

NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION
Division of Fish, Wildlife & Marine Resources
Bureau of Habitat
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Joseph Martens
Commissioner

November 2011

[Individual/Group Name]

[Individual/Group Address]

RE: Update on Hudson River restoration proposals



Dear [Individual/Group Name]

Thank you for submitting a Restoration Project Proposal for the Hudson River Natural Resource Damage Assessment. Your input, and the project ideas submitted by your friends and neighbors along the Hudson River since May of 2000, helped the Trustees identify new restoration options for the river. We are extremely grateful for the value that an informed and involved public brings to the process and to our decision-making, and we hope this letter helps you to understand a bit more about the Hudson River restoration process.

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), along with Federal Trustees from the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) are assessing how the Hudson River's natural resources were harmed by releases of PCBs from the General Electric Company (GE) plants at Fort Edward and Hudson Falls, New York. Right now, we are studying the effects of the PCB contamination through a process known as Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA). In NRDA, Trustees use scientific studies to measure the ways hazardous substances injure natural resources. The conclusions of these NRDA studies will guide the Trustees in selecting a final list of restoration projects to address natural resource injuries and the public's lost use of these resources. Restoration is the goal of NRDA. It is an active component of damage assessment that can be seen and felt for generations. The damage assessment and restoration process is complex and lengthy. Currently, we are in the injury quantification phase, and we are making progress in determining the amount of restoration required to address the Hudson River's injured natural resources. We believe the amount of restoration required will be quite substantial.

We will assess your restoration project proposal, along with many other proposals, and create a list of potential restoration projects after the damage assessment is complete. Trustees will assess the restoration project idea that you submitted based on the following criteria:

(Please note: Trustees may add to this list to aid their selection of restoration projects that most appropriately compensate the public for natural resource losses.)

- **Relevance-** Is there a connection between natural resource injuries and losses to the public due to PCB contamination and the proposed restoration effort?
- **Legality-** Is the project barred by law?
- **Efficacy-** How likely is it that the restoration project will be successful?
- **Cost Effectiveness-** What is the cost of the proposed restoration effort? Can the benefits be quantified? Is there an opportunity to share costs with other organizations and/or agencies? Do the costs outweigh the benefits?
- **Ecological Leverage-** Will the restoration project promote other environmental benefits?
- **Existing Plans-** Does the restoration project address or build upon existing federal, state, or local management plans?

As noted above, the Trustees will select restoration projects after we have measured how the Hudson River's natural resources were harmed by releases of PCBs. We have not yet established a schedule for selecting restoration projects. We plan to begin restoration efforts as soon as possible after we resolve the damage claim. This timing will depend on the completion of the NRDA studies. Typically, completion of these studies takes several years.

The criteria listed above will help Trustees evaluate proposals and build a list of potential restoration projects. Trustees will select some of the potential restoration projects for the final restoration plan. The public will also be invited to comment on the draft restoration plan, and we encourage your involvement in this process.

Thank you again for your efforts and your interest in the future of our Hudson River.

Sincerely yours,

NYS DEC Hudson River Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration Team

Photo courtesy of Chris Balk, DEC, The Hudson River from Saratoga National Historic Park.

Learn More: Hudson River information can be found on the Internet at the following addresses:

NYS DEC: www.dec.ny.gov/lands/25609.html

NOAA: www.darrp.noaa.gov/northeast/udson/index.html

DOI: www.fws.gov/contaminants/restorationplans/HudsonRiver/index.html