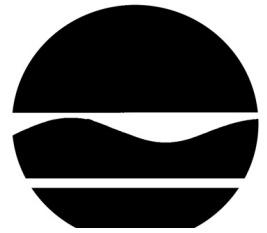


**New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
Hudson River National Estuarine Research Reserve**

Norrie Point Environmental Center, P.O. Box 315, Staatsburg, NY 12580

Phone: (845) 889-4745 ~ **FAX:** (845) 889-4749

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Alexander B. Grannis
Commissioner

September 17, 2009

National Marine Fisheries Service
Office of Habitat Conservation

To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's Hudson River National Estuarine Research Reserve (HRNERR), I am writing to endorse the grant proposal titled "A Partnership to Restore Fish Habitats Associated with the National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERRS) and Associated Restoration Reference Sites"

The Hudson River NERR has been a key partner with state and federal agencies since the late 1980s in efforts to restore Hudson River Estuary habitats. Working with the state Hudson River Estuary program, we developed and are implementing an estuary-wide habitat restoration plan to restore critical spawning and nursery habitats for coastal migratory fish species including river herring, American shad, striped bass, Atlantic sturgeon and American eel. The Hudson River NERR's 5000 acres at four sites contain high quality examples of habitat types targeted for restoration. These have been intensively studied and are used as reference sites in science-based restoration design and monitoring approach (shorelines, tidal marsh and vegetated intertidal and shallows.) Our 2009 Reserve Management Plan also identifies several restoration needs.

Implementation of restoration plans is currently limited by funding; future implementation will require continued partnership with a broad range of stakeholders including state and federal agencies, NGOs and community groups. Several non-federal partners would qualify to match funding received through the proposal submitted by NERRA via financial contributions or in-kind services. If funded, the Hudson River NERR and its partners are ready to support restoration projects at several sites in the Reserve and estuary that would seek to restore migratory and resident fish habitats including vegetated shallow and intertidal habitats and natural shorelines.

As both a Reserve Manager and the Hudson River Habitat Protection Manager, I am aware of the unique challenges presented by habitat restoration projects, especially in the context of climate change. I believe that funding the proposal will result in a partnership that takes full advantage of the NERRS's science and stewardship capacities and will result in implementation of coastal habitat restoration activities that will be recognized for their high standard of excellence.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my support for the proposal. If you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Betsy Blair

Elizabeth A. Blair
Manager