

Hudson CAG lower river expansion update

May 2 2023 Hudson CAG meeting

By the Consensus Building Institute on behalf of the CAG lower Hudson expansion team



The Hudson River CAG is expanding

Over its 20 years of existence, the CAG has adjusted membership to meet project and community needs.

As the project begins to move into the lower river, the CAG has determined this is a good time to grow its membership. The CAG will continue to serve as a forum for the community to discuss this Superfund clean up.

We are working to figure out what perspectives should be added to the CAG.

Key considerations

We want:

- **For representatives from all key perspectives** to have a seat at the table, to give voice to their concerns and questions
- **To add members to our existing CAG** (we aren't proposing removing existing CAG members' seats)
- **To maintain a manageable sized CAG** so the group can function and deliberate well together

Process so far

1. June 2021 CAG supported expanding CAG
2. Convened planning team of volunteers
3. Identified important perspectives to hear from
4. Developed the contact list + set of interview questions
5. Reached out to 29 people for input
6. Interviewed 11 people
7. Spring 2023 working with the lower Hudson expansion team to develop a recommendation for the CAG (still underway)

People we interviewed

David Carpenter, Director of Institute for Health and Environment, University of Albany

Scott Croft, Vice President of Government Affairs, Hudson River Boat Clubs & Boat Owners' Association

Stuart Findlay, Aquatic Ecologist, Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies

Meme Hanely, NY Senior Program Manager, Land Trust Alliance

Scott Keller, Executive Director, Hudson River Valley Greenway

Michele Langa, Staff Attorney, Baykeeper, Hackensack Riverkeeper

James Lodge, Senior Scientist, Hudson River Foundation

Rebecca Martin, Riverkeeper and Acting Coordinator, Hudson 7

Rob Pirani, Program Director, The New York-New Jersey Harbor & Estuary Program / Hudson River Foundation

Dan Shapley, Technical Advisor, Riverkeeper, for the Hudson 7

Peter Wepler, Chief of Environmental Branch within the US Army Corps of Engineers-NY District's Planning Division

CBI's main takeaways from interviews

- We now have an extensive contact list for the lower Hudson
- It was hard to get elected officials to talk with us
- There are various ways to engage municipalities and counties
- We need to speak with more environmental justice advocates
- Virtual meetings will work well (the project has a huge geography)
- There's a strong research & academic community in the lower Hudson
- Drinking water concerns will bring communities to the table

Perspectives interviewees said were important

Science, research, academia	Heritage, open space
Environmental justice	Municipal, counties, CACs or ECCs, economic development
Agriculture	Recreational fishing
Natural resources, environmental	Recreational boating
Tribes (note: this is likely a government-to-government relationship w/ EPA)	Commercial boaters
Agencies (note: they serve as CAG liaisons)	

Seats	Existing CAG Stakeholder Groups (with # of filled seats)	Some current thoughts (still underway)
1	Environmental Justice	May add 1 or 2 more seats
2 (1 filled)	Agriculture & Land Conservation	May split into Ag (existing seat) + a different open space/heritage seat
4	Environmental	May add 1-2 more seats
1	Recreational Boating	May expand to be “boating” to include commercial, and add 1-2 more seats
4 counties + 4 econ devpt seats (12 filled)	Elected Officials by County + Economic Devpt, Tourism & Recreation	May invite each county along the Hudson to join. And may also invite some other associations of communities
1	Fishing	Not yet discussed
4 (0 filled)	Next Generation	May shift to include college and university representation in addition to high school
1	Floodplains Property Owner	
2	Soil and Water Conservation Districts	
1	Ad Hoc	

Process going forward

- Lower Hudson CAG expansion team will bring the CAG a recommendation for additional seats to represent lower Hudson River interests
 - We will meet in May & June
 - Any CAG member is welcome to be part of this group
- We will need the CAG to bless our proposed approach.
 - To modify our operating procedures so the CAG can have more than 25 members
 - To ok the general proposed set of additional seats and perspectives
- Then we will reach out to invite new members to join
- And hope to have additional CAG members in the near future!