

SUMMER NEWSLETTER

June 2025



NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

After experiencing a challenging winter/early spring season, it's gratifying to see that the wait was worth it. Each day, the Hudson River Valley erupts into beautiful colors, the migratory birds have returned (I'm filling the bird feeders more frequently), and the temperatures have continued to warm up, albeit more slowly than we probably would have liked them to. I believe that it is now safe to get my kayak and camping gear ready for some summer adventures.

2025 for HRES has been a positive and productive year so far. We held our annual Leadership awards dinner in February honoring three very special and deserving individuals, we plan to award three McKeon Student Research grants, we took a very interesting field trip to the Normanskill region this May, and we have now begun to plan our annual symposium for the fall.

As always, thank you all for your continuing support.

Jim Morrison - HRES President

HRES Membership: Our 2025 Membership renewal period is now active at

https://HRES_2025_Membership.eventbrite.com

The memberships of people who signed up at our October 2024 symposium are valid until October 2025. To avoid the Eventbrite fees, you can print out the application online at www.hres.org and mail with your check to: HRES, PO Box 279, Marlboro, New York 12542.

AT NIGHT TO REMEMBER: 2025 HRES LEADERSHIP AWARDS DINNER

A big thank you to HRES members and awardees who attended our Annual Awards dinner at Mahoney's Irish Pub in Poughkeepsie in February. It was certainly a night to remember as we recognized the contributions of three of our colleagues who have made a significant difference toward providing a better understanding of the environmental issues facing the citizens of the Hudson Valley. We were pleased to present the following awards to three individuals who the board felt represented the ideals and spirit of our program.

Outstanding Environmental Researcher Award – Dorothy Peteet, NASA GISS & LDEO Columbia University

Dorothy Peteet is a Senior Research Scientist at NASA/Goddard Institute for Space Studies and Adjunct Professor, Columbia University. She directs the Paleocology Division of the New Core Lab at Lamont Doherty Earth Observatory of Columbia and in collaboration with GISS climate modelers and LDEO geochemists is studying the Late Pleistocene and Holocene archives of lakes and wetlands (peatlands, salt marshes, tidal freshwater marshes, bogs, fens). Dr. Peteet has added significantly to our understanding of the evolution of, carbon sequestration in, and sedimentation in Hudson River marshes. She also has been a mentor to countless graduate students helping them pursue a career in natural sciences.



HRES Vice President Chuck Nieder presenting the award for Outstanding Environmental Researcher to Dorothy Peteet.

Outstanding Environmental Educator Award – Carrie Roble, Hudson River Park Trust

Carrie Roble began working for the Trust in 2010 as a seasonal environmental educator. Since then she has helped expand the Trust's environmental education programs and research initiatives. In 2020, Ms. Roble was promoted to Vice President of the Trust's River Project. She dedicates her work to the health of the Hudson River and empowering New Yorkers to be stewards of NYC's waterways through participatory research and environmental education.



HRES Vice President Chuck Nieder and HRES Board Member Margie Turrin with Outstanding Environmental Educator award winner Carrie Roble.

Distinguished Service Award – Roy "JR" Jacobson, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

JR Jacobson manages and directs the Freshwater Wetlands Protection program for the State of New York. JR has worked tirelessly for the past several years to garner the support needed to protect all wetlands in New York that meet regulatory threshold. In 2023, New York State passed a new Freshwater

Wetlands Law that provided the authorization to do just that. JR then led a statewide team in 2024 to draft new freshwater wetland regulations that were promulgated on January 1, 2025. The new law and associated regulations will significantly increase the number, types, and area of freshwater wetlands protected in the Hudson Valley.

Congratulations to all our 2025 award winners.

To learn more about HRES's Leadership Awards program, visit the HRES website at www.hres.org.



HRES Field Trippers at Norman Vale Mansion in Guilderland, NY (see article below)!

INTERVIEW WITH JR JACOBSON



JR receiving an HRES Distinguished Service Award in February.

Roy "JR" Jacobson works in the Division of Fish and Wildlife for the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. He started with the Freshwater Wetlands Program in 1988 and currently oversees the statewide implementation of New York's Protection of Waters Program and the Freshwater Wetlands Regulatory Program.

HRES: What inspired you to pursue a career in environmental protection at the Department of Environmental Conservation?

JR: I'm a wildlife biologist by training and we cannot have wildlife without habitat. Thus, a career in environmental protection was a logical fit.

HRES: During your more than 30 years working at DEC, you remained dedicated to protecting the freshwater wetlands of the state, starting as a field technician and advancing to the leadership position for directing and implementing the Freshwater Wetland Regulatory Program across the State. What is it about freshwater wetlands that keep you so committed to this work?

JR: Freshwater wetlands are cool. They provide many benefits to humans, including stormwater retention, pollution treatment, and recreational opportunities. They are also many types of wetlands that provide habitat for many types of organisms.

Some career advice from JR Jacobson....

Do it! Happenstance and serendipity got me here, while patience and empathy for the regulated stakeholders have kept me here.

HRES: This year is a pivotal year for the protection of wetlands in New York with the adoption of the new regulations. What is your greatest challenge with implementing the regulations?

JR: Everyone had more than 40 years of operational experience using the old regulations and while the new regulations offer an opportunity to protect important wetlands, the change is difficult for everyone. DEC staff is currently solving unforeseen challenges that come up with the development of a completely new system for making jurisdictional determinations.

HRES: Finally, what advice do you have for students considering a career in environmental science and protection?

JR: Do it! Happenstance and serendipity got me here, while patience and empathy for the regulated stakeholders have kept me here.

2025 NORMANSKILL FIELD TRIP

HRES member **Simon Litten** organized a very informative field trip to the Normanskill region of the Hudson River Valley on Saturday May 17, 2025. Along with Simon, **Emilie Hauser** took on the difficult task of organizing the logistics of the field trip including sending out multiple emails, updating attendee lists, coordinating lunch choices, and making the decision to “Damn the Torpedoes, Full Speed Ahead” when the weather forecast looked threatening. We did luck out with the weather (warm and sunny).

The featured speaker at each stop presented detailed information on the unique geology of the region from the vantage point of the Thacher Park Overlook (**Mike Nardacci**); the workings of the Watervliet dam and hydroelectric plant (**Jim Besha** and **Stephen Wilson**); a tour of the historical Norman Vale mansion (**Matt Reuter**); the complex history of the interactions of the Dutch, indigenous peoples, the British, and the Americans living in the area and their contributions to the birth of our nation (**Jeff Perlee**); and the environmental education youth programs provided at the *Heldeberg Workshop (**Mike Nardacci**), as well as the ongoing efforts to control and/or eradicate the damage to Hemlock trees by the wooly adelgid (**Marshall Lefebvre**). The attendees agreed that we had a very enjoyable day touring the Normanskill region.



Mike Nardacci, Thacher Park Geologist, speaking at Thacher Park Overlook in Voorheesville, NY.



Jim Besha, Albany Engineering, and Stephen Wilson, speaking at Watervliet Dam in Guilderland, NY.



Norman Vale Mansion in Guilderland, NY with Jeff Perlee - Albany County Legislator and Normanskill Historian (above) and speaker Matt Reuter – Host/Owner (right).





Marshall Lefebvre of Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy presenting on the impact of Woolly Adelgid on NYS Hemlocks (Heldeberg Workshop)



Mike Nardicci presenting at the Heldeberg Workshop in Voorheesville, NY

**** The Heldeberg Workshop offers one-week outdoor courses taught by certified teachers and expert artisans for children and teens in various program areas such as science, nature, high adventure, theater and art.***

HRES Fall Symposium

Preparations are under way for our annual 2025 Symposium to be held again in the Fall (October). With an overall theme centered on habitat restoration, key topics being considered by the conference planning committee led by Chuck Neider include dam removal, SAV, Phragmites control, channel restoration, historical perspectives and the history of restoration plans, oysters, shoreline, in-river and funding opportunities.

PHOTOGRAPHY FROM THE HUDSON VALLEY

After retiring from NYSDEC in December, HRES Vice President **Chuck Nieder** is enjoying time out of the office and exploring the natural environs of the Hudson Valley. Based on this fabulous collage of nature photography taken at two nature reserves in the Hudson Valley, Chuck may have found his next calling!



From Top to Bottom: Wood Frog, Hooded Merganser, and Great Blue Heron at RamsHorn-Livingston Marsh Sanctuary in Catskill, NY.

If you have photos of Hudson River Valley scenes that you would like us to consider for future newsletters, please email them to

David.davis@hdrinc.com





Round-lobed hepatica (Hepatica americana) 2 photos from the uplands around RamsHorn-Livingston Marsh Sanctuary.



Skunk cabbage flower spathe at Lewis A. Swyer Preserve in Stuyvesant, NY.

**HRES Executive
Committee**

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*We need your help. Interested in
volunteering your time to
support the HRES mission?*

*Contact an HRES Board Member
today!*



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Founded in 1970, the Hudson River Environmental Society is a nonprofit, non-advocacy organization that delivers the science behind Hudson Valley issues to citizens, scientists, and decision makers. We enable objective discussions, provide forums for rigorous science, connect disparate views, and showcase the region's natural heritage. We are academic researchers, government officials, nonprofit scientists, private consultants, teachers, students, and interested residents who find real solutions.