

The QUAD: Cultural and Education Task Force Report  
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Co-Chairs Cultural & Education Task Force  
Updated: May 14, 2010

## ***EXECUTIVE SUMMARY***

*“Position the Hudson River Valley as the Environmental Science Center of America”*

### **CORE PROPOSITION:**

We advocate strongly for National Park designation to help position this region as a nationally significant cultural, historical, and environmental center, as the Environmental Science Center of America.

### **The Cultural & Education Task Force recommends:**

- Showcasing the biodiversity, ecosystem health and environmental attributes of our region;
- Involving arts, cultural, environmental and educational organizations to advance this identity; and
- Educating both local residents and visitors about environmental stewardship through imaginative programs reaching the broadest possible demographics.

### **Through:**

- Concerted, well-coordinated efforts, including proactive communications and marketing efforts focusing on building a strong national identity; and
- Involving a broad cross-section of many individuals and organizations -- performing & contemporary arts centers, museums, historic houses & sites, environmental and educational organizations -- in the HRV and beyond in this work which requires focused attention and leadership from organizations, individuals and elected representatives to strengthen the capacity of our environmental, educational and cultural assets.

### **To succeed and build regional capacity, we recognize:**

- That these organizations require higher levels of public- and private-sector recognition and financial support, both capital and program funding.

- That these organizations will help create a dynamic economic climate and a dynamic place to live and work.
- That the HRV has tremendous economic challenges and lacks the economic infrastructure to bring a net cash flow into our region.
- That we have strong cultural, environmental and educational assets that are the basis for a knowledge economy.
- That our population absolutely must understand the watershed on a deeper level, and see the River as key to daily life, to agricultural and smart economic development and as a complement to the HRV's cultural identity.

*"Cultural, environmental and educational institutions are places for ideas and advance this work"*

**To advance this particular *idea of place* we recognize the importance of the following:**

1. Historic Resources (how they can be protected and supported)
2. Park Stewardship (its role in informing the educational work of local institutions)
3. Heritage Tourism (our ability to attract outside visitors to our region to strengthen and sustain our local economy, while also engaging the people who live and/or work in the HRV with local cultural and educational institutions)
4. Destination (we are a "place" with particular attributes of scenery/vistas, cultural amenities, and economic possibilities related to specialized food, unique cultural assets and the environment itself)

**How this can be accomplished**

*Near term:*

1. Advocate for resources for a National Park Service study (the area from Westchester & Rockland Counties to Albany & Rensselaer Counties)
2. Advocate for an in-depth, detailed inventory of the cultural, environmental and educational assets of the region, including identifying the capital needs of existing organizations.
3. Forecast a sense of stewardship; advance & promote the idea that Everyone is a Steward; Everyone has a Voice.
4. Convene scholars, cultural and environmental leaders. Enlist these leaders as "Hudson Ambassadors"

5. Advocate for Green Jobs in all HRV industries and regions.
6. Integrate learning about the River and surrounding lands, the watershed and run-off areas into the curriculum K-18 (and lifelong learning). Use the "No Child Without Wet Feet" approach!
7. Make certain that many voices reflect the HRV's sense of place in a very public way deliberately involving those most directly engaged in this concept of sense of place: contemporary artists and writers, workers in environmental studies, naturalists, waterways and river commerce, agriculture/farming art, architecture and restoration crafts, archaeologies who have excavated in the HRV, commuters and community activists.
8. Conferences and symposia at cultural, environmental and educational institutions, including libraries, can advance this work.
9. Encourage a large program of regional field trips for the general public related to the study of the environment.
10. Work with existing forums (e.g. Waterfront Alliance) and help establish new partnerships (e.g. Hudson Valley Congressional Caucus) to advance this initiative.

*Long term:*

1. Identify permanent federal and other support at a significant level to manage the park and address the long-term stewardship of the designated park.
2. Incorporate a place-based and ecological literacy throughout the educational systems, K-18 in the HRV.

**Challenges and Action Items**

1. Coordinate federal, state, and local programs, both ongoing and newly defined.
2. Organize a major public hearing and to line up the full support of the NY Congressional Delegation.
3. Engage the public -- through extensive well-coordinated campaigns with educational collateral materials -- and present them with these ideas. Strong informed grass-roots support is key.
4. Engage the cultural and educational organizations of the region to bring broader public participation in and understanding of the issues in other fields, such as land use and agricultural development, and about the environment and key industries of the region
5. Encourage cultural, environment and educational players to take proactive roles.

The QUAD: Cultural and Education Task Force Report  
Submitted by John Haworth and William Schlesinger  
Co-Chairs Cultural & Education Task Force  
Updated: May 6, 2010

## **STATEMENT OF THE CULTURAL & EDUCATION TASK FORCE**

“Position the Hudson River Valley as the Environmental Science Center of America”

The Cultural & Education Task Force recommends that the Hudson River Valley be re-positioned as a nationally significant and unique cultural and educational resource--the Environmental Science Center of America. The primary focus is to showcase the biodiversity, ecosystem health and environmental attributes of our region. We believe the arts, cultural, environmental and educational organizations all play critical roles in advancing this identity through their public programs, exhibitions and educational work. We value educating both local residents and visitors about environmental stewardship through imaginative programs reaching the broadest possible demographics.

The Hudson River Valley is the historic core of America’s revolutionary resources (e.g. American Revolution, Industrial Revolution and now, the Environmental Preservation Revolution). Through concerted, well-coordinated efforts, including proactive communications and marketing efforts, our aspiration is to transform the HRV in the national imagination, strategically re-positioning it to have a far greater national identity. It is important to involve a broad cross-section of many individuals and organizations in the HRV and beyond in this work, which we believe will complement efforts to transform the local economy. This requires focused attention and leadership from organizations, individuals and elected representatives to strengthen the capacity of our environmental, educational and cultural assets.

It is important that the Hudson River Valley be seen with “new eyes, fresh voices, new visions”, and we recognize the importance of having the full spectrum of organizations deeply engaged in bringing a collective and sharper focus and a heightened public awareness of the region’s identity. We believe that having a broad range of organizations involved is a priority. As a strategy, it is essential that performing and contemporary arts centers, museums, historic houses and sites, environmental and educational organizations become far more deeply engaged in and play active and prominent roles in re-shaping the identity of the region. While the public programs, exhibitions, symposia and other educational activities focusing on the Hudson River Valley complement this regional work, we also recognize that these organizations require higher levels of public- and private-sector recognition and financial support (including funding for both capital improvements for public facilities and public activities). Active recognition of the roles of educational, environmental and cultural institutions (including both historic sites and contemporary art) is critical. The HRV currently lacks a solid regional identity that is well recognized both inside and outside the region, requiring an energetic commitment at multiple levels.

Practically speaking, making pragmatic, politically feasible changes to advance to idea of HRV re-positioning the nation’s Environmental Science Center, the cultural and educational work within the HRV is key, but not easy.

We recognize that educational and cultural organizations in our region will help create a dynamic economic climate and a dynamic place to live and work. We also recognize that the HRV has tremendous economic challenges, so our recommendations must generate new resources. The HRV is economically distressed and does not have the economic infrastructure to bring a net cash flow into our region, and yet, we have strong cultural, environmental and educational assets that are the basis for a knowledge economy. To become the Environmental Science Center of the nation which is attractive both for local residents and outside visitors required a different focus for tourism development beyond a place with nice antique shops, importance as that may be for the tourism base of our economy.

Our population absolutely must understand the watershed on a deeper level, and see the River as key to daily life, to agricultural and smart economic development and as a complement to the HRV's cultural identity. Re-

branding the HRV to develop strong connections to the agricultural production of the region is important, and developing career opportunities in environmental fields related to the HRV is key. Having both residents and outside visitors having experiences in the HRV that help them appreciate and learn more about the watershed is a tremendous opportunity. Supporting the cultural, environmental and educational infrastructure to create meaningful programs and activities to take this to another level is a huge challenge for all of us.

*"Cultural, environmental and educational institutions are places for ideas and advance this work"*

In order to develop the unique character of the HRV, economic development goes hand in hand with a healthy culture and environment; green jobs in particular are important strategically to the effort. We are mindful that tremendous challenges will help us develop transformative solutions. The cultural, environmental and educational institutions of the HRV are places for ideas, and also where the *idea of place* is advanced.

We recognize the importance of the following:

1. Historic Resources (how they can be protected and supported)
2. Park Stewardship (its role in informing the educational work of local institutions)
3. Heritage Tourism (our ability to attract outside visitors to our region to strengthen and sustain our local economy, while also engaging the people who live and/or work in the HRV with local cultural and educational institutions)
4. Destination (we are a "place" with particular attributes of scenery/vistas, cultural amenities, and economic possibilities related to specialized food, unique cultural assets and the environment itself)

### **CORE PROPOSITION:**

We advocate strongly for National Park designation to help position this region as a nationally significant cultural, historical, and environmental center, as the Environmental Science Center of America. One option is to frame a future Hudson River Valley Park as a cultural site (similar to the national park designation for the Mississippi National River & Heritage

Area, the Wolf Trap Performing Arts Center, or Presidio Park in San Francisco)

How this can be accomplished

*Near term:*

11. Advocate for resources for a National Park Service study regarding the protection, preservation, and enhancement of the significant values of the Hudson River Valley in the area from Westchester & Rockland Counties to Albany & Rensselaer Counties.
12. Advocate for an in-depth, detailed inventory of the cultural, environmental and educational assets of the region, including identifying the capital needs of existing organizations. It is important that elected representatives and civic leaders throughout the region and beyond are presented not simply with a list of the cultural, educational and environmental organizations, but that a more comprehensive capital needs assessment is undertaken so that our leaders have a better understanding of what is required to strengthen these cultural, environmental and educational assets. Having a well-organized inventory will help on the advocacy front.
13. Forecast a sense of personal stewardship (community stewardship) of the Hudson River Valley. Advance and promote the idea that Everyone is a Steward; Everyone has a Voice.
14. Convene scholars, cultural and environmental leaders on this topic frequently through professional and educational conferences and focused community meetings. Enlist these leaders as “Hudson Ambassadors”
15. Advocate for Green Jobs in all HRV industries and regions.
16. Integrate learning about the River and surrounding lands, the watershed and run-off areas into the curriculum K-18 (and lifelong learning). Encourage educational, environmental and cultural institutions to have a deeper commitment to this work. (We propose using the "No Child Without Wet Feet" approach!)

17. Make certain that many voices reflect the HRV's sense of place. Anecdotal comments collected in the summer 2009 survey of Hudson Valley cultural institutions holding collections of recorded oral histories, turned up the statement that regional "voices" should be recorded, preserved and made known. We recommend being far more public about this work, and deliberately involving those most directly engaged in this concept of sense of place: contemporary artists and writers, workers in environmental studies, naturalists, waterways and river commerce, agriculture/farming art, architecture and restoration crafts, archaeologies who have excavated in the HRV, commuters and community activists. We encourage more public dialogue (presented at cultural, environmental and educational institutions) between the elders who were stewards of the land and those who are responsible the day-to-day management of watershed-related resources.
18. Conferences and symposia at cultural, environmental and educational institutions can advance this work. There are many libraries in the region that can reach diverse audiences (especially the libraries involved in oral history projects).
19. Encourage a large program of regional field trips for the general public related to the study of the environment. We encourage local cultural and educational institutions to develop "tool kits" with key information to build greater in-depth public knowledge about our region. These institutions can help compile oral histories about the area to get more people involved in this dialogue. This program will tap into the momentum of the QUAD's good work.
20. Work with existing forums (e.g. Waterfront Alliance) and help establish new partnerships (e.g. Hudson Valley Congressional Caucus) to advance this initiative.

*Long term:*

3. Identify permanent federal and other support at a significant level to manage the park and address the long-term stewardship of the designated park.
4. Incorporate a place-based and ecological literacy throughout the educational systems, K-18 in the HRV.

## Challenges and Action Items

6. Need to coordinate federal, state, and local programs, both ongoing and newly defined. This must include an appropriate management framework to assist NYS and units of local (county) governments in the development & implementation of integrated resource management and to ensure orderly public and private development in the area.
7. Need to organize a major public hearing and to line up the full support of the NY Congressional Delegation.
8. Need to engage the public -- through extensive well-coordinated campaigns with educational collateral materials -- and present them with these ideas. Strong informed grass-roots support is key.
9. The cultural and educational organizations of the region can play key roles in bringing broader public participation in and understanding of the issues in other fields, such as land use and agricultural development, and about the environment and key industries of the region. Cultural, heritage and arts organizations can play deliberate, proactive institutions for bringing a far greater public awareness of QUAD Legacy initiatives.
10. Leaders in the cultural, environment and educational fields should be encouraged to take proactive roles to bring a greater public awareness about the Hudson River Valley, and its issues and aspirations that sprang from this QUAD Legacy initiative.
11. Cultural, environmental and educational institutions, their staffs, boards and visitors have the capacity to complement the work of other partners advocating for a stronger Hudson River Valley identity.

## Time Frame

Study phase: 2011 - 2013

Stage 1 implementation: FY2015-FY2018

Stage 2 implementation: FY2019-FY2020

## **ADDENDUM A**

### **KEY QUESTIONS THAT INFORMED THE WORK OF THE CULTURAL & EDUCATION TASK FORCE:**

1. What would we like to see as the BEST presentation of cultural and education programs in the Hudson River Valley 15 years from now? 50 years from now?
2. What might we recommend to make the Hudson River Valley have the same level of recognition in the broader public imaginations as, say, the Loire Valley in France, Sonoma Valley or even the Silicon Valley? What might advance the economy AND the cultural & educational assets of our region?
3. What recommendations - from the cultural and educational lens - might we put forward to complement the regional waterfront revitalization programs in place or possibly to put in place?
4. How might our educational institutions - both those with a local focus and those national institutions attracting students from outside the area - tap into the local resources in a more focused and vigorous way? ("Leave No Child Inside" - let's help college professors and public school teachers more aware of our unique place and use it to teach sustainability. ("Place-based education is key"))
5. How might we validate and recognize that each community is its own destination, while advancing the attributes of the entire area? What steps might we take to encourage our communities and educational/cultural organizations to advance this important regional focus on the importance of this place? ("Every community is a microcosm, every community is a destination")
6. In this time of particular economic challenges, what recommendations might we put forward to support and sustain the institutions whose work relate to the local culture and environment of the Hudson River Valley?

7. Review the existing State Historic Preservation Plan. What policies overlap here and how might our work and advocacy move things forward in good ways? ("We've got to prevent the closures of parks and historic sites"). There has been much discussion over many years about similar topics: how might we incorporate the good work that has already been done into our recommendations? (e.g. Regional Plan, SHPO/Greenway/DEC Conservation Plan)
8. Our region has a strong educational consortium, including 48 institutions of higher education. How might we engage them in the recommendations we put forward? How might we engage other groups?
9. What are the jobs related to education and cultural assets that can benefit from re-thinking and re-positioning the Hudson River Valley?