

# TEACHERS GET A BIRD'S EYE VIEW



Educators learn much about New York City waterways at an all-day workshop designed by New York Sea Grant. Says New York Aquarium's Merryll Kafka (pictured far right) who hosted a second workshop this fall, "Coastlines are our lifelines, and without education, there is little compliance to protecting our natural resources and wonderful wetlands."

Photos by Nordica Holochuck

In May 2008, NYSG's Hudson Estuary specialist Nordica Holochuck presented a full-day professional development workshop to 28 educators at the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) in Manhattan.

New York Sea Grant designed "The Bird's Eye View: Exploring Changes to New York – New Jersey Harbor Estuary Environments" to meet NYC middle school science curriculum guidelines. The effort was sponsored by the EPA NY–NJ Harbor Estuary Program. Holochuck says, "This workshop aimed to introduce teachers to low- or no-cost publicly accessible geospatial data. Our teaching materials included current and historic topographic maps, aerial photos and Internet resources, including the NYC OASIS Web Site. The teaching materials are an engaging starting point for students to learn more about NYC waterways, and inspire teachers to involve schools in harbor stewardship projects."

The workshop focused on seven Harbor Estuary Program restoration sites. The majority of participants were middle school teachers and the remainder educators from community or environmental education organizations.

The workshop proved such a great success that **Merryll Kafka**, Curator of Education from

the New York Aquarium, invited Holochuck and her team to repeat the workshop for the New York State Marine Educators Association at the Aquarium in September 2008. "This workshop is an excellent professional development opportunity for an introduction to estuarine ecology, Web site resources, and the use of the Aquarium as a partner in education," says Kafka. The NY Aquarium is a federally designated Coastal Ecology Learning Center and part of Coastal America.

NYSG also collaborated with **Susan Hoskins**, Image Analyst at Cornell University Institute for Resource Information Sciences. Hosted by AMNH, Senior Education Program Supervisor **Jay Holmes** introduced participants to the Museum's geospatial and estuarine learning resources. This effort was inspired by the recent AMNH special exhibit, *Water H<sub>2</sub>O = Life*, and as a capstone, the museum provided tickets to the exhibit to workshop participants

Says Holochuck, "I firmly believe that collaboration with existing educational institutions in New York City is key to effective programming for teaching about the importance of coastal waterways and habitat conservation and restoration. These workshops prove the great value of such partnerships."

— Nordica Holochuck