

LEADERSHIP

Board Chairman



**CONSTANTINE
SIDAMON-ERISTOFF**

My congratulations to U.S. Environmental Protection Administrator Christine Todd Whitman for her courageous decision in the matter of the cleanup of the PCBs in the Hudson River. My special congratulations to the long-suffering staff of Region II. As regional administrator, I started the reassessment process in 1989, little thinking that it would take so long to reach the point at which a remediation method could be proposed and adopted. After twelve years I think we can all now agree that the relevant science has been fully explored and that the work that was done by Region II fully deserves support from all members of the community.

I am fully aware that the political pressures on the Region and on the administrator were enormous. These pressures came from all kinds of different quarters: communities, politicians, environmental groups, property rights groups. Indeed, just about every conceivable actor weighed in on this question. Upstate communities were deeply concerned that the proposed remedy would not only spoil their farmlands but also make it impossible for their citizens to use and enjoy the river for decades to come. Communities down-river were afraid that the failure to remediate and remove the PCBs from the hot spots

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ECOSYSTEMS, FOCUSING ON BIRDS, OTHER WILDLIFE
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HUMANITY AND THE EARTH'S BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY.**

would mean that their use of the Hudson for fishing and recreational uses would likewise be impossible for decades to come. Feelings ran high. Governor Pataki and the New York State Department of Environmental Protection, under Commissioners Cahill and Crotty, deserve special thanks as without their full support, the final decision might well have gone the other way.

In the end, EPA's decision was based on sound science. I am gratified that it was approved by Administrator Whitman.

This is not the end of the story. Controversy will continue. It is worth noting that General Electric has had, overall countrywide, a reasonably good record when it comes to remediating Superfund Sites. I hope that it will now bite the bullet, begin the work, and use every scientific and engineering technique in its arsenal to do what has to be done to clean up those hot spots.

This may sound overly optimistic, but I would also hope that environmental groups, community groups, EPA, the State Department of Environmental Conservation, and communities up river and down river can now begin to work together to get this job done as soon as possible.

There has been so much ill will, bad feeling and rhetoric in the past. I know that it will be very difficult to overcome these passions. Lawsuits, political controversies, intemperate rhetoric can only slow things down. The River, however, needs to be cleaned up, and quickly. Is this too much to hope for?

Norman Stotz, an organizer of the Audubon New York Council and a delegate of the New York City Audubon Society (NYCAS,) passed away in July. For over 20 years, Norman served NYCAS as President, Treasurer, Board Member and stalwart advocate of the Audubon cause in the city, the state and the country. In his honor, NYCAS established an endowment in his name, as well as the "Norman I. Stotz Award for Extraordinary Volunteer Service on Behalf of the Society and the Environmental Cause."

Norman believed firmly in the need for a unified, statewide Council of Audubon Chapters; recognized how important the Council could be as a force for environmental advocacy and as a resource for individual chapters; and worked hard to see that the Council got established and stayed on that unified plane. He also advocated for a New York State Audubon office headquartered at Albany and was dedicated to advancing the Audubon Cause across the state, particularly among influential people in the Capital City, through advocacy, education and sound science and through close cooperation with Chapters and Council.

August of 2001 marked the thirteenth anniversary of the Council's establishment at a meeting in Ithaca – a meeting at which Norman played an important role. In July the state office of New York celebrated its fifth anniversary and could point to dramatic growth as its many programs advance the Audubon message of conservation around the state. Together, we form **Audubon New York** –

Council Chairman



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the most important advocate for birds, other wildlife and their habitats in New York State.

Contributions to an endowment in his name may be made to New York City Audubon Society, 71 West 23rd St., New York, NY 10010.

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