

## Hudson River Anchorages

by Alexis Stabulus, Clearwater Environmental Action Associate

On June 9, 2016, the United States Coast Guard released an Advanced Notice of Public Rule Making (ANPRM) (citation #81 FR 37168, docket #USCG-2016-0132) proposing the addition of ten anchorages along the Hudson River from Kingston to Yonkers. The anchorages are to be constructed for the use of commercial vessels (along with their attending tug, tow, or pushboats). The ten sites are: Kingston Flats South, Port Ewen, Big Rock Point, Roseton, Milton, Marlboro, Newburgh, Tompkins Cove, Montrose Point, and Yonkers.

According to the ANPRM, USCG received requests from the Maritime Association of the Port of NY/NJ Tug and Barge Committee, the Hudson River Port Pilot's Association, and the American Waterways Operators to consider establishing new anchorage grounds on the Hudson River.

The proposal itself merely states the location and size of the proposed anchorages. There is no mention of what effect this might have on the Hudson Valley and New York as a whole leading to the formation of many questions . . . What are the economic costs and benefits of this new route? What are the figures on the increased traffic to the Hudson and what would this mean for residents and those that use the Hudson for recreational purposes? Not to mention the copious environmental concerns from biodiversity to pollution. The proposal lacks the information and transparency for the public to make an informed decision on this radical change to half of New York State's population. And this is because the proposal has not yet been pushed far along enough in the approval process for these analyses to be mandated. However, the USCG is in the preliminary stages of establishing the traffic changes/possible concerns of the anchorage grounds and if the proposal is publicized as a Notice of Public Rule Making (NPRM) they will have to conduct an environmental review that is in line with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

At a Press Conference at the Cortlandt Waterfront Park on August 2, 2016 officials gathered to discuss the proposal and bring it to residents' attention. Senator Terrence Murphy cited the environment, navigational issues, and homeland security to be his main concerns with the USCG document. Westchester County Executive Rob Astorino echoed Senator Murphy's apprehension: "New York City and the surrounding area is the number-one terrorist target in the world with Indian Point sitting right here, a nuclear power plant, and having these vessels that are going to be coming in from the Atlantic and from wherever right up the shoreline to dock here, that is something that we should all be concerned about," said Astorino.

The Maritime Association says the new rule will help ensure safety and environmental well-being as trade increases because restrictions on American crude oil sale abroad are lifted but how is this possible when higher traffic and crude oil would do the opposite? The proponents also say that anchorages will not be constantly filled and that they are needed so ships can more easily follow the high tide needed to traverse the Hudson and avoid traveling through foggy weather in the narrower parts of the river. If these sites are needed, then they must be heavily traversed in order to create this proposal, statistics must have been conducted on the anticipated increase in traffic and the public deserves to have this information.

In addition, of the nearly four-square miles of land being used for these anchorages, three-quarters of it are on traditional commercial fishing grounds. "It's better off being a parking lot than being a source of jobs as it has been for hundreds of years for working commercial fishermen on the Hudson," said John Cronin, senior fellow for environmental affairs at Pace University and former Hudson Riverkeeper. "That is the federal government's view of the Hudson River."

If the Coast Guard's proposal is approved, more than 2,000 acres of the estuary will be taken over and used as anchorage grounds. Many of the Hudson's riverside towns have invested millions of dollars to revitalize their waterfront areas and the sight of a tanker or barge could curtail business.

“The barges are eyesores that could be detrimental to the visual aesthetics of the Hudson River,” said Cortlandt Town Supervisor Linda Puglisi. “We are already burdened with a nuclear power plant and the continuing construction of the Spectra gas line. We do not need to further devalue our shoreline by allowing barges and tankers to anchor offshore.”

This proposal has created unity from a bipartisan system where officials of both political parties are agreeing that these anchorages would be detrimental New York State. Other members that were present at the press conference or have voiced their opposition to the proposal are Putnam County Legislator Barbara Scuccimarra, Dutchess County Executive Marc Molinaro, Westchester County Legislator John Testa, Cortlandt Deputy Supervisor Frank Farrell, Peekskill City Councilman Joe Torres, Yonkers Mayor Mike Spano, Malborough Supervisor Al Lanzetta, Rhinebeck Supervisor Elizabeth Spinzia and members of the Peekskill Yacht Club, Croton Mayor Dr. Greg Schmidt and Deputy Mayor Bob Anderson, Buchanan Mayor Theresa Knickbocker and Steve Winkleman, owner of Hudson Valley Marine.

The development of the Hudson River Valley cause mass destruction to the river ecosystem through pollution and traffic. After decades of cleaning up the river and educating the public about the importance of the Hudson’s health, some of its original glory has been restored and it has once again become a draw for tourism and local business as well as a source of pride and activity for residents. It is important that the USCG is full-transparency on the risks and issues surrounding their new proposal and that they fully allow the nearly 11 million residents that would be directly affected by this issue to have their say.

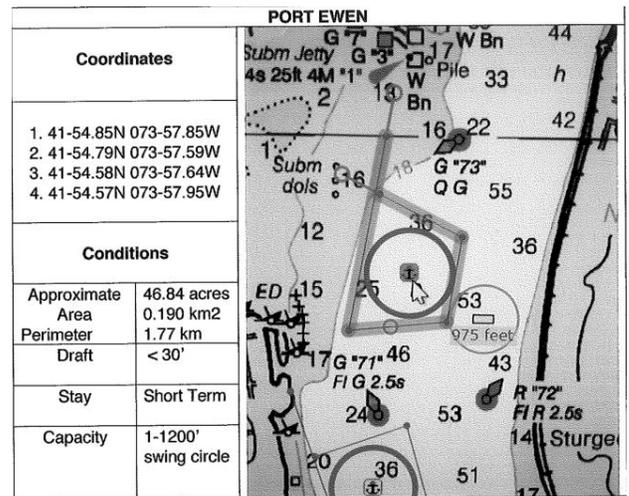
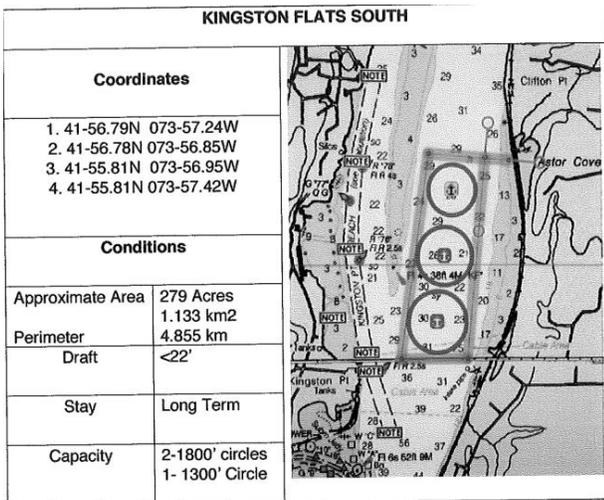
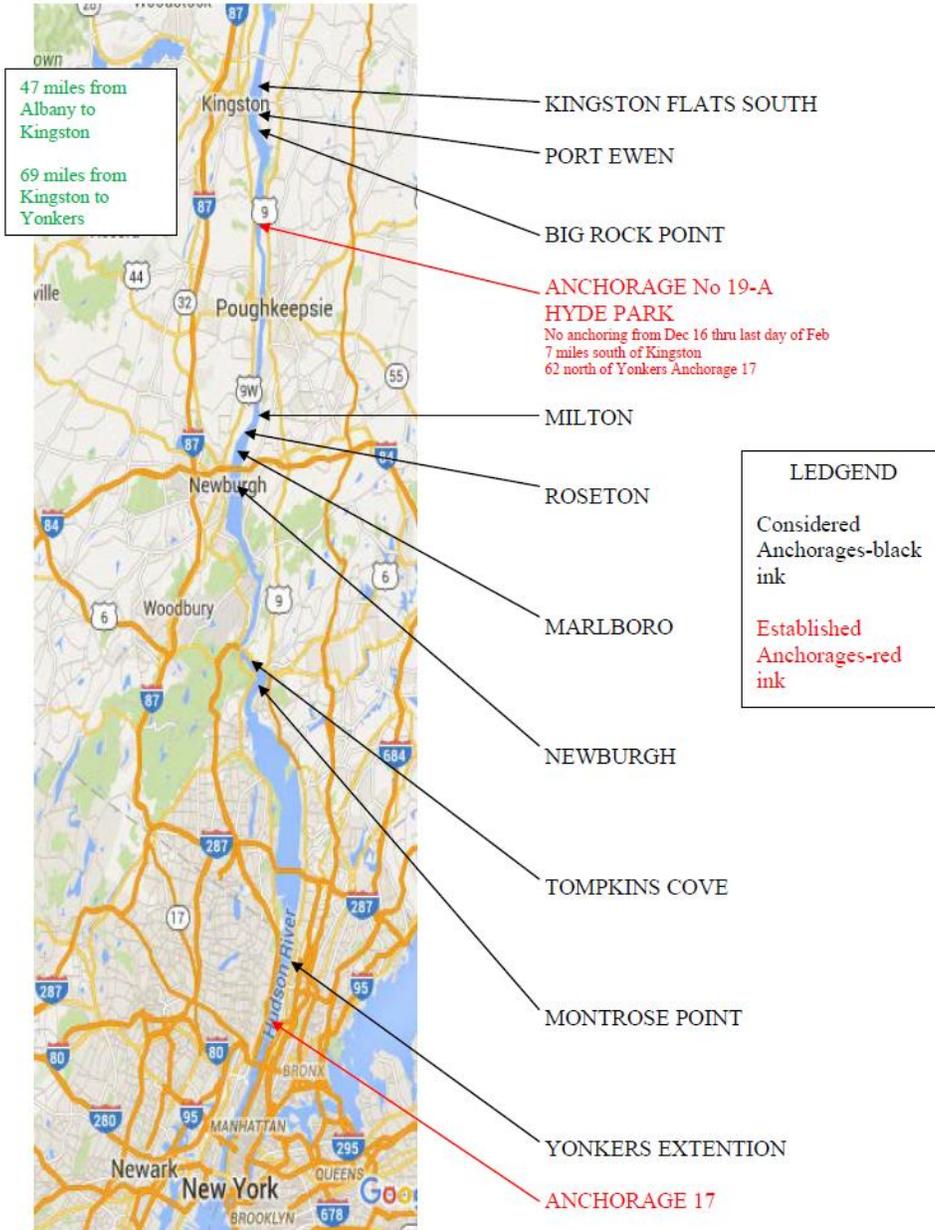
The Coast Guard has urged public feedback and has provided an online form for comment. Dutchess County Executive Marc Molinaro stated his dissatisfaction with the USCG’s transparency saying that the online medium is “insufficient”. All comments are due by September 7, 2016 so please state your opinion at:

<https://www.regulations.gov/comment?D=USCG-2016-0132-0001>

Senator Murphy’s office has also put out a petition which we urge you to sign:

<https://www.nysenate.gov/questionnaires/terrence-murphy/hudson-river-not-parking-lot-0>

**Anchorage Grounds, Hudson River; Yonkers, NY to Kingston, NY**



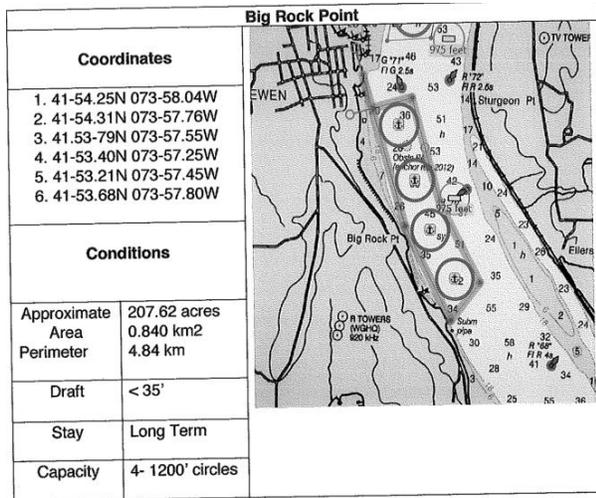
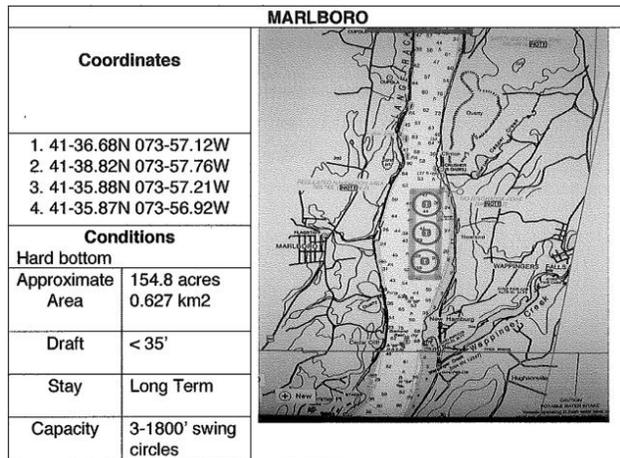


Figure KHI.2: BIG ROCK POINT



MOI.1

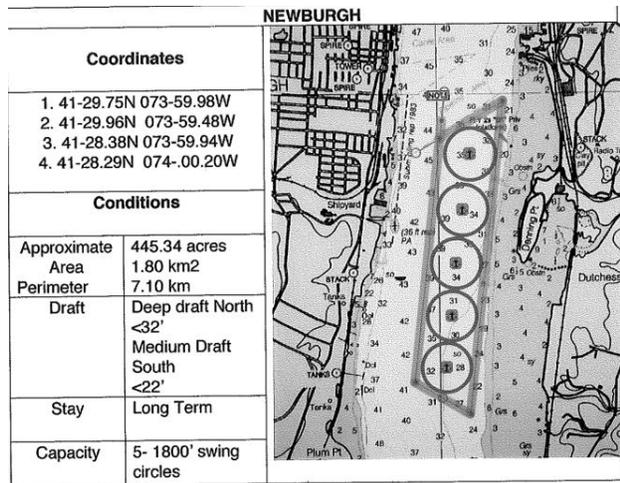
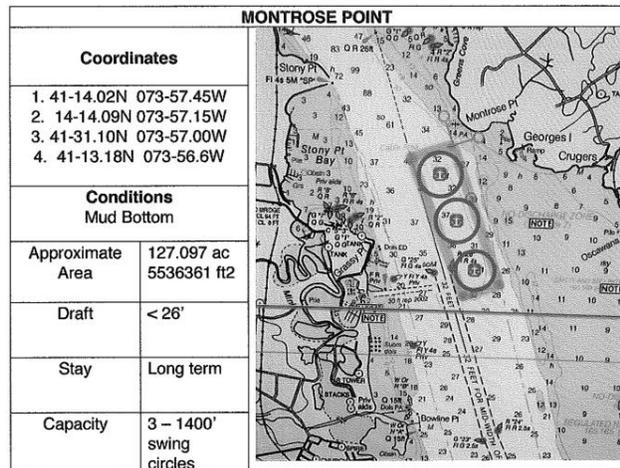
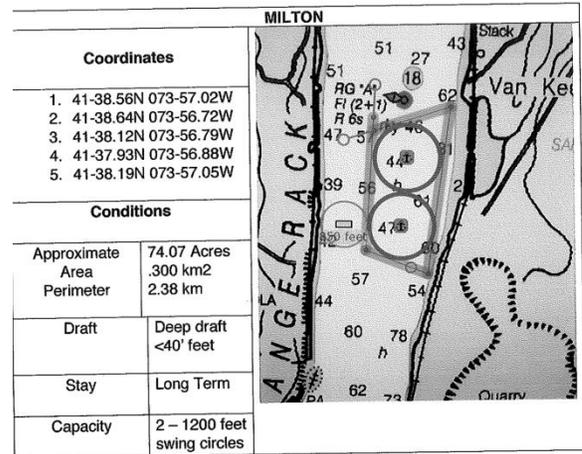


Figure NHI.1



MPI.1



MNI.1

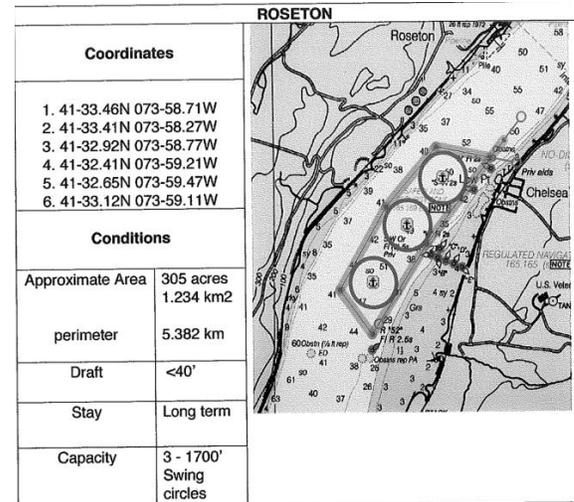


Figure NHI.2

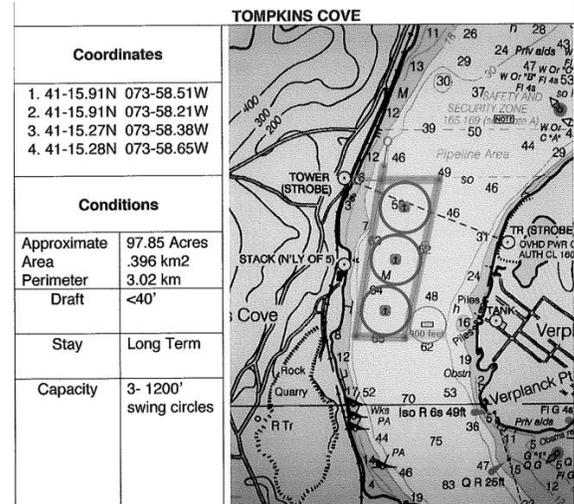
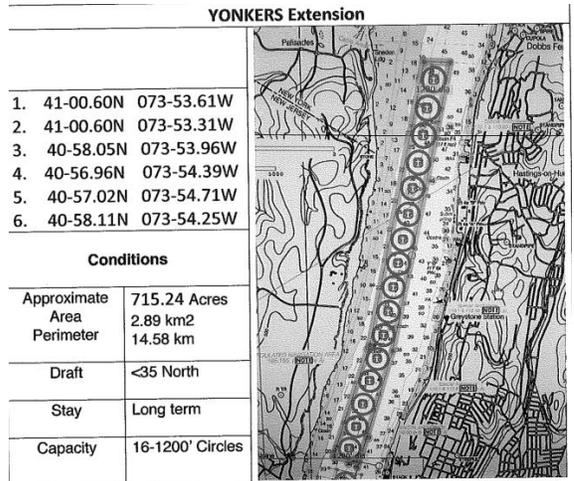


Figure TCI.1



YEHI.1