



For Immediate Release

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*****Media Advisory*****

**Beacon Institute and Poughkeepsie Journal to Host
Inaugural Address Broadcast and Reaction Session**

*Poughkeepsie Journal to stream live video of panelist and guest reactions from
Institute's new Center for Environmental Innovation and Education*

BEACON, NY — Beacon Institute for Rivers and Estuaries today announced that it is inviting members of the community to gather at the Center for Environmental Innovation and Education (CEIE) on Denning's Point in Beacon on Tuesday, January 20, 2009 to watch the inaugural oath and address and participate in a reaction session immediately following the address. A panel of business, political, environmental and community leaders will share their viewpoints with audience members and welcome their feedback. Poughkeepsie Journal will stream live video of the reaction session on its website at www.poughkeepsiejournal.com.

Capacity is limited to 80 guests, who must pre-register at www.bire.org or by calling 845-838-1600 ext. 16. Registration is on a first-come, first-served basis.

WHO: **Beacon Institute for Rivers and Estuaries, with Poughkeepsie Journal**

Panelists (bios follow)

- **John Cronin**, Director and CEO, Beacon Institute for Rivers and Estuaries
- **Gwendolyn Outlar Davis**, Executive Director, Beacon Community Center
- **Jonathan Drapkin**, President and CEO, Pattern for Progress
- **Michael C. Finnegan**, Investment Banker
- **Arthur L. Gellert**, Partner, Gellert & Klein, P.C.
- **Connie Hogarth**, Director, Connie Hogarth Center for Social Action at Manhattanville College; Founding Member, Climate Crisis Coalition
- **Ann Chambers Meagher**, President and CEO, Greater Southern Dutchess Chamber of Commerce

WHAT: Broadcast of Inaugural oath and address with reaction session immediately following

WHEN: Tuesday, January 20, 2009 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

WHERE: Beacon Institute's Center for Environmental Innovation and Education
199 Dennings Avenue
Beacon, NY 12508

PRE-REGISTER: **For the public:**
Capacity is limited, guest pre-registration is necessary. Register online at www.bire.org or call 845-838.1600 ext. 16. Online registration preferred.

For the media: Kindly email [Kathleen Hickey](mailto:Kathleen.Hickey@bire.org) if you plan to cover this event so we can plan for your attendance.

DIRECTIONS: From I-84: Take Exit 11 (just before/after the Newburgh-Beacon Bridge) and turn onto Route 9D South. After the I-84/9D intersection, go through 3 more lights. At the 4th light, make a right onto South Avenue and then bear to immediate right onto Dennings Avenue. At the stop sign, continue to the left to the parking area, where there will be a shuttle bus available to take you to the CEIE. You may also choose to walk into Denning's Point.

REACTION PANEL BIOGRAPHIES

JOHN CRONIN

Director and CEO, Beacon Institute for Rivers and Estuaries

John Cronin has a long and distinguished career in environmental policy, advocacy and education. He began his work on the Hudson River in 1973, at the prodding of folksinger Pete Seeger, and since then has worked as an advocate, a state and congressional legislative aide, a commercial fisherman, and director of the Pace Academy for the Environment at Pace University School of Law. For 17 years, he served as Hudson Riverkeeper, during which time his work in citizen environmental enforcement gained widespread prominence, and served as the inspiration for 170 similar programs around the world. He has been the subject of print, broadcast and documentary profiles that have brought international attention to the story of the Hudson River's rebirth. *The Wall Street Journal* called him "a unique presence on America's major waterways," and *Time Magazine* honored him as a "Hero for the Planet."

GWENDOLYN OUTLAR DAVIS

Executive Director, Beacon Community Center

Gwendolyn Outlar Davis brings a wealth of human services expertise and experience to her new post as Executive Director of the Beacon Community Center. As a long-time Beacon resident and past member of the Community Center's board, she is uniquely aware of the needs of the families served by the Center as well as the needs and concerns of the broader community. Formerly site director of the Southern Dutchess Community and Family Development Center, Ms. Davis was directly responsible for the operation of 23 programs of service to low income families and individuals in the surrounding community.

As case manager for the YWCA of Dutchess County, she provided pregnant and parenting teens with counseling, advocacy and parenting and life skills mentoring. Ms. Davis is the current president of the Beacon Rotary Club and an active member of the NAACP. She is a graduate of the State University of New York at New Paltz.

JONATHAN DRAPKIN
President and CEO
Pattern for Progress

Jonathan Drapkin is President and CEO of Pattern for Progress, the regional public policy, research and planning not-for-profit serving the nine counties of the Hudson Valley. Previously he served as executive director of the Gerry Foundation, where he guided the creation of Bethel Woods; he has also served as Sullivan County manager. Mr. Drapkin spent his earlier years in New York City, first as an Urban Fellow working for City Council President Carol Bellamy, then as legislative counsel within the Office of the Criminal Justice Coordinator, and finally as head of the New York City Council Office of Oversight and Investigation. He was a member of the Governor's Commission on Local Government Efficiency and Competitiveness, and served on the Metropolitan Transportation Authority's Commission on Sustainability. As an adjunct lecturer for the Executive MBA Program at CUNY's Baruch College, Mr. Drapkin for six years conducted courses on how to measure the effectiveness and efficiency of government services.

MICHAEL C. FINNEGAN
Investment Banker
Trustee, Beacon Institute for Rivers and Estuaries

Michael C. Finnegan is an investment banker and resident of Garrison. He served as Chief Counsel to Governor George Pataki and the New York State Senate in the mid-1990s, where he was instrumental in negotiating the landmark New York City Watershed Agreement that safeguarded the drinking water of nine million New Yorkers. He also negotiated a historic Adirondack timber agreement between lumber interests and environmentalists and in 1996 conceived and negotiated Governor Pataki's \$1.75 billion Clean Water/Clean Air Bond Act legislation. Before public service, Mr. Finnegan was an attorney with Plunkett & Jaffe in New York City and White Plains. He has served on the Environmental Protection Agency's environment finance advisory board and on the board of the UN Development Programme. Mr. Finnegan is a graduate of Siena College and Pace University.

ARTHUR L. GELLERT
Partner, Gellert & Klein, P.C.

Attorney Arthur L. Gellert has concentrated his practice of law in commercial transactions, including real estate and banking, as well as estate planning and trust and estate administration. He was named one of three real estate attorneys in the 2007 upstate edition of *Super Lawyers* magazine. At present, Mr. Gellert serves the State of New York as a member of the Taconic State Park, Recreation and Historic Preservation Commission and is a member of the Committee on Character and Fitness for the Ninth Judicial District. He has served as Chair of the board of the Community Foundation of Dutchess County, the Special Committee of the New York State Bar Association on Procedures for Judicial Discipline, Chair of the Dutchess County Bar Association Grievance Committee. A commissioner of the State Hudson-Fulton-Champlain Quadricentennial Commission and a director of the Dutchess County Regional Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Gellert also is a member of the New York State Bar Association and the SCORE Advisory Board. He is a graduate of Union College and Albany Law School of Union University.

CONNIE HOGARTH

**Director, Connie Hogarth Center for Social Action at Manhattanville College
Founding Member and Steering Committee Member, Climate Crisis Coalition**

Connie Hogarth is a lifetime peace, justice, anti-nuclear and environmental activist. As co-founder and executive director of Westchester People's Action Coalition (WESPAC) for 23 years (she has been executive director emerita since 1996), she was actively organizing for the shut-down of Indian Point nuclear power plants. Ms. Hogarth is a current member of the Indian Point Safe Energy Coalition (IPSEC), and continues to work for the shut-down of Indian Point. In 1998, Manhattanville College established the Connie Hogarth Center for Social Action, which Ms. Hogarth now directs, dedicated to training students to move from academics to social activism. She is a founding member and serves on the steering committee of the Climate Crisis Coalition in Lenox, MA. She has been active in the local NAACP, the Mid-Hudson Progressive Alliance, Lower Hudson Valley Civil Liberties Union and the Beacon Sloop Club. She serves as a committee person on the Fishkill Democratic Committee and is a member of the Dutchess County Democratic Committee.

**ANN CHAMBERS MEAGHER
President and CEO, Greater Southern Dutchess Chamber of Commerce
Trustee, Beacon Institute for Rivers and Estuaries**

Ann Chambers Meagher (pronounced "Mar") has led the Greater Southern Dutchess Chamber of Commerce (GSDCC) since 1995, during which time she has created innovative programming to support Southern Dutchess businesses, especially women business owners and young professionals throughout the Hudson Valley. Prior to her work at GSDCC, Ms. Meagher was head of external affairs and government relations for Prudential Financial. She also led the public affairs department of the New York State Assembly Minority Conference and directed communications for New York State Senator Stephen M. Saland. Ms. Meagher serves on the boards of the American Heart Association, the Exchange Club of Southern Dutchess, SCORE and the Dutchess County Workforce Investment Board. Ms. Meagher is a graduate of Ithaca College.

About Beacon Institute

Beacon Institute for Rivers and Estuaries, with offices in Beacon and Troy, New York, is a not-for-profit environmental research organization engaging scientists, engineers, educators and policy experts in collaborative work focusing on real-time monitoring of river ecosystems. It aims to make the Hudson Valley a global center for scientific and technological innovation that advances research, education and public policy regarding rivers and estuaries. www.bire.org

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