



For Immediate Release

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Date: November 13, 2007

Hotaling Joins Beacon Institute as Chief Education Officer

(Beacon, NY) – The Beacon Institute for Rivers and Estuaries today announced that Liesl Hotaling has joined its staff as Chief Education Officer. Hotaling, an educator with a background in marine biology and maritime systems, is a nationally recognized expert in developing internet-based science curricula for K-12 teachers designed to engage students in a variety of environmental topics.

Hotaling will lead the educational component of The Beacon Institute's recently announced River and Estuary Observatory Network (REON) project with IBM, working in close collaboration with scientists and engineers from IBM and other partner organizations, including Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Columbia University, Pace University and Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute. She also will direct the Institute's public and school programming in the soon-to-open Building One located at Denning's Point Park on the Beacon waterfront.

"Liesl is at the forefront of the science education movement that is taking advantage of the incredible real-time data that we are beginning to see from established earth science observatory networks," said John Cronin, Director and CEO of The Beacon Institute, referring to several curricula that make use of real-time data that Hotaling co-developed with collaborators such as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Institute of Marine and Coastal Sciences at Rutgers University.

"I am delighted to launch The Beacon Institute's educational programs. We want to excite teachers about integrating real-time data from the REON project in their classrooms and ignite student interest in science, technology, engineering and mathematics," Hotaling said. "Our goal is to use the Hudson River and the REON project as learning platforms to demonstrate how science and technology help us view, interpret and interact with the environment." A similar curriculum she developed with the EPA engages students with real-time data to explore the connections between air quality and weather, observe how air quality conditions affect their daily lives, and then assimilate that knowledge to make smart choices.

"We want people to feel connected to the Hudson River and think wisely about this important natural resource," Hotaling explained. "We are exploring partnerships with schools in the region to help students make similar connections between REON data and the broader ecosystem and to encourage informed choices about how personal actions can affect this precious resource."

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“Liesl’s expertise will ensure that the data we obtain from our REON project on the Hudson River will become available to students and teachers in the Hudson Valley and beyond in a useful and meaningful way,” agreed Cronin. “Studies have shown that knowledge is the strongest motivator in encouraging people to change environmentally dangerous behaviors. If we can educate our constituencies so they can actually see and understand the changes that human, commercial and environmental impacts on our watershed cause, we will have a better chance of preserving the health of this and other rivers for future generations.”

Hotaling honed her expertise at Stevens Institute for Technology in New Jersey, where she most recently served as Assistant Director for the Center for Innovation in Engineering and Science Education. Prior to that, she taught science at the elementary through college levels in both public and private schools. Early in her career, she was a biologist and education specialist the New Jersey Marine Sciences Consortium in Sandy Hook, NJ. Hotaling holds a bachelor’s degree in marine science from Fairleigh Dickinson University and master’s degrees in teaching and maritime systems from Monmouth University and Stevens Institute of Technology, respectively.

About The Beacon Institute:

The Beacon Institute for Rivers and Estuaries, headquartered in the City of Beacon in Dutchess County, 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.

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