



## RESTORATION WORK GROUP

*Co-Chairs: Lisa Baron (Army Corps of Engineers),  
Marit Larson (NYC Parks)*

[www.hudsonriver.org/estuary-program](http://www.hudsonriver.org/estuary-program)

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### **Meeting, January 7, 2019**

Hudson River Foundation  
17 Battery Place, NY 10004

**10:00 – 1:30**

#### **I. Welcome/introductions**

Attendance is at the end of this document. Several members of the group could not attend because of the federal government shutdown. Terry Doss joined us as the newest member, representing NJ Sports and Exposition Authority replacing Ross Feltes.

#### **II. Minutes**

Approved minutes from the last meeting in October 2018.

#### **III. Environmental Monitoring Plan Story Map Discussion**

Rosana Da Silva, HEP's Water Quality Manager, outlined the scope and recommendations for the Environmental Monitoring Plan story map, which is in development. The group was asked to review the monitoring recommendations suggested and offer new ones. One notable suggestion from the group was to add a mention of ribbed mussels to the oysters indicator. Using ribbed mussels as restoration tools is not common yet in our estuary but there is growing interest. It may be a good indicator to add in the future, although it is unclear what exactly should be tracked (monitored). Also, Rob Pirani suggested that there is a need to coordinate with the Economic Development Corporation for monitoring shoreline habitat. Lisa Baron noted that the CRP may be a good source for monitoring recommendations, particularly for harbor herons. Each TEC chapter, as well as Volume II has details related to data needs to better advance each TEC.

Rosana will reach back out to the group in February for a final prioritization of the monitoring recommendations. Anyone willing to review the storymap text for the Habitat section can contact [Rosana@hudsonriver.org](mailto:Rosana@hudsonriver.org)

#### **IV. Wetland Migration Pathway Protection presentation and discussion**

Betsy Blair presented the results of her HEP funded research on pathway protection to the group. Betsy conducted this research through a series of interviews with 22 stakeholders that represent coastal researchers, environmental conservation leaders or public agency officials that were working

in resilience. This project identifies the needs to make progress on finding and protecting the pathways where marshes can migrate with sea level rise. The project also frames the state of the interviewee's familiarity and current work with pathway protection and highlights key geographic areas that may be good pathways.

Comments and questions from the group included:

- Appendix N of the CRP lists which opportunity sites may be able to be used as NNBFs. That may be a good start to prioritization efforts.
- The word "retreat" is a red flag. We need to find ways to talk about wetland migration and development moving back from the shoreline in a way that resonates with people.
- There is a conference at Columbia in June called "[At What Point Managed Retreat?](#)". HEP will try to participate to discuss wetland migration pathways.
- Judith Weis said that marsh migration should be reviewed in the larger context of marshes keeping up with sea level rise.
- Marit Larsen said that Parks has reviewed the potential for migration for marshes on Parks property in the NYC.
- Lisa Baron is looking for more comprehensive information on marsh accretion rates if others can provide sources.

Betsy summarizes the report with 12 recommendations as next steps specifically for HEP. The group read over the recommendations and Isabelle Stinnette introduced a real-time prioritization matrix where the group could vote on which of the recommendations the group thought had the greatest need and also the level of difficulty. HEP will take this report and the prioritization exercise and create a plan for how to progress. The final report is available at: <https://www.hudsonriver.org/article/addressing-climate-change>.

## **V. The Hudson River Comprehensive Restoration Plan**

Andy Peck from the Nature Conservancy introduced the group to the completed Hudson River Comprehensive Restoration Plan (CRP) from Partners Restoring the Hudson. This plan, similar to the Hudson-Raritan Estuary CRP adopted by our group, consists of a baseline conditions analysis (including threats per habitat unit), target assessment, and opportunities list (sites). The goals for 2030 and 2050 are broken up by Target Ecosystem Characteristics (TEC). Interestingly, the USFWS has provided a document on how their funding opportunities engages with the various HR TECs. Andy can share that document if anyone is interested. Partners Restoring the Hudson have created a Hudson River Mapper (available <https://s3-us-west-1.amazonaws.com/nascience/apps/hudson-river/index.html>) where you can browse habitat, infrastructure or recreation and public access project opportunities. Andy is still accepting project suggestions but they do not have an official nomination form. Isabelle will provide the latest HEP restoration form to Andy for reference.

## **VI. Hudson River Habitat Restoration Tentatively Selected Plan**

Lisa Baron provided an update from the USACE on the Hudson River Restoration Feasibility Study. The Tentatively Selected Plan was approved at the milestone in December 2018 includes the restoration at five sites consisting of one shoreline restoration project (Henry Hudson Park), two projects creating side channels and wetlands (Binnen Kill and Schodack Island), and four dam removal projects on Moodna Creek (3 dams) and Rondout Creek (1 dam). USACE also created a new

tributary connectivity tool to quantify the benefits (habitat units) for a fish passage project. The USACE's Ecosystem Center of Expertise certified this model in October 2018. The design and implementation of these restoration projects supports the goals of the recently released Hudson River Comprehensive Restoration Plan. The Draft Integrated Feasibility Report and Environmental Assessment is planned to be released in June 2019 in order for DEC to conduct necessary outreach to dam owners prior to public release of the report.

## **VII. Tracking the Enclosed and Confined Waterways TEC**

Last year the group determined that we needed to find a new way to track progress with the Enclosed and Confined Waterways TEC. The current tracking method was not recording any of the progress that has been made in water quality in these basins and under-flushed areas. Isabelle started to outline some of the options for different ways for tracking progress, however, the discussion got held up on the first primary consideration in the PowerPoint:

The CRP says that these enclosed and confined waterways can be impaired for a number of reasons including trash, high organic carbon, and sediment contamination. We only realistically have the data to track DO and Pathogens. Is this OK?

John McLaughlin suggested that DO and Pathogen monitoring may not be appropriate to show the great efforts that NYCDEP has put into water quality improvements. Other methods suggested by the group included an assessment of the benthic community or CSO discharge volume. The discussion was cut-short by the end of the meeting but several volunteers agreed to continue the conversation in a temporary subcommittee: Ken Scarlatelli, Judy Weis, John McLaughlin and Susan Maresca.

## **VIII. Further updates from the group (Provided by email)**

### STAC (Judy Weis)

- About 1 1/2 years ago, I notified the group that I had been appointed to the NYC Waterfront Management Advisory Board. Now I can report that we have actually started to meet! We had one meeting in which we all introduced ourselves to each other, and the second meeting was focused on ferry transportation. There are a few other people besides me interested in environment, living things, and habitat issues. I am assured that these will be the focus of a future meeting. Stay tuned.
- I am working on reviewing and synthesizing research showing the positive values of Phragmites (a lot of papers!) "the case for the defense." I hope we can devote a significant chunk of time during the next meeting to discuss this and opposing views and ultimately come to a more rational approach to management of this species for the "Anthropocene age" the 21st century.

### USACE

- HRE Feasibility Study: Updated designs and costs are under development for the 22 sites (of the original 33) that will be recommended in the Final Feasibility Report/Environmental Assessment. Sites include 3 Jamaica Bay perimeter (Fresh Creek, Brant Point, Dead Horse Bay), 5 marsh islands, Flushing Creek, 5 Bronx River (Shoelace

Park, Bronx Zoo and Dam, Stone Mill Dam, Bronxville Lake and Garth/ Harney), 3 Lower Passaic River (Kearny Point, Oak Island Yards, Branch Brook Park) and 2 Hackensack River (Meadowlark and Metromedia). Concurrence from HQ was obtained in 7 Feb 19 that Jamaica Bay marsh islands can be included in the recommendation as a cost shared project (great news!). Final report is planned to be completed in September 2019.

- Hudson River Habitat Feasibility Report and Environmental Assessment will be released for public review 10 June 2019.
- Spring Creek South (NYSDEC/FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program) designs for Phase 1 were submitted to FEMA end of December and we await FEMA's decision on approval to advance the project with federal funds.
- Liberty State Park Restoration Project field work to detail baseline conditions initiated March to prepare updated integrated design.
- Spring Creek North Restoration Design Phase was initiated.

#### NYC Parks

Salt marsh restoration is underway at sites in Jamaica Bay. At Sunset Cove in Broad Channel, excavation of urban and contaminated fill began in the 11 acre site. At Bayswater park excavation of fill and grading began to remove fill at a 1 acre site through a partnership with the Natural Areas Conservancy. Both sites will be planted this spring. Shoreline reconstruction and restoration / revegetation of a dilapidated bulkhead and degraded edge is also nearly complete at Randalls Island along the Harlem River, in partnership with the Randalls Island Alliance.

Forest management continues across the city Parks, with on-going implementation of the Forest Management Framework, using data on forest condition and threats to guide prioritization and evaluation of site work.

#### **Attendance:**

Lisa Baron, (chair) USACE  
Marit Larson, (chair) NYC Parks  
Betsy Blair (guest)  
Rosana Da Silva, NY-NJ HEP  
Terry Doss, NJSEA  
Caitlin Frame, NYSDEC (phone)  
John King, NJDEP (phone)  
Kristen King, NYC parks  
Jim Lodge, HRF  
James MacDonald, NYSDEC  
Susan Maresca, NYSDEC  
John McLaughlin, NYCDEP  
Dana Mecomber, PANYNJ  
Brendan Newell, USACE (guest)  
Andy Peck, TNC  
Robert Pirani, NY-NJ HEP  
Ken Scarlatelli, NYSDEC  
Isabelle Stinnette, NY-NJ HEP  
Judith Weis, STAC