



New York - New Jersey
Harbor & Estuary Program
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RESTORATION WORK GROUP

of the New York – New Jersey Harbor & Estuary Program

Chair: Lisa Baron (Army Corps of Engineers)

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Meeting June 25, 2015

17 Battery Place, Suite 915

10:00-1:00

- I. **Introduction and minutes from last meeting:** minutes from the March 23rd meeting will be approved, pending any changes, by July 16.

- II. **Hudson-Raritan Estuary Feasibility Study update:** Lisa Baron reviewed the status of the CRP and upcoming timelines. Expected Future feasibility (“spin-off”) studies were described and are listed in Appendix A. Oakwood Beach on Staten Island was selected as a highest priority site for new feasibility in 2017. Many of these studies are referred to as “new phases” of feasibility, rather than “new starts” so as to undergo a less-onerous process toward a feasibility study.

Action items

- **Lisa Baron to bring CRP timeline to next RWG meeting.**
- **Lisa Baron to send design charrettes for the Bronx River as feasible to NYSDEC /Venetia Lannon.**
- **RWG members to brief their agencies regarding key elements of the timeline.**

- III. **NYC Parks/Natural Areas Conservancy Restoration Opportunities Inventory (ROI) – opportunities and potential applications:** Jamie Ong presented in more detail the process that Natural Areas Conservancy (NAC) has developed to assess NYCDPR properties city-wide and to inform planning and implementation priorities. Group discussion followed and focused on how the ROI could be expanded beyond NYC Parks sites to the entire CRP and other applications.

- **The Methods use an adjustable prioritization method** so that depending upon the interest of the user, the elements of the index can be weighted more or less heavily.
- **Potential applications:** the group is interested in seeing the conceptual designs developed during this project incorporated into the Waters We Share/OASIS database. Additionally, the group discussed using this as a potential initial short-list of projects to be shared with potential funders and those that have the ability to advocate for priority projects (e.g. Citizens Advisory Committee). The ROI prioritization process would be useful for those interested in conducting mitigation.

Action items

- **NAC and HEP will review data available beyond NYC Parks sites to determine the feasibility of creating an equivalent analysis for all relevant CRP sites.**

- **ACE to apply the Restoration Opportunities Index**, as feasible (per first action) to all relevant CRP sites.
- **Proposal to incorporate NAC additional sites and edits to existing projects to be developed** by NAC and HEP and shared with the RWG to review.
- **HEP to share Public Access Assessment (stewardship) data with NAC** upon completion (late summer/early fall).

IV. **Tappan Zee / upper Hudson oyster restoration** – Jim Lodge’s report on the Tappan Zee oyster restoration was tabled until the next meeting.

Action items

- Jim to present at January/February 2016 meeting.

V. **Oak Island Yards – input into potential mitigation in Newark, NJ region**: John Crow of C&H Environmental and Dennis Toft presented their interest in seeking input from the RWG on potential mitigation opportunities. They expressed the requirement of their client to mitigate for 6 acres of wetlands that were filled, and an interest in either acquiring land for conservation purposes or restoring land to mitigate for losses.

Action items

- **Follow-up meeting**: HEP and ACE, NJDEP, Dennis Toft and John Crow, and others to follow-up and provide advice as to potential restoration and acquisition opportunities in the region.

VI. **Waters We Share online interface revision – results of survey and proposed implementation**: Kate Boicourt presented on the results of the survey informing the user-interface revision of the Waters We Share site. The following recommendations were agreed to at the meeting:

- **Applications of the map**: respondents view the map primarily as an information resource, followed closely by progress-tracking and mitigation and restoration opportunity identification. Other potential applications include: research platform, community organizing tool, highlighting local successes/challenges, as a public policy tool, and as an educational tool.
- **Map query features**: the group’s priorities for querying the map were “by completed projects or opportunities;” “by acquisition or restoration opportunity;” and “by Target Ecosystem Characteristic.” Other potential ways to search included agency or organization, watershed, block/lot, size/estimated cost, ownership. It was decided that block/lot was important to include and that that at least completed projects or opportunities and restoration/acquisition opportunity would be implemented and that the others would be considered.
- **Project or site status updates**: most groups were at least likely to use the map and update site or project status periodically. 85% of respondents would prefer to have an excel sheet or standard form to periodically fill in information but that oversight by the RWG is needed.
- **Visualization of projects**: it was decided that for sites and projects that have polygons, that there should be only polygons and that dot-points should only be used for those which do not have explicit polygon geography. Other

recommendations were to include pictures, clearly be able to see which projects are completed versus which are opportunities, and to be able to see block/lot.

Action items

- **Create procedure for updating Waters We Share Map/OASIS:** HEP staff (Kate) to work with CUNY and ACE and Parks to write up a proposed procedure for changes and updating the maps and database, and will share with RWG to review and approve.
- **Implement changes:** HEP and CUNY will work together to implement changes to the user interface between July 2015-September 2016. Data updates /editing will also occur in a similar time-frame via USACE, CUNY, HDR, and others.

- VII. **Restoring the NY-NJ Harbor Estuary** report results debrief and input discussion to inform future versions: the group discussed last year's process and the time-frame for this year.
- **Timing:** similar to the previous year, information would be collected in fall/winter of 2015 about completed projects from the previous year.
 - **Report content:** it was decided that considering that there would be less change to observe in a one-year report, that the next report should go into more detail about each Target Ecosystem Characteristic and what is working, what areas remain challenging. Content will also highlight projects/policies that support the action agenda reported on last year.

Action items

- **Review of projects for inclusion** to occur in early 2016
- **Report will be completed** in advance of the next HEP Restoration Conference so that it can be released simultaneously.

- VIII. **HEP Restoration Funds:** Kate Boicourt described some potential options for applying HEP restoration funds (approximately \$30,000), specifically on conceptual restoration design plans for restoration projects in Raritan Bay, or to continue developing the urban shorelines assessment protocol.

Action items

- **HEP will begin to develop a draft focus for the RFP for these funds,** focusing on advancing the urban shorelines assessment protocol, to be reviewed at or in advance of the next RWG meeting.

- IX. **Next HEP Restoration Conference:** the group selected April/May for the next restoration conference and decided to go over key elements of the conference at the next meeting.
- **Conference focus:** the group discussed a need to address, as well as overall progress toward restoration goals, two to three key topics: 1) progress since Sandy/how funds were spent; 2) coastal green infrastructure advances and effectiveness; and 3) ecosystem services/the human element of restored natural areas.

Action items

- **Rough draft of conference structure and foci** will be developed by HEP and discussed at the next RWG meeting.

X. **Other updates** (15 minutes)

- **New York [Statewide Action Plan](#)** release: Ken Scarlatelli encouraged all members to comment on the recent SWAP by the **July 17th deadline.**
- **Two States, One Bay Conference** – all [presentations are online](#) and a **follow-up document will be prepared by end of 2015.**
- **Urban shorelines assessment protocol and webinar date-setting:** dates were circulated and the **webinar was held in summer of 2015 and has been uploaded to the HEP website.**
- **Public Access Assessment** – Kate Boicourt gave an update on the progress for this assessment. The project is expected to be completed by January 2016, and a draft of the assessment is expected to be completed in late July/early August for Review. **Those interested should contact Kate Boicourt regarding details.**

Attendees:

Carl Alderson, NOAA

Lisa Baron (Chair), US Army Corps of Engineers

Kate Boicourt, NY-NJ Harbor & Estuary Program

John Crow, C&H Environmental

Jennifer Curran, HDR

Ariane Giudicelli, NY-NJ Harbor & Estuary Program

Bram Gunther, Natural Areas Conservancy / NYC DPR

Marit Larson, NYC Department of Parks and Recreation

Jim Lodge, Hudson River Foundation

Grace Jacob, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection

Venetia Lannon, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

Debbie Mans, New York / New Jersey Baykeeper

Jamie Ong, Natural Areas Conservancy

Andy Peck, The Nature Conservancy

Robert Pirani, NY-NJ Harbor & Estuary Program

Ken Scarlatelli, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

Dennis Toft, Chiesa, Shahinian, & Giantomasi PC

Shelly Xia, NY-NJ Harbor & Estuary Program

Steve Zahn, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation