

Tributary Connection Subcommittee of the Restoration Work Group

Chairs: Megan Lung and Laura Wildman



Meeting Minutes

www.Hudsonriver.org

Meeting, February 8, 2022

1:00 – 3:00 pm

Virtual

I. Welcome and Attendance

The group was welcomed by Isabelle Stinnette, Megan Lung, and Laura Wildman. Attendance listed below.

II. Minutes Approval and Membership

The group approved the minutes from the December meeting.

III. Priming for Infrastructure Funding: Brainstorming Discussion and Task Determination

This is the first of the actionable items that this group chose to pursue as a focus. We did a Mentimeter poll to brainstorm and then wrote tasks down in a spreadsheet in our [shared google drive](#). Important comments include:

- Concerns about match for the funding coming down the pike
- Thoughts on how to deal with the metric of river-miles, that is more challenging in our area. Need to communicate to federal funders, if you want to support urban areas, this are the changes that need to be made to the grant making system.
- Focusing on our partnerships is important, even starting with what we can offer each other amongst this group.
- For funding information from the Infrastructure law, see the White House Building America Better Guidebook https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/BUILDING-A-BETTER-AMERICA_FINAL.pdf
- NJ Environmental Justice web map: <https://njdep.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=34e507ead25b4aa5a5051dbb85e55055>
- NYC Environmental Justice web map: <https://nycdohnh.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/lookup/index.html?appid=fc9a0dc8b7564148b4079d294498a3cf>
- For those interested in the forced removal of the Lenape people: <https://www.bklynlibrary.org/calendar/lenapehoking-history-virtual-20220223>
- An example of a project in partnership with a tribe <https://www.openspaceinstitute.org/news/papscanee-island-nature-preserve-returned-to-the-stockbridge-munsee-community>

IV. Streamlining Barrier Removal Process and Improving Coordination Between Dam Removal Efforts and Dam Safety Focus: Brainstorming Discussion and Task Determination

The same process was enacted for our second item. Discussion items included:

- The need to forge relationships with State dam safety experts
- Small dams are not often regulated but still are targets for removal
- It is very hard to navigate the permitting process for barrier removal (unclear, arduous). There should be a permitting short circuit for low-head dams with non-aggravating conditions.
- NYS Dam permitting info: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/permits/6552.html>
- Is not always easy to find the correct information on dams, especially on NJ
- Link here for NYS Dam inventory: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/pubs/103459.html>

>> See the working task list for both action items here:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/167-R_OXoOYpyrSnGWSx3HjbtBfev4W2M/edit?usp=sharing&oid=101685574498392268633&rtoref=true&sd=true

V. EPA Tidal Restrictions Project

Jaclyn Woollard updated the group with a new project from the EPA Office of Wetlands, Oceans and watersheds on assessing barriers to tidal flow. A pilot project will take place in region 2. She is looking for individuals who would like to participate in this workgroup and asks that you reach out to her if you are interested: woollard.jaclyn@epa.gov.

- How does EPA's program compare to the NAACC protocols? They have been working with NAACC and do think it is possible that they could incorporate existing models.

VI. Group Updates

Save the Sound

- Hiring a new Regional Director of Ecological Restoration. See: <https://www.savethesound.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Regional-Director-of-Ecological-Restoration-FINAL.pdf>
- Applying for a dam removal feasibility study for the Bronx River, for Westchester dams, through the NYS Dam Removal Planning Grant.
- Finalizing a conceptual design for a dam removal on the Nissequogue River, (Long Island NY).

NY-NJ HEP

- Just offered three mini-grants to educators and community groups that want to conduct American eel monitoring in NJ. Scheduling a NJ Eel monitoring meetup in the spring.
- Writing an RFP for design work on new culverts/bridges in the Lower Raritan watershed through the Aquatic Connectivity for Climate Ready Infrastructure.

NYSDEC/ HR Estuary Program

Hosting a tidal and non-tidal NAACC training on Long Island in May, if anyone is interested in joining let Megan know.

USEPA

The EPA Wetland Program Development Grant, which cannot be used for implementation, could be used for other aspects of barrier removal.

Biohabitats

They have started working on Hutchinson River reservoir project.

NOAA

Nationally competitive grants from the BIL are in preparation although there is no timetable yet. They expect to have three different rounds this year and announcements should be shared here: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/grant/coastal-and-marine-habitat-restoration-grants>.

TNC/NJ Dam Removal Partnership

Working on three dam removals in the Delaware watershed, and planning for more upstream of those in engineering design.

Riverkeeper

Is disinclined to share dam removal projects in the pipeline because word gets out before community buy-in.

VII. Attendance

Laura Wildman, Biohabitats (chair)

Megan Lung, NYSDEC (chair)

Carl Alderson, NOAA

Eric Bohm, NJ Fish and Wildlife

Melissa Cohen, NYSDEC

Katie Friedman, Save the Sound

David Hsu, Montclair

George Jackman, Riverkeeper

Julie Lockwood, Rutgers

Lingard Knutson, EPA
Jamie Ong, NYC Parks
Rob Pirani, NY-NJ HEP
Isabelle Stinnette, NY-NJ HEP
Beth Styler Barry, TNC NJ
Jaclyn Woollard, EPA