

Tributary Connection Subcommittee of the Restoration Work Group

Chairs: Megan Lung and Laura Wildman



Meeting Minutes

www.Hudsonriver.org

Meeting, April 22, 2022

10:00 – 12:00 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

Minutes were approved from the February meeting.

III. Group Updates

NYSDEC/ HR Estuary Program

Hosting a tidal and non-tidal NAACC training on Long Island in May 11-12, and a non-tidal training in May 31- June 1 in New Paltz. If anyone is interested in joining, let Megan know.

Biohabitats

Organizing two fish passage/dam removal conferences out west for this coming year as well as presenting in Europe.

TNC/NJ Dam Removal Partnership

- TNC NJ developed two new graphics: “What is a dam” and “What is a waterfall” that highlight the many differences for a public audience. Isabelle emailed these to the group to use (with credit).
- Held a workshop highlighting the expected implications of the bipartisan infrastructure law from federal funders.
- Presenting to China about dam removals, also River Rally and First National Conference.

NYSDEC

Started their annual electrofishing of lakes in NYC.

NYC Parks

- Saw their first alewife coming up the Bronx River last week.
- Working on supporting language for the CRP Feasibility Study projects at the Bronx Stonemill Dam.
- Continuing to work on the research and planning on the Bronx River Dam removal project.

USEPA

- The Mid-Atlantic wetlands workgroup is meeting in MD May 10-12 if anyone is interested in joining. She is also happy to share info to the larger group on our behalf.
- The EPA Wetland Program Development Grant, cannot be used for implementation, but could be used for other aspects of barrier removal.
- Tidal restrictions project is kicking off within the next couple of months.

Save the Sound

- Applying to several grants for planning and assessment of barriers for Westchester County.
- Applying for funding for design of the first dam on Blind Brook. Working with a local high school, who is monitoring.
- Connecting with Westchester County who is looking at their dams on the Bronx River.
- They have funding to work on EDNA studies with regards to aquatic barriers on the Bronx River and are open to suggestions of other sites in the harbor if they are able to get more funding.

NY-NJ HEP

- Supporting congressional legislation for the next set of projects for the HRE CRP feasibility study.
- Holding an NJ Eel monitoring event on May 18 in Liberty State Park.
- Preparing for a new season of monitoring culverts in the Lower Raritan watershed in partnership with Rutgers. Fact-sheets are available for the first six watersheds here: <https://www.hudsonriver.org/article/actcri>

USACE

The network for engineering with Nature has started a new project looking at barrier removal within military installations.

IV. Open Grants for Barrier Removal

The chairs and Isabelle put together a rough list of open grants that could be used for barrier removal. These were reviewed and other grants were suggested. The group decided that all grants should go on the list even if they do not have RFP's out yet.

- FEMA funding for high hazard dams in particular was mentioned, and Katie referenced that there is a dam on the Mamaroneck that is a high hazard dam that the municipality is being encouraged to remove.
- Kyle said that his division of the USACE might be available for technical assistance with the grant proposals or projects.

- Everyone is encouraged to add to this list. See here:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/13mWHAPvzKq6-A2wUUu1YWDVE_rf85Vi2RpPDuenXElo/edit#

V. Priming for Infrastructure Funding: Task Determination and Role Assignment

Megan updated our tasks table for our two action items. Here:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/167-R_OXoOYpyrSnGWSx3HjbtBfev4W2M/edit#gid=1665080857

2. Partnership: To accomplish the first task, a document was created to focus on creating partnerships within this group. The document is a place to list where our expertise is and what we need from partners. Following participation, the chairs will review the entries for matchmaking opportunities.
 - Lingard offered EPA's help in determining EJ concerns (EJ screen or justice 40) with respect to grant applications, likely to be key for BIL funding.
 - All group members should please contribute to this document by **Wednesday, May 11, COB.**
<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1P5MUqELWKzkgozFYrlwVvA7Q76sli23lgXYpNRuX0s/edit?usp=sharing>
3. Communicating the challenges of NY/NJ based projects (high cost, lower stream mileage) to federal funders and the public. Jackie suggested a cost analysis that we could prepare for federal funders outlining the higher cost of restoration in our region as well as the increased benefits because of the population density. Group members outlined resources that could be used for this analysis (listed in the tracking table) and it was decided that maybe the group could ask USACE to work on this analysis per Kyle's earlier suggestion. Jackie, Lingard, Kyle, George, Rob, Megan and Katie will work on a pitch for the USACE and others are welcome to join this group.
4. The group decided that an additional outreach letter was needed to go to federal funders prior to the potential cost analysis that tackles issues with application processes. For example, the need for preapproval letters and lower match requirements. Katie agreed to draft this letter with editing and support from the group. This letter would be sent from our group as a whole to federal funders.

- See Katie's draft letter linked below. Comments and edits are due by x/xx/22.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/11j_iATDjMtOBqXFX6bk-Z5OB-8fRYItVB57dRh6MF6I/edit?usp=sharing

5. Attendance

Laura Wildman, Biohabitats (chair)
Megan Lung, Hudson River Estuary Program/NYSDEC (chair)
Melissa Cohen, NYSDEC
Katie Friedman, Save the Sound
Marit Larson, NYC Parks
Sophie Killy, USACE
Lingard Knutson, EPA
Kyle McKay, USACE
Rob Pirani, NY-NJ HEP
Isabelle Stinnette, NY-NJ HEP
Beth Styler Barry, TNC NJ
Jaclyn Woollard, EPA