



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

of the New York – New Jersey Harbor & Estuary Program
*Co-Chairs: Lisa Baron (Army Corps of Engineers),
Marit Larson (NYC Parks)*

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Meeting, March 12, 2018

17 Battery Place
Suite 915
10:00 – 1:00

- I. **Welcome and minutes from last meeting:** minutes from last meeting were approved and can be found on the HEP website.
- II. **Introductions and Updates (attendance at the end of this document):**

NJDEP

- NJDEP has a new Commissioner (Catherine McCabe) and Deputy Commissioner (Debbie Mans), both of which have worked closely with HEP in the past. Debbie has been a member of the RWG for years and was co-chair of the Oyster Restoration work group.
- As part of their Operations and Maintenance Toolkit development, there is a webinar scheduled in April designed for stormwater professionals. Reach out to Alexis Taylor (Alexis.Taylor@dep.nj.gov) for more information.
- NJDEP has signed an MOE with USACE for the Liberty State Park salt marsh project.
- Weston Mill Dam: continued monitoring following dam removal.

Judy Weiss (Rutgers)

- Studying the ecosystem service provided by phragmites and participating in plastic free waters efforts.

USFWS

- In the process of updating their white paper on the recontamination risk of salt marsh restoration with additional data.
- Providing comments on Tottenville, Living Breakwaters project and Hackensack Meadowlands HUD proposals as well as offshore drilling proposals in NJ.
- Participated in the ground breaking of the Saw Mill Creek Mitigation Bank on Staten Island.

NY-NJ HEP

- Finishing final Action Agenda and State of the Estuary Reports for final release in the fall of 2018. The annual HEP conference will be moved to the fall to celebrate the release of these documents.

NYSDEC

- James MacDonald was introduced to the group. He may be taking over some of the RWG responsibilities from Susan Maresca.
- DEC has completed a conceptual design of the Masbeth Creek (Newtown Creek trib) living shoreline. They are awaiting progress on the Superfund cleanup design prior to implementing next steps.

NYC Parks

- Saw Mill Creek mitigation bank opening
- Participated in RPA's New Shoreline Working Group discussing technical, regulatory, planning responses to changing wetland extent.
- NYC Mayor's Office doing some preliminary exploration of potential feasibility, of buy-out program as one tool in long-term resiliency planning efforts.
- NYC Parks is looking for comments from the RWG on their Salt Marsh Monitoring and Design Guidelines.

NYCDEP

- Head of the Bay oyster project in Jamaica Bay. They saw no recruitment of oysters last year but still hope to this summer. The project is slated to end at the end of 2018.
- Working on a project at Alley Creek measuring wetlands ability to remove pathogens from the water column.
- The State of the Bay conference will be held this fall.
- Floating wetlands project was destroyed last winter by a failure of some of the materials to cope with repetitive wave and tidal motions.

NOAA

- Designing an alternative fish passage for the Island Farm Weir following their monitoring of the current fish passage.
- Working as the federal partner for the Liberty State Park salt marsh restoration.
- Reviewing proposals for resiliency grants.

Audubon (Susan Elbin via email)

- Annual Harbor Heron's meeting took place in December. All presentations are available through HEP (contact Isabelle).

USACE (From Lisa Baron via email)

- HRE Feasibility Study: Agency Decision Milestone (ADM) is scheduled for 29 March 2018 to verify the Tentatively Selected Plan proposed in the Draft Feasibility Report/ Environmental Assessment that was released February 24, 2017. The ASA(CW) and Chief of Civil Works for HQ participate in the Senior Leader Panel at the ADM meeting. Non-Federal sponsors including NYSDEC, NYCDEP, NYC Parks plan to participate (in addition to possible participation by NJDEP and PANYNJ).

- Spring Creek South: Detailed designs have been prepared and provided to USACE, NYSDEC and NPS on 9 March 2018 for review in preparation for planned release of the Environmental Assessment in April. The detailed designs and EA will be provided to FEMA to meet NYSDEC deadline of June 2018 for Phase 1 approval.
- Spring Creek North: Final Feasibility Report/Environmental Assessment was approved by the USACE North Atlantic Division (verbal last week- formal week of 12 March). Draft Project Partnership Agreement package with NYC Parks for completion of Preconstruction Engineering Design (PED) and Implementation Phase is due to NAD submittal 16 March 2018.
- Liberty State Park Restoration: Agreements have been executed to advance project with NJDEP through USACE Interagency International Services Program. USACE still awaiting funds to initiate and complete designs/plans and specs with NJDEP.
- Hudson River Habitat Restoration Feasibility Study: A total of 13 sites were investigated during Field Reconnaissance in September and December 2017. Sites were prioritized and screened further to identify 8 sites for further feasibility evaluation including 2 Aquatic Organism Passage sites (Moodna and Rondout Creek); 3 Shoreline restoration sites (Henry Hudson Park, Charles Rider Park, Albany Shoreline); and 3 Mosaic Sites (Schodack Island, Binnen Kill and Rattlesnake Island). Sites will be evaluated including: 1) baseline conditions this spring, 2) development of restoration alternatives; 3) calculation of benefits (using Evaluation of Planned Wetlands, Habitat Suitability Indices and Fish Passage Assessment tools); 4) estimation of costs; and 5) cost effectiveness and incremental cost analysis (CE/ICA). The Tentatively Selected Plan is planned for fall of 2018 with release of Draft Feasibility Report/Environmental Assessment end of 2018.

iii. **Shorelines and Shallows Target Ecosystem Characteristics**

Marit led the group in a discussion on our strategies to advance our understanding of shorelines and shallows. We will address as a group the following needs:

- 1) Better characterization of the target ecological parameters, metrics, and functions that constitute a healthy shoreline and shallow environment.
- 2) Better understanding of what design and restoration strategies improve ecological condition and function.
- 3) Better characterization of the extent and location of shoreline and shallows types where there are restoration opportunities or opportunities for intervention in design/development to improve ecological function.

We will do so by contributing to and building off existing efforts including the Natural and Nature Based Feature (NNBF) Monitoring Framework Development project led by the Science and Resiliency Institute at Jamaica Bay (SRIJB) and the WEDG design guidelines created by the Waterfront Alliance.

Comments from the group included:

- How does our effort tie in with EDC's raising the shorelines effort? Is there an opportunity to influence their design?
- EDC is inventorying regularly for their Waterfront Facilities Maintenance Database. We could potentially ask them to add new parameters to monitor.

- The Port Authority is open to doing more monitoring on their properties and may have funds to do so.

Action items

- **Create a shorelines and shallows subgroup that can dig deeper/narrow the focus of the Monitoring NNBF project following the workshops. Please contact Isabelle to volunteer for this subgroup.**
- **RWG should fill out list of shorelines sites they know about so we can have a complete inventory of projects.**
- **Isabelle will start compiling/summarizing the state of our shoreline resource inventory.**
- **Isabelle will follow up with Waterfront Alliance, Sustainable Shorelines Project, and Brooklyn Bridge Park/SeaArc? about presenting at upcoming meetings.**

iv. Measuring success: monitoring nature-based shoreline features in New York State

Jessica Fain from the Science and Resiliency Institute at Jamaica Bay presented on the project that she is managing and that HEP and several other RWG members are participating. The goal of the project is to create a monitoring framework that cuts across different nature based shoreline types as well as regions of NY.

- Jessica will follow up with HEP following the technical workgroup meeting for this project to see if there is anywhere the RWG can add value to these efforts.

v. Update on the NJ Rebuild by Design Projects

Clay Sherman from the NJDEP presented on the Hudson River project centered in Hoboken. The project includes a resist structure that is not waterfront aligned and contains a large number of gates as well as green-grey bioswales that can capture and hold stormwater. NJDEP has received the \$230 million needed to cover the completion of the resist structure. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-JJGpmDdTT4>

Alexis Taylor presented on the NJ Meadowlands project that includes a floodwall along parts of the Hackensack and increased/improved stormwater conveyances. The project involves a small wetland restoration and an aboveground channel revegetation. The group noted that the expansion of the Teterboro airport could affect this project.

Attendees:

Marit Larson, (Chair) NYC Parks
 Carl Alderson, NOAA (by phone)
 Jessica Fain, SRIJB – guest
 Ross Feltes, NJSEA
 John King, NJDEP (by phone)
 Grace Jacob, NJDEP (by phone)

James MacDonald, NYSDEC
 Susan Maresca, NYSDEC
 Steve Mars, USFWS
 John McLaughlin, NYCDEP
 Daniel Montella, USEPA (by phone)
 Robert Pirani, NY-NJ HEP
 Ken Scarlatelli, NYSDEC
 Clay Sherman, NJDEP
 Isabelle Stinnette, NY-NJ HEP
 Alexis Taylor, NJDEP – guest
 Judith Weis, Rutgers University
 Rick Winfield, USEPA

ACTION AGENDA TRACKING REPORT

Action ID	Action	Start Date	Complete, In-process, Planned	Responsible party
H-A-1	Increase investment in conservation and restoration projects.	01/01/18		
H-A-2	Evaluate ways to reduce costs of restoration.	10/01/17		
			Create a hub for recruiting restoration volunteers/citizen scientists – HEP CAC is proceeding towards this project	CAC
H-A-3	Document value of ecosystem services delivered through restoration for decision makers.	04/03/17		
			HEP and the Hudson River Foundation hosted a small workshop (7/27/17) with environmental economists from Resources for the Future to discuss Ecosystem service evaluation in the NY-NJ Harbor region	HEP + HRF
H-A-4	Create a decision making tool for prioritization of restoration opportunities.	07/05/17		
			Have a discussion with the RWG on what we would like to see for a prioritization tool	RWG
H-B-1	Share research and best practices among partners.	04/03/17		
			Restoration Work Group meeting 3/29/17	RWG
			2016 Restoration Progress Report	ILS
			Create State of the Estuary Report	ILS

Action ID	Action	Start Date	Complete, In-process, Planned	Responsible party
			State of the Estuary Conference 5/23/17	ILS
			Update CRP tracking website	ILS
			Restoration Work Group meeting 7/26/17	RWG
			RWG assisted HEP with gathering restoration, acquisition and leveraging data for NEPORT (EPA reporting)	RWG
			Restoration Work Group meeting 10/30/17	RWG
			HEP CAC is planning to have a citizen science conference early 2018	CAC
			Restoration Work Group meeting 3/12/18	RWG
H-B-2	Assess and interpret shoreline and shallow-water habitat condition and value.	04/03/17		
			RWG has scoped its efforts and is proceeding with actions as outlined in the minutes	RWG
			Compiling data to better understand our shoreline conditions and opportunities.	ILS
			HEP has contracted with a researcher to sample the benthic community structure within and adjacent to pile fields.	ILS
H-B-3	Understand the risks of recontamination of restored sites.	06/01/18		
			Going to start planning a workshop to discuss this issue	RWG
			Invited US Fish and Wildlife Service to be a member of the RWG	RWG
H-C-1	Increase support for monitoring and consistency among metrics.	04/03/17		
			HEP is participating in a project led by the SRIJB to discuss monitoring of NNBFs	ILS
			HEP is advising the Hudson River Sustainable shorelines project and has offered to help in its next stages	ILS
H-C-2	Synthesize existing monitoring data to better understand and communicate trends.	01/01/18		
			HEP is collecting monitoring data as part of the State of the Estuary Report research	ILS

Action ID	Action	Start Date	Complete, In-process, Planned	Responsible party
			HEP will create an Environmental Monitoring Plan interactive website showing metadata for monitoring and providing links.	WQ mgr.
H-D-1	Incorporate sea level rise into restoration and management practices.	12/30/17		
			HEP has drafted a climate vulnerability report	RP
			HEP is working with RPA on a project to identify wetland migration pathways	ILS
			Analysis planned for CRP sites recommended in the Draft HRE Feasibility Report	USACE
H-D-2	Advance conservation and restoration planning for properties eligible or already acquired through flood plain/buyout programs.	10/03/17		
			Have States come into RWG meeting to discuss plans/status	RWG