

# Hudson & Harbor Educators Meeting

April 28, 2021

## Attendees

1. Rachel Aronson, Freshkills Park Alliance, [aronson@freshkillspark.org](mailto:aronson@freshkillspark.org)
2. Elizabeth Balladares, HEP, [eballadares@hudsonriver.org](mailto:eballadares@hudsonriver.org)
3. Lisa Bloodgood, Newtown Creek Alliance
4. Jennifer Bombardier, Lower East Side Ecology Center, [jennifer@leseecologycenter.org](mailto:jennifer@leseecologycenter.org)
5. Chris Bowser, NYSDEC Hudson River Estuary Program
6. Eli Caref, SLC CURB, [ecaref@sarahlawrence.edu](mailto:ecaref@sarahlawrence.edu)
7. Hugh Carola, Hackensack Riverkeeper, [hugh@hackensackriverkeeper.org](mailto:hugh@hackensackriverkeeper.org)
8. Rosana Da Silva, HRF/HEP, [Rosana@hudsonriver.org](mailto:Rosana@hudsonriver.org)
9. Jerel Ezell, Cornell University, [jme246@cornell.edu](mailto:jme246@cornell.edu)
10. Margaret Flanagan, Waterfront Alliance
11. Ann Fraioli, Billion Oyster Project, [afraioli@nyharbor.org](mailto:afraioli@nyharbor.org)
12. Toland Kister, Hudson River Park, [tkister@hrpt.ny.gov](mailto:tkister@hrpt.ny.gov)
13. Anna Koskol, Hudson River Park, [akoskol@hrpt.ny.gov](mailto:akoskol@hrpt.ny.gov)
14. Annie Lederberg, Billion Oyster Project
15. MaryLynne Malone, NYSOEA, [malone@highlands.com](mailto:malone@highlands.com)
16. Sarah Mount, NYSDEC Hudson River Research Reserve, [sarah.mount@dec.ny.gov](mailto:sarah.mount@dec.ny.gov)
17. Olivia Radick, Hudson River Park, [oradick@hrpt.ny.gov](mailto:oradick@hrpt.ny.gov)
18. Kristin Schreiber, Billion Oyster Project, [kschreiber@nyharbor.org](mailto:kschreiber@nyharbor.org)
19. Ciara Scully and Tiffany, Shirley Chisholm State Park, [Ciara.scully@parks.ny.gov](mailto:Ciara.scully@parks.ny.gov)
20. Shino Tanikawa, NYC Soil & Water Conservation District
21. Christina Tobitsch, Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservancy, [ctobitsch@bbpc.net](mailto:ctobitsch@bbpc.net)
22. Margie Turrin, LEDO, [mkt@ldeo.columbia.edu](mailto:mkt@ldeo.columbia.edu)
23. Tina Walsh, Hudson River Park
24. Steve Wong, NYSDEC, [steven.wong@dec.ny.gov](mailto:steven.wong@dec.ny.gov)
25. Laurel Zaima, Lamont Doherty Earth Observatory, [lzaima@ldeo.columbia.edu](mailto:lzaima@ldeo.columbia.edu)

## Program Updates

### DEIJ subcommittee

Rosana Da Silva shared that the DEIJ Subcommittee had developed and released a survey to better understand the challenges and opportunities within the estuary. The survey covers educational programs, internships, mentorships, and training needs. The subcommittee, led by Tanasia Swift, has been working to refine the Safe Space Commitment that encourages organizations and staff to be proactive in creating an atmosphere where the safety and comfort of Black, Indigenous, and people of color is valued. Eli Caref clarified the need and purpose of the letter, which really focuses on rejecting discriminatory, derogatory and violent language, behaviors, apparel, and actions at our centers, field sites, and other physical spaces/places. Hugh Carola added that he has been working with the NJ Land Conservation Rally where the safe space commitment would be a great place to share the commitment with educational centers and land stewards in NJ through either a round table or panel discussion. Lisa Bloodgood indicated she shared the concept and Tanisia Swift's email with some folks from the Parks and the Open Space

Partnership, a citywide coalition of parks/open space groups, who are looking for templates that could help provide a basis for code of conduct/non-discrimination language for their sites.

### HEP Tag Board

Liz Balladares provided an update on the Citizen Advisory Committee who had conducted a citizen science survey and identified ways to strengthen citizen science efforts. HEP utilized a social media aggregator to address the need to connect motivated individuals to join the efforts of the various citizen science programs across the estuary. The aggregator takes multiple posts that utilizes a specific hashtag and puts them all in one place. Anyone is welcomed to use the hashtag by following these guidelines: (1) the name of your group/organization; (2) include #NYNJCitizenScience and #NYNJCommunityScience in your social media post; (3) include a captivating image related to your citizen science program(s); (4) include a short description or summary of your available citizen science volunteer opportunities; and (5) link to a signup page or contact information regarding where a volunteer can sign up. The website to view all the posts using the hashtag can be viewed here: <https://www.hudsonriver.org/article/citizen-science>. During the height of the pandemic, HEP partnered with the Lower Hudson Partnership to use the aggregator to share COVID-safe engagement protocols and resource folders to help everyone who were planning to work with volunteers by using #COVIDSafeEngagement. Laurel Zaima added that the map is great to showcase all of the work happening and asked if she used the hashtag whether it would populate in the map. Liz clarified that the social media post would be posted on the page below, but as a second step, HEP would place that information onto the map. Lisa Bloodgood added that the goal of the map was to help volunteers learn more about an organization and that there are a number of organizations that they could volunteer at. Anyone with questions should contact Liz directly at [eballadares@hudsonriver.org](mailto:eballadares@hudsonriver.org).

### Hudson River Estuary Program (Grants, DITL, Great Fish Count)

Chris Bowser shared that Saturday, July 31<sup>st</sup> the great Hudson fish count will be held and if you are interested in any fish work, please contact Chris. DEC is seeking to capture a snapshot of what's being caught up and down the Hudson and Harbor. In partnership with LDEO, the Day in the Life will take place on October 14<sup>th</sup>! Laurel and others are working to get everyone's data. They are hopeful that those groups and schools that may conduct some in-person sampling, it would be great to get your data, but if not in person then instead we would like to do one video instead of three for some asynchronous learning. A couple of virtual and in person trainings will be scheduled for later this year. Chris also indicated that he will be teaching a pre-college class over the summer and may have some resources to support virtual field trips (~20 students) in mid to late July. Please reach out if you would like to work together with Chris. There are several education grants available (due June 2), and available on DEC's website: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5091.html>. Chris also has been connecting with Cornell researchers and if anyone finds a researcher that has some parallel interests, please let him know and he may be able to make an introduction to connect this group with researchers.

### Virtual Environmental Education Expo May 13

Tina Walsh shared that rather than an in-person event, this year the annual Environmental Education expo will be held virtually on May 13<sup>th</sup>. For information please click here: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/17Jxi0y2jUjvsPpTILQU\\_t0TLb3OFRNnS/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/17Jxi0y2jUjvsPpTILQU_t0TLb3OFRNnS/view?usp=sharing). Shino Tanikawa indicated that they will be using Zoom and breakout rooms as an exhibition hall. If you haven't signed up, please feel free to email Shino directly. This is open to all NYC educators and will be featuring organizations that have develop digital and online resources. It is likely that remote learning will continue

in some kind of capacity into next. The event will be similar to a speed dating format where every 12 minutes attendees will move around to new breakout rooms with a goal of 4/5 rotations. Please share the tinyurl link and flyer with teachers and educators to sign up: [tinyurl.com/NYCOutdoors21](https://tinyurl.com/NYCOutdoors21). Shino's email is [shino@nycswcd.net](mailto:shino@nycswcd.net).

## Cornell Researcher: Jerel Ezell

Chris Bowser introduced Jerel Ezell, a professor on African studies, general social science, and humanities at Cornell. Jerel's most recent work has been on Flint, MI, where he is from, and recently received a grant to look at all the NYC boroughs to collect data on Black and Latino youth and their tap water consumption behaviors and general beliefs on tap water. This work will be conducted through surveys, interviews, and focus groups. Jerel also plans to speak to stakeholders, NYS more broadly, who is drinking tap water and where are the intervention points to improve some of the uptake behavior. Most of the data will be student collect and he is looking for partners in the city. Jerel indicated interest to attend the next meeting where he would love to present on his proposal, approach, and where can this work bring benefits to these underserved communities. Feel free to email Jerel directly at [jme246@cornell.edu](mailto:jme246@cornell.edu). Eli Caref indicated that the Watershed Agricultural Council could be a really good partner and loved the goal of this research project.

## Working Group 2021 Focus Discussion

Tina Walsh opened the discussion for the group on how do we want to maximize our time and future Harbor Educator meetings. Tina launched a live poll asking, based on our original needs assessment survey, which of the six areas are you most interested in this group focusing efforts on. 44% indicated Collective Impact with the most interested followed by Sharing Best Practices at 25%, and Networking/Partnerships at 13%. Shino Tanikawa added that in recognizing the pandemic has impacted underserved communities the most, can we more explicitly focus on diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice? How can we support students with the greatest need? Annie Lederberg agreed.

## Sharing Best Practices

Tina Walsh opened the discussion on sharing best practices. Eli Caref indicated that during the pandemic, she has felt that she has been working within a vacuum where she has received less feedback and unclear as to whether her lessons are working or not. Recognizing that all teachers have had a challenging year, it has been hard to get a hold of them. MaryLynne Malone agreed. Chris Bowser also agreed. He added he liked to hear what everyone is doing but hasn't learned how people are approaching hybrid learning. Our programs are facing new difficulties, but also new opportunities of who we can reach with our programs.

Tina Walsh asked what does that look like in how we are sharing best practices. Do we invite other organizations to trouble shoot or more focus on developing lessons? Margie Turrin added that she would like to see how everyone is tackling the same thing but in a different way. It would also be nice to know that we don't have to do everything and have a better understanding of who is really good at what. Eli Caref liked the idea of sharing remote practices with each other even more than lessons. MaryLynne Malone added it would be great to know how many programs meet with some students virtually. Are there interactive things you developed that are working or do you need information from somewhere else? Eli added she had worked on an entire lesson in Spanish and does not think it has been used. She continues to struggle with people using their content.

Chris Bowser asked, on the technical end, whether there are any tools, methods, programs, that we as a group would like to get a training on? MaryLynne Malone indicated Edpuzzle and Google sites. Rosana Da Silva indicated that Lisa Bloodwork had worked on tool to develop virtual field trips. Margie Turrin added that anything tech base would be great but cautioned that every laptop is different and a component of tech help of the platform and typical glitches to work around it would also be helpful. Eli Caref added that it would be great to hear if people have used certain platforms or methods that actually worked or didn't work.

Shino Tanikawa shared that one of the big focuses in the coming year is the social and emotional need of the kids. There will be a need for a lot of healing from this trauma and the historically marginalize students will have more trauma. Shino would be interested in creating a virtual program that uses nature as a healing factor. She shared it would be great if this group could think about how to use the environment for healing purposes and not just content delivery. Ciara Scully added that one of their patrons is a school social worker and get students to come back to the park. It would be interested if anyone has ideas in how to put this into practice. They do have an open pool of funding that you can request from to get students to parks (usually used to cover bussing): <https://www.parks.ny.gov/environment/connect-kids.aspx>. Ciara added if anyone has more specific questions about connecting kids to parks, please email her at [ciara.scully@parks.ny.gov](mailto:ciara.scully@parks.ny.gov). Tina Walsh agreed, busing is a challenge. Chris Bowser added that we could simply consider starting lessons by closing our eyes for 2 minutes and asking what do you hear, what do you smell, what do you feel? Shino agreed and added that it is perfectly okay to just sit there and be. We don't need to pack the lessons with activities for every minute and should give space for moments that are not programmed. Jennifer Bombardier and Hugh Carola agreed. MaryLynne Malone is interested in the Social Emotional program development. Jerel Ezell added that he has been thinking about ways to measure the (long term) impact of the healing. Eli Caref added that she had just listened to a podcast in the abolitionist teaching network's episode on social emotional learning: <https://abolitionistteachingnetwork.org/podcast>. Tina Walsh added that you can have passive activities along the river while still being engaged in a program such as fishing or kayaking.

### Collective Impact

Margie Turin asked what the frame of reference for collective impact is for this group. Recognize that there was a Stanford article on this, but not sure how this was framed for this group. Tina Walsh and Rosana Da Silva answered that the goal of collective impact was to be able to identify similar metrics that we could share amongst ourselves to highlight the importance of everyone's work. This could then be used to help support these groups and seek additional funding sources.

Eli Caref added that qualitative impact may also be helpful in recognizing that teachers are overworked, it is harder to get feedback regarding the use of our materials. Tina Walsh added that maybe we can tap into the community, going to the DOE from the STEM departments, and invite folks to tell us what teachers need, how you are seeing the fall rolling out and how can our organizations help. Shino Tanikawa indicated that NYC DOE is having a virtual conference this summer and is anticipating ~600 teachers to participate.

Margie Turrin indicated that sharing tips for field work would be helpful given that every district will be different. Chris Bowser indicated that Sarah Mount had similar safety concerns for field work and has been working with a smaller set of folks. Sarah shared they were able to have four students participate while keeping distance, but happy to share the COVID-safety plan. Eli Caref and Shino Tanikawa asked to see

the plan. Tina Walsh added that HRPT has also had small student pod groups come through the park and will soon have a class of 30 in the park to see if they can figure out how this will work out. Anna Koskol indicated that public schools are holding in person and virtual classes, but largely these groups are 12 students rather than 35. Eli Caref added she loves the idea of a smaller class, but again that leaves out a whole section of students which begs the question of equity again.

Hugh Carola reflected that his thought around collective impact is that we need to get stuff done and benefiting people where they are. Eli Caref and Ciara Scully asked if anyone had any success figuring out individual impact. MaryLynne Malone indicated that google sites and YouTube have analytics formulas that you can access. Eli agreed that those help to quantify how many times videos have been watched but that she wants to go a little deeper with teachers to see how helpful the whole module is.

## Other Upcoming Dates/Announcements

Liz Balladares shared City of Water Day 2021 will be held on Saturday July 10th! We're looking forward to having a number of the partners today join us this year in hosting an IYN (In Your Neighborhood) events. Any questions about COW Day or the Citizen Science platform please reach out at [eballadares@hudsonriver.org](mailto:eballadares@hudsonriver.org).

Ann Fraioli shared that BOP's annual (virtual) symposium, where we ask students to submit projects, is seeking adult project reviewers which is very important for our pedagogy. If anyone is interested in participating, up to a 2-hour commitment, please visit this link: <https://www.billionoysterproject.org/symposium>. Annie Lederberg shared that the RSVP form to be a Guest Reviewer can be accessed here: <https://forms.gle/PA9VvV11reThSvxN6>. Annie thanked everyone in advance for volunteering as so many of you have done such wonderful work with students in years past. BOP are looking forward to working with you again, and to working with folks who are new to the Symposium! Anyone interested to sign up to be a guest project reviewer, please visit: [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdMo7LOyyqw7Vv\\_sJlzO8u6rb2fPArfMAGMHctxaPsnO79SRQ/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdMo7LOyyqw7Vv_sJlzO8u6rb2fPArfMAGMHctxaPsnO79SRQ/viewform)

Maggie Flanagan shared that Waterfront Alliance is partnering with BOP to provide some teacher professional development opportunities via Zoom. Maggie shared the flyer and encouraged everyone to share the flyer particularly for anyone in Manhattan, Staten Island, and Brooklyn: <https://waterfrontalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/EE-PD-flyer.pdf>

Hugh Carola shared that on May 1<sup>st</sup>, the Hackensack Riverkeeper will be starting up their eco tours again at a limited capacity. They can arrange for up to 7 adults on the vessel. Please reach out to Hugh if interested in participating.

## Next Steps:

Next meeting will be held in August. Eli Caref asked if it would be possible at the next meeting maybe to share out some of these successes/challenges, round robin style. We will continue to host these virtually and in the future consider how we may want to continue to include virtual meetings.