



# RESTORATION WORK GROUP

Co-Chairs: Lisa Baron (Army Corps of Engineers),  
Marit Larson (NYC Parks)

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**Meeting, March 23, 2021**

**9:00 – 12:30**

**Virtual**

**I. Welcome/Attendance**

Attendance is at the end of this document.

**II. Minutes**

Approved minutes from the last meeting in December 2020.

**III. HEP Aquatic Connectivity Through Climate Ready Infrastructure Update**

Isabelle Stinnette updated the group on the latest results from the upper Passaic subwatershed assessed in partnership with the Great Swamp Watershed Association. HEP is the recipient of a Coastal Watershed Grant administered by Restore Americas Estuaries and EPA. Through this project, HEP will partner with the Rutgers Raritan River Consortium to assess over 350 culverts and bridges on the lower Raritan and South Rivers.

**IV. Recontamination Action Agenda Item Survey and Discussion**

The group discussed the outstanding action agenda item on recontamination threat and made progress towards determining next steps. The group walked through the responses to a survey created by the Chairs regarding what each agency is already doing to prevent and monitor recontamination.

- Many members expressed concern about the recontamination threat halting restoration projects or the ability to protect natural areas from development pressure, as well as how to make the decisions about scaling back restoration because of contamination issues.
- Isabelle will compile the results of the survey as well as the discussion into a document for discussion on next steps. A subgroup of individuals focused on this issue may be created.

**V. Beneficial Reuse Of Dredge Material; South NJ Examples and Discussion**

The group continued its discussion about the beneficial use of dredge material for restoration, related to the proposed harbor deepening. Scott Douglas (NJDOT) and Jacklyn Woollard presented on several projects that they have been involved within South NJ using dredge material. The presentation included, project types, lessons learned, adaptive management and monitoring.

Discussion points included:

- The project should start with identifiable goals based on scientific analysis. For example, not every unvegetated spot in a marsh needs filling.
  - The lessons learned document should be available for release from the NJDEP this month.
  - One potential issue with putting dredge material on a marsh that they witnessed is die out due to higher salinity in the dredge material.
  - Limit containment material, it proved to be problematic.
  - Do not expect to see immediate results. The marsh can look pretty bad for a few years before the vegetation responds.
  - They have created some intertidal rock sills with dredged rock material but they do not have much data on how that it performing yet. They have not placed many rock sills as rock is less appropriate for the marsh flats of Jersey Shore, whereas it may be more appropriate for HEP's geography.
- Restoration work group members have also selected potential restoration projects to use the dredge material in a document available here:  
[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1A\\_GirvSd7KJN2EL7ANZVSAYgBEap2dn1d5GvpumlcfA/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1A_GirvSd7KJN2EL7ANZVSAYgBEap2dn1d5GvpumlcfA/edit?usp=sharing)

#### **VI. NYC Wetlands Management Framework**

Marit Larson walked the group through an overview of NYC Park's new wetland management framework. The report includes the methodology they are using to manage their marshes that gauges health and threat to ultimately break the marshes down into those to protect, manage or restore. The report will be released mid-April and NYC Parks is scheduling an upcoming interdisciplinary workshop with practitioners to discuss approaches, challenges, and potential collaborations to implement the plan.

#### **VII. CRP Restoration Activity Map Update**

Isabelle updated the group on the progress to create a new version of the restoration activity map. HEP has contracted with our ongoing partners at Pratt to help us develop a new map that is easier to keep current. Many members of the group have participated in reviewing CRP site opportunities for errors or updates. We hope to have the data ready by May to produce the final map in September.

#### **IX. RWG Member Updates**

##### USEPA

After the administration turnover, EPA will be reviewing the 401 Water Quality Certification Rule and the Navigable Waters Protection Rule for CWA 404 jurisdiction. No word on next steps yet but we will keep you updated as we can.

##### USACE

- Currently working on FY23 budgeting process to request the first group of new phase Preconstruction Engineering Design (PED) HRE projects authorized in WRDA 2020 including Stony Creek Marsh Island, Bronx River/Bronx Zoo and Stone Mill Dams, Naval station Earle oysters, and Flushing Creek.

- Going to have a virtual harbor Inspection April 27, 2021. Let Lisa know if you have not received an invitation.
- About to award a Task Order for Spring Creek North to finish engineering and design phase for construction in late 2022.

#### BOP

- BOP is making materials for a large installation for the Hudson River Park Trust aquatic restoration project in Tribeca, including 80 gabions and reef-balls. They will be producing these and installing them this summer.
- There is a NYS shellfish restoration council meeting on Thursday, discussing the NYS shellfish restoration plan.

#### NJDEP

NJDEP is advancing to 60% design on Liberty State Park and ramping up their public outreach. The hot button issues have been contamination and inclusion of active recreation in the design. The conversation on active recreation is ongoing with a second public survey currently in circulation.

#### NYC Parks

- Completed their first in-house installation of intertidal oyster castles in Little Neck Bay to prevent salt marsh loss. Had no idea how difficult it would be. Sediment placement will be the next step.
- Marit suggests that the RWG puts together a card for Steve Zahn who is retiring in April. Lisa notes that they will do a small tribute at the virtual harbor inspection and that Susan Maresca should be our contact for all things restoration in the future.

#### NYC Audubon

NYC Audubon has a new Director of Conservation Science (Susan Elbin's position). Kevin Burgio was on this call and Kaitlin and Kevin will decide which of them will continue to represent at future RWG meetings.

### **X. Attendance (all virtual via webinar)**

Lisa Baron, (chair), USACE  
 Marit Larson, (chair) NYC Parks  
 Carl Alderson, NOAA  
 Stephanie Andreescu (guest), USEPA  
 Kevin Burgio (guest), NYC Audubon  
 Elizabeth Butler (guest), USEPA  
 Rosana Da Silva, HEP  
 Terry Doss, NJSEA  
 Scott Douglas (guest), NJDOT  
 Marco Finocchiaro, USEPA  
 Allison Fitzgerald (guest), NJ City University  
 Caitlin Frame, NYSDEC  
 John King, NJDEP  
 Lingard Knutson, USEPA  
 Jim Lodge, HRF

Susan Maresca, NYSDEC  
Katie Mosher, BOP  
Kaitlyn Parkins, NYC Audubon  
Patricia Pechko (guest), USEPA  
Robert Pirani, NY-NJ HEP  
Mark Reiss (guest), USEPA  
Seika Robinson (guest) USEPA  
Eric Schrading, USFWS  
Clay Sherman, NJDEP  
Isabelle Stinnette, NY-NJ HEP  
Judith Weis, Rutgers and STAC  
Jaclyn Woollard, USEPA  
Adrianna Zito-Livingston (guest), TNC NJ