



RESTORATION WORK GROUP

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

www.hudsonriver.org/estuary-program

Meeting, June 25, 2021

9:00 – 12:00

Virtual

I. Icebreaker Poll

Isabelle presented a quick poll on how folks felt about having an in-person meeting in the fall. The highest ranked option was to have both an in-person and virtual option, followed by an interest in being in person.

II. Welcome/Attendance

Attendance is at the end of this document.

III. Minutes

Approved minutes from the last meeting in March 2021.

IV. CRP Restoration Activity Map Update

Sara Eichner and Can Sucouglu from Pratt walked the group through the options for functionality and design elements for the new Restoration Activity Map. Some options include making the filters of the TECs additive rather than reductive and adding a photo of the restoration site or completed project. Isabelle sent the samples to the group to review and the next step for the group will be beta testing once the map has been developed.

V. Recontamination Action Agenda Item Discussion

John Prince, Deputy Director of EPA Superfund & Emergency Management Division, visited the group to present on how EPA handles the recontamination threat. Major points and questions answered included:

- They need to be scrupulous about predicted remediation results given background levels of toxicity.
- They address this uncertainty through integrated hydrodynamic modeling, in which you can factor in recontamination, and adaptive management. The models are very expensive and take a long time to create. Alternatively, you can take action more quickly if you are prepared to take an action and then know that you have to monitor and potentially do more.
- One of the great frustrations of Superfund is how long the process takes.
- Climate change/resilience expectations have been a consideration in remedy selection for about 8 years and they revisit older sites at least every 5 years, to review the integrity of the

older remedies considering sea level rise, more frequent tidal inundation, more frequent and more intense storm events, etc.

- They have data for the Hudson remediation that could potentially show recontamination since 2015.
- You need to consider the source of the contamination, is it upland or in the sediments. Contaminated sediments lead to recontamination with every tide, as with the Hudson Superfund site.

VI. Tributary Connections Subcommittee

The co-chairs of the newly reinstated Tributary Connections Subcommittee are Megan Lung (NYSDEC) and Laura Wildman (Biohabitats). They reported on the first meeting and intentions for the group; the group will try to determine one or two actionable items that they will pursue at a time in addition to a focus on communication, education and sharing of best practices. The subcommittee will regularly report back to the RWG.

VII. HRF Shallows Workshop

Jim Lodge presented HRF's plan to hold a workshop this fall that would both help HRF in our strategic planning process and be a resource to restoration practitioners and planners by focusing on research needs and gaps in our understanding. The discussion would focus specifically on shallow water enhancements and be grouped by habitat type: soft sediments, rock and artificial structures, shellfish beds, and SAV and macroalgal beds. Jim requested suggestions or people that may make good panelists.

VIII. Managed Retreat Conference

The group was given the opportunity to share what they learned at the Columbia Managed Retreat Conference in preparation for our next meeting where we will address the restoration of buyout properties. The conference did not focus much about environmental science and wetland migration. Many case studies were presented on different strategies to pull back from the coasts and folks were curious on what strategies NYC planning has considered. The conference was recorded so there are probably many sessions that we could review in preparation for our next meeting.

- Judy Weis notes that the draft waterfront management plan for NYC contains little to nothing about managed retreat.

IX. RWG Member Updates

NOAA

- Carl is still working on unsettled natural resources damage cases for Newtown Creek, Piles Creek, lower Passaic and Raritan Bay slag.
- They are making progress on determining what restoration techniques can take place in tight spaces like the NYC canals. There may be an opportunity to soften shorelines within Newtown Creek (as opposed to the remedy for Gowanus).
- The Cornell Dublier damages fund still has 28 million dollars to spend on the 11 restoration projects identified, notably some important fish passage projects in the Raritan watershed. The projects are in review with USFWS.

USACE

- The District is working with NYC Parks on the design for Spring Creek North with construction planned in late 2022.
- Spring Creek South/Howard Beach Multi-Purpose Feasibility Study did get into the President's Proposed FY 2022 budget in March for \$500,000. The District will conduct the feasibility study with NYSDEC and NPS to evaluate solutions for both restoration and coastal storm risk management.

BOP

BOP has put in a million oysters at the pilings on Pier 88 and are preparing 18 million for deployment on gabions and reef balls for HRPT. They are waiting for permits for three other restorations.

NJDEP

They had to pause the Liberty State Park design process to reconsider active recreation area. A compromise was recently reached with the wetland areas intact as designed and 50 acres added for active recreation. They hope to be back on track towards a 60% design by spring 2022 and construction by summer 2023.

NJSEA

- They are working on a Meadowlands breeding bird atlas, which they will use to guide restoration to protect this species, in particular grasslands on former landfills.
- They are collaborating with the Meadowlands Environmental Research Institute (MERI) at Rutgers to form the Environmental Research and Restoration Department.

NYC Parks

- Had a call with Congressman Steve Englebright (Long Island) who, at their recommendation, did not advance a FW wetland bill, due to some reductions in buffer protections for smaller wetlands. He wants to get a more comprehensive bill through the House. However, trusted partners Riverkeeper, Sierra Club etc., supported the bill, so we will be learning what the NY Senate process was to learn what is possible to get passed.
- On-going oil spill/contamination remediation is happening at Mariners Marsh, where thousands of gallons of fuel was flushed into the Park after the fire. Will be pursuing long process of trying to account for the natural resources damages.

STAC

- Judy announced that the manuscript that was written as part of the NJ wetland resilience advisory group has been accepted for publication.
- She does not recommend the use of Scholar One for the submission of journal articles.

TNC

Bill Shadel worked on project SOAR to collect 4,000 unused oysters from restaurants to use in restoration on Baykeeper's Earle reef. <https://www.nature.org/en-us/what-we-do/our-priorities/provide-food-and-water-sustainably/food-and-water-stories/oyster-covid-relief-restoration/>

HEP

- Isabelle sent out an email asking everyone to participate in NEPORT, our yearly collection of restorations and other activities that support HEP's goals.
- HEP asks if anyone wants to participate in NOAA's Mussel Watch data collection this fall. BOP offered to help.
- HEP's Public Access Workgroup just released a new paddling guide showing the 150 public access sites and paddling programs located around the NY/NJ Harbor. Let HEP know if you would like some of the maps to distribute.
- City of Water Day is coming up on July 17 with many In Your Neighborhood events which HEP is helping to organize and supporting with micro-grants.

NYSDEC

Susan Maresca has been working on Natural Resources Damages cases and is expecting to be able to hire new staff, which will help with their recent staffing shortage. She wants to get the dredge team back up and running.

X. Attendance (all virtual via webinar)

Lisa Baron, (chair), USACE
Marit Larson, (chair) NYC Parks
Carl Alderson, NOAA
Elizabeth Butler (guest), USEPA
Terry Doss, NJSEA
Sara Eichner, Pratt (guest)
John King, NJDEP
Lingard Knutson, USEPA
Jim Lodge, HRF
Megan Lung, HR Estuary Program (guest)
Susan Maresca, NYSDEC
John McLaughlin, NYCDEP
Katie Mosher, BOP
Kaitlyn Parkins, NYC Audubon
Robert Pirani, NY-NJ HEP
John Prince, USEPA (guest)
Bill Shadel, TNC
Isabelle Stinnette, NY-NJ HEP
Can Sucuoglu, Pratt (guest)
Judith Weis, Rutgers and STAC
Laura Wildman, Biohabitats (guest)