



RESTORATION WORK GROUP

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

www.hudsonriver.org/estuary-program

September 17, 2021

9:30 – 12:30

Virtual

I. Welcome/Attendance

Attendance is at the end of this document.

II. Minutes

Approved minutes from the last meeting in June 2021.

III. Restoration of Buyout Properties and Preparing for Wetland Migration

Kim Rennick provided us with an overview of the NJDEP Blue Acres Program and a recent restoration of a buyout property in Linden. Blue Acres is a voluntary state buyout program of flood-prone homes, where the house is then demolished and the property is allowed to return to floodplain, protected from further development. Restoration on these properties can occur if the municipalities are willing to conform to state objectives of these lands including conservation or passive recreation, the use of native plants, and consideration of public access. The Linden restoration involved restoring coastal forest, public access, and adding floodplain storage (removing impervious coverage and contouring). Additional details on the Linden restoration can be found here: <https://princetonhydro.com/linden-njdep-blue-acres/>.

Rebecca Swadek presented on the Wetland Management Framework for NYC. This allowed them to find a vision for the future of the city's salt marshes that included acquisition opportunities for wetland migration and supported city policy to conserve these areas. Their modeling research shows that flooded developed land is predicted to double every 50 years, highlighting the importance of continued buyout programs. The group discussed the importance of a potential acquisition adjacent to the Saw Mill Creek Wetland Mitigation Bank for marsh migration and protection from development. See the Wetland Management Framework here: <https://naturalareasnyc.org/wetlands>.

Lauren Wang and Mike McCann presented on their joint project on how to prepare NYC for land-adaptation to more flooding in the future. The project, which is still being scoped, also addresses housing mobility and community visioning. They are considering the full range of steps from acquisition, management to stewardship. Next steps include a series of outreach workshops, followed by recommendations and actions that include hypothetical scenarios.

Deliverables include policy recommendations to NYC and beyond. The group gave feedback including the importance of altering the wetland regulations, focusing on impervious coverage and the idea of renting buyout properties as an interim measure.

IV. Adding habitat value to BPCA resilience plan

Rob Pirani presented the group with a report that HEP and HRF worked on last year in partnership with Battery Park City Authority (BCPA), Nautilus International and AECOM. BPCA is embarking on an ambitious resiliency plan and were looking to improve the ecological value by adding some enhancements to the shorelines and shallows. HEP convened a team of scientists and created a framework with some opportunities for the different habitat types on the site. The report is available here: <https://www.hudsonriver.org/article/hudson-river-foundation-publications>.

V. Beneficial Use of Dredge Material Project List

Jim Lodge alerted the group that we have slightly formalized the table created by members of the RWG regarding potential restoration sites that could beneficially use dredged materials. This table along with a letter written by Isabelle and Jim on behalf of the RWG will be submitted to the USACE project team for the Harbor Deepening Channel Improvement project. The table is expected to be placed as an appendix in the USACE feasibility study. The letter and table were submitted to the USACE on September 28, 2021.

VI. CRP Restoration Activity Map Update

Isabelle Stinnette presented the group with the nearly final new Restoration Activity Map following the beta testing effort. Please let Isabelle know if you have any ideas on how to best create a broad distribution in mid-October.

IX. RWG Member Updates

USACE

- A total of \$1.2M was included in the Senate mark-up bill to initiate Pre-construction, Engineering and Design phase for four (actually five) of the 20 HRE projects: Stony Creek Marsh Island (NYCDEP), Oysters at Naval Station Earle (NJDEP), Flushing Creek (NYCDEP) and Bronx Zoo & Dam/Stone Mill Dam (NYC Parks). Design Agreements with non-federal sponsors will be executed once the Final FY22 Budget is enacted.
- The District and NYC Parks continue to prepare designs for Spring Creek North with construction planned in late 2022.
- Spring Creek South/Howard Beach Multi-Purpose Feasibility Study is in the President's FY22 Budget for \$500,000 and will be initiated after execution of a Feasibility Cost Share Agreement with NYSDEC. The District will conduct the feasibility study with NYSDEC and NPS to evaluate solutions for both restoration and coastal storm risk management.
- Liberty State Park restoration designs are currently being updated (with NJDEP) to incorporate 50 acres of active recreation..

- Lisa notes that the international NNBF guidelines for Flood Risk Management were made publicly available. Download the report at https://ewn.erdc.dren.mil/?page_id=4351.

STAC

Judy is giving a webinar at CERF regarding the study with NJDEP on sea level rise on marshes.

NYC Parks

- Parks continuing to do adaptive management with Partners at several sites, including Bayswater, Alley Creek, Saw Mill Creek, Flushing Bay, Soundview Park and Sunset Cover Park had a lot of herbivory last year.
- Parks received funding for a salt marsh restoration and waterfront access at Bolton Point, at the southern point in Castle Hill Neighborhood in the Bronx.
- Parks is continuing to monitor two salt marsh restoration projects, each over 2 acres, at Pugsley Creek and Ferry Point Park in the Bronx.
- Parks is working with EDC on planning for phase 2 of the Saw Mill Creek Wetland mitigation bank.

BOP

- They provided 80 gabions and 96 reef balls seeded with oysters to Hudson River Park Trust for their shallow water restoration project.
- They installed 7 million additional oysters at Soundview at the end of this season.

NYCDEP

They are progressing in the discussions with NYSDEC on the Jamaica Bay Long-Term Control Plan that includes marsh island restoration and the use of ribbed mussels for water quality improvement.

NYCDEC

- Susan has been promoted to the Natural Resources Supervisor Position at DEC Region 2 office and is for the time being still operating as the Marine Program Manager.
- They are still working with Albany on the potential acquisition of the Sharrots Shoreline Addition site on Staten Island. That property is having a major erosional issue due to stormwater.

NOAA

- They were finally able to claim some NRD funds totaling ~ \$800,000 from the 1991 Exxon Bayway settlement, which can now be put to use for restoration in the Arthur Kill.
- The Passaic River Superfund site now has a draft restoration plan for a new park along the banks. It is unclear if they will be able to add some shoreline habitat restoration. One responsible party has stepped up.
- Carl is still working on natural resources damage assessment on the Gowanus and Newtown Creek.
- The Cornell Dublier damages fund has 28 million dollars, and growing, to spend on the 11 restoration projects identified. They hope to have the final restoration plan available for the public shortly.
- Carl also reminds the group that the Senate has passed the Infrastructure Bill so we may have a great influx of money that is going to need ready projects as the government expects you to be able to spend the money within 18 months.

TNC

Bill reminds us that the Living Breakwaters Project has started construction.

<https://www.archpaper.com/2021/09/scapes-living-breakwaters-project-begins-in-water-construction-staten-island/>

HEP

- Isabelle reminded the group of HEP's fall conference, which will be held virtually on November 15 – 18th. The theme is Waterway Stories: water quality, access and community.
- HEP is planning to hold a NJ Eel Monitoring workshop so contact Isabelle for ideas on who to invite. The workshop will be October 26, 2021 at Dundee Island Park.

X. Attendance (all virtual via webinar)

Lisa Baron, (chair), USACE

Marit Larson, (chair) NYC Parks

Carl Alderson, NOAA

Kevin Burgio, NYC Audubon

Alison Branco, TNC (guest)

Meredith Comi, Baykeeper

Terry Doss, NJSEA

Caitlin Frame, NYSDEC

Jim Lodge, HRF

Susan Maresca, NYSDEC

Nicole Marr, TNC (guest)

Mike McCann, TNC (guest)

John McLaughlin, NYCDEP

Katie Mosher, BOP

Robert Pirani, NY-NJ HEP

Kim Rennick, NJDEP (guest)

Bill Shadel, TNC

Isabelle Stinnette, NY-NJ HEP

Rebecca Swadek, NYC Parks (guest)

Lauren Wang, NYC Mayor's Office of Sustainability (guest)

Judith Weis, STAC