

## RESTORATION WORK GROUP

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

[www.hudsonriver.org/estuary-program](http://www.hudsonriver.org/estuary-program)

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**Meeting, July 13, 2022**  
**1:00 – 4:00 pm**

**I. Welcome and Attendance**

Attendance is at the end of this document.

**II. Minutes**

Approved minutes from the last meeting in May, 2022.

**III. Living Breakwaters Update**

Pippa Brashear from Scape presented on status of the Living Breakwaters Project in Staten Island. The project started construction in August 2021 and just recently the first few breakwaters have become visible on the shoreline.

<https://www.scapestudio.com/projects/living-breakwaters/>

**IV. Preparation for Fall 2022 Restoration Report and Restoration Conference**

Isabelle reminded the group that there are two big projects coming up this fall that involve the RWG: 1) A restoration report, chronicling the progress towards the CRP goals as well as highlighting recent restoration projects; and 2) The theme of this fall's annual HEP conference will be restoration. Isabelle highlighted earlier efforts and opened the floor for input. Notable comments included:

- Go a little deeper into the science – avoid lightning talks
- Work groups/STAC to help organize
- Cross market with harbor herons and green roof conference (September 22, Javits)
- Highlight progress made – CRP goals, updates
- billion-oyster project upcoming priorities
- NY Shellfish restoration committee, different types of restoration strategies with shellfish
- Oysters not all conference focus
- NNBFs /living shorelines (engineering with nature)
- Panel dedicated to the consulting world, highlight private sector projects
- Utilize the society for ecological restoration and professional credits

Several members of the RWG volunteered for the conference planning committee and planning is ongoing. Please contact Isabelle if you have further input.

**V. CRP Site Priorities for future HRE Feasibility Studies**

Lisa Baron opted to save time and accomplish this task via email after the meeting. Lisa and Isabelle will put together a spreadsheet including restoration projects in Appendix K of the HRE Final Feasibility Report/Environmental. group can identify their priority sites for future USACE feasibility studies which will be helpful for Congressional Representatives to highlight or authorize (if a site is not included in Appendix K) in a future Water Resource Development Act (WRDA). This activity will also identify local sponsor interest and readiness for a future USACE study as well as prepare a short list of projects if funding opportunities become available.

<https://www.nan.usace.army.mil/Missions/Environmental/Environmental-Restoration/Hudson-Raritan-Estuary/>

**VI. Hope Spot Application**

Judith Weis educated the group on the Hope Spots program created by Sylvia Earle. She presented rationale on why the Harbor Estuary would be a good candidate for a Hope Spot application including:

- Enormous improvements in water quality
- Contaminated sediments less bioavailable
- Increase in biodiversity (benthos, fish, birds, marine mammals)
- Huge investment in habitat restoration, including on landfills
- Increase in public access to the water and ecotourism

Terry volunteered to help Judy create the application and Lisa mentioned that a presentation like this would be great at the fall conference. Judy also mentioned that this award could bring in more funding for the region.

**VII. Tributary Connections Subcommittee Update**

Megan Lung, co-chair of this subcommittee gave a report on the progress the group has made in drafting a letter to state and federal grant funders. This letter highlights some inherent biases in grants that often bring funds out of more urban areas and thus cross-purpose with stated goals to help disadvantaged communities. Some examples from the letter include, focus on the number of people served in restoration projects, the acceptance of template letters and the repeal of substantial match requirements.

**VIII. RWG Member Updates**

NY/NJ Baykeeper

Continuing to monitor Soundview oyster reef in the Bronx and invites group members to come visit.

Billion Oyster Project

- Finishing up a monitoring report on the Soundview oyster restoration.
- They are preparing to deploy 50 million oysters this summer
- Kicked off new projects in City Island and Newtown creek
- Trying to pull local larvae from Tappan Zee population for use in restoration
- The Living Breakwaters project is getting to the stage of permitting the oyster installation
- They are also supporting the state shellfish restoration plan organized by Pew

### NYCDEP

Conducting field research this summer on mussel restoration and its effect on water quality.

### NYC Parks

- Groundbreaking for second phase of Sunset Cove restoration that includes public access and replanting.
- They did receive a good bit of funding from the Play Fair for Parks initiative which allows them to retain staff working on forest and wetlands management, restoration, and stewardship.
- Researching wetland migration transect data as part of the wetland development grant.
- Working on trail formulation program that standardizing the blazes on parks properties.

### NJSEA

- They are deep in field season including terrapin surveys, secretive marsh bird surveys, motus towers for migratory birds, osprey and eagles, fish and invertebrates, and EDNA.
- Trying to find places to restore high marsh for endangered salt marsh sparrows.
- North Portal Bridge project is going to be a 5-year headache that may result in vulnerable wildlife populations, and they're looking for partners to help restore habitat.
- Working on a wetland development grant for Sawmill Creek and a plan for the closing Keegan landfill.

### USACE

- Spring Creek North is expected to start construction in 2023. Currently, more than half (11 of 18 acres) of the wetland restoration is using Thin Layer Placement technique to address erosion and increase the marsh elevation to keep up with sea level rise.
- Planning to conduct drone surveys for several projects in Jamaica Bay.
- Starting field surveys soon at Stony Creek Marsh Island and Flushing Creek (conducted by NYCDEP). Design Agreement should be executed this month with NJDEP for oyster restoration at Naval Station Earle.
- NY/NJ Harbor Deepening Channel Improvements Study was approved, Chief's Report was signed June 2, 2022, project awaits authorization in WRDA 2022, followed by initiation of Pre-Construction Engineering and Design (PED). We can expect millions of CYD of dredged material for beneficial use.
- In-person Harbor Inspection scheduled for September 21<sup>st</sup>. However, due to COVID the Harbor Inspection has been postponed for the Spring 2023.

### NJDEP

Liberty State Park Restoration Project is progressing with 60% redesign package planned in October 2022. Princeton Hydro is creating a video rendering of the future park for the public. Construction expected to start early 2024.

### NOAA

- Putting out four new national, competitive grants for habitat restoration with BIL funding. These grants will continue for the next 5 years. Details here: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/funding-opportunities/open-opportunities>
- NOAA has also released a grant on marine debris removal.

- Has made a lot of progress on the Raritan River Fish Passage initiative. They have six dams down and eight more in discussion for removal.
- Seaside sparrows and salt marsh sparrows are in danger from feral cats that live in the middle of the Sawmill Creek wetland mitigation bank in Staten Island.

#### NYC Audubon

- Just completed a full Harbor Herons survey, 38<sup>th</sup> year of doing so. Some colonies are doing well, and others have been abandoned. Raccoons seem to be an increasing problem.
- Continuing to monitor shorebirds including migratory species.
- Had a record number of ospreys in Jamaica Bay this year.

#### HEP

- Have received guidance from EPA on spending the BIL funds and are preparing the workplans for the first two years of funding.
- HEP organized City of Water Day with more than 60 events all over the Harbor: <https://www.hudsonriver.org/article/city-of-water-day-2022>
- Restoration progress is due to Isabelle for NEPORT, so that we can track for the upcoming restoration report.
- Looking into the NOAA Brennan matching fund for oceanographic mapping for our nearshore areas. If anyone would like to nominate an area to be surveyed, please get back to Isabelle.

#### NYSDEC

Link to new video they created on tributary connections:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eZmvoVE4dAg>

## **IX. Attendance**

Lisa Baron, (chair), USACE  
 Carl Alderson, NOAA  
 Pippa Brashear, SCAPE (guest)  
 Terry Doss, NJSEA  
 Alison Fitzgerald, NY-NJ Baykeeper  
 Carolyn Khoury, BOP  
 John King, NJDEP  
 Kristen King, NYC Parks  
 Megan Lung, NYSDEC  
 Susan Maresca, NYCDEC  
 John McLaughlin, NYCDEP  
 Dustin Partridge, NYC Audubon  
 Robert Pirani, NY-NJ HEP  
 Clay Sherman, NJDEP  
 Isabelle Stinnette, NY-NJ HEP  
 Judith Weis, STAC  
 Jaclyn Woolard, EPA