



## 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, June 9, 2023**

**1:00 – 3:30 pm**

**I. Welcome and Attendance**

Attendance is at the end of this document.

**II. Minutes**

Approved minutes from the last meeting in February 2023.

**III. Membership and Leadership**

Longtime RWG member, Jon King, from NJDEP has retired – we wish him well and thank him for his service to the workgroup over the years. The group welcomed three new members: Stacey MacEwan (NJDEP; not in attendance), Myles Davis (NYC Audubon), and Rebecca Swadek (NYC Parks).

Lisa Baron and Marit Larson have been serving as co-chairs of the RWG for 13 and 5 years respectively. They plan to move on this year to make way for new leadership. Rebecca will be replacing Marit Larson as co-chair of the workgroup this summer and Lisa will step down in the fall with the assignment of a new chair for her spot to come. Isabelle Stinnette proposed that our group may want to consider a rotating leadership position (similar to other HEP work groups) and will suggest a change to the bylaws to enact that at our next meeting.

**IV. RWG Member Updates**

NJSEA

- They are using new acoustic monitors to document breeding saltmarsh sparrows and other more difficult to find species.
- Just finished building a floating island geared to attract least terns.

NYC Audubon

- They just finished conducting the annual Harbor Herons nesting survey. Subway island remains abandoned and there was evidence of racoons. Little Egg increased in abundance.

- Going to work with the Bronx River Alliance on monitoring foraging sites for Harbor Herons in the Bronx.

#### USACE

- Spring Creek north is at 90% design, and they are slated to start construction in the spring 2024 (including thin layer placement).
- USACE and NJDEP are approaching 90% design for Liberty State Park and are initiating construction this fall to include vegetation removal and clearance of Munitions and Explosives of Concern (MEC) in a 42-acre area of the site.
- Jamaica Bay Marsh islands: Deployed hydrodynamic instruments throughout Jamaica Bay end of May to collect current, velocity, water level data over the next year to be used for modeling activities. Bathymetry surveys of the bay were initiated June 26<sup>th</sup> and will continue through July.
- Design Agreement is under negotiation with NYCDEP to initiate Engineering and Design Phase of Fresh Creek.

#### NOAA

They have released the Draft Restoration Plan/Environmental Assessment for the American Cyanamid Superfund Site in Bridgewater NJ. They are proposing a 100+ acre restoration to a floodplain forest at Duke Farms in NJ. The report can be downloaded from here:

<https://www.fws.gov/press-release/2023-05/seeking-public-comment-draft-restoration-plan-american-cyanamid-superfund>

#### NYSDEC

They have constructed some new artificial nesting platforms at Sharrots Shoreline on the Arthur Kill. They will monitor for any signs of breeding next year.

#### Hudson Riverkeeper

- They expect the removal of the Maiden Lane Dam on Furnace Brook this fall. They are also advocating for the restoration of the original Algonquin name of this creek: Jamawissa Creek.
- They have been involved in some hydropower discussions, trying to protect eel habitat.
- They are holding screenings of their newest film, One Dam at a Time.

#### Hudson River Foundation and HEP

- HEP has released RFPs for several grants including Habitat Restoration in Disadvantaged Communities. They received a lot of great proposals covering nearly all the TECs and all the CRP regions. Awardees will be announced in mid-July.
- HEP recently hosted a hybrid DEIJ summit in partnership with the Harbor Educators workgroup, advancing work towards our organizations safe space commitments. The DEIJ subcommittee is always looking for new members. See more here: <https://www.hudsonriver.org/article/safe-spaces>

#### Billion Oyster Project

They are deploying 20 million oysters to the Head of Bay (Jamaica Bay) this summer as well as phase 2 of the Tribeca Project and engaging in restoration planning.

### NYC Parks

- Submitting a lot of grant applications for restoration, in particular to the US Forest Service for their Inflation Reduction Act funding.
- They are nearing completion on a 30-acre restoration at Arverne and a public access project at Sunset Cove in Broad Channel.

### **V. Engineering with Nature / NNBF Regulatory Context**

Marit updated the group with the next steps towards this effort to understand the regulatory barriers to implementing natural and nature-based features. The SRIJB has submitted proposals to research this topic and are leading stakeholders in a discussion to determine the data and analysis needs to advance NNBFs. Her team is looking into getting more resources for mitigation planning. Reach out to Marit if you would like the minutes from the meeting last year with the USACE Engineering with Nature Network.

### **VI. NYC Parks Thin Layer Placement Project**

The NYC Parks team piloted placing a thin-layer of sand on top of an existing low-marsh in Hook Creek, Queens, to protect from sea-level rise. They plan to follow up with Phase II at Idlewild Park, Queens. A sand slurry was placed through a hose and spartina plugs were planted on top. There was a steep learning curve going through this process for everyone involved and they used the same equipment used to create the islands in Dubai. A local hydrant was available for a water source, which will not likely be the case for future projects. Parks is composing a project report that they can distribute to those interested. Answers to group questions include:

- They did see areas of natural recruitment of marsh vegetation from when they placed the sand in February and when they planted in May.
- The contractors were not very familiar with this method and there is an opportunity for contractor outreach.
- The sediment source was quarried material. They always check the clean soil bank but rarely find a project to match.
- Target grades were met but they did not prioritize a high degree of accuracy on elevations because of the pilot nature of the project and costs.

### **VII. Resetting TEC Goals Discussion and Decision**

Now that 2020 has passed, the group has agreed on the need to revise the CRP 2050 goals and establish a 2035 interim goal. Isabelle Stinnette walked the group through a process outlined by the RWG leadership. Elements include:

- Objectives include taking time to involve the regulatory community not only to register their priorities but also to make sure that it looks like future policy will allow for us to reach our goals.
- Going TEC by TEC, RWG members should review the rationale behind the original goals, the state of the science, and evaluate current constraints to restoration progress.
- The group acknowledges that the size of this effort should be “best professional judgement” and we should avoid turning this exercise into a major research project.
- Leadership proposes we break into workgroups for each TEC with the goal of holding one call before the next RWG meeting.

Group comments include:

- We have no record of what habitat is being destroyed, it seems like we should do that at the same point if we're talking about goals.
- Should one of the goals of this effort be less opportunism in restoration planning. How would we rate our success in identifying specific target locations for each of the TECs?
- Should we consider prioritizing the TECs or dropping ones that our group is not likely to have an effect on, e.g. sediment contamination.
- We should make sure we consider climate change implications such as wetland migration and loss of previous target species (lobsters).

➤ **Isabelle will follow up by email with instructions on signing up for TEC groups.**

## **VIII. Attendance**

Lisa Baron (chair), USACE  
Rebecca Swadek (chair), NYC Parks  
Carl Alderson, NOAA  
Liz Balladares, NY-NJ HEP  
Danielle Bissett, BOP  
Terry Doss, NJSEA  
Myles Davis, NYC Audubon  
Marco Finocchiaro, EPA  
George Jackman, Hudson Riverkeeper  
Lingard Knudsen, EPA  
Marit Larson, NYC Parks  
Susan Maresca, NYCDEC  
Jessie Murray, NOAA  
Dustin Partridge, NYC Audubon  
Rosana Pedra Nobre, NY-NJ HEP  
Robert Pirani, NY-NJ HEP  
Bill Shadel, TNC  
Isabelle Stinnette, NY-NJ HEP  
Judith Weis, STAC