



New York - New Jersey  
Harbor & Estuary Program  
[www.harborestuary.org](http://www.harborestuary.org)

# RESTORATION WORK GROUP

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of the New York – New Jersey Harbor & Estuary Program  
*Co-Chairs: Lisa Baron (Army Corps of Engineers),  
Marit Larson (NYC Parks)*

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## Meeting, June 22, 2018

17 Battery Place

Suite 915

11:00 – 2:30

- I. **Welcome and minutes from last meeting:** minutes from last meeting were approved and can be found on the HEP website.
  
- II. **Introductions and Updates (attendance at the end of this document):**

### USEPA

- They are going through the process of how to define the waters of the US.

### NJSEA

- Field season is ramping up with continued monitoring of terrapins, nesting bird surveys and a new plankton survey

### USACE

- Spring creek north progress has been made advancing to Design and Implementation Phase with NYC Parks; as well as moving forward with the restoration at Cedar Beach in Suffolk County with Cornell.
- The District must defend all 33 restoration sites and confirm the proposed alternative for each site in the Tentatively Selected Plan included in the Draft Report.
- Numerous activities were conducted between April-July to complete update of cost estimates, benefits, Relative Sea Level Change (RSLC) analysis & Cost Effectiveness/Incremental Cost Analysis (CE/ICA) to justify each restoration site. The RSLC analysis must be conducted to ensure that the proposed wetland restoration will be sustainable over 50 years.

USACE evaluates the output of the CE/ICA (plotting incremental costs and benefits) to identify the breakpoint where there is large jump in cost for smaller ecological benefits (habitat units). These sites may not be justified and included in the National Ecosystem Restoration Plan and may be eliminated. Therefore, some of the sites would not be included in the Recommended Plan to move forward and be recommended for construction authorization in the final report.

#### NYC Parks

- Participating with the LISS Restoration Work Group
- Commenting on USACE High Frequency Flood Risk Reduction proposed project at Edgemere
- Have 10 acres of wetlands in planning and design
- Sunset Cove wetland restoration set to break ground this summer
- Noted the Reclaimed land conference being held shortly at Fresh Kills

#### TNC

- Working on a restoration at the Jamaica Bay wildlife refuge. One of the goals of this project is to test a maritime plant palate.
- Completed an oyster monitoring report.

#### NYSDEC

- There is a restoration opportunity for phragmites removal at a freshwater pond at the North Mount Loretto Property in Staten Island. Phragmites seed likely arrived there through the Bluebelt so they may ask NYCDEP for help with remediation.
- There are several pairs of Beavers now on Staten Island causing issues with drainage.
- The DEC has just released a draft document on Flood Risk Management Guidance, see [here](#). They are looking for comments on the document and Susan Maresca notes that this document will affect grant funding decisions.
- DEC is lobbying for money to make the acquisition of properties adjacent to their Sharrotts Shoreline property in Staten Island so that public access can be created at the site.

#### PANYNJ

- Working with NYC parks salt marsh restoration design at Puglsey creek for mitigation of LaGuardia runway.
- Funding for acquisition has been authorized but never appropriated. HEP and partners will try to focus on a couple of priority projects to encourage action with these funds.

#### NJDEP

- Working on Liberty State Park Restoration design with the USACE.

#### NOAA

- Working on several restoration projects at Superfund sites along the Raritan, Hudson, Passaic, and on Long Island.

### **iii. Wetlands Migration Project Results**

Ellis Calvin from Regional Plan Association (RPA) introduced the group to their project on wetland migration: New Shoreline, Integrating Community and Ecological Resilience around Coastal Wetlands, and shared their results. Several RWG members were on the advisory committee for this project. This project addressed not only the physical results of sea level rise on marshes but the human component of wetlands adaptation. In addition to producing maps showing potential migration pathways and migration barriers such as development, the research produced recommendations for property managers, planners and policy makers. A sampling of some of these recommendations included:

- Incorporate wetland migration pathways into state level data.
- Discourage infrastructure and other development investments in priority pathways.
- Integrate wetlands into developed places.
- Support fully-funded buyout programs that enable wetland restoration and migration.
- Reconnect coastal communities with the ways natural systems affect their community.

Betsy Blair asked the group some follow-up questions about next steps for this project.

Comments from the group included:

- Noting that RPA's report is not prescriptive – they do not prioritize the pathways. That could be a next step.
- Anecdotal evidence points to some opportunity for wetland migration on the NJ Bayside.
- Mitigation has to be rethought: Should it count if it will be underwater in 20 years?
- Can we use the transfer of development rights as a tool?
- SLR analysis may not be in our favor in terms of pushing forward restoration in our area such as for the HRE CRP.

RPA's final report, The New Shoreline, is available at: (<http://www.rpa.org/publication/new-shoreline-integrating-community-and-ecological-resilience-around-tidal-wetlands>)

#### **iv. Update from the Shorelines and Shallows Subgroup**

Marit Larson presented an update from discussions of the shorelines and shallows subcommittee. Ideas include:

- Now that there is a draft monitoring framework from the Measuring Success project, can we use to tease out our best goals and metrics or metrics we want to promote further study? RWG members involved in this study can report back.
- One possible option includes starting a shorelines inventory including, shoreline type data, updated list of shorelines projects, bathymetry.
- Need to check in with EDC.
- There may be opportunities for pilot projects due to the Hudson River Park Management Plan update.

#### **v. Shorelines and Shallows: Waterfront Design Guidelines (WEDG)**

Sarah Dougherty from Waterfront Alliance gave the group an update on the WEDG project including their addition of a peer-reviewed shoreline stabilization matrix. Their program is adaptable to incorporating new evaluation metrics of shoreline evaluation including those that may come out of the Measuring Success Protocol or efforts by the RWG.

#### **vi. Benthic Infaunal Communities and Sediment Properties in Pile Fields within the Hudson River Estuarine Sanctuary**

Gary Taghon, a benthic ecologist from Rutgers University presented us with his findings from a HEP funded study on the benthic communities in the Hudson pile fields. Key findings included:

- There was not a significant difference between the benthic communities within the pile fields and without (in the inter-pier areas).

- Most of the species found were tolerant of stressors.
- An analysis called rarification, indicates that they undersampled for species that were sensitive or intolerant of stressors.
- The benthic index puts all of the sampling sites at either a rating of “high” or “good” in terms of environmental quality.
- Cluster analysis shows three of the sites are not like the rest, primarily due to lower overall abundance of organisms. The three sites were all closer to the shore.
- The southern end of sampling area, closer to the Harbor, showed slightly more high rated sites than the northern end.
- Gary notes that this study does not include any input from biological interactions with the benthic infauna (such as predation). That is an unknown complicating factor with this kind of analysis.

Please contact Isabelle Stinnette for a copy of the full report.

#### **vii. Update on HRE and Hudson Restoration from USACE**

Lisa Baron, gave us an update on the Hudson Raritan Estuary and Hudson River restoration plan and feasibility studies. For the HRE, there is an Agency Decision Milestone meeting on September 5<sup>th</sup> where a significant amount of analysis must be completed prior to that date to prepare. The list of 33 sites as presented in the draft feasibility report has been narrowed down slightly and sites have been removed based on the activities completed. For the Hudson River Feasibility Study, the District has screened down the sites in order to evaluate 6 sites (Binnen Kill, Schodack Island, Henry Hudson Park, Charles Rider Park, Roundout Creek (aquatic fish passage) and Moodna Creek (3 aquatic fish passage opportunities). The draft report is planned to be released for public review in March 2019.

#### **viii. Discussion of HEP’s Environmental Monitoring Plan**

Rosana Da Siliva, HEP’s Water Quality Manager, briefed the group on the progress towards creating the Environmental Monitoring Plan. The plan will consist of 3 parts each geared to a different audience: an online interactive map showing where monitoring is occurring in the harbor, a story-map meant for the general public to introduce them to monitoring in the harbor and the environmental indicators, and monitoring recommendations report, meant to explore data gaps.

#### **Attendees:**

Lisa Baron, (chair) USACE  
 Marit Larson, (chair) NYC Parks  
 Carl Alderson, NOAA (by phone)  
 Betsy Blair, HRNERR (guest)  
 Ellis Calvin, RPA (guest)  
 Sarah Dougherty, Waterfront Alliance (guest)  
 Ross Feltes, NJSEA  
 John King, NJDEP (by phone)  
 Jim Lodge, HRF

James MacDonald, NYSDEC  
Susan Maresca, NYSDEC  
Steve Mars, USFWS (by phone)  
Emily Maxwell, TNC  
Dana Mecomber, PANYNJ  
Daniel Montella, USEPA  
Robert Pirani, NY-NJ HEP  
Ken Scarlatelli, NYSDEC  
Isabelle Stinnette, NY-NJ HEP  
Gary Taghon, Rutgers University (guest)  
Rick Winfield, USEPA (by phone)