

Assessing the Effects of Storm Surge Barriers on the Hudson River Estuary

Project Advisory Committee (PAC) Synopsis

Project Overview

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, states of New York and New Jersey, and New York City are partnering under the Harbor and Tributaries Focus Area Feasibility Study (HATS) to evaluate several options to manage coastal storm risks, including gated storm surge barriers. The National Estuarine Research Reserve System Science Collaborative (NERRS-SC) funded a “Catalyst” project for one year with the following goals: (1) to facilitate development of a collaborative research agenda that can help interested parties better understand potential barrier effects on nearby estuaries, and (2) to undertake targeted research in close collaboration and with information-sharing among scientists and key end-users such as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and its partners.

The project team led by Philip Orton with the Stevens Institute will conduct modeling and analyses of the physical influences of surge barriers and host a series of workshops to synthesize and share information. The effort is being advised by a Project Advisory Committee that includes federal, state, city, research and regional representatives (see accompanying description).

The Project Advisory Committee

The Project Advisory Committee (PAC) of this NERRS-SC-funded project is a group of about 15 members (including the Project Team) that serves as a sounding board for the project scope and design throughout the project. The PAC’s main purpose is to provide ongoing guidance to ensure the project is relevant, effective and credible to both decision-makers and the broader stakeholder community.

To that end, the Project Team identified a bounded set of individuals and agencies to serve on the PAC who collectively represent: (1) city, state and federal decision-makers on the HATS study; (2) representatives from the Barrier Benefits and Impacts (BBI) Workgroup that preceded this effort; and (3) scientists with a detailed specific knowledge of the physical oceanographic or engineering aspects of surge barriers, as well as their estuary effects. Input from a broader set of interested stakeholders and scientists will be incorporated through a March 2019 scoping session and 1-2 workshops in summer 2019 (see accompanying Scoping Session description).

While the Project Team is solely responsible for project work and outcomes, PAC input will be essential in helping identify consensus-supported approaches for a study that is likely to be of great interest to a wide range of stakeholders. The PAC will convene via webinar about four times over the coming project’s one-year duration (October 15, 2018 to October 14, 2019). Specifically, the PAC will provide input to the Project Team on the project approach, scientific analyses, and scientific workshops.