

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

Project Scoping Session | 10am - 4pm | March 25, 2019

Beczak Center for the Urban River, 35 Alexander St, Yonkers, NY

Project Scoping Session 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).

Scoping Session Objectives

A scoping session is planned for the NERRS-SC funded project to seek broad input on project scope so that we can finalize our work plans and ensure that they meet the interests and needs of a diverse set of stakeholders. A draft Scope of Work - informed by discussions with the advisory committee - will be distributed in advance of the meeting.

The objectives of the one-day (10am-4pm) Scoping Session are:

- Provide an update on the Harbor and Tributaries Focus Area Feasibility (HAT) Study
- Take stock of current knowledge of estuary effects of gated storm surge barrier systems
- Learn of the broad range of stakeholder concerns and interests related to the potential environmental effects of storm surge barriers on the Hudson River Estuary
- Get input on the draft Scope of Work, including scientific analyses and scientific workshop(s)
- Identify potential future prospects and funding for deeper science and a broader involvement from the research community

After the Scoping Session, we will finalize the project Scope of Work and begin planning one or two science workshops for summer 2019. In fall 2019, the project will have a final workshop, where we intend to share and seek feedback on a proposed future Scope of Work with the same set of stakeholders who attended the initial Scoping Session.

Scoping Session Participation

Scoping Session attendees have been invited based on meeting the following recruitment criteria:

- Member of the PAC and/or relevant expertise in disciplines that include coastal storm risk, coastal storm risk management approaches or environmental science (physical, chemical, ecological) in NY/NY Harbor, the Hudson River estuary or sub-estuaries
- Offer a unique geographical or otherwise critical or necessary perspectives to the project
- Willingness to adhere to widely accepted methods of scientific inquiry, engage objectively and collaboratively, and consider a variety of possible outcomes to manage coastal storm risk in the study area

In general, the Project Team is limiting participation from each organization to ensure the Scoping Session is small enough to foster effective discussions.

Pre-Meeting Distribution Documents

These documents will be shared with attendees days in advance

- Project fact-sheet
- This Scoping Session description
- Scoping Session agenda
- Draft Scope of Work
- Project Advisory Committee (PAC) description