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U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, NEW YORK DISTRICT
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CENAN-PL-E

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Notice of Availability

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), New York District, announces the availability of Draft Integrated Feasibility Report and Environmental Assessment (Draft FR/EA) and the opening of a 45-day review period for the public to submit written comments for the Hudson-Raritan Estuary (HRE) Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study. The Draft FR/EA addresses the impacts associated with implementation of ecosystem restoration actions within the HRE Study Area defined as a 25-mile radius of the Statue of Liberty National Monument. The HRE study area includes eight (8) planning regions: 1) Jamaica Bay; 2) Harlem River, East River, and Western Long Island Sound; 3) Newark Bay, Hackensack River and Passaic River; 4) Upper Bay; 5) Lower Bay; 6) Lower Raritan River; 7) Arthur Kill/Kill Van Kull ; and 8) Lower Hudson River. The USACE and multiple non-federal sponsors {New York City Department of Environmental Protection (NYCDEP), Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANYNJ), Westchester County, New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority (Former Hackensack Meadowlands Commission) and New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT)} commenced six (6) concurrent ecosystem restoration feasibility studies in the 1990s and early 2000s that focused on the restoration of different areas of the HRE. In an effort to streamline parallel efforts, and maximize efficiencies, resources, and benefits, the feasibility studies were integrated into the HRE Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study effort. The studies, referred to as “source” studies include:

- Jamaica Bay, Marine Park, and Plumb Beach Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study;
- Flushing Bay and Creek Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study;
- Bronx River Basin Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study;
- HRE Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study;
- HRE- Lower Passaic River Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study; and
- HRE- Hackensack Meadowlands Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study.

The analyses completed as part of these “source” studies were incorporated into and informed the current planning effort. This Draft HRE FR/EA responds to all “source” studies’ authorities. The goal of the HRE study is to identify a plan that restores and sustains a mosaic of habitats within the human-dominated landscape important to the people of the HRE region and the nation that maximizes habitat benefits while minimizing impacts to environmental, cultural, or socio-economic resources.

The HRE is located within one of the most urbanized regions in the United States. Urbanization and industrialization over the past 400 years has put stress on the estuary, resulting in significant ecosystem-level changes due to residual, persistent impacts to numerous habitats, especially those linked to aquatic environments. Regional development of the watershed and massive physical changes to the estuary, including dredging and channeling, filling, damming, and bank stabilization, led to marked hydrologic alterations, acute sediment contamination, pervasive reductions in water quality, and habitat fragmentation and loss. The ecological integrity, health, and resiliency of the estuary have been severely compromised.

The Tentatively Selected Plan (TSP) includes the restoration of up to 33 sites throughout the estuary that will provide for an increase in the quality and extent of estuarine, freshwater riverine, marsh island and oyster habitat. It will provide for the restoration of up to 360 acres of estuarine wetland habitat, 12 acres of freshwater riverine wetland habitat, 81 acres of coastal and maritime forest habitat, 5.5 acres of riparian forest habitat, and 57 acres of oyster habitat. Two (2) fish ladders would be installed and three (3) weirs would be modified to re-introduce or expand fish passage along the Bronx River. Sites were selected based on the potential each site provided in meeting the HRE program "*to develop a mosaic of habitats that provides society with renewed and increased benefits from the estuary environment*", as well as considering of how each site contributes to the overall objectives and restoration goals within each Planning Region. Restoration measures were developed to restore ecosystem function while recognizing the urban nature of the existing environment.

The Draft FR/EA has been prepared for the proposed Federal action in accord with the Council on Environmental Quality's National Environmental Policy Act regulations [Federal Register 40 CFR 1508.9(a)].

Documents are posted on the USACE-New York District's website: [Click here](#).

Additional Information and Comments:

Questions regarding the Draft FR/EA should be directed to:

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Comments should be sent to HRE_FREAComments@usace.army.mil by April 14, 2017.

Public meetings to provide information, at which public comments will also be received will scheduled at later dates. At the end of the public comment period, USACE will consider all comments received by close of business on the expiration date of this public notice and make a determination of significance of impacts resulting from the proposed action. Comments received regarding the Draft FR/EA will assist in the agency's evaluation of the proposed action and will be reflected in the project record. All written comments, including contact information, will be made a part of the administrative record, available to the public under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). The Administrative Record, or portions thereof, may also be posted on a Corps of Engineers' Internet website. The comment period ends 45 days after the date of this notice.