

**APPENDIX O**

**Regional Technical Workgroup Progress Reports**

**The Nature Conservancy's Regional Technical Workgroup (RTW) Contract in support of Suffolk County's Coastal Resiliency via Integrated Wetland Management Project**

**Quarterly Progress Report #1**

**Due:** December 30<sup>th</sup> 2016; **Delivered:** December 30<sup>th</sup> 2016

**Prepared by:** Nicole Maher, Senior Coastal Scientist, The Nature Conservancy

**Prepared for:** Suffolk County Department of Economic Development and Planning

1. *Background.*

Suffolk County has been awarded a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation ("NFWF") Sandy resiliency grant for wetlands restoration along the south shore of Suffolk County. The goal of this project is to support the County by providing a forum to improve the exchange of ideas and information among saltmarsh restoration practitioners across the Sandy-impacted region as we work to improve the resiliency of our coastal wetlands and coastal communities. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is contracted to assemble and lead a group of saltmarsh restoration experts for the purposes of sharing information and best practices regarding saltmarsh restoration which will then be utilized to benefit the County's saltmarsh projects and improve the resiliency of our coastal wetlands.

2. *Achievements since last reporting.*

- Assembled RTW membership based on strategic engagement with people and projects across the Sandy-impacted region as well as those with relevant Long Island marsh experience. Potential membership was an iterative process with involvement of SC personnel and key/trusted restoration practitioners such as Sue Adamowicz, USFWS. The final membership list was the result of multiple iterations starting with an initial potential membership list compiled during the preparation of the NFWF proposal submission (January 2014). Updated draft membership lists were shared with the County on multiple occasions, including Friday, September 30<sup>th</sup> 2016, and again on Wednesday, October 26<sup>th</sup> 2016. At those times the County reviewed the potential membership list and provided input. TNC and the County discussed the list and adjustments were made. This review of draft RTW member lists satisfied Task 1 of the contract.
- Secured agreements to participate from a wide-ranging group of 41 very smart and skilled restoration practitioners. Also secured agreements from additional practitioners to participate in a more limited capacity as they are available (Charley Roman, Retired NPS; Bryan DeAngelis, TNC Restoration Coordinator; Scott Warren, Retired Conn College; Paul Castelli, USFWS-Forshythe; Rob Pirani, NY-NJ Harbor

- Estuary Restoration Program; Danielle Kreeger, Science Director, Partnership for the DE Estuary; Beth Lambert, MA DNR).
- The final RTW membership list, “RTW members 112916” complete with contact info and relevant project citations was delivered to the County on 11/29/16 to satisfy that part of Task 2 which was due no later than 11/30/2016.
  - Scheduled and held a successful 2-day kickoff meeting on November 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> 2016 (attended by over 41 people in person and remotely) with representatives of SC Economic Development and Planning, SC Parks, SC Dept. Public Works Vector Control, TNC, NYS DEC, NYC Parks & Natural Areas Conservancy, Hempstead Dept. Conservation and Waterways, CT Department of Energy and Environment, USFWS, Ducks Unlimited, NOAA, Natural Academy of Sciences, University of NH, Seatuck, Save the Bay, RI Coastal Resources Management Council, and representatives of the consulting industry (AECOM and Greenvest) and projects in NY, CT, RI, MA, NJ, DE, & MD. Day 1 included 12 presentations of projects and discussions; day 2 was a successful site visit to Timber Point Marsh, one of Suffolk County’s top priority restoration sites.
  - Created a shared meeting Box folder, “Saltmarsh Restoration Regional Technical Workgroup (RTW)” on TNC’s server for sharing files, photos, relevant papers etc.: (<https://tnc.box.com/s/mdfrzjztxk0blqmltfds3e2k61v4bka>). All RTW members were invited to be editors of this folder so that they have the capability to view, add, and download files in the shared folder.
  - Compiled photographs from Timber Point site visit on a separate box site: <https://tnc.box.com/s/4xr3m76qymvaujbem65e7itb3pg4u>
  - Posted recording of the day-long kick-off meeting on the shared box folder for anyone to review.
  - Made a cleaner and more legible electronic copy of the County’s Expense Reimbursement Form (a103484) to facilitate smooth reimbursement and accounting transactions. Shared the electronic copy of the form with the County on 11/16/16.
  - Held conversations with key restoration practitioners at the Restore America’s Estuaries (RAE) meeting who could not be at the RTW kick-off meeting in Suffolk County.
  - RTW Kick-off meeting notes are included here and after they are approved by the County, they can be posted on the shared Box folder. The delivery of these meeting notes on 12/30/16 should satisfy that part of Task 2 which was due no later than 12/30/2016.

### 3. *Discussion of new opportunities.*

- NM to find time to discuss an opportunity to use Warren Pinnacle Inc.’s new prioritization tool (Dynamic Marsh Management Tool) to help the County prioritize the remaining marshes in their list of 21 potential marshes for restoration. This new decision-support tool is based on results of the Sea Level Affecting Marshes Model (SLAMM) and estimates the benefits that a set of

marshes could provide based on the stakeholder's assessment of the ecosystem services of greatest interest to them (such as risk reduction from coastal storms for coastal resilience, or Nitrogen removal, or public access for recreation, or use by wildlife etc.). This tool has been tested on a subset of marshes in NYC and Nassau County. Warren Pinnacle is seeking funding from NYSERDA to apply the tool in additional geographies. TNC has written a letter to NYSERDA in support of funding WP to do this as well as to re-run SLAMM for all of Suffolk County using the updated SLR projections from ClimAID (Horton et al. 2014<sup>i</sup>) and post-Sandy LiDAR data. WP's decision support tool could be a very useful way for the County to document how they will prioritize the next set of marshes for restoration activities. Info on the tool development and case studies can be found at: <http://warrenpinnacle.com/prof/SLAMM/NYSERDA2015/DMMT.html>

#### 4. *Discussion of work that lies ahead.*

- Schedule time to discuss timeline and project designs with SC team.
- Develop agenda for and schedule a Winter Status meeting in February to hear from RTW members unable to participate in the kick-off meeting and evaluate the plans for SC's first restoration sites.
- Put out a call for suggestions of field trip sites and potential dates.
- One RTW member/outside participant (Paul Castelli, USFWS – Forsythe NWR in NJ) suggested that even hosting a field site visit is asking a lot of them while they are feeling understaffed and under the gun to complete projects on time. TNC to revisit this issue with Forsythe NWR and other potential site visit hosts to clarify the role that TNC would play in facilitating the site visits and explore other ways to minimize any burden on local site hosts.
- Budget request on schedule to be delivered before Jan 30<sup>th</sup>
- Next progress report QPR #2 due before 3/31/17 to include notes from winter status meeting.

---

<sup>i</sup> Horton, R., D. Bader, C. Rosenzweig, A. DeGaetano, and W. Solecki. 2014. Climate Change in New York State: Updating the 2011 ClimAID Climate Risk Information. New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), Albany, New York. This report can be found on the NYSEDA website: <http://www.nyseda.ny.gov/climaid>.

**The Nature Conservancy's Regional Technical Workgroup (RTW) Contract in support of Suffolk County's Coastal Resiliency via Integrated Wetland Management Project**

**Quarterly Progress Report #2**

**Due:** March 31<sup>st</sup> 2017; **Delivered:** March 31<sup>st</sup> 2017

**Prepared by:** Nicole Maher, Senior Coastal Scientist, The Nature Conservancy

**Prepared for:** Suffolk County Department of Economic Development and Planning

1. *Background.*

Suffolk County has been awarded a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation ("NFWF") Sandy resiliency grant for wetlands restoration along the south shore of Suffolk County. The goal of this project is to support the County by providing a forum to improve the exchange of ideas and information among saltmarsh restoration practitioners across the Sandy-impacted region as we work to improve the resiliency of our coastal wetlands and coastal communities. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is contracted to assemble and lead a group of saltmarsh restoration experts for the purposes of sharing information and best practices regarding saltmarsh restoration which will then be utilized to benefit the County's saltmarsh projects and improve the resiliency of our coastal wetlands.

2. *Achievements since last reporting.*

- Worked with Suffolk County Team to develop an agenda for the RTW Winter Status meeting that met the County's needs for review and comment on the draft restoration plans for Gardiner County Park and Timber Point Marshes.
- Scheduled and held a successful Winter Status meeting on Thursday, March 2<sup>nd</sup> 2017 which was attended by at least 28 RTW members in person or remotely. The webinar counted 32 attendees and there were 6 of us gathered at TNC's office in Cold Spring Harbor. Discussions covered: restoration designs for Gardiner County Park and Timber Point Marshes, initial restoration ideas for Pepperidge Hall Marsh, two potential DEC restoration sites (Fireplace Neck and Johns Neck), Coggeshall Marsh in RI, an update on projects from RTW members, additional metrics for SC's sites, and preliminary field trip planning. The completion of this meeting and notes submitted with this progress report satisfies Task 5.
- Added Winter Status Meeting PPT files, MP4 meeting recording and relevant papers/reports to our shared meeting Box folder: "Saltmarsh Restoration Regional Technical Workgroup (RTW)" on TNC's server:  
<https://tnc.box.com/s/mdfrzjztxk0blqmltfds3e2k61v4bka>
- RTW Winter Status 2016-2017 Meeting notes are included here and after they are approved by the County, they can be posted on the shared Box folder. The delivery of these meeting notes on 3/31/17 should satisfy Task 5.

- Participated in online (e-mail) discussions among RTW members evaluating the relevant similarities and differences among restoration projects (most especially regarding Coggeshall Marsh in RI).
- Sought volunteers from RTW members directing projects at restoration sites across the region who were willing to host field trips to their relevant sites.
- Fielded suggestions for field trip proposals.
- Consulted with the SC Team to select those restoration sites which are of the greatest interest to SC and the time windows during which SC would be able to travel and visit those sites (CT, RI and NJ sites in early spring or fall 2017).
- Currently planning the logistics and details for those trips to Suffolk County's high priority locations/projects.

3. *Discussion of new opportunities challenges.*

- TNC helped Warren Pinnacle Inc. (WP) secure additional funding from NYSERDA to update the SLAMM marsh migration and flooded developed projections for Suffolk County using the updated ClimAID SLR projections, post-Sandy LiDAR, and updated marsh elevation trends data from TNC. This additional funding will also permit WP to demonstrate how to apply their new SLAMM Dynamic Marsh Management decision support tool to the prioritization of potential marsh restoration projects in Suffolk County ([http://warrenpinnacle.com/prof/SLAMM/NYSERDA2015/Description\\_Marsh\\_Management\\_Tool.pdf](http://warrenpinnacle.com/prof/SLAMM/NYSERDA2015/Description_Marsh_Management_Tool.pdf)). Even though the County has clearly explained that their primary goal for identifying the next restoration sites under this NFWF grant is to maximize the amount of acreage that can be addressed with the current grant, TNC will include the Suffolk County team in a future discussion with WP to see how WP's decision support tool might help prioritize selection of future restoration projects to maximize the delivery of ecosystem services of greatest interest to the County. This is a no-obligation and no-cost opportunity for the County to evaluate the relative potential benefits that they could reasonably expect to achieve from future restoration projects in different locations across the County.

4. *Discussion of work that lies ahead.*

- Identify dates and sites for spring field trips (CT and possibly NJ)
- Finalize scheduling and travel logistics for spring field trips
- Initiate discussion of possibilities for fall field trips (RI, and possibly NJ?)

5. *Assessment of whether you will meet the objectives in the proposed schedule and budget.*

- Budget revision request to be developed and submitted to account for any necessary adjustments based on the actual expenses from kick-off meeting and field trips.
- Next quarterly progress report before 6/30/17 to include notes from spring field trips.