

LESSONS LEARNED

Despite a high level of expertise and experience in various aspects of shoreline design and management, very little information sharing takes place among the actors in this group. There is great opportunity to share knowledge and skills through staging networking opportunities.

Sea level rise and climate change are understood to be issues of concern, but their importance is considered to be relatively low compared to other, more immediate, concerns faced by shoreline landowners. In addition, predictions of the effects of climate change and sea level rise are considered to be too imprecise to include in the design process.

Barriers to the adoption of soft shoreline techniques include: lack of knowledge in terms of design and installation; perceived costs of installation and maintenance; uncertainty regarding their longevity and efficacy in the unique energy regime of the Hudson River; loss of land required to design inland of the shore; intended uses of a site; difficulty in obtaining public funds for non-traditional designs; time required to introduce permittees to new soft engineering tools and materials; and lack of support for shoreline treatments by the general public, in light of the fact that other infrastructure such as storm sewers, water lines, and sanitary sewers are malfunctioning in some places.

Training needs are pervasive and varied, ranging from basic introduction to soft shoreline tools and techniques in various settings to high level training for engineering firms. Virtually all types of actors need training: planners, landscape architects, engineers, contractors and their seasonal staff, and permittees were all cited as needing training in soft shoreline design and management.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Take full advantage of the existing expertise and experience in the Hudson River system – engineers, planners, landscape architects, and other professionals are abundant, well-trained, energetic, and committed to the Hudson River.

Create opportunities to share information and experience. Because the organizational system is so large, varied, and complex, it is difficult to determine how best to enter new information into it. This warrants more thought, however, because at the moment the considerable expertise in the area is siloed.

Create opportunities to build trust and understanding among different type of stakeholders. There is a general lack of sensitivity to the opportunities and constraints under which different actors operate.

Develop field-based training opportunities, which provides hands-on experience as well as networking opportunities.

- Develop a HRSS-specific applied research program, which answers vital questions in short timeframes. This would comprise short-term research projects, appropriate for upper level undergraduates or masters students.