



Analysis of a Follow-up Survey to Determine Workshop Outcomes and Effectiveness

Results of a March 2015 survey of participants in the July 2014 workshop: *Applying the Findings of the Hudson River Sustainable Shorelines Project*

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Lisa Graichen

University of New Hampshire

Training for the Integration of Decision-making and Ecosystems Science (TIDES)
and

NYSDEC Hudson River National Estuarine Research Reserve

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Department of
Environmental
Conservation

Hudson River
Valley Greenway



I. BACKGROUND

Purpose

In March 2015, an online survey was sent to the participants of a workshop, *Applying the Findings of the Hudson River Sustainable Shorelines Project* (HRSSP), held in July 2014 at the Norrie Point Environmental Center in Staatsburg, New York office of the Hudson River National Estuarine Research Reserve (HRNERR) and coordinator of the training. Shoreline engineers, landscape architects, and state permit and habitat staff who work on shoreline protection in the Hudson River Estuary came together to learn about the findings of the HRSSP and increase their capacity to design and permit ecologically enhanced shoreline protection. This event included case studies presented by peers and engaging hands-on activities. The goal of this follow-up survey was to learn more about the effectiveness of the July workshop and also get feedback on other aspects of the HRSSP.

Objectives of this follow-up survey included:

1. **Learn about the outcomes of the training** – have participants taken actions or developed partnerships since participating in the workshop?
2. **Investigate the usage of the project resources** – which resources are people using, how are they using them, and how useful is the project website?
3. **Get feedback on future training needs and preferences** related to sustainable shorelines

Fifty-four people attended the workshop (including 11 members of the project team), and 25 responded to the survey (see Table 1 for the professions represented by the survey participants). These survey results can inform future training efforts related to this project as well as further work on project resources. This report summarizes the results of the survey and provides recommendations for future work.

Consent

All of the participants whose responses are reported here indicated their consent to permit the use of the information in a report for the HRSSP team (and to be included in the master's degree work of HRNERR intern and University of New Hampshire graduate student Lisa Graichen). A letter with information about the intended uses of the survey results and consent process was included when the survey was initially sent out to the participants.

Survey Development

The survey instrument was developed by Lisa Graichen, with assistance from Emilie Hauser and Ben Ganon. It was administered using SurveyMonkey™. It was first tested with several members of the project team. Participants received an email request to take the survey, initially on March 5th, with reminders sent March 11th and March 23rd. The survey was closed on March 30th, and names and email addresses (optionally submitted) were removed before analyzing the results. See Appendix A for the survey questions.

Survey Participants

Survey participants were asked to indicate the job title that best described their position out of a list of options derived from the audience. Respondents could also select “other” and type in a response. Participants could select more than one title and many did (see Appendix B for the full list of responses). The most common jobs represented included: scientists (8), landscape architects (6), engineers (6), and outreach to decision makers (6), and educators (5). Table 1 indicates the

distribution of job titles (the total number is greater than the number of survey participants because many indicated multiple job titles). This information was useful in looking for patterns in responses regarding resource use and workshop effectiveness by professional groups.

Table 1. Survey participants' reported job titles (could select more than one).

Job Title	Number of responses
Scientist	8
Engineer	6
Landscape architect	6
Outreach: decision makers	6
Educator	5
Planner	4
Other	4
Outreach: general public	3
Land manager	2
Permit administrator	2
Municipal official	1

II. RESULTS

Resources Used

All but one of the survey participants reported using at least one of the shoreline-related resources (Figure 1). One participant reported using nine of the 11 resources. The most reported resources used included the demonstration site case studies (16), HRSSP website in general (14), engineering publications (10), geospatial data (9), ecological publications (8), shoreline ecology brochure (8), and Scenic Hudson's Sea Level Rise Mapper (8; not a product of the HRSSP but a useful related resource that was incorporated into the workshop activity). Resources that were not often used included the training resources available online (4), Rapid Assessment tool (2), HRSSP website for permit information (2), and shoreline inventory data (2). One selected the "other" option. The average number of resources participants reported was 3.3.

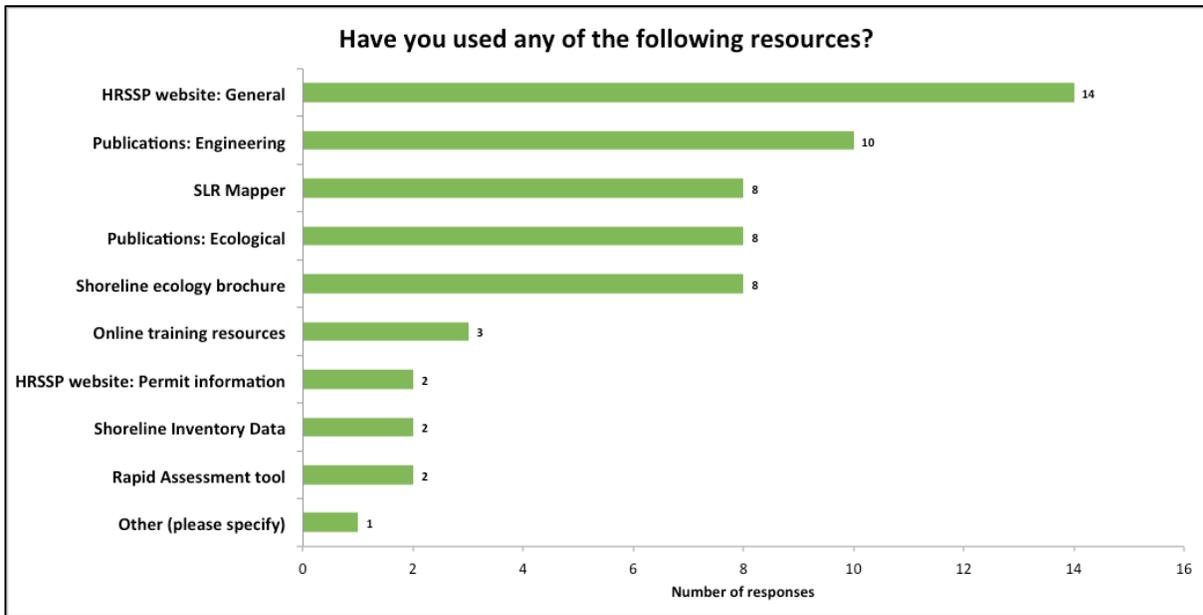


Figure 1. Reported resource use by survey participants (could select more than one option).

Participants were asked to describe how they have used these resources in their work, and also to note whether they had used the resources before the workshop. Comments submitted included (grouped by topic):

Incorporating in project planning or permitting

- I have used similar info prior but more info is always better in these cases. I have used this info to push for and plan restoration and construction projects, making sure to take river dynamics into account.
- Re: impact of predictive tidal waters at Poughkeepsie.
- [I have] incorporated knowledge gained from reading the publications into my permitting process.
- Inform decisions on stream and river bank restorations.
- I use the engineering links to inform engineers of the tools that can be used to design Hudson River shoreline projects.

Referring applicants/clients to the resources

- I have referred potential applicants to these resources for consideration in their project development.
- Already using the resources and continue to use as research guide for prospective client/projects.
- To illustrate "best practices" of documentation of pilot project demonstrations.
- I have continued to use these resources in my Hudson River habitat management activities and outreach to permit applicants, agency regulators, natural resource managers, local officials, and interested others.
- I use the examples to give landowners idea of projects that have been successful along the river.

Using in training programs, presentations, and other outreach

- I've been using the resources prior to the workshop. I've been using the above resources as I prepare training content as well as other program content. The examples from the Hudson are some of the best NY has to offer right now.
- Included the [SLR] mapper in a presentation about Nyack's Sustainability Action Plan.
- I have continued to use the resources above (since before the workshop) in my work to develop outreach materials to promote living shoreline concepts and to inform the development of a similar program for NY's Great Lakes region.
- Applied case study findings to help steer other states such as CT on the good work being undertaken by HRNERR on living shoreline advancement
- I use the geospatial data for restoration work. Some I used before but it alerted me to some new ones that I have overlooked. We ran a community workshop and I utilized a number of publications and case studies.

Sharing with colleagues

- I have shared these resources with Hudson River educators. I had been using these prior [to the workshop]. The workshop in July showcased how all of these components and various research projects fit together.

General

- I knew of the resources before. I use the engineering literature review, the case studies of demonstration sites, terminology and the beyond Hudson links.
- I [had] used these resources prior to the workshop and since the workshop. I use them in my everyday work.
- I [had] already been using the NYS Clearinghouse but the information on the engineering and ecological aspects of shoreline stabilization is pertinent to my work as a landscape architect.
- As an extension educator I have shared information about the website, as a place for information about the case studies with others.
- I have used these different resources for my dissertation, internal report writing, external report writing, proposal writing and in preparation for class.
- I previously used geospatial data. However, I have shared the shoreline brochure when appropriate.

Not used yet

- We have had no projects come to our consulting firm needing these tools. We are however, very glad to have all this information at hand, knowing it will be available when needed.

Shoreline inventory

When asked whether they had used the shoreline inventory data (Bowser and Miller, 2005), five responded yes, six responded no, and fourteen selected "not yet but plan to." Comments submitted included:

- These are great visual tools.
- I use it to seek basic background information about waterfront sites. I usually get help accessing it to save time.
- I have used it in providing content for municipal habitat summaries. The inventory is 10 years old, so may longer be accurate. It is good for understanding the system.
- I have used it occasionally to help NGOs understand a particular piece of shoreline. It could be improved by snapping the shoreline inventory to an accurate shoreline shapefile.
- I haven't used it because I don't cover the Hudson River, not because I wouldn't find it useful.

- These images are really useful for audiences. I have not used them formally yet.

HRSSP Website

When asked about the usefulness of the project website, most rated it “very useful” (14), seven rated it “somewhat useful,” two selected N/A, and two did not respond (Figure 3). Feedback on the website included:

Content

- The site is generally well organized but content needs to be expanded, particularly the information on demonstration sites.
- I like the content – there is a lot of stuff on the site, which may be less useful, maybe intimidating to people operating outside academic realms.

Navigability and usability

- I have found the site easy to navigate. There is quite a lot of content, so it might be challenging for someone less familiar with the project overall.
- More way finding. More descriptions of the documents. On the Beyond Hudson, give a description of what the link is about.
- Indicate any new material. Since I frequently visit the site, it would be nice to see the new material highlighted in some way.
- I'd like to be able to save and email the case studies, rather than just send people a link. If there's a way to do that, I haven't found it.

General

- Very useful and well organized website.
- It's terrific that all this information has been developed and is ready for use. Thank you.
- I haven't really explored it. I just took a look at it again briefly and can say it seems like a resource I expect to recommend and use as we expand our capacity and horizons in sustainability planning in Nyack. We did reference it in our Sustainable Nyack Action Plan.

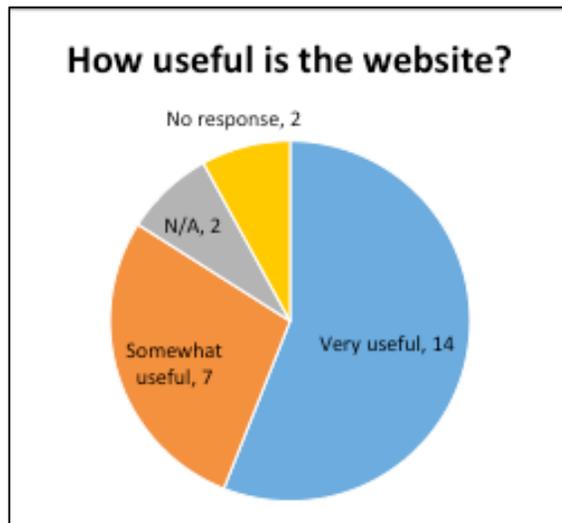


Figure 3. Reported usefulness of the HRSSP website.

Partnerships Established

Survey participants were asked whether they have established partnerships with anyone they met at the workshop, and if so, what the purpose was (Figure 4). Ten responded that yes, they have reached out to people from the workshop for general outreach. Five reached out for other purposes, four with engineering questions, three with ecological questions, and two with permit questions. Ten had not reached out to establish partnerships at the time of this survey.

Comments submitted included:

- Shoreline engineering is not my field of endeavor.
- Primarily for the purpose of obtaining information that will help us develop a Great Lakes Sustainable Shorelines initiative.
- Cooperation.
- Comments entered in other sections.



Figure 4. Reported partnerships established related to the HRSSP July 2014 workshop (could select more than one answer).

Actions Taken

Survey participants were asked to report the frequency with which they have taken a variety of actions related to the July 2014 workshop (never, once, occasionally (once or twice a month), frequently (once a week), or daily (Figure 2). There were a small number of reports of daily frequency for certain actions (sharing information or resources with a colleague or client (1), recommended ecologically enhanced approaches to a colleague or client (2), researched alternative shoreline stabilization approaches (2), incorporated sea level rise projects into a shorelines-related project (1), and used the geospatial data in my work (2). Many people reported occasional frequency of the actions. There were some reports of “never” or “once” taking the actions, especially for accessing the workshop presentations online (10 never, 11 once). All who responded had shared information or resources with a colleague or client at least once (9 once; 13 occasionally; 1 frequently; 1 daily; 1 no response). These results do not necessarily indicate that these actions were caused by participation in the July 2014 workshop, but it is useful to at least get a sense of what actions are being taken by this group of end users. See Appendix C for a summary of frequencies reported for each action.

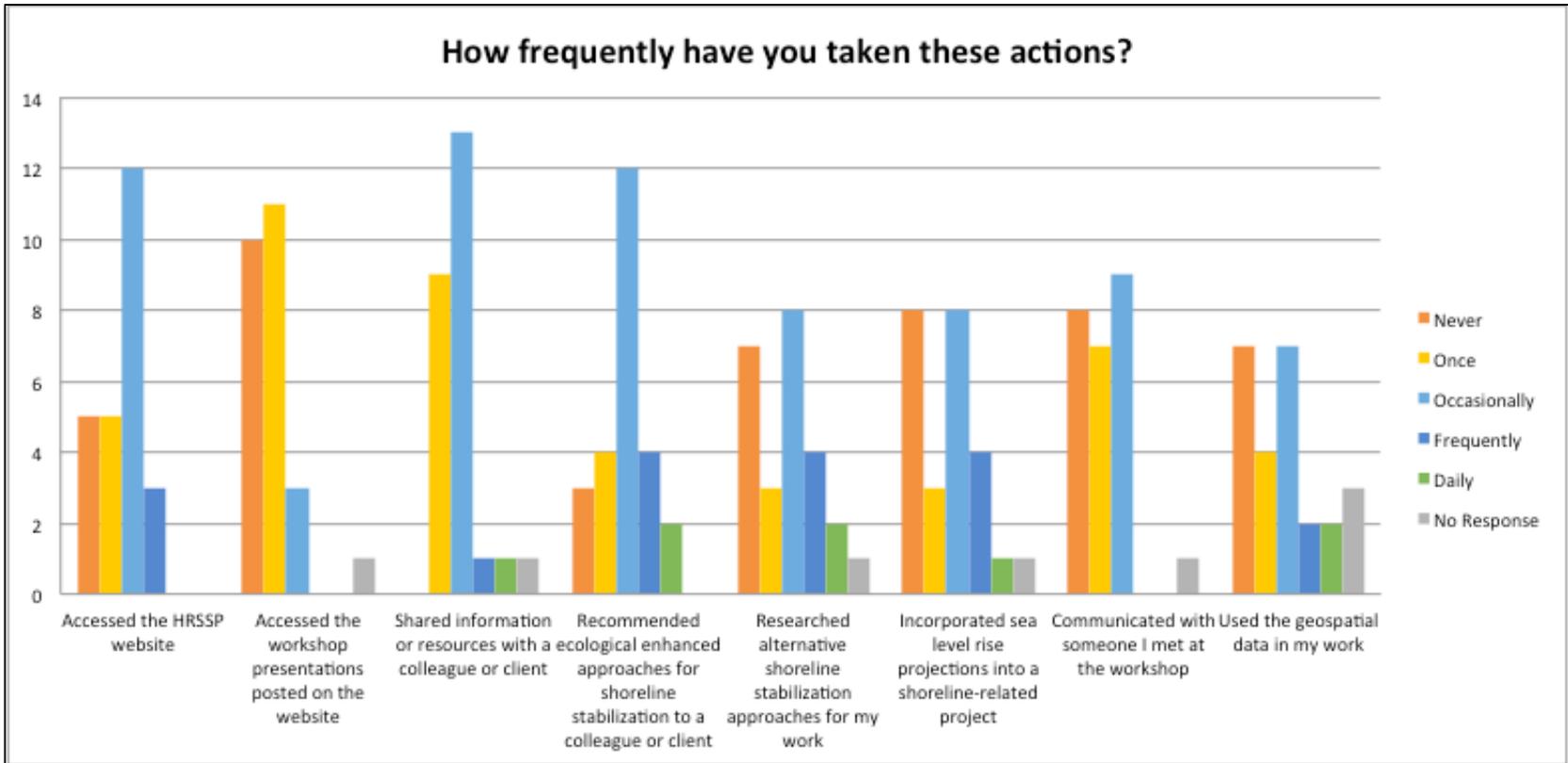


Figure 2. Reported frequency of a variety of actions related to the HRSSP July workshop.

Barriers Encountered

When asked whether they have encountered barriers to implementing more sustainable shoreline management in their own work, 13 said yes, 4 said no, 2 were not sure, 3 preferred not to answer, and 3 had no response (Figure 5). There were many comments submitted for this question (organized here by barrier topics):

Uncertainty, risk, and lack of knowledge

- Lack of design guidance.
- Other parties lack of knowledge regarding living shorelines.
- Uncertainty of permitting specific projects within NYS.
- Recently I encountered a challenge in getting an urban brownfield site owner to consider making changes in the shoreline to enhance ecological functions, mainly because of perceived risk of uncovering more contamination and being saddled with that cleanup.
- There also seems to be a lack of consistent understanding among regulatory and engineering personnel on available "soft" options and the benefits of softened shoreline protection structures.
- Overall, there is a lack of understanding as to what approaches will perform well (from an ecological and engineering standpoint) over time. There is a general lack of confidence in new designs that have not been widely tested.
- Lastly, there seem to be limited options available to effectively soften shorelines in high-energy areas – more information on potential options is needed.
- Currently, I would describe the barriers (in the context of my work) more in the context of how to prioritize these types of approaches, or improve understanding as an alternative approach, as opposed to actual barriers to implementation.

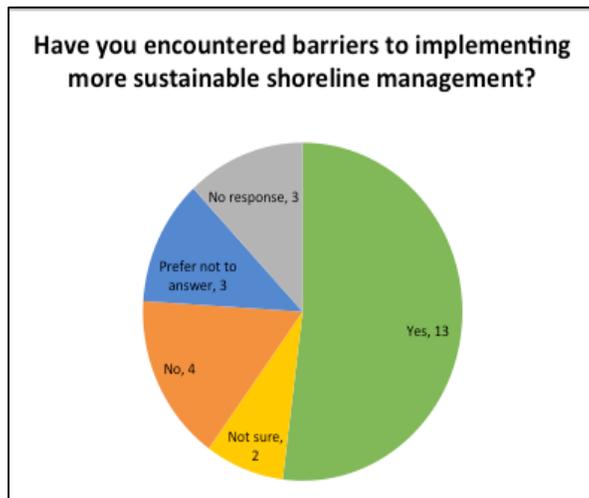


Figure 5. Survey participants indicated whether they have encountered barriers to implementing more sustainable shoreline management in their work.

Engineers and project managers

- Many engineers are uncomfortable with soft shoreline approaches, particularly ones relying on vegetative growth. We also need more case for less sheltered area that experience greater tidal action, waves, and ice damage.
- Sustainable approaches are not always well received by established engineering professionals who control project scopes.
- Trying to convince the engineers that have a methodology predefined in their courses that there are other ways to design a project.
- Many engineers are reluctant to try new approaches to shoreline stabilization such as living shorelines. It is difficult to assess stability of non-engineered shorelines.
- There are plenty of project directors/leaders/managers that don't see the value in sustainable approaches yet. They will use the hard structured engineering approaches as always for now. So the need to continue to do what you do and even expand it continues.
- Convincing project sponsors that a sustainable shoreline doesn't mean they lose access or that the site will be "messy."

Permitting and regulations

- Permitting with the regulatory agencies puts these projects at a disadvantage with more traditional protection strategies in terms of the all-important "how much land am I going to lose"? These projects, being a bit more out of the norm, also seem to get more scrutiny by the regulatory agencies.
- Conservative permit administration.
- There are policy barriers that seem to keep people from utilizing untested approaches. I think we need to be more willing to experiment with new approaches, which I think we acknowledged in the meeting.

Client interest and willingness

- Our barrier has simply been the lack of clients proposing shoreline projects.
- Municipalities still do not address the issues unless it is generally acknowledged and pressing risk and liability...Need continued public outreach and also demonstration projects.

Other

- Does not apply.
- My work so far has not involved enough of the issues to have encountered barriers but I am sure it will on a substantial project.
- Not specifically. In Nyack we have a set of opportunities on the waterfront that need a deep and fresh look. We now have obtained a NYSERDA Cleaner, Greener Communities grant for a sustainability update to the Comp. Plan, with a heavy emphasis on the waterfront, so have this as a prime opportunity to utilize the tools and resources from Sustainable Shorelines and the Hudson River Comprehensive Restoration Plan.

Usefulness of the workshop

About eight months since the workshop, almost all of the survey participants felt that the workshop was a good use of their time (23 out of 25). Two were not sure. Comments submitted included:

- Even though I've been involved with the project, it was helpful to see people attempting to use all the sources at one sitting. I got a better sense of both the challenges of taking it all in, and the ease with which people could make use of it.
- Well-run and very valuable.
- The information presented was relevant and useful, and it was a great networking opportunity.
- Most important was seeing who was involved in this type of work or concerned about it for future collaborations.
- I did learn new things, even if I may not specifically apply them to my work.
- I like the cumulative content of the workshop.

Future Training

Preferred training format:

The most preferred modes of training included: in-person trainings (12), webinars (11), annual conferences (10), and small working groups (7). Two had no preference, one preferred not to answer, and four selected “other.”

Comments submitted included:

- Conferences are better as they offer a chance to personally engage with presenters.
- Specifics on design for climate change resilience.
- Working groups to discuss regulatory guidance.
- All useful, depends on topics.

Table 2. Training format options and number of responses for each.

Training Format	Number of responses
In-person trainings	12
Webinar	11
Annual conferences	10
Small working groups	7
Other	4
No preference	2
Prefer not to answer	1

Training topics:

Survey participants were asked which further training topics would be useful. The most popular topics selected were: more specific engineering and design guidance (14), economic valuation of ecosystem services (11), [trainings] focused on bringing multiple disciplines together (11), regulations and permitting processes (10), shoreline project monitoring (10), and cost considerations of shoreline projects (8). Other topics and comments submitted include:

- More design, construction, and maintenance guidance especially for licensed design professionals such as landscape architects and engineers who will lead these projects for design, construction, and maintenance.
- Need to incorporate resilience to climate change in general planning.
- Successfully/creatively incorporating the human element in an ecological shoreline design.
- Sustainable or 'soft' shoreline options for high-energy coasts.
- Less engineering and design guidance; more focus on regulatory issues.

Table 3. Further training topics needed and number of survey participants who selected each.

Training Topic	Number of responses
More specific engineering and design guidance	14
Economic valuation of ecosystem services	11
Focused on bringing multiple disciplines together	11
Shoreline project monitoring	10
Regulations and permitting process	10
Cost considerations of shoreline projects	8
Other	5
Shoreline project management	4

Use of geospatial tools	2
Focused on an individual discipline	0

Additional Feedback

- The workshop team did a very good job of designing effective exercises for the workshop.
- You really need to demonstrate with examples how engineers would actually use some of the data presented in the workshop. I think the statements by representatives from Stevens Institute that engineers know how to use the information about hydraulic stresses (current velocities, etcetera) is generally not true. Some in the audience asked about this and their questions were not answered.
- You are doing great work. Please continue!
- This effort is in its beginning stages and hopefully we will see a larger effort for ecological shoreline treatments, softening of shorelines and flood mitigation.

III. CONCLUSION

This survey provided useful information about the effectiveness of the workshop and some useful insight in terms of the actions participants took, resources people use, the partnerships people have formed, the usefulness of the website, and barriers still faced by this group of end users. The survey participants represented a variety of different professional backgrounds and about half of the total number of participants at the workshop. Participants reported that the workshop was a useful, well-run, and valuable learning and networking opportunity. Many have reached out to people they met at the workshop. Most also reported that the website is useful, but there were some constructive suggestions for improvement of content and navigability (see below). All but one of the survey respondents have used at least one of the project resources, with the most used resources being the project website, engineering and ecological publications, shoreline brochure, and Scenic Hudson’s Sea Level Rise Mapper. A variety of uses of these resources were described: incorporating in project planning or permitting, referring applicants and clients to the resources, using in training programs or other outreach, and sharing with colleagues. Some have used the shoreline inventory data, and many responded that they intend to do so.

It is clear that the Hudson River Sustainable Shoreline Project results and resources have been useful to a variety of shoreline decision makers. There are still barriers and challenges to implementing more sustainable shoreline management, such as uncertainty, lack of knowledge and understanding, having support for new engineering approaches, permitting and regulatory barriers, and client interest and willingness. The results of this survey will inform future training efforts, website revisions, and other outreach efforts for the Hudson River Sustainable Shorelines Project.

Recommendations

- Expand web content, particularly information on the demonstration sites. Make it clear how to download and share the case studies. Provide more descriptions of documents, highlight new material, and improve way finding.
- Focus on in-person trainings, webinars, an annual conference, and maybe small working groups for future training events.
- Provide more examples about how engineers can actually use the physical forces data.

- Prioritize these training topics: more specific engineering and design guidance, economic valuation of shoreline ecosystem services, shoreline project monitoring, and regulations and permitting processes. Another topic mentioned was how to design shoreline treatment for climate resilience.
- Implement this workshop approach to reach more people.
- Work on targeting the barriers mentioned by these participants, including clarifying regulatory processes, increasing client interest in sustainable shoreline approaches, and ensuring support for engineers to design these approaches.

Appendix A. Survey Questions

* indicates a required question (only the consent questions were required)

1. I consent to allow my (anonymous) responses to be used in an internal report for HRNERR and the HRSSP team. This may be shared with the NERRS Science Collaborative for evaluation purposes.*
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

2. I consent to allow my (anonymous) responses to be used in a report and possibly presentation for Lisa Graichen's master's work.*
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

3. Since the July 2014 workshop, have you used any of the following resources and tools in your work? Please select all that apply and write in any other resources not listed. (Unless otherwise indicated, these resources can be found at www.HRNERR.org; when we refer to HRSSP website we are referring to <https://www.hrnerr.org/ HUDSON-RIVER-SUSTAINABLE-SHORELINES/>)

<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstration site network case studies <input type="checkbox"/> Geospatial data (e.g., NYS Clearinghouse or NYHOPS) <input type="checkbox"/> HRSSP website: General <input type="checkbox"/> HRSSP website: Permit information <input type="checkbox"/> Publications: Engineering <input type="checkbox"/> Publications: Ecological	<input type="checkbox"/> Online training resources (e.g., presentations from July workshop) <input type="checkbox"/> Rapid Assessment tool <input type="checkbox"/> Scenic Hudson's Sea Level Rise Mapper <input type="checkbox"/> Shoreline ecology brochure <input type="checkbox"/> Shoreline Inventory Data <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)
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4. Please describe how you have used these in your work. If you were already using the resources prior to the workshop, please note that as well.

5. How frequently (if ever) have you taken any of the following actions (if any) as a result of your experience at the workshop? Please indicate the frequency with which you have taken these actions.

	Never	Once	Occasionally (once or twice a month)	Frequently (once a week)	Daily
Accessed the HRSSP website					
Accessed the workshop presentations posted on the website					
Shared information or resources with a colleague or client					
Recommended ecologically enhanced approaches for shoreline stabilization to a colleague or client					
Researched alternative shoreline stabilization approaches for my work					
Incorporated sea level rise projections into a shoreline-related project					
Communicated with someone I met at the					

workshop					
Used the geospatial data in my work					
Other (please specify)					

6. How useful do you find the HRSSP website overall?
- Not at all useful
 - Somewhat useful
 - Very useful
 - N/A
- Do you have any feedback on the content or usability of the HRSSP website? Can you easily find the resources you need?
7. Have you used the Hudson River Estuary Shoreline Inventory ([available here](#)) created by Bowser & Miller in 2005? These data identify the character (hard engineered, soft engineered, or natural), type of structure (e.g., revetment, bulkhead, woody vegetation, etc.), and structure material or substrate for segments of the Hudson River shoreline from the Tappan Zee Bridge to Troy.
- Yes
 - Not yet, but plan to
 - No
 - Prefer not to answer
- If you answered yes, please explain how you use the inventory, and how it could be improved.
8. Since the workshop, have you established partnerships with anyone you met at the workshop? If so, what is the purpose of reaching out? (you may select more than one option)
- Yes, with engineering questions
 - Yes, with questions about geospatial data
 - Yes, with permit questions
 - Yes, with ecological questions
 - Yes, with project management questions
 - Yes, general outreach
 - Yes, for other purposes
 - No
 - Prefer not to answer
 - Other (please specify)
9. Have you encountered barriers to implementing more sustainable approaches to shoreline management in your work? If so, please describe.
- Yes
 - No
 - Not sure
 - Prefer not to answer
 - Please describe
10. Looking back, was attending the July workshop a good use of your time?
- Yes
 - No
 - Not sure
 - Prefer not to answer
 - Please explain
11. What further training topics would be useful? You may select more than one, or describe other options in the comment box below).
- Use of geospatial tools
 - Regulations and permitting process
 - More specific engineering and design guidance
 - Cost considerations of shoreline projects
 - Economic valuation of ecosystem services
 - Shoreline project management
 - Shoreline project monitoring
 - Focused on an individual discipline

- Focused on bringing multiple disciplines together
- Other (please specify)

12. Which mode of training would you prefer? If you have a preference for certain topics, please mention in the comment box.

- In-person trainings
- Annual conferences
- Webinar
- Small working groups
- No preference
- Prefer not to answer
- Other (please specify)

13. Please provide any additional feedback you would like to share.

14. Please select the job title that best describes your position (you may select more than one) (submitting this information is optional but is useful for us to understand how effective the training was for different groups)

- Educator
- Engineer
- Land manager
- Landscape architect
- Municipal official
- Outreach: decision makers
- Outreach: general public
- Permit administrator
- Planner
- Scientist
- Other (please specify)

15. Please enter your name, company or organization, and email (optional) (submitting this information is optional – it may be used by Emilie Hauser to follow up if needed)

- a. Name
- b. Company/organization
- c. Email

Appendix B. Job Titles Indicated by Survey Participants

Job Title	# of Responses
Biologist with a focus on analyzing impacts and the regulations	1
Educator, municipal official, outreach: decision makers, outreach: general public, planner, architect, author	1
Educator, outreach: decision makers, outreach with other groups (e.g., boating public)	1
Educator/outreach: decision makers	1
Engineer	4
Engineer, scientist	1
Land manage, outreach: decision makers	1
Land manager, outreach: general public, planner, scientist	1
Landscape architect	3
Landscape architect, outreach: decision makers, outreach: general public, planner	1
Landscape architect, scientist	1
Outreach: decision makers	1
Permit administrator	1
Permit administrator, scientist	1
Planner	1
Scientist	3
Scientist, project manager for state agency	1
No response	1
<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>25</i>

Appendix C. Results: Frequency of Actions Taken

Action	Never	Once	Occasionally	Frequently	Daily	No Response
Accessed the HRSSP website	5	5	12	3	0	0
Accessed the workshop presentations posted on the website	10	11	3	0	0	1
Shared information or resources with a colleague or client	0	9	13	1	1	1
Recommended ecological enhanced approaches for shoreline stabilization to a colleague or client	3	4	12	4	2	0
Researched alternative shoreline stabilization approaches for my work	7	3	8	4	2	1
Incorporated sea level rise projections into a shoreline-related project	8	3	8	4	1	1
Communicated with someone I met at the workshop	8	7	9	0	0	1
Used the geospatial data in my work	7	4	7	2	2	3