



## New Jersey Coastal Resilience Collaborative 2024 Biennial Workplan

The New Jersey Coastal Resilience Collaborative (NJCRC) is a network established to foster sustainable and resilient coastal communities and ecosystems by generating informed action. NJCRC partners include state and private universities, non-profit and for-profit groups, national estuary programs and reserves, advocacy groups, state agencies and regional planning groups.

The NJCRC priorities are:

1. **Building partnerships** by bringing stakeholders and interested parties from all sectors to the table to optimize expertise, and to integrate all elements related to coastal resilience such as land use and future development, transportation, housing, economic development, public facilities and infrastructure, natural resource protection, and historic properties and cultural resources.
2. **Working directly with communities** to raise awareness, identify challenges, build support for addressing those challenges, and promote the implementation of beneficial solutions.
3. **Information sharing** promotes open communication within the group and with the public. Continuous open communication creates a knowledge base that allows for leveraging other's successes and failures to improve and enhance resiliency among coastal communities.
4. **Inform decision-making to foster action** through the development of science, tools, and data; by using common and consistent messaging; by promoting best practices; and by providing accessible education and training.

The NJCRC 2024 Bi-Annual Workplan reflects the Collaborative's broader goals for the next two years. Based off the success of the NJCRC/DEP 2024 New Jersey Coastal and Climate Resilience Conference, the NJCRC will be hosting smaller one day events in 2025 and planning another joint conference with NJDEP for 2026. The NJCRC is also reviewing and preparing comments on the NJPACT REAL rules and the State Redevelopment Plan. The NJCRC will continue to address emerging issues (as a Collaborative and through the Workgroups) as they arise and build partnerships to make resilience a priority.

### The NJCRC Workgroups

The NJCRC currently has six workgroups that are comprised of representatives from member organizations as well as outside organizations. Each workgroup is dedicated to specific topics. The NJCRC workgroups serve various functions that include providing technical assistance to coastal communities, support for Collaborative and Workgroup efforts, and

offering guidance based on synthesized regional knowledge on areas of expertise such as ecological restoration and the beneficial use of dredged material. Additionally, transitory Workgroups may create a consensus document/letter that comments on proposed rules and documents presented by the State or other entity. Throughout the year, the NJCRC Workgroups and Leadership Committee assess the input provided by the full partnership to identify the next set of priority actions with a focus on collaborative work spanning the NJCRC partner expertise and interests.

Current workgroups include:

- Beneficial Use Learning Network (BULN)
- Coastal Habitat and Aquatic Resource Research and Monitoring (CHARRM)
- Communications
- Ecological Restoration and Science (ER&S)
- Field Site Visit
- Municipal
- Technical Assistance Coffee Chat

Each workgroup submits an annual workplan to the Leadership Committee that identifies priorities and action items for the upcoming year to help guide the overall mission of the NJCRC. The NJCRC Leadership is responsible for providing input and approving each workplan. Summaries of the 2024 annual workplans are provided below. Full workplans are posted on the NJCRC website and on Basecamp.

### **Beneficial Use Learning Network (BULN) Workgroup**

Purpose Statement: The BULN is a multi-organizational cooperative whose mission is developing a shared understanding of restoration tactics and projects using dredged sediment. The primary purpose of the Beneficial Use Learning Network is to collect and disseminate information for planning, implementing, and assessing beneficial use projects to maximize the ecological uplift for coastal habitats and community resilience by preserving ecosystem services and maintaining safe navigational channels. With the understanding that practitioners, resource managers and regulators have concerns about beneficial use in salt marshes and other coastal systems, it is vital to build a shared understanding of beneficial use techniques and develop a shared vision for when and how these techniques can be used to help retain the diversity of coastal habitats in the face of a changing climate.

#### Goals and Objectives:

**Goal 1:** Reform the network's structure and leadership through listening sessions with the full membership to determine learning focus and subject matter experts to engage in 2024.

- *Objective:* Adopt a leadership model similar to other work groups.
- *Objective:* Accept nominations for one or more co-chairs to ensure a diversity of thoughts charting the course of the Network.

**Goal 2:** Launch community of practice structure and continue shared learning through project-based examples.

- *Objective:* Provide at least two webinars.

- *Objective:* Present at NJCRC/DEP 2024 New Jersey Coastal and Climate Resilience Conference in 2024.
- *Objective:* Coordinate at least one in person field visit (possibly in coordination with CHARRM or ER&S WGs).

**Goal 3:** Synthesize shared lessons and regional case studies in a tangible way and inform the broader coastal restoration discussion on planning, permitting, implementing and monitoring coastal restoration projects in NJ and throughout the region.

- *Objective:* Complete Case Studies, Technical Guidance and Project Framing Documents and disseminate.
- *Objective:* Coordinate with CHARRM and ER&S Workgroups and Regional Workgroups contributing member expertise to achieve shared objectives.
- *Objective:* Plan and hold a field trip.

**Goal 4:** Develop training/educational materials for new practitioners/project managers.

- *Objective:* Demystify beneficial use tactics for interested parties.

Workgroup Lead: Adrianna Zito-Livingston

### **Communications Workgroup**

Purpose Statement: To create clear and concise communication materials that leverage the existing NJCRC network of professionals and connect local stakeholders with practitioners from government, non-profit, private, and academic sectors to enhance coastal resilience and outreach. Membership is open to all NJCRC members. Members are expected to contribute to public outreach efforts, content creation, and other activities that help communication and promote the work of the NJCRC.

#### Goals and Objectives:

**Goal 1:** Strengthen external communication

- *Objective:* Improve communication within NJCRC's network partners and government agencies.
- *Objective:* Enhance awareness of NJCRC through effective external communication.

**Goal 2:** Increase public understanding of coastal resiliency

- *Objective:* Foster understanding and implement tools and platforms that facilitate teamwork and information sharing.

#### Action Items and Outcomes:

**Activity 1:** Oversee redesign of NJCRC website and migration of content to new site (with URL [protectthecoast.org](http://protectthecoast.org)) designed by Sparkman Media.

**Activity 2:** Provide communications support for New Jersey Coastal & Climate Resilience Conference, including promotional emails, branded event materials, social media collateral, registration systems, etc.

**Activity 3:** Produce bi-annual digital newsletter featuring content created by work group and collected from other NJCRC workgroups and members.

**Activity 4:** Maintain the NJCRC website to ensure access to timely information for members and the public, including work group webinars, blog posts, current membership roster and other content as needed.

**Activity 5:** Promote webinars organized by the Technical Assistance Coffee Chat Workgroup and compile, edit, and post recordings on NJCRC website.

**Activity 6:** Produce digital email campaigns via Constant Contact to promote events, webinars and other NJCRC news as needed, and actively maintain the organization's mail list in the system.

**Activity 7:** Produce branded materials (fact sheets, flyers, PowerPoint slides) as needed to support leaders/members with engagement at conferences and events that forward the mission and raise the profile of the NJCRC.

Workgroup Lead: Karl Vilacoba, Monmouth University Urban Coast Institute

**Coastal Habitat and Aquatic Resources Research and Monitoring (CHARRM) Workgroup**

Purpose Statement: The CHARRM Workgroup facilitates collaboration and communication among Mid-Atlantic regulatory/resource agencies, restoration practitioners, and research scientists on current coastal habitat restoration, coastal resources and associated data collection issues. CHARRM aims to inform action, increase efficiencies, provide learning resources, work through perceived hurdles and advance science-based coastal habitat restoration.

Goals and Objectives:

**Goal 1:** Ensure data collection around restoration work meets shared objectives and answers outstanding resource questions

- *Objective:* Standardize practices, develop research proposals, identify data gaps, etc.
- *Objective:* Understand resource agency concerns and promote data collection that informs management.

**Goal 2:** Create an open forum to share knowledge, discuss current topics and increase efficiencies among the 3 targeted stakeholder groups

- *Objective:* Facilitate knowledge sharing between resource agencies and restoration practitioners and bringing in outside expertise to fill gaps.
- *Objective:* Ensure knowledge/deliverables are publicly available.

**Goal 3:** Increase efficiencies among the 3 targeted stakeholder groups

- *Objective:* Streamline permit review processes for all.
- *Objective:* Influence how policy is interpreted through science-based knowledge integration.
- *Objective:* Influence how projects are planned based on resource agency needs.

**Goal 4:** Action items informed by member input, expertise and current needs in the Mid-Atlantic Region

- *Objective:* Annual in-person kickoff meeting in February.
- *Objective:* Plan field trips of interest.

Action Items:

**Action Item 1:** In-person meeting TBD.

**Action Item 2:** In-person field trips to restoration sites/projects of interest.

**Action Item 3:** Streamline permit application preparation and review processes through easy-to-reference guideline document.

**Action Item 4:** Convene session at NJCRC/NJDEP 2024 New Jersey Coastal & Climate Resilience Conference in March.

**Action Item 5:** Continue learning Webinar Series on Current Topics (3+ webinars), and synthesize Learning Webinar Series into easy-to-reference Factsheets.

**Action Item 6:** Share CHARRM's organizing, working action items, tasks, responsibility and leadership with members, and expand CHARRM'S research/WG, especially to academics and researchers.

**Action Item 7:** Synthesize Learning Webinar Series into easy-to-reference factsheets

**Action Item 8:** Plan and set expectations for 2025.

**Action Item 9:** Expand CHARRM's reach, especially to academics and researchers.

Workgroup Members:

- Lead: Danielle McCulloch, USFWS, Coastal Program and Jessie Murray, NMFS, Habitat and Ecosystems Services Division
- Members: Resource managers, restoration practitioners (of all kinds), and academic researchers in the Mid-Atlantic region. Members include professionals from Virginia to New York.
- Member Organizations: U.S.FWS Coastal Program, National Marine Fisheries Service/NOAA, NJDEP (various departments, many folks), Partnership for the Delaware Estuary, The Nature Conservancy NJ, Am. Littoral Society, Stockton University, Rutgers University, Virginia Institute of Marine Science, Drexel University, Barnegat Bay Partnership, U.S. FWS E.B. Forsythe Refuge, Army Corps, EPA, MD Dept of the Environment, Ducks Unlimited, Stevens Institute of Technology, Wetland Institute, ACT Engineering, NYC Parks, Pew Trusts, DNREC, and others.

**Ecological Restoration & Science (ER&S) Workgroup**

Purpose Statement: The ER&S Workgroup is a multi-sector workgroup of the NJCRC that aims to represent the variable coastal geographies and scientific expertise in NJ with the following charges:

1. Connect planning and restoration activities with the best available science;
2. Provide scientific review when appropriate;
3. Promote a greater understanding of how to align restoration tactics with site-specific conditions; and
4. Advocate for scientific inquiry regarding appropriate restoration practices.

### Goals and Outcomes:

**Goal 1:** Finish any remaining Coastal Resilience Resource Library items remaining from 2023

**Goal 2:** Develop leadership rotation schedule to provide opportunities for work group members to gain leadership experience and to promote diversity regarding ideas and operations

- *Outcome:* An engaged membership assisting with the 2025 work plan creation.
- *Outcome:* Identification of possible new co-chairs, sub groups, etc.

**Goal 3:** ER&S Session planning for the NJCRC/NJDEP 2024 New Jersey Coastal and Climate Resilience Conference in March

- *Outcome:* Produce a white paper based on conference session.
- *Outcome:* Hold a possible second session at PDE Sci Summit focused on regulatory needs and roadblocks that can inform an action plan (2025).
- *Outcome:* Convene a follow up session and/or produce paper (2026).

**Goal 4:** Help coordinate a joint ER&S/CHARRM meeting to develop complementary 2024/2025 work plans leveraging our individual efforts and assist with the development of a Regulatory Guidance Document.

**Goal 5:** Provide scientific review and advisement on documents, monitoring plans, etc.

**Goal 6:** When requested, provide content for the NJCRC newsletter .

### Workgroup Co-chairs:

- Capt. Al Modjeski, ALS
- Josh Moody, NJDEP
- Martha Maxwell Doyle, PDE
- Meredith Comi, Monmouth University Urban Coast Institute

### **Field Site Visit Workgroup**

The Field Site Visit Workgroup was formed and approved in April 2024 to provide support for planning and facilitating NJCRC field trips and site visits. Workgroup leads will work in coordination with the Field Site Visit Workgroup to inform the field trips and site visits to ensure workgroup priorities and messaging is accurately conveyed. Field trips and site visits may serve an educational purpose. There is no formal workplan for 2024, however the workgroup aims to host 2-3 field trips/site visits by year's end.

Workgroup Lead: Michael Galvin, JMT Inc.

### **Municipal Workgroup**

Purpose Statement: The Municipal Workgroup is a multi-sector workgroup of the NJCRC that aims to identify and help overcome municipal obstacles to resilience in NJ's coastal communities.

The Municipal Workgroup is tasked with the following challenges:

1. Identifying regulatory inhibitions to resilience at the municipal level and ways to combat them;

2. Foster partnerships by matching municipal needs with available services (where appropriate);
3. Balance the workgroup with a mix of municipal, non-profit, academic and professional members, all with a focus on resilience;
4. Advocate for municipal representation at DEP and DOT stakeholder committees; and
5. Develop a policy document.

#### Goals and Objectives:

**Goal 1:** Outreach to Coastal Municipalities to expand and engage NJCRC membership.

- *Objective:* create/update a contact database for the 111 Coastal communities

**Goal 2:** Automate notices from NJCRC to go to municipal contact list.

- *Objective:* Get pertinent CRC messages to municipalities to generate interest and attendance

**Goal 3:** Help develop content for the NJCRC/NJDEP conference in March.

**Goal 4:** Identify municipal obstacles and inhibitions to resilience planning.

- *Objective:* Develop target audiences for various obstacles through interaction with DPW directors, municipal managers, engineers and planners

**Goal 5:** Provide content to NJCRC newsletter

- *Objective:* Provide up to two articles for a NJCRC newsletter

#### Workgroup Co-Chairs:

- Angela Andersen, Long Beach Township, NJ
- Elissa Commins, NJAFM

### **Technical Assistance Coffee Chat Planning Workgroup**

Purpose Statement: To leverage the existing NJCRC network of professionals and connect local stakeholders with practitioners from the government, non-profit, private, and academic sectors that can offer technical assistance to enhance coastal resilience.

#### Goals:

**Goal 1:** Build community capacity to address new and changing state requirements for local coastal resilience planning.

**Goal 2:** Maintain a “living” resource list of practitioners and organizations that can provide various types of resilience-related technical assistance to local stakeholders.

**Goal 3:** Improve future implementation of Technical Assistance Coffee Chats from target audience recommendations as resources and/or capacity allows.

#### Outcomes:

**Outcome 1:** Develop and implement up to 6 Technical Assistance Coffee Chats, incorporating at least 1-2 in-person networking opportunities including one at Monmouth University this fall.

**Outcome 2:** Work with NJCRC website developers to update Technical Assistance Directory with any new Technical Assistance Directory Survey responses.

**Outcome 3:** Work closely with NJCRC Municipal Workgroup to address relevant technical assistance gaps in coffee chats.

**Outcome 4:** Review Coffee Chat survey evaluations in workgroup meetings and incorporate feedback into future Coffee Chats.

Workgroup Lead: Amanda Archer, Jacques Cousteau Coastal Education Center