Appendix 6-E: Wetlands & Waterbodies Technical Memorandum

Technical Memorandum

Date: May 8, 2024

To: Fredrik Hallsten – NKT

From: Frank Smolenski, Senior Environmental Scientist

Project: Champlain Hudson Power Express Project

Subject: Harlem River Bulkhead; Wetlands Assessment

Project Description and Purpose

At the request of NKT, TRC undertook a Wetlands Presence-Absence Assessment at the Champlain Hudson Power Express (CHPE) Project's proposed Harlem River Bulkhead Penetration and Tie-In location as depicted in Figure 1. This area is currently used by Waste Management Inc. as a transfer facility, with the Project Area used for container storage before transfer elsewhere. TRC assessment efforts included the following tasks:

1. A desktop review of existing, publicly available federal and state agency resources for wetlands and/or wetlands indicators;
2. A field assessment of all aquatic features within the proposed Project Area; and
3. Documentation of identified aquatic features, including any wetlands and surface waters, which may be subject to potential agency jurisdiction for each resource based on properties identified in the field.

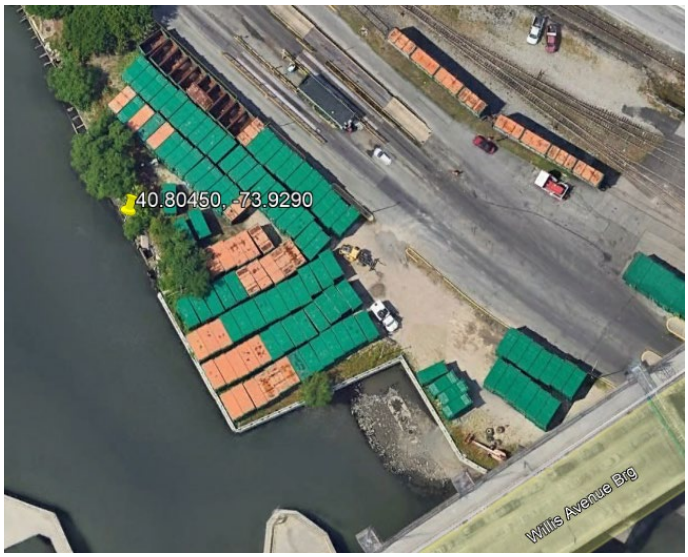

Figure 1 Site Aerial View

Desktop Reviews

Federal and State Mapped Wetlands and Streams

A review of the New York State-regulated wetlands, as mapped by the NYSDEC[1] for the Project Area, indicated no wetlands within the Project Area boundaries. State mapping did identify the Harlem River waters as Estuarine, Impaired Segment (IR Category 5) (Figure 2). The Project Area is also noted by NYSDEC as lying within the 100-year flood hazard zone, as mapped by the Federal Emergency Management Administration.

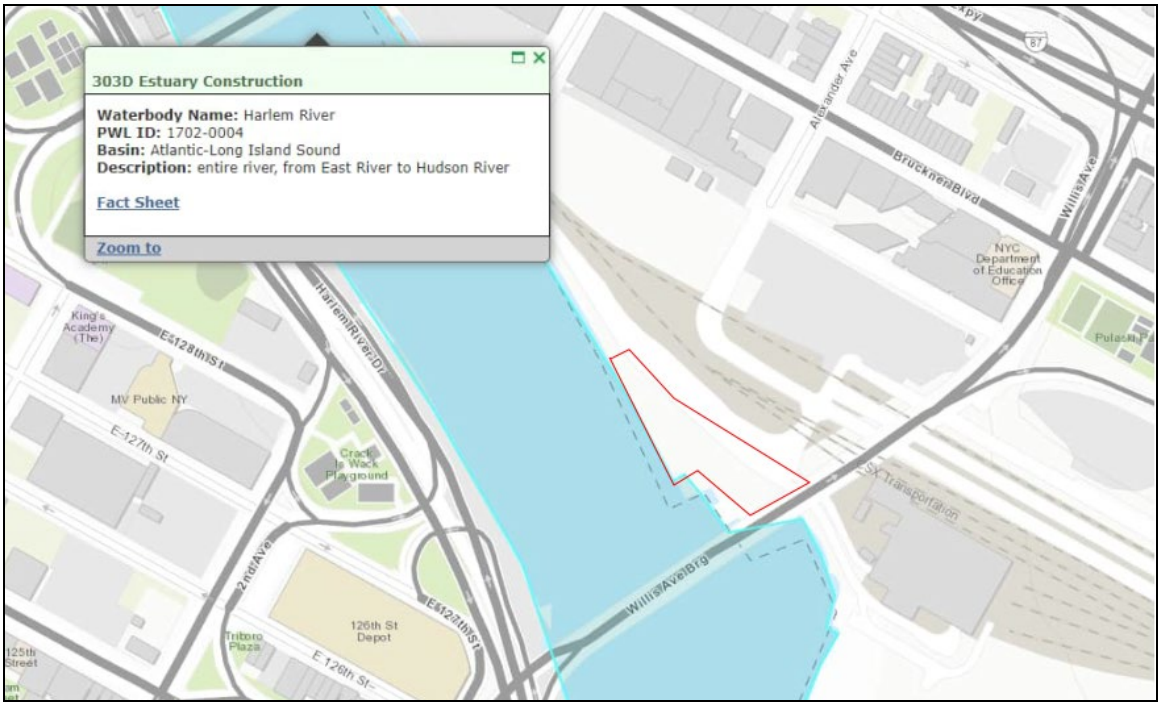

Figure 2 NYS DEC Wetlands and Waters

A review of the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) mapping[2], used by the USACE, similarly indicated no wetlands mapped within the Project Area boundaries. NWI mapping did identify the Harlem River extending across property limits, presumably due to depiction of the historic water's edge. The Harlem River was classified as E1UBL, or "Estuarine and Marine Deepwater" habitat (Figure 3).

[1] https://gisservices.dec.ny.gov/gis/erm/
[2] https://fwsprimary.wim.usgs.gov/wetlands/apps/wetlands-mapper/

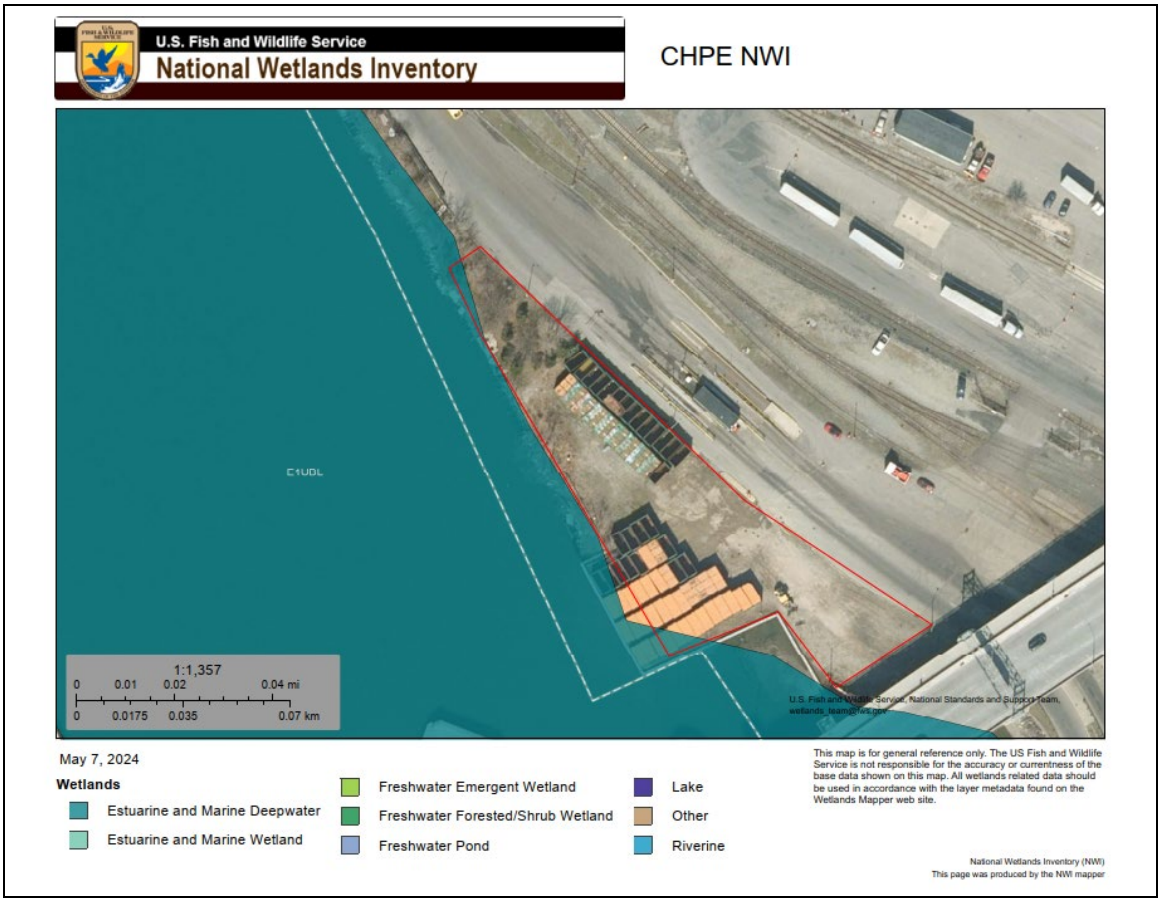

Figure 3 USFWS National Wetlands Inventory

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE SOIL SURVEY

A review of the US Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Soil Survey[3] indicated that the Project Area's soils consist entirely of those classified LUB, or Laguardia-Urban land complex, 3 to 8 percent slopes (see Figure 4). Such soils are described as "Loamy-skeletal human-transported material" on base or side slopes consisting of "cobbly-artifactual coarse sandy loam" to a depth of 79 inches. Their properties are listed as well-drained, medium runoff, not subject to flooding or ponding, and non-hydric (i.e., not wetlands). To the west of these soils, the listing was "W," for open "water," (i.e., Harlem River).

3 https://websoilsurvey.sc.egov.usda.gov/WssProduct/wrr2zqdupm2zs5rdwnbiew0q/GN_00000/20240507_104647 10007_1_Soil_Report.pdf

Figure 4 NRCS Soil Survey

Field Assessment

On May 7, 2024, two TRC staff scientists visited the CHPE site, for purposes of documenting existing site conditions. Particular attention was given to document the existing site's vegetation, soils and hydrology that would indicate the presence, or absence, of freshwater or coastal wetlands indicating agency jurisdiction. The results of this field review basically confirmed the findings of the desktop reviews and includes:

- A riprap bulkhead extends along the length of the shoreline where the proposed landing is to occur. Typical width of the top of this bulkhead is five to ten feet. The Harlem River water level was several feet below this bulkhead surface[4].

[4] At the time of inspection, between 8:00 and 9:30 AM EDST, NOAA Tide Predictions at Randall Island was for near high tide, which was to occur at 10:23 AM. Source: https://tidesandcurrents.noaa.gov/noaatidepredictions.html?id=8518643

- Soils behind the bulkhead are predominantly cobbly-stony coarse sandy loam as described in the soil survey. Soils were heavily compacted, likely owing to heavy equipment use and the waste storage containers stored on site.
- There was scattered herbaceous vegetation over most of the northwestern area, which consisted primarily of adventive “weed” species (e.g., common plantain, various grass spp.). Scattered herbaceous plants and shrubs (e.g., sumac spp.) were noted growing from the bulkhead rocks in some places. The land area appeared recently cleared.
- Only one small area of ponding was noted at the southeast end of the site behind the concrete bulkhead, apparently due to recent rains, while reflecting the well-drained, yet compacted, nature of the soils. This area was also noteworthy as being sparsely vegetated.
- A small area of maintained landscape plantings, including lawn, bearded iris and several trees and shrubs, was also noted alongside the facility entrance.

Representative photographs taken during the site visit are presented in Attachment A.

Conclusion

Based upon TRC’s review of agency data sources and subsequent site inspection, the Project Area proposed for the Harlem River Bulkhead Penetration and Tie-In is absent of any freshwater or estuarine wetlands. Further, no aquatic vegetation was noted along the river’s edge. The site’s soils were confirmed to be well-drained rocky urban land. There was no evidence of wetlands hydrology, such as high water table or being tidally or frequently flooded or ponded. The area is noted by NYSDEC as being within the 100-year flood hazard zone.

ATTACHMENT A

	
View southeast from the end of the Project site. Note the rock bulkhead and sparse vegetation.	View southeast towards the lower limit of the site. Note the presence of heavily compacted yet well drained stony coarse sandy loam.
	
View west of the Harlem River. Note the existing manholes built into the bulkhead, with sparse adventive vegetation behind in soils.	View west of the Harlem River. Note additional adventive vegetation growing in the bulkhead rocks.