



Department of
Environmental
Conservation



Gowanus Canal Natural Resource Damage Assessment Trustee Council

March 1, 2024

Dear Stakeholder,

Re: Notice of Availability of, and Opportunity for Public Input on, the Draft Assessment Plan for Gowanus Canal Natural Resource Damage Assessment

To whom it may concern,

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (together known as the “Trustees”) are excited to share our draft plan for assessing injuries to natural resources in Gowanus Canal related to the contamination. This letter describes how you can access the Draft Assessment Plan and, should you have any input or feedback, how to submit your comments to us for our consideration.

Gowanus Canal is a waterway in the Borough of Brooklyn in New York City and has been contaminated for decades. Natural resources such as surface water, sediment, fish, and other wildlife have been exposed to, and negatively impacted by, that contamination. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is currently working to clean up contamination in Gowanus Canal. That clean-up, however, is not designed to compensate the public for past, present, and future injuries to natural resources associated with the releases of hazardous substances and oil. We, the Trustees, are conducting a Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) for Gowanus Canal. The NRDA process will help us determine the appropriate amount and type of projects needed to restore, replace, or acquire the equivalent of injured natural resources at Gowanus Canal and the associated ecological functions and human use services those resources should provide.

The Draft Assessment Plan provides background information on Gowanus Canal and NRDA, describes the approaches the Trustees may implement to determine and quantify natural resource injury and corresponding damages, and presents the potential studies and analyses that we are considering.

Because public participation is integral to NRDA, we encourage members of the public to review and provide comment on the Draft Assessment Plan. You may submit your written comments electronically by e-mail or by mail to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Natural Resource Damages Section contact listed below. **Comments on the Draft Assessment Plan will be accepted through April 15, 2024**, after which we will respond to and incorporate your comments into the Final Assessment Plan as applicable. Should you have any questions about the Draft Assessment Plan, or the NRDA process, you may send them to nrd@dec.ny.gov.

The Draft Assessment Plan is available for review online at each of the following websites:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:
<https://www.fws.gov/media/gowanus-canal-nrda>

NOAA:
<https://www.diver.orr.noaa.gov/web/guest/diver-admin-record?diverWorkspaceSiteId=6834>

NYSDEC:
<https://dec.ny.gov/regulatory/nrd/major-ongoing-nrd-assessments>

A hard copy of the Plan is also available for review at the following locations:

Brooklyn Public Library
Park Slope Branch
431 6th Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11215
Tel: (718) 832-1853

New York State Department of Environmental
Conservation - Region 2
4740 21st Street
Long Island City, NY 11101
Tel: (718) 482-4900

You may submit your written comments on the Draft Assessment Plan or questions related to the Gowanus Canal NRDA electronically by e-mail or by mail to the following contact. You can also obtain a hard copy of the Draft Assessment Plan by submitting a written request to:

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
Natural Resource Damages (NRD) Section
c/o Alicia Pasos
625 Broadway, 14th Floor
Albany, NY 12233
E-mail: nrd@dec.ny.gov

We look forward to your comments on the Draft Assessment Plan for Gowanus Canal. Please share this information as widely as possible.

Sincerely,
The Gowanus Canal NRDA Trustee Council