

#SingleUseless

GREEN RESOURCE GUIDE

HUDSON RIVER PK

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PARK OVER PLASTIC HUDSON RIVER PK

Plastics are harming our waters. How can you help?

Every day, we see the damage that plastics have on local wildlife and habitat in the Hudson River.

Park Over Plastic is an initiative among Park staff, vendors and community members, like you. Let's decrease plastic in the Park and support a more sustainable environment.

We're over it, aren't you?

Learn more at hudsonriverpark.org

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All photography by Max Guliani
for Hudson River Park

INTRODUCTION

With the creation of Hudson River Park (HRPK), State Legislation designated the 400 acres of in-water area within the Park an Estuarine Sanctuary. These protected waters are a vital ecological resource for wildlife and the millions of visitors and patrons of the Park each year.

Research has shown that 4.8 to 12.7 million tons of plastic enter the ocean each year causing irreparable harm to wildlife and habitat, while releasing toxic chemicals into the water and air.

Plastic waste is a growing concern for Park staff, vendors and our community. To advance the Park's environmental stewardship and promote the reduction of plastic pollution, Hudson River Park (HRPK) launched its green initiative, Park Over Plastic (POP) in May 2019. HRPK aims to become a local leader in reducing single-use plastics and to inspire parks across the country to advance plastic-free goals.



HRPK's current efforts to reach this goal include:

- › Ceasing the purchase and usage of nearly all single-use plastics at its offices and operational areas and switched to green alternatives where needed.
- › Installing water fountains, portable hydration stations, and recycling bins throughout the 4.5mile Park to encourage the use of reusable water bottles and environmentally friendly waste management.
- › Creating educational curriculum on plastic pollution for school groups and hosts free public education programs focused on the harmful impacts of plastic pollution and how collectively we can effectuate change through reduction measures.
- › Requiring events to discontinue the use, sales and distribution of single-use plastics and to adhere to NYC recycling standards.

HRPK encourages its tenants and occupants to partner with us on the Park Over Plastic initiative. Many have become “Green Partners” and are committed to the discontinuation of single-use plastic bottles, straws, stirrers and flatware and use green products instead. Others have become contributing partners by making significant efforts to reduce single use plastic in their daily operations in the Park. In the future, new tenants and occupants will be required to commit to plastic reduction with the ultimate goal of the elimination of plastic in the Park.

FOCUSING ON PLASTICS

Despite the Hudson River being much cleaner than it was only 40 years ago, plastic pollution is a growing challenge, negatively impacting the River's water quality and wildlife. Hudson River Park's Estuary Lab conducts research and volunteer activities to collect and categorize both macroplastics (plastics larger than 1inch) and microplastics (plastics smaller than 5 millimeters) in Park waters to better understand the scale and impacts of this problem.



In 2018, teams led by the Estuary Lab counted and categorized over 6,000 pieces of plastic and removed 1,000 pounds of marine debris from Hudson River Park's shorelines. The data collected is then entered into the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) marine debris tracker database to contribute to a national count on shoreline plastics. Since 2016, foam items and beverage bottles have been the most commonly collected macroplastics within the Park.

Microplastics are now found in even our world's most isolated corners. Microplastics have been engineered into products, including many textiles, cosmetics and hygiene consumables. Macroplastics can also degrade into microplastics, especially as salt water and sun exposure causes plastics to brittle and break into smaller fragments. Microplastics are so tiny that they are easily ingested by animals as small as plankton and microplastics often contain high levels of chemical contaminants. These plastics and their associated chemicals are impacting feeding behaviors, growth rates, and body systems.

In 2018, the Estuary Lab found an average concentration of nearly 600,000 microplastics per kilometer, the highest concentration the Park has documented since the survey began in 2016.

Through continued study, the Estuary Lab hopes to create strong records of macroplastics and microplastics concentrations in the Estuarine Sanctuary and to narrow the sources of contamination. Reducing single use plastics consumption within HRPK is an important step in this process.



IMPORTANT TERMINOLOGY: PLASTIC ALTERNATIVES

When seeking alternatives to single use plastics, it is helpful to understand some key terminology.

Both compostable and biodegradable products are options that will eventually break down completely into organic matter as opposed to plastic which effectively does not. However, there are important differences between them.

› **“Compostable”** is a certification that given by a third party such as BPI, the Biodegradable Products Institute (bpiworld.org), or ASTM (American Society for Testing and Materials). Such certified compostable products are fully biodegradable and are considered to be the greenest choices.

› **“Biodegradable”** products degrade, but can sometimes release toxic chemicals that are not suitable for composting, often because the product is petroleum based.

If you are looking for the greenest choice, the ideal product would be a compostable bio-based product, meaning that the product is mainly composed of plant material. As a result, the product will decompose more quickly, making it better for the environment.

Examples of plastic alternative materials:

› **Polylactic Acid (PLA):** most common plastic substitute for items like utensils and clear beverage cups.

PLA is a plastic substitute made from fermented plant starch (usually corn). It is biodegradable and sometimes compostable, depending on the brand.

Example of PLA products: ecoproductsstore.com

› **Bagasse:** made with sugarcane fiber.

In addition to bagasse, there are alternatives made of a variety of plants, including bamboo, potatoes, etc. Many are certified compostable.

› **Aluminum:** another alternative for items like soda or water.

Aluminum is arguably more sustainable than plastic water bottles. Aluminum products have very high recycling rates and the most recyclable components.

› **Paperboard:** paper board is commonly found as a plastic substitute for food containers, and is often compostable.

Since paperboard is a less sturdy product, it is often lined with an interior coating. Some coatings, such as those labeled “poly-coated,” use some plastics, though in a lower quantity than if the product were made entirely of plastic. This is something to look out for especially with boxed waters—76% of boxed water brands will layer with polyethylene plastic. For the greenest option, choose products with PLA coating.

Example of PLA-coated compostable paperboard containers: mrtakeoutbags.com

ALTERNATIVES TO PLASTIC: WATER BOTTLES

As part of the Park Over Plastic initiative, HRPK has installed 43 bottle refill and drinking fountains throughout the Park for visitors, in addition to providing access to portable Hydration Stations at many Park events. HRPK encourages Park patrons, tenants, occupants and permit holders to consider using or providing refillable containers where feasible.

The commercial market is increasingly offering alternatives to plastics. Below are examples of brands with plant-based and/or recyclable materials that have already been approved by the HRPK as alternatives to single use plastic water bottles. HRPK will also consider additional products.

Open Water (drinkopenwater.com)

- › Packaged in aluminum, with an option to buy cans or re-sealable water bottles
- › Pros: strong structure and refillable, aesthetic appeal, and fully recyclable
- › Cons: some may notice a metallic taste
- › Price: \$96/case of 48 *

Flow Water (flowhydration.com)

- › Packaged in paperboard with a plant-based plastic cap
- › Pros: variety of flavors and sizes, pH balanced alkaline water in modern containers
- › Cons: plastic film lining, although 100% recyclable
- › Price: \$20/case of 12 *

Just Water (justwater.com)

- › Packaged in paperboard with a plant-based plastic cap
- › Pros: variety of flavors and sizes, reusable to a limited extent
- › Cons: uses a plastic film lining, although 100% recyclable
- › Price: Free shipping, \$39.99/case of 24 *

Cove Bottles (drinkcove.com) available in 2019

- › Fully biodegradable, made of a material called PHA (degrades to CO2, water, and organic waste)
- › Pros: Completely biodegradable within 5 years or less, size 16 oz.
- › Cons: Not available in NYC until late 2019
- › Price: \$24/case of 12 *

Glass Bottles

- › Glass bottles are also a sustainable option e.g. Voss, Acqua Panna
- › Pros: similar in price range to options above and fully recyclable
- › Cons: can break if not handled with care



*Prices as of May 2019

ALTERNATIVES TO PLASTIC: FOOD & BEVERAGE SERVICE

For both sanitary and convenience reasons, single-use plastic is widely used in the food and beverage industry. However, options for biodegradable and compostable plastic alternatives are becoming more readily available.

HRPK strongly suggests providing reusable cutlery and dishes and offering bamboo, paperboard or stainless steel straws. For a comprehensive plastic-free guide for food preparation and service, visit: plasticpollutioncoalition.org/guides-eats

Plastic alternative retailers with extensive product lists that are compostable and plant-based:

BioMass Packaging:

- › Biobased food service products: biomasspackaging.com

Greenware:

- › BPI compostable-certified: fabri-kal.com

EcoProducts:

- › BPI compostable-certified: ecoproductsstore.com

World Centric:

- › BPI compostable-certified: worldcentric.org

Straws

- › Fully compostable straws: ecoproductsstore.com
- › Reusable, stainless steel straws in different sizes and styles: amazon.com
- › Coming soon - completely plastic free and hyper-compostable: loliware.com

Cutlery

- › PLA compostable cutlery: store.worldcentric.com
- › SpudWare - made from potatoes, heat resistant and BPI-certified compostable: amazon.com

Hot & Cold Cups

- › Compostable clear cups: store.worldcentric.com
- › No Tree Paper Cold Cup with bio-based lining: store.worldcentric.com
- › Hot cups with PLA coating (hot cups should not be wax coated because the wax can melt off at higher temperatures): webstaurantstore.com

ALTERNATIVES TO PLASTIC: FOOD & BEVERAGE SERVICE

Clear To-Go Containers

- › Take out containers by World Centric:
store.worldcentric.com
- › PLA deli Containers by Webstaurant store:
webstaurantstore.com
- › Clear containers by Eco Products:
ecoproductsstore.com
- › Biodegradable Condiment Cups by Green Paper products:
greenpaperproducts.com

Trash Bags

- › Compostable trash bags:
webstaurantstore.com
- › PLA trash bags:
bgreentoday.com
- › Cheapest options for starch-based 55-gallon bags:
store.worldcentric.com
- › BPI certified compostable - partially corn starch based, but still a partially plastic product:
amazon.com
- › BPI certified compostable:
greenpaperproducts.com
- › Consider an oxo-degradable additive technology:
symphonyenvironmental.com

ALTERNATIVES TO PLASTIC: EVENTS

The Park is a perfect venue for gathering groups on the waterfront. Large and small Park events are opportunities to think sustainably and creatively avoid single-use plastics. Below are tips to help you reduce plastics at your next event. Let's celebrate special occasions and be kind to the earth!

- › Paper or reusable cotton table cloths.
- › Skip juice boxes and use insulated coolers or pitchers for beverages.
- › Balloons are prohibited in the Park. Decorate with rice or recycled paper products:
greenpartygoods.com
- › Paper confetti.



OUR WEST SIDE STORY

Pre-European Contact

The Original New Yorkers

The Lenape people farm tobacco and conduct trade along the lower Hudson River.

19th Century

Canal Era

Hudson River waterfront transforms into one of the world's busiest working waterfronts due in part to the opening of the Erie Canal and the advent of the steamship. Oyster barges proliferate along the shoreline and oyster carts are as plentiful as current day hot dog stands.

Early 20th Century

All Aboard!

Some of the world's most celebrated ships—the *Lusitania*, *Carpathia*, and the *Normandie*—came and went from piers in Chelsea and Hell's Kitchen, transporting soldiers, celebrities, immigrants and more to and from Europe.

1973

West Side Highway Collapses

A section of the elevated West Side Highway collapses, bringing attention to NYC's deteriorated infrastructure and leading to plans for a never-built project called "Westway" that would have filled in a portion of the Hudson River to create an underground interstate highway.

1985

A Catchy Tale

New York State and New York City halt plans for Westway due to political pressure and community concerns, including impacts to juvenile striped bass. The State and City begin discussing alternative solutions for Manhattan's West Side waterfront and piers.

1998

A Park is Born

The Hudson River Park Act is signed into law—designating approximately 150 acres of land and piers and 400 acres of water as a major, new park and Estuarine Sanctuary—happy news for New Yorkers and the 70+ species of fish in HRPK.

2018

20 Years Young

Hudson River Park celebrates its 20th Anniversary, attracting 17 million visits each year. With 75% of the Park's 4-mile footprint complete, HRPK offers over 700 cultural, educational and family programs annually. HRPK's Estuary Lab conducts original research on oyster restoration and microplastics.

2019

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HRPK launches Park Over Plastic, a multi-year initiative to rid the Park of single-use plastics.

2020 & Beyond

There's More to This Story

With the openings of Hudson River Park's Pier 26 (the first pier to feature an "ecological get down"), Gansevoort Peninsula, PIER55, Pier 57 and Pier 97—the completion of HRPK is now in sight!

Visit hudsonriverpark.org to learn more about the waterfront's history and the future of HRPK.

PARK OVER PLASTIC HUDSON RIVER PK

BOTTLE FILLERS & RECYCLING STATIONS IN HUDSON RIVER PARK

Bottle Fillers & Recycling Stations in HRPK

Single-use plastics have become a nearly invisible staple in our day-to-day lives but by making a few simple swaps when you come to the Park, you can help us build a greener open space! On this map, you'll find convenient bottle-filler & recycling stations all over our four-mile footprint.

Park Over Plastic

Every day we see the damage that plastics have on local wildlife and habitat in the Hudson River. Hudson River Park is taking steps to fight plastic pollution. And, you can help, too! Park Over Plastic is an initiative among Park staff, vendors, and community members like you to help reduce our plastic footprint and improve the health of the Hudson River.



PARK **OVER PLASTIC**



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Hudson River Park Trust
353 West St.
Pier 40, 2nd Floor
NY, NY 10014

Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor
Bill de Blasio, Mayor
Gale A. Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
Diana L. Taylor, Chair
Madelyn Wils, President & CEO