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Photos available [here](#) (credit Max Giuliani)

Hudson River Park opens newly-renovated Chelsea Waterside Park Play Area

Hudson River Park's first playground is reimagined and restored with new design from Michael Van Valkenburgh and one-of-a-kind play features from Denmark-based MONSTRUM, including Hudson River Pipefish as centerpiece slide and play equipment

New York, NY (August 14, 2018) – The Hudson River Park Trust and Hudson River Park Friends today celebrated the opening of the newly-renovated \$3.4 million Chelsea Waterside Park Play Area at 23rd Street and 11th Avenue. Federal, state and local officials were on-hand to cut the ribbon on the Michael Van Valkenburgh-designed playground, which had been closed since September 2017 for construction. The renovated playground is nearly 17,000 square feet and includes a giant Hudson River Pipefish, newly-designed water play features for kids of different ages, sand play area, improved seating and new plantings with increased shade.

“We are extremely pleased with the re-imagining of the Chelsea Waterside Park Play Area,” said **Madelyn Wils, President & CEO of the Hudson River Park Trust**. “This beautiful new playground is the culmination of the Trust’s outreach and consensus building within the community and would not be possible without the tremendous support from our local elected officials, Hudson River Park Friends and our many partners. The incorporation of elements from the Hudson River Park Estuary with our one-of-a-kind pipefish slide, as well as features that lift up the West Side’s history are what make this playground a unique addition to our vibrant park and we look forward to the children of our community enjoying it for years to come.”

“Friends is overjoyed about the opening of this new play area,” said **Connie Fishman, Executive Director of Hudson River Park Friends**. “These unique play features will replace Hudson River Park’s oldest play equipment and provide limitless opportunity for recreation and imaginative play for thousands of New York City children. Hudson River Park Friends is so proud to have helped make this exciting new park amenity possible and extends the warmest thanks to all its donors and supporters.”

The new Chelsea Waterside Park Play Area features a custom, multi-colored, 64-foot wooden slide and play equipment in the shape of a Pipefish, a nod to the Hudson River-home of this aquatic species that children of all ages can learn about at the Hudson River Park’s Estuary Lab. Year-round programming for students at the Estuary Lab will help to deepen the knowledge and understanding of the Hudson River environment as they play on one its most unique species. The play equipment was designed and built using sturdy Robinia wood by MONSTRUM, a Denmark-based playground design company, and is the first of their themed playground structures in the eastern U.S.

Other notable aspects include two limestone cattle head sculptures, reclaimed from their historic home in the nearby Meatpacking District, that will be incorporated into some of the playground's water features. Additionally, reclaimed granite cartouches from the old West Side Highway and original granite from Pier 54, the landing point for survivors of the Titanic will also be incorporated into the park.

Design and construction for the \$3.4 million playground was funded by Hudson River Park Friends' Playground Committee, State Assemblyman Richard Gottfried, City Council Speaker Corey Johnson, State Senator Brad Hoylman, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer and Hudson River Park Trust. Major private donors include the Related Companies and Howard Lorber, Chair of Douglas Elliman, Friends Board members Mike Novogratz, Chair, and Ben Shaoul, the Philip and Janice Levin Foundation, and dozens of West Side families and Friends.

Chelsea Waterside Park Play Area was Hudson River Park's inaugural playground, first opening in 2000. The beloved playground was well-used by a diverse range of neighborhood children. The heavy usage and standard wear and tear ultimately led to the need for a renovation, with the planning beginning in 2016. Through an extensive, rigorous and inclusive public process, the final design was agreed upon, with Michael Van Valkenburgh chosen as lead architect. Van Valkenburgh is renowned for his landscape designs and is notable in New York City for designing Hudson River Park's Chelsea Cove and Brooklyn Bridge Park.

Chelsea Waterside Park Play Area was built and is operated by the Hudson River Park Trust, a NYS public benefit corporation charged with the design, construction and stewardship of the 4-mile long Hudson River Park. It is open daily from 6:00 AM to dusk. The general contractor for the construction was Deborah Bradley Construction, Inc., a Woman-owned Business Enterprise (WBE), and the construction manager was Gilbane Building Company.

The Chelsea Waterside Park Play Area will also incorporate Hudson River Park's new logo and the park's first permanent signage program. The new brand identity and signage is currently being rolled out throughout the full length of the 4-mile park. In its 20th anniversary year, hundreds of new signs including beacons, directories, welcome and wayfinding features, designed by Pentagram, will help to link various portions of the park and create uniformity in design to benefit park visitors. The first two 15-foot beacons will be lit for the first time next week, with others to be installed in the coming months. The beacons will highlight major access points and welcome the over 17 million annual visitors to the popular waterfront park.

"Chelsea Waterside Park Play Area was one of the first playgrounds within the Hudson River Park, and it has become a key part of growing up in Chelsea," said **Congressman Jerrold Nadler**. "I congratulate the Hudson River Park Trust, Hudson River Park Friends, and the many elected officials, companies and individuals who have helped create this fun and creative play space."

"Congratulations to the Hudson River Park Trust and the Hudson River Park Friends!" said **NYS Senator Brad Hoylman**. "The new Chelsea Waterside Park Play Area is a beautiful tribute to local history and the community effort that built the first playground in the Hudson River Park."

I'm extremely pleased to have helped fund the new play area along with my government colleagues and am excited to bring my own kids soon to experience the delightful new play features that will help inspire them to learn more about the Hudson River. "

“Public parks are a public trust, and it’s our responsibility to continually invest in them, renew them, and make them the free, accessible recreation spaces that all New Yorkers deserve,” said **Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer**. “This one-of-a-kind playground will delight kids and their families with smart design, play spaces featuring water and sand, improved seating and shade. I thank the Hudson River Park Trust and the public and private funders who made this renovation possible.”

“We are thrilled with the new, expanded playground at Chelsea Waterside Park Play Area,” said **Lowell Kern, Chair of Community Board 4 Waterfront, Parks and Environment Committee**. “It is great that the Trust was able to reopen it before the end of the summer, as the playground is a much-needed community amenity, particularly with other parks in the neighborhood also being closed for renovation. We look forward to working with the Trust on additional renovations for Chelsea Waterside Park and the completion of Hudson River Park.”

"The design of Chelsea Waterside Park Play Area draws from elements found just steps from the playground, while weaving in the history of the park and surrounding neighborhood," said **Michael Van Valkenburgh, President and CEO of Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, the architects of the Chelsea Waterside Park Play Area**. "With equipment designed for children of varying ages, including the amazing pipefish structure, this playground will be loved by all who visit for years to come."

“Hudson River Park’s new brand identity and signage system reflect a close, six year-long collaboration with the park team,” said **Timothy Cohan, Associate Partner at Pentagram**, who designed the Hudson River Park’s new signage. “We are thrilled to see the new identity featured throughout the park, complementing its green spaces and functioning as an aesthetic as well as navigational tool. The logo encompasses the park’s vast green space and references its iconic piers. It reinforces the park’s vibrancy and it’s already being used by park-goers as a way-finding tool, guiding visitors and creating continuity from the park’s tip in Tribeca to its top on 59th Street.”

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About the Hudson River Park Trust

The Hudson River Park Trust is a partnership between New York State and City charged with the design, construction, and operation of the four-mile Hudson River Park. Both the Trust and the park itself are governed by the Hudson River Park Act, a 1998 law that established the park and its requirements. Guided by a vision for a magnificent waterfront park, the Trust continues to advance park construction and ensure the park’s future financial self-sufficiency by developing the remaining commercial nodes.

About the Hudson River Park Friends

Hudson River Park Friends is the Park's dedicated fundraising partner, raising money and public support through private donations and foundation and government grant. Funds are used to support the Park's free public programs, environmental education and stewardship, and award-winning horticulture, along with raising needed capital funds for playground renovations and other family initiatives.