



**Report to Hudson River Park Advisory Council  
December 1, 2020**

**Environmental and Sanctuary Initiatives:**

Hudson River Park had its first research article published in a peer reviewed science publication known as the Marine Pollution Bulletin Journal last month. The paper is entitled “The Presence and Significance of Microplastics in Surface Water in the Lower Hudson River Estuary 2016–2019: A research note.” Marine Pollution Bulletin is concerned with the rational use of maritime and marine resources in estuaries, the seas and oceans, and it focuses in part on documenting marine pollution. The paper is the culmination of several years of microplastics research in Sanctuary waters by Trust staff in collaboration with a scientist from Brooklyn College. The Park’s River Project also shared this research at two conferences this Fall. Siddhartha Hayes presented at the New England Estuarine Research Society (NEERS) Conference in October and Helen Polanco shared a scientific poster summarizing the research at an international microplastics conference called MICRO 2020 in November. See: <https://hudsonriverpark.org/the-park/parks-river-project/current-research/microplastics/>.

The Park’s River Project staff has a goal of making scientific data from research projects available on its website. <https://hudsonriverpark.org/the-park/parks-river-project/current-research/>. We will be updating the website with 2020 data and reports by the beginning of 2021 and would be happy to discuss any of these projects with the Advisory Council in the future if desired.

Advisory Council members who are park tenants are already very familiar with the Park Over Plastic effort. HRPT strives to make information about plastics and ways to decrease our collective reliance on them to other organizations and the general public. You and your organizations may be interested in reviewing some of these resources: <https://hudsonriverpark.org/the-park/sustainability/park-over-plastic/resources/>.

Since the launch of Park Over Plastic in 2019, HRP has been working to evaluate the effectiveness and needs of the initiative with an external consultant, Knology. Over the past two years, Park staff, tenants and visitors were surveyed to learn about their relationships with single use plastics to inform resource development, messaging and education programs. Waste audits were also conducted at 13 sites in the Park to understand plastic consumption and to inform strategic placement of waste receptacles throughout the Park. Knology will be sharing their culminating report with the Trust shortly, and the Trust plans to share the information on our website in support of other parks and organizations looking to reduce plastic waste.

Related to this, the Park’s River Project and Operations departments are also working to streamline and track daily waste metrics in the Park. These metrics will improve our operations

in managing waste streams and help us improve programming and messaging to reduce litter, encourage reuse when possible and help people accurately recycle and compost. For example, having access to waste totals will reveal where additional receptacles could be helpful and will support the Park's understanding of fluctuations in waste concentration by location, season, and stream type (landfill, recycling, compost).

The Park's River Project team has been conducting socially distant tours of the Pier 26 Tide Deck. The two free public tours welcomed 40 people in family units and quarantine groups onto the Tide Deck. Groups were led by River Project educators who shared the unique design and ecologies of the marsh and rocky intertidal habitats. In addition, educators have hosted tours for groups with special interest in the Tide Deck including students from City College's Master of Landscape Architecture program, NYC Park Rangers and a local Girl Scout troop.

Over the last couple of months, the River Project team has also been developing a new program for middle school and high school students focused on environmental justice. This program will be trialed with a long-standing partner, The Gateway School, and will serve 30 students from two middle school classes. The curriculum is styled in a "town hall" role-play format to encourage students to share their views through the perspective of different community stakeholders. Students will be asked to weigh the social and ecological consequences of an environmental problem and then learn to negotiate new solutions that equally benefit the planet and the rights of the people involved.

Staff is completing a round of revisions on the draft Estuarine Sanctuary Management Plan as requested by NYSDEC. We are eager to share it with the broader community but will need to share it again with NYSDEC and our Board Sanctuary Committee prior to doing so. The draft plan will be made available for public review as previously discussed.

Last month, we announced that we would be surveying benthic and epibenthic habitat in the area between Pier 34 and Pier 26 to increase our baseline understanding of existing habitat conditions. The Hudson River Foundation completed its sampling of bottom habitat and results will be analyzed in collaboration with University of New Hampshire and Monmouth University. Underwater dives of Pier 34 and the former pier areas have also been completed and the epibenthic assessment phase has begun, led by Dr. Allison Fitzgerald with New Jersey City University.

### **Design and Construction:**

James Corner Field Operations is finishing 100% construction documents for the Gansevoort Peninsula, with the design expected to be completed in December on schedule. The first work activity zone is planned on the south side where the new beach would be, hopefully in Spring 2021 assuming all permits and approvals are in hand.

The Trust will be releasing a Request for Proposals for the Gansevoort Peninsula "Surcharge program." Unlike most of the public park areas west of the bulkhead, Gansevoort consists of

old, poor quality urban fill. As we have progressed with the design for Gansevoort, the design team's engineers have recommended that clean fill materials be pre-loaded on a portion of the site, principally where the ballfield would be located, for a period of approximately four months to ensure that existing fill is properly compacted and that future settlement beneath the planned ballfield is not an issue. All fill delivered to the site for this compaction purpose will then be re-used throughout Gansevoort to achieve the proposed grades, which are elevated from the existing condition to minimize the risks from flooding.

Work by the Whitney Museum of American Art on the construction of the *Day's End* sculpture by David Hammons planned for the south side of Gansevoort continues. The Whitney intends to have the superstructure – the portion that will be visible above the water area -- installed this winter. The Whitney has been consulting with the Trust as it plans options for a socially distanced opening when the installation is complete.

At this week's HRPT Board meeting, the Board will be asked to approve a contract with DACK Consulting Solutions for construction management services, including oversight of the pre-construction, construction and post-construction phases of the Chelsea Waterside Park Phase 2 project. The Trust intends to issue a request for proposals for the construction work this winter so that construction can commence in Spring 2021.

At Pier 40, numerous capital maintenance projects funded by the air rights proceeds and New York City continue. Structural repairs have now been completed for Phases 1, 2 and 5 and are very near completion on Phase 6. (Each phase has approximately 500 piles.) Phase 3 work is now resuming, and we expect to complete the remaining approximately 100 piles this winter. Phase 4 will resume sometime before Christmas. We expect to bid the final phase, Phase 7, in the first part of 2021.

Repair work is currently under way on southern portion of the Pier 40 roof. During the course of this work, additional scope items entailing structural concrete plank repair and replacement were discovered once the existing waterproofing membrane was removed. In addition, the Trust has decided to add the replacement of the "passive field" to the scope of work. The Trust initially planned to issue a separate contract for the installation of the passive field, but based on discussions with the roof contractor and design engineer, replacing this area now and installing the new field as quickly as possible after the roofing membrane is replaced has been determined to be preferable. This will hopefully enable us to place the field back in public use this summer. The existing contractor will subcontract with a qualified field installer for this scope. Staff is bringing an amendment to the existing contract with the roofing company to the Board of Directors for consideration at this week's meeting.

The façade contractor has mobilized and will soon be erecting scaffolding (officially known as a sidewalk bridge) shortly along the eastern façade of Pier 40. Work on the north and east sides will occur simultaneously and is preliminarily expected to take approximately 4 months once it commences. On the eastern façade, the work includes removing the existing porcelain panels to assess damage, replacing any severely damaged panels, repointing and other brick and

concrete work. Work on the south and west sides has not yet been scheduled. We will be prepared to discuss this topic at the December 8<sup>th</sup> Advisory Council meeting as we understand there is interest in learning more about it.

Imelk Landscape Architecture and its subconsultant Toshiko Mori Architects submitted 60% construction documents for the Pier 97 park and comfort station in mid-October and November respectively. Construction cost estimates are being prepared based on these documents to confirm anticipated budgets. The NYC Public Design Commission granted approval for the park landscape, comfort station, and wayfinding signage designs as required. The final construction documents are due by the end of December for the park and end of January for the comfort station. The Trust expects to issue an RFP for fabrication of the shade structures in the next few weeks as an early action item to save time and money and to ensure quality control since these elements are to be custom fabricated.

The Trust also has an open RFP for on-call environmental services.

### **Public Programming:**

Staff from both Public Programs and the Park's River Project team are hard at work preparing plans for the 2021 season. Both teams are looking at hybrid models of remote and in-person programming. In-person programming will almost still need to be managed carefully for public safety so this will affect which programs can occur within the park. Examples of programs we are currently hoping to do in person include opening the Wetlab at Pier 40 for some open hours, Ask a Scientist, bringing back some live music – for example, the Sunset on Hudson and Jazz series – and some of our exercise classes. All of this will be subject of course to continuing changes required due to Covid.

Our staff also continues to field questions from other organizations, both for profit and non-profit, who are considering moving some of their programming outdoors. Many of these are in an exploratory category, with the organizations themselves not yet being certain whether or how they would be able to move outdoors given uncertainties of weather, social distancing requirements, etc. As discussed at last months' meeting, all activities of 20 or more people require permits, and some that are smaller need permits as well.

### **Operations:**

The Pier 40 parking garage is of course an important source of revenue for the Park. The Trust retains an outside parking garage firm to operate the garage on our behalf. The current contract is expiring shortly and as reported at the last meeting, the Trust issued an RFP for a new operator. The Trust's Board of Directors will be considering approval of the garage operator at its meeting on Thursday.

The Trust continues to work with FEMA to complete the reimbursement process for expenditures related to restoring the park after Super Storm Sandy. The expenditures eligible

for reimbursement through FEMA totaled approximately \$34 million and at this time, the Trust has received approximately 80% of the this amount.

There is an open RFP for updating the decals on Park vehicles with the Trust's no longer very new logo.

**Other Planning:**

HRPT attended the November 12th meeting of Community Board 4's Waterfront, Parks & Environment Committee at 6:30 to provide an update on long-term planning for Pier 76 and then an interactive discussion led by JCFO to discuss possibilities for interim public recreational uses at Pier 76. The discussion was very constructive, and there was enthusiastic support for introducing interim uses to the pier.