



## Report to Hudson River Park Advisory Council November 9, 2021

### Environmental and Sanctuary Initiatives:

#### *Fall Programs*

October was an exciting month of events for our River Project team with a successful SUBMERGE Marine Science Festival and the Release of the Fishes.

#### *SUBMERGE Marine Science Festival*

This year's SUBMERGE festival was held as a three-day event, from Tuesday October 19 to Thursday October 21, offered through Facebook Live, Zoom webinar & in-Park events, with a total of over 3,500 participants for the duration of the event. Something interesting to note is that of the total event attendees, 2,670 were local students, including many teachers that incorporated SUBMERGE into their fall curriculum. Additionally, many of the schools that virtually attended brought multiple classes and tuned in multiple days, showing a great depth of participation.

During the festival we had excellent partner showcases from groups like NY Aquarium teaching about Atlantic sturgeon, Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory with a powerful visual explaining sea level rise and more. There were a series of engaging panel conversations and live performances with our collaborators from groups like NYU, Killer Snails & Cantina, which also elevated the voices and experiences of students. Additionally the public also joined us in-person for Wetlab Look-ins, Tide Deck Tours & Shell-ebrate Oysters programs.

#### *Release of the Fishes*

Following SUBMERGE, the River Project team was thrilled to bring back the popular Release of the Fishes event. Over 100 people joined us in-person at the Wetlab for the duration of the event to celebrate the end of our season. During the event, students and visitors of all ages helped us return fish and invertebrates back into the Hudson River. This is an important part of our Wetlab operation so that the animals housed there are able to go to their over-wintering habitat, ensuring that their behaviors are minimally impacted.

#### *Pumpkin Smash*

To close out the season, we hosted our annual Pumpkin Smash on Sunday November 7 at Pier 84 with 272 people who attended in-person and 1,115 pounds of pumpkins smashed. This event is designed to help divert seasonal organic waste from landfills as well as educate and engage our Park community. Pumpkin Smash invites people to bring their jack-o-lanterns or un-carved pumpkins to squash, smash and smush into compost to help keep our Park beautiful, green and growing. Collecting horticultural and food scraps also reduces our waste stream and supports the Park's overall sustainability.

### *Funding Updates*

This month we were thrilled to receive two grant awards to support our River Project initiatives. The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation awarded us with a grant to further community engagement and education connected to plastic pollution. This project will purchase and deploy an autonomous aquadrone called a WasteShark, designed to collect floating debris in the water while simultaneously gathering geospatial and water quality information. It will also engage volunteers and students in the collection of this plastic debris and contribute to the Park's ongoing research.

Additionally, we received an award from the Hyde & Watson Foundation to help install a water quality digital data display. The displays will communicate Hudson River's water quality data to Park patrons, boaters and students. The goal is to provide Park visitors with a greater understanding of current water quality in the Hudson River Estuary, based on Park data collected with continuous monitoring equipment at Pier 25 and Pier 84.

### *River Health Dashboard*

Since January 2021, the Park's River Project team has been working with experts to develop a dashboard that makes Park environmental data accessible to broader audiences. Last year, we were thrilled to receive the "Innovate for Social Impact" award from Cantina, a highly regarded design innovation agency that—among other things—works with organizations to design user friendly experiences involving complex technology. Through this partnership, and with technical support from Dr. Wade McGillis of Columbia University, we are proud to launch our new water quality model that uses actual and historic data to predict, in close to real time, occasions when water quality is degraded due to pollution events.

The dashboard will support the Park's stewardship and environmental education efforts while also helping non-motorized boaters make informed decisions about days when water quality conditions are poor. We invite you to explore our new dashboard to learn more about physical and environmental factors affecting our local water environment. The Park is grateful to all our project partners, especially Cantina, Wade McGillis at Columbia University, NYS DEC, US Geological Survey and NYC Water Trail Association, for helping to make continuous water quality data more accessible and relevant to the public at large.

### *Tribeca Habitat Enhancement*

Work continues on the installation of textured concrete piles within the Pier 32 pile field and is expected to be completed by the third week in November. Along with the previously installed reef balls and gabions seeded with juvenile oysters between Pier 26 and Pier 32, these enhancements will help to increase the Sanctuary's oyster population, diversify river habitat and create a corridor to support local fish populations. This project will be monitored over the next few years to inform future habitat enhancement design and decision-making.

### **Design and Construction:**

Trust staff have been busy with procurement and construction activities for Pier 97, Gansevoort and Chelsea Waterside Park.

#### *Gansevoort Peninsula*

Construction at the Gansevoort Peninsula continues to proceed well. Steven Dubner Landscaping and EJ Electric have been working throughout the site, and have made progress on the salt marsh marine structures to the north and rip rap beach edge at the south. In-water work has ceased for the season and will resume in the spring. Sports field light footings are being installed, as well as other electrical conduits.

#### *Pier 97*

The Pier 97 Shade Structures fabrication is ongoing with completion scheduled for the end of December. Once complete, they will be stored by the contractor until the footings to support them are installed on Pier 97 at which point the Structures will be delivered to the site. The Site work and electrical construction contractors began mobilizing on the pier last week and have started demolition work. Once demolition is complete on the Pier, installation of drainage mat and cast-in-place concrete elements will commence.

Trust staff will complete bidder interviews this week for all Pier 97 building construction RFPs, with the goal of selecting contractors for the four building contracts and beginning construction in early winter.

The design team is working on a Construction Documents package for the esplanade and bikeway project from Pier 97 to Pier 99. After preliminary planning, the Trust is coordinating with NYSDOT for procurement of a contractor for this project, which will be partially funded by a Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant. There is also substantial coordination with NYSDOT for project definition and other aspects of the grant, including coordination with the Department of Parks & Recreation for the seamless connection into Riverside Park South.

#### *Chelsea Waterside Park*

The site contractor mobilized on October 4 and has been completing material salvage and removal operations. The current phase of construction has the Central Area, Overlook and the south edge of Athletic Field closed to the public. These areas will remain under construction until fall 2022.

#### *Pier 40*

Up on the roof, the reconstruction of the southern section is progressing with an anticipated completion of the parking area in late November.

#### *Other Park Projects*

Private Passage (2005) by Malcolm Cochran is being removed from Clinton Cove for conservation in mid-November. The sculpture will be transported to a specialized facility and restored per the Public Design Commission approved treatment plan, which was developed in

conjunction with the artist. We expect the conservation work to take 3-4 months and to re-install the sculpture in spring 2022.

**Public Programs:**

The Park is finishing hosting charity walk/runs this month with the LUNGeivity walk at Pier 63 on Saturday, November 6th.

The Public Programs department will continue event planning for the 2022 season, including reaching out to Community Boards, block associations and Park constituents to discuss current and future special events and program offerings.

**Operations:**

Trust staff is continuing to coordinate with the NYSDOT on the bikeway work order and contract review including pavement resurfacing and restriping. Staff will also be conducting another NYCDOT bikeway light audit this month.