



## Report to Hudson River Park Advisory Council October 12, 2021

### Environmental and Sanctuary Initiatives:

#### *SUBMERGE Marine Science Festival*

Our SUBMERGE Marine Science Festival is being offered for the first time as a three-day event, from Tuesday October 19 to Thursday October 21 with both virtual and in-Park programming. Each day of the festival begins with a series of immersive showcases from local community and environmental partners, followed by a live panel discussion led by experts in the field. Then the virtual portion of the festival each day wraps up with a live interactive performance that will allow participants to follow along with hands-on experiments. Each day concludes with in-person tours and activities led by the Park's River Project staff between 5:00 PM and 7:00 PM.

#### *Release of the Fishes*

Later this month, we will also be bringing back the original River Project's popular Release of the Fishes event at the Wetlab on Tuesday October 26 from 3:00 to 6:00 PM. We will be marking the end of a successful Wetlab season both virtually and in-person as we bid farewell to the wildlife that served as marine ambassadors all season long. Participants will be able to join us in person and help to release animals back into the River, an important first step in us closing down the Wetlab for our end of season maintenance before water temperatures drop.

#### *Pumpkin Smash*

We will be celebrating sustainability at the Pumpkin Smash on Sunday November 7 from 11 am to 2 pm at Pier 84. Participants are invited to bring their leftover Halloween pumpkins and jack-o-lanterns to smash, crush and smush into nutrient-rich compost to support our Park plants and trees.

#### *Fall Programs*

Our River Project team is in the midst of a busy field trip season, with many high school and college groups joining us for in-person field trips. In addition to touring engaging educational venues such as the Wetlab and the Pier 26 Tide Deck, groups have been supporting science research in the Park including oyster monitoring and tree health surveys. Additionally, during the recent NYC Climate Week from September 20 to 26, the River Project team offered a series of events virtually and in the Park that offered students and members of the public opportunities to learn more about human impacts and coastal resiliency while discussing what actions we can take to support a more sustainable future NYC.

#### *Estuarine Sanctuary Management Plan (ESMP)*

Since the last Advisory Council meeting in September, our Board of Directors approved the draft ESMP. Pursuant to the Act, it must also be approved by NYSDEC. The draft reflects input received during the public hearing and comment period that took place this summer and

incorporates feedback of TAC and Sanctuary Committee members as well. As reported previously, the comments received during the public process were very positive overall. We are grateful to all those who have helped achieve this milestone for the Sanctuary.

#### *Tribeca Habitat Enhancement*

Last week, the contractor began installing textured concrete piles within the Pier 32 pile field. 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. The staff worked with the Downtown Boathouse to install buoys in locations where water is shallower as previously discussed with the Advisory Council.

#### **Design and Construction:**

There continues to be a lot happening in the realm of Design and Construction in the Park. Trust staff have been busy with procurement activities for construction at 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 are currently constructing the salt marsh marine structures to the north and rip rap beach edge at the south. Sports field light footings are being installed, as well as other electrical conduits.

Following Board Approval, Trust staff is preparing to award the General Construction Phase II, Submerged Habitat, and Electrical Construction Phase II RFPs, and is currently reviewing proposals for the construction of a building containing Maintenance and Operations space, restrooms, and concession space.

Construction will begin on the remainder of Gansevoort Peninsula later this fall, including the shared use pedestrian esplanade, reconstructed bikeway, dog run, and fitness area. The Trust will also begin fabrication of submerged features so that they will be ready for installation next spring and summer after being seeded with oyster spat. We remain on track for a late spring 2023 overall project completion.

#### *Pier 97*

At Pier 97, the Shade Structures fabrication is ongoing with our consultant recently visiting the fabrication site in the Netherlands to inspect the completed mock-up. Site work and electrical construction on the Pier will commence at the end of October, starting at the west end of the Pier and moving east. Trust staff are continuing to evaluate Pier 97 building construction proposals, with the goal of selecting contractors for the four building contracts and beginning construction late fall/early winter.

The design team is completing a Construction Documents package for the esplanade and bikeway project from Pier 97 to Pier 99. The Trust recently had a meeting with NYSDOT to plan the procurement of a contractor for this project which will be partially funded by a Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant.

#### *Chelsea Waterside Park*

The site contractor mobilized on October 4 and is in the midst of installing construction fencing and preparing the site for upcoming 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. As of October 2021, the Athletic Field, Basketball Court, Playground and Dog Run are still in use. The following phases of construction will require the Dog Run to be closed from early 2022 – summer 2022 and the Athletic Field closed from summer 2022 – fall 2022. All work is anticipated to be complete in fall 2022.

We are doing our best to time the work based on slower seasons for each use, but since nothing is ever truly slow in Hudson River Park, some disruption is inevitable. The Trust provided a construction update to Community Board 4 in September and are working on signage and website updates to inform the public.

#### *Pier 40*

At Pier 40, work continues on the seventh and final phase of the pile repairs, and we expect that in spring 2022, all of the pier's piles will have been jacketed. Up on the roof, the reconstruction of the southern section is progressing with an anticipated completion of the parking area in mid-November. The passive field will be completed soon after. The scope includes the reconstruction of the passive field area in addition to the structural work.

#### *Other Park Projects*

Trust staff is endeavoring to issue Requests for Proposals for both the Estuarium and the upland area between 29th to 44th Streets within the next several months.

#### **Public Programs:**

The Public Programs department is finishing a busy outdoor season as Healthy on the Hudson fitness classes continue at Pier 46 until the end of this month. Next up at Pier 76 is the New York Wine and Food Festival's Grand Tasting event on October 15, 16, and 17 to benefit "God's Love We Deliver" food delivery charity.

The Park will also host the start and finish of the National MS Society's 2021 Bike MS NYC event this month at Pier 84 as cyclists take to the streets to raise money for the cause. The movie and TV industry continues to bounce back. The Park is very busy permitting film shoots in the Park, including the recent filming of scenes for the fourth season of HBO's Westworld at Pier 26. As the Park continues to receive event and film inquiries we recognize the need to maintain a balance of events staged on the Piers with available open space for park patrons to enjoy.

This month Public Programs will begin planning for the 2022 season, evaluating current special events and program offerings. We will continue to curate programs that support the Park's mission. One very popular event series is Tango Dancing at Pier 45. We are exploring ways to continue offering this very popular participatory dance program through the curation of multiple event producers/instructors.

**Operations:**

Trust staff is continuing to coordinate with the State Department of Transportation (SDOT) on the bikeway work order and contract review including pavement resurfacing and restriping.

**Planning:**

*Chelsea Piers*

Trust staff is continuing to negotiate a proposed new lease with Chelsea Piers. Trust staff and Chelsea Piers attended the Community Board 4 Waterfront, Parks and Environment Committee meeting on September 28 to explain the rationale of the new lease, and to provide our perspective on the public benefits of it. Once lease negotiations conclude, Trust staff will conduct additional outreach, including to the Community Board and Advisory Council throughout the public review process scheduled for this fall.

*NYC Ferry*

Ridership on the new NYC Ferry's St. George route with a stop at Pier 79/ West 39th Street remains low due to COVID-19. Trust staff is continuing to monitor conditions on the ground and have not observed any significant increase in the number of buses or overall traffic since the start of the St. George route end August. Trust staff has been speaking directly with NYCDOT and NYCEDC on safety and other issues related to ferry operations and are exploring possible solutions going forward.

**Other Trust Updates:**

Charles "Chris" McGann joined the Trust on October 1 as Senior Director of Public Safety. Chris is a 35 year veteran of the NYPD, retiring at the rank of Lieutenant. Chris was most recently assigned as the Chief, Operations Bureau where he was responsible for the coordination and management of citywide events. Chris also received his JD from Fordham Law School in 2002. We welcome him to the Trust Team and look forward to him sharing his wealth of knowledge and expertise with us.