



**Report to Hudson River Park Advisory Council  
November 1, 2022**

**Environmental and Sanctuary Initiatives:**

Last month, we provided an annual update to our Board on the Estuarine Sanctuary Management Plan. We focused largely on projects that have been of particular interest to our TAC including research partnerships, data sharing, recent habitat enhancement projects and associated research, DEI efforts, Park internships, construction projects, sustainability initiatives and direct River access and safety. Looking ahead, we plan to organize a focused discussion on discharges with our Research & Habitat Enhancement subcommittee. This winter, we will also host our second annual Sanctuary science meeting to review relevant data and research findings from the year to inform future scientific and habitat enhancement priorities. We will then meet with the full TAC to discuss progress across management areas and identify and discuss opportunities for accomplishing goals for the coming year.

Hudson River Park's SUBMERGE Marine Science Festival took place on October 14 and 15 at Pier 84, the first time the festival expanded to two-days in-person. On Friday, 1000 NYC students and teachers joined us at the festival, with 75% of the classes coming from Title I schools, split between elementary, middle and high school grade levels, with a few college students as well. On Saturday, 4000 visitors enjoyed science-themed entertainment, wildlife touch tanks, and more.

Thursday October 13 marked a special educational day in our local waterways, the "Day in the Life of the Hudson River & Harbor." This annual event, which celebrated its twentieth anniversary, is organized by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory of Columbia University. During "Day in the Life," students throughout the Hudson River Estuary from the Troy Dam to NYC participated by collecting water quality data including temperature, salinity, dissolved oxygen and more. Hudson River Park is a key educational site in Manhattan for schools to participate in this event. Over 150 local students collected data from three locations within Hudson River Park, contributing to a greater data set collected during the day by students. Our River Project team ran education programs centered on water quality at two sites to celebrate "Day in the Life" including a class of high schoolers from the NYC Museum School at the Pier 40 Wetlab.

We also celebrated the end of our Wetlab season at the Release of the Fishes on October 27. This annual event invites participants of all ages to help us release fish, crabs and other organisms back into the Hudson River as we begin to shut down the Wetlab for the winter months. We are thrilled that during the event 300 people visited the Wetlab to participate in the festivities, which also included a wildlife touch tank and various hands-on activities that taught visitors about ongoing Park research and local ecosystems.

This month, scientific divers from Billion Oyster Project used the Trust's clear water box to take videos and conduct counts to characterize the juvenile oysters recently set on reef balls deployed at Gansevoort Peninsula last summer. At installation, the spat were too small to accurately survey on the

textured concrete reef balls and so we delayed the counts until the fall when the oysters had time to mature. This dive project also intended to trial less invasive oyster monitoring methods at a more protected site in the Sanctuary to understand how it can translate to other locations.

On September 30 we met with 22 design and tech business leaders from Japan to share the Trust's current waterfront design, restoration and science work. The group was introduced to the Trust through David Benjamin, the Founding Principal of The Living and Associate Professor at Columbia University, who collaborated with a Japanese scientist and designer, Satoshi Nakagawa, on the 2019 mussel sensor exhibit in the Wetlab. During this visit, Satoshi shared his Off the Grid project, which uses natural elements like compost and water to power sensors and even buildings. In addition, the Park's River Project work was also shared in a video at an international design and technology symposium hosted in Japan to promote new ideas and future collaborations between Tokyo and NYC. Earlier this month, we also met in the Wetlab with Dr. David Farrier from the University of Edinburgh and Dr. Ike Wirgin from NYU to discuss how Atlantic tomcod populations in the Hudson have been impacted by anthropogenic factors, and specifically how Hudson River tomcod have evolving resistance to PCBs. David is conducting research for his book on ways that humans are affecting animal evolution and was interested in River Project's fish data. We also connected David to research partners at Stony Brook and Brooklyn College for additional interviews and a potential story on oyster toadfish behavior changes in response to anthropogenic noise, which a visiting scientist, Kelsey Hom, is conducting in the Park's Sanctuary waters.

### **Design and Construction:**

At Chelsea Waterside Park ("CWP"), construction in all areas is well underway with the project more than halfway complete. The site contractor, Alpine Construction & Landscaping Corp. ("Alpine"), is currently installing footings, curbs, walls, and site utilities in the Central Area of CWP. Alpine is performing sports field fencing reconstruction, turf removals and drainage/plumbing work on the closed Athletic Field, which now encompasses the former Overlook area. Athletic Fields of America is scheduled to install the new synthetic turf on the Athletic Field starting on November 14, 2022. Also, part of Alpine's work is the larger, improved Dog Run that is largely finished with portions of the perimeter fence still in fabrication; its installation is on track for completion in November 2022. There are new walls, curbs, concrete mounds, pavement with color seal coating, tiered seating, benches, tree plantings, water spray features, electrical, plumbing, and irrigation. While the Dog Run is in a functional state, a complete fence is necessary for its safe public use. EW Howell, the building contractor, has completed the comfort station's foundation, utilities, exterior walls and roof, and is presently installing the building's granite cladding system, interior walls, mechanical/electrical/plumbing equipment, and exterior/interior architectural finishes.

At the Gansevoort Peninsula, Steven Dubner Landscaping has completed installation of soils and plantings for the salt marsh on the north edge of the site. They continue installation of overlooks and seat steps with all concrete work largely completed. On the south side, Dubner has completed the south edge stone ledges below MHHW and has installed the kayak landing ahead of the moratorium period. JR Cruz will be starting reconstruction of the Bloomfield Street entrance within the next several weeks and continues subsurface utility work, including for the dog run and adult fitness area. The 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue Promenade landscaping and paving is complete including pavers, plantings, railings, and site furnishings. Pine Grove tree plantings and ground cover is largely complete, as are the vehicular rated boardwalks. EJ

Electric is relocating CDOT lighting along the bikeway in advance of Bloomfield Street and bikeway reconstruction. Padilla Construction continues to advance construction of the restrooms, concession, and Park operations space.

At Pier 97, work is proceeding well. Soil is being placed in newly completed planters, and some trees are scheduled for planting this fall. Concrete walls for planters are being formed at the flexible gathering area and the playscape. All granite veneer material is now on site and being installed at planter walls and curbs throughout the pier. Installation of the Overlook granite slide has also started. Drainage mats and geofoam fill are continuing to be installed around the pier. Excavation for the comfort station foundation slab is complete and all unforeseen sub-grade obstructions have been removed. Contractor has started installing form work, insulation, and waterproofing for the foundation frost wall.

Work is continuing on the tennis courts just north of Spring Street. Demolition is complete and base stone for the asphalt has been spread and graded. Asphalt will be laid over the next two weeks and the tennis surfacing system will be installed, weather permitting, by the end of November.

In a big step forward for the Estuarium, the Board approved the Trust's selected design team led by Tribeca based Sage and Coombe Architects at its September meeting. The project team also includes EHDD, a west coast based architecture firm known for their work on Aquaria as well as their sustainable design, Elizabeth Kennedy Landscape Architect, Matthews Nielsen and Space Haus for exhibit design. The Trust expects to begin pre-design work this fall.

The Board also approved the contractor for the Pier 26 Science Play Area. The Trust is currently executing a contract with Alpine Construction and expects to start construction by the end of 2022. The play equipment will include a 90 feet long Atlantic sturgeon and 49 feet long Shortnose sturgeon with educationally themed painted interiors, an 18 feet tall eel grass play structure, slides, climbing nets, and a shrimp and oyster shell play area, among other features.

Trust staff is also coordinating with the construction and development team for 550 Washington Street on the construction plan for the new crosswalk to the Park. Work began in mid-August and is currently wrapping up. The construction fence has come down on the northern portion of the site and all work within the park is expected to be complete by mid-November. Work to Route 9A and the bikeway is also nearing completion. The work is being completed overnight in accordance with SDOT issued permits. The Citibike docking station has been temporarily relocated from the tennis courts to Morton Street while the crosswalk construction wraps up. The docking station will be shifted to the new path currently within the construction fence after the completion of construction.

In early September we were pleased to reopen the Pier 84 Dog Run after its recent restoration lead by Deborah Bradley Construction. The improvements included installing a colorful new surface, modifying the existing fencing, and installing a permanent canine water feature and boulders for dogs to play on, and additional benches for their human companions. Hudson River Park Friends hosted an informal reception with several elected officials and of course many happy dogs.

### **Public Programs:**

Hudson River Park's Public Programs department had an outstanding 2022 summer, bringing Park favorites back in full force since COVID disrupted many gatherings. We are excited to share that over 42,000 people participated in our programming this season.

In September, we welcomed Adirondack Mac and the sustainable torch for the FISU World University Games to Pier 45. The torch had just arrived in New York after its journey from Italy and will be hosted at the Winter World University Games in Lake Placid in January 2023. The Trust was pleased to support and welcome our colleagues from New York State including the Olympic Regional Development Authority, Empire State Development Corporation and the Adirondack Sports Council at a reception in honor of the occasion.

Hudson River Park's Pier 76 hosted one of the highlight events of the 2022 New York Wine & Food Festival, the Grand Tasting on October 14th, 15th, and 16th. The festival supports God's Love We Deliver, New York's leading provider of life-sustaining meals and nutrition counseling.

Our final event of the season, Pumpkin Smash, is coming up on Saturday November 5 at Pier 84. Help support the Park's Community Compost Program by bringing your Halloween Jack-o-lanterns for a smashing good time!

### **Operations:**

The perpetrator of the sexual assault and robbery that occurred on March 27 at Pier 46 has been positively identified by NYPD but not apprehended as of yet. The NYPD arrested a person for a similar sexual assault and robbery that occurred in Fort Tryon Park on Saturday September 24, 2022. The Fort Tryon attack was initially thought to be related to the Pier 46 attack but later determined not to be. The Senior Director of Public Safety maintains regular contact with the NYPD Special Victims Squad regarding the status of the investigation.

With the increased summer and autumn use of the Pier 40 playing fields, we have experienced an increase in thefts on and around the field. Most of the thefts involve unattended backpacks and scooters. We have identified two suspects who appear to be responsible for most of the thefts. We have been working closely with the 6 Precinct Detective Squad and have provided valuable video and information for their investigations. On October 11, Detective Carey arrested one individual and charged him with six separate Grand Larcenies. All users of the fields are reminded to secure their valuables and not leave their property unattended. We have taken a pro-active approach to crime prevention and regularly canvass the fields for unattended valuables and identify and educate the owners of the property. We are also coordinating on crime prevention with the NYPD 6 Precinct.

The Trust has been working closely with DUSC and the NYPD to address security and safety concerns being created by one individual at Pier 40, a situation we are monitoring closely. We are also working to increase communication with permittees and reinforce the need to secure personal belongings while in the park to field users.

The Park consists of over 4 miles of waterfront and water safety is a significant concern. There are 32 life rings installed along the esplanade throughout the park. The life rings have been used by PEP, NYPD, and Park patrons to assist people who have entered the water. In the month of June, PEP helped rescue three people from the river, two with the use of life rings. In recent months many of the Life Rings have been removed from the cabinets and thrown into the river. On August 11, an individual walked along the esplanade tossing 11 life rings into the water. On numerous other occasions single life rings were found missing or tossed in the river. Sometimes the life rings are recovered other times they are not. The life rings are inspected regularly and repaired or replaced when necessary.

On Tuesday October 25, Chris McGann, the Trust's Senior Director of Public Safety, participated in the Public Safety Community Discussion for Patrol Borough Manhattan South with Mayor Adams. Most of the City's Deputy Mayors and Department Commissioners attended the event. Many of the public safety concerns that were raised were related to homelessness, mental health, quality of life issues, school safety, and child welfare. The Mayor and his staff reported that they were trying to address these issues with a multi-agency coordinated approach, aimed at both near term and longer term solutions.

The Trust facilities team recently completed repair of a broken sewage line at the western end of Pier 25. An existing bypass line was engaged to accommodate operations while the repair was ongoing. All systems are back to normal.

The Chelsea Waterside Park playground is now open following repairs made to the facility due to damage caused by vandalism that occurred on Saturday September 24. The facilities team made repairs in October. The large slide at the playground continues to be closed until the playground manufacturer replaces the part, which will occur over the winter.

The Trust horticulture team with the support of Friends planted 23 trees over the last two weeks. 11 of the trees were planted throughout Tribeca and 12 inside the Habitat located between 26th and 29th Streets. It was a mix of various species of trees such as Maple, Oak, Pine, Dogwood and Serviceberry. All trees planted in the Habitat are native to the Northeast. The trees were funded by Friends who received a donation from One Tree Planting. They were planted by Trust staff and two groups of volunteers.

#### **Other Park Updates:**

The Trust acknowledges the concerns expressed by members of the Advisory Council regarding Con Edison's use of Pier 98. Following the City Club's 60-day Notice of Intent to Sue under the Clean Water Act as received by the Trust, Con Edison and DEC, extensive discussion has occurred at both the September Community Board 4 and Advisory Council meetings. DEC and Con Edison have explained the nature of the discharges, which consist either of NYC drinking water or untreated river water used to cool the heat exchanger. DEC has also confirmed that the Con Edison permit is valid, notwithstanding that a new discharge permit application is simultaneously under review. Our impression is that most people now understand that DEC is an active regulator that monitors the discharges from the site. As noted above, HRPT will work with its TAC to consider the science questions related to discharges, including thermal, CSOs, boating and others as we collectively look at human impacts to the river. Finally, since this question arose in the chat during the last AC meeting, HRPT was not asked any questions by the City Club or any of its members before simultaneously receiving the 60-day Notice and questions from the press. HRPT is committed to continuing its efforts to engage with our communities in formal and informal settings.

Encouraging water access is a key part of the Trust's mission, and we are proud to host one of the largest collections of public on-water activities in New York City. As part of our continuing effort, Trust staff released an RFP to manage the operations of the Park's four boathouses and public boat launches located at Piers 26, 66, 84 and 96 on October 18 with proposals due November 18, 2022. The current boathouse permits expire end of this year. The goal is to continue to promote on-water access to the public through free, low-cost and/or market rate opportunities by attracting a variety of boating organizations and non-motorized boat types within the Park. The RFP is available on our website [here](#).