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(Credit: Olin)

HUDSON RIVER PARK TRUST BREAKS GROUND ON PIER 26 SCIENCE PLAY AREA

Newest recreational space in Hudson River Park will include marine-science inspired play elements to help children learn about local ecology

NEW YORK, NY (December 14, 2022) — The Hudson River Park Trust today broke ground on the Pier 26 Science Play Area at N Moore Street in Manhattan’s Hudson River Park. The 4,000-square-foot marine science-themed space is the beneficiary of a private fundraising campaign by Hudson River Park Friends and will feature custom, interactive sculptural elements where children can learn, play and be inspired by wildlife and the Hudson River habitat. Designed by OLIN, the specialized playground will also serve as an outdoor extension of the environmental programming planned for the future Hudson River Estuarium and will complement the ecology-focused Pier 26. The Play Area is expected to open to the public in 2023.

"Hudson River Park is one of our city's most treasured green spaces, especially for our youngest residents, which is why we're so excited to start construction on the Pier 26 Science Play Area," said **Noreen Doyle, President and CEO of the Hudson River Park Trust**. "This Play Area has been thoughtfully designed to advance two key aspects of our mission -- play and environmental education. We are incredibly thankful to Hudson River Park Friends, Mike Novogratz, Borough President Mark Levine, Council Member Chris Marte, and all who donated generously to make this imaginative project come to life. Hudson River Park is so grateful to all our elected officials and our community for their tireless advocacy and support, year in and year out."

"I want to congratulate everyone involved in Hudson River Park's capital campaign to create this singular playground that will inspire so many children and help teach them about the importance of the Hudson River estuary," said **Connie Fishman, Executive Director of Hudson River Park Friends**. "Thank you to all our generous donors and for the support from our elected officials, with a special thank you to Mike Novogratz for his incredible generosity and devotion to improving his community."

“It gives me such pleasure to see this playground getting started,” said **Michael Novogratz, former Chair of Hudson River Park Friends**. “It will spark the imaginations and curiosity of thousands of NYC children while giving them a great new space to play and learn about the Hudson River’s unique ecology. I am proud to have kick-started this fundraising campaign with a lead gift for its construction. Our whole community should support the Park in whatever form they are able. It provides such enjoyment to millions of New Yorkers.”

The Pier 26 Science Play Area will be the fifth children’s play area in Hudson River Park and will serve as an important educational and recreational space that further advances the Trust’s extensive science and environmental programming. The Play Area will include custom-fabricated play structures in the shape of two endangered sturgeon species that are native to the Hudson River — the Atlantic sturgeon and shortnose sturgeon. These larger-than-life structures are already in production by the Danish play equipment design and fabrication team at Monstrum, which specializes in creating whimsical, nature-based designs that spark imagination. Children will be able to climb inside each of the two sturgeon structures and explore fish “anatomy” such as a sturgeon’s swim bladder and interact with other marine-oriented play features to learn about local wildlife that resides in the Park’s 400-acre Estuarine Sanctuary. Trees and other plantings will be integrated into the space, along with a perimeter seat wall, safety surfacing, climbing nets and various other engaging play features for all ages to enjoy.

Hudson River Park Friends (Friends), the Trust’s nonprofit advocacy and fundraising partner, launched a successful capital fundraising campaign last year, raising nearly \$4 million for construction of the Play Area from a combination of private and public sources. The initiative was championed by former Friends’ Chair, Mike Novogratz, who provided a \$1.3 million match for private donations. In 2022, New York City Council Member Chris Marte and Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine also contributed funding for this project, expanding on a previous award from former City Council Speaker Corey Johnson and enabling the design to include a misting feature and other landscape improvements. New York State Senator Brian Kavanagh has similarly pledged financial support for children’s play in Tribeca which will help fund critical water play improvements and safety surface features.

“This playground will give our youngest New Yorkers an appreciation of the Hudson’s wildlife and give them the opportunity to connect with the marine habitat that surrounds our borough,” said **Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine**. “Through this playground, Hudson River

Park is molding the next generation of environmentalists, which is critical to New York's future. I'm proud that we could use my office's capital funding to support such a transformative project."

"I am delighted that ground has been broken on the Pier 26 Science Play Area in Manhattan's Hudson River Park and that the residents of this community, especially children, will soon have an exciting new recreational space where they can relax, play and learn about marine science and the Hudson River habitat," said **State Senator Brian Kavanagh**. "Thanks to all who played a role in developing this wonderful space, especially Noreen Doyle of the Hudson River Park Trust, Connie Fishman and Michael Novogratz of Hudson River Park Friends, and Tammy Meltzer and Community Board 1 for their tireless advocacy and fundraising efforts on behalf of Hudson River Park. I am pleased to join all of them, as well as Borough President Mark Levine, Assemblymember Glick, and Council Member Chris Marte, in contributing to the success of this project."

"I commend the Hudson River Park Trust for their stewardship of the Park as a vital hub for recreation and education," said **Assemblymember Deborah Glick**. "The Science Play Area will be a welcomed addition to the many offerings already enjoyed by visitors to Pier 26. I'm so pleased that the Play Area will include play structures and features that complement the ecology-focused programming offered by HRPT, and will foster a connection to the Hudson River habitat."

"CB1 is thrilled to welcome the Pier 26 Science Play Area, with its integral connection to the Estuarium and Sanctuary, to the Lower Manhattan neighborhood," said **Tammy Meltzer, Chairperson of Manhattan Community Board 1**. "Olin has designed a one-of-a-kind, hands-on experience that will delight families and spark curiosity about the local habitat for generations. CB1 is elated to support opportunities for children to explore natural sciences, connect imagination, and play with learning about the unique island life that exists around them, especially in their local ecosystem. We look forward to enjoying this playground as the final piece of the puzzle, the Estuarium, is built."

Once complete, the Play Area will complement the adjacent Pier 26, the 2021 winner of the Municipal Art Society's Best Urban Landscape award, which was also designed by OLIN. Pier 26 is inspired by Manhattan's natural shoreline with native plants and a habitat walk that leads visitors through its five ecological zones: woodland forest, coastal grassland, maritime scrub, rocky tidal zone and the Hudson River. The western end of Pier 26 also features the Tide Deck, a first-of-its-kind engineered rocky tidal marsh that ebbs and floods with the Hudson River's daily tidal cycle and offers students and members of the public an immersive and educational

river ecology experience. Pier 26 is also home to a sunning lawn, sports area, Downtown Boathouse and City Vineyard.

In September 2022, the Trust awarded a comprehensive design contract for the long-planned Estuarium, a center for marine science research and public education on river ecology, to be located immediately adjacent to the Science Play Area. Once both projects are finished, the Pier 26 Science Play Area and the Estuarium will complete the upland section of the Tribeca park area.

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About Hudson River Park Trust

Hudson River Park Trust is a unique partnership between New York State and New York City charged with building and operating Hudson River Park between approximately Chambers Street and West 59th Street along Manhattan's west side. This free, urban recreational oasis is home to award-winning skate parks, playgrounds, sports fields, gardens and nature exhibits, boating and maritime activities, art installations, and myriad year-round events that celebrate the diverse cultures and neighborhoods along its shores. The Park, which has transformed four miles of decaying piers and parking lots into a premier New York City destination for local residents and visitors alike, plays a critical role in protecting the Hudson River ecosystem. For more information, please visit www.hudsonriverpark.org.

About Hudson River Park Friends

Hudson River Park Friends is an independent nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to the completion, care, enhancement and ongoing sustainability of Hudson River Park. Serving as the Park's primary fundraising partner, Hudson River Park Friends generates necessary private support to guarantee that this vital destination for millions of park lovers continues to flourish and grow.