



Report to Hudson River Park Advisory Council

June 13, 2023

Invitation: Please join us to celebrate the completion of the Chelsea Waterside Phase 2 Improvements on Thursday, June 15 at 11AM! There will be a short ceremony and remarks, followed by a ribbon cutting and picnic. Phase 2 Improvements include a permanent picnic area, a new public restroom facility, and the refreshed synthetic turf field and expanded dog park. The park is also significantly greener in both senses of that word. RSVP to Ted Schneck (tschenck@hrpt.ny.gov)

Design and Construction

Science Play Area:

The Pier 26 Science Play contractor, Alpine Construction, is installing subsurface utilities and beginning installation of the footings needed to support the play equipment. Monstrum, the Danish play equipment manufacturer constructing the centerpiece play sturgeons and related equipment, is finishing fabrication of equipment, which is due to be onsite at the site in July. Completion of the Science Play Area is still on track for late Fall.

Estuarium:

The design team has been studying options for addressing flood resiliency on site and has begun preliminarily working on preliminary massing schemes for the building that address these requirements. The design team has been working with River Project staff to better understand its education and research work and create preliminary ideas on how the building can best support those efforts, and has also begun exploring intake options for Hudson River water. We expect to schedule the next meeting with the community shortly.

Tennis Courts:

In May, colored play surface was installed on the tennis courts which were previously regraded and repaved in late Fall. Existing court lighting fixtures were replaced with LED fixtures, reducing power consumption by half.

550 Washington Crosswalk:

As mentioned in our previous reports, the project was delayed due to required Con Ed signoffs. Those signoffs were recently granted and now the project electricians just need to make the final connections to energize and program the new traffic light. That work is being scheduled and we have been told to expect that the light will be operational shortly.

Gansevoort Peninsula:

At the Gansevoort Peninsula, work is progressing well. The bikeway, south edge, and salt

marsh are complete, and the esplanade, Bloomfield Street walkway, dog run, adult fitness, and sports field under construction, with turf to be installed later this month. The building volumes and canopies are currently in construction. This project is scheduled for completion in late summer 2023.

As you are aware, at the kayak landing, the designs called for the ramp to be topped with a revetment mat atop the slope to provide a cushioned surface for boaters to enter and exit the water. Unfortunately, within a very short period of time, the installation began failing at the site due to wake and wave action and due to the product, itself.

The Trust met with stakeholders from the boating community to discuss the new kayak landing at Gansevoort on May 4, and explained that after exploring numerous options, we would be proceeding with a concrete ramp. The ramp was installed in the past few weeks and is performing well, thus far with the desired balance of resiliency, durability, and slip resistance. We also had a positive discussion about boating and south edge operational requirements and signage with the boating stakeholders.

Chelsea Waterside Park:

At Chelsea Waterside Park, Alpine, the site and landscape contractor, completed the installation of landscapes, hardscapes, and site furnishings in the central area. EW Howell, the building contractor, put the finishing touches on the comfort station building in preparation of its impending opening. The new synthetic turf field is complete and already opened to the public. As noted above, a ribbon cutting is planned on June 15 to reopen the much-improved Chelsea Waterside Park in its entirety.

Pier 97:

Construction at Pier 97 is also continuing to progress nicely for the late summer 2023 opening. Installation of the granite “all ages” slide at the Overlook is complete while work in the playscape area continues. This includes installation of the perimeter curb of the sand pit, the elevated play structure retaining wall, assembly of the large jungle gym, and footings for small play elements. Installation of the concrete unit pavers is continuing from the west end of the pier to the east. Shrubs for the site were delivered recently and installation is ongoing. Work on the new restroom/maintenance building is progressing with installation of formwork for vertical walls beginning.

Environmental and Sanctuary Initiatives

Tribeca Research & Phase II Deployment:

This June we will start year two of researching the effects of the Tribeca Habitat Enhancement project. A sample reef ball and gabion from each enhancement area between Pier 26 and Pier 32 will be lifted on deck of Monmouth University’s 49’ research vessel, R/V Heidi Lynn Sculthorpe, to measure growth and mortality rates and sample for epibenthic species. From July through mid-September, we will also monitor mobile species and water quality conditions

from gear deployed with Rutgers University's 27' Sea Hawk vessel. This research program is led by the Trust and AKRF in collaboration with local universities and non-profits including Hudson River Foundation, Rutgers University, New Jersey City University, Molloy University, Monmouth University, and Billion Oyster Project. All work will conclude by 4pm to minimize impacts on recreational boating in the area. In August we are also planning to install Phase II of our Tribeca Habitat Enhancement project. Dates are not set, but this installation will include twenty-four seeded reef balls and 24 seed gabions organized into three clusters north and just south of the Pier 32 pile field. This installation is consistent with our current permit and will help to complete the reef corridor between Hudson River Park's Pier 26 and Pier 34.

Visiting Scientists

Hudson River Park's Visiting Scholar program is continuing to grow this year with more than a dozen scientists conducting research in the Park's Sanctuary. This summer we are hosting two Hudson River Foundation Polgar Projects led by Dr. Allison Fitzgerald and her student Rachel Caraballo from New Jersey City University and Dr. Matt Hare and his student Henry Hua from Cornell University. Rachel will research how the settlement of epibenthic organisms influences oyster larval recruitment while Henry is researching the distribution and abundance of oyster spat in Park waters to learn more about broodstocks and hydrological effects on juvenile oyster settlement.

In collaboration with CUNY, the Park also selected two visiting scholars as awardees for our pilot research funding opportunity. Dr. Chester Zarnoch with Baruch College will measure carbon and nitrogen levels, grass health and elevation fluctuations at Gansevoort's Salt March to understand baseline ecosystem services of this recently installed wetland. Dr. Dianne Greenfield with Queens College will assess microbial diversity during wet and dry weather conditions to elucidate the relationship of combined sewer overflow events on microbial communities. Both projects thoughtfully include CUNY student participation from both the graduate and undergraduate levels and each will receive \$10K of funding for the 2023 season.

We are also welcoming back PhD candidate, Tom Quigley, with Brooklyn College who is investigating the neurological processes and physical conditions influencing oyster toadfish vocalizations. Dr. Yong Chen and Dr. Hsiao-yun Chang with SUNY Stony Brook University will be expanding their finfish modeling work in the Park to trial innovative videographic sampling of fish and crabs utilizing the habitat enhancement structures off the Gansevoort Peninsula. Dr. Sam Chin with Monmouth University will also help the Park conduct metabarcoding on eDNA samples collected from Park waters over the past three summers. This project builds off the River Project's GoFish eDNA methods and collaborations with Cold Spring Harbor Lab. On the upland areas, we are launching a pilot project with graduate student, Hope Kenmore, from the University of Oxford. Kenmore is surveying pollinating insects in the Park with a focus on lepidopterans (butterflies/moths) and hymenopterans (bees and wasps) to catalog insect biodiversity in the Park and understand the effect of planting type, species and age. All visiting scholar projects help the Park meet various ESMP research goals, while also using the Park as a training site for students and young professionals seeking applied science experiences. We look forward to sharing more on our learnings from this work.

Summer Camp Field Trips & Public Drop-in Programs:

We look forward to another summer season full of science and hands-on STEM programming in the Park! NYC summer camps can book a wide range of field trips to visit Hudson River Park and learn more about our local environment. Students will have the opportunity to visit Pier 26 Tide Deck, Pier 40 Wetlab, Pier 57 Discovery Tank and Chelsea Habitat Garden during these programs. Please help spread the word to any groups in your network that would be interested in these upcoming enrichment opportunities.

And in terms of public drop-in programs, earlier this month we opened our Wetlab aquarium for the 2023 season. This year, we are excited to offer expanded public hours during Wetlab Look-ins where our River Project staff offer free drop-in tours for visitors of all ages. This season, we are open on Sundays from 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM and Tuesdays/Wednesdays from 4:00 to 7:00 PM.

Big City Fishing is also back again, with catch & release fishing workshops offered this summer on Piers 26 and 51. We are also continuing to expand our Park Tour series, which will provide relaxing and informative walks focused on shoreline ecology, native plants, and history. This season, we are planning tours of the Park's Compost Center, Habitat Garden, Pier 26 Tide Deck, historic vessels and more to be announced. We are also looking forward to offering another season of Ask a Scientist, the entertaining yet informative lecture series in partnership with Nerd Nite and Secret Science Club.

Over the past two months, we have welcomed thousands of students and members of the public into the Pier 57 Discovery Tank to learn more about our local ecology with this hands-on digital environmental exhibit. Starting this month, we expanded the programs offered in this space through an exciting series of workshops and programs including Science Trivia Nights, Sensory Science Classes, Nature-Inspired Art Workshops, Lectures & more.

Information can be found on our website about upcoming events [here](#) and field trip programs [here](#).

Public Programs

Public Programs kicked off an ambitious 25th Anniversary Event Season that will bring hundreds of free events to the park through November. From educational programs for the little ones, to fitness classes for gym lovers, maritime safety for the seafarers, amazing options for food lovers, expanded dance offerings and ample opportunities to enjoy local musicians, each corner of the park has something exciting in store for everyone.

Our ever-popular Hudson River Dance Festival took place on Friday, June 9th despite challenging weather conditions and welcomed an enthusiastic crowd for an evening of street dance, tap, ballet and modern dance on the Pier 63 lawn, presented in partnership with the Joyce Theater. The beautiful and successful event set the stage for an expanded season of dance throughout the park!

The Park is offering more dance classes this year than ever before, including an expansion of the popular Sunset Salsa, which transforms Pier 76 into a stunning dance floor under the city lights. The first night of Salsa brought more than 1500 people out to dance. A full season of the incredibly popular Bollywood and Bhangra lessons brings dance and physical fitness together at Pier 63 now on Saturday mornings at 10am through August 26th.

For music fans, Jazz at Pier 84, made possible by the Jazz Foundation of America, will bring local jazz musicians out every Wednesday at 7:00pm through August 16. Featured artists include the Bertha Hope Quintet, Salongo, The Harmony Bartz Experience and more!

Pier 45's Sunset on the Hudson will also celebrate local talent with a strong focus on LGBTQIA+ artists, Fridays at 7:00pm through August 25th. We have some talented artists, including Resistance Revival Chorus, the Queer Urban Orchestra, the Queer Big Apple Corps and more. We have also partnered with the Tin Pan Alley American Popular Music Project, which works to preserve the history of West 28th Street between Broadway and 6th Avenue as the birthplace of American popular music at the turn of the 20th century, to bring a bit of local history to the Park.

The venerable Blues BBQ Festival returns this year to satisfy hungry patrons looking for tasty food and great music. Join us on Saturday, August 19 at 1pm on Pier 76 for a day filled with great food and great company! All ages welcome!

The crowd-favorite workout series, Healthy on the Hudson, has already drawn hundreds of fitness enthusiasts to several of the Park's scenic piers with a variety of classes from yoga to High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) workouts presented by lululemon. The jam-packed evening class schedule starts at 6:30pm and includes - Meditation & Restorative Yoga at Pier 84 on Mondays, HIIT at Pier 25 on Tuesdays, Yoga and HIIT at Pier 57 on Wednesdays, Yoga at Pier 64 on Thursdays, HIIT at Pier 46 on Thursdays and Yoga on Fridays at Pier 26. Yoga and HIIT are also offered Wednesday mornings at 8am on Pier 57.

Every Thursday at 6pm from June through September, visitors can join a free and informative walk through the park focused on shoreline ecology, native plants, history and more. Take a tour of the Pier 26 Tide Deck to learn about this special environment and the animals that inhabit our 400-acre Estuarine Sanctuary. Dig in to learn about sustainability during a visit to the Park's Compost Center. Hop aboard some of the fascinating historic vessels that are berthed in the Park for a behind-the-scenes tour while learning their fascinating histories.

The Hudson River Park Green Team hosts regular volunteer sessions throughout the year where members of the community can gain meaningful experience working with friends and like-minded individuals looking to beautify and maintain the Park's picturesque waterside landscape. Members of the Green Teamwork with the Park's expert horticulture staff and support planting, weeding, pruning, mulching, and other gardening activities. Locations and activities vary each month.

The third Thursday of every month features free US Coastguard Auxiliary classes at 6pm on Pier 84. From learning how to tie proper knots, to what to do if you suddenly find yourself in command of a vessel, these free maritime safety classes are taught by Coast Guard certified instructors and are open to everyone. Advance registration is required, contact Terry Wasserman at the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary via email at – uscgaux.terry.wasserman@gmail.com.

Complementing this year's expanded environmental programming, the interactive SUBMERGE Marine Science Festival will return on September 29th and 30th, on Pier 84. Join our River Project team and STEM experts across New York for two exhilarating days of interactive science, sharing the wonders and wildlife of New York City's coastal waters. SUBMERGE features awesome experiments, kid-approved entertainment and more!

Save the date! Saturday, November 4, 11am – 2pm, come out for Pumpkin Smash! Bring jack-o-lanterns or uncarved pumpkins and squash, smash and smush them into compost to help keep the park beautiful, green, and growing. Participants get fifteen minutes to break up gourds into the smallest pieces possible and then learn how composting works at the Park.

The full list of 2023 Park Programming events can be found at hudsonriverpark.org/event.

In addition to the hundreds of free events we are providing this season, many of our park partners are also offering amazing opportunities that are free to the public. Be sure to check out Astronomy and Movie Nights at the Intrepid, performances at Little Island, tours of the Lilac, a range of lessons and classes at Pier 57, and free or low-cost boating at Downtown Boathouse, Village Community Boathouse, Hudson River Community Sailing, New York Kayak Polo, Manhattan Kayak, NY Outrigger and Manhattan Community Boathouse

Operations

The team is finalizing plans in preparation for the annual Pride Sunday gathering on June 25. This is an organic gathering of people who visit the Greenwich Village area of the Park each year to celebrate. We anticipate about 12,000 people visiting throughout the day. We are coordinating with NYPD and making arrangements to manage overall safety. If this area of the Park reaches capacity, NYPD may close access to the Park due to safety as has occurred in previous years including last year. There will also be heavy pedestrian traffic along the bikeway in the Village.

Horticulture:

Hudson River Park has hosted 28 volunteer groups recruited and organized by Hudson River Park Friends from the beginning of March to end of May resulting in a total of 28 groups, 864 volunteers and 2450 hrs. of work!

Horticulture staff have been spending a lot of time watering the Park, trying to keep all the new plants alive and well due to the lack of rain. It has been a very dry spring so far and keeping all the plants healthy has been a challenge for the Horticulture staff.

Maintenance:

The maintenance staff spent 63 hrs. cleaning graffiti around the park in the month of May. This is an increase of 18 hrs. from April, which totaled 45 hrs.

Facilities:

Display fountains and water features in the playgrounds and dog runs are all on. Drinking fountains are mostly all on except for a handful park wide. For the fountains that are not working, parts are being ordered and work orders scheduled to make repairs.

Public Safety:

As summer rapidly approaches, the Park is busier every day. We are experiencing a seasonal increase in people climbing over the safety rail, placing themselves at risk of accidentally entering the river. Since March 2023, PEP has removed 59 people who have climbed over the safety rail. We are working on adding to existing signage in certain key locations.

In early January, we began receiving complaints about a person who frequents the CWP Dog Run and harasses and intimidates the other Park patrons. PEP and NYPD were called to the dog run on numerous occasions to address this condition and the person was removed from the dog run on multiple occasions and issued a criminal court summons on one occasion. PEP increased their patrols at CWP Dog Run and regularly assigned a foot post there. We have not had any problems or complaints there recently. We will continue to closely monitor this situation and implement any additional measures deemed necessary and proper.

On June 9, we welcomed seven new park rangers who graduated from their academy and were assigned to HRPK.

Real Estate and Planning

Water Safety Meeting:

The Trust held its Annual Water Safety Meeting during National Safe Boating week on May 23 via zoom with the goal of bringing together the Park's non-profit and commercial, non-motorized and motorized water related tenants and permittees, specifically those who touch the water in their day-to-day activities. Also present were ferry operators NY Waterway and NYC Ferry, NYCDOT- Ferry division and the US Coast Guard Auxiliary. Trust staff provided Park updates affecting water related activities including construction, environment & education-park research, water quality, waste shark, the Pier 57 discovery tank and other 2023 programs being offered. Water safety and security issues were discussed including the Hudson River Park's Water Use Map, which can be found [here](#), hazards to navigation, spill protocol, EZ dock

safety rails and ladders, other water safety equipment including life ring cabinets and tenant communications protocol.

A key element in making sure that our boaters remain safe on the water is through safety education. The Trust sponsors and provides free or highly subsidized boating programs and educational opportunities to the public including water safety classes through our boathouse operators, historic vessels, and museum spaces. USCG Auxiliary and the Nautical school hold boater safety and educational sessions every season at our Pier 84 classroom. The USCG Auxiliary also gave a presentation on recreational boating safety programs that they offer and other ways that they can assist the boating community.

Both the ferry operators present at the Water Safety Meeting, NY Waterway and NYC Ferry, provided updates on their current operations, and reiterated their commitment to have their ferry captains maintain a 100-yard distance from the Park's pier headline. NYC Ferry held their Captains in Kayaks event on May 18 at the Pier 84 boathouse in collaboration with Manhattan Kayak where ferry captains and deckhands went on the water in kayaks.

We hope that such meetings like this water safety meeting will help different organizations who share the Park waters get to know each other better and connect with each other and Trust staff so we can together keep our shared waters safe.

Pier 76 Task Force:

The Trust is planning to resume the Task Force that had been working together in 2020 to explore long-term solutions for the park's two remaining park/commercial piers: Piers 76 and Pier 40 before being interrupted by COVID. Obviously much has changed since 2020 – including the fact that Pier 76 now no longer hosts the tow pound. The city and state economic climate are also now struggling in ways that could not have been foreseen in early 2020. The current goal is to focus specifically on Pier 76, which has greater and more urgent needs than Pier 40 at this stage. While there are still significant infrastructure needs at Pier 40, air rights proceeds have greatly benefited the structure, notably the piles. In contrast, Pier 76 will need to be entirely rebuilt due to its aging wood piles, and will not be able to fulfill either its open space or revenue generating needs. The Trust intends to build on work previously accomplished during the 2020 Task Force and local elected officials, community boards, Friends, the Advisory Council, and the same consultants who helped facilitate economic and open space discussions previously will all participate again.

Pier 40 Mooring Field:

The P40 mooring field south of Pier 40 is open and the Trust is issuing mooring permits for the season. If anyone is interested in getting a permit, please contact the Park's dockmaster Jim Gill at jgill@hrpt.ny.gov.