



Report to Hudson River Park Advisory Council

November 15, 2023

Help Us Name the WasteShark!

We are collecting suggestions of names for the WasteShark. Modeled after the filter-feeding whale shark, the WasteShark is a remote-controlled aquadrone that can remove hard-to-reach plastic pollution from the Park's Estuarine Sanctuary waters. Similar to how a whale shark consumes plankton, this ROV glides at the surface, straining out floating debris from River water into its inner basket.

Visit link [here](#) to suggest a name for our new favorite plastic pollution fighting tool!



Design and Construction

Gansevoort Peninsula

Contractors are finishing the last sections of Gansevoort Peninsula. Both the dog run and the Bloomfield Street promenade are scheduled to be open before Thanksgiving, with the building on track to be open by the end of the year. The rain garden and remaining plantings near the building are underway and also scheduled to be complete this month.

Science Play Area

The contractor is currently installing safety surfacing on site and preparing to begin installation of landscaping. The last items are the installation of lighting, fencing, permanent bikeway wall fronting the site, and signage and donor wall. We are projecting an opening next month.

Estuarium

A public meeting was held on October 30 to present the concept design to the community. The design team is taking the comments received during the meeting into consideration as they move forward into schematic design. Now that the basic shape, location and volume have been established given site conditions and the building program, the designers will be developing the basic shape and volume into a building design. They will be studying exterior materials and fenestration, while further developing the interior layout and overall building appearance. Further development on the landscape and interior tanks, classroom, and back-of-house needs will also occur in the schematic design phase. Continued planning related to the water/river intake system will also occur.

Pier 97

Construction at Pier 97 is also continuing to progress, although we will be opening it later than expected due to some delays with materials. We are actively working with the contractor to make sure work is moving as quickly as possible and will update you when we have a better sense of opening. Safety surfacing installation was recently completed in the playground and the synthetic turf installation just commenced at the Activity Field. Decking is being installed at the Sunset Deck and Belvedere areas as well as built in wood seating. Installation of concrete unit pavers is continuing along the east half of the pier and fencing work is finishing up at various locations pending continued fabrication off-site. Work on the new restroom/maintenance building is progressing with all structural concrete walls and waterproofing completed. Structural steel for the roof is currently being installed.

34th Street Interim Pickleball Courts

Construction of four interim pickleball courts in a section of HRPT's storage yard was recently completed and the courts are now open. We will be monitoring usage at the courts for the next few months and will make adjustments as necessary.

Pier 94 Film Studios

Immediately adjacent to the Park, Vornado began construction on NYC Economic Development Corporation's Pier 94. There may be some limited areas of Clinton Cove section of the park that are temporarily impacted during the construction, including some utility work. We are working with Vornado on ways to limit the disruption and will keep the website updated if there are any closures.

Environmental and Sanctuary Initiatives

ESMP Annual Update to Board

At our last Hudson River Park Trust Board meeting, River Project leaders provided an annual update on the Estuarine Sanctuary Management Plan, highlighting key areas of interest from our Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and progress in all three management areas including new educational programming at Pier 57, the Trust's expanded Science Leadership Program, the Tribeca Phase II installation, growth of our visiting science program and our work on the Estuarium conceptual design. A meeting with our science TAC and restoration research experts has been scheduled to discuss NOAA funding secured by the Trust through our federal elected officials and earmarked to research the submerged and shoreline habitat enhancements at Gansevoort. This winter, we will also host our third 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.

Research Update

We are beginning to wrap up our peak field season. Last month we returned our oyster wraps to the Pier 32 pile field for the winter, and we are looking forward to our fall Tribeca Habitat Enhancement research vessel going out later this month. November is the start of our data crunching and reporting season. Our River Project team is creating in-house reports and working with our 12+ visiting scientists to share Sanctuary findings with our greater science and park community. Our two 2023 CUNY Visiting Scholars, Dr. Dianne Greenfield and Dr. Chester Zarnoch, are speaking at this November's "Ask A Scientist" event on Thursday, November 30 at Pier 57. This is a great opportunity to hear about their work in Hudson River Park this summer and how it is helping to advance our shared research goals.

Release of the Fishes

In late October we hosted another successful “Release of the Fishes” event in our Pier 40 Wetlab. Over 400 community members joined us to help shut down our tanks, return this season’s fish ambassadors back to the river, and celebrate the conclusion of our 2023 Wetlab season. Four Visiting Scholars created posters summarizing their research in the Park, and scientists Hope Kenmore and Tom Quigley came in person to present their projects on Park pollinators and toadfish vocalization behaviors. Cathy Drew, the founder of The River Project, talked to participants about BIG, the largest oyster found in the NYC Harbor at Pier 40, and Dr. Jeff Levinton, a SUNY professor and member of our Technical Advisory Committee, sang a Release-themed song on the ukulele. Many environmental partners also joined Release including Randall’s Island, Gowanus Dredgers and Billion Oyster Project. We concluded the night with sharing findings from the Citizen Water Quality Testing Program and celebrated the work of 2023 season’s pathogen testing program with tours of our pathogen processing lab.

First Blue Team Event

Last weekend we launched our first Blue Team volunteer event in collaboration with Hudson River Park Friends. Park staff were joined by six volunteers who helped collect and categorize plastics from Gansevoort’s southern shoreline and including through use of our new Wasteshark. The thousands of pieces of plastic pollution removed amounted to about 50lbs of trash and recyclables. We expect the Wasteshark to become a valuable community education tool. We plan to host more Blue Team volunteer events in the coming seasons, including more Shoreline and Wasteshark Cleanup events. Keep an eye on the Park calendar for these events this spring!

Public Programs

Our 2024 event season concluded this month with Pumpkin Smash at Pier 84. Hudson River Park welcomed more than 1,700 participants who smashed 3,000 lbs. of pumpkin into compost to help keep our Park green and growing. This was 1,000 more people than in 2022! We are already looking forward to the 2024 season and are excited to continue offering free events and programs to our community. Outreach for the season will begin in the spring, and we will share more details about what you can look forward to at that time.

Even with cooling temperatures, athletes continue to utilize all recreational areas of the Park. Field users should mark their calendars for December 11, when applications open for the spring season. Applications will be accepted through January 15, 2024.

Operations

Gansevoort Peninsula

Staff have been actively monitoring and maintaining the open portion of Gansevoort Peninsula and we are happy to report that operations are running smoothly. Despite colder weather, the peninsula remains a popular attraction for park visitors.

Gansevoort St. Crosswalk

The Gansevoort St. crosswalk officially opened to the public on November 2, providing an additional entry point into a busy section of the Park for visitors. We congratulate City and State DOTs and the Meatpacking District for their work to get this project done in record time.

Parkwide Events

Now that internal and external parkwide events are coming to a close due to the end of season, the Operations team will be finalizing a few post-inspections to ensure any adjustments/maintenance of any Park assets and facilities are completed before Spring.

Facilities Maintenance

The Pier 84 and Christopher Street fountains are shut down for the season. Next week staff will be completing winterization on the parkwide fixtures. We will be blowing the remaining water out of the lines for the drinking fountains, ground hydrants, spray features and all of the playgrounds and dog parks. Because of this people might see mist coming up out of the ground at times that may look like steam from a distance. This work should be completed before Thanksgiving.

Horticulture

Staff have been busy this fall doing a lot of planting projects throughout the Park, often in coordination with volunteers recruited by Hudson River Park Friends. So far since September 1, we have planted 10 trees, 5000 shrubs & perennials, and 26,450 bulbs including a mix of small woodland bulbs such as crocus and glory of the snow and a mix of daffodils and orange and white tulips. The 3000+lbs of pumpkins that were smashed at Pumpkin Smash will get processed into compost. So far this year, the Park has hosted 2200 corporate volunteers to help with gardening tasks. This is the highest number of corporate volunteers the Park has hosted and the Trust appreciates the work Friends does to recruit and support these volunteer efforts. In addition, the amazing Neighborhood Gardeners (community volunteers) have given the Park 675 hours of volunteer work so far this year.

Maintenance staff spent 92 hours cleaning graffiti around the Park since September 1. Staff also refurbished some benches that are being used at the new pickle ball courts, and they are also busy cleaning leaves throughout the park and bikeway.

Public Safety

Thanks to the Advisory Council's suggestion last year, the Park again launched its Running Safety Month campaign at the beginning of November. Aligned with the daylight-savings time change, which suddenly shifts many early evening runners into the dark, the campaign includes safety tips that were prepared in consultations with NY Road Runners. You should see the tips on posters throughout the Park, emailed out, and on our website and social media.

After last month's discussion at the Advisory Council, the Park's Public Safety team has been in contact with NYPD personnel from the 1st, 6th and 10th Precincts regarding bikeway enforcement. Each Precinct has agreed to conduct joint education and enforcement operations with PEP at strategic points along the bikeway. We also participated in a productive Safety Committee meeting where a number of ideas were discussed about how AC members might be able to advocate for additional bike rule enforcement.

On Friday October 27, 2023, a swimmer had to be rescued from the storm drain on the esplanade in front of City Vineyard. At 7:14 AM a park patron walking his dog called 911 to assist a person calling for help from below a storm drain cover. Our video cameras captured NYPD and FDNY removing the storm drain cover and pulling a male from the drain. The swimmer reported that he had gone for a late-night swim and ended up stuck in the storm drain for hours.

Earlier in October, PEP was able to identify and detain two individuals that were caught on Park cameras throwing a life ring in the water, stealing a bag from a sleeping patron in the Greenwich Village area,

before stealing two bags from Pier 40 fields. When one of the individuals returned the next day, PEP recognized and apprehended them, and they were subsequently arrested by the NYPD.

At the end the month, Chelsea Piers security reported a dog stranded in the water at Pier 62. PEP responded and assisted by Chelsea Piers, DOE fund and a park patron, they were able to rescue the dog. PEP transported the dog to the ASPCA where it was subsequently reunited with its owner. The Park began distributing Dog Education brochures about the importance of following leashing rules, among others including waste disposal, this fall. The brochure is currently being updated to include the soon to open Gansevoort Dog Park, and we will continue to look for creative ways to reinforce our messaging.

Real Estate and Planning

Pier 76 Task Force

The work of the Pier 76 Task Force continues. In October the group reviewed a range of potential revenue generating uses – including opportunities and constraints - with assistance from the facilitators. While no decisions are being made, the Task Force is generating a useful set of information for further discussion. We know that more engagement with the broader community, including the Advisory Council, and our elected officials is going to be needed and are beginning to consider next steps.