

## **Report on Operations and Accomplishments in 2014-15**

### **2014 was a transformative year for Hudson River Park, with many highlights, including:**

- The announcement in November 2014 of a major gift to the Park to bring a world class park open space and cultural programming to Pier 54.
- The announcement in November 2014 of a new partnership with Clarkson University and its partners, the New York Hall of Science and Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, to operate the long-planned Estuarium at Pier 26.
- The announcement of an expanded joint venture to redevelop the historic Pier 57 into an exciting mixed use facility with some office space in addition to the previously planned creative retail and public open space components.
- Continued cultural and educational programming, including innovative public art installations, and Submerge, a new annual river science festival that attracted 4,500 participants to Pier 26 in its inaugural year.

### **Construction and New Projects**

The Park continued to recover from the effects of Superstorm Sandy which struck in late October 2012, and significant progress has been made to restore and replace storm-damaged infrastructure and facilities. Restoration of the Pier 51 playground, for example, was completed in 2014. The Trust also initiated several capital maintenance projects to maintain existing facilities, including playgrounds and ballcourts, that had suffered the effects of use and age.

In September 2014, the Trust announced that Young Woo Associates, the developer chosen to develop Pier 57, would be joined in the project by RXR Realty. Together, this partnership will redevelop the historic Pier 57 into a mixed use facility. The 2013 amendment to the Hudson River Park Act allowed office uses in the building, and it is anticipated that the new Pier 57 will have both office and retail uses, in addition to new public open spaces, further enhancing this part of the Park while also generating critical new income for Hudson River Park's operations.

In November 2014, the Trust announced a major donation from the Diller-Von Furstenberg Foundation that would permit the Trust to reconstruct Pier 54 as an exciting new park open space and cultural performance venue. The new pier will be built slightly outside Pier 54's historic footprint, as allowed by the 2013 amendment to the Hudson River Park Trust Act. A newly-created not for profit will offer cultural programming, much of it specifically created for the new venue.

In addition, the Trust began planning for a widened new pedestrian esplanade in the area between the Gansevoort Peninsula and 14<sup>th</sup> Street that will be funded largely through the federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program. The Trust is working closely with the New York State Department of Transportation to design and implement this important project, which will also improve the adjacent bikeway and create a new bus stop for future public transit service in this area.

Repairs to the Pier 40 rooftop continued, ensuring that the parking revenue that the Trust relies on would not be interrupted last year. Meanwhile, the Trust worked closely with the New York

City Department of City Planning to advance planning for the potential future sale of some of the park's unused air rights from commercial piers. Revenue from such sale is needed to restore the integrity of the degraded piles at Pier 40, and could also be used to assist the park in completing other areas of the park in the future.

### **Public Events and Recreation**

In 2014, the Park continued to host a variety of free recreational and education programming for New Yorkers, families and visitors as part of the "Summer of Fun" series. Popular annual events returned, including Hudson RiverFlicks "Big Hit Wednesdays" and "Family Fridays" that averaged a combined attendance of 20,000+ at 14 movie nights. For music lovers, the 15<sup>th</sup> annual Blues BBQ attracted 9000+ fans and Hudson RiverRocks concert series returned to Pier 84 for three performances. A new participatory dance series, Sunset Salsa, drew crowds to 14<sup>th</sup> Street with NYC's best DJs and beginner Salsa dance lessons. Family programming continued at Pier 25, as did health and fitness programs with free yoga, dance and exercise classes in multiple neighborhood locations. The 86 free events programmed specifically by park staff continue to bring fun and fitness to 50,000+ people participants.

Aside from cultural and event programming, our Public Events staff facilitated recreational play for the over 400,000 park goers who participate in organized sports activities on Park courts and fields, hosting soccer, baseball, lacrosse, rugby, basketball, tennis and more. Thanks to quality programming provided by the Park's wide range of for-profit and non-profit tenants under the Trust's oversight, tens of thousands more also played beach volleyball, mini golf, rowed, kayaked, dared the trapeze, swam or cycled.

The Trust's fourth and newest non-motorized boathouse opened in 2014 at Pier 26 in Tribeca. Operated by the Downtown Boathouse group, the boathouse offers 100% free programming including "basic learn to kayak" and longer river trips. On a typical weekend, the boathouse gets over 1,000 new kayakers, in addition to return customers.

In 2014, Hudson River Park held a paid concert series on Pier 97 with Live Nation, a partnership that has continued into this year. The series has brought several exciting acts to the Park, and has also generated new revenue to support Park operations.

### **Education**

For more than a decade, Hudson River Park has been a leader in delivering informal science education to both organized groups and the general public. Last year, Hudson River Park increased the amount of people educated through our programming by over 50% - hosting 450 enrichment programs and educating over 23,500 people.

#### **2014:**

- The Trust hosted over 120 school year field trip programs reaching approximately 3,600 children; the Trust hosted 150 summer camp programs reaching approximately 5,000 children. (In total, the Trust reached 8,600 children through school year and summer camp programs.)

- The Trust offered 125 free public education programs including teaching nearly 5,000 people how to fish last summer through our catch-and-release Big City Fishing/education program.
- In keeping with our mission to serve all New Yorkers, the Trust waives 25% of school program costs and 50% of camp program costs upon demonstration of need.
- Over half of our student groups live in the outer boroughs, with 24% coming from Brooklyn 24 % coming from the Bronx, and 9% coming from Queens.
- Teachers identified students as 38% Black or African American, 32% Hispanic or Latino, 20% White, 2% American Indian, 6% Asian, and 2% Other.
- Almost 70% of students receive free/reduced lunches; and a third of students are English as Second Language learners.

## **2015**

- In addition to maintaining a similar level of programming as offered in 2014, our education team launched a new afterschool program as a means to provide a more in-depth, immersive teaching experience targeted to students residing in nearby neighborhood public housing.

### **■Science Festivals**

Hudson River Park partners with research institutions and local environmental organizations to share Hudson River science with New York City's general public in an integrated, immersive way. The integration of scientists and environmental outreach specialists at the festival provided attendees with diverse perspectives and approaches to addressing local environmental issues. Participating organizations are required to create a hands-on activity that encourages attendees to explore and apply river related concepts.

In October 2014, the Trust hosted SUBMERGE Marine Science Festival. The Trust partnered with New York Hall of Science to create a more expansive estuarine/marine science festival dedicated to raising awareness about our coastal waters. With expanded capacity and combined resources, HRPT and NYSCI invited over 4,500 people to engage with 35 science, research and policy group about the Hudson River and surrounding water system.

### **■Environmental Monitoring Initiatives**

With its lush greenery and estuarine waters, Hudson River Park provides a much needed habitat and travel corridor for numerous fishes, birds, crustaceans and insects. Monitoring how and the frequency at which these animals use the Park's land and waters provide valuable information about the viability and adaptability of these populations. Hudson River Park also facilitates several water quality monitoring projects that inform our assessment and education of Hudson River health.

Information gathered from Hudson River Park's environmental monitoring initiatives helps park managers' to make informed decisions about park management and operations. In

addition, these environmental monitoring projects provide an interactive, hands-on way for the Park's Environment & Education Department to engage student groups and the general public. The data from these projects also support larger research initiatives that help protect and restore wildlife and natural resources on local, regional and national levels.

### ■Oyster Restoration

Historically, oysters have played a major role both ecologically and economically in the Hudson River Estuary. However, oyster populations began to see a significant decline in the mid- 19th century from over exposure to toxic chemicals, over harvesting and habitat loss. In 1999, NY/NJ Baykeeper established an oyster gardening citizen science research project aimed at tracking oyster viability within the New York Harbor. In 2014 NY/NK Baykeeper transitioned this oyster garden project to the Billion Oyster Project, and the Trust built and monitored eight oyster cages. Each month, Park staff, students and community residents monitor the Park's oysters for growth and mortality. Any sessile or parasitic organisms are also recorded. Data collected from this monitoring initiative provides Billion Oyster Project with a wealth of information to inform protocols for reintroducing oysters back into the lower Hudson River. This initiative also helps the Park's education staff to engage students and community members in a hands-on way as a means of building awareness and stewardship of NYC waterways.

### ■Marine Debris Monitoring

Hudson River Park participates in the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Marine Debris Program. Marine debris constitutes one of the most widespread pollution problems in the world's waters today. Marine debris monitoring programs are necessary to compare debris sources, amounts, locations, movement, and impacts across New York, the US and internationally. Park staff and volunteers collect, categorize and weigh marine debris on Hudson River Park's soft shoreline at Gansevoort Peninsula. This information helps the Park examine the spatial distribution and variability of debris, and investigate temporal trends in debris types and concentration. This Data can be used to evaluate the debris mitigation policies and give insight into priority targets for prevention.

### ■Urban Tree Ecosystem Services

Trees are invaluable natural resources to New York City, yet it is hard to conceptualize the impact that trees are having on the city. Hudson River Park staff and local students are therefore participating in TreeKit, a program that empowers NYC citizen scientists to identify, measure and map trees within the city as a means of quantifying the ecosystem services that they provide. This inventory not only categorizes what trees as in Hudson River Park, but also measures the health of each tree and calculates the benefits that each tree provides the Park, adjacent neighborhoods and greater city. This data helps the Park determine how trees intercept storm water and reduce CO2 levels. These results will inform tree maintenance and management within the Park as well as be leveraged to publicize the Park's benefit.

In addition to these projects, Hudson River Park partners with NYC Water Trail, River Project and Village Community Boathouse to get citizens involved in tracking Enterococcus bacteria levels in the river; Hudson River Park staff records information about fish caught (and

released back to the river) during our park programs; participates in NYSDEC's Striped Bass Cooperative Angler (SBCA) Program; and is part of a network of partners gathering real-time water quality data about the Hudson River through the Hudson River Environmental Conditions Observation System (HRECOS) network.

### **Private Sector Partnerships**

Hudson River Park was conceived as a public-private partnership. Since the Trust's inception, the Park has worked with partners ranging from large scale commercial tenants like Chelsea Piers and Circle Line to non-profit boating and community organizations to help activate and enliven the park while also generating income in the form of rent to support park operations.

Throughout 2014, HRPT and the Friends of Hudson River Park worked closely together to plan the hugely successful Hudson River Park Gala in October 2014, raise private money for horticultural programs and playgrounds, attract volunteers and increase Hudson River Park's profile and name recognition among members of the general public.

As always, the Trust will continue to focus on creative sponsorships that can increase revenue for park operations while still prioritizing the needs of public park users.

### **Public Art**

Hudson River Park boasts a number of site specific sculptures commissioned especially for the Park. In addition, it also hosts periodic temporary installations. In 2014, the Trust partnered with CYNTHIA-REEVES Projects to install *Waves and Particles*, an installation of stainless steel sculptures by George Sherwood in the Greenwich Village Section of the Park. In September 2014, the Park and Alliance Francaise, in partnership with PS 122 and Hudson River Park, presented "Everything by My Side," an immersive one-on-one theater piece by Buenos Aires artist Fernando Rubio. This unique installation featured seven white beds where seven actresses whispered childhood memories to individual audience members.