



Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance

Final Report on 2013 City of Water Day Project

August 12, 2013

Project Period: June 7, 2013 to July 20, 2013

Thanks in part to the \$15,000 in funding support from NY-NJ Harbor Estuary Program and the New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission (NEIWPCC) and \$103,498 received in matching funds from corporations and in-kind support 25,000 people came together on Saturday, July 20th, 2013 to celebrate and revitalize the New York-New Jersey Harbor as part of the Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance's 6th annual City of Water Day. This year's event was held on Governors Island (New York) and at Liberty State Park (New Jersey) — and at twenty-five “In Your Neighborhood” sites throughout the harbor.

Summary:

The Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance's (MWA) *City of Water Day* is a free annual event that brings the waterfront and the NY-NJ Harbor to life—making it real and vivid for thousands of participants by bringing them together for recreational and educational activities on Governors Island, in Liberty State Park, and at other locations around the New York and New Jersey harbor. This high-profile event promotes public access to the waterfront; provides opportunities for estuary education via guided boat tours, nature walks, fishing, kayaking, children's activities, and more; and encourages public engagement with hundreds of organizations working on the waterfront every day.

Goals:

The goal of this annual event is to invite residents of the NY-NJ region to spend a fun day on the water, while at the same time educating them about this invaluable natural resource at their shoreline that should be open and accessible for water-based and waterfront recreational activities. At the same time, the festival seeks to educate the public about the world-class potential of our harbor and waterways—to be realized through restoration and revitalization—the issues it faces, and the action needed to realize this potential.

The purpose of City of Water Day is to:

- Promote public access to the waterfront
- Provide opportunities for estuary education while highlight the need for citizen involvement to make waterfront revitalization and restoration a reality
- Encourage public engagement with hundreds of organizations working on the waterfront every day

Course of Action:

Planning for City of Water Day began six months prior to the event. After a work plan was developed, planning continued with sending a save the date for the event and a kick-off meeting.

Feedback from the kick-off meeting was used in the planning to help improve the experience for participating exhibiting organizations and attendees. Outreach to organizations, boat operators, boating and paddling groups, and volunteers was done via e-mail and telephone. In addition to receipt of online submissions, research was done to get new exhibitors. Planning also included coordination with event coordinators for on-water activities and interns who worked on various aspects of the event.

Activities at City of Water Day engaged many attendees who have no previous connection with the harbor. These activities included estuary education, narrated boat tours, on water activities such as kayaking and paddling, an opportunity to learn about the work of MWA's Alliance Partners and fun family activities. The event also helped fulfill MWA's goal to educate the public about the potential of our harbor and waterways.

Highlights and Accomplishments:

This event changes long-held attitudes about the waterfront by demonstrating the public benefits of a revitalized NY-NJ Harbor, increases the public's desire to take advantage of the harbor's resources, and raises awareness of estuary issues that are critical to its revitalization. Major media coverage of the event raises the profile of our waterfront resources before the public, elected officials, and others.

Many City of Water Day visitors had little previous connection to the harbor. The event gave them first-hand waterfront experience; and inspired them with the vision of a restored and revitalized NY-NJ harbor. The festival gave MWA an opportunity to highlight the important work of our Alliance Partners and provide them with a platform to make their work more effective. The Waterfront Activity Fair helped achieve this while generating new activity for our Alliance Partners, who were given the much-needed opportunity to network, plan future collaborations, speak with the general public about their missions, and actively engage community members in volunteering and attending at future events.

Highlights of the event included:

- Free narrated harbor boat tours for over 7,000 people on the region's premier working, historic, and educational vessels;
- Kayaking, gig rowing, outrigger paddling and paddle-boarding lessons;
- A flotilla of over 237 paddlers, rowers and sailors converging on the festival from launch points throughout the harbor (Governors Island only);
- Disney's *Imagination Playground* (Governors Island only);
- The *Waterfront Activity Fair*, showcasing hundreds of businesses and organizations working to revitalize our waterfront;
- Special activities just for families, including water-themed arts and crafts, touch-tanks
- Free narrated ferry transit between Governors Island and Liberty State Park courtesy of Statue Cruises;
- Live music and some of the region's best food vendors.
- Cardboard kayak race

With the grant from NEIWPC, MWA was able to provide 15 non-profit Alliance Partners with the incentive and tools to communicate their mission to City of Water Day participants through \$500 grants made possible by the grant. Each of the grantees undertook a program activity that achieved one of the following:

- Enhanced environmental education; or
- Enhanced public awareness of the Hudson River Estuary; or
- Provided an opportunity for the public to gain access to the water and waterfront

Appendix 1 a full list of grantees and the activities that they undertook to promote environmental education, enhance public awareness of the Hudson River Estuary and harbor, or provide an opportunity for public access to the water and waterfront.

In addition, the funds provided by NEWIPCC also provided MWA with much needed support for City of Water Day by allowing MWA to rent equipment needed to complete a successful event. Some of this equipment included, safety boats, safety equipment, walkie-talkies, and tents.

Project Evaluation:

Each year MWA closely monitors and tracks event metrics as it continues to grow, expand and re-evaluate the *City of Water Day* event. MWA solicits Alliance Partner and guests/ participants feedback after the event. This information along with the table of key metrics provided below allows MWA to evaluate and measure project objectives while highlighting areas for improvement.

City of Water Day 2011, 2012, 2013 by the Numbers			
	2011	2012	2013
Alliance Partners	425	649	730
Kayakers and Paddlers	252	213	237
Launch sites	16	14	14
Kayaking and Paddling Groups	19	15	17
Kayak Boat Race			10
Campers	130	150	117
Locations	6	17	25
Large Boats	5 – NY Waterways, Statue Cruises, NY Water Taxi, DCV Hayward, Circle Line	9	12
Historic Boats	5	7	4
Number of Boat Tours	13	25 + 12 Ferry rides	29 tours + 12 ferry rides = 41

Boat Open Houses	1	3	1
Press Event on a Boat	1	1	1
Boat Seats	4,128	8,079 including ferry 2,842 tours only 5,616 capacity for ferry	2,675 tours only 4,730 capacity for ferry 7,405 including ferry
Ferry transit to island	3 ferries (GI Manhattan, GI Brooklyn, Hoboken)	3 ferries (GI Manhattan, GI Brooklyn, plus MWA shuttle ferry between GI to LSP	3 ferries (GI Manhattan, GI Brooklyn, plus MWA shuttle ferry between GI to LSP
In Your Neighborhood Events			
Kids and Family Activities (including boat tours)	24 (GI); 10 (LSP)	33 (GI); 28 (LSP)	52(GI); 17(LSP)
Alliance Partners with Information Fair Tables	87 (GI); 50 (LSP)	48 (GI); 24 (LSP)	25(GI); 6(LSP)
Alliance Partners with Hands-on Activities at Information Fair	30 (GI); 15 (LSP)	79 (GI); 9 (LSP)	20(GI); 4(LSP)
Food vendors	13	9 (GI); 4 (LSP)	8 (GI) 2 (LSP)
Bottled water giveaways	11,000+	1,300 bottles	
Music, speakers, and acts	8 bands and acts (GI & LSP)	5 bands and acts (GI); 5 bands and acts (LSP)	4(GI) 3(LSP)
Webpage views	95,000	116,410	148,239
Webpage unique visitors	20,000+	25,886	29,323
Volunteers confirmed	232 (GI); 69 (LSP)	284 (GI); 98 (LSP)	412(GI); 155 (LSP)
Volunteer groups	5	3 with 109 volunteers (GI); 2 with 48 volunteers (LSP)	9 groups with 250 volunteers (GI); 3 groups with 75 volunteers (LSP)
Press hits	30	31 blog posts; 57 event calendars; 26+ articles; 3 TV interviews; 1 radio interview	35 articles, 89 event calendars/blog posts, 38 social media (Twitter & Facebook) posts, 4 TV interviews, 1 radio interview
Press registered at event	17	26	

Lessons Learned:

Each year MWA learns a variety of lessons and encounters roadblocks as it improves the City of Water Day event for its participants and guests. This year MWA encountered construction on Governors Island limiting the space where City of Water Day activities could take place. Also, another vendor had booked Nolan Park for a carnival which caused a change in location for MWA to Colonels Row. This change in venue and storage locations caused issues with transportation of stored materials and the movement and distribution of materials into Colonels Row. MWA staff was able to solve most of these problems by searching and eventually finding most materials. MWA is currently identifying better ways to distribute materials next year.

APPENDIX I: Groups receiving HEP funds to provide estuary education, enhance estuary awareness, or provide opportunities for public access to the waterfront or water.

Bronx Council for Environmental Quality Inc. (BCEQ)



The community celebrated the *City of Water Day in Your Neighborhood* at Mill Pond Park (Under the Major Deegan Expressway between East 149 and 153 Streets) on the Harlem River Waterfront. Local groups including the Bronx Council for Environmental Quality, Highbridge Community Life Center, Bronx Children’s Museum, Sustainable South Bronx, Gaia Institute, Dlandstudio, and the Harlem River Working Group participated.

Hundreds of children and adults attended. Tours showcased the project – the construction of the Stormwater Capture “Pop up” wetland planter at Pier 5 (located just south of Mill Pond Park). This project was made possible through the efforts of Congressman Jose Serrano and funded by the Wildlife Conservation Society and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, or the “WCS-NOAA South Bronx Waterfront Partnership”.

A public discussion involved how to protect and clean the water in the Harlem River and the Hudson River estuary, by looking at stormwater discharges into the river. In addition, the public was asked to describe what they would like to see in their new waterfront parkland.

Young people, under the direction of the Bronx Children’s Museum, painted the mural to identify Pier 5 in the context of their neighborhood (Yankee Stadium, Bronx Terminal Market, and buildings where they live). The “*Dump No Waste Drains To Waterway*” mural describes the concepts learned in the “Pop Up” Wetland discussions -- looking at just how dirty highway rainwater is and how plants can clean water of these pollutants. Bronx Children’s Museum guide educators, Zhay Owens, Luisa Escalera, and Jennifer Opoku supervised mural painting. The slogan was found engraved in the curbed storm drains along the street under the Major Deegan Expressway.

Bronx River Alliance (BRA)



An *Estuary Parks Paddle* departed from Starlight Park with 12 intrepid souls. They paddled south to Hunts Point Riverside Park where they observed the sight of combined sewer overflows. *Tree Care & Family Day* was held concurrently in Starlight Park and be lead by Friends of Starlight Park and the Bronx Volunteer Coalition. Approximately 40 volunteers attended to the needs of 50 newly planted trees, clearing litter from tree pits, mulching, and watering. Finally, Bronx River Alliance Education Director Damian Griffin staffed the Alliance's table at the main *City of Water Day* event on Governor's Island, where 237 people stopped by the table and got information on the Alliance's activities.

Fund for A Better Waterfront (FBW)



FBW did a walking tour with approximately 40 people along Hoboken's waterfront starting at Pier A Park at the south end of town and proceeded about a mile and a half to the Weehawken Cove. The tour, led by FBW Executive Director Ron Hine, pointed out the importance of establishing waterfront plans that secure the land at the water's edge as public parkland, making it accessible to people from all walks of life for generations to come. The tour also pointed out the environmental benefits of setting private development back from the water's edge and providing for extensive plantings of trees, shrubs and lawn within the waterfront park. The tour also stressed the importance of finishing the waterfront park so that the full length of Hoboken's waterfront will be fully accessible to the public without interruption.

Governors Island Alliance (GIA) for 501C3 holder: Regional Plan Association

241 Water Street, 3rd Floor • New York, NY 10038 • (212) 935-9831 • www.waterfrontalliance.org



City of Water Day gave the Governors Island Alliance an opportunity to roll out some new creative and educational activities for children and families on our New York-New Jersey Harbor Map. We hosted harbor related arts and crafts that encouraged children to decorate and assemble paper fish using species commonly found in the Harbor. Through this activity we were able to introduce children to the variety of species that can be found in the Harbor. To raise awareness of and show support for the restoration of oyster beds in the Harbor, children and adults were also able to color oyster pictures, write a hope or wish on the back, and place their masterpieces on the Harbor Map in oyster colonies. We used Playmobile ships and forts on the Harbor Map to address the historical significance of our unique Harbor. These toys allowed children to explore historical scenarios in a safe and hands-on manner. Further, to test the geographical knowledge of older visitors, we coordinated a map-matching game. Visitors chose five geography cards, each card with a different location in the New York-New Jersey Harbor, and placed as many of the cards as they could on the map. Grant funds were instrumental in providing these activities as they allowed us to purchase the necessary materials and encouraged our creative development of activities for City of Water Day.

Hackensack Riverkeeper



Hackensack Riverkeeper exhibited at City of Water Day at Liberty State Park and engaged event attendees in environmental education through bird watching and wildlife observation. We provided information about public access points, wildlife and history of the Harbor Estuary region. We also had a spotting scope available for City of Water attendees to observe wildlife. Our location on the green with the other exhibitors was not ideal for spotting water fowl and shore birds. Common birds such as American Robins and Pigeons were spotted and event attendees enjoyed getting a closer look at marine vessels on the Hudson River and the skyline of Lower Manhattan. Although a wide variety of birds were not spotted, having the spotting scope at our exhibit did allow us to engage with people to talk to them about what birds and animals do live in the estuary. It also gave us the opportunity to introduce people to birding and to expand their horizons about what animals use our public lands and how human behavior impacts them.

HarborLab for 501C3 holder: Earth Day New York



HarborLAB hosted two programs on Governors Island for City of Water Day. We provided the visiting public with walk-up paddling. We also had an eco-education tent with literature about the estuary and watershed and activities (such as video microscope viewings of estuary life) on the island's upland green. Partnering us to provide additional teaching was the Columbia Astronomy Public Outreach.

Human Impacts Institute (HII) for 501c3 holder: Huairou Commission



On Governors Island, the HII booth was stocked with educational activities for both adults and children. Children and adults had an opportunity to learn the names of native New York State bird and fish species through our memorization game, which often turns into a healthy competition amongst players! Parents and their children were also able to work together with our “Climate Wheel.” Parents were asked water and climate related questions to test their knowledge on the subject, while their kids were able to play Twister based on the corresponding color of the question asked.

Harlem Community Development Corporation (HCDC) for 501C3 holder: Mount Morris Park Community Improvement Association.



The day began with a fishing event, supported by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. The event was open to all ages and allowed our partners to begin a conversation with the participants about the fish of the Harlem River and the many ways that humans have altered their environment. Although the water quality of the Harlem River is remarkably improved when compared to the peak of the industrial city during World War II, care must be taken when consuming fish and the fishing event was our opportunity to explain why.

There were a myriad of other activities for our visitors. The community was invited to participate not only as visitors, but also as presenters of art and culture by bringing painting and music to the water. Additionally, visitors were invited to tour the entirety of the park and see how Harlem River Park interacts with the river. A landscape architect from the Department of Parks and Recreation was on hand to give tours of the natural edge.

Hester Street Collaborative (HSC)



On July 20th, Hester Street Collaborative (HSC), in partnership with the Lower East Side Waterfront Alliance and Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, launched *Paths to Pier 42* as an In Your Neighborhood site for City of Water Day. *Paths to Pier 42* is a series of art, cultural and educational programming that is creating community access to a neglected section of the East River Waterfront while addressing issues of waterfront and neighborhood resiliency raised by Hurricane Sandy.

The public was invited to join us on Pier 42 from noon-4pm to celebrate the official opening of the park. *Paths to Pier 42* artists were onsite to discuss their installations with attendees.

Installations include: ***Triple Island***, a scalable, amphibious ecosystem by Mary Mattingly that serves as a habitat in preparation for increased ecological instability and the dearth of livable land; and as a public experiment about living with the altered environments of our shared future; ***Inked Garden***, by Jennifer Wen Ma, an elongated garden painted black with charcoal-based Chinese ink, planted and cared for with community members; ***Tree Grove***, by Interboro Partner, which leverages the New York Restoration Project's Million Trees NYC Initiative by creating custom planter/benches made from recycled lumber that temporarily "hold" replacement trees bound for neighborhood NYCHA buildings at Pier 42, where there is an immediate need for shade, green, and seating; and ***On A Fence***, by Chat Travieso, which transforms the fence surrounding Pier 42 into an interactive structure incorporating seating, play, exercise, and signage and seeks to invert the function of the fence from a physical barrier to a place of inclusion; and ***Do you remember the bananas?***, a painted herbarium by Nanna Debois

Lilac Preservation Project



Over 200 people visited LILAC during City of Water Day 2013. Our ship tours, which allowed visitors to also visit a site-specific art exhibit, overlapped successfully with rides on the fireboat JOHN J. HARVEY, where passengers boarded via LILAC, and on the tug PEGASUS, environmental demonstrations on board by The River Project, as well as the pier side fishing lessons from educators of the Hudson River Park Trust.

Long Island City Community Boathouse (LICCB) for 501C3 holder: The Gowanus Dredgers



LICCB, an activity group of the Gowanus Dredgers, set up a table on Governors Island, and also at Gantry State Park, providing information on LICCB activities and also had a sign up sheet for public participation. Our public programs introduce people, who might not otherwise be aware, to the idea that we can all use the NYC waterways for human-powered transport and recreation.

Lower East Side Ecology Center (LES) for 501C3 grant holder: Outstanding Renewal Enterprises



On July 20, 2013 the Lower East Side Ecology Center coordinated a City of Water Day in Your Neighborhood event on Pier 42 along the East River at Jackson Street. The Ecology Center's activities was complemented by other activities offered by members of the Lower East Side Waterfront Alliance as part of the *Paths to Pier 42* project.

The Lower East Side Ecology Center's City of Water Day in Your Neighborhood event fulfilled all three of the stated goals of City of Water Day and this grant by enhancing environmental education and public awareness of the Hudson River Estuary while also providing an opportunity for the public to gain access to the waterfront. The activities that we provided to achieve these goals include:

- A catch-and-release fishing clinic with bait and tackle provided to bring residents up to the water's edge and learn about the ecology and environment of the Hudson River Estuary. This fishing clinic contributed to the Great Hudson River Fish Count to provide data to the Hudson River Estuary. However, this activity was not funded by HEP/NEIWPC.
- Gardening and planting activities to encourage stewardship of this park and to learn about how proper plant choice and garden design can contribute to the resiliency to the inevitable flooding that will occur at this site.

Paths to Pier 42 is a series of art, educational, and design installations and public events along the East River Waterfront in the summer of 2013 by the Lower East Side Waterfront Alliance with the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council. The project will create a "pop-up" waterfront park that will increase access to, and public enjoyment of, Pier 42 while it awaits permanent transformation into a new public park over the next several years. *Paths to Pier 42* installations will model activities that can and will take place on the waterfront once it is fully redeveloped.

The Lower East Side Waterfront Alliance is comprised of CAAAV: Organizing Asian Communities, Good Old Lower East Side, Hester Street Collaborative, Lower East Side Ecology Center, and Two Bridges Neighborhood Council.

The River Project



The River Project participated in the In Your Neighborhood program at Pier 25, partnering with Hudson River Park Trust and Lilac Preservation Project in Hudson River Park. The River Project had enough staff, interns, and supplies to open up the wetlab and had two locations within Hudson River Park. At Pier 25, The River Project taught fish anatomy and had identification demonstrations, explored the sediment using a sediment dredge, and had visitors to the steamship Lilac check traps. At Pier 40, Eastern oyster restoration in the Hudson River was focused on using The River Project's new Oyster Ecosystem Exhibit. All activities had corresponding viewing tanks, touch tanks, and other hands on components for all ages. The River Project was able to educate a large group of people during City of Water Day due to our ability to provide two sites and to print literature to hand out.

Tugboat Pegasus Preservation Project



On City of Water Day several hundred people were with us aboard as we provided narrated boat tours of the harbor. With the Open Boat program at-the-dock at Pier 25 in the afternoon additional hundreds learned about the Harbor and its working waterfront heritage and of the restoration work being done on the Pegasus. Handouts of our own production of a chart of historic vessels all over the harbor/estuary encouraged the public to visit other historic vessels, especially those at Pier 25, the fireboat *John J Harvey* and the lighthouse tender Lilac, and of course a return visit to the tug *Pegasus*.

Westchester Sail & Power Squadron for 501C3 holder: U.S. Power Squadron



The Westchester Sail & Power Squadron, a division of the U.S. Power Squadron, Presented on Governors Island our on the water boating programs which educate more people to be aware about the beauty of Hudson River and Long Island Sound and so that they will be educated on the importance of safe boating and maintaining our environment clean by not discharging waste or oil from the boats to the waters. We also had brochures about the importance of obeying the federal and local regulations such as obeying no wake rule so that we can stop beach erosion.

This project was funded by an agreement awarded by the Environmental Protection Agency to the New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission in partnership with the New York-New Jersey Harbor & Estuary Program.

Although the information in this document has been funded wholly or in part by the United States Environmental Protection Agency under agreement CE98272004 to NEIWPCC, it has not undergone the Agency's publications review process and therefore, may not necessarily reflect the views of the Agency, and no official endorsement should be inferred. The viewpoints expressed here do not necessarily represent those of the New York-New Jersey Harbor & Estuary Program, NEIWPCC, or U.S. EPA, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or causes constitute endorsement or recommendation for use.



New York - New Jersey
Harbor & Estuary Program
www.harborestuary.org

