

CASE STUDY: HUNTS POINT LANDING

OVERVIEW

An ecological restoration project that removed degraded industrial features and implemented salt water habitat restoration, improved runoff design and increased recreational access to the water for local users.

LOCATION & ACCESS

Bronx, New York City, New York, located along the East River at Farragut Street. This site is publicly accessible.

PARTICIPANTS

Owner: New York City Economic Development Corporation

Manager: New York City Economic Development Corporation

Design: Prime/Landscape Architecture- Mathews Nielsen Landscape Architects; Civil/Geotech-Dewberry Goodkind Inc.; Marine-Halcrow; Environmental/Structural-HDR; Signage-Russell Design

Community Partners: Sustainable South Bronx

Contractor(s): Galvin Brothers Inc.

Cost: 6.8 million

Contact: John Roebig, HDR & Kate Van Tassel, NYC Economic Development Corporation or Terrie Brightman, Mathews Nielson Landscape Architects



The Hudson River Sustainable Shorelines Project is a multi-year effort lead by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Hudson River National Estuarine Research Reserve, in cooperation with the Greenway Conservancy for the Hudson River Valley.

The Project is supported by NOAA through the National Estuarine Research Reserve System Science Collaborative.

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BACKGROUND

In the mid-20th century, the industrial base that built New York City moved from Manhattan to the outer boroughs, with concentration in the Bronx. Just over the East River from Manhattan and Queens, the Bronx neighborhood of Hunt's Point was inundated with power plants, wastewater treatment plants and food storage buildings. In the 21st century, the entire Hunt's Point waterfront was industrialized and very little greenspace was available to locals.

With an increase in demand for public recreation access and a healthier local environment, the South Bronx Greenway was developed to respond. Directed by the New York City Economic Development Corporation, the South Bronx Greenway was making headway on acquisition of land for parks and recreation.



Figure 1: View of the park prior to construction. (Mathews Neilsen Landscape Architects/NYC Economic Development Corporation)

The dead end parcel on Farragut Street was located along the shoreline of the East River with great views of New York City. A de-mapped street and site of a former coal gasification plant, it was an area that was ideal for improvement with lush greenery and recreation amenities. Additionally, the location of the parcel, called Hunt's Point Landing, was convenient to the development of the greenway concept throughout the neighborhood.

ASSESSMENT, PLANNING & DESIGN

HDR and Mathews Neilsen Landscape Architects, among other private partners in the Greenway, noted the lack of lush greenery throughout the area. In particular, the Farragut Street dead end that eventually became Hunt's Point Landing was predominantly degraded pavement and discarded industrial wastes. Hunt's Point Landing became a Phase One project for the overall South Bronx Greenway project in 2006 due to its status at the time as an informal fishing recreation area. The project planners envisioned a park space that allowed local recreationists and residents to access the water and experience a natural East River shoreline.

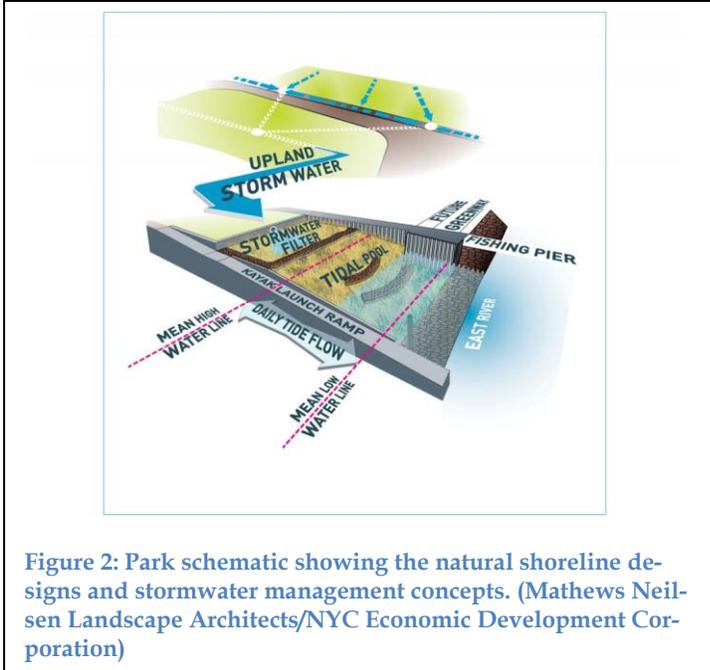


Figure 2: Park schematic showing the natural shoreline designs and stormwater management concepts. (Mathews Neilsen Landscape Architects/NYC Economic Development Corporation)

Due to the contrast in nature of the Greenway plan and the local economic base of heavy industrial companies, there were initial reservations regarding the plans at Hunt’s Point Landing. Public participation was included in the process in the form of community charrettes, allowing local residents to voice their desires and concerns with design ideas. Public meetings and communication between project partners and local industry improved the understanding among both industry and park lands proponents.

With strong communication and understanding among all parties in the area, Hunt’s Point Landing moved forward in 2012, following a series of permits and

approvals required by both New York State and New York City due to the brownfield and urban nature of the project.

As previously stated the goals of the project were to increase habitat and recreational access. Designers focused on maximizing both of these along the shoreline. The shoreline was designed at 7% slope to allow for tidal salt marsh species to migrate depending on sea level rise scenarios. The park plans allowed for access to the water for recreation at any tidal stage with this shallow slope and soft, native vegetation. The salt marsh restoration was constructed to allow for typical species such as oysters to reclaim their habitat.. Also included for recreational benefits was a pier for fishing and sightseeing from the panoramic point along the East River. Lastly, the designers sought to employ stormwater management techniques that limited flow of potentially harmful stormwater into the river.

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The initial first step was to acquire local land parcels to complete the park space needed to construct the designs. Following that, the general contractor started construction of the park features. The plantings included saltmarsh cordgrass (*Spartina alterniflora*) in the low marsh; saltmeadow cordgrass (*Spartina patens*) and seaside saltgrass (*Distichlis spicata*) in the high marsh; and Saltwater bulrush (*Shoenoplectus robustus*) in the brackish pond to recreate the habitat of the native Hunt’s Point shoreline. The park was opened to the public with the official ribbon cutting ceremony which was held on September 24, 2012.

Maintenance is provided by NYC Economic Development Corporation, and maintenance issues includes removal of floatables and debris being washed in by high tides and river flooding along with regular maintenance of the adjacent kayak launch and fishing pier.



Figure 3: A photograph of the upland portion of the park with green infrastructure and recreational amenities. (Mathews Neilsen Landscape Architects/NYC Economic Development Corporation)

LESSONS LEARNED

- Ecological restoration and recreation access can be dually accomplished in areas where shoreline space is limited.
- Although site specific, incorporating sea level rise concepts and projections can benefit users through increased greenery, better recreational access and security from future storm surge events.
- Understanding site environmental conditions such as hydrology, water chemistry, and underlying substrate is critical to successful shoreline design and restoration.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Hunts Point Landing is one of five Phase I projects selected from the South Bronx Greenway Master Plan. Funding for the projects came from sources including City capital, the New York State Department of State's Environmental Protection Fund, the Wildlife Conservation Society, and the WCS-NOAA South Bronx Waterfront Partnership.