

Learning Places Summer 2019

SITE REPORT #2

NATURE WALK



THE LIFE IS ALLOWED TO TAKE HOME

STUDENT NAME: Micaela Maria

SITE OBSERVATIONS

What are some general observations about the character of this place? What does it remind you of? How does it make you feel?

- According to the article in “The Newtown Creek Nature Walk” by Environmental Protection, nature walk is a symbol where various cultures and stories intercalate to form a path where visitors can enjoy the view and the host behind the architecture. When you first enter nature walk the entrance is a bit confusing. According to our guide, the entrance begins in an immense rock that is more than 2000 years old and was founded when they were building the Nature Walk. I say that it is confusing because when I arrived at the place I really had no idea that it was a public place and that the immense rock belonged to that place. In my opinion the entrance of the place is inconvenient, it is not really in a place where people would expect it to be. Nature Walk was next to several industries that it made me think that the space was a private property.

Historically, what are some of the important developments that have created the current

environmental situation at Newtown Creek area. Refer not only to the reading and Prof. Spellane's lecture, but also what you learned on the Newtown Creek Alliance tour (hint... estuaries, for instance)?

- Nature Walk is an interesting place with a unique structure. Here we can find a junkyard for cars, a huge boat that transports our waste to beautiful trees that the natives (before the Europeans arrived) used for medicine and crafts. Some important developments that have caused the situation on the nature walk is the industries, and the stories of them.

In what ways is the natural environment contained or shaped by the architecture of the Newtown Creek Nature Walk? In what ways is the natural world repossessing, interacting with, or invading spaces that have been over-polluted or industrialized?

- In my opinion, this place has become an over-polluted unpleasant environment and these industries are the ones to blame for. We can see how nature interacts with space when we saw all those dead crabs in the triangle and how some trees grew there. This was done intentionally to represent "life is allowed to take home," but in reality industries and pollution have taken over nature's home and is only giving nature a small space to grow.

Discuss the program of the nature walk. How are people meant to interact with one another and with the environment?

- The Nature Walk program is a path full of history, if the visitors pay close attention to the plants, rocks, and barrels of the habitat; one can see and learn about how things were before and how they are now. Something good about this place is that it has areas where people can sit and share with each other while enjoying the view of native trees and water. Another thing that I liked about this place is that it grants access for people with wheelchairs, giving more people the opportunity to access and enjoy this place.

If you were to stage a performative intervention in a *specific* site (i.e., a single structural aspect of the walk or industrial remains) where would you stage it and why (how does the environment add meaning to the performance)? /What message would your performance convey and who needs to hear this message?

- The space that most caught my attention would be the steps that go to the water and have triangles where nature is supposed to emerge and be welcomed as home. In this area it would be a good idea for people on the steps to make a line where each of them grabs a photo of plants and animals that would be unable to be born in a place where the water is contaminated in order to show how important it is for plants and animals have a clean habitat without contamination to grow healthy and strong. The message I want to convey is that just because they make a very nice place and name it the Nature Walk does not mean that all of nature will be able to grow and coexist in this ecosystem. Instead of wasting money fixing the place and trying to plant trees that will probably die due to the polluted

water. It would be good if they removed the problem from the root and start by cleaning the water and creating a safe environment for fishes, plants, and trees to grow and cohesist without the contamination killing them.

QUESTIONS for FURTHER RESEARCH. These should follow directly from your analysis section and be complex and specific enough to serve as the basis of a research project.

Questions might relate to architectural or environmental observations, socio-political problems and/or solutions, demography, history, zoning, civic processes, performance strategy, etc.

1. Question? How much money and time did it cost the city to create this place?
2. Question? What are some aspects and factors that makes the Nature Walk's name ironic?
3. Question? If the water is so polluted why is the Nature Walk space for the public?

4. **FURTHER RESEARCH:**

Revised Research Question: WHY IS THE NATURE WALK OPEN TO THE PUBLIC WHEN THERE ARE MANY FACTORS THAT MAKES THIS SPACE ONE OF THE MOST POLLUTED PLACES IN NEW YORK CITY?

CITATION 1:

Ruen, Chris. "The Ironic Nature Walk." *New York Times*, 10 May 2009, p. 3(L). *Gale Academic Onefile*, https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A199488833/AONE?u=cuny_nytc&sid=AONE&xid=f0448a37. Accessed 21 Oct. 2019.

Why did you select this source? How does it address all or part of your research question?

Is the source credible? Why or why not?

- I selected this article because it talks about how much money the Nature Walk cost and how many years it took. Even though the article is from 2009 this shows that the city has not done anything to clean the most polluted water of New York city. It shows that the problem with contaminated water has been going on for more than a decade and remains the same on this day.

CITATION 2:

“NEWTOWN CREEK Site Profile.” *EPA*, Environmental Protection Agency, 20 Oct. 2017,
<https://cumulis.epa.gov/supercpad/SiteProfiles/index.cfm?fuseaction=second.Healthenv&id=0206282>.

Why did you select this source? How does it address all or part of your research question?

- I selected this source because it talks about the risks we can face if we get any sort of contact with the polluted water. It also talks about the toxic chemicals found in it and how these chemicals affect humans and animals in the area.

Is the source credible? Why or why not?

- I think this source is credible because United States Environmental Protection Agency published it and they are an organization that has been offering services for almost 50 years and is composed by 14,172 employees.

What further information would you need to answer your question? Where would you look for additional sources?

- I would like to know what is the city doing to clean the polluted water and why the industries that cause so much harm not paying for this?