

REPORT #2SITE

Gowanus Canal Conservancy Walk



Gowanus Canal view from 9th Street Bridge

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INTRODUCTION AND PRE-VISIT REFLECTIONS

The Gowanus Canal is known to be one of the most polluted canals in the United States. It's located in Brooklyn between Red Hook and Carroll Gardens. The canal was used to transport goods back in the ____ when Industrialization started to increase. Known for its plate size oysters, as time passed it became very polluted and the lack of regulations at that time didn't help at all. Now it was time to take control over the matter. Superfund is an organization that is trying to clean up the canal and making the community aware of the problem. The Gowanus community is also undergoing through gentrification, which I've learned that zoning can change and can also be manipulated to put in other purposes buildings; for example, hotels and storage buildings.

SITE DOCUMENTATION:



Key / Legend

- Start of Tour
- Stops
- Picture 01
- Picture 04
- Tour Route
- End of Tour

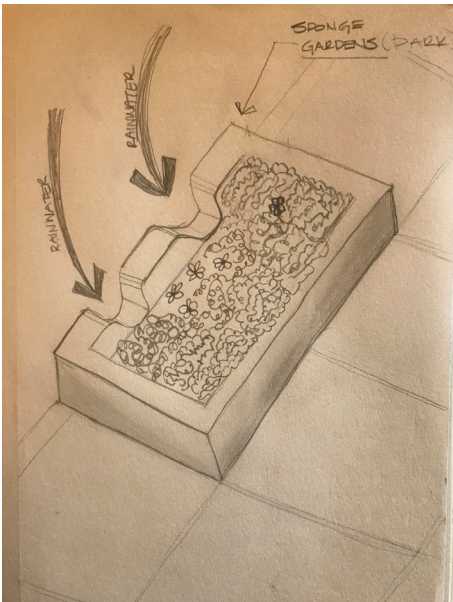
PHOTOS AND SKETCHES



Sponge Park is part of the Green Infrastructure Plan. The curbside rain garden allows the rain water to enter the garden and stay inside. Avoiding the water from going to the sewer and produce a sewage overflow.



Zoom in of curbside of a Rain Garden or Sponge Park.



Sponge Parks are being tested but in a way is also not been tested fully. This one is located on 2nd Ave. and Bond St. in front of 365 Bond Street. If the gardens ran through the top of 2nd Ave. they can be tested to its full capacity and be implemented in many places in the city.



Gowanus Canal water showing iridescent like spots. I assume that those spots are contaminated places in the canal.



The 365 Bond Street building complex that promotes kayaking in the Gowanus Canal.



This is a print located in front of some sewers to promote less pollution.

ANALYSIS:

Superfund is part of the United States Environment Protection Agency (EPA) and is a program responsible for cleaning up some of the nation's most contaminated locations, among other tasks. Superfund has taken the big responsibility of trying to clean the Gowanus Canal. During the Gowanus Canal Conservancy Walk I learned that many of the industrial business owners that used the canal to transport goods have taken responsibility. They have agreed to pitch in this cleanup process along with the federal, state and city funds. Christine Petro, Education Director, mentioned that having many people funding the plan has delayed the process. The project's cost is approximately 500,000,000 dollars. It was originally supposed to finish in 2022 but now is delayed to 2030.

One of the issues in Gowanus is that portion of the water going to the canal comes from the sewage overflow. In response to that, Superfund has designed a "Sponge Park." Sponge Parks or gardens that look like regular gardens that are everywhere in the city. These sponge parks are more special, they serve a purpose other than aesthetic purposes. The garden has a curbside that allows rainwater that rolls down the block to enter the garden. The water is preserved there and prevents the sewers to get overflowed. Also prevents the canal from getting contaminated and overflowing.

When testing a possible solution many issues can or cannot come up. One issue is that the sponge parks are not being tested correctly. If only they ran down 2nd Avenue from Smith Place, since it's on a hill, then they can really show if they are functional or not. Another issue is that the gardens must be maintained clean and should be taken care of. Walking through a sponge park in front of the residential building, 365 Bond Street, I noticed that it was a bit dirty. There were wrappers in it and some of the plants looked like they were drying out. The lack of funds and volunteers to maintain the gardens clean has become a negative outcome from these gardens.

Some questions that have risen from the site visit is, how has the implementation of gardens changed the amount of water going to the canal? Or if there have been notable changes from these possible solutions? Has it been positive or negative changes?

KEYWORDS/ VOCABULARY

- 1.Superfund
- 2.Green Infrastructure
- 3.Sponge Park (Garden)
- 4.Pop- Up Nursery
- 5.Rezoning

QUESTIONS for FURTHER RESEARCH:

- 1.How many are responsible for the contamination of the Gowanus Canal?
- 2.What have been the setbacks that have been delaying the cleaning up of the canal?
- 3.Has there been results showing the improvements of the cleaning plan?