

Learning Places Fall 2017

SITE REPORT #2

Gowanus Conservancy Guided Tour



An image of the Gowanus Canal.

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10.05.2017

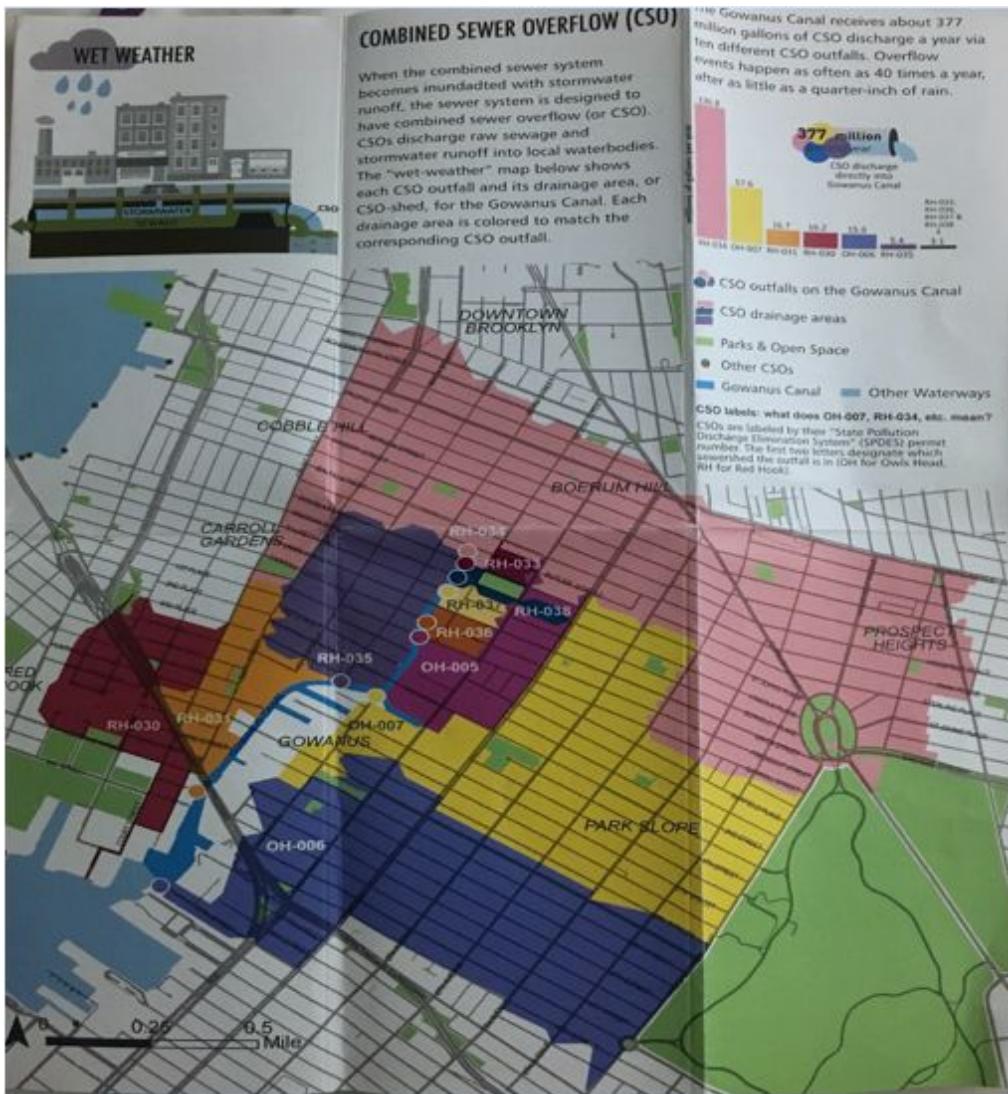
INTRODUCTION AND PRE-VISIT REFLECTIONS

Gowanus Conservancy Walk

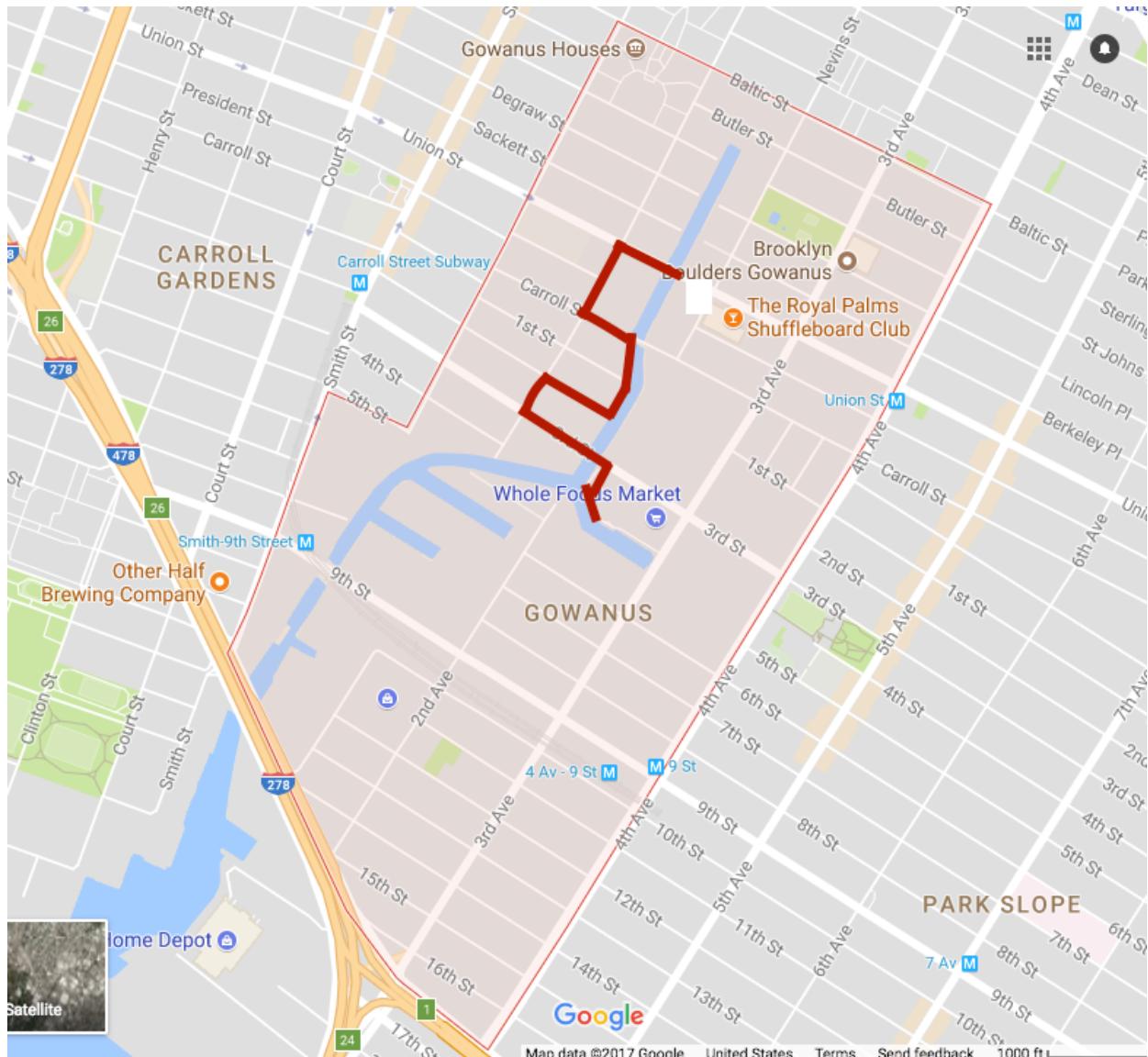
On September 28th, 2017 the LIB 22015ID class returned to a location that they had been to before, the Gowanus Canal. The Gowanus Canal is a canal in the New York City borough of Brooklyn, on the westernmost portion of Long Island. It connects different Brooklyn neighborhoods like Carroll Gardens, Red Hook and Gowanus. On the previous walking tour from weeks before the class discovered that the area is mostly residential as well as industrial. Many industrial buildings are abandoned or have been repurposed for either business or residential. The tour on the 28th was lead by a participant of the Gowanus Conservancy, Christine. From their website the conservancy describes themselves as "a community-based non-profit organization that serves as the environmental steward for the Gowanus Canal Watershed. That envision the evolution of an Open, Clean and Alive Gowanus Canal and Watershed with accessible, connective open space; clean water, soil and air; and vibrant ecological, business and cultural activity." They participate in many neighborhood lead projects that aid the Gowanus. During the tour we walked a similar path from the first tour but on this tour we stopped more to talk about the details of the Gowanus. The first stop was at the bridge that is over the canal. There the leader explained the history of the Gowanus and how it came to be. She explained some things that we had heard before but also explained new information. She also answered questions the students had about the Gowanus canal. At the bridge she explained that oxygen was being pumped into the canal from the flashing tunnel to help move the canal. Christine also spoke about sewage overflow and the reason why it keeps occurring in the canal. Before going on this walking tour I had some knowledge from the information we had learned in class but I was eager to learn more information from the tour with Christine. One of the topics that I enjoyed the most was when Christine explained the Sponge Park and the bio swells to us , it shows that the Gowanus Conservancy is actively trying to work with the city of New York to help fix the neighborhood. Another thing that stuck out to me this tour was the art in the neighborhood something that had caught my attention on the previous tour.

SITE DOCUMENTATION: Take notes and sketch in your notebook, take many photographs – search for angles and details that really tell a story and use those to report your documentation. Your site documentation will include the following:

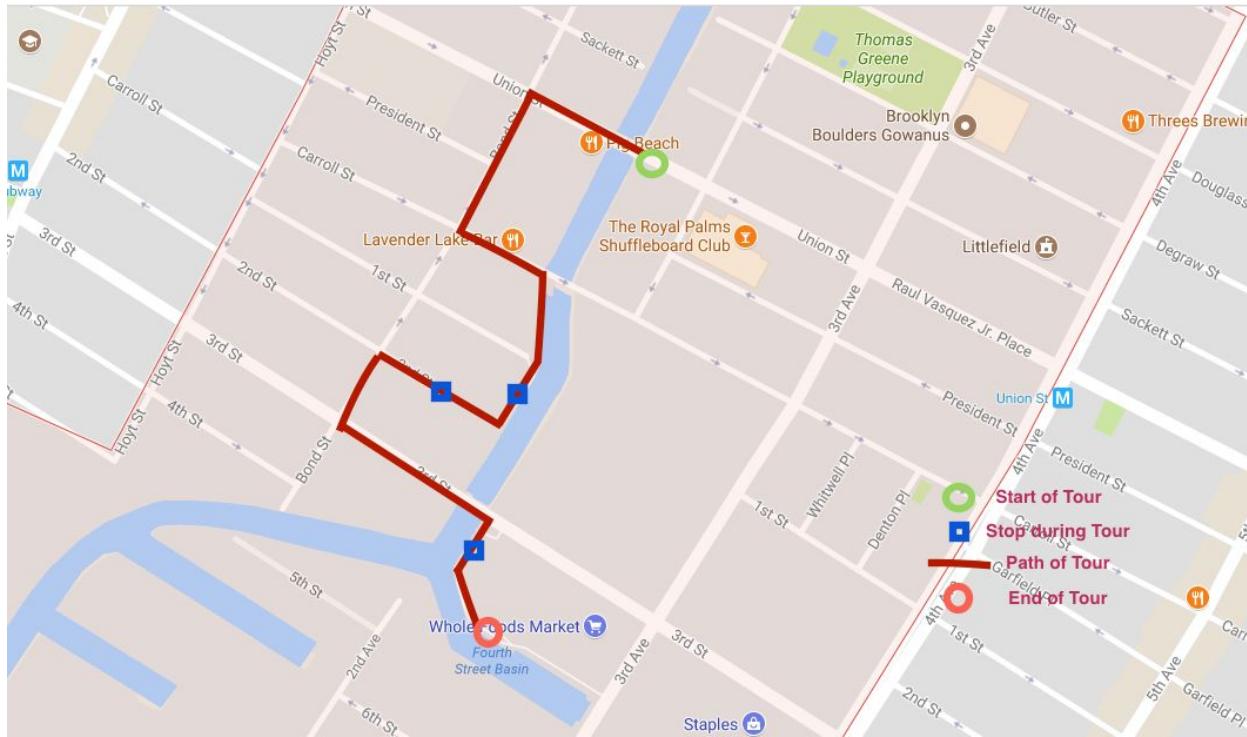
(1) MAP OF AREA OF INVESTIGATION



- A map that was given to the class by Christine. It describes Gowanus and its surrounding neighborhoods. The map displays all the Combined Sewage Overflow that gets deposited into the Gowanus Canal.



- The path the class took on the Gowanus Canal tour.



- *The path that was traveled during the tour as well as various stops that were made that were to explain details of the Gowanus.*
 1. The tour gathered together on the Union Street bridge across the street from Pig Beach.
 2. Once on the bridge Christine explained the history of the Gowanus and answered questions.
 3. Then the group walked toward Bond Street and made a left.
 4. After walking down Bond street a left was made on Carroll Street where the group walked through the residential waterfront park.
 5. At the waterfront they stopped to speak of the Sponge Park and bioswells located in Gowanus.
 6. Then the group made it down to the Whole Foods waterfront where the tour ended.

(2) PHOTOS



Street view.



Art displayed on an exterior wall of a business.



-An art piece displayed at the entrance of a business in the neighborhood.



365 Bond Street; The new residential development in Gowanus that was achieved by spot zoning change.

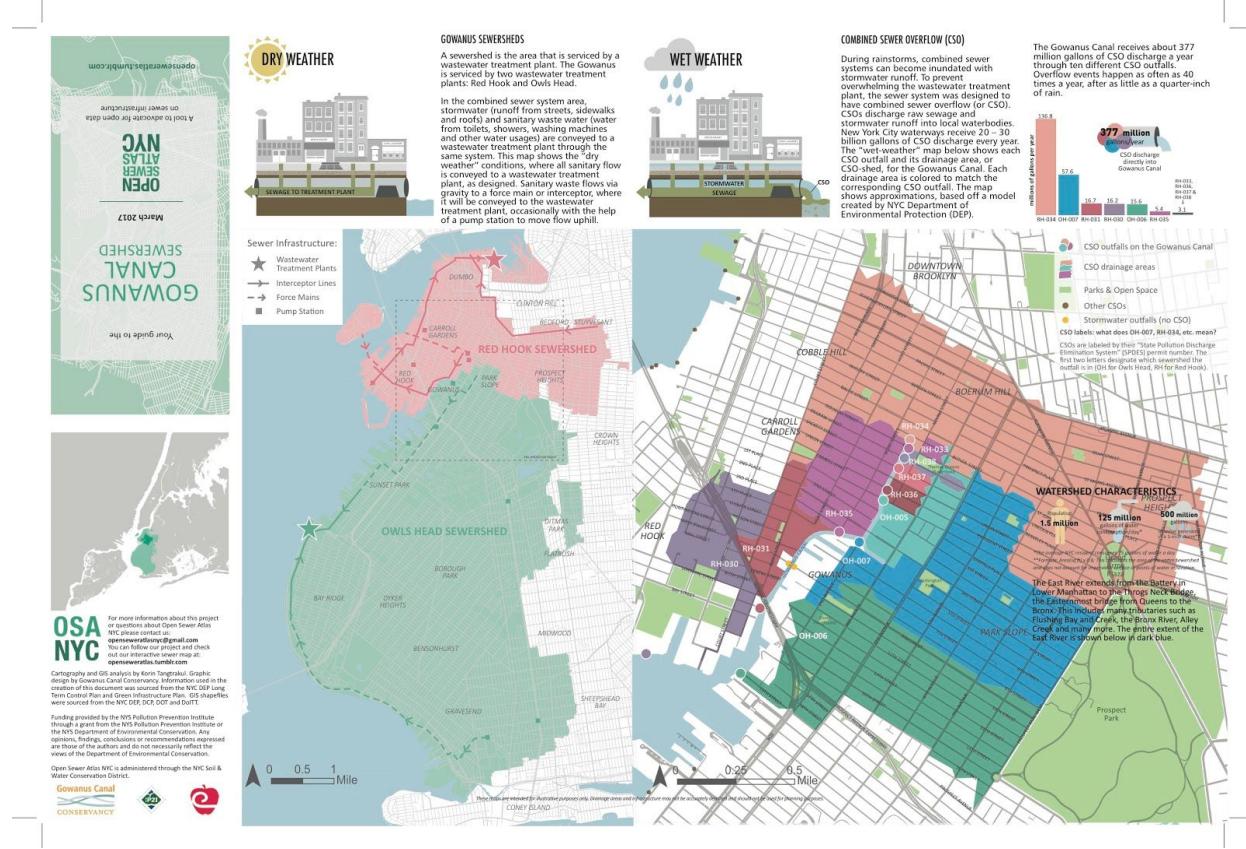


-The Carroll Street bridge view from the 365 Bond Street property.



-An image of the breaks on the curb to allow water to travel through and make its destination to the Sponge Park.

ANALYSIS:



Combined Sewage Overflow is when the combined sewer system becomes inundated with stormwater runoff, the sewer system is designed to have combined sewage overflow. Combined Sewage Overflow's discharge raw sewage and stormwater runoff into local waterbodies. The map that we received during the tour shows each outfall and its drainage area, or shed for the Gowanus Canal. The Gowanus Canal receives about 377 million gallons of Combined Sewage Overflow discharge a year via ten different Combined Sewage Overflow outfalls. Overflow events happen as often as forty times a year, after as little as a quarter-inch of rain. That topic interested me on the walk because it is an actual issue that the Gowanus Canal is having. By having so many sewer pipes leading to the canal will never ensure that it will be a clean canal. I believe that the city should fix the sewer system and tunnels because these issues have been present almost since the creation of the system. Many community members have protested the existing sewer conditions because the smell is not pleasant in the canal. One of the participants have been the artists of Gowanus and near. Artist have been protesting the sewers using their art. There have been multiple images next to sewer caps with the words "No More Pollution". Some images are seen in

Gowanus and keep branching out to other Brooklyn neighborhoods.



KEYWORDS/ VOCABULARY (these must be words you learned on this walk such as specialized vocabulary, city agencies, names of businesses or significant people – they must be specific to the topic of the walk) *5 keywords required per site visit

1. Combined Sewage Overflow
2. Bioswales
3. Sponge Park
4. Superfund
5. Gowanus Conservancy

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; do not include questions you can answer with a quick google search)

1. Do you believe that the Sponge Park is being used to its full potential in its current location?
2. By changing the street slopes to let water travel down hill and across the street to the Sponge Park, do you think other issues will arise from making that change?
3. Being a superfund site , will changes be seen in short term or long term?

