

Learning Places Summer 2019

# SITE REPORT #2

## Newtown Creek



STUDENT NAME: Kevin Garcia

## SITE OBSERVATIONS



“LONG TIGHT WALK”



“COOL CONCEPT”



“DISGUSTING CREEK”

1. Historically, what are some of the important developments that have created the current landscape of the 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)?

Bulkheads were added around the 1920s and 30s to accommodate larger barges. The factories have been polluting the waterway for quite some time now, but the pollution they've caused has added to the current landscape.

The estuaries have widened more over the years, but its depth has reduced from 12 feet to just four.

2. Discuss the historical remnants that you observed in the current landscape.

A historical remnant that I observed from the current landscape was "Dutch Kills" which I didn't understand what it meant at first. The Dutch citizens in 1642 were granted licenses to settle in Queens. Dutch men settled around Long Island City and "Kill" was another word for stream, so the name Dutch Kills was adopted. The stream is a tribute to Newtown Creek and divides Queens and Brooklyn. Other remnants were Maspeth Creek, Whale Creek and English Kills.

3. In what ways is the natural environment contained or shaped by the architecture of the Newtown Creek Nature Walk designed by George Trakas? In what ways is the natural world repossessing spaces that have been over-polluted or industrialized?

The Huge steps of geology leading out into the water is a good example to me. The steps are for the public and there is no barrier at the bottom can be served architecturally to stand and look ahead or sit down and enjoy the view. The natural world is repossessing spaces with over pollution such as this by giving it a different purpose. If Newtown Creek wasn't polluted those steps would be perfect to sit on and look at the view, but now it's mean to serve a different purpose by having people walk on them and get close to the water to see how bad the pollution has gotten and see the life around it such as the plants growing from the ground and even blue crabs living in the water.

4. Discuss one instance of architectural semiotics. **Choose only one building or built structure.** If the building or designed structure could talk, what would it say?



This structure is the New York City Office building and I chose this building because I feel like it was one of the nicest built structures in the area considering there were a lot of industrial buildings around. If this structure could talk I think it would say "Look at me and ignore all that is happening behind me" the reason I say this is because I feel the water fountains in the front are very inviting and is kind of a good distraction from Newtown Creek.

5. 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 what message would your performance convey?

I think a good place for a performance could be maybe through the nature walk. Passing through the nature walk you can see all of the pollution in Newtown Creek, so the message the performance will have is awareness of the Creek and to let the people know that something needs to be done, not for us, but for the future of New York City.

## FURTHER RESEARCH

Research Question (*should follow directly from your above observations, and be complex, specific, and researchable*):

What are some new developments in technology that can be used to clean up Newtown Creek in an efficient and sustainable way?

Find an article from a journal, website, or newspaper that you believe will help you answer your question

Smith, Willas. "5 Green Technologies to Accomplish Environmental Remediation." *5 Green Technologies to Accomplish Environmental Remediation* / *Energy Central*, 2 Sept. 2016, [www.energycentral.com/c/ec/5-green-technologies-accomplish-environmental-remediation](http://www.energycentral.com/c/ec/5-green-technologies-accomplish-environmental-remediation).

How many sources did you look at before selecting this one? Why did you select this source? How does it address all or part of your research question? Be specific.

I looked at four different articles, but those articles spoke more about technologies for storm water and ways to clean up polluted water for farmers, which are great sources, but not exactly what I'm looking for. I chose this source because it gave me exactly what I wanted in sustainable methods on cleaning waterways.

Is this source credible? How can you tell (what criteria did you base your evaluation on)?

Yes, this source is credible because the author speaks on sustainable methods and technologies to cleaning water, which is needed for my research.

What other sources or further information would you need to answer your question? Where would you look for them?

Other sources I may need could be more scientific and maybe even technologies that have failed to understand the difficult processes it takes to cleaning up toxic waterways. I would just look through google scholar and find published articles and newspapers that speak about groups that have tried ways to cleaning up Newtown Creek.