

Learning Places Summer 2019

SITE REPORT #2

Newtown Creek Nature Walk



Cover Image

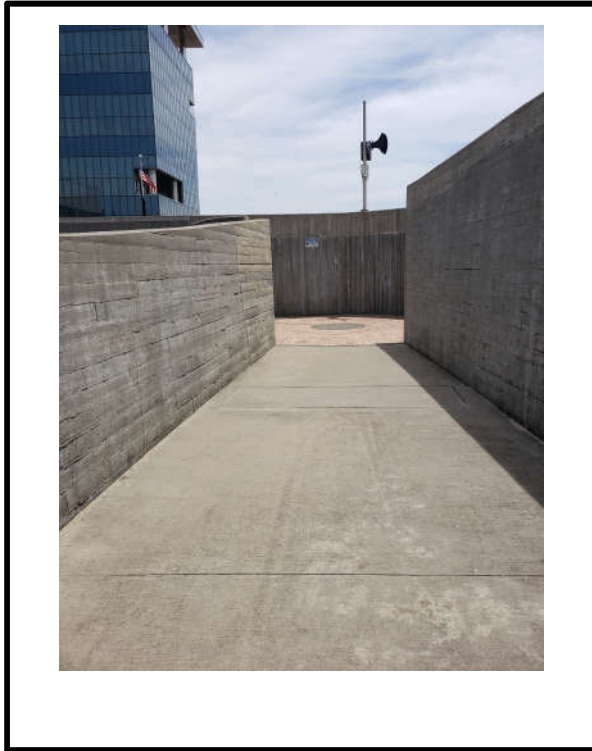
The Entrance to the Newtown Creek Nature Walk. On the right before you enter, you will see few warnings telling people who not eat the blue shell crabs, fish, and mussels or clams that are found in Newtown Creek because they are toxin. On the left, a cable company that was fighting for their services to remain in New York City, Spectrum. Follow these flight of stairs, you will find yourself on a path that look like a docking station with light holes on the left and open holes on the right, leading to a circular corner and then onto another pathway down to the Nature walk.

The park of the Nature walk, where native species of plants is designed by environmental architect George Trakas.

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SITE OBSERVATIONS

Insert 3 photographs and provide a *creative* title for each image. The title should be a word or short phrase that suggests a *theme or conceptual association* related to the photo.



Echo chamber – standing in the middle of the circle, where the grey circle is, when you project your voice, sounds will bound off the wall and travel back to you.



Treasure map – A map embedded onto a marble table of the surrounding areas that make up the Newtown Creek.



Dutch Kills Swing Rusty Bridge – Rusty Bridge that used to have trains transports goods or freight from one side to the other side as a source of transportation in Dutch Kills.

General instructions:

- a. **Do not try to anticipate an answer the instructors “are looking for”. We want you to write truthfully about your own observations.**
 - b. **Be sure to draw meaningful connections between what you observed and the purpose of the performative intervention. In other words, how does the performative intervention respond to, or integrate directly with, the specific material conditions of the site.**
 - c. **Finally, your research question should respond directly and specifically to your site observations.**
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)?

Across the Newtown creek, there is a scape yard where metal are being brought there to have them sorted into different types before they send it off to another location for production. The metal is send to a warehouse in Sunset Park to have it product. During the nature walk, we saw the Pulaski Bridge from the walk but we didn’t get a chance to go near it. If you go onto the Pulaski Bridge and look down at the toxin water, you can see there are multiple logs wrapped together on both side, one on the Brooklyn side and the other one on the Queens side, similar to the ones that we see in Gowanus Canal. Along the walk, there are some sort of barricade that prevents ships or anything to collide on the wall of the walk. Image 2 shows

that the creek have change from time to time and looking at the current creek, most of the areas are not as they used to be. As we enter the park, there are seven stones and each stone have some form of words that symbolize something and by the tree, there is a key that translate each of the words. After using the key to translate the words, you can put it together to create a better picture of the true meaning. On the stairs of the creek, you will see poles that have some form of chemistry symbol on them. When you put the symbols together, it form the chemistry symbol for H₂O, which is water.

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

The bridge on the creek that lead to Dutch Kills. The bridge is illustrated in image 3. The bridge is called Dutch Kills Swing Bridge. This bridge was built by the Long Island Railroad to transport freight from one side to the other side during the Revolutionary War period. This bridge in the early times, act like a bridge to transport people, freights, or good across Dutch Kills. Nowadays, the bridge is unsafe to use because it is rusty and it can be dangerous to cross on it. Even though the bridge is old and rusty, it is good to keep it there to show that that bridge was a form of transportation trains used to run on it to bring goods to part of the island along the creek.

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?

Along the creek, there are multiple native plants that grow and expand. At the entrance of there is an underground garden that are plant with multiple type of plants. Plants species that appear on the nature walk includes Fragrant Sumac, Bayberry, Pitch Pine, Purple coneflower, Tree of Heaven, and Willow tree. There might be more but that is all the ones that we see along the path that we have walked. When walking up the stairs at the entrance to the walk, you will walk down the vessel path that look like a docking hall, leading to a circular room, when you project your voice, it will echo off the wall and back into the speaker. As you continue on the path after the circular room, you will notice that the path start to go lower and lower as you were going underground or going down a hill toward the water. As stated before, natives plants are growing along the wall and bank along the creek. There are small scrubs and bushes growing on part of the bank and mostly against the wall, while you will see some trees are near each other and some are a length apart along the walk. As you notice, the trash can on the nature walk are

barrel shape trash can. This shows that barrels are used to hold goods such as pickle and oil.

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?

One instance of architectural semiotics would be the Pulaski Bridge that connect Greenpoint, Brooklyn and Long Island City, Queens. The Pulaski Bridge have the bottom in the water of the Newtown Creek for many years. After being in this disgusting water for so long, there are multiple layers of bacteria and toxin are growing on the foot of the bridge. If the bridge have a mind of its own, it probably want the creek to have better and cleaner water and since it's the bridge before the opening of the canal to Hudson River and Manhattan. The Pulaski Bridge at the beginning of the canal is like a gate to the canal where the flow of the waste to flow inward and outward. Everything must go through this gate to get to the outside world beyond the creek. The bridge will be known as the guardian of the creek, where it can choose what enter and what cannot enter such as clean water can enter whereas pollution must be removed or rejected at all cost. The Pulaski Bridge stare into the wonders of Manhattan and the large body of water that it lead into and looking back into the creek, wishing that if the bridge is not standing on pollution water, then the bridge will see more people coming into the creek to fish and more aquatic lifeform will be in its water.

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?

The solar machine left of the Granite Slab steps leading to the water. The solar machine is absorbing the sunlight and then using the stored energy to send electricity to the light sources along the creek such as the lamp post along the creek or the light hole along the vessel. The message that it will display is to show that the creek is going to be eco-friendly where they use the sunlight as a source of electricity to power up structure that require power or energy to operate. By using the solar screening machine, it illustrate that this environment can still operate at night or at times where there is no power in the area because the machine will be their energy source when an outage appear.

FURTHER RESEARCH

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

What solutions can city agencies or governments can use to help maintain and control combined sewer from overflowing and affecting neighborhoods?

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

MLA Citation for source:

Stoner, Nancy. "Green Solutions for Controlling Combined Sewer Overflows." *Natural Resources & Environment*, vol. 21, no. 4, 2007, pp. 7–59. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/40924846.

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 have come up with at least ten results and each results have their goods on how CSO will help to break down sewage overflow. But this article clearly states the ways that can be used to help control combined sewage overflow by having green roofs to stop the water from overflowing the sewer when it rains or have a better underground system to hold up more dirty water. If the infrastructure is use and implement correctly, neighborhoods won't have any sewage overflow problem and everyone can live in a better environment with clearer water and have a green environment. In some areas, we have seen some areas have green roof install to help mitigate the overflowing of sewage water.

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

This source might work only if our city agencies or government have the budget to implement the plan. If the plan have successfully started and work, we will be seeing greener environment where plants and the air will become fresher. It all depends on how the city and government act as a whole. If this plan were to execute outside New York, the plan might be put into effect but in New York, every plan will take time to be put into effect.

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

You will need to look into the city agencies website or the government website in order to find out if the plan will be put into consideration. If city agencies and government have a debate on the plan and there is someone to support it then there is a chance that they infrastructure change will take effect but there is no one to support it, mostly likely, it will be put aside and be forgotten. You can look into source that relates to environmental economy, sewage infrastructures, and underground sewer pipes.