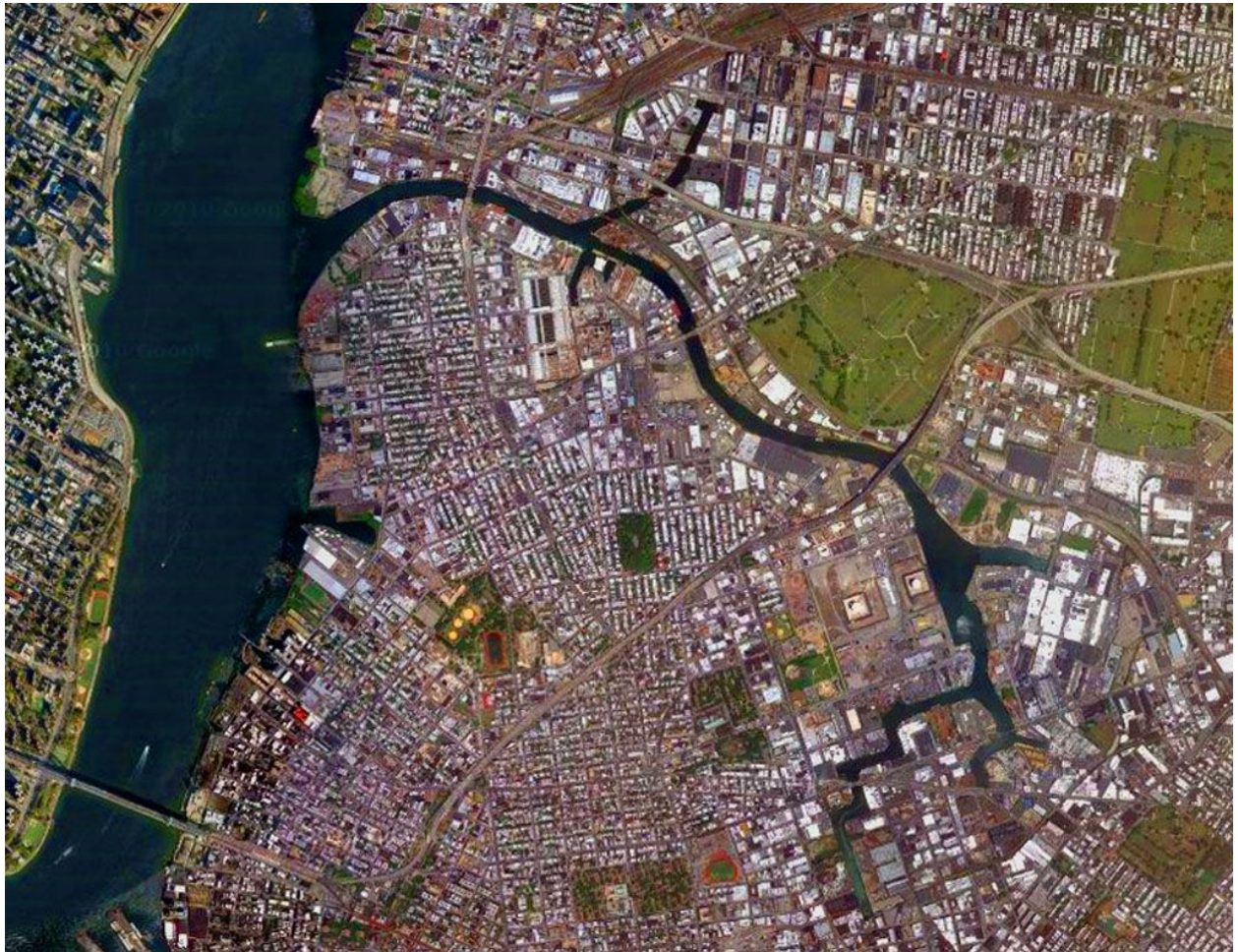


Learning Places Summer 2019

SITE REPORT #2

Newtown Creek



Newtown Creek is an estuary that's connected to the East River and on lies in between Brooklyn and Queens.

Johnson Noel

SITE OBSERVATIONS

CIRCLE	NATIVE AMERICAN NAMES	TRANSLATION	PRESENTLY KNOWN AS
1	MAHICANITUK	great river of ebb and flow	Hudson River
	SCHEPMOES	little brook into the river	Kip's Bay
2	CANAPAUKAH	long water place	Dutch Kills
	MUSCOTA	place of rushes	Harlem River
3	MESPAETHES	great brook with tide	Newtown Creek
	SACKHICKNEYAH	the shore path	to Flushing Bay
4	SAPOKANIKAN	wet planting place	Algonquin Village
	KAPSEE	where there are sharp rocks	tip of Manhattan
5	MARACHKWIECK	sandy place	Navy Yard
	RINNEGACHONCK	on the pleasant land	Wallabout Bay
6	QUANDUS QUARICUS	stream source	English Kills
	MECHAWANIENCK	old path or trail	King's Highway
7	O JIK HA DA GE GA	salt water	Atlantic Ocean
	KESHAECHQUEREREN	grassy expanse	Greenpoint

from: Native American Place Names in New York City, by Robert Steven Grumet, Museum of the City of New York 1981

This example of semiotics shows the native names of the nearby locations.



An ecosystem that attracts small lifeforms.



The wastewater treatment plant at work.

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)?

Newton Creek is an estuary that was shaped by filling its surrounding marshes, many of which were also paved over. As time went on the creek was widened and deepened following the expansion of the industrial economy. It then became home to many factories because it was a place where garbage and unwanted leftover could be dumped.

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

There were many plants and trees around the creek area, such as the empress tree also known as the peanut tree. There was also a Glacial Erratic, an indigenous rock made from an eroded piece of diorite granite. This particular rock migrated from the Adirondacks to Brooklyn over 17,000 years ago.

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 natural environment was built upon. There were many areas where the bank of the creek was filled with structures including stairs that lead to the water. The creek was widened and deepened by people because it provided a good place for commerce, boats coming in and out. Even though the creek was dug up and mistreated to accommodate waterway transit, there are plants and trees that still thrive there. These plants and trees would still sprout up all around the creek even though the water has been deemed contaminated. This shows that nature is resilient and will flourish even in the harshest conditions.

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?

The Brooklyn Bridge is a structure that says a lot when looking at it. It attracts a lot of tourists every day and is an important symbol in NY. Compared to some other bridges it doesn't look as modern. When looking at the bridge you get a sense of the 1800s with the style of the bridge and the materials used to make it. The bridge is filled with bricks that seemed to be stacked on top of each other. If this structure could talk it would speak of the hard work and dedication that went into building it, and how important it was to the people that crossed it every day.

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?

If I were to stage a performative intervention at a specific site it would be at the metal scrap recycling area on the other side of the creek. I believe that place would be a great stage to speak about the importance of recycling and reusing materials instead of just throwing them out. There are plenty of landfills all over the country, where trash gets shipped to and dumped. The earth is one big ecosystem that relies on other areas to perform the way it does. Something as simple as not recycling can cause feedback that changes the way the earth performs. So when we take natural materials from the earth, use them, then discard them, we are reducing the natural resources that the earth provides. Everything that we use today comes naturally from the earth in one form or another. So we should properly recycle materials instead of just dumping them in some landfill somewhere because sooner or later we will have to deal with it.

FURTHER RESEARCH The Netherlands

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

One thing I was interested to learn more about was the salt marshes. Since a lot of the marshes were filled up and restructured by people.

What kind of life does salt marshes contain?

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

MLA Citation for source:

Dini-Andreote Francisco , van Elsas Jan Dirk & Salles Joana Falcão,

“Ecological succession reveals potential signatures of marine–terrestrial transition in salt marsh fungal communities”,

University of Groningen, Groningen, The Netherlands,

The ISME Journal volume 10, pages 1984–1997 (2016)

[Published: 29 January 2016](#)

Database: Science and technology -> Biology -> Nature Journals

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 went to six other sources before selecting this source. It was hard to find a source that speaks on animals in the salt marshlands and this source was focused on fungi in the marshlands. The article speaks on microbial life in the marshlands and what drives these microbial communities. Because of the shift in environmental conditions, it is difficult to identify what drives the fungus communities. The article speaks of different communities of fungus based on different temperatures and soils.

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

I believe the source is credible because the research is done by science departments in Universities of the Netherlands. Researchers use science to obtain this information and are highly reliable when it comes to biology.

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

To answer my question in further detail I would need to know about other animals or life forms in the marshlands. A good place to start would be to search for documentaries that are focused on the marshlands or something similar like swamps and lakes. One possible source can be the Nature magazine that has been in business for a long time so they should have a few articles on wetlands/marshlands.