

Connecting Passaic to the River: Dundee Island Waterfront Park and Community Engagement Profile

*Social
Assessment White Paper
Assessed
2019*

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**NY/NJ
HARBOR
& ESTUARY
PROGRAM**

URBANWATERS
FEDERAL PARTNERSHIP
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I. Executive Summary

This report documents research findings from *Connecting Passaic to the River: Dundee Island Waterfront Park and Community Engagement Profile*, a project of the New York–New Jersey Harbor & Estuary Program (HEP) in collaboration with the Lower Passaic River Urban Waters Federal Partnership (LPR UWFP) and USDA Forest Service. The **Introduction** provides a justification for the research and background information on ecological and social context of the study area. A brief summary of findings by major themes of the research can also be found here. The **Methods** section presents a narrative description of the mixed-methods approach to field observations, interviews, surveys, and focus groups with park users. Here we introduce both the system for moving through large areas of open space and the techniques for making and recording observations. The **Observation, Interviews, Event Surveys, and Focus Group** sections explore the results of observations and questions posed in the field. The final section, **Conclusion**, returns the research to its context, discussing implications for programming, natural resource management, and community well-being at Dundee Island Park and the Passaic River now and in the future. A complete set of research protocols is included in the **Appendices**.

Estuary Context and Need for This Research

In 2016 The NY–NJ Harbor & Estuary Program (HEP), worked with the USDA Forest Service and HEP’s Public Access Work Group to characterize public access and its distribution around the Harbor Estuary, the relationship of these parks and public spaces to socioeconomic need, and where and how civic organizations are providing stewardship and programming at the waterfront. The report, “Connecting with Our Waterways: Public Access and its Stewardship in the New York–New Jersey Harbor Estuary” found that not all of the 539 parks and public spaces identified were evenly distributed. Only nine percent of residents in 12 higher need areas around the bi-state estuary, including the Lower Passaic River and Bronx/Harlem Urban Waters locations, had accessible waterfront access. These 12 waterfront areas are defined by HEP as being those waterfront reaches having a limited number of parks, densely developed housing, and/or an otherwise disadvantaged population.

In the Passaic River between Newark and Paterson, for example, over 96% of the waterfront is inaccessible. Given the lack of available open spaces in higher need areas of the estuary, improving public access opportunities and the quality of experience at public spaces, is of particular importance. Improving access is not only about creating public spaces, but also about improving the quality of the visitor experience at those spaces. For instance, higher need waterfront communities might value different amenities in comparison to wealthier waterfront populations and the quality of experience for those community members will therefore depend on whether those open spaces reflect their community values. For higher need areas, public spaces such as parks can help alleviate some of the environmental justice issues faced by those communities by improving neighborhood quality of life. An increase in tree canopy, for example, can help reduce the heat island effect, which is often stronger in communities with poor and minority neighborhoods. In addition, in many low-income communities, parks and

recreation facilities may be the only place for children to be physically active outside of school (Currie, 2017).

To improve public access opportunities and the quality of experience at public spaces within these 12 higher need waterfront communities, it is necessary to understand how community members use and value their local open space resources. Equally significant is the need to understand the types of programs and amenities that will engage waterfront community members to the nearest and most accessible open space. While this assessment and the conclusions drawn are specific to Dundee Island Park and the City of Passaic, the results (especially in the context of comparable assessments conducted by the USDA Forest Service and partners elsewhere in the Estuary) provide important insights for advancing community-based stewardship all along the Lower Passaic River and the NY–NJ Harbor Estuary.

Site Context

Dundee Island Park is a 6.73-acre waterfront park located at the eastern edge of the City of Passaic, New Jersey, a diverse community with more than 50% of the population having Hispanic or Latino descent, the fourth highest ratio in the state (Passaic, 2020). Reported to have once been a detached island in the middle of the Passaic River and the first land purchase from the area's native Lenni-Lenapi Indians (Auerbach, 1998), Dundee Island Park is now a part of the mainland and features a gated soccer field, aged playground and picnic tables, open grass field, a vegetation-lined shore, concrete boat ramp, dirt parking lot, and wooded back area. The Passaic River borders the east side of the park while an old and up until recently abandoned railroad tracks borders it to the west. Pulaski Park, a larger, more accessible and updated park sits immediately west of the railroad tracks, which are barely visible through the overgrown shrubs and trees that now make up the track's habitat. Access to Dundee Island Park is difficult as its entrance appears as a driveway from the street, buildings block any visual of the park, and only informal pathways winding through the railroad allow movement between Pulaski and Dundee. Yet people do find their way and use these methods to travel between areas. A semi-permanent encampment also sits in the back of Dundee Island Park with many visitors and/or residents accessing the railroad lines as a pathway. Soccer games, fishing, people in conversation, and children recreating on the playground or at the water's edge represent some of the activities that have been seen. In September 2019, Dundee Island Park was closed for renovation with the new plans, including more access to the waterfront, aiming to revitalize the area for recreation, events, nature, and as a community resource. The City of Passaic has several business districts with a number of shops, restaurants and businesses reflecting the city's Latino and Eastern European populations. Passaic is currently home to almost 70,000 people.

Research Questions

We explored the following questions:

- 1) What uses, values, and meanings are associated with Dundee Island Park and the Passaic River waterfront?

- 2) How do users perceive social and ecological conditions of Dundee Island Park and the Passaic River?
- 3) To what extent do local users engage in stewardship activities associated with Dundee Island Park and the Passaic River? How can greater stewardship and engagement be cultivated?

Key Findings

- **Passaic is a community proud of their city and diverse cultures. (pages 55-56)** Focus groups discussed their life in Passaic as it is and has the potential to be, imparting waves of city pride. Specific mention was made of being a small town and the importance of learning from one another, having a vibrant food scene and street life, and creating a sense of community culture with people from a variety of countries. Parents also want to pass on a legacy of helping the community and being a part of nature, continuing an appreciation for where they are.
- **Youth representation is frequently seen and highly valued in Passaic. (pages 20, 27, 43, 45, 60-61)** When looking at the variety of age groups seen across all zones, 335 youths (47.18%) were observed, with the amount of adults at 374 (52.68%). This showcases the clear and abundant presence of youths in the area, particularly in the Pulaski Park zone where more recreation fields are located and 472 total people (all ages) were observed. In addition, 26.67% of interviewees stated the reason they came to the park was so their child or child relative could play. The theme of children frequently surfaced in relation to many of the discussion topics in the focus groups. In particular, participants voiced how lessons for the kids needed to start at home, urgency over getting them involved before they lose interest, and how youths can get discouraged from trying new things if there are no other options aside from the popular activities (soccer, baseball, etc) in which they might not excel in. In addition, parents expressed concerns over the potential negative influences that their children might have to face as they age but mentioned that stewardship opportunities would keep them busy and focused on giving back to their community. Rowing and on-water opportunities for youth are currently rare, but valued. Overall, parents were optimistic and excited about joining community activities and initiatives that foster a connection with the environment with their children, such as litter cleanups, gardening, and tree plantings.
- **Fear and uncertainty surround the Passaic River due to its history. (pages 40-41, 57-59)** 73.33% of interviewees stated that they visit the Passaic River. When asked if they would feel safe performing a variety of water activities, 80% said no to swimming, 93.3% said no to eating fish, and 60% said they would not feel safe boating. 40% replied that pollution was the reason they would not feel protected. Some participants voiced concerns over the water quality and historical contamination during the focus group stating health should come before enjoyment. However, most were still not completely aware about the background of the River's contamination and how the lower Passaic River became a superfund site. Others' fears stemmed from personal history and never learning how to swim or being on a boat, canoe or kayak. As noted during one of the focus group discussions, the fear of not knowing how to swim prevented one of the participants from actually getting on a kayak although she participated in the rest of the

day's events. The Passaic River is known for its strong currents and the city's fire department has had instances of people getting hurt or swept away downriver.

- **Concern and criticisms are not hidden within the community. (pages 58-59)** Common concerns stemmed from the appearance and use of the railroad tracks, located between Dundee Island Park and Pulaski Park, and the unsheltered population at Dundee Island Park. The old railroad tracks serve as the main pathway to access the semi-permanent encampment located at the north end of the park. This encampment community was either discussed with concern over whether and how they will be receiving aid for relocation, or as issues that needed to be addressed in order to improve the safety of the park and surrounding areas.
- **Sports, recreation, and culture meld together within the parks. (pages 24-25, 27, 33,47)** 362 people (50.99%) were observed doing a variety of sports and recreation activities. Of these, 69.34% were youth and 30.66% were adults. Soccer, one of the many activities practiced in these parks, has a deep hold in the area with dedicated volunteers both maintaining and using the Dundee Island soccer field on a weekly basis, as well as people who no longer play continuing to help the teams, fields, and parks touched by the sport.
- **Park program participants are fueled by willingness, excitement, and curiosity. (pages 59-62)** The mayor has created momentum behind a 'new Passaic' and the people that follow him on social media platforms such as Facebook want to believe in his energy and vision. They are also open to new ideas concerning programs and park designs, and are willing to try something new such as the kayaking programs that were offered over the summer of 2019. Participants are also simply excited about water, from the look and sounds, to the mystery that lies below the surface.
- **The Passaic area would benefit from waterfront programming and building community stewardship, amplifying their values of care, beauty, and kinship. (pages 28, 51-52, 57, 61-62)**
 - The community's care, value and interest for the Park and its waterfront is well represented through their participation in scheduled events as well as unscheduled park clean-ups. 68.00% of responses given from participants during the event surveys stated they had participated in a City of Passaic event. This care extends beyond just the park, with emphasis in wanting more opportunities for their children to learn about nature, form good habits, and be involved in stewardship groups.
 - Beauty is expressed by the community in the slightest Park improvements, to seeing the shoreline from the water or a bald eagle for the first time. These moments of discovery are noteworthy as it exhibits an unveiling of a new perception or unexpected feeling only available to them by participating in a waterfront program.
 - The community's need for kinship is apparent in their ideas for programs, which emphasize group activities, including boat clubs, kayak tours, tree plantings, and group night hikes through particular Passaic parks. Most participants brought

family, friends, and pets to the events to enjoy the day. Sociability was also seen across zones with 34 pairs (34.34%), 39 small groups (39.39%), and 13 large groups (13.13%) observed.

- The Passaic community is not only enthusiastic but also committed when it comes to caring for their open spaces. 94% of participants that were surveyed in the study responded yes to wanting to participate in a *Friends of* or similar type of group, showing that they are willing to take on the role of community leaders.

This study sought to understand the ways community members residing within higher need waterfront areas of the Harbor Estuary are utilizing their open space resources and what types of programming will encourage future environmental stewardship and community engagement. The *Connecting Passaic to the River: Dundee Island Waterfront Park and Community Engagement Profile*, is of particular importance given that parts of the Passaic River severely lack public access and recreation opportunities. The Project team will work with relevant partners to share lessons from this study with stakeholders in other waterways in our Harbor Estuary in order to continue building upon our collective efforts to reconnect our higher need communities to their nearest waterfront. The study area, the Dundee Island Park community in the City of Passaic, is not only located within one of 12 higher need waterfront areas in the Harbor Estuary, but also one of 20 designated urban waters locations in the U.S, the Lower Passaic River. The Lower Passaic River Urban Waters Federal Partnership, NY–NJ Harbor and Estuary Program (HEP) and USDA Forest Service understand there is great value in sharing Project findings, methods and lessons learned with partners in similar locations throughout the Harbor Estuary and throughout the country. Therefore, the Project team also seeks to share these lessons with partner urban waters locations and the vast urban waters network.

II. Introduction

Access to the waters of the NY–NJ Harbor Estuary, whether for swimming, boating, fishing, or just enjoying the spectacular views, is an amenity that improves quality of life. Park use has been positively correlated with physical activity levels and improved public health. Most critically, access is a vital strategy for fostering improved stewardship of the Estuary.

‘Connecting with Our Waterways: Public Access and its Stewardship in the New York–New Jersey Harbor Estuary,’ a report produced in Partnership with the USDA Forest Service and with the assistance of the HEP’s Public Access Work Group, identifies 539 parks and public spaces that are accessible to the public. These parks, public spaces and access sites however are not evenly distributed across the estuary, especially when considered in the context of differing socioeconomic characteristics of the estuary’s waterfront populations. Only about nine percent of the waterfront is accessible for the more than 500,000 residents in 12 higher need areas around the bi-state estuary. These 12 waterfront areas are defined by HEP as being those waterfront reaches having a limited number of parks, densely developed housing, and/or an otherwise disadvantaged population. For example, fifty percent of the people living within one half mile of the lower Passaic River waterfront lack access to its shoreline.

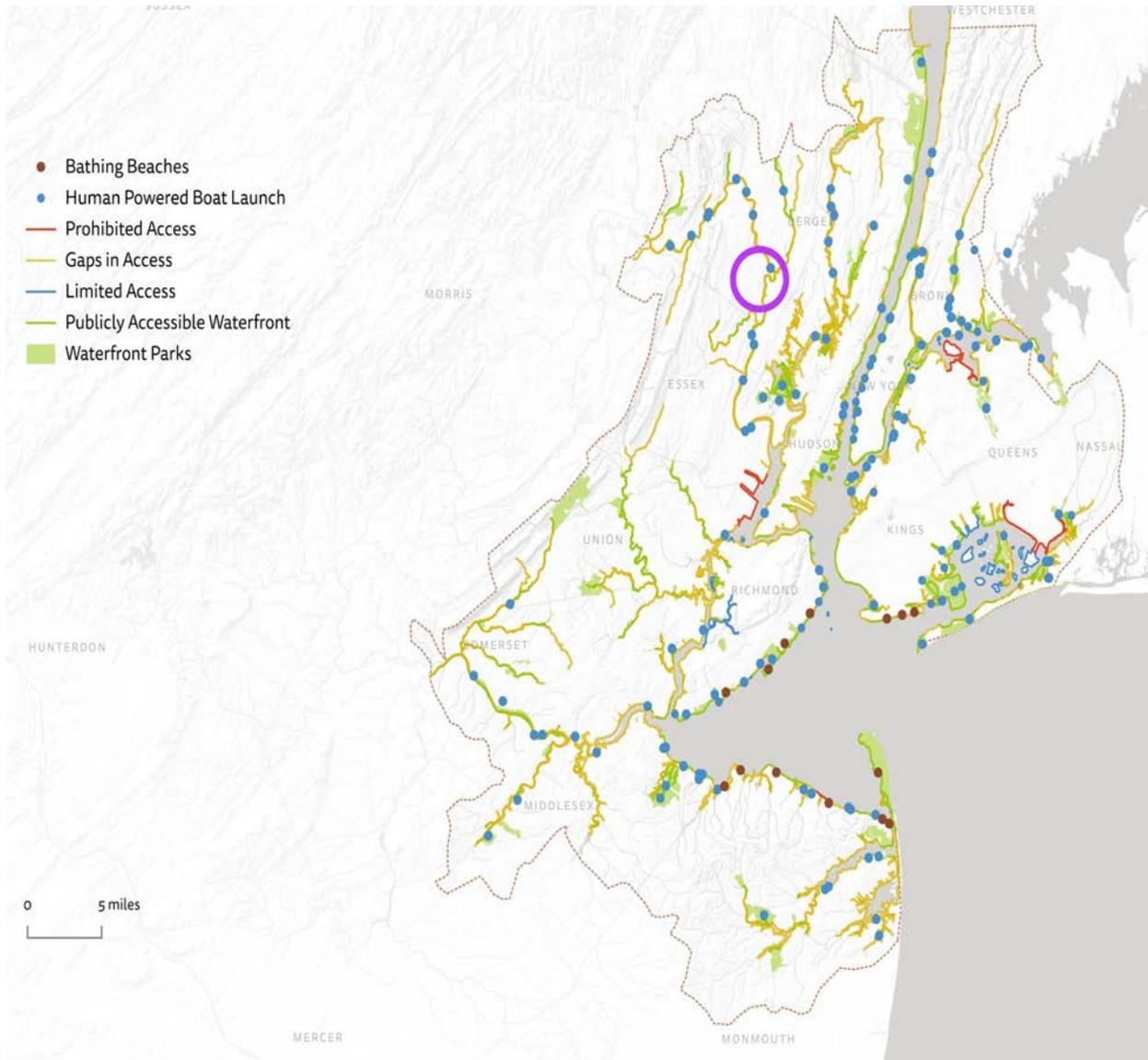


Image 1: Public access and stewardship context in the NY-NJ Harbor Estuary. Approximate City of Passaic location shown in purple.

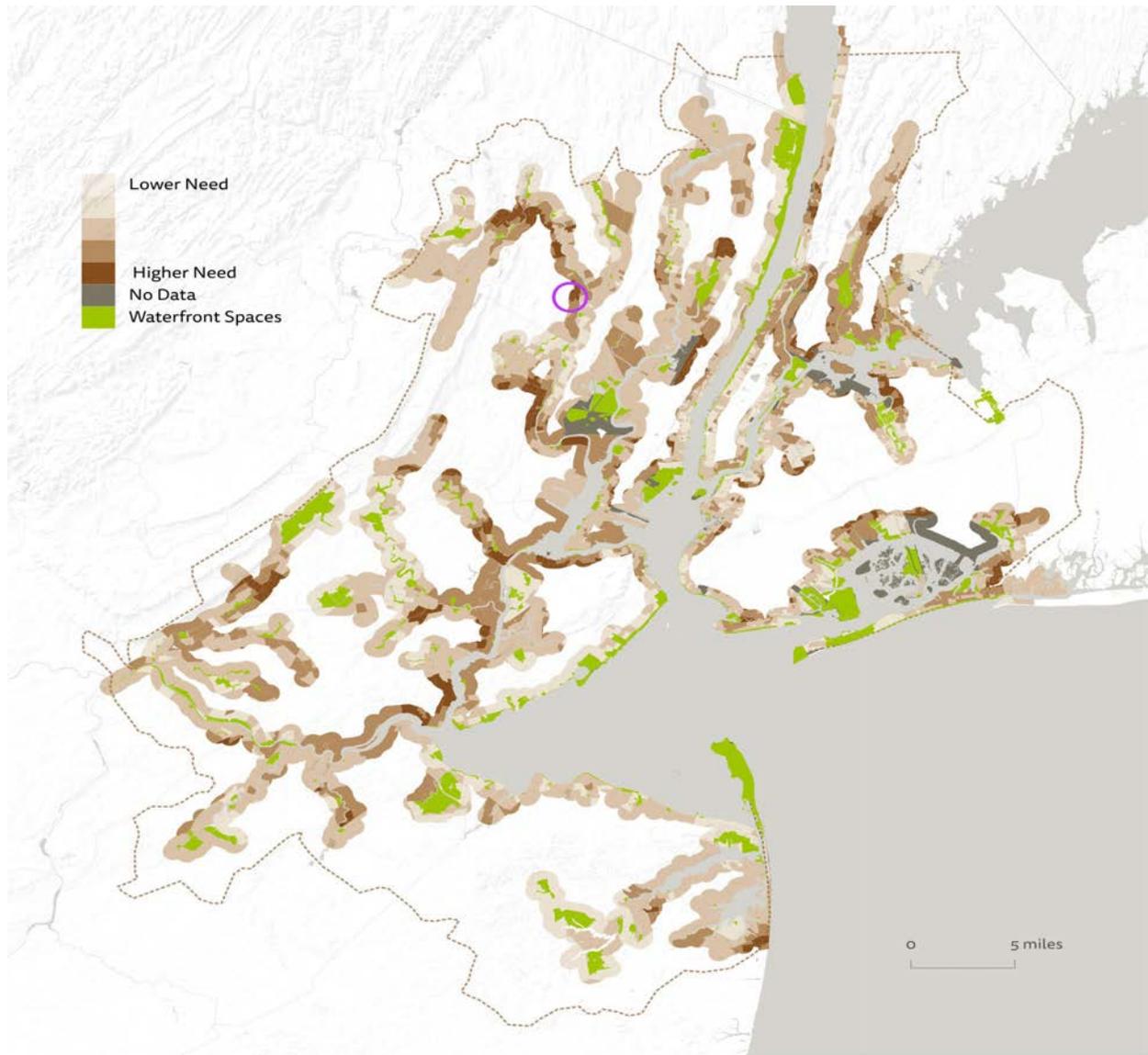


Image 2: Concentration of need for public access in the NY-NJ Harbor Estuary. Approximate City of Passaic location shown in purple.

One of the goals of HEP’s 2017-2022 Action Agenda is increasing public access, stewardship and programming of public access and stewardship in these higher need communities.

About the Lower Passaic River & the Lower Passaic River Urban Waters Federal Partnership (LPR UWFP)

The Passaic River's lower reach is a 17-mile tidal stretch from Dundee Dam in Clifton, New Jersey, to Newark Bay. The Lower Passaic has borne a heavy burden of pollution from a century of industrialization in the Passaic River Watershed. Manufacturing has left behind layers of dioxin, mercury, PCBs and many other toxic contaminants in the river's sediments in the lower 17-mile tidal stretch. The site was listed on the Superfund National Priorities List (NPL) in 1984.

Combined sewer overflow events have also contributed chemical contamination, along with disease-causing organisms, which have worsened the river's water quality. Fishing and crabbing advisories are in place and poor land-use management has also degraded the river's shorelines and exposed vulnerable, often immigrant populations, to flooding while obstructing access to the waterfront. To date, two cleanups of the river have been completed. The plan for a third cleanup, bank-to-bank for the lower eight-mile stretch of the river, was issued in March 2016. Diverse partners continue to work with parties responsible for the pollution to complete the investigations and river cleanups for the full 17 miles of the river.

The Urban Waters Federal Partnership is a national collaborative effort made up of government agencies and NGOs that work together with an Ambassador to reconnect urban communities with their waterways by improving coordination among federal agencies and collaborating with community-led revitalization efforts. The Lower Passaic River is one of twenty designated Urban Waters locations. The mission of the Lower Passaic River Urban Waters Federal Partnership (LPR UWFP) is to collaborate with federal and state agencies, municipalities, NGOs (including HEP) and community-based organizations in order to advance cleanup, restoration, and stewardship of the Lower Passaic River and equitable, sustainable development along its banks. Most importantly, in higher need areas, the LPR UWFP works to expand opportunities for walkable public access to the Lower Passaic River, including access to and from the water. The LPR UWFP also supports and leads in executing programming, that raises awareness of the watershed as a whole, and that integrates river stewardship into holistic, culturally-competent community development efforts. Understanding how higher need communities in the Lower Passaic River utilize open space resources along this urban waterway and the activities that engage them is essential in strengthening the work of the LPR UWFP to increase environmental stewardship in the Passaic River Watershed.

To address the goal of reconnecting communities to their waterways and improving public access and stewardship opportunities in higher need areas, this study sought to understand how community members value their open space resources along the Passaic River. At the same time, it also sought to understand what are the types of programs, events and overall stewardship opportunities that engage people to the water/waterfront and, that ultimately encourage community members to become more likely to be involved in environmental stewardship.

III. Methods

This waterfront study was adapted from the existing methodology for studying the use, value, and meaning of parks and natural areas created by the USDA Forest Service, NYC Parks, and the Natural Areas Conservancy (Auyeung et al. 2016; Strehlau-Howay, 2019). Social and site data were collected in order to understand how urban waterfront users engage with Dundee Island Park and the Passaic River. Primary means of understanding were direct observations of human actions, observations of signs of human use, assessment of language and narrative conveyed through interviews with waterfront users as well as two focus groups separately held for English and Spanish speakers.

Data collection was carried out between April and October in 2019 by eight field researchers. Pairs or small groups (3-5 people) were always used in order to enhance reliability through corroboration and to provide greater richness of daily debriefs and qualitative field notes. In addition to paired debriefs, full team debriefs were conducted at the end of each day in order to gather overall impressions, observations, and questions about sites as a whole. Additional debriefs were held after each focus group with present team members.

We utilized five data collection approaches: ***direct observations of human activities, observations of signs of human use, interviews with waterfront users, event surveys, and focus groups***. Human activities were grouped functionally by type (e.g. sitting, socializing, bicycling, exercise, nature recreation). Field observation protocols (Appendix A-E) guided a mix of structured, quantitative counts, qualitative field notes, and photographic documentation.

The *direct human observation protocol* (Appendix A) was implemented throughout the study area, which was subdivided into zones according to park boundaries, management practices, uses, infrastructure, and cover type (see map). The prior protocol was modified to include a broader range of specific waterfront activities. Pairs or small groups implemented the protocol, taking photographs and logging observations of waterfront users and signs of human use, with debriefs conducted at the completion of a zone and at the end of a day of fieldwork. Research crews covered all terrain that was navigable without extensive bushwhacking, following all established trails and desire lines within each park site before moving onto another site. Crews were instructed to complete zones in a single day (i.e., not to split zones across visits). Type of activity and level of sociability (individual, pair, small group, large group) were recorded for all people observed in a particular zone. A total of 710 observations were made through this protocol.

Observations of signs of human use (Appendix B) were collected through attention to the following key areas: signs of activity; signs of neglect, decay, or damage; signs of environmental stewardship; and signage, writing, and art. In other words, these signs are part of the traces that people leave behind in waterfront parks, offering important clues and insights into the use and value of a particular area. Photos of key signs (as indicated with the camera symbol on the forms) were also collected. Field researchers observed 135 signs of human use and captured 122 images through photographic documentation.

The *interview protocol* (Appendix C) was implemented throughout the study area. The prior protocol for park users was modified to gather additional data about waterfront use and perceptions of waterways. IRBs were obtained and approved through Pace University (1320846-3). Minors under the age of 18 were excluded from interviews and not approached. Researchers selected any waterfront user encountered and approached them for a rapid interview, unless they were overly occupied (i.e. playing sports, talking on a phone) or if the situation deemed too uncomfortable (i.e. approaching individuals near the encampment). This technique was used due to the limited number of people found in each zone on most days. Interviews were voluntary and remained anonymous. This included 15 in-place interviews with waterfront users. Of the interviewees, 33.33% were male and 66.67% were female. 93.33% of participants fell in the age range of 18-65, while 6.67% were over the age of 65. Research teams found that language was a barrier when conducting interviews, with some park visitors only speaking what was observed as possibly Spanish and Polish languages. To aid with communication, at least one person in a pair of researchers was able to speak Spanish fluently.

Event Surveys (Appendix D) were implemented through two summer waterfront events. Both events took place along the Passaic River waterfront located in Dundee Island Park and were hosted by the City of Passaic Recreation Department. The events consisted of registered participants (via Passaic Recreation) taking part in a kayaking tutorial and excursion down the Passaic River and a Father's Day inspired fishing event where equipment was provided by Passaic Recreation. Surveys were conducted throughout the events and administered orally as well as by the participant solely filling out the questionnaire. English and Spanish versions of the surveys were available and at least one Spanish-speaking field researcher was present at each event to aid in communication. Minors under the age of 18 were excluded from surveys and not approached. Researchers selected any event member and approached them for a survey, unless they were overly occupied (i.e. talking on a phone, getting in a kayak, attending to their kids, fishing). Debriefs were conducted at the end of a day's fieldwork and a few days after each event with the lead researcher. Surveys were voluntary and remained anonymous. This included 34 completed surveys, of which 20 were administered in English and 14 in Spanish.

Lastly, *focus group* (Appendix E) participation was implemented through email and phone calls to event survey participants who left viable information and answered yes to doing a follow up interview. Minors under the age of 18 were excluded from surveys and thus not contacted for focus group participation. Several rounds of phone calls and emails were made and sent out in English and Spanish by two field researchers while Passaic Recreation posted the meetings on their social media sites with the researchers' contact information. Both the English and Spanish focus groups were held at community-based locations near Dundee Island Park and children of participants were allowed to attend day-of, but were not involved in the focus groups. Prepaid gift cards and lunch were offered as incentives for those who participated and as thank you for their time. Each session was recorded and transcribed, with debriefs conducted a few days after completion via phone. Focus group involvement was voluntary and persons remained anonymous during transcription. This included 9 participants, of which 3 were present for the English focus group and 6 for the Spanish. Members in attendance at the focus groups were

Passaic community members and each shared important viewpoints and experiences unique to their own. It is important to note that key stakeholder representatives of the park and greater Passaic area such as tribe members, the mayor, and persons from the semi-permanent encampment were not contacted and so their perspectives are not represented here.

Social Zones

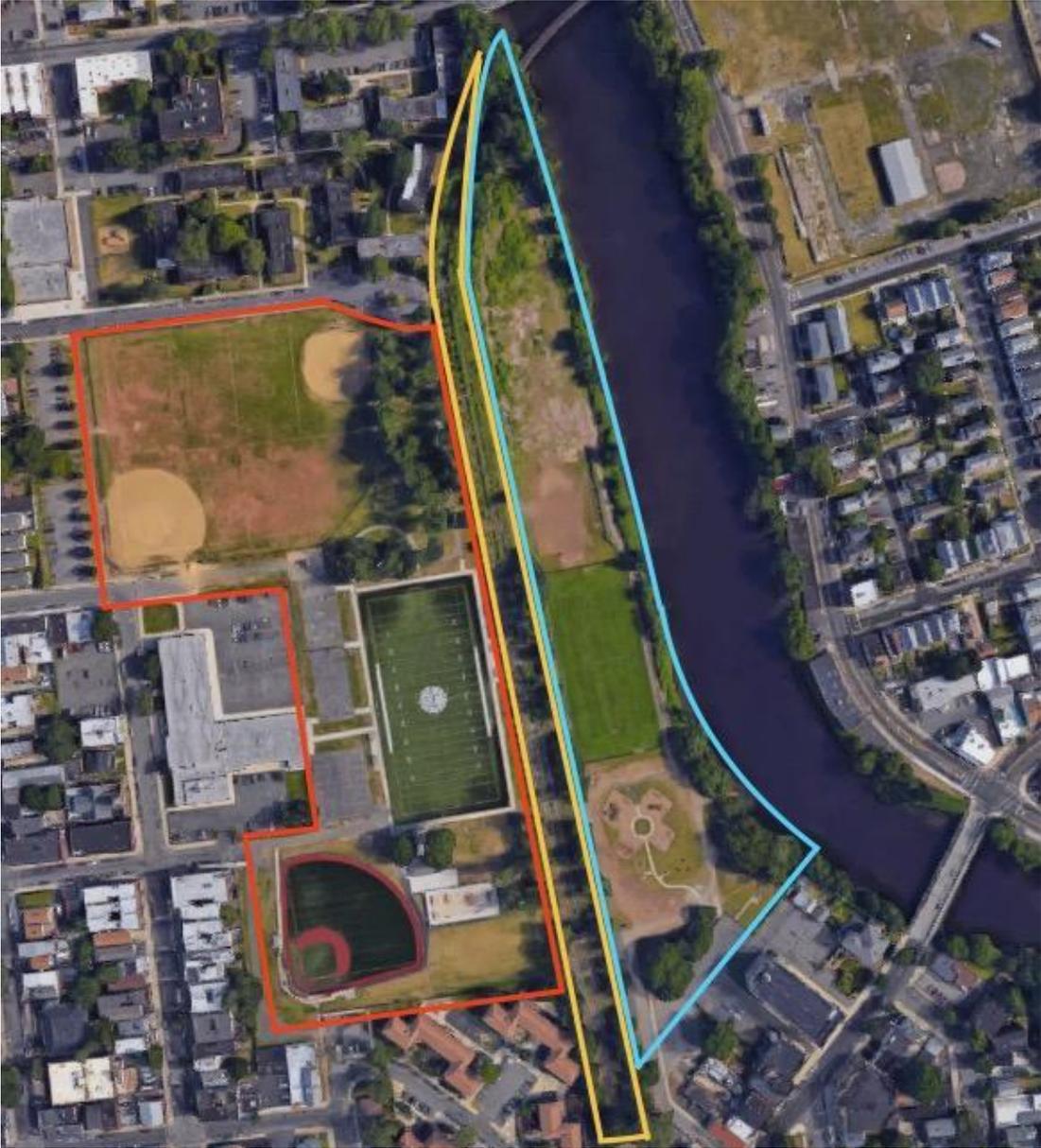


Image 3. Map of social zones in the 2019 social assessment

Zone Labels		
Red Outline	Yellow Outline	Blue Outline
Pulaski Park	Railroad	Dundee Island Park

Railroad Zone

The Railroad is a slender zone situated between Pulaski Park and Dundee Island Park. It runs the entire length of both parks and touches the Passaic River at its northern end. Here views of the water and the bridge can be seen through overgrown bushes and trees; a small active encampment has been established at this point near the river. The southern portion of the railroad actually extends past our zone lines and out into the public street, culminating across the active road. Fencing lines the sides of the railroad tracks but is open at either end, allowing foot traffic access from the street and sidewalks. People walk up and down this zone wearing away an informal trail alongside the tracks and creating passage to a large encampment in Dundee Island Park. Concealment under the vegetation and openings in the fencing allow movement between the other two zones. This is significant since no connection between Dundee and Pulaski Parks exist apart from climbing through breaches in the worn fencing. The railroad is decommissioned and up until recently had become officially abandoned. All along the trail, under the foliage, and in the tracks are bags of trash, pieces of clothing, broken glass and plastic, litter and graffiti. Small groups of men, described to us as day workers, have also been seen sitting and conversing together towards the street end of the zone.



Image 4. Railroad Zone: showing areas of entrance, crossings and walkways

Photos taken by Lindsey Strehlau-Howay and Olivia LeWarr

Pulaski Park Zone

Pulaski Park contains the most recreational facilities out of the three zones and is located closest to the residential neighborhood areas. Multiple public resources surround this park including schools, a Boys and Girls Club, public library, local churches, and Mi Casa es Puebla Passaic community center. One of the schools backs up to the park and uses the grounds as their playground during recess sessions. The park seems very well maintained with certain features, such as playground equipment, appearing new. A turf football/soccer field, basketball courts, a baseball field, a softball field, gated skateboarding area with ramps, two playgrounds, picnic tables, bathrooms and a concession building make up the park. Although more visitors are seen on days with children sports' games, the park is used by a variety of age groups for a wide range of uses including traversing the baseball field to reach the apartment buildings and parking lot that line the back of the zone.

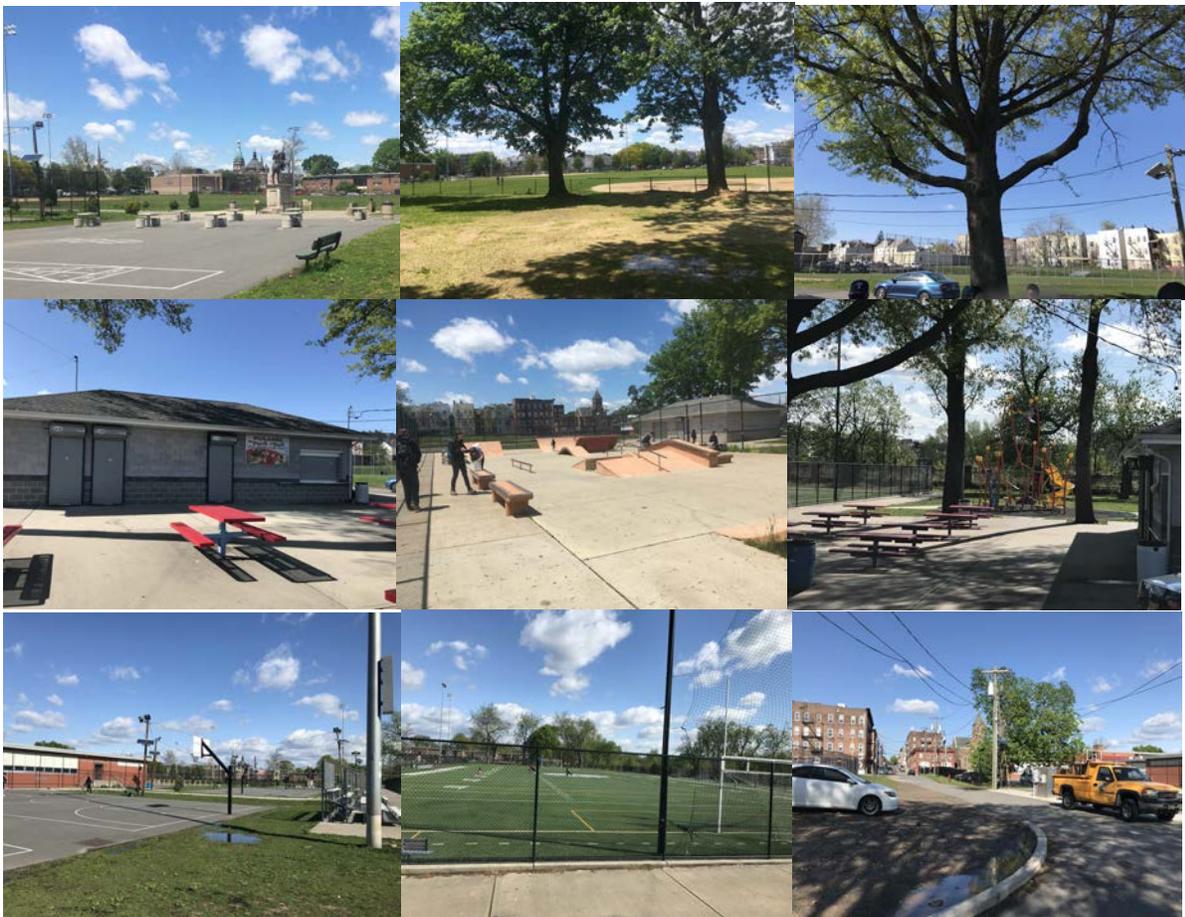


Image 5. Pulaski Park Zone: showing diverse areas to zone including statue, baseball and softball fields, concession stand, skate park, playground, basketball courts, football field, and entrance

Photos taken by Lindsey Strehlau-Howay and Olivia LeWarn

Dundee Island Park Zone

Dundee Island is a park established along the banks of the Passaic River with access to the water by means of a boat ramp and densely vegetated shorelines. The shore near the park entrance boasts mature trees and an open concrete area with benches where fishing often occurs. Dundee Island is tucked away behind a church (that also serves as a magnet school), multiple storefronts, and has a long, but unclearly defined dirt driveway. The park therefore embodies a feeling of being cut off, with a faded Dundee Island Park entrance sign adding to this atmosphere. Several interviewees did not even know the name of the site. The uneven and low-lying gravel road and parking area within this zone encircle aged playground equipment, picnic tables, and the gravel is often characterized by large, muddy puddles. Immediately behind the parking is a fenced-in grass soccer field with informal trails lining the spaces between it and the railroad as well as the river. The back portion of this zone contains a large, grassy field that partially houses a large encampment of about 20 individuals. Blue tarps, small dogs and notable dumping are seen along the river-side edge of the zone.

"[I spoke with a man who considered himself] the unofficial historian of the area... and said that Dundee used to have tennis courts where he would play and then he would BBQ under the shaded tree sitting area since it was the only place with concrete. He also mentioned the field behind the soccer field and how in the 60s and 70s they used to call it 'Hobo Jungle' due to the tunnels the homeless used to dig back there. He and his friends would hang out back there during the day."

Vignette from field researcher's notes during the Kayaking Event



Image 6. Dundee Island Park Zone: showing diverse areas to zone including boat ramp, open field, playground, soccer field, pathway, and river shoreline

Photos taken by Lindsey Strehlau-Howay and Olivia LeWarn

IV. Waterfront Observations

Q.1 When did we see people at the waterfront?

People were counted throughout the zones during weekday, evening, and weekend visits.

"It was a drastic difference from the busy Saturday we had just experienced. While we were there, the concession workers started to open the building, though it seemed more for restocking than selling products. It was a bright and sunny day with very warm temperatures... and we noticed groups of kids playing with balls on the field. Behind the softball field, one kid was rolling down the grassy hill and a few adults and youths were making use of the picnic tables. One man was walking laps around the football field, showcasing how a track could be used if the mayor's plan to build one is funded. When we first arrived, the basketball courts and skate park were empty. Later on a group of kids would start playing basketball on one of the courts. A few kids on bikes came through the park and a few adults walked through as well."

Vignette from field researcher's notes on an evening visit in Pulaski Park

"It was notable that many of the kids in either park were unattended. One of our researchers mentioned that a lot of the parents in this community work after 4pm, so it was thought that perhaps the kids go to the park until their parents come to pick them up. Or, as another researcher gave an example from her own childhood, they might be on their way home, but then decided to spend time in the park since their parents wouldn't know the difference..."

A 6-7 year old appeared to be alone at the park. He had a light blue polo shirt, which matched the other kids playing basketball behind the church with no supervision (most likely not an after school program)... The little boy was throwing rocks in the river from the boat launch area. Later we saw him head towards the soccer field, walk beside it and assumedly access the fence opening to go to the other park. He came back to Dundee with a slightly older female we thought to be his sister."

Vignette from field researcher's notes on an evening visit in Dundee Island Park

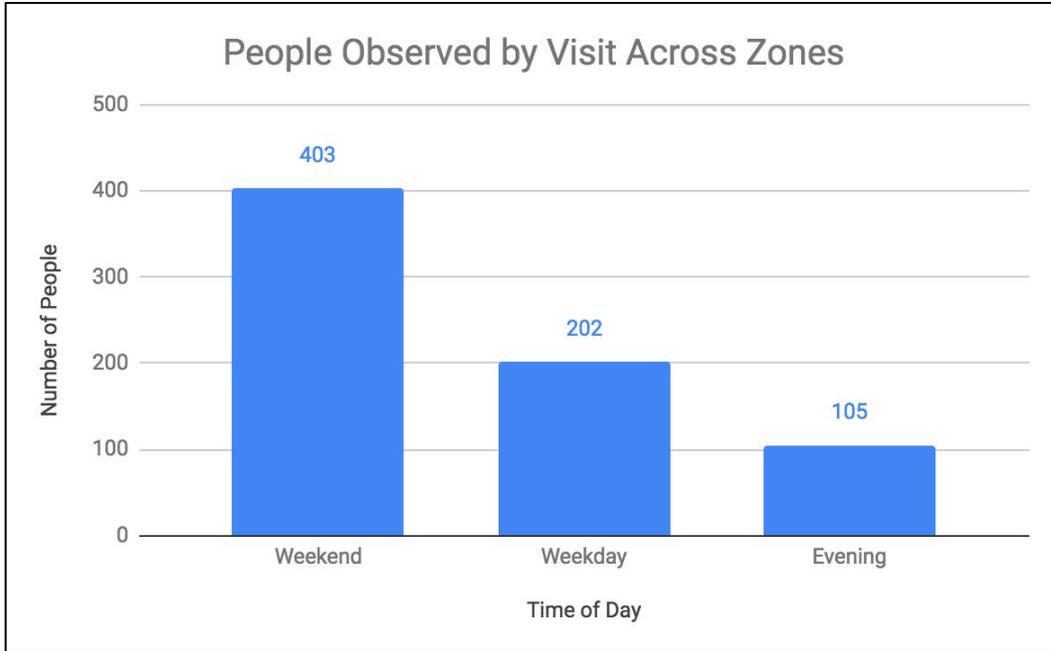


Figure 1. People Observed by Visit Across Zones

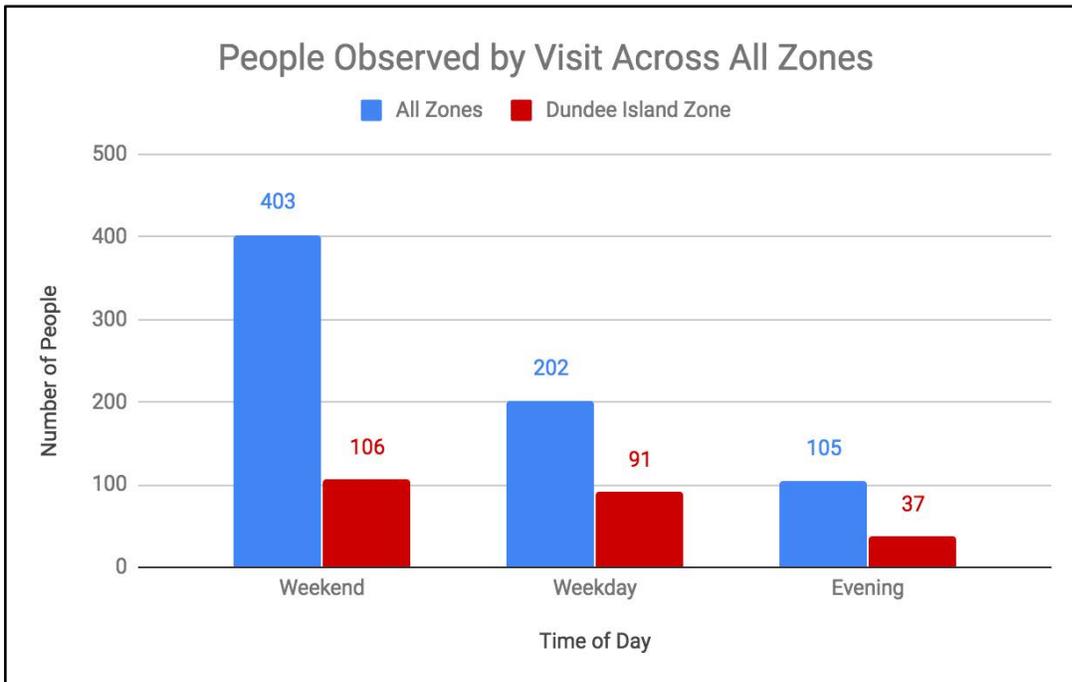


Figure 2. People Observed by Visit Across All Zones (Dundee highlighted next to all zones)

Q.2. Who are they?

“During all of this, middle/elementary school kids in uniforms were being led from the nearby school to the football field. Again, we assumed this was their recess, making use of the park as their playground. The children were playing on the black top portions of Pulaski as well as the turf baseball and football field, and though they were taking part in sports (i.e. soccer) it did not seem to be led by an adult, but instead free play. This pattern of letting children out to play happened throughout our field time, and at Dundee creating an ebb and flow of energy and people. We reflected on how at one moment Pulaski Park was empty, ‘no one there’, but then in another moment it would fill up with kids and became a cut through from all sides. A woman was also noticed doing laps with her dogs around the football field.”

Vignette from field researcher’s notes across all zones

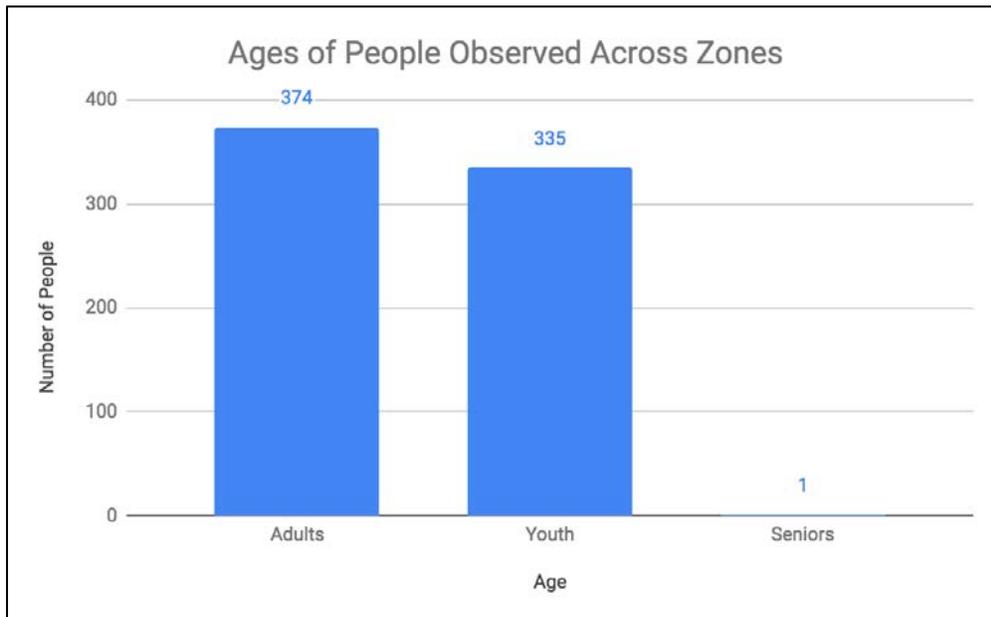


Figure 3. Ages of People Observed Across Zones

Q.3. What are they doing?

The activities listed below represent categories of activities observed at Dundee Island Park, Pulaski Park and the Railroad section that separates the two. Some categories represent a singular activity observed, such as walking, bicycling, or fishing. Other categories represent an overall theme of the activity observed. For example, the majority (362) of people were seen engaging in sports and recreation. This theme includes activities such as playing, watching, or refereeing a sports game, free play in the park area or on playground equipment, or practicing for a sport. For the socializing category, people were observed sitting together on benches, meeting up to talk, or resting together on the grass. Other activities included encampment

activity, men sleeping on the ground, people fixing a car, and kids buying items from the concession stand.

“The noise from Pulaski Park could already be heard from the tracks, and as we got closer, the intensity grew louder. The park was full of kids and adults using every area. This was not surprising since it was a warm and sunny day...

There was an official kids (middle school age) soccer game going on with uniformed referees on the field and spectators sitting and standing in bleachers and along the fence. Meanwhile kids were skating in the skate park and the concessions and bathrooms were open. People filled the picnic tables, both basketball courts were being used, both playgrounds had many kids on them, the softball and baseball fields both had games, and people were sitting and lying in the grassy areas.”

Vignette from field researcher’s notes on Pulaski Park

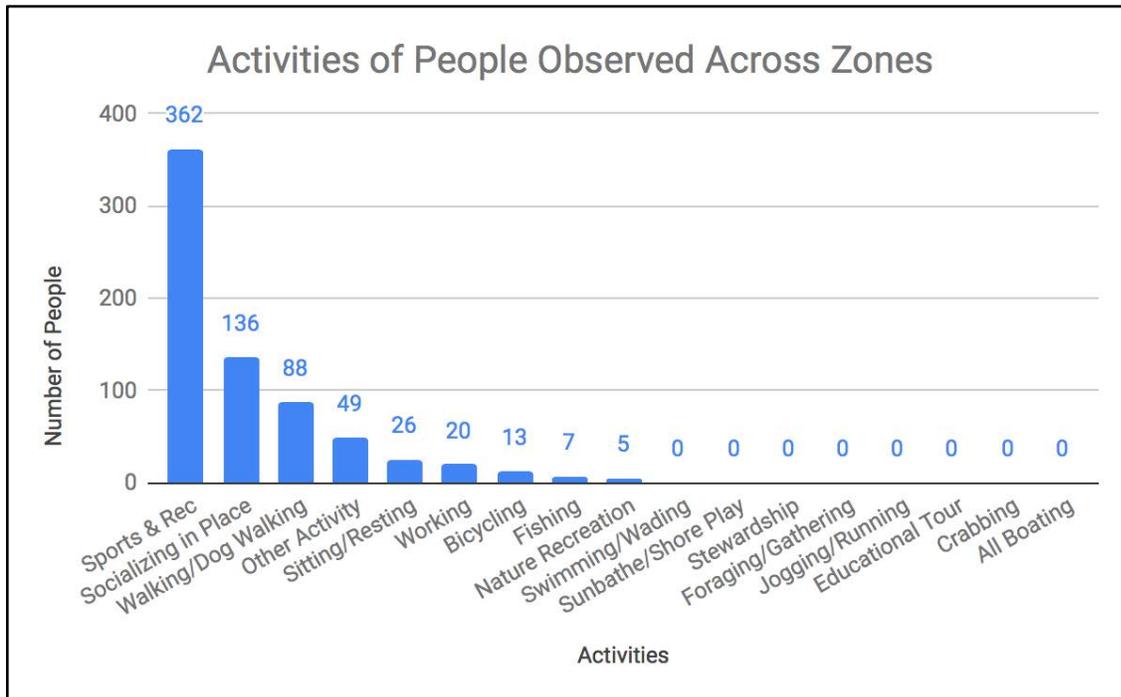


Figure 4. Activities of People Observed Across Zones

Q.4 Where did we observe them?

“We started walking back to the front (along the railroad zone), stopping off where the encampment was to take observational notes. There was again a large group gathered in the area, same as the two other times we visited. The informal trail was very busy with a lot of people walking back and forth between the two parks, people walking up and turning into the park next to the soccer field fence,

and heading towards and from the encampment. We even saw the man from the last visit, who was always engaging with us, on this trail later in the day. One of our researchers mentioned that the people walking down the trail could easily cut into the park by the soccer field, blend into the group of spectators during games, and then continue on their way to the encampment. As we got closer to the front, we noticed there was an active soccer game (elementary age) happening at Dundee Island Park. We found spectators on the side of the field next to the railroad fence taking advantage of the shade. The new ... cars were parked close to the field also in the shade..."

Vignette from field researcher's notes on the three zones

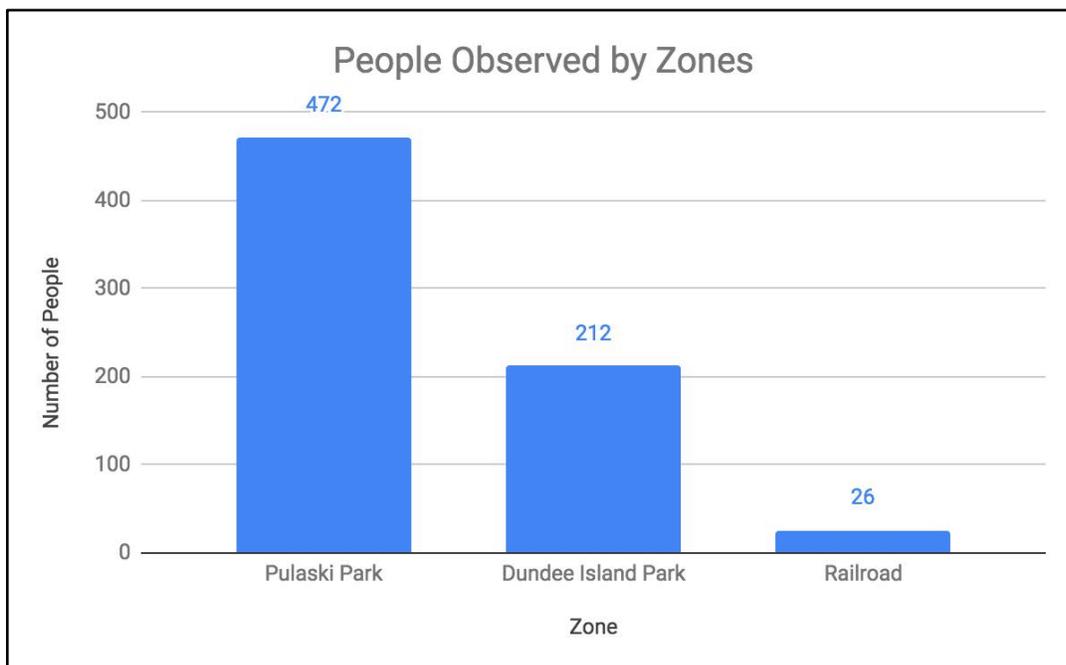


Figure 5. People Observed by Zones

Activity: Counts of people observed in the waterfront interior by zone.

Activity Observed	Waterfront Zone			
	Pulaski Park	Dundee Island Park	Railroad	Total
Sports & Rec	254	105	3	362
Socializing in Place	97	39	0	136
Walking / Dog Walking	63	7	18	88
Other Activity	2	43	4	49
Sitting / Resting	25	0	1	26
Working	16	4	0	20
Bicycling	11	2	0	13
Fishing	0	7	0	7
Nature Recreation	0	5	0	5
Swimming / Wading	0	0	0	0
Sunbathing / Shore Play	0	0	0	0
Stewardship	0	0	0	0
Foraging/Gathering	0	0	0	0
Jogging / Running	0	0	0	0
Educational Tour	0	0	0	0
Crabbing	0	0	0	0
All Boating	0	0	0	0
Total	472	212	26	710

Figure 6. Counts of people observed in the waterfront interior by zone.

Activity: Counts of people observed in the waterfront by time of visit and age group.

Activity Observed	Time of Visit				Age Group			
	Weekday	Evening	Weekend	Total	Youth	Adults	Seniors	Total
Sports & Rec	95	16	251	362	251	111	0	362
Socializing in Place	48	23	65	136	42	94	0	136
Walking / Dog Walking	31	35	22	88	13	75	0	88
Other Activity	10	18	21	49	2	47	0	49
Sitting / Resting	3	6	17	26	8	18	0	26
Working	10	2	8	20	0	20	0	20
Bicycling	2	4	7	13	10	3	0	13
Fishing	0	0	7	7	4	2	1	7
Nature Recreation	0	1	4	5	4	1	0	5
Swimming / Wading	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sunbathe / Shore Play	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Stewardship	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Foraging/Gathering	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jogging / Running	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Educational Tour	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Crabbing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
All Boating	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Positive Encounter with Resident	3	0	1	4	1	3	0	4
Negative Encounter with Resident	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	202	105	403	710	335	374	1	710

Figure 7. Counts of people observed in the waterfront by time of visit and age group.

Signs of Activity Observed by Zone

Because you can't always see people "in the act" of interacting with the site, the assessment team documented signs of human use to capture traces of activities and practices that occur across different timeframes and over longer time horizons. We will miss the birders at dawn, or the slow erosion of grass under feet. So we look for traces, for signs of human use, for the imprint that waterfront users leave on the landscape. We note desire lines and well-worn trails. We document counter-narratives in the form of graffiti, hand-made signs, dumping, and vandalism. We note murals, gardens, impromptu seating, and temporary shelters. All of these signs are evidence that humans are ecosystem engineers, that our waterfronts are co-created, by the Waterfronts Department, of course, but also by the broader public.

*Crews were instructed to take note of any other noteworthy or unique observations that stood out to them in each waterfront. For the Dundee Island Zones, other signs of activity noted included, for example, images of bagged trash, broken tree branch, and dog waste stations.

"Nearby a unique set-up with a picture of the Virgin Mary and small religious figurines was discovered. Considering how peaceful and beautiful the area felt, especially next to the river, the idea of having this small shrine-like display didn't feel out of place to me, just unexpected for a semi-permanent encampment. As we walked to cut through the "garden" area, we wondered if the future park designs incorporated this area as well. A small fence-like structure roughly about 12" tall was noticed and was thought to have once been the border for a garden plot."

Vignette from field researcher's notes on the Railroad and Dundee Island Park

Sign	Waterfront Zone			
	Pulaski Park	Dundee Island Park	Railroad	Total
Graffiti, Art, Murals	30	14	14	58
Signage, Flyers, & Stickers	42	4	0	46
Damaged/ Vandalized Building or Property	4	0	4	8
Other	3	0	3	6
Informal/Improvised Sitting Places	0	2	2	4
Articles of clothing, shoes	1	0	3	4
Informal Trails	0	0	3	3
Substantial Dumping/ Debris	0	0	3	3
Encampment/Sleeping Area	0	1	0	1
Memorial/ Shrine/ Sacred Symbol	1	0	0	1
Dangerous Debris	0	0	1	1
Fire pit	0	0	0	0
Garden in Park	0	0	0	0
Bird Feeder/ Birdbath/ Bird box/ Bat box	0	0	0	0
Boats (Stationary or Tied)	0	0	0	0
Fishing (lines, hooks, nets, etc.)	0	0	0	0
Crabbing, etc. (Clam digging, traps)	0	0	0	0
Total	81	21	33	135

Figure 8. Signs of waterfront activity by social zone



Image 7. Railroad Zone: Signs of human use observed including substantial dumping, bags of trash, articles of clothing, broken fencing, litter, and graffiti



Image 8. Pulaski Park Zone: Signs of human use observed including a broken water fountain, Green Acres Sign, broken tree, stickers, signs, and graffiti



Image 9. Dundee Island Park Zone: Signs of human use observed including graffiti, park signs, and a chair

Photos taken by Lindsey Strehlau-Howay and Olivia LeWarn

Sociability Observed by Zone

Waterfront Zone	Sociability Observed				
	Dogs	Pairs (2)	Small Group (3-10)	Large Group (10+)	Total
Pulaski Park	9	25	29	7	70
Dundee Island Park	0	8	8	6	22
Railroad	4	1	2	0	7
Total	13	34	39	13	99

Figure 9. Sociability observed by zone

V. Interviews with Waterfront Users

The next section presents the results of open-ended interview questions with waterfront park users. Respondents could answer in any way that they chose and these responses were later coded for emergent themes by researchers. The tables present a summary of the rank-order of the occurrence of these themes among all the interviewees in the waterfront, which are then explained in the text. The percentages may total to more than 100% because respondents often identified with multiple themes.

Fifteen participants were interviewed within all three zones (Pulaski Park, Railroad, and Dundee Island Park) of which 33.33% were male and 66.67% were female. 6.67% were above 65 in age, while 93.33% of participants fell in the 18-64 age range. No one under the age of 18 was interviewed. People were observed moving throughout all three zones, often using the railroad zone to cut to and from Dundee Island Park and Pulaski Park. Other times teams would notice people walking from the back of the railroad area and cutting over to either the Dundee or Pulaski Park. Due to this movement between zones, we interviewed fluidly in all three zones.

Q.1 What are you doing in the park today?

Many users (33.33%) stated they were in the park for a sports and recreation activity; 26.67% of respondents were in the area to play with their children or child relatives. Locations for playing with children included a variety of settings such as the playground, the soccer field, and skate park where a participant’s son was climbing on and over the ramps. A few even stated that it was their child’s favorite park. Fishing, living in the park, socializing, sitting/resting, walking, and the weather each made up 6.67% respectively.

Park Activities		
ACTIVITY	COUNT	% OF RESPONDENTS
Sports & Recreation	5	33.33%
Child Playing	4	26.67%
Fishing	1	6.67%
Lives in Park	1	6.67%
Socializing	1	6.67%
Sitting/Resting	1	6.67%
Walking	1	6.67%
Weather	1	6.67%
Total Respondents	15	100.02%

Figure 10. Counts of park activities reported by interviewees

Q.2. And why did you choose to come here today?

33.33% of participants stated proximity as the reason why they choose to come to the park areas. Others said that bringing a child to play (22.22%) in the parks was the motivation while 16.67% chose it for a sports and recreation type activity including making use of the soccer fields and watching the games. 5.56% said they came to the park areas because they are clean. One participant (5.56%) mentioned how they were there because they heard the park was nice, showcasing how positive word of mouth can increase the number of park goers.

Reasons for Visiting Parks		
ACTIVITY	COUNT	% OF RESPONDENTS
Proximity	6	33.33%
Child Playing	4	22.22%
Sports & Recreation	3	16.67%
Clean	1	5.56%
Enjoyment	1	5.56%
Safety	1	5.56%
Sitting/Resting	1	5.56%
Word of Mouth	1	5.56%
Total Responses	18	100.02%

Figure 11. Counts of reasons participants visited parks

Q.3. How often do you visit this park?

Many respondents came to the park on a weekly (46.67%) and daily basis (26.67%). This could possibly coincide with their proximity to the park. First time visitors (13.33%) are notable as it shows that the parks have not plateaued in bringing in new visitors.

Frequency of Visits		
FREQUENCY	COUNT	% OF RESPONDENTS
First Time	2	13.33%
Rarely	1	6.67%
Daily	4	26.67%
Weekly	7	46.67%
Monthly	1	6.67%
Total Respondents	15	100.01%

Figure 12. Counts of frequency of visits by interviewees

Q.4. When was the first time you came here? (year, or month if in the last year)

The longevity of visitations to the park areas is important since it can highlight a sense of place attachment. Participants who visited the park 20+ years (20.00%) and 10-19 years ago (20.00%) were both less in number than people in the 1-9 year range (40.00%). It would be interesting to explore what factors contributed to these numbers. Since we know that the Passaic community is fairly young (the median age of those that reside in the City is 29 while the median age for a New Jersey resident is 40) perhaps one factor could be that younger people are more likely to move away, thus there is little data on participants who had a connection to the Park for more than 10+ years.

Longevity of Visitation to Parks		
FIRST TIME VISITED	COUNT	% OF RESPONDENTS
20+ years	3	20.00%
10-19 years	3	20.00%
1-9 years	6	40.00%
Less than a Year	1	6.67%
Today	2	13.33%
Total Respondents	15	100.00%

Figure 13. Counts of longevity of visitation to the parks by participants

Q.5. Have you noticed any changes since then? If so, what?

80.00% of persons interviewed said they noticed that the park areas have changed in some way over time, while 10.00% stated they have not seen any changes and 10.00% had no answer due to it being their first visit. New infrastructure change refers primarily to the sporting fields and playgrounds, and even though these participants stated new changes, comments on whether they thought they were improvements or positive changes were not given. One participant (5.00%) clearly defined his infrastructure change as negative saying how the turf fields were new and that he did not like them. He also did not like the playground near the skatepark and the concession stand since it is rarely open. Seasonal changes in the amount of people (5.00%) were noted as well as more homeless (5.00%) in the areas. 20.00% commented on how the areas were cleaner, while other perceived changes in the park to be dirtier (5.00%) due to the yellow service trucks not cleaning and cutting grass as often.

Types of Changes		
CHANGE	COUNT	% OF RESPONDENTS
New Infrastructure	7	35.00%

Cleaner	4	20.00%
No change	2	10.00%
N/A (First Visit)	2	10.00%
Dirtier	1	5.00%
Seasonal	1	5.00%
Infrastructure, negative	1	5.00%
More Homeless	1	5.00%
Amount of People	1	5.00%
Total Responses	20	100.00%

Figure 14. Counts of the types of changes seen by interviewees

Q.6. How did you get here today?

The majority (66.67%) of participants walked to the park areas, while only 33.33% drove. This possibly indicates a strong connection with the neighboring communities and how the park is not a destination for people outside of them.

Mode of Travel		
MODE	COUNT	% OF RESPONDENTS
Walk	10	66.67%
Drive	5	33.33%
Total Respondents	15	100.00%

Figure 15. Counts of the mode of travel taken by participants

Q.7. How long did it take you to get here?

60.00% of persons interviewed stated it took them 1-9 minutes to get to the park areas. Other responses were 10-19 minutes (20.00%) and over twenty minutes (20.00%).

Travel Time to Parks		
TIME	COUNT	% OF RESPONDENTS
1-9 minutes	9	60.00%
10-19 minutes	3	20.00%
20+ minutes	3	20.00%

Total Respondents	15	100.00%
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Figure 16. Counts of travel time to parks by interviewees

Visiting the Passaic River

Teams also asked interviewees whether or not they visited the Passaic River and what activities they participated in if they answered yes. Out of 15 respondents, 11 (73.33%) stated yes to visiting the river, while 26.67% responded no. Activities when visiting the river can be seen in the chart below with “walking by the river” and “watching wildlife/water” each holding the majority (17.65%). In terms of reasons why they did not visit the Passaic River, safety was cited as the most common (23.53%) followed by “other facility use” (11.76%). For example, one participant would only frequent the playground and no other area within the parks. Participants were then asked to name other locations where they enjoyed being close to the water. Most (62.50%) included places within New Jersey such as Hoboken, Point Pleasant, and Dundee Dam.

“She remembers the river being cleaner and how, being an avid angler with her dad, they would actually go the fishing spot in Dundee Island Park as well as Hughes Lake to fish. She even holds a fishing event on the Passaic River as a kind of ode to him. She passionately spoke about how the families that now create Passaic come from rural communities yet do not have that sense of open space any longer, from space to roam to only having a one-bedroom apartment. The vision behind the park is to make it a place people want to go, to make it safe so people can go fishing.”

Vignette from field researcher’s notes during volunteer trash pick-up event and initial survey of zones

Q.8. Do you visit the Passaic River?

Visiting Passaic River		
RESPONSE	COUNT	% OF RESPONDENTS
Yes	11	73.33%
No	4	26.67%
Total Respondents	15	100.00%

Figure 17. Counts of people who visit the Passaic River

Q.9. If yes, what do you do there?

Activities Along the Waterfront		
ACTIVITIES	COUNT	% OF RESPONDENTS
Does Not Visit	4	23.53%
Walk by River	3	17.65%
Watching Wildlife/Water	3	17.65%
Child Playing	1	5.88%
Fishing	1	5.88%
No Response	1	5.88%
Personal	1	5.88%
Sitting/Resting	1	5.88%
Stewardship	1	5.88%
Used to Visit	1	5.88%
Total Responses	17	99.99%

Figure 18. Counts of activities at the Passaic River from people who visit

Q.10. If no, why not?

Reasons to Not Visit River		
REASONS	COUNT	% OF RESPONDENTS
No Response/Visits River	9	52.94%
Safety	4	23.53%
Other Facility Use Only	2	11.76%
Animals	1	5.88%
No Activities	1	5.88%
Total Responses	17	99.99%

Figure 19. Counts of reasons why people do not visit the Passaic River

Q.11. Where else do you like to go to be close to the water?

Locations Liked for Closeness to Water		
LOCATIONS	COUNT	% OF RESPONDENTS
New Jersey	15	62.50%
New York	4	16.67%
Outside U.S.	2	8.33%
Pennsylvania	1	4.17%
No Response	1	4.17%
Does Not Visit	1	4.17%
Total Responses	24	100.01%

Figure 20. Counts of where participants like to be near water

Safety of Passaic River

Whether the interviewees believed the Passaic River was safe to swim in, eat fish from, and boat in was also noted. The majority of participants responded no for each question, 80.00% stated they did not feel safe swimming, 93.33% did not feel safe fishing, and 60.00% responded no to feeling safe enough to boat. Most people did not respond with reasons as to why they felt safe or not safe when asked. Out of those that did have an answer, the majority stated pollution (40.00%) as the main cause of not feeling safe, followed by one user stating that we should not be using rivers at all, hinting that he might have been under the impression that all rivers are polluted or not safe to use for recreation.

“We then wandered closer to the river and saw a fisherman. One of our researchers spoke with him briefly about what he was catching, his perception of the water, and if he swam in the river. The man stated he catches perch... thought the water was clean, and that he does not swim in the river. He talked about the brackish water and how you can’t swim in the river because the current is strong. Our researcher also thought he might not be able to swim. The man comes to this spot to fish weekly, picks up litter in the area (unprompted), and he fishes for sport only, throwing the fish he catches back into the river. A Passaic Rec worker would later mention that fishermen have also been known to catch largemouth bass, porgy as well as perch.”

Vignette from field researcher’s notes during volunteer trash pick-up event and initial survey of zones

Q.12. Would you feel safe swimming here?

Feeling of Safe Swimming		
RESPONSE	COUNT	% OF RESPONDENTS
No	12	80.00%
Yes	2	13.33%
No Response	1	6.67%
Total Respondents	15	100.00%

Figure 21. Counts how many people would feel safe swimming in the Passaic River

Q.13. Would you feel safe eating the fish?

Feeling of Safely Eating Fish		
RESPONSE	COUNT	% OF RESPONDENTS
No	14	93.33%
Never Thought About It	1	6.67%
Yes	0	0.00%
Total Respondents	15	100.00%

Figure 22. Counts how many people would feel safe eating the fish in the river

Q.14. Would you feel safe boating?

Feeling of Safely Boating		
RESPONSE	COUNT	% OF RESPONDENTS
No	9	60.00%
Yes	4	26.67%
Maybe	1	6.67%
No Response	1	6.67%
Total Respondents	15	100.01%

Figure 23. Counts how many people would feel safe boating in the Passaic

Q.15. Why or why not?

Reasons Why Did or Did Not Feel Safe		
REASONS	COUNT	% OF RESPONDENTS
No Response	8	53.33%
Pollution	6	40.00%
Should Not Use Rivers	1	6.67%
Total Respondents	15	100.00%

Figure 24. Counts of reasons why they did or did not feel safe

Stewardship

When asked if they were involved in any environmental groups, the majority of respondents (60.00%) stated they were not, with only two people answering yes. These two included picking up trash on the soccer fields and being unofficially involved in the group Liberty State Park Clean-Ups. Participants who answered no, gave reasons such as time (54.55%), proximity (9.09%), and transportation (9.09%) as reasons for not being involved. A third category, “no, but” was included for persons who stated they were not involved in a group, but they had an example of how they were adding to their own idea of stewardship. These examples included being interested in helping (50.00%), how they helped in the past (25.00%), and how their vegetarian lifestyle was beneficial (25.00%).

“A Passaic Rec worker said that was her group of soccer moms who come out to Dundee Park every Saturday to pick up trash. For them, it was just another Saturday even though this was an organized event. A fellow researcher would later speak with a volunteer who stated that there is always a lot of glass there, so one could reason that these moms come out to clean the glass so their children don’t get hurt during games.”

Vignette from field researcher’s notes during volunteer trash pick-up event and initial survey of zones

Q.16. Are you involved in any groups that help take care of the environment?

Involvement in Environmental Groups		
RESPONSES	COUNT	% OF RESPONDENTS
No	9	60.00%
No, But	4	26.67%
Yes	2	13.33%
Total Respondents	15	100.00%

Figure 25. Counts of how many people are or are not involved in environmental groups

Q.17. If no, why not?

Why Not Involved in Environmental Groups		
REASONS	COUNT	% OF RESPONDENTS
Time	6	54.55%
Proximity	1	9.09%
Transportation	1	9.09%
Observe Only	1	9.09%
No Opportunity	1	9.09%
No Response	1	9.09%
Total Responses	11	100.00%

Figure 26. Counts of reasons why they are not involved in a group

Q.18. If no, but – add details

Not Involved in Environmental Group, But		
RESPONSES	COUNT	% OF RESPONDENTS
Interested in Helping	2	50.00%
Helped in Past	1	25.00%
Life Style	1	25.00%
Total Respondents	4	100.00%

Figure 27. Counts of reasons why participants who are answered 'no, but'

VI. Event Surveys

Kayaking Event

The kayaking event was held on June 1st, 2019 in conjunction with the City of Passaic Recreation Department and Resilience Paddle Sports (based out of Hoboken, New Jersey). The City of Passaic Fire Department was also present and had a motorized boat to sweep the river and confirm that the current would be safe for participants. The fire department stayed for the duration of the event in case of an emergency.

The event was set to begin promptly at 10 a.m. in order to avoid the current shift later in the afternoon. However, the start time was delayed due to complications with getting the fire department's boat to the site and with issues concerning the flow of participants' arrival and filling out their waiver documents. After getting the first kayak out on the water, the Resilience Paddle Sports instructor quickly realized the current was too strong to follow her plan of having two groups of twelve participants out on the river. The River, she mentioned, was behaving a bit unpredictable even though she made sure to do previous research. She then adjusted and instead took out groups consisting of only two to three kayaks (four to six people). In the end this actually allowed more participants to go out on the water, though many had their kayaks towed by the Resilience Paddle Sports staff as it was their first time kayaking and the current was just too strong to fight against while learning how to paddle.

The issues with the timing of the program did not dampen the spirits of the participants and many expressed an interest in going out on the river a second time. After the current became too strong to continue kayaking, the Resilience Paddle Sports team taught an environmental education program to the youth participants present. This included setting fish traps, doing nature arts and crafts, reading books about the outdoors, learning about the types of animals that live in urban waterways and surrounding habitat, and giving the participants nets to try catching things from the river. This allowed people who had trepidation about kayaking on the river to still participate in learning about the ecosystem, as well as provide an activity for children who were too young to kayak. Overall the event could be considered a success, with the positive attitudes in our data collection as evidence. The research team had no refusals to the request to fill out the surveys and many were filled out while participants were waiting their turn to get onto the river.



Image 10. Select photos from the kayak event: Safety instructions (1, 2), Kayaking on the river (3, 4), and educational activity (5, 6)

Photos taken by Lindsey Strehlau-Howay and Elizabeth Balladares

Fishing Event

The fishing event was held on June 8, 2019 and a fair amount of participants seen here were also involved in the kayak program the week prior. The City of Passaic Recreation Department actually holds this fishing event annually at Hughes Lake, but changed locations to the Passaic River this year. The city advertised the fishing opportunity as a Father’s Day program, giving out reusable bags, snacks, and Passaic Recreation t-shirts as gifts upon arrival. For equipment, the Recreation Department was able to borrow most of the rods used during the event from the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife, specifically from the “Hooked on Fishing Not on Drugs” (HOFNOD) program. Once again the city fire department was at the event in case of an emergency and an Americorps member from the New Jersey Watershed Ambassador Program also came to present an interactive non-point source pollution demonstration for the younger participants.

Many of the participants that came early in the day brought their own rods and did not need assistance, however this changed as the day progressed as many of the participants needed guidance from the city employees as well as from the research team members. As can be expected with beginner anglers, many of the children were squeamish about handling the bait worms or the fish once they were caught, but these attitudes changed over just a few hours.

Limited prior activity experience was a theme seen at both events and more youths were observed at this event versus the kayaking one.

Many of the childrens' parents were not actively fishing, so the research team was able to hand out surveys easily and not impede the flow of the event. As with the kayaking event, there were zero refusals and many participants ended up having extended conversations with the research team after completing a survey, thus elaborating on their answers.



Image 11. Select photos from the fishing event: Members of the City Fire Department and Research Team assisting participants (1-4), Americorps Member with interactive pollution display (5), Various fish caught (6-9)

Photos taken by Lindsey Strehlau-Howay

The next section presents the results of the event survey data. Questions were a mix of multiple choice and open ended. The percentages may total more than 100% because respondents often identified with multiple themes.

Q1. How often do you visit Dundee Island Park?

When asked how frequently participants visited Dundee Island Park, the majority of participants reported rarely visiting (25.81%) or visiting for the first time (38.71%) on the day of the event. Continued programming at Dundee Island Park may lead to more members of the community utilizing the space.

Frequency of Visits (Dundee)		
RESPONSE	COUNT	% OF RESPONDENTS
First Time	12	38.71%
Rarely	8	25.81%
Daily	5	16.13%
Weekly	2	6.45%
Monthly	4	12.90%
Total Responses	31	100.00%

Figure 28. Counts of how often participants visit Dundee Island Park

Q2. How often do you visit Pulaski Park?

31.04% of participants stated they rarely visit Pulaski Park, while 24.14% responded that they visit the park weekly. This difference shows the variance of park users the events drew. The responses could be due to a variety of factors including the participant's amount of or participation in organized sports, amenities found at the park such as playgrounds and basketball courts, amenities that are lacking, increased awareness of the Park due to proximity to a school, or poor visibility from the surrounding area.

Frequency of Visits (Pulaski)		
RESPONSE	COUNT	% OF RESPONDENTS
First Time	4	13.79%
Rarely	9	31.04%
Daily	5	17.24%
Weekly	7	24.14%
Monthly	4	13.79%
Total Responses	29	100.00%

Figure 29. Counts of how often participants visit Pulaski Park

Q3. How did you first hear about this event?

The top two engagement methods were through family or friends (26.32%) and Facebook posts (23.68%). The other methods that involved people from organizations (13.16%), flyers or posters (21.05%), school/work (7.90%), walking by the event (5.26%), and newspaper ads (2.63%) were less effective in engaging the public to attend the event. Yet this still encourages a diverse advertising strategy for future programs in order to attract a wide audience.

Method of Engagement		
RESPONSE	COUNT	% OF RESPONDENTS
Family or Friends	10	26.32%
Facebook	9	23.68%
Flyer or Poster	8	21.05%
People from an Organization	5	13.16%
School or Work	3	7.90%
Walked by	2	5.26%
Newspaper	1	2.63%
Total Responses	38	100.00%

Figure 30. Counts of how interviewees first heard about the event

Q4. With whom did you come to this event?

Only 5.41% of those surveyed came to the event on their own, a vast majority came with friends (13.51%) and/or family (81.08%). While not recorded in the survey, many of the participants joyfully spoke about the program’s ability to engage people of all ages and how it being family friendly was important in their decision to attend. They also voiced their want for additional family-based programs in the future.

Accompaniment to the Event		
RESPONSE	COUNT	% OF RESPONDENTS
Family	30	81.08%
Friends or Neighbors	5	13.51%
Alone	2	5.41%
Total Responses	37	100.00%

Figure 31. Counts of who participants came with to the event

Stewardship

68.00% of respondents had previously participated in a City of Passaic event. If environmental programming were to continue at the site, the City of Passaic would be a proven and powerful force in engaging the community's participation. When able to provide examples of environmental or community groups, all of the responses, aside from 'No or N/A', were of groups found within or near the City of Passaic. This echoes the responses of the previous question, indicating that members of this community have a high likelihood of participating with organizations that are based within their city.

Q5. Have you participated in events with any of the following groups?

Groups (Predetermined)		
RESPONSE	COUNT	% OF RESPONDENTS
City of Passaic	17	68.00%
City of Passaic-1st time volunteer	5	20.00%
Great Swamp Watershed Association	1	4.00%
Trust for Public Land	1	4.00%
No	1	4.00%
Total Responses	25	100.00%

Figure 32. Counts of events participated in with various groups

Q6. Are you a member of any environmental or community groups?

Groups (Open Ended)		
RESPONSE	COUNT	% OF RESPONDENTS
No or N/A	5	50.00%
Non-established clean-up group	1	10.00%
Boy Scouts of America	2	20.00%
Make the Road	1	10.00%
Clean Ups	1	10.00%
Total Responses	10	100.00%

Figure 33. Counts of people involved in an environmental or community group

Q7. Are any of the following a member of any of the groups that you just mentioned?

Accompaniment to environmental or community groups		
RESPONSE	COUNT	% OF RESPONDENTS
N/A	18	69.23%
Relative	4	15.38%
Friend	3	11.54%
Girl Scouts	1	3.85%
Total Responses	26	100.00%

Figure 34. Counts of people interviewees know that are also a part of mentioned groups

Q8. Do you participate in any of the following waterfront activities?

Within each of the waterfront activities listed below, the majority of participants have stated that they never once engaged in them. This holds true for all activities aside from “relaxing at the water’s edge” wherein 68% occasionally engaged. This information speaks to the amount of participants seen needing assistance at the events, as 64.00% reported to have never engaged in fishing and 68.18% for kayaking. This indicates that there is a potential for engagement in programs that are introducing new experiences for the participants, as well as opportunities for park management to engage people’s already formed interests – more park benches for park goers who like to relax by the water. Overall it can be seen that the vast majority of the waterfront activities selected by the research team were rarely experienced by the participants of the events. However, the fishing and kayaking events exposed people to new experiences within their city and may increase engagement in future programs or stewardship initiatives. While many reported never engaging in the activity that the event was centered around, all were enthusiastic throughout the program. All of these activities hold potential for future events that would engage all community members of Passaic.

Waterfront Participation								
WATERFRONT ACTIVITY	NEVER	OCCASIONALLY	OFTEN	TOTAL RESPONSES	% OF RESPONSES: NEVER	% OF RESPONSES: OCCASIONALLY	% OF RESPONSES: OFTEN	Total %
Relaxing at the water's edge	7	17	1	25	28.00%	68%	4.00%	100.00%
Canoeing/Kayaking	15	7	0	22	68.18%	31.82%	0.00%	100.00%
Power Boating	18	5	0	23	78.26%	21.74%	0.00%	100.00%
Fishing/Clamming	16	6	3	25	64.00%	24.00%	12%	100.00%
Monitoring (Water quality, wildlife)	17	4	0	21	80.95%	19.05%	0.00%	100.00%
Restoration (tree planting, marsh grass)	18	1	0	19	94.74%	5.26%	0.00%	100.00%
Clean up (Trash pickup)	14	6	1	21	66.67%	28.57%	4.76%	100.00%
Waterfront Park Advocacy	13	7	1	21	61.90%	33.33%	4.76%	100.00%
Total Responses	118	53	6	177				

Figure 35. Counts of how often interviewees participated in listed waterfront activities

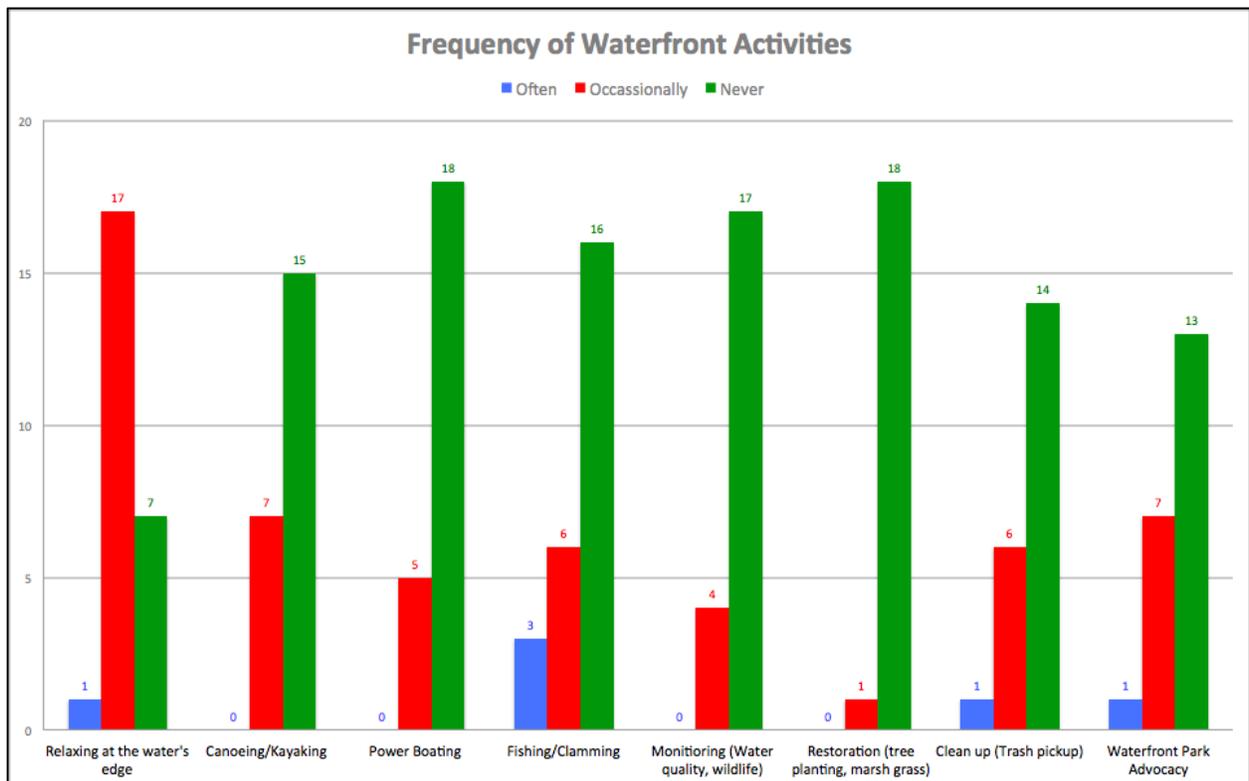


Figure 36. Frequency of interviewees participating in waterfront activities

Q9. Are you interested in participating in a “Friends of” Dundee Island Park group?

Interest in “Friends of” Group		
RESPONSE	COUNT	% OF RESPONDENTS
Yes	31	94.12%
No	2	5.88%
Total Responses	33	100.00%

Figure 37. Counts of interest in participating in a “Friends of” group

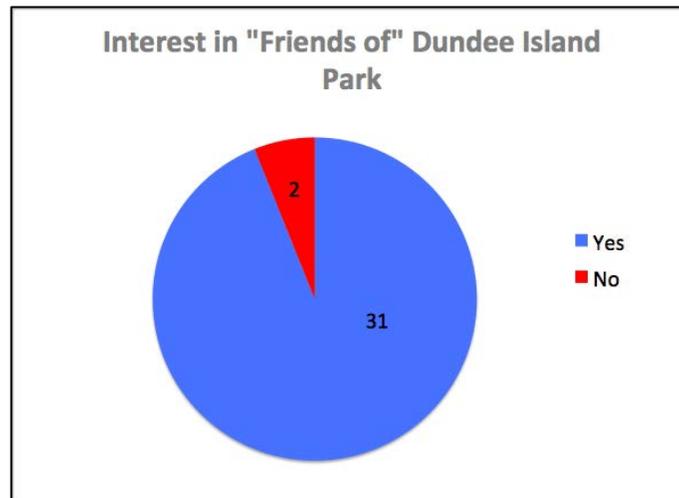


Figure 38. Interest in “Friends of” Dundee Island Park Pie Chart

Q10. What kind of public programs would you like to see in Dundee Island Park?

Participants’ answers included variations of waterfront activities, including fishing and kayaking. Many surveyed have noted that they wanted to continue seeing events enjoyable for both adults and children, as seen with almost half of the answers given, again stressing the importance in engaging children and the whole family. Along with the reported answers below, persons surveyed included amenities that they would like to see at the park including food vendors and more bathrooms. One survey simply had written “As many as possible”, and while that does not give a lot of details, it speaks to the enthusiasm that many participants had for continued programming at the park.

Public Program Interests		
RESPONSE	COUNT	% OF RESPONDENTS
Fishing	5	25.00%
Canoeing/Kayaking	5	25.00%
Tree Planting/Gardening	3	15.00%
Clean Ups	3	15.00%
Basketball	1	5.00%
Cultural Environmental Events	1	5.00%
Boating	1	5.00%

Splash Pad/Sprinkler	1	5.00%
Total Responses	20	100.00%

Figure 39. Counts depicting the types of public programming participants would like to see

Demographic Information

Q11. Gender

Gender		
RESPONSE	COUNT	% OF RESPONDENTS
Female	16	48.48%
Male	16	48.48%
Male and Female Responded	1	3.03%
Total Responses	33	100.00%

Figure 40. Demographic counts for gender of participants

Q12. Age

Age		
RESPONSE	COUNT	% OF RESPONDENTS
Under 30	3	10.00%
30-39	17	56.67%
40-49	7	23.33%
50-59	3	10.00%
Total Responses	30	100.00%

Figure 41. Demographic counts for age of participants

Q13. Race

Race		
RESPONSE	COUNT	% OF RESPONDENTS
Latino/a or Hispanic	26	81.25%
White	2	6.25%
African-American	2	6.25%
Human	1	3.13%
Asian-American	1	3.13%
Total Responses	32	100.00%

Figure 42. Demographic counts for race of participants

Q14. Education

Education		
RESPONSE	COUNT	% OF RESPONDENTS
High School	14	45.16%

College/University	7	22.58%
Graduate or Professional School	5	16.13%
Incomplete College/University	3	9.68%
Incomplete High School	2	6.45%
Total Responses	31	100.00%

Figure 43. Demographic counts for education of participants

Q15. Income

Income		
RESPONSE	COUNT	% OF RESPONDENTS
Prefer not to answer	5	20.83%
\$0-4,999	1	4.17%
\$10,000-14,999	2	8.33%
\$15,000-19,000	2	8.33%
\$20,000-29,000	3	12.5%
\$40,000-49,999	3	12.5%
\$50,000-69,000	4	16.67%
\$70,000-89,000	2	8.33%
\$90,000-119,000	1	4.17%
\$120,000 and over	1	4.17%
Total Responses	24	100.00%

Figure 44. Demographic counts for income of participants

Q16. Zip Code

Zip Code		
RESPONSE	COUNT	% OF RESPONDENTS
7055	27	81.82%
7305	2	6.06%
7003	1	3.03%
7004	1	3.03%
7506	1	3.03%
7013	1	3.03%
Total Responses	33	100.00%

Figure 45. Demographic counts for zip code of participants

Q17. Years Resident

Years Resident		
RESPONSE	COUNT	% OF RESPONDENTS
Less than 5	3	9.09%
5 to 10	13	39.39%

11 to 20	9	27.27%
21 to 30	4	12.12%
31 to 40	1	3.03%
Above 41	3	9.09%
Total Responses	33	100.00%

Figure 46. Demographic counts for participants years of residen

Surveys Performed in Spanish or English

Language-Based on survey requested		
RESPONSE	COUNT	% OF RESPONDENTS
English	29	58.00%
Spanish	21	42.00%
Total Responses	50	100.00%

Figure 47. Counts of surveys performed in English or Spanish

VII. Focus Groups

Two focus groups were organized at community centers in the City of Passaic. One group was administered in English and the other in Spanish, representing the two most commonly spoken languages in the city and giving an array of community members a voice. Three participants joined the English focus group with four field researchers administering questions, taking notes, and facilitating conversation. The Spanish focus group had six participants with three Spanish-speaking field researchers coordinating the discussion. Since this group was invited to bring their kids, two additional researchers were present to engage the children in a few environmentally focused lessons and games, separate from the research. Both focus groups were approximately two hours in length with roughly thirty minutes set aside at the beginning for people to arrive and settle. As noted in the transcription, new participants arrived and joined in the conversation throughout the Spanish speaking group. The main themes extracted from both focus group dialogues were their ***feelings about Passaic*** (pride, park area memories, cultural diversity, criticism/concerns), ***perceptions of water*** (fear, excitement, and water memories), ***future opportunities to come*** (events, programs, and stewardship), and a ***keen focus on youth and children***.

Participants' emotions, passion, and pride ran high when speaking about their city as it currently stands and its potential to flourish. This spurred participant's memories, recalling stories of the area and parks. Cultural diversity and the depth that it brings to the area through food, language, and family values were also highlighted as an influential characteristic of the City. Though these positive comments about Passaic reoccurred throughout both groups, criticisms and concerns did surface about past mayoral administrations, as did concerns over the safety in the railroad and encampment areas. Contrasting views on the homeless encampment at the Park were seen, with some participants viewing the group as people in need of assistance, while others saw homelessness as a negative issue that needed to be addressed in order for their community to improve and for them to see real progress. Concerning perceptions of water, participant's own memories of visiting or living near places with water fostered a positive atmosphere filled with excitement, while strong currents, present water quality, and historical contamination were voiced as fears when discussing the Passaic River. Event and programming ideas emerged from the focus groups during various discussion points including more clean-ups, nature and exercise focused programs, teaching kids about the natural world, outdoor recreation activities, and creating stewardship groups to name a few. Those who attended the Spanish speaking focus group even exchanged information, speaking about continuing the forward momentum. It is worth mentioning that a distinct focus on kids was heard in both groups and expanded across all themes. Future programs could take note from this emphasis on children and family as the groups placed importance in steering their kids towards stewardship and nature.

On Feelings about Passaic

Pride in Place

"But on the other hand, I feel proud because I'm a proud Passaic, always. I didn't even study here, but I came to educate here. Here is work, ... I live in Passaic. I have my house in Passaic, my roots are in Passaic, and I will end in Passaic. I love Passaic, that's why I want to...work with you guys, not because my kids, no, it's because of the community. We want to return something to them. That's why, you know, I have both feelings at certain times, but right now I feel proud. And that's why when I go to my school, you know during those spirit days, I wear Passaic."

Quote from English Focus Group

"...I have noticed that our current mayor has been the most active in terms of doing things to improve the environment like coordinating clean ups for example. I've been living here for 20 years and the previous mayors have done nothing of this sort, but this current mayor has done a lot and the city looks different. Before you'd see trash in every corner of the city, of course it still exists, but now it is not on that same level, it has definitely improved. That's why I want to be able to get involved because I wholeheartedly believe we can improve our city together."

Quote from Spanish Focus Group

"I was raised here, I work here, I live here, I love it. I love it. And my family, they say, 'oh why do you like Passaic?' and I say, 'it has everything. It has everything.' It's a great melting pot, every culture here has a strong history. It's moving up, you know, ... I'm a very proud Passaician. ... I love it. I really do. I can't say anything wrong. I know there are some bad parts, but every town has their bad parts and their good parts, there's not one place that doesn't. No, every town has that one area. If you ask someone, they will say 'yea don't go there.' It's everywhere ... I don't know why they're scared. Ever since I was little, walking downtown, going to my friend's house, I'm not [scared], I live here. I don't see any harm. There's no fear when I'm walking around, it's my town."

Quote from English Focus Group

Park Area Memories

"...when we were in eighth grade, we were trying to figure out what we were going to do for our eighth-grade class. And ... we thought, you know what, let's hit the park. ...we haven't gone to the park since we were little and you saw all of us big teenagers, some with stubble, walking down with our picnic baskets, with our blankets down to Wheeler Brook Park.... We relaxed, we had fun. We actually played as kids play. Because you know, no matter how old you get, whenever you hit a park, that little kid comes out..."

Quote from English Focus Group

"I'm originally from New York, the Bronx. Born in Manhattan, raised in the Bronx, lived in Queens for about two years. I've been visiting Passaic since I was fourteen and I'm now 54. I moved here... 32 years ago. My son was born in New York, my daughter was born here and even though people complain about Passaic, Passaic is not the Bronx. Coming from the black out of 1977 when I was 11, 12 years old in NY, people broke into all the apartments, all the stores. After that they were all gated. Then to come to Passaic and find Passaic, free! There were no gates down ... In front of the library there was a vending machine for a quart of milk. So in the middle of the night, if you ran out of milk, you go with 75 cents to the front of the library and come out with your quart of milk. That was amazing! I've never seen that before..."

Quote from English Focus Group

Cultural Diversity

"Well, I like it so much because I feel at home here, this is an area rich in Hispanic culture, and although we all come from different countries and backgrounds so many of us speak Spanish. If we find ourselves needing something we can be pointed in the direction of where to look, and it's very helpful that it's done in our language. I used to live in West Virginia and it was a little hard to find that type of help, there aren't really any centers that you could go to where you could request any help with translating or those sorts of things."

Quote from Spanish Focus Group

"You know, here, it's a small town, so people are more connected and I think that's awesome and it's so rich, you know. It's so rich in cultures and everybody's experiences and that's, that's awesome. Everyone here learns from one another."

Quote from English Focus Group

Concerns/Criticisms

"I mean the ideal thing would be to be able to service each one of them [the homeless] and be able to get them help. But, no one has given up on them. Yea, the mayor's a big advocate, you know for trying to help them. I think what it does, based on the conversations that I've heard, a lot of people, I wouldn't necessarily identify with them, but a lot of people sympathize with the fact that a lot of these people don't have, you know, citizen or resident status in this country, and so they're very aware that they, you know, they can't get the services that other people can, and so I think that, in a sense of the community, I think that you have a lot of folks that understand that and are willing to sympathize with them and you know their lack ... having the ability ... to get a job or be able to do that because it holds them back."

Quote from English Focus Group

"In reality I think that it [the encampment] affects the city a lot, and I understand that everyone has a vice right, but the thing is that the city needs people that are clean [drug free], that can support the city. But I think..., that instead of helping keep the city clean, they only add to the uncleanness."

Quote from Spanish Focus Group

"My kids have been in that school for three months now but I'm always very cautious because the location is a little different than what they're used to. If I can't send him with someone I don't send him alone because I don't feel secure enough in letting him walk."

Quote from Spanish Focus Group

"Sometimes I feel proud of the city, but sometimes I feel ashamed of the city too. Because ... we have to be realistic, our town had three consecutive mayors that ended up going to jail because they were delinquents. ...they were engaged in ... kind of mafia things. ... I feel like there are certain small communities that take full advantage of all the benefits that are available to the city and for the residents of Passaic. Recreation, education, opportunity for gifted and talented students, opportunity for these advantaged students... It took or is taking kind of a long time to provide service for the majority community ... And it's not fair that the small community gets everything, whatever they want, just because the administration allows it. Because they were elected by them, therefore, the majority of us, we don't get it. That makes me feel ashamed."

Quote from English Focus Group

On Perceptions of Water

Fear

"... they say that the river's dirty. ... No I wouldn't go there (Passaic River) ... I didn't check, but I assume some of the areas are more polluted than other ones because of the factories. ... You know I was thinking... we as adults can go (to the River), ... we take care, we don't just put two hands in the water. But kids, they are kids. So they may just not think about it and try to drink the water or to put in their faces. So are those places (Rivers), following the standards, the EPA standards in terms of health? It is an issue for kids. That would be my worry. Because you can do whatever you want in polluted water, but the thing is that you have to take the health issue first. I mean, that would be my first. Second would be the enjoyment. ... that's my worry at this time."

Quote from English Focus Group

"I was too chicken [to go boating], I don't swim. I don't swim at all. And even though the fire department was right behind us, I didn't wanna be the one that was going to tip over and have a big scene. Um, so yea I didn't do that one (kayak event)."

Quote from English Focus Group

"Well for me in my case, that's the most important part. It is a little worrying to know that this contamination has been there for so many years, I think it's definitely a concern. ...I remember I was on a bus and once passed by a super old building that was being worked on, ...but I remember seeing this super dark liquid coming off it. What I'm wondering is, perhaps something like that could end up being washed into the river, I don't know, since it was so close."

Quote from Spanish Focus Group

Excitement

"Being in the water is another world. You know I don't swim. But I love the water, like I should have been born a mermaid. You know I, I can go on a boat and I don't get sick. The ferry, when we were little, my mom, she has six kids and then had my nieces and cousins ... so one of the cheapest outings was to go back and forth to Staten Island on the ferry 'cause it was like 25 cents. I went on a boat one time to look at dolphins and everybody's like, 'don't look at the waves you're gonna get seasick'. I said 'no I'm not'. 'Yes, you're gonna get seasick'. I didn't get seasick, and I was like I know I told you I don't swim, but I like the water. Cause to me it's just, it's just another world. ... I would love to see the world underneath... the water. It's so peaceful; it's just so relaxing. I go to sleep with the sounds of nature. Like with waves hitting the shore. Waves hitting the shore, or rain on a tin roof."

Quote from English Focus Group

"... I like hiking and going to forests and everything so I've been to Wynoki. They have a nice river there, they have like skipping stones and river fronts, and you see the woods. When I like to go, you know we do learning activities. They have the butterfly sanctuary and stuff like that 'cause you need to get them (youths) outdoors, you get them walking and doing stuff like that. So I try to go to as many parks that have waterfronts or rivers, even behind William Patterson with the waterfall, that's nice to go to and everything. But I don't know, ... personally I just like hanging out at the water, usually fishing, ... just relaxing with everybody just fishing. We've been to waterfronts, even reservoirs that have some things like Passaic has the fishing... and it just serves a small amount of people and stuff like that, I love it."

Quote from English Focus Group

Water Memories

"I would remember rivers in my country. In my country I was surrounded by rivers, a lot. I used to swim in the river. I used to catch fish with my hand or with the stick in the river. And we lived on top of it,

you know in my own country we built a house and the river was going under it. Our house was right there. You hear the sound 'shhhh' of the water. And then when there's a lot of rain, a lot of rain, you see animals, boats, cars passing by us. My family catches some of those, because it was a kind of gift, you know bicycles, this and that. I'm from Peru. From South America ... we are close to the ocean, mountains ... forest, so a lot of the Amazon River is right by us. Beautiful. Also close to my place ... (were) waterfalls, and there ... we take showers, nude, we don't care, nobody's looking at us. Oh my god, total freedom. But here, you cannot do that. I miss those you know, ... I was ten, twelve years old ... right before going to the capital in Lima, Peru. ... Rivers are my thing."

Quote from English Focus Group

"Well where I'm from there used to be a river too, but nothing compared to the size of this (Passaic River), it was very small ... There we had *cosquites*, they're like lobsters but they're much smaller. There used to be so many of those and it'd be fun to catch them as kids. The real joy when you're that young is to be able to run around, catch them and get to cook them and eat them. Yeah lots of those memories for sure."

Quote from Spanish Focus Group

"When I was younger, my dad is a fisherman, he always used to fish close to a lagoon. I grew up there, I know how to fish but my kids don't. The first time my kids fished was at the fishing program at the park on the river, they really liked it. For them it was super interesting to learn about new things like that, and since then they've asked me when are we going fishing again. They want to go more frequently now [the park] and it's nice for them to learn about these new things."

Quote from Spanish Focus Group

On Future Opportunities

Programming

"A constant question that I've been getting from my kids is where we can go camping around here? I think it'd be great to offer them that experience or if there was a way to connect programs like the previous one to camping."

Quote from Spanish Focus Group

"We have this long river and last time we were kayaking, the guy (in the solo kayak) just floated by. And he was like, 'what you guys doing, where am I?' I'm like 'Dundee Park', and he's like, 'ok I'm headed up down to Benhurst'. We're like ooh. And he just kept on going. How cool would it be (to see) ... a couple kids from Passaic with one leader? A longer expedition you know ... can you imagine

the people's heads turning? Like what, there's a boat team going on down the river? Where are they? And just to see different animals and different areas, how from the city down to more, less populated areas, how the landscape changes and everything, that would be amazing tour right there, just seeing half, kind of like a small evolution from regular forest and waterfront to the urban city where you see the buildings and the waterways and stuff like that. I think that would be cool."

Quote from Spanish Focus Group

Building Stewardship

"Personally speaking, I'm not part of one single organization. But I join people ... in cleaning up our block with other neighbors. For example, her and I, along with a group of other folks have cleaned up around the bridge and we've managed to pull around 100 bags of garbage. And like I mentioned before, we're always taking part in the park clean ups and stuff as well, whenever those opportunities come up, I always volunteer. I just really want to see my city clean."

Quote from Spanish Focus Group

"There's a lady that comes, that lives across the street from Christopher Columbus Park, and we have some little garden beds there, and she goes and she takes care of the garden. So what we did in August is to turn them into a sensory garden. So there's two beds, plants that you can touch and the other one is focused on smell, things like that. So when the park, when they were taking over it, the lady across the street, that usually ... takes care of the plants, she went running to them, yelling at them not to touch the plants. You know so this was like somebody that can form a little community, a little group for that area."

Quote from English Focus Group

Youth Focused

"A community garden that would be very nice. Whoever wants to plant flowers or plants can do it, so that they can learn what growing food is all about at the same time they'd be learning about nature. I think we're losing a lot of knowing about nature. I think that for kids and for young adults it would be good to learn all about this, especially if it's close to the river because there's water. I think it's so important to get the ones sitting in that table [the kids] because when they're older, they lose interest. You have to capture their attention now when they still want to play with dirt and that's how they'll learn about what's necessary to plant a flower and what season and what temperature is necessary that'll be best for planting. When they're older they really become disengaged, become distracted with video games and the internet and they care less about that stuff."

Quote from Spanish Focus Group

"I always tell the kids they have to make sure they put things where they belong, if they finish any type of snack to make sure it goes in the bin. That's where it starts, because we need to show them now

that they're kids. We as parents need to make sure those are the types of lessons we are cultivating at home because that's where it starts."

Quote from Spanish Focus Group

"There's not a lot of activities for the kids who aren't athletically inclined. (If I were to ask a kid) What do you wanna do this summer? (The kid says) I'm not good at baseball. Well there's (only) baseball and little league sign up. (And the kid also says) I'm really bad at soccer ... Like you can't sign (him/her) up for those ... because, you know when you're little and you're not good at something, even if you're trying, and you're still not good at it... it discourages you to try new things."

Quote from English Focus Group

VIII. Conclusion and Considerations for Moving Forward

Waterfront parks are an important resource to communities, as water access helps to expand the number and reach of activities and provides experiences that are not always found at landlocked urban areas (i.e. kayaking, fishing, bald eagle sightings, etc). However, mistrust and long-standing fears over contamination have carved wide barriers between some of these waterfronts and their surrounding communities, depriving rivers of needed attention and support. Community stewardship can help bridge these distances by offering activities at and on the water, building a population that is more aware and knowledgeable of the environment and landscape, and thus more inclined to protect it. Experiences such as these help form meaning in participants' lives, their culture, and can even in some instances become a part of their identity. Programming, including stewardship-based ones, should therefore not be underestimated.

In particular, Passaic, New Jersey would benefit from programs that include the entirety of the city and its parks, as pride is highly valued among this community. A night walk through featured Passaic parks or a festival of lights over the river could offer a unique perspective on one's hometown, inspire community members, and encourage people to meet other individuals also passionate about the same initiatives and goals. Community, group, and family-focused activities would be addressed in the creation of a boat house where boaters and fishers of all ages could gather, exchange stories, and hold celebrations at one location. A community garden at a waterfront park might be another option to create an inviting and enriching environment. Members would have different roles and children could learn responsibility by taking care of the boats or garden beds. A variety of fears concerning the water can be addressed with swimming lessons at the local YMCA or Girls and Boys Club, kayaking lessons on Hughes Lake, guided kayaking tours and lessons that take into account river navigation and safety, and citizen/community science programs where the impact of the data can be seen online or is easily obtainable and explained. With emphasis on expanding knowledge, a nature or youth camp that links to an educational opportunity with an academic institution would be ideal. As would historical and nature-based tours along the waterfront including bird watching.

In order to attempt these programs and events, interested parties would need to obtain additional resources. Employing or seeking out grant writers can help an organization's chances when applying for financial assistance, as would seeking out funders and supporters that share the same future vision. How the new Dundee Island Park construction will affect the community, waterfront appreciation, and interaction is still unknown, as is the change in the old and new visitors, displacement status of the encampment, and continuation of stewardship activities. Based on this assessment, focus group participants have exchanged information in hopes to get together and maintain the stewardship and program-minded momentum. While the physical redesign is a crucial step in the enhancement of the parks impact, planning for ongoing programming by municipal, nonprofit, and community partners will help ensure that this resource remains a treasured asset for the community going forward.

In order to continue building upon our collective efforts to reconnect our higher need communities to their nearest waterfront, the Project team will work with relevant partners to share lessons from this study with stakeholders in other waterways in our Harbor Estuary. The Project team also seeks to share these lessons with partner urban waters locations and its vast urban waters network.

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X. Appendices

Appendix A: Direct Human Observation

DIRECT HUMAN OBSERVATION 2019 WEEKDAY EVENING WEEKEND

DIRECT HUMAN OBSERVATION	# Kids (<18)	# Adults (18-65)	# Seniors (>65)
Bicycling			
Jogging / Running			
Walking / Dog Walking			
Sports & Recreation (soccer, tennis, cricket, baseball, volleyball, football, frisbee, playground use, tag, etc.)			
Educational Group / Tour (remember primary purpose, note the activity - count each individual)			
Nature Recreation (birding, digging, building w nature, climbing, etc.)			
Fishing (fishing with pole, fishing with net or hands)			
Crabbing			
Swimming / Wading / Water play (jumping, playing, relaxing in water)			
Sunbathing / free play on shore (playing in sand, beach activities)			
Boating – with engines or sails (launching or landing boat, jetskiing, sailing)			
Boating – nonpower (launching or landing boat, kayaking, paddleboarding)			
Plant Collection / Foraging / Gathering			
Stewardship (gardening, tree care, weeding, trash removal, watering, volunteers in parks)			
Sitting / Resting / Standing / Waiting / Keeping Watch (alone, not socializing, talking on phone)			
Socializing in Place (people talking, barbecuing, party, in groups, children in free play)			
Working (parks maintenance, vendor, utility, repair, building, re-building)			

Other Activity (homeless person sleeping, musician on street, washing or fixing car, sitting in car)			
Encounter with Resident: <u>positive</u> (remember to record what they are doing)			
Encounter with Resident: <u>negative</u> (remember to record what they are doing)			
SOCIAL OBSERVATION			
# of pairs			
# of small groups (3-10)			
# of large groups (10+)			
# of dogs			

PARK:

DATE:

Appendix B: Signs of Human Use

PARKS OBSERVATION – 2019

WEEKDAY

EVENING

WEEKEND

Team Name:		Park Name:		Zone:
Date (MM/DD/YYYY):		Camera #	First Photo #:	Last Photo #:
SIGNS OF HUMAN USE			COUNT	
Informal Trails 📷 (cut-throughs, foot paths, desire lines, bike tracks)				
Encampment / Sleeping Area 📷				
Informal / Improvised Sitting Places 📷 (bench, chair, grill)				
Fire Pit 📷				
Memorial / Shrine / Sacred Symbol 📷 (colored ribbons, RIP, “in memory of,” stuffed animals)				
Damaged / Vandalized Building or Property 📷				
Substantial Dumping or Debris 📷 (NOT bagged trash or litter)				
Dangerous Debris 📷 (Glass, needles)				
Articles of clothing, shoes. 📷				
Graffiti, Art, Murals 📷 (hand written/painted messages or signs – do NOT photo small, illegible tags)				
Signage, Flyers & Stickers 📷 (community bulletin boards, institutional signs, NOT city street signs or standard parks signs)				
Garden in Park 📷				
Bird Feeder / Birdbath / Bird Box / Bat box 📷				

Appendix C: Interview Protocol

DUNDEE ISLAND OBSERVATION – 2019

WEEKDAY

EVENING

WEEKEND

Team name:	Park name:	Date:	Zone:
Approximate age: <input type="checkbox"/> 18-65 <input type="checkbox"/> >65	Gender: <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female		Time:
What are you doing in the park today?			
And why do you choose to come here?			
How often do you visit this park? <input type="checkbox"/> Daily <input type="checkbox"/> Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly <input type="checkbox"/> Occasionally <input type="checkbox"/> Rarely		When was the first time you came here? (year, or month if in the last year)	
Have you noticed any changes since then? If so, what? (i.e. usage, development, access, pollution, wildlife, etc.)			
How did you get here today? <input type="checkbox"/> Walk <input type="checkbox"/> Bike <input type="checkbox"/> Drive <input type="checkbox"/> Bus		How long did it take you to get here?	
Do you visit the Passaic River? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No →If "yes," what do you do along the waterfront? →If "no," why not?			
Would you feel safe swimming here? Eating the fish? Boating? (why or why not?)			
Where else do you like to go to be close to the water? (capture named sites & specific geography whenever possible)			
Are you involved in any groups that help take care of waterfront areas or the environment? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> No, but... <i>If necessary, prompt interviewee to think about LOCAL stewardship activities / groups</i> →If "yes," which group(s)? →If "no," why not?			

→If “no, but,” capture details: (e.g.: related profession, individual practice, home stewardship, other volunteerism)

FIELD NOTES

Appendix D: Event Survey Protocol

SURVEY FOR DUNDEE ISLAND EVENT ATTENDEES

1. How often do you visit the following? (tick the box)

	Firs t tim e	Rarel y	Monthl y	Weekl y	Dail y
Dundee Island					
Pulaski Park					

2. How did you first hear about this event? (choose all that apply)

- Radio
- TV
- Newspaper
- Flyers or Posters
- Newsletter of an organization/ group (name:)

- Family/ Friends
- School/ Work
- People from an organization/ group (name:)

- Web Site (name :)

- E-mail/ Mailing list (name it:)

- Social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter)
- Subway/ Bus ads
- Other (name it:)

- Don't remember

3. With whom did you come to this event? (choose all that apply)

- Alone
- Partner
- Family
- Friends/ Neighbors
- Colleagues/ Co-Students
- With members of organization (name:)

4. Have you participated in events with any of the following groups? (choose all that apply)

- I am a first time volunteer with the City of Passaic
- City of Passaic
- Great Swamp Watershed Association
- Local Environmental Commission / Green Team
- NY/NJ Baykeeper

- Passaic Basin Eco-Explorers
- Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission
- Rowing Club
- Trust for Public Land

5. Are you a member of any environmental or community groups?

Group Name: _____

How long? _____

6. Are any of the following a member of any of the groups that you just mentioned? (choose all that apply)

- Your partner/ spouse
- A family member
- A friend
- An acquaintance
- A colleague or co-student
- N/A

7. Do you participate in any of the following waterfront activities? (tick the appropriate box)

	Never	Occasionall y	Often
Relaxing at the water's edge			
Canoe/ Kayaking			
Power Boating			
Fishing/ Clamming			
Monitoring (water quality, wildlife)			
Restoration (tree planting, marsh grass)			

Waterfront cleanup (trash pick-up)			
Waterfront park advocacy			

- 8. Dundee Island is about to undergo a renovation. Are you interested in participating in a “Friends of” Dundee Island Park group? Yes or No**
- 9. What kind of public programs would you like to see in Dundee Island Park?**

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

- 10 Select your gender (please choose one):**
- MALE
 - FEMALE
 - OTHER
- 11. What is your age (as of your last birthday)? _____**

- 12. What is your race? (please choose all that apply):**
- African-American / Black
 - Asian-American
 - Latino / Hispanic
 - Caucasian / White
 - Native-American
 - Other (please specify): _____

- 13. What is the highest level of education you have completed? (please choose one):**
- Some High School
 - High School
 - Some University
 - University
 - Graduate or Professional School

- 14. What is your approximate annual household income? (please choose one):**
- \$0-\$4,999
 - \$5,000-\$9,999
 - \$10,000-\$14,999
 - \$15,000-\$19,999
 - \$20,000-\$29,999
 - \$30,000-\$39,999
 - \$40,000-\$49,999
 - \$50,000-\$69,999
 - \$70,000-\$89,999
 - \$90,000-\$119,999
 - \$120,000 and over
 - Prefer not to answer

15. Specify your home ZIP code: _____

16. About how many years have you lived in your current neighborhood? _____

- 17. Are you willing to participate in a follow up interview? (please choose one):**
- Yes
 - No
- If yes, please provide your contact information:**

Name: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Appendix E: Focus Group Protocol

We are a team from the Urban Waters Federal Partnership, NY/NJ Harbor Estuary Program, Pace University, and the USDA Forest Service who are doing research and programming along the Passaic River.

We are meeting today to discuss your involvement with Passaic Parks and Recreation – both Dundee Island Park in particular, as well as other parks and programs throughout the city of Passaic. You are part of this focus group because you participated in at least one prior volunteer or recreational event at Dundee Island Park this spring or summer. As a reminder, Dundee Island Park is the park closest to the river on the other side of the train tracks from Pulaski Park.

Thank for you for participating!

This focus group is confidential and what you say will not be attributed to your name. It is also voluntary and you can chose not to answer any question or to leave at any time – but we do hope you will contribute to our conversation as we hope to learn from you.

We will be recording the focus group, but will not be attributing anything you say. We will use the recording to make a transcript we will analyze to write reports and articles.

To get us started, let's go around the table and tell us your first name and some of your favorite things to do at Dundee Island Park.

Do you have any particularly memorable stories to share of your experiences with Dundee Island Park? What was the most interesting/surprising thing that you've seen or experienced at the park? These could be positive or negative – looking for stories that stand out in your mind.

(Prompts: follow up on homeless population if it comes up? Come ready to share our own reflections.)

Work has already begun at Dundee Island for a large-scale renovation to add new features and amenities to the park.

Were you aware that the park was closing? Who do you think will be most impacted by this? *(Prompts: what about the people who live in the park?)*

When it reopens, what sorts of programming at the Park would be of most interest to you?

(Prompts: educational, arts, sports, environmental – for what age groups? At what time of day or day of the week?)

What do you think of the idea of a volunteer “Friends of Dundee Island Park”? Would you be interested in being involved in such a group and what kind of activities might it engage in?

(Prompts: activities, roles, membership, events, programming – share examples of other friends of groups we know of)

For those of you who have done boating or fishing from Dundee Island Park, can you reflect on that experience- how did it affect you? How did it affect your perception of the river?

Now let's talk about the Passaic River itself and other places you might access it:

Do you have any particularly memorable stories to share of your experiences with the Passaic River more broadly? These could be positive or negative – looking for stories that stand out in your mind. *(Prompts for particular places – North Pulaski Park, Dundee Dam, Dundee Island Nature Preserve in Clifton, Great Falls in Paterson, Post Ford Park in Garfield, Main Ave Park in Wallington, Veterans Park, in Wallington, Hathaway Park in Wallington, beach; If only negative stories, prompt for positive stories and vice versa; prompt for specific activities in which they engage)*

Do you have any concerns or questions about the Passaic River? If so, what are they?

(Prompts e.g. safety, current, pollution came up in our prior interview)

On the other hand, if the Passaic River no longer existed, would you miss it? And why?

(Prompts: share personal stories – the river powered industry in these cities, Patterson – Silk City; let people know that there is life, ecology, nature along the river – Bald Eagles, Herons; difference between headwaters and the lower stretch – can access a more pristine river, not far away.)

We are also interested in ways that you care for your local community and environment.

Other than the clean-up, kayak, and fishing events where we surveyed you, have you participated in any other environmental or civic activities in the last six months? If so, please share. These do not have to be connected to Dundee Island or parks.

(E.g. could be through church, civic groups, protest, etc.; probe on how they heard, how long they've been involved, and why they do it?)

What is your personal connection to the City of Passaic? What makes you most proud about living in this community? What would you like to see change?

(Prompt/how long have you lived or worked here?)

Provide point of contact if they have questions about Dundee Island Park.