

The Newtown Creek Nature Walk was designed by environmental sculpture artist George Trakas. It was built by the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) through the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs Percent for Art Program in conjunction with the Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrade. DEP's general contractor, the joint venture team of Picone/McCullagh, constructed the Nature Walk, and 5-Star Electric was the electrical contractor. The landscape architect was Quenelle Rothschild & Partners, LLP.



The Newtown Creek Nature Walk is situated serenely between industrial and natural areas. The landscape features indigenous trees, shrubs, grasses, wildflowers and boulders that re-imagine this open space as a vibrant intersection, where multiple histories, cultural identities and geologic epochs coexist. Visitors are inspired to ponder the various eras of Newtown Creek, from its inhabitation by the Lenape people before the arrival of Europeans, to the thriving cooperage, ship-making and lumber industries of 18th and 19th century Greenpoint. The Nature Walk affords the public its first opportunity in decades to enjoy intimate views of Newtown Creek and to enjoy the local environment and history of the waterfront.



Upon leaving the Nature Walk, take a leisurely stroll to the Visitor Center at Newtown Creek. Walk to the intersection of Provost Street and Paidge Avenue. Turn left on Provost Street, walking along the perimeter fence of the Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant. Continue south about nine blocks to Greenpoint Avenue. Turn left and walk to the next traffic light. You will see the two-story orange brick Visitor Center at Newtown Creek in front of you.



Begin your virtual journey of nature's never-ending water cycle by viewing a scale model of the Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant and reading about how used water – from washing, brushing your teeth and flushing toilets, as well as from rainwater and melted snow draining into our sewer system – is treated. Enjoy the cascading water landscape, while learning about the source of New York City's great-tasting water that comes from reservoirs, some more than 100 miles north of the City, and travels by gravity through thousands of miles of aqueducts, tunnels and water mains to homes and businesses in the State. You will discover how after water is used, it is transported through sewer pipes to the Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant, or another of the City's 14 plants, where it is cleaned, then safely released to local waterways, continuing nature's endless water cycle.

The Newtown Creek Nature Walk is open to the public daily, from sunrise to sunset, weather permitting. The Visitor Center at Newtown Creek is open to the public on Fridays and Saturdays from 12:00 noon to 4:00 pm and Tuesdays and Thursdays by appointment only. For information please visit www.nyc.gov/dep, or call 311.



The New York City Department of Environmental Protection

DEP manages the City's water supply, providing more than one billion gallons of water each day to approximately nine million residents throughout New York State through a complex network of nineteen reservoirs, three controlled lakes and 7,000 miles of aqueducts, tunnels and water mains. DEP is also responsible for managing stormwater throughout the City and treating wastewater at 14 wastewater treatment plants.

The New York City Department of Cultural Affairs

Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA) supports and strengthens the City's vibrant cultural life through public funding for programs, operations and capital improvements at nonprofit cultural organizations throughout the five boroughs. Under New York City's Percent for Art Law, administered by DCLA, one percent of the budget for eligible City-funded construction projects is dedicated to commissioning permanent site-specific artwork. The Percent for Art Program brings artists into the design process, enhancing the City's civic architecture and providing venues for New Yorkers and visitors to experience art outside of traditional settings.

The Newtown Creek Monitoring Committee

The upgrade of the Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant has been monitored by a group of citizens who volunteered to be the eyes, ears, nose and voice of the community. Established in 1996, the Newtown Creek Monitoring Committee (NMC) is one of the longest-standing citizens committees in New York City and a model of public involvement in a large multi-decade project. NMC members are committed to improving the quality of life in Greenpoint by addressing the environmental impacts that have affected the neighborhood. NMC has also recommended amenities for the community and worked closely with DEP on the development of the Newtown Creek Nature Walk.

George Trakas

George Trakas is an environmental sculptor with a rich vision of history and unique sense of place. His work has been shown in galleries throughout the world, including the Guggenheim and Brooklyn Museums in New York, the Uffizi Gallery in Florence, Italy, the Miami Art Museum and many others. He has received numerous awards for his work, including two National Endowment for the Arts Fellowships, in 1979 and 1989, and a Merit Medal for Sculpture from the American Academy for Arts and Letters that honored Trakas as a "master-builder and poet-guide" with a "vision of landscape" that "is unique and profoundly original."

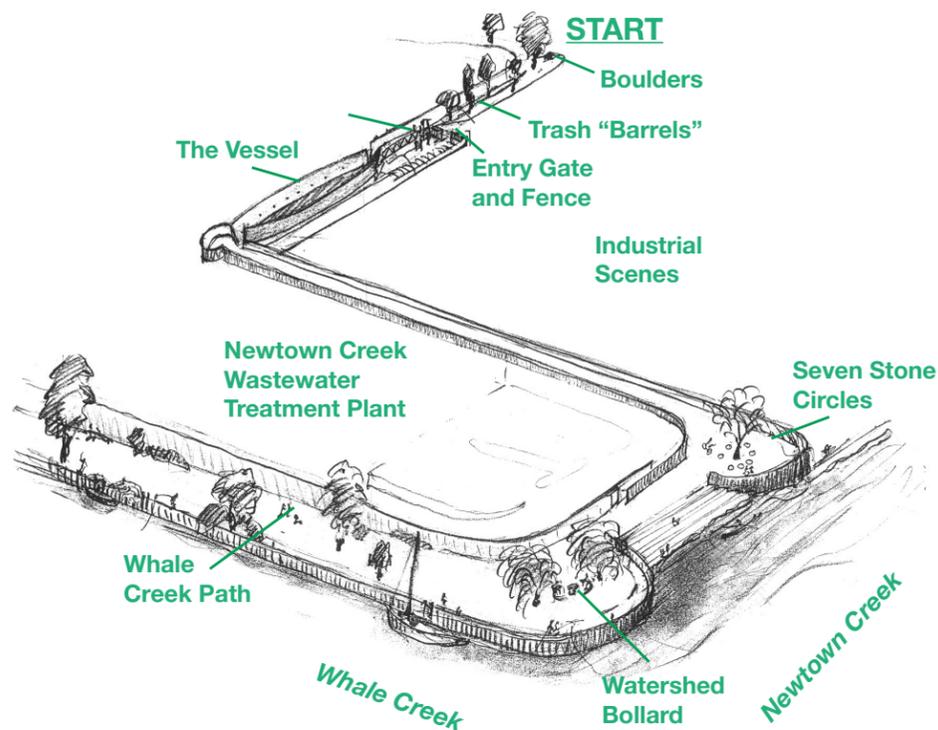
PlaNYC

By 2030 New York City is expected to grow by one million residents. Created by Mayor Bloomberg, PlaNYC is a sweeping plan that will prepare the City for the future, and for the growing population. Composed of 10 key goals, PlaNYC anticipates the City's future land, air, water, energy, and transportation issues, and serves as a model for other cities entering the 21st century. The upgrade of the Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant is an important part of PlaNYC. These improvements will better protect the waterways and more effectively serve the people of New York City.

The Newtown Creek Nature Walk

Designed to evoke the rich, continually evolving environmental, industrial and cultural histories surrounding Newtown Creek.





Boulders at Provost Street and Paidge Avenue

As you approach the Nature Walk, take a moment to examine the two large boulders at the corner of Provost Street and Paidge Avenue. The granite stone was found just a few blocks away during a street reconstruction, though it first arrived in Greenpoint during the last Ice Age. The second stone has a similar history, though it was discovered in Queens, near Whitestone. Many of the stones, trees and plants along the Nature Walk were selected by the artist to tell the story of Greenpoint's rich environmental, industrial and cultural histories.



Trash "Barrels"

Winding through plantings of Red Oaks, Locust and Sweet Gum on your way to the entry gate, you will notice barrel-shaped trash receptacles designed to represent the cooperages (barrel-making shops) that flourished in this neighborhood nearly a century ago. Please be sure to dispose of all trash in these barrels to keep the Nature Walk clean and beautiful for all to enjoy.



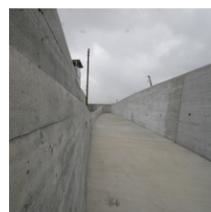
Entry Gate and Fence

The nine foot tall entry gate itself is made of stainless steel pipe and has a wave shape that mimics the movement of water. This fitting design for a riverside walk near a wastewater treatment plant plays a central role in the journey of New York City's water from source, to tap, to state-of-the-art treatment plants like Newtown Creek, and out into the City's iconic harbor and waterways.



Fragrance Garden and Bridge

As you walk through the gate, the path diverges: follow a small, fieldstone course beneath the bridge and discover an eclectically planted fragrance garden. Follow the main path over a 40-foot steel bridge to arrive at the "vessel," one of the Nature Walk's central features. The artist worked to ensure that the entire Nature Walk is handicap accessible, and crafted a beautiful ramp framed by stainless steel curved rails to facilitate use by all.



The "Vessel"

The 170-foot "vessel" has bowed walls that are orientated to perfectly mimic the way old boats were built along the shore of the East River in Greenpoint during the 19th Century. The original boats were nearly twice the size of the Nature Walk vessel and were built from lumber floated to Whale Creek from Nova Scotia and milled where portions of the Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant currently sit. Looking through the portholes of the vessel's 13-foot-high concrete walls, you can see many of the buildings and processes of the plant.



The Turret

Proceeding from the vessel to the base of the large turret, you can turn north (left) and catch your first glimpse of Newtown Creek. Turn back the way you came, and you can catch a glimpse of an equally spectacular view, the apex of the Empire State building, jutting high above Manhattan's skyline.



Industrial Scenes

Walking north, the path gradually widens, eventually emerging along Newtown Creek in what the artist has described as a "blooming lily." As you walk towards this more open area, take note of the industrial plant to your left. Used to produce asphalt even today, the plant's proximity to the Nature Walk reveals the constant intersection between industry and nature that underscores modern life in this richly historical city.



Seven Stone Circles

Where the path widens, pause to take in the spectacular panoramas all around you. The artist has arranged seven granite circles around a Honey Locust tree that, when mature, will provide the comfort of shade and rustling leaves alongside the placid waters of Newtown Creek. The artist has etched native place names on each circle, used by the early Lenape people, indigenous to the area. Each name is etched at a different angle, so you can see the place it identifies, while you read each word. The artist intended for these etchings to encourage "a meditative dance of reflection and respect for our origins."



Watershed Bollard

Centered between two Weeping Willow trees near the eastern edge of the granite steps is a large, 1400 lb. granite table in the shape of an enormous shipping bollard, the cylindrical posts used to secure ships in port. Atop the table is an etching of Newtown Creek's original watershed, before the first Europeans came to inhabit the land. The etching has a slight gradient, so falling raindrops can replicate the journey of the Creek's own, original waters, albeit on a much smaller scale. A small, brass pin on the shore indicates your position on the watershed map.



Whale Creek Path

Turning south, a long, narrow passage runs along the western border of Whale Creek. Richly planted with native trees, including Swamp White Oak, Sweet Gum, Eastern Red Cedar, Sawtooth Oak and Pitch Pine, as well as various small trees and shrubs, the path affords an interesting contrast between the tugboats, barges and industrial plants that dot Whale Creek, and the birds, aquatic fowl and fish that depend on its waters. Seven recessed seating areas at the water's edge allow for easy canoe or kayak access.



The Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant

The Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant is the largest of New York City's 14 treatment plants. The plant serves approximately one million residents in a drainage area of more than 15,000 acres (25 square miles). The plant began operation in 1967 and currently treats 18 percent of the City's wastewater at a capacity of 310 million gallons per day (mgd) during dry weather flow. Upgrade work began in 1998 and will eventually raise plant capacity to 700 mgd during wet weather flow.



Native Plants

Free-standing plaques identify indigenous plants and describe their historic industrial and medicinal uses. Selected for their unique characteristics, color, fragrance, and fruit, the plants also attract wildlife and adapt readily to a waterfront environment.