



Department of  
Environmental Conservation



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**A Partnership of Environmental Non-Profits launch  
Urban Ecology Educational Program with Long Island City Schools**

On **Thursday, September 5, 2019, at 3:30 pm**, Newtown Creek Alliance (NCA) and Hunters Point Parks Conservancy (HPPC) will be hosting a press conference at the 2nd St. Boat Launch in Hunter's Point South Park to announce the program and celebrate the new partnership. Local elected officials, representatives from the schools, NCA, and HPPC, and public arts production partner, Greenpoint Innovations (GPI), will be in attendance to share exciting developments about urban ecology educational programs forthcoming to Long Island City schools. We invite all members of the press to attend.

**Long Island City, NY** - Two Queens focused non-profit organizations, Newtown Creek Alliance (NCA) and Hunters Point Parks Conservancy (HPPC), are working together to help bring place-based urban ecology to Long Island City schools.

The curriculum is designed for elementary and middle school students to "bring the Creek into the Classroom and the Classroom out to the Creek," originally with four units: Flora & Fauna, Water Quality, Soil Quality, Watershed & Sewershed. The curriculum also has a strong emphasis on field lessons and place-based education. The Newtown Creek Urban Ecology STEM Curriculum was initially funded by the Greenpoint Community Environmental Fund. As a part of the partnership and expansion project, HPPC received funding from TF Cornerstone to work with NCA on the creation of two new units within the existing curriculum - Climate Change Adaptation and History and Geography of Newtown Creek and its surroundings.

Starting this fall, teachers at Hunter’s Point Community Middle School and PS/IS78 will be the first in Queens to integrate the Newtown Creek Urban Ecology STEM Curriculum into their classrooms. Four teachers at each school, from various grades and subjects, will play an active role in the program. The schools were chosen due to their proximity to the Creek and the teachers volunteered to be trained on the curriculum and integrate it into their school year. This expansion to these Long Island City schools has been made possible through funding from the NYC Environmental Fund and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation.

In addition, the groups partnered with Brooklyn based Greenpoint Innovations to create an environmental and historically themed public mural to be located in an accessible location in LIC. The soon to be developed public art will highlight the environmental work happening in the neighborhood and create a focal point for community engagement about the future of the waterway. Funding for this public art project is provided by the Environmental Protection Fund as administered by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation through the New York State Pollution Prevention Institute.\*

**ABOUT NEWTOWN CREEK ALLIANCE:**

Newtown Creek Alliance (NCA), a community-based organization dedicated to restoring, revealing and revitalizing Newtown Creek. Since 2002, NCA has been the voice of the waterway and has worked to bring all stakeholders of the waterway together working towards a clean, healthy and robust future. [www.newtowncreekalliance.org](http://www.newtowncreekalliance.org)

**ABOUT HUNTERS POINT PARKS CONSERVANCY:**

The Hunters Point Parks Conservancy (HPPC) is a community-based non-profit organization whose mission is to enrich the quality of life in Hunters Point, Long Island City by preserving and enhancing its parks, green spaces, and waterfront in partnership with the community. Formed in 1998 as Friends of Gantry Plaza State Park, the organization expanded its mission and scope in 2013 with the opening of Hunter’s Point South Park and has been operating as HPPC since. [www.hunterspointparks.org](http://www.hunterspointparks.org)

**ABOUT GREENPOINT INNOVATIONS:**

Greenpoint Innovations is a purpose-led Brooklyn based arts production, storytelling, and creative communications & services company for advancing awareness and understanding of local and global sustainability initiatives. Since 2016, GPI has coordinated, curated, produced events and artistic activations to provide engaging and educational opportunities for local and global stakeholders to learn about climate change and advance awareness of available solutions. Our goal is to help communities act on sustainability to make a difference. [www.gpi.nyc](http://www.gpi.nyc)

\* “Funding provided by the Environmental Protection Fund as administered by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. Any opinions, findings, and/or interpretations of data contained herein are the responsibility of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the opinions, interpretations or policy of Rochester Institute of Technology and its NYS Pollution Prevention Institute or the State.”

## RELEVANT QUOTES:

**NCA Executive Director Willis Elkins** said “We are very excited to be able to expand our educational programming and help foster the knowledge, awareness, and stewardship that will continue to drive positive change for Newtown Creek in the coming years. We are thankful to the funders and project partners for investing in our shared vision of a waterway that serves as a positive resource for those working, living and learning near the Creek.”

**HPPC President Rob Basch** said “The Conservancy is thrilled to partner with the Newtown Creek Alliance and Long Island City Schools on this important project. Part of our mission is to Educate the community about environmental concerns on the Hunters Point Waterfront and this program will help to achieve these goals.”

**Hunter’s Point Community Middle School Founding Principal Sarah Goodman** said “Hunter's Point Community Middle School has been committed to engaging students in real world learning since it opened in 2013 along the banks of the East River and the Newton Creek. We are thrilled to partner with the Newtown Creek Alliance and the Hunters Point Parks Conservancy to develop the skills and stewardship of the next generation of leaders.”

**GPI’s Founder Stephen Donofrio** said, “We’re super thrilled to be a part of this project. The youth are not just the future, they’re our future’s managers, and our natural world is one of the necessary cornerstones of that future. It’s for this reason that we are honored to be offered the responsibility of helping to prepare them for the job using the awesome power of public art. Thank you to the Newtown Creek Alliance and the Hunters Point Parks Conservancy for your partnership.”

**DEC Regional Director Steve Zahn** said, “The State Department of Environmental Conservation is committed to fostering community stewardship of New York City’s waterways, shorelines, parklands and open spaces through funding programs like the New York City Environmental Fund. Our partnership with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation helps DEC to distribute the Fund’s resources to projects like the Newtown Creek Alliance’s Newtown Creek Urban Ecology Education Expansion Project. This local environmental education and stewardship project will help strengthen community awareness and understanding of Newtown Creek and bolster activities to improve its health.”

**TF Cornerstone VP of Corporate Social Responsibility Ebony Young** said “TFC is proud to support the Hunters Point Park Conservancy, partnering in education. We are encouraged to know that students will walk away from this project with a commitment to urban ecology and an understanding of the value it brings to environmental sustainability. Thank you HPPC and NCA for making our world a better place to be.”