



A New York Sea Grant-initiated project will help more Americans with disabilities access Hudson River waterfront areas

NYSG Hudson River Estuary Project Brings Accessibility to Those with Disabilities

People with disabilities and mobility issues who nevertheless would like to enjoy New York's waterfront areas have found sites along the Hudson River not easily, if at all, accessible.

NYSG Responds

In 2013, to increase recreational access to New York's waterfront resources for people with disabilities, New York Sea Grant (NYSG) partnered with the Northeast Americans with Disabilities Act Center (NADAC) at Cornell University to develop and deliver an assessment of 18 boat launches and adjacent beach areas located along 100 miles of shoreline on both sides of the Hudson River.

The effort was sponsored by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) Hudson River Estuary Program. The program's action plan goals include providing access to the river in order to increase and sustain recreation and tourism for underserved communities. NYSG initiated the project at Cornell, contacting appropriate university expertise, and working closely with NYSDEC representatives.

Thorough accessibility compliance evaluations were conducted at 18 NYSDEC-supported sites. The December 2013 report includes specific recommendations to bring each site into compliance with the 2010 Standards for Accessible Design. For example, requests included removing a raised edge on a fishing pier entry ramp, marking handicapped parking, and lowering pier railings for wheelchair users to be able to use a fishing rod or crab trap.

Additionally, all sites were assessed from a "user's perspective." These assessments were conducted by staff and clients from Independent Living Centers (ILCs) in the mid-Hudson area.

Future Holds Improved Accessibility

Suggestions from the users' assessment and United Spinal Association evaluation recommendations were provided to site managers to help them prioritize accessibility projects for development.



An Independent Living Center Assessment Team Member enjoys the Newburgh waterfront; photo: Cornell University Northeast Americans with Disabilities Act Center

In 2014, NYSG and Cornell will provide training on estuary accessibility for a wide group of stakeholders in Hudson River communities.

Partners:

- Northeast Americans with Disabilities Act Center
- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
- New York State Department of State
- New York State Water Resources Institute
- United Spinal Association, and
- 7 mid-Hudson area Independent Living Centers

The Sea Grant Focus Area for this project is Sustainable New York Coastal Development.

New York Sea Grant is a joint program of Cornell University, the State University of New York, and NOAA.

New York Sea Grant Extension

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