

THE RIVER PROJECT

2005 Highlights

Mission

The River Project is a marine science field station founded in 1986 at Pier 26 in Tribeca, on the lower west side of Manhattan, in New York City. The River Project works to protect and restore the ecosystem of the Hudson River estuary through scientific research, hands-on environmental education, and urban habitat improvement.

Accomplishments

- The Estuarium exhibit at Pier 26 was open 184 days, attracting an estimated 5,147 **Public Visitors** during regular open hours and special events. There were 13,570 visits to The River Project's website, www.riverproject.org.
- The River Project left Pier 26 in November to make way for construction of the Tribeca portion of Hudson River Park. A grant from the New York State Environmental Protection Fund through the Hudson River Estuary Program of the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation funded **Planning** for relocation of facilities. Temporary office space was generously provided by the Tribeca Organization, and storage and field station facilities at Pier 40 by the Hudson River Park Trust. Planning continued for relocation of office and lab facilities to Pier 40.
- The **Marine Biology Internship Program** was funded by the National Science Foundation, the Helena Rubinstein Foundation, and the New York City Environmental Fund. Thirty students from nineteen schools and organizations participated. An external evaluation including assessment of seventeen intern research projects, observation of internship activities at the Pier 26 field station, and interviews with interns and staff found that the program met its goal to increase students' interest, knowledge, and skills in marine science and urban ecology.
- A total of 1,107 students and 110 teachers participated in **Marine Science Field Trips**, funded by the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation's Zoos, Botanical Gardens and Aquariums program and the NYU Community Fund.
- The fourth annual **Teachers' Open House** took place in cooperation with the NYU Wallerstein Collaborative for Urban Environmental Education and the New York City Soil and Water Conservation District.
- The 2005 season of **Summer Science Events** brought more than



Young-of-the-year striped bass



Exploring beneath the surface



Marine Biology Internship Program presentations



Preparing for a dive at the Estuarium



Blue crab

and Dr. Rodney Rountree of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. The Davidson Lab of the Stevens Institute of Technology installed a state-of-the-art water and weather monitoring system at Pier 26 (now being relocated to Pier 40) for continuous observations of tides, wave characteristics, currents, temperature, salinity, dissolved oxygen, and turbidity; and wind speed and direction, air temperature, and barometric pressure. The Stevens Urban Ocean Observatory links data from the sensor network with computer estuarine and coastal ocean forecasting models to provide 48-hour forecasts of weather and ocean conditions.

Future plans

Applications are pending to fund installation of temporary public exhibits and/or the building of a new exhibit, called City Fish, in lower Manhattan. City Fish is designed as a modular exhibit serving as a window into the underwater world of the urban waterfront, with animals residing in naturalistic aquaria integrated into the building walls viewed from the outside by passers-by.

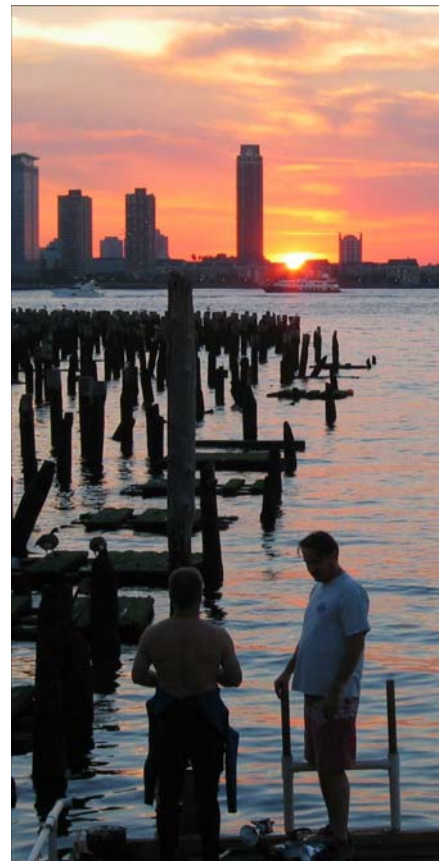
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1,400 visitors and over 100 volunteers to The River Project to learn about local marine science in an informal and festive waterfront setting. There was a range of activities to appeal to many audiences: formal lectures and discussions of scientific topics (*Li'l Stuff*), gourmet events promoting the Hudson River as a natural resource (third annual *Shad Bake*, sixth annual *Crab Crunch*), and the annual presentation of The River Project's Marine Biology Internship Program intern research projects. Events were funded in part by Con Edison and the Port Authority of NY & NJ, and co-hosted by the Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance and the Hudson River Foundation and in cooperation with the Hudson River Park Trust.

- **LIVE! From the Bottom of New York Harbor** is the hallmark event of The River Project. This pioneering, live underwater exploration is the public outreach component of the River Project's in-water research program described below. It is a multi-media, real-time broadcast event in which audience members interact with divers investigating marine nightlife on the bottom of the river. In its second year, the event was attended by approximately 500 people and was featured, with photos, in the Metro section of the *New York Times*.
- The **Discoveries from the Deep** in-water research program continued with funding from the Hudson River Estuary Program of NYS DEC and the Florence V. Burden Foundation, and in partnership with the Center for Maritime Systems at the Stevens Institute of Technology



Sunset at Pier 26

The River Project

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