

NAME OF ORGANIZATION Ironbound Community Corporation / City of Newark

PROJECT TITLE *Newark Back to the River Boat Tours & Walkshops*

DATE OF FINAL REPORT September 30, 2012

PROJECT PERIOD June 2011–September 2012

GOALS OF PROJECT

- Promote public access to the Passaic River
- Enhance stewardship of the Passaic River and its upland areas
- Build and strengthen the constituency for the sustainable and inclusive development of Newark's riverfront
- Provide environmental education on natural systems, remediation, and environmental justice

ONE-PARAGRAPH SUMMARY OF PROJECT

Newark Back to the River Boat Tours & Walkshops brought participants from all areas of Newark and surrounding municipalities into physical proximity with the Passaic riverfront, its natural systems, history of development, and current improvement initiatives. Events combined aspects of traditional tours with environmental education, storytelling, and discussion.

COURSE OF ACTION

June 2011: Project start-up & Outreach. Ironbound Community Corporation (ICC) & City of Newark designed and produced a palmcard (attached below) to advertise tours, and distributed at community meetings, government offices, local businesses, religious institutions, schools, and community centers. Tours were marketed to local groups and organizations including summer school programs, Boy and Girl Scouts, block associations, etc. City of Newark finalized contracts with Hackensack Riverkeeper and Rutgers University for provision of boats and vans. City of Newark posted tour information on www.newarkriver.wordpress.com. City of Newark issued press advisory.

June–September 2011: Tour Season 1 Twenty public River Tours and one Walkshop took place (6/19, 6/30, 7/9, 7/17, 7/23, 8/10, 9/17, 9/18, 9/24, 9/26). These events brought participants into physical proximity with the riverfront, its natural systems, its history of development, and current improvement initiatives. Events combined aspects of traditional tours with more interactive visioning activities. All tours took two hours. Boat tours launched from the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commissioners facility near Port Newark and traveled to the northern boundary of Newark. The overall message of each tour was that the river and riverfront has made much progress in recent years, but that this progress depended upon educated, organized, and engaged residents acting as stewards. Each boat tour accommodated 30 participants on two boats. Boat tours took place primarily on weekends, with morning and afternoon tours each day. A ticket price of \$5 was charged to prevent no-shows, with group discounts available.

October–November 2011: Season 1 Evaluation Tour evaluations (excerpts below) and participation demographics were compiled and analyzed to improve program design for Tour Season 2.

January–April 2012: Planning Season 2 Tour dates and outreach plan determined with project partners and contractors.

May–June 2012: Tour Season 2 Start-up ICC & City of Newark designed and produced a palmcard (attached below) to advertise tours and walkshops, and distributed at community meetings, government offices, local businesses, religious institutions, schools, and community centers. Tours were marketed to

local groups and organizations including summer school programs, Boy and Girl Scouts, block associations, etc. City of Newark finalized contracts with Hackensack Riverkeeper and Rutgers University for provision of boats and vans. City of Newark posted tour information on www.newarkriver.wordpress.com. City of Newark issued press advisory.

June-September 2012: Tour Season 2 28 public River Tours took place (6/23, 6/24, 7/7, 7/8, 7/21, 7/22, 8/18, 8/19, 8/21, 8/24, 8/25, 9/15, 9/29, 9/30). For this season, due to changed Coast Guard rules, each tour accommodated 26 passengers on two boats.

September 2012: Completion and evaluation. City of Newark contacted community-based organizations to reinforce constituency-building, collected documentation and media hits for project.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- The project brought 743 people on 28 two-hour boat tours and one walkshop examining Newark's Passaic riverfront, including participants from throughout Newark and beyond, summer camp groups, neighborhood associations.
- All passengers completed a tour evaluation, where they documented their pre-existing awareness of the river and its environmental condition and any new knowledge or perceptions gained through the tour (see excerpts below). Based on project evaluations, these tours succeeded in greatly increasing participants' awareness and knowledge of the Passaic River and its condition.
- Conducted riverfront and environmental outreach in Newark's North, Central, West, East, and South Wards and in neighboring municipalities, including distribution of boat tour palmcards, tabling at community events, meeting with community-based organizations, and door-to-door canvassing.
- Received total of 18,235 unique visitors to Newark's River website (www.newarkriver.wordpress.com) during project period.
- Received press coverage in *The Wall Street Journal*, *Newark Star-Ledger*, and numerous blogs and community newspapers.
- Coordinated design and production of 5,000-piece print run of 2011 and 2012 Newark Boat Tour palmcard.
- Upgraded Newark Boat Tour visual aids, including additional and enhanced visual aids for ecological and watershed issues.
- Trained one additional tour guide.

PROJECT EVALUATION

The overall goals of *Newark Back to the River Boat Tours & Walkshops* were to help develop and strengthen a city- and area-wide river and watershed coalition. This included the five goals below:

- (1) Expansion and strengthening of constituency invested the sustainable and inclusive development of Newark's riverfront.

The project brought 743 people into direct contact with the river and its environment, and raising the profile of the river and its surroundings through the 18,235 unique visitors to Newark's River website (www.newarkriver.wordpress.com) during project period and garnering widespread press and media coverage of the river and its environmental situation. Further, we hosted several special tours for neighborhood groups and young people geared towards their particular interests and potential advocates and stewards. Finally, we increased the Newark Riverfront email distribution list by over 350 names.

- (2) Increased support for public investment in waterfront access

Newark's first open space along the river, Essex County Riverfront Park, opening in June 2012. Throughout the second tour season, many individuals came on tours after learning about them at park events and programs, or participated in park events and programs after attending a tour. The awareness and utilization of the new riverfront park is seen as one indicator of success towards this goal.

- (3) Increased support for requirements for private property owners to provide public waterfront access.

One topic discussed during tours was public access to the riverfront and the required zoning changes to implement it at the municipal level. In June 2012, proposed new zoning for 250 acres of riverfront property, including new access standards, was unanimously recommended for approval by the Newark Central Planning Board to the Newark Municipal Council. Over 25 residents attended the hearing in favor of the zoning proposal, many of who had participated in river tours.

- (4) Increased support for public investment in environmental and green infrastructure, including both "end-of-pipe" technologies like netting chambers and source control through increased permeable surfaces.

Combined Sewer Overflow was discussed on the tours, and necessary steps to mitigate their harms. The boat contractors, Hackensack Riverkeeper, also provided up-to-date information on state-wide discussions about mitigation of combined sewer overflow.

- (5) Increased usage of the river and its environs by schools and educational programs

Tour participants included several student groups from summer camps and other programs.

Below are excerpts from individual tour evaluations:

What did you enjoy most about the tour?

- "Being on H20 and seeing city from a different angle."
- "I loved being on the Passaic River for the first time. Seeing and learning about the past, present, and future of the riverfront was great"
- "The atmosphere, temperature, sun, birds, landmarks" – Nikki Hernez, East Ward, Ironbound
- "The landmarks Newark has to offer."
- "Inspiring to realize the commitment on the part of Newark residents to once again create a desirable riverfront."
- "Diversity of information discusses, history, environmental, industry, community, natural resources" – Justin Appenzelle
- "Fresh air, smell of water - Being taken through an experience of my own backyard. Seeing familiar things in new ways. Seeing new things. Learning new things. Highlights: seeing bridges in detail. Hearing about planes for riverfront. Seeing the wildlife-baby ducks. A groundhog" – Linda Lobdell, North Ward

What are some things about the tour you think should be changed?

- "More week-day tours for next season."

- “The tour should have larger boats for next season.”
- “A map that tracks the route of the tour would be helpful”
- “Advertising. Get your voices across using community service organizations at the city of Newark. There are a lot of them. It is free to post your ad” – Albania Pichardo
- “Getting more people to come. Maybe making part of schools curriculum” – Anthony Arizmendi, North Ward
- “Nothing, it was excellent. There were knowledgeable tour guides and a great-sized group.”
- “I think the residents and employees of the city should be required to go on the tour to see the importance of the future of city” – Novella Dickens, West Ward

What were your perceptions about the river and riverfront before the tour?

- “I did not know Newark had a riverfront” – Racquel Porter
- “It’s a great opportunity to re-imagine the area and long-term plan to implement the entire riverfront.”
- “I thought the river would be more dirtier and it would be more bridges” – Janoa Watson, West Ward
- “Heavily industrial, heavily industrial, heavily industrial (which it is, was, but that’s not the whole story). –Anne Mabry, Central Ward
- “I thought I was going to see the good, the bad, and the ugly.”
- “I didn’t understand why so much of it was undeveloped.”
- “I didn’t know the river had any fish in it!”
- “I thought it was polluted and no one cared.”
- “Knew very little. Didn’t realize how much has been done.”
- “I didn’t know so many cool birds inhabited the area.”

What were your perceptions about the river after the tour?

- “A resource the city needs to bring more people to.”
- “Wow! This is a beautiful natural habitat and some great depth of space for building both commercial and residential building to flank a wonderful park / outdoor / greenspace” – Elizabeth Perry
- “It was a great tour. It was a great way to engage community.”
- “I am really looking forward towards the great things the city has planned.”
- “We need to work together to ensure River is fixed and I respect the Passaic River for all it does” – Novella Dickens, West Ward
- “I have never seen birds so big in Newark!”
- “Tour guides were informative and I learned a great deal about current river wildlife.”
- “Alive!”
- “Improving. Livable once again!”
- “Being cleaned-up and beautified!”

In the future, how do you think the river and the riverfront can best benefit the City of Newark and its residents?

- “Access, access, access!”
- “Save our Fish!!!” – Bathazar, North Ward
- “Include the river in our future, don’t let developers close it off!” – L. Thomas, East Ward
- “Water’s edge should be made more accessible to the public.”
- “Provide a friendlier environment.”
- “Let’s get our people out on the river and on the riverfront!” – East Ward
- “Wouldn’t it be wonderful to one day be able to swim in the river?” – North Ward

- “I think the riverfront redevelopment is an] opportunity to create a sense of community.”

LESSONS LEARNED - DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED

- We scheduled our 2011 walkshops too late in the season, and were forced to cancel two due to weather.
- For the 2012 season, Coast Guard regulations changed, lowering each boat’s passenger capacity from 15 to 13.
- Because of unmet demand for boat tours in 2011, in 2012 we substituted additional boat tours for walking tours.
- For 2012 season, the boat launch point at Passaic Valley Sewerage Commissioners upgraded security requirements and required signed agreements from all project partners.

PICTURES (4 TO 6 PICTURES WITH CAPTIONS AND PHOTO CREDITS)

All photos: Newark River Boat Tours 2012, photos courtesy Newark Riverfront Revival/Damon Rich



MATERIALS (PRODUCED WITH HEP FUNDING)



2012 Newark Boat tours! Paseo en barco!

This year, Newark's riverfront is undergoing a transformation. Join the movement back to the river!

You are invited to a **FUN** and **AFFORDABLE** boat tour. These tours travel 7 miles of Newark's riverfront, focusing on its dramatic past and how Newarkers are shaping its future.

Tickets are \$5 each, and must be purchased in advance. For more information, call Ms. Roberts at (973) 733-3917 or email newarkriverfront@gmail.com with the date and time of the tour you'd like.

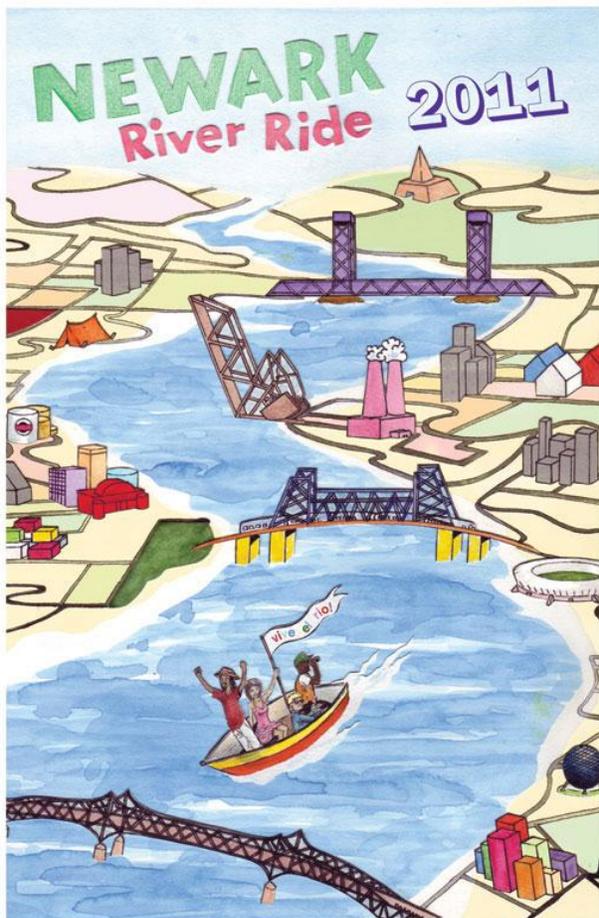
Este año, la orilla del río de Newark esta experimentando una transformación. Únete al movimiento para recobrar el acceso al río!

Le invitamos a un paseo en barco **DIVERTIDO** y **ECONÓMICO**. Esta gira navegara más de 7 millas de la orilla del río. Tendrás la oportunidad de aprender sobre el dramático pasado del río como de su futura transformación.

Los boletos tendrán un costo de \$5 y deben comprarse por adelantado. Para más información, llame a la Sra. Roberts al (973) 733-3917 o envíe un correo electrónico a newarkriverfront@gmail.com con la fecha y hora de la gira que usted desea atender.

Saturday, June 23	9 am – 12:30 pm / 11 am – 2:30 pm
Sunday, June 24	12 – 3:30 pm / 2 – 5:30 pm
Saturday, July 7	9 am – 12:30 pm / 11 am – 2:30 pm
Sunday, July 8	12 – 3:30 pm / 2–5:30 pm
Saturday, July 21	9 am – 12:30 pm* / 11 am – 2:30 pm
	*WITH COUNCILMEN AMADOR, GONZALEZ, & RAMOS
Sunday, July 22	12 – 3:30 pm / 2 – 5:30 pm
Saturday, Aug 18	11 am – 2:30 pm*
	*WITH COUNCILWOMAN CRUMP
Sunday, Aug 19	12 – 3:30 pm
Saturday, Aug 25	9 am – 12:30 pm / 11 am – 2:30 pm
Saturday, Sept 15	9 am – 12:30 pm*
	*WITH COUNCIL PRESIDENT PAYNE
Saturday, Sept 29	9 am – 12:30 pm / 11 am – 2:30 pm
Sunday, Sept 30	12 – 3:30 pm / 2 – 5:30 pm





Newark riverfront boat tours! Paseo en bote por la orilla del río!



This summer, join the movement to bring Newarkers back to their river. You are invited to a FUN and AFFORDABLE boat tour of the Passaic River. Industrial sightseeing! Natural beauty! Hear stories from the river's past and learn how Newarkers are shaping its future.

Tickets are \$5 each and must be purchased in advance. For more information, call Ms. Roberts at (973) 733-3917 or email newarkriverfront@gmail.com with the date and time of the tour you'd like.

Sunday, June 19, 2011	1 pm – 4:30 pm
Saturday, July 9, 2011	9 am – 12:30 pm / 11 am – 2:30 pm
Sunday, July 17, 2011	2 pm – 5:30 pm / 4 pm – 7:30 pm
Saturday, July 23, 2011	9 am – 12:30 pm / 11 am – 2:30 pm
Sunday, July 24, 2011	2 pm – 5:30 pm / 4 pm – 7:30 pm
Saturday, August 27, 2011	9 am – 12:30 pm / 11 am – 2:30 pm
Sunday, August 28, 2011	10 am – 1:30 pm / 12 pm – 3:30 pm
Saturday, Sept 17, 2011	9 am – 12:30 pm / 11 am – 2:30 pm
Saturday, Sept 24, 2011	10 am – 1:30 pm
Sunday, Sept 25, 2011	10 am – 1:30 pm

newarkriver.wordpress.com

