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Oak Point/McInnis Cement Marine Terminal Becomes the First Project In 2018 to Meet Gold Standard for Excellence in Waterfront Design

Setting a high bar for resilience, accessibility, and sustainability, Bronx waterfront project is the first to be certified in the new WEDG (Waterfront Edge Design Guidelines), a nationally applicable standard for excellence in waterfront design

New York, NY—The Waterfront Alliance announces that Oak Point/McInnis Cement is the first project to achieve certification in the national version of its [WEDG®](#) (Waterfront Edge Design Guidelines), released earlier this year.

Once New York City's largest illegal landfill, the 28-acre Oak Point Property, in the South Bronx, had trash piled high enough to block views of the waterfront. The new McInnis Cement Marine Terminal built on the property is now an exemplar of the Waterfront Alliance's WEDG® program's principles of resilience, ecology, and access; a place where maritime industry thrives against a backdrop of restored native wetlands and a public waterfront walkway.

An award-winning program of the [Waterfront Alliance](#), WEDG certification is the gold standard for resilient, ecologically sound, and accessible waterfront design (think *LEED for the waterfront*). WEDG is a crucial tool to cut through myriad challenges—complex ecosystems, overlapping regulatory jurisdictions, multiple stakeholders, sea level rise and coastal storms—providing clear guidance for excellent waterfront design. Used by design professionals and planners, government agencies, and community advocates alike, the [free WEDG guidelines](#) offer a common language that allows all users to work together toward the highest standards. With the release of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's recent report on the impacts of global temperatures surpassing 1.5 degrees C, including mass food shortages, wildfires, and coral reefs dying off as early as 2040— the need to mitigate climate change impacts using practical, scalable tools like WEDG has never been greater.

As a maritime and industrial property, the McInnis Marine Terminal at Oak Point sets an unprecedented high bar in its balance of commercial use, resilience, ecology, and public waterfront access. Steven Smith became involved with the site in 1998 and set up Oak Point Property LLC (OPP) which purchased the property out of bankruptcy in 2009. After a \$2.5 million investment in site remediation and wetland restoration, the project suffered a huge setback when Hurricane Sandy struck, requiring an additional \$1 million to rebuild and improve resiliency of the shoreline.



Mr. Smith persevered. Working closely with state regulators, OPP showed how flooding and storm surge affected the unique hydrodynamic conditions of the Oak Point shoreline. OPP and McInnis Cement worked with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and consultants such as Dewberry, Moffat & Nichol, Philip Habib & Associates, AKRF, Land Use Ecological Services, Pantheon Properties, the architecture firm WXY, and construction partners Geis, Weeks Marine, and AAL Construction Services LLC, headed by Smith's wife, Ana Lavdas, to overhaul and rebuild the site's resiliency measures. As part of the construction of their cement marine import and distribution terminal, McInnis demolished 100-year-old deteriorating wooden piers and built a new stone wave attenuator to reduce the impact of storm surge on the restored wetlands.

Above all, the employees of McInnis Cement and OPP are most proud of the close relationships they have established with many members of the Hunts Point, Bronx, and New York City communities. Local community partners as well as urban planning students from a Cornell University Studio have all contributed to the vision for the site. A good neighbor, McInnis encourages the hiring of local residents. And in an area with some of the nation's highest asthma rates, air quality is already improving, as cement delivery via water reduces truck traffic through the neighborhood by an estimated two million miles per year.

"As our waterfronts face increasing pressure due to sea level rise and coastal storms and a need to balance multiple needs, Oak Point/McInnis Cement, through its design and WEDG certification, is at the forefront of designing for the future," said Roland Lewis, President and CEO of the Waterfront Alliance.

"The Bronx River exemplified what this city was founded on: commerce and waterfront accessibility," said Rubén Díaz Jr., Bronx Borough President. "Somewhere along the way we lost that. But today we have ferry service. The Bronx River has herring and two beavers. It was Steve Smith who understood, like very few waterfront property owners, the value not only in terms of cleaning our river up, but also allowing the community to have access to our waterfronts."

"We are proud to provide cement for the New York City area and helping to grow the local economy in the Bronx by providing quality, maritime industrial jobs to local residents and improving the waterfront for the community. We recognize that the industrial impacts of trucking and emissions have harmed the South Bronx for too long, which is why we aim to make McInnis not only a new industrial distribution facility but an asset for the community," said Jean Moreau, Chief Financial Officer, McInnis Cement Inc.

"I'm thrilled that Oak Point is WEDG Certified. The WEDG guidelines have played a pivotal role in helping the Oak Point team design and implement the restoration of a 100-year-old port into a beautiful, accessible, and resilient working waterfront. I greatly appreciate the help and friendships I have forged with the Waterfront Alliance and local community groups over the years," said Steven Smith, President of Oak Point Property LLC.

"Oak Point has truly been a collaborative effort. When I decided to switch careers and begin my own construction company, there was no better place to jump in than the Oak Point shoreline and adjacent properties. We have taken on many challenges and work hard to push the construction industry towards resiliency projects that play a vital role in keeping our waterfront communities safe," said Ana Lavdas, President of AAL Construction Services, a WBE-certified civil site construction company.

"Having worked with Community Board 2, Oak Point and McInnis, students from Cornell University, and other community leaders to provide feedback on the design of this project using WEDG, I am excited to see waterfront access restored for Hunts Point. It's a good step in the right direction to bring our



community better access to the waterfront and make us more resilient to climate change,” said Ralph Acevedo District Manager of Community Board 2.

“The redevelopment of the Oak Point property proves that industrial shorelines don’t need to be in conflict with the enhancement of the ecology of the waterfront or public access. Kudos to Steve Smith and his colleagues on achieving WEDG certification, and demonstrating that a site’s shoreline can accomplish many goals with good planning and design,” said Michael Marrella, Director of Waterfront and Open Space Planning, New York City Department of City Planning.

“The opening of McInnis Cement at Oak Point is a source of pride for my District and the Bronx and shows what is possible in terms of thoughtful waterfront development. This industrial project envisioned economic development, job creation, and climate change resiliency, while giving local residents the opportunity to enjoy a waterfront walkway. We need to keep thinking about all these important elements as we undertake future waterfront projects in this community,” said Council Member Rafael Salamanca.

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The Waterfront Alliance works to protect, transform, and revitalize our harbor and waterfront.