In 2021, the Waterfront Alliance continued its groundbreaking work to shape a resilient and equitable future for the region. Our work put into place critical laws and policy; we engaged in creative outreach to the public; we acted to protect people and property. Here’s how a remarkable year unfolded at the Waterfront Alliance.

Read further to see our impact.

“"It’s important that we protect the waterfront, not only for safety and resilience but for economic development and to improve quality of life for people.””

Natalie Snider
Associate Vice President, Climate Resilient Coasts and Watersheds
Environmental Defense Fund
COMPREHENSIVE NEW POLICY

Rise to Resilience, a campaign and coalition spearheaded by the Waterfront Alliance, expands to 100+ members.

Rise to Resilience advocacy results.

✓ In Washington, the federal budget includes a $1,450,000 commitment to restart the New York New Jersey Harbor and Tributaries Study. Advocating, especially for environmental justice and at-risk neighborhoods, Rise to Resilience submitted extensive comments to FEMA as the agency develops a strategic plan for climate adaptation, disaster risk reduction, and community resilience.

✓ A statewide New Jersey climate resilience plan released in October 2021 reflects Rise to Resilience input on key topics such as managed retreat, flood disclosure, and environmental conservation.

✓ In New York City, the FY22 budget includes permanent funding for the NYC Mayor’s Office of Climate Resilience. The City announces Climate Resiliency Design Guidelines making New York the first city in the country to integrate multiple climate risks into its capital program. A five-borough climate adaptation bill requires for the first time the City to conduct long-term planning cycle for assessing climate hazards and solutions at various scales, with a mandate to focus on environmental justice communities.

NEW YORK CITY ELECTIONS

We issue the Waterfront and Resilience Platform for the Next Mayor of New York City. In a highly charged political year, we survey 8 candidates for Mayor of New York City and reveal widespread agreement that the City’s 520 miles of waterfront are integral to the region’s recovery from the pandemic, adaptation to climate change, and economic vibrancy.

✓ We launch Resiliency Starts Today, a guide for the first 100 days of the next Mayor that recommends achievable measures to leverage our waterways and waterfronts for New York City’s well-being.

✓ We produce a three-day virtual Waterfront Conference, with 14 panels, 40+ speakers, 90+ sponsors, and over 530 attendees. The Conference culminates in a Mayoral Candidates Forum.
Using case studies of innovative waterfront projects to bring WEDG® (Waterfront Edge Design Guidelines) to life, we offer the third WEDG Professionals course. The 2021 cohort brings the total number of WEDG Associates to 300+ professionals from around the country.

North Waterfront Park—a longtime industrial waterfront site restored to accessible, native riparian landscape in Wilmington, North Carolina—becomes the 10th WEDG Verified project, and is the first project outside the metropolitan region to achieve verification in the nationally applicable version of WEDG.


“What the Waterfront Alliance is doing that no one else in the City is doing is connecting the community organizations at the neighborhood level and the policy makers and decision makers at the top level and creating a communication across all those scales.”

Yadiel Rivera-Diaz
Partner & Landscape Architect
Marvel Architects
COMMUNICATIONS AND ADVOCACY

✓ Working with 100+ stakeholders, we release Maritime Economy, Public Access, and Resilience: A Feasibility Study of Staten Island’s Northeast Shore; the report recommends maritime activation and resiliency adaptation, in keeping with the community’s wishes, for an under-used stretch of waterfront.

✓ We publish six op-eds and are quoted in scores of news and feature stories in print, on air, and online. Topics range from immediate resilience measures to environmental justice, from reducing truck traffic to increase waterfront access.

✓ We launch the Maritime Digest, a bi-weekly newsletter with a focus on New York Harbor, green economic development, and national trends in port development.

The Architects Newspaper
“The Once and Future Harbor: The growth of offshore wind energy could remake the Port of New York” in October 2021

“In 2015, the Waterfront Alliance launched the inaugural iteration of the Waterfront Edge Design Guidelines (WEDG), a voluntary rating system and set of guidelines similar to LEED certification for projects located on the waterfront. ‘The idea is to change the way that designers and developers are looking at waterfront projects,’ Imas said, ‘but also to encourage the city and the state to look at the permitting processes through a lens that can drive more innovation, ecology, and resilience for the waterfronts that we need today.’"

See our website for the full list of press hits.

OUR TOP OP-EDs

City Limits
Opinion: Let’s Transform NYC’s Waterfront Street-Ends for Equitable Water Access

Crain’s
The next mayor must act swiftly for climate resilience and justice

NY Daily News
Nine years after Sandy, rush to resiliency: Climate change is here and NYC is under threat
EVENTS

300+ people attend the Heroes of the Harbor gala on October 12 at the World Trade Center, where we honor former New York Governor David A. Paterson, Port Authority Chief of Capital Projects Steven Plate, and the Royal Norwegian Consulate for their transformation work at our waterfronts and waterways.

The 14th annual City of Water Day is organized on July 10 with the New York–New Jersey Harbor & Estuary Program (HEP) and 45+ organizations throughout the region to raise awareness about climate change and sea level rise.

For the second year, Art at the BlueLine illuminates our understanding of climate risk with unique art installations and performances in Lower Manhattan’s Seaport throughout the month of July.

EDUCATION

Estuary Explorers, our waterfront lab and classroom-based toolkit for students reaches more than 1,000 students in all five boroughs and New Jersey through virtual classes during Covid-19, and 25 educators from environmental justice communities participate in our multi-day professional development program.

400+ people participate in-person in community climate events and camps across New York City.

“I can’t even imagine the New York New Jersey waterfront not having the Waterfront Alliance advocate for them. They’re the biggest advocates and without them we would be lost. Since I’ve been working with the Waterfront Alliance, I think we’ve made a lot of progress on the waterfront – it’s actually changing – and the values of the people are front and center.”

Pamela Pettyjohn
President
Coney Island Beautification Project
FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT
Audited for the year ending December 31, 2020

**Total Expenses**
- Program Services: $1,160,594
- Fundraising: $225,907
- Management & General: $198,565
- Total Expenses: $1,585,066

**Support & Revenue**
- Contributions and Grants: $1,034,726
- Special Events (net of direct expenses): $282,859
- Conference Fees & Other Revenue: $46,953
- Total Support & Revenue: $1,364,538
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We extend our deepest gratitude to our donors, without which our work would not be possible. The following represents donors to the Waterfront Alliance from January 2020–October 2021.

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Wildlife Conservation Society’s New York Aquarium

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“I think if the Waterfront Alliance didn’t exist, we wouldn’t have the same kind of focus on our waterfront that it really deserves and warrants.”

Julie Tighe
President
New York League of Conservation Voters
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