











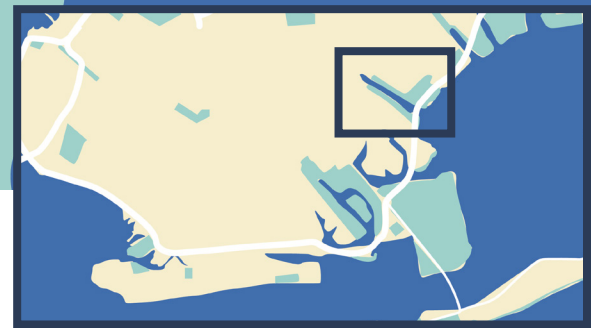
## LEGEND

-  Sebago Canoe Club
-  Row New York
-  DEP Retention Facility
-  Combine Sewage Overflow
-  Fishing Spots
-  Bike Path
-  Oyster Restoration Site
-  Brooklyn Community Board 18
-  NYC Department of Transportation
-  Salt Marsh

A site guide by the Billion Oyster Project in partnership with the NYS DEC.



# PUBLIC ACCESS PAERDEGAT BASIN



## HISTORY OF PAERDEGAT BASIN

Four hundred years ago, when the first European colonists arrived, Paerdegat (Dutch for “horse gate”) Basin was the mouth of a shallow, meandering creek whose headstreams were the source of freshwater runoff onto the tidal flats of Jamaica Bay. As such, it was undoubtedly a productive hunting, fishing and gathering site for the original Native American inhabitants, the Canarsies. In the 18th and 19th centuries, the surrounding area was transformed from undeveloped coastline to farms and villages. Uplands were leveled, wetlands were filled, and a progressively more urban landscape developed.

The dredging of Paerdegat Basin began in 1912, part of a failed plan to transform Jamaica Bay into an alternative port to New York Harbor. After the Second World War, as a new wave of residential development encroached upon Jamaica Bay, storm sewers were constructed to convey street runoff directly into Paerdegat Basin. Without the mediating influence of surrounding

wetlands, water quality in the basin declined. And while the land around the basin remains in public hands, only about 20 percent of its shoreline affords visual or direct access for the general public—the rest is controlled by city agencies or leased to private interests.

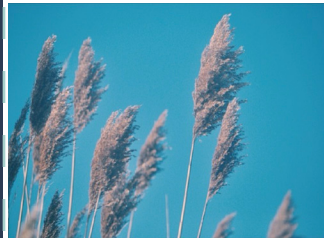
## PUBLIC BOATING

Paerdegat Basin is home to a half dozen yacht clubs and boating organizations, all of whom lease land from the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation. Two of those groups, the Sebago Canoe Club and Row New York, host free paddling and rowing events that are open to neighborhood youth and the general public on a regular basis during the summer months. Membership in both organizations is reasonably priced and open to all.

For more information, write:  
[contact@sebagocanooclub.org](mailto:contact@sebagocanooclub.org)  
[info@rownewyork.org](mailto:info@rownewyork.org)

## ECOLOGY PARK

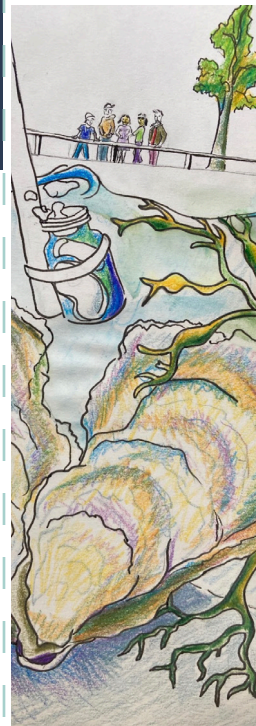
Up until the 1940s, when the Belt Parkway was built, the land around Paerdegat basin was home to Brooklyn’s last maritime forest. Since then phragmites (a non-native reed) have taken over most of the vacant land around the head of the basin, which is controlled by city agencies and not open to the public. However the boardwalk pathways of the Ecology Park, midway along the western edge of the Basin, offer a glimpse of shoreline plant communities.



Phragmites  
*Phragmites australis* subsp. *australis*



Open by appointment.  
Contact Floyd Jarvis:  
[Floyd.Jarvis@parks.nyc.gov](mailto:Floyd.Jarvis@parks.nyc.gov)



## CSO RETENTION FACILITY

When it rains, the city’s sewage treatment system is unable to handle the mix of sanitary waste and stormwater runoff, and large volumes of ‘combined sewage’ are discharged into the Basin. In 2011, the city opened a \$400 million retention facility at the head of the basin, and since then sewer overflows (CSOs) have decreased by an estimated 70%. Nevertheless, citizen testing continues to show high levels of contamination in wet weather.

Visit [www.nycwatertrail.org/water\\_quality.html](http://www.nycwatertrail.org/water_quality.html) for more information on water quality in Paerdegat Basin.

## CANARSIE PARK AND MCGUIRE FIELDS

On the northeast shore of the Basin, near the point where it meets Jamaica Bay, is Canarsie Park, a 132-acre expanse that includes wetlands and forested areas along with ballfields, playgrounds, and a skate park. It’s a popular destination for fisherman and others looking to enjoy the waterfront or connect with nature. A bike path passing under the Belt Parkway Bridge connects the park to the 19-mile Jamaica Bay Greenway bike path.

On the opposite, southeastern shore of the Basin are the playing fields of Joseph Thomas McGuire Park. As in Canarsie Park, fisherman and beachcombers can access the shoreline under the bridge and around the corner on Jamaica Bay proper.



Department of  
Environmental  
Conservation

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The Billion Oyster Project wishes to thank its partners at Paerdegat Basin:

- *Public Agenda- Cycles of Resilience*
- *NYC Department of Parks and Recreation*
- *Canarsie Community Development Incorporated*
- *Fresh Creek Civic Association*
- *Millenium Development*
- *Brooklyn College*
- *Science and Resilience Institute at Jamaica Bay*
- *Sebago Canoe Club*