

Dobbs Ferry Waterfront From Beneath the River

by Diver-Z

Diver Z was inspecting the bottom prior to construction of this pier, part of the new Waterfront Park in Dobbs Ferry, NY

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One piling hammered down in to the Hudson River bed! Great success and a new beginning is here for Dobbs Ferry Waterfront Park.

And here I am, thinking about dead end road, I'm steering in to the light and watching the sediment particles flying over the bright column of my dive torch, in pitch black water. They look like needles. Which way are they going??? What direction is the current rushing to??? Im struggling to figure out direction how I got here in to this spot and most importantly how to get out!

I'm on the bottom of the Hudson River.

This is how it all begins: (before any pilings could go down in to the river bed)

Climbing the rocky shore of the Hudson River over the boulders with the full heavy dive gear and swimming in to the unknown rubble field down below the waters. Fighting the current, little more...and here

I go, swept down right under where the massive Hudson was finding its way through the humongous concrete slabs laying beneath the water. All this gave way and laid down the path for new docks - a part of the beautiful Waterfront Park. This bottom time provided the answers to where to set the first piles for the waterfront boat docks.

The River looks so peaceful from above but below the water it's a different story - dark, murky, full of shifting slabs of concrete and with a powerful current constantly pushing you where you don't want to be!

This is the beginning of the new Dobbs Ferry Waterfront Park and it's docks.

It was around lunch time when I started to crawl down on the river rocks and boulders toward to the mighty Hudson.

Closer and closer with all my dive gear and life-line end clipped on me and the other end entrusted to the pair of hands on the shore. In the water now, current is ripping, I'm still standing on the rocks and slowly going deeper.

Mission: to find the edge of the submerged debris. I was told that there was a walk way promenade over the water and it's all demolished now and laying on the bottom.

"OK locate the edge of the debris field so we know where to drive the pilings for the docks."

I'm almost deep enough to swim, now here I go - swimming on a life line like a dog on the leash (first one today in the park I assume) keeping direction as being told (yelled from the shore - "left - right, little further...") and descending now at the estimated location. I'm a few feet down, about 8 feet and all I see is dull orange light above. Descending, bumping into some pile of rocks or concrete, with my body right in front

of the ledges and with my hands trying to get a feel for the edge. As I'm going down I'm forced by a current against the slabs and I feel a light wobble in them as massive pieces are trying to resist the giant river just like a big sail catches all the wind.

Descending, crawling down pushing myself away from the slabs I'm positively identifying the edge of the rubble. I think that my fins just touched down, and feel no debris against me from about waist down, nice and clear -I like that! My small relief is replaced with a quick tumble as the current took over. Now I'm under the debris pile in someplace like a cave, where the water found its way through the rubble and took me with it on its journey. I'm stuck here now. I'm on all fours, kneeling down, holding onto my life line as a guide to the surface. One slow pull, another one long pull and I feel no tension on my life line, it's not connected to the shore! I switch off the lights for a moment, just to calm down,... it is pitch black here and I have no idea which way to go to get out. Is that the way out or will it bring me more in, and under? How far did I get in, and

under all that rubble, is that little "man cave" solid? Will it collapse? Does it fork out to a bigger maze? Lots of questions. I stabilize myself and I'm slowly putting my hands up, but not far there is solid ceiling. My man's cave is about 5 ft. high. Decision time- do I just crawl backward out?? Sounds like a good idea, but what if there is a fork junction and I pick the wrong one, which way did I get in? Same dilemma. I turn on the lights and with hands up I feel the wobbling slabs overhead, carefully assessing the surroundings without getting my fingers pinched in by moving slabs. I look at the light for moment, and see the rushing parties on the collaborative journey with mighty Hudson current. My answer just arrived!

I know now which way is the way out!!! Backing up, backing up, on my fours right directly against the current! It feels that I covered enough distance

watching the light and directions of those particles as Im going directly against the current. Im proud of myself, it looks just like a compass-Home made one! Now I have a sense of direction!!!

I'm trying to stand up and feel for ceiling... nothing yet, still nothing, that is good news, my hands get higher, I feel nothing above me, and my mind is getting bright despite the pitch black of surrounding unknown. Slowly rising up, and now my body is against the concrete rubbish, once more securely pushed against it, and my hopes are on the rise. I see the orange light right above me! Im about 8 feet below the water. Coming up!!! Great feeling. I just broke the surface and few hundred feet of the life line is floating on the surface. Little did I know that my venture marked the spot where the first pile went in.

It was one of those regular calls, to see what is under the water. Next few times of surveying I found myself breaking some obstacles under water with a jackhammer and whoa!... there is a place for next and next and next piling. Today all the docks are here and place is nothing but peaceful. I like it that way! This place has one more special meaning for me forever. Watching people enjoying their spare time in peace whether by boat or on foot, there is nothing to go wrong now, all there is...is to enjoy!

I'm always thankful for any new opportunity and challenges it brings with it to be overcome.

