

BEYOND MEMORIALS: MEMORY and PLACE

in COTTAGE GARDENS YONKERS, NY

BACKGROUND

Faculty and students from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies (FES), in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service Living Memorial Program, Groundwork Yonkers, and Columbia University conducted a special seminar to explore how nature can help humans recover from chronic and acute traumatic events. The students' efforts of the FES seminar were directed to engage residents of Cottage Place Gardens, (a subsidized housing complex in La Martine Heights, Yonkers, NY). The work represented on this poster is a result of the concerted efforts of ten Yale students from Professor William Burch's seminar "Global to Local Pattern and Process in Urban Ecosystems."

For the first time in history, cities will be the primary habitat for the majority of people in the 21st century. In the words of Professor Burch, "the greatest challenge to the future ecologists will be finding a sustained human-environment-human balance in urban ecosystems. That is, reduced consumption and new means of equitable sustained livelihoods in cities will be critical if we are to persist as a species."

In ecology, we understand ecosystems based on how they respond to major perturbations. "The world stopped between 8:46 and 10:29 AM on September 11, 2001" said Brian McGrath of Columbia University. Yet, a fragmented and disintegrating urban ecosystem, plagued by the chronic ills of unemployment, stark social and health disparities and crime is unlikely to sustain biodiversity, clean air and water. Our work in Cottage Place Gardens was guided by the search for nature-based strategies. Dr. Burch's students investigated how to alleviate the chronic social and environmental fatigue in southwest Yonkers through the development of nature programs. The Living Memorials Project serves as a powerful catalyst to provide material and symbolic response to both kinds of victims: these of urban miasma and of the 9/11 tragedy.

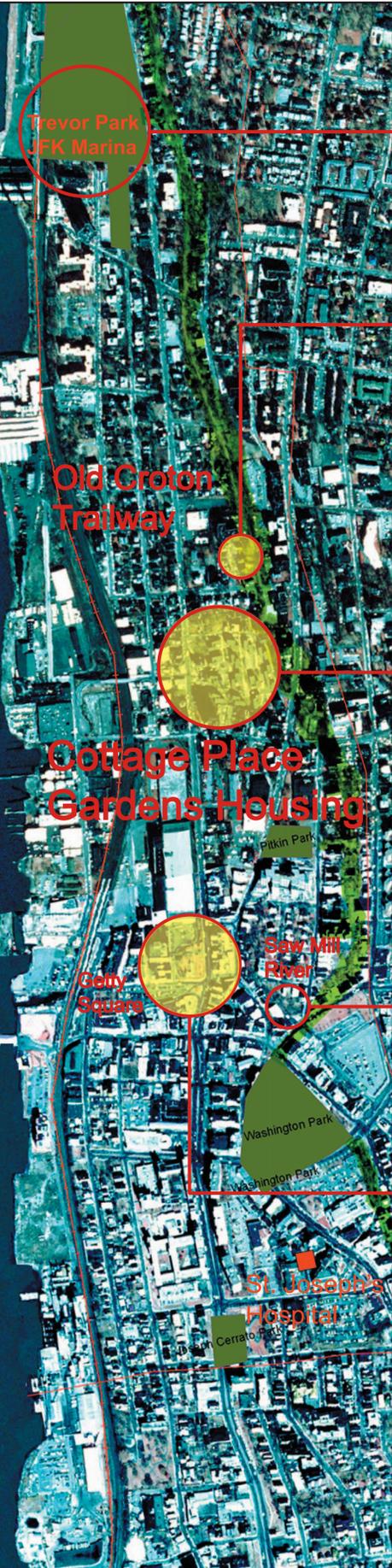
PARTICIPANTS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We thank the residents of Cottage Place Gardens who gave us their patience, time and energy.

Instructors:
 Dr. William H. Burch, Yale
 Colleen Murphy Dunning, New Haven Urban Resources Initiative
 Erika Svendsen, Lindsay Campbell US Forest Service/Living Memorials
 Brian McGrath, Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, Columbia University
 Rick Magder and Ann Megaro Groundwork/Yonkers

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Poster design: P. Amstislavski



JFK Marina



Trevor Park



Trash along the Trailway



Old Croton Trailway



Cottage Place



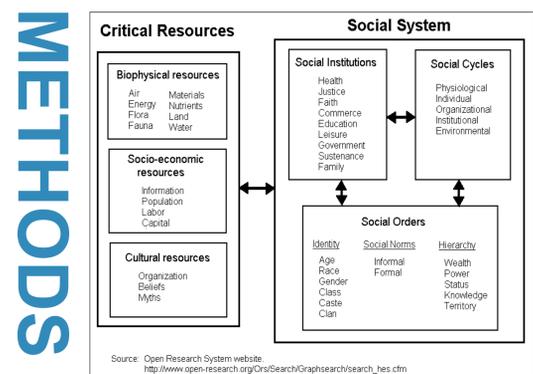
FEAR

UNEMPLOYMENT

ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION



Human ecosystems framework



METHODS

Key Informant Interviews

- City of Yonkers Planning and Development staff
- Westchester Dept. of Public Health staff
- non-govt. organizations (Groundwork/Yonkers, Greyston Foundation)
- community organizations (Friends of the Old Croton Aqueduct)
- church groups

Landscape Documentation

- informant-led photography
- participatory landscape mapping-Cottage residents
- informal interviews (cottage residents)
- children's drawings

Needs assessment

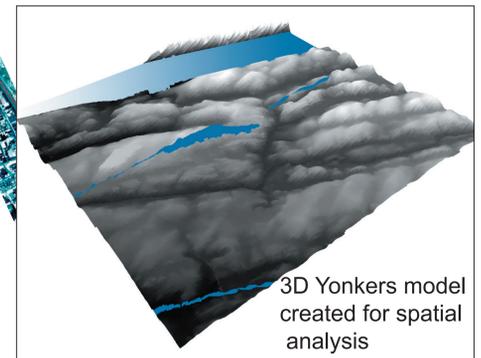
- field surveys
- workshop sessions with Cottage Place residents
- cardiovascular disease focused interviews

Spatial analysis and 3D modeling

- ArcGIS
- CrimeStat

Secondary sources

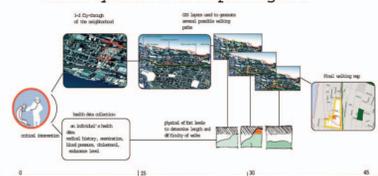
- spatial sources--GIS datasets
- socio-economic--Census 2000
- internet searches



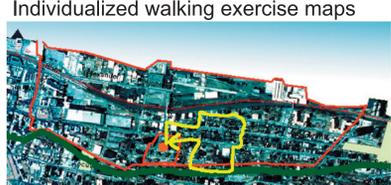
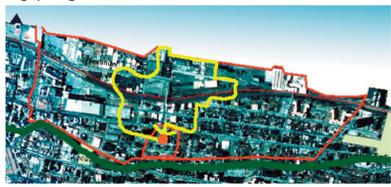
3D Yonkers model created for spatial analysis

RECOMMENDATIONS

community cardiac health planning tool



WalkingRX, a GIS-based mapping tool will help residents and their health providers design individualized walking programs



HEALTH SECURITY

Skills matching: pair residents' skills with gaps in services

- child care
- home care to elder and disabled residents
- hair care



Cardiovascular disease (CVD) prevention

- Pilot **WalkingRX**: a community-based health planner to promote and maintain exercise-walking programs for obesity and CVD prevention
- engage local Health officials in this pilot study to demonstrate that improved access to open space results in improved health

Yonkers landscape-focused education for youth and adults

- publish *Layers of Time*-textbook that provides teachers/mentors with techniques to facilitate historical and spatial analysis of the post-industrial Yonkers
- promote adult volunteer programs
- initiate school programs that focus on the local environment (Outdoor Classroom)

Integrate Old Croton Trail and Riverfront with Community

- promote community interest groups (gardening, fishing, wildlife watching)
- promote environmental education
- vocational training: jobs for youth
- connect residents to the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program
- promote culturally-driven social activities (African-American and Latino festivals)

JOBS

EDUCATION