

New York City

The New York / New Jersey metropolitan region is home to several projects with many partnering organizations, community groups, and individuals. The image above shows a Union Square aerial mapping event with The New School's urban program.

The Public Lab NYC community's mapping efforts are featured [in Google Maps](#).

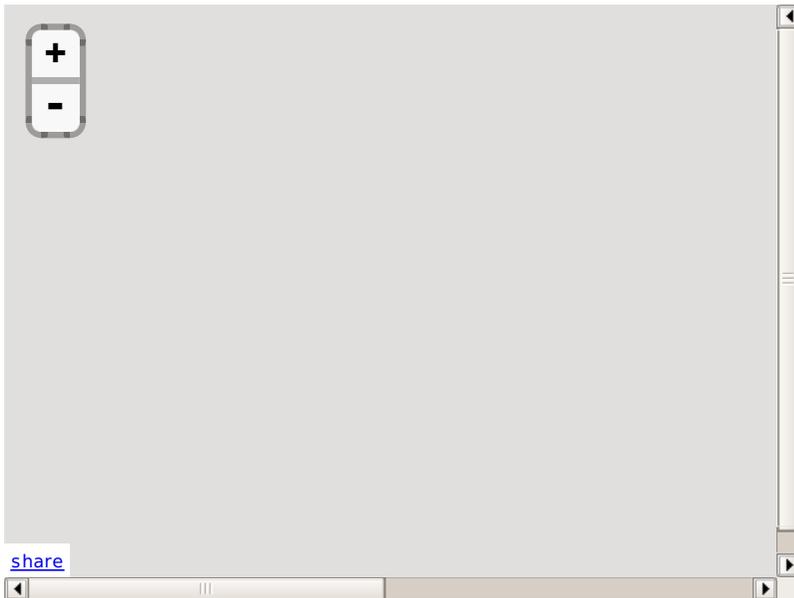
(Above: a plume [discovered with near-infrared balloon photography in the Gowanus Canal](#) in 2011 by PLOTS mappers and the GCC)

Gowanus Canal Investigations

The [Gowanus Canal Conservancy](#) is conducting environmental investigations in the Gowanus Canal sub-watershed by using [balloons](#) and [kites](#) to capture aerial imagery. The Gowanus Low-Altitude Mapping (GLAM) project aims to document the changing urban landscape of the watershed. With this information, we hope to identify more areas to expand green space, in addition to position ourselves as a community watchdog during the Superfund cleanup. We have completed a four-part set of seasonal imagery from 2011, which is hosted in our [archive](#). Sometimes we



use a [stereo camera rig](#) to collect [infrared imagery](#) in addition to visible imagery. The data documents patterns/concentrations of vegetation or possible contaminants, monitors the stormwater retention design interventions that the GCC is installing along the canal edge, and reveals unknown or unidentified pipes or sources of groundwater entering the canal. In the long-term, this inquiry effort seeks to address the 300M gallons of untreated sewage that will continue entering the canal yearly even after the EPA finishes their Superfund clean-up of the toxic sediments at the bottom of the canal. See our [Flickr gallery](#) for our collection of aerial imagery.



[Thermal imaging](#) is a newly developed approach to identify where warmer ground water is entering the cool waters of the canal. A [thermal fishing bob](#) can be towed through the water by a canoe. The temperature is displayed on a RGB LED. Data is collected by a timelapse camera set up on shore.

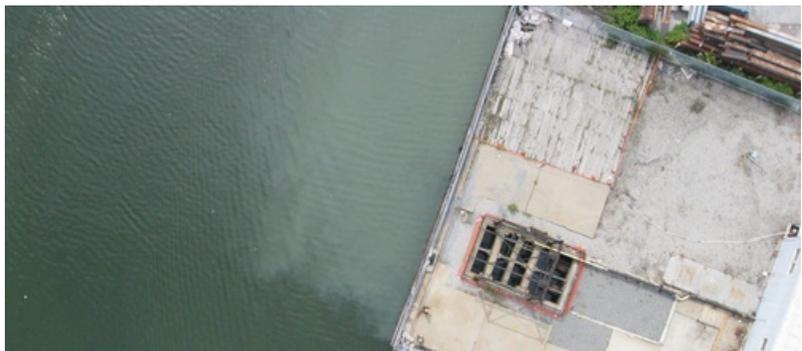
Newtown Creek

Just starting up is a Newtown Creek monitoring project, where the first set of [imagery](#) was collected from the Riverkeeper boat during a shoreline infrastructure assessment in summer 2011. (In progress [map](#)). [Newtown Creek](#) is another EPA Superfund site within the five boroughs of NYC.

(Above: A plume of unidentified material in Newtown Creek, [photographed with a balloon mapping kit](#) by PLOTS mappers and Riverkeeper in 2011)

Cypress Hills

The EPA has granted the Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation \$25,000 to train local students as citizen scientists. Program participants will spend 24 weeks working with



air quality sensors to monitor indoor air pollutants in Cypress Hills and East New York. The students will catalog and analyze the environmental air pollutant hazards that affect neighborhood homes and will share their findings with other community members.



Additional Sites

Another regional project is Grassroots Newark, organized by Jen Hudon in 2011, which focused on development and community issues on both sides of the Passaic River:

<http://grassrootsnewark.wordpress.com/>.

[The New School Geo Club](#) is a newly formed student group that has been active mapping social patterns in Washington Square Park and other sites. Occupy Wall Street [events](#) and [maps](#) are related to this student group.

An October 2010 workshop was held at Union Square with [Parsons The New School for Design](#), see the [blog post on GrassrootsMapping.org](#). Jen Hudon, Lee Altman, Jenny Chou (who went on to lead aerial mapping in Beijing), and Leif Percifield joined at this time.

History

NYC supported the Gulf Coast response to the BP Oil Spill in May 2010. Current and past students of Liz Barry met up outside of class to help the Grassroots Mappers with remote logistics such as connecting volunteer mappers with available spots on boats at specific marinas from which the most vulnerable wetlands could be reached. This group included Molly Oberholtzer, Ian Pugh, and Kaushal Shrestha, and Corey Mullee, and went on to create their own balloon aerial mapping rig with CHDK camera.

The first ever Grassroots Mapping workshop was held in New York City in June 2010 at [collab](#) at the Hudson River Piers. Natalie Jeremijenko, Victoria Marshall, Liz Barry, Jeff Warren and about 6 others attended.

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