

Do-gooders defy Parks Department to clean up Seagate park



Courtesy of Steven Patzer

Coney Island cleanup: Two 22-year-old friends led a cleanup of the shoreline along Coney Island Creek Park on Sept. 8, picking up 50 garbage bags of trash.

BY ROSE ADAMS

A group of vigilante do-gooders strong armed the Parks Department into “allowing” them to clean up used syringes, glass shards, and other debris strewn along Coney Island Creek Park last Sunday, after the agency wanted to charge them a permit fee for the favor.

“You need a permit to clean the beach!” riled Gravesend resident Steven Patzer, 22, who helped spearhead the cleanup effort. “How can a beach in Brooklyn look like this?”

Patzer said he noticed the seaside park’s sorry state while strolling with pal Andrew Windsor, 22, along its sandy shores between Seagate Avenue and W. 33rd Street in August.

At first, the duo tried to get the city to pitch in, but a rep for the Parks Department told them it didn't have the resources to fund a cleanup until October.

And when the young men offered to pull together their own garbage-picking team, Parks officials said they would have to pay \$45 and leave the park to fester with syringes for 30 days while waiting for a permit authorizing the gathering of 20 people or more!

"I tried to convince them that this looks dangerous," Windsor said, citing the large number of syringes on the sand.

But the pair obstinately reached out to Deputy Public Advocate Kashif Hussain, who brow beat the Parks Department into waiving the permit for their event, although the agency still refused to provide supplies for the cleanup, and Windsor and Patzer were forced to reach into their own pockets for necessities including gloves and garbage bags.

After hanging flyers around the neighborhood encouraging locals to join them, the effort quickly gained traction, inspiring between 25 and 30 nature-loving locals to show up for the big day on Sept. 8, when volunteers spent three hours cleaning about half the beach between W. 33rd to W. 37th streets — where they discovered no less than 26 syringes, according to the 22-year-olds.

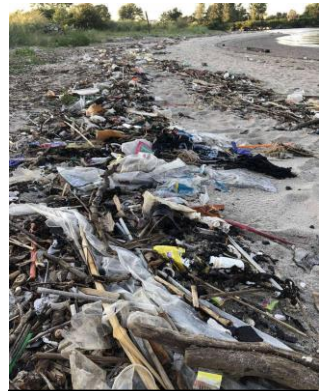
"A lot of us worked together," Patzer said. "This was a collaborative effort."

The friends are now planning a second cleanup day on Sept. 15, and have written to local pols urging them to implement a permanent clean-up plan for the filthy beach.

"Nothing permanent has been done about it," Patzer said.

A spokesman for the Parks Department claimed that agency staff already maintain the area on a regular basis, and that natural areas like Coney Island Creek Park aren't typically equipped with amenities such as garbage cans, lights, or benches.

"Coney Island Creek Park is a nature area and is maintained by staff weekly," said Dan Kastanis. "We will inspect the park for cleanliness, and address any issues accordingly."



Courtesy of Steven Patzer

Filthy: Cleanup volunteers blasted the Parks Department for failing to clean the beach in Coney Island Creek Park, where they spent three hours picking up garbage on Sept. 8.

Reach reporter Rose Adams at radams@schnepsmedia.com or by calling (718) 260-8306. Follow her on Twitter [@rose_n_adams](https://twitter.com/rose_n_adams)

Updated 11:59 am, September 10, 2019