



THE NEW YORK RESTORATION PROJECT (NYRP) carries out founder Bette Midler's dream of a cleaner, more beautiful New York. NYRP restores, develops, and revitalizes underserved parks, community gardens, and open space in New York City.

GOODdirt

NEW YORK RESTORATION PROJECT NEWSLETTER SPRING/SUMMER 2006

DEAR FRIENDS,

With all the new growth and activity that spring brings to our parks and community gardens, I think of that wonderful old saying: *Many hands make light work*. So many generous volunteers are lending us a hand this season. Their muscle and enthusiasm make it possible for NYRP to take on new restoration and greening projects, as well as maintain the sites we've already restored across the city.

Sharing the work makes it easier. But more importantly, it gives people a shared purpose and common goal. That builds a powerful sense of community. We've seen firsthand how important that is in the New York City neighborhoods where NYRP maintains 57 community gardens. This spring and summer, we're restoring three gardens in Brooklyn. Our partners in these ambitious projects include private foundations, local gardeners, schools and neighborhood groups, corporations and their employees, award-winning landscape architects, and generous contributions from NYRP members.

Volunteers are important in all aspects of our work, from jumpstarting cleanup efforts in new waterfront reclamation sites along the Harlem River to planting native species and conducting trail maintenance in northern Manhattan parks. Volunteers also help us put on park festivals throughout the year and participate in our environmental education programs and projects.

With now over a decade of work under our belts, we are seeing the beginnings of a wonderful trend: kids who participate in our environmental education programs as grade schoolers are growing into NYRP student interns in high school. Many AmeriCorps national and community service volunteers come to work for us, helping to clean and green New York, then join our staff as permanent employees. There's a vital link between volunteerism and environmental stewardship that we are proud to encourage. Thank you for being a part of this exciting work that creates a lasting legacy.

Bette Midler
Founder



LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN	2
IN THE PARKS	4
IN THE GARDENS	7
ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION	10
DISHING THE DIRT	12
VOLUNTEERS HELP NYRP GROW	B7



NEW YORK RESTORATION PROJECT
254 West 31st Street, 10th Floor
New York, NY 10001
P 212.333.2552
F 212.333.3886
www.nyrp.org

FOUNDER
BETTE MIDLER

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

BENJAMIN F. NEEDELL, Esq. *Chair*
CHARLES SUSSMAN *Secretary & Treasurer*
MARCIA DIAMOND
AMY P. GOLDMAN, PhD
ALFRED R. KAHN
KAREN J. LAUDER
ELLEN LEVINE
SARAH E. NASH
MARIA RODALE
JANN S. WENNER
HON. ADRIAN BENEPE *ex officio*

STAFF

AMY GAVARIS, *Acting Executive Director*
CATHERINE HALL, *Vice President, Administration & Operations*
SUSAN MADDEN, *Director of Development*
JO ANNE BARRY, *Controller*
BRIAN SAHD, PhD, *Vice President, Community Development*
JANE JACKSON, *Director of Programming*
PHILIP COFFIN, *Assistant Director of Programming*
JEFF WEBER, *Boat Building Educator*
JUAN ACOSTA, *Environmental Educator*
JOSÉ BAEZ, *Aquatics Educator*
TOM CAMPBELL, *Development Associate, Institutional Giving*
BREANNE SCANLON, *Development Associate, Individual Giving*
JOSIE BELLO, *Accountant/Administrative Assistant*

FIELD CREW

GREG KRAMER, *Director of Horticulture*
CHRIS DRURY, *Director of Field Operations*
JASON SHEETS, *Director, Garden Program*
EDWARDS SANTOS, *Swindler Cove Park Manager*
YACQUELINE MARTINEZ, *Park Manager*
YESSENIA SANTIAGO, *Assistant Director of Field Operations*
ALBAN THOMAS, *Chief of Construction*
ANDREW STEWART, *Construction Crew*
CHRISTOPHER VANTERPOOL, *Deputy Horticulturist*
ERIC REED, *Landscape and Forestry Supervisor*
BRUNO LAROCHE, *Chief of Repair*
HECTOR MATEO, *Parks Field Crew*
CESAR QUINTANA, *Parks Field Crew*
ELVYSS ARGUETA, *Swindler Cove Park Field Crew*
ANNE MARCARIAN, *Swindler Cove Park Field Crew*
DONTE TAYLOR, *Parks Field Crew*
JOHN WASTIUTYNSKI, *Brooklyn District Garden Manager*
WILLIAM CURTIS-BEY, *Manhattan District Garden Manager*
SASHA RODRIGUEZ, *Bronx District Garden Manager*

NEW LEAF CAFÉ

FAUSTO ESPINOSA, *General Manager, New Leaf Café*
KRISTIN FRESQUEZ, *Chef, New Leaf Café*

GOOD DIRT

JOHN EWING *Writer/Editor*
MARK MULLIN *Art Director*
CHRISTINE CIRKER *Graphic Designer*

LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN



NYRP IS BUSIER THAN EVER this spring and summer! As we develop our partnerships with city, state, and federal agencies; schools and community groups; and corporate and private foundations, we are able to take on a greater number and variety of projects. This is an exciting time for open-space development in our city and a beautiful season to explore NYRP's efforts.

In Roberto Clemente State Park and Bridge Park in the South Bronx, we are continuing to expand waterfront reclamation along the Harlem River. Grants from the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation are supporting these projects and providing materials for a series of volunteer workdays at these sites.

Across the river in Sherman Creek, our joint work with City Parks reclaiming the Upper Manhattan waterfront just north of Swindler Cove Park is advancing rapidly, thanks to volunteers from Lehman Brothers, American Express, and The Home Depot. These dedicated folks have been cleaning and preparing the site for native plantings and a pedestrian trail this spring. The restoration of this former dumping ground will reestablish a healthy, thriving nature area with waterfront access for an adjacent public school and area residents.

We are completing a bumper-crop of community garden restorations this spring and summer with the help of many generous partners. In East New York, Brooklyn, Goldman Sachs has made the restoration of the McLeod Garden a centerpiece in the 10th anniversary celebration of the company's Community TeamWorks program. In Williamsburg, Brooklyn, The Heckscher Foundation for Children is supporting the creation of a children's learning garden. This project has been prepared with the help and input of neighborhood schools and youth enrichment groups who will use the space in their programs.

Designer Ellie Cullman has led the effort to restore the Garden of Hope in yet a third Brooklyn neighborhood as a lovely tribute to her late business partner, Hedi Kravis. In the Bronx, we are currently completing restoration of the Mildred T. Rhodebeck Garden, funded by The Rhodebeck Charitable Trust. Also, designer Linda Allard is putting the finishing touches on a community garden restoration she and husband Herbert Gallen are personally supporting in East Harlem—stay tuned for an update and images. We know you'll enjoy reading about these and other NYRP projects and activities in this issue of *Good Dirt*. As always we are very grateful for your continued support.

Benjamin F. Needell, Esq.
Chairman

ON THE COVER: Corporate volunteers transform NYRP community gardens, with the help of creative designs and new plant materials. *Photos by Amy Wicker and Brian Sahd.*

GIVE WITH CONFIDENCE!
NYRP is proud to be a member of



NEW YORK RESTORATION PROJECT SITES

- PARKS
- COMMUNITY GARDENS
- MAJOR PROJECTS



- 1 FORT TRYON PARK**
NEW LEAF CAFÉ
ANNE LOFTUS PLAYGROUND
- 2 SWINDLER COVE PARK**
RILEY-LEVIN CHILDREN'S GARDEN
PETER JAY SHARP BOATHOUSE
- 3 HIGHBRIDGE PARK**
- 4 FORT WASHINGTON PARK**
- 5 ROBERTO CLEMENTE STATE PARK**
- 6 BRIDGE PARK**

BETTE MIDLER FOUNDED the non-profit New York Restoration Project (NYRP) in 1995 to carry out her dream of a cleaner, more beautiful New York. NYRP reclaims, restores, and develops under-resourced parks, community gardens, and open space throughout New York City, primarily in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods. NYRP invests in the communities it serves by providing ongoing maintenance and environmental education and recreational programs.

NYRP MAJOR PROJECTS INCLUDE:

- Swindler Cove Park
- Riley-Levin Children's Garden
- Peter Jay Sharp Boathouse
- Fort Tryon Park / New Leaf Café
- Highbridge Park
- Roberto Clemente State Park
- Bridge Park
- 24 community gardens in Brooklyn
- 18 community gardens in the Bronx
- 17 community gardens in Manhattan
- 4 community gardens in Queens
- 1 community garden in Staten Island
- Environmental Education and Recreational Programs

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION TO MAJOR PARK SITES

- 1** FORT TRYON PARK & NEW LEAF CAFÉ: Take the M4 bus to the last stop (Fort Tryon Park—The Cloisters), or take the A train to Dyckman Street.
- 2** SWINDLER COVE & HIGHBRIDGE PARKS: take the 1 train to Dyckman Street, turn right on Dyckman and walk 1/5 mile to the intersection of 10th Avenue and the Harlem River Drive. Continue south on the Harlem River Drive—Swindler Cove Park is on your left and lower Highbridge Park is on your right. For upper Highbridge Park, take the M101 bus along St. Nicholas Avenue and exit around 189th Street.
- 4** FORT WASHINGTON PARK: Take the 1, 9, or C train to 168th Street or the M4 bus to 165th Street; walk west on 165th to the park.
- 5** ROBERTO CLEMENTE STATE PARK AND BRIDGE PARK: In the Bronx, take the Bx40 or Bx42 bus.

Go to www.mta.info for subway and bus maps.

IN THE PARKS: NYRP PARKS FIELD CREW



NYRP Field Crew and new AmeriCorps members get acquainted at the Fresh Air Fund's Sharpe Reservation in Fishkill, New York, on March 28.

WHETHER THEY'RE PICKING UP trash, digging rubble out of the Harlem River shoreline, or planting native vegetation, NYRP's Parks Field Crew is the force behind restoring and maintaining our sites in northern Manhattan and the South Bronx. Combining permanent staff and AmeriCorps members, the field crew is deployed across many sites and tasks, including 3 crew members in the South Bronx, 6 at Swindler Cove Park, 3 on landscape and forestry duty, and 8 on the general parks crew. Chris Drury, NYRP's Director of Operations, oversees this year-round buzz of activity.

"Our focus has really changed in the last few years," says Drury, who, like the majority of field staff, started as an AmeriCorps member. "We used to be a bulk garbage cleaning crew. Now, because we are developing new sites every year, we have also become a site preparation crew in the fall and winter."

Wearing these different hats is hard work and keeps the crews on the move. Starting at 8 a.m., six days a week, the general parks crew performs litter patrol first thing every morning in Fort Tryon Park, and then Fort Washington and Highbridge Parks three or more days a week. Mondays are the toughest for trash—in the winter, the crew may haul away 25 bags; summer Mondays easily top 100 bags. Other regular maintenance duties in the parks include summer-

time watering, clearing leaves and other natural debris year round, painting benches and covering graffiti, and shoveling snow from bus shelters, fire hydrants, and park crosswalks.

"We do a lot of non-plant-oriented maintenance, but when we can we like to


"By the end of the summer, Sherman Creek will feature a pedestrian trail, native plantings, and beautiful views of the formerly obscured Harlem River."

take on planting and restoration projects that assist the City Parks Department—nothing is added or subtracted without their authorization," says Drury. This spring and summer, in addition to continued work restoring Bridge Park in the South Bronx, NYRP is tackling two new projects that are creating parkland out of former dumping sites. The first is the Sherman Creek cleanup and restoration just north of Swindler Cove Park, a joint project with the City of New York Department of Parks & Recreation and the Department of City Planning, and sup-

ported by a New York State Environmental Protection Fund grant. By the end of the summer, this area will feature a pedestrian trail, native plantings, and beautiful views of the formerly obscured Harlem River.

"Like Bridge Park before we began restoring it, this area contains virtually no native plant material and a thick layer of dumped debris and concrete—that's the "top soil!" says Drury. Unlike daily litter patrols, transforming these abandoned sites requires thought, patience, and most of all persistence. "Bringing all that rubble to the surface is hard work," says Donte Taylor, a three-year field crew veteran who began as an AmeriCorps member. "But at the end of the day, it gives you a good feeling watching these sites turn into places that people come to and enjoy."

The other large restoration project is the development of Roberto Clemente State Park north along a two-acre section of Harlem River waterfront, a joint project with the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. Once a dumping and storage area, this site was painstakingly cleaned by NYRP and State Parks crews over the fall and winter—that meant hauling away large rubble, sifting dirt for small trash and keeping natural rock, and redistributing the soil, all to prepare for grass seeding and native plantings of herbaceous shrubs along the shoreline this spring. As Cesar Quintana, another NYRP veteran who began with AmeriCorps, notes, "It's very challenging work, but it's good to be outside and get involved with the community everyday."

Field crew members Hector Mateo and Tina Pimental, both originally from the Dominican Republic, agree. Mateo served two years with AmeriCorps and has worked on staff for the last two and a half years: "It's great to meet and work with a lot of different people, and seeing the results makes a difference in everybody's life." The experience has been an eye-opener for Pimental, a first-time AmeriCorps member. "I never worked in the community or even sat in the park before—now, I know everything about it!" 

IN THE PARKS:

Look What we Found

The Virginia bluebell (*Mertensia virginica*) is a surprise new resident in Bridge Park. "They came in on their own with the park restoration," says NYRP Horticulturist Greg Kramer. "Even some of the most pristine parks do not have them." This spring ephemeral likes a rich, moist habitat with well-drained soil. Also known as Virginia cowslip, or just plain *Mertensia*, the flower has pink buds, and the blue-green foliage is dormant in summer. They can be found throughout much of the United States in wooded areas near water, such as Bridge Park. Catch them again in mid April 2007!




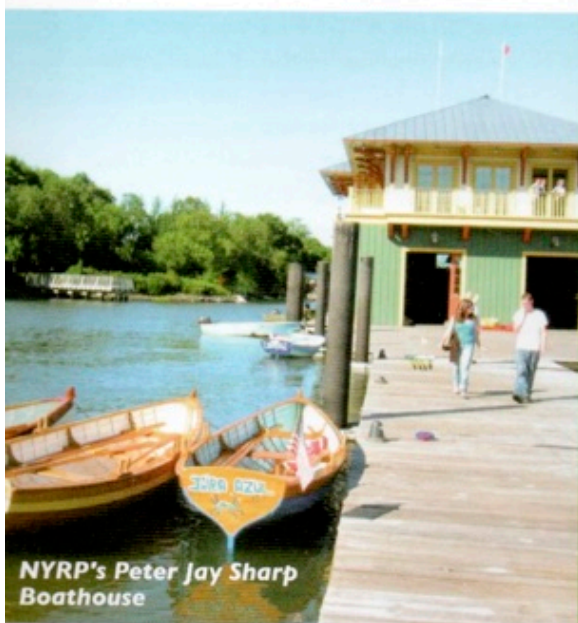
"NO WAKE" LEGISLATION FOR HARLEM RIVER

ON DECEMBER 29, 2005, New York City's Mayor Michael Bloomberg signed into law new legislation that establishes no-wake zones along the Harlem River, including near NYRP's Peter Jay Sharp Boathouse. At the signing of the new legislation, Mayor Bloomberg noted that "large wakes caused by watercraft pose a danger

to boaters, the shoreline and waterfront recreational facilities."

The new bill authorizes the Police Department and other city agencies to enforce an "idle speed" restriction on all motorized boats. The legislation also requires the posting of warning signs for boaters, distribution of education material about wake reduction, and establishes a

temporary Citywide Boater Safety and Wake Reduction Task Force, which NYRP will hopefully participate in. NYRP's Acting Executive Director Amy Gavaris led the two-year effort for the legislation; Founder Bette Midler made the case by testifying before the New York City Council in June 2005. 



NYRP's Peter Jay Sharp Boathouse

Dear Bette,

December 7, 2005

I work as a tour guide on the Circle Line Sightseeing boats and sail by many of your projects every day. It does my heart good to see what a truly magnificent job you and your group have done, especially with the Swindler Cove Park project. It used to be an embarrassment to sail by that wretched place, with the sunken boats and trash and abandoned autos. Now, it's a delight! And I inform all of my passengers of what has happened here and who is responsible for this wonderful change. Good luck to you and NYRP, and keep up the good work.

*John Mason
(NYRP member since December 2005)*

IN THE PARKS:

WE'RE IN THE MISSING PART OF THE MAP!



Photo: Benjamin Swett

Northern Manhattan on the Harlem River: The High Bridge, Highbridge Park, and Highbridge Tower.

Tourists can't be blamed for thinking Manhattan ends at 145th Street. The communities of Washington Heights and Inwood are often lopped off the top of city maps and frequently fall outside what New Yorkers think of as "their city." But we know better! As NYRP works to restore and maintain the historic and beautiful parks of northern Manhattan—Highbridge, Fort Washington, Fort Tryon, and Swindler Cove—we'd like to remind you of some of the other area attractions you can enjoy on your next visit to our neck of the woods.

Near Fort Washington Park in Washington Heights, you'll find the Audubon Terrace Historic District, located on 155th and 156th Streets between Broadway and Riverside Drive. This complex of Beaux Arts-style buildings includes the museum of the Hispanic Society of America, The American Academy of Arts and Letters, and The American Numismatic Society. Adjacent are the stunning Gothic Revival-style Church of the Intercession and the Calvert Vaux-designed Trinity Cemetery, with Victorian and Neo-Gothic monuments.

The new, state-of-the-art National Track & Field Hall of Fame at the Armory is located further north at 168th Street and Fort Washington Avenue. Next, head east and south on St. Nicholas Avenue and visit the elegant Morris-Jumel Mansion, the oldest house in Manhattan, at 160th Street and Edgecombe Avenue. (Another excellent example of colonial architecture is the Dyckman Farmhouse Museum at 204th Street and Broadway in Inwood.) The cobble-stoned Jumel Terrace Historic District and adjacent Sylvan Terrace both offer fine examples of 19th century and Victorian-style row houses.

Here, you'll be next to the upper portion of Highbridge Park, where NYRP, through the U.S. Forest Service's Living Memorials program, has planted Sargent cherry trees along Edgecombe Avenue as a springtime memorial to the victims of 9/11 and American Airlines Flight 587. Stroll down the park's switchback pathways, which NYRP restored along with native plantings, and visit the High Bridge and Highbridge Tower.

NYRP belongs to the High Bridge

Coalition, which is helping to restore and develop this historic and scenic area. For a brochure and information about tours of Highbridge Tower, call (718) 430-1803 and visit www.thehighbridge.org and www.partnershipsforparks.org. At the bottom of Highbridge Park, cross Harlem River Drive and visit NYRP's Swindler Cove Park, home to the Riley-Levin Children's Garden and the Peter Jay Sharp Boathouse.

Fort Tryon Park, a 1935 gift to New York from John D. Rockefeller near the top of Manhattan, is home to The Cloisters, The Metropolitan Museum of Art's medieval art collection. You'll also find NYRP's New Leaf Café and the nearby Heather Garden, originally designed in the 1930s by the Olmsted brothers and restored in 1985 by the City of New York Department of Parks & Recreation and the Heather Garden Trust, with support from the Greenacre Foundation and volunteers. NYRP hosts the annual Try On Fort Tryon Park! Festival in April in the lower portion of the park.

Other festivals in northern Manhattan include NYRP's Harlem River Festival in the fall in Swindler Cove Park and the Little Red Lighthouse Festival in September in Fort Washington Park on the Hudson River, which NYRP co-sponsors with the Historic House Trust. This event features tours of the Little Red Lighthouse and celebrity readings of the children's classic *The Little Red Lighthouse and The Great Gray Bridge*, such as folk singer and songwriter Pete Seeger and Dr. Ruth Westheimer at the 2005 festival. Visit www.nyrp.org for more information about our park festivals and other community events.

These are just a few of the historical, educational, and scenic attractions to see on a northern Manhattan excursion. For more information and a copy of its beautiful new *Discovering Northern Manhattan* brochure, call the Chamber of Commerce of Washington Heights and Inwood at (212) 928-6595, or visit www.washington-heights.us. 🍀



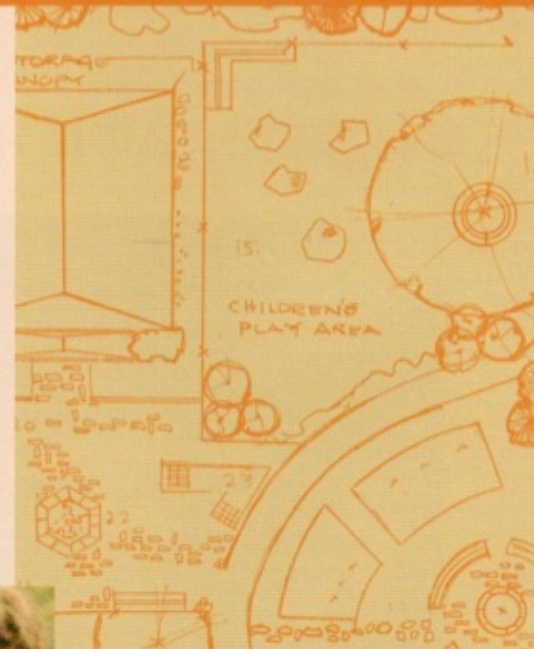
FEATURED EYESORE NO MORE!

Thanks to NYRP's dedicated Parks Field Crew, Highbridge Park and our other northern Manhattan and South Bronx park sites stay clean, beautiful, and ready to welcome visitors.



IN THE GARDENS:

THE RHODEBECK CHARITABLE TRUST RESTORES A "GARDEN OF EDEN," WITH HELP FROM A GREEN GODDESS



Landscape designer Edie Kean (left) and a detail from her plan for the Mildred T. Rhodebeck Garden.

Located at 927 Faile Street in the Hunts Point section of the Bronx, this large and active community garden is receiving major capital improvements and a complete new garden design thanks to a \$250,000 restoration and endowment grant from The Rhodebeck Charitable Trust. This well-used neighborhood plot is close to 8,000 sq. ft., with a large portion dedicated to vegetable growing and another area set aside for social gatherings. The garden is also actively used by students from P.S. 75 across the street.

Edie Kean, the veteran GreenThumb landscape designer, will provide the design plan, a process she describes as "putting a community's dreams down on paper." Kean's design includes a "green screen" of trees and plants around the garden to buffer it from noisy street traffic on Bruckner Boulevard. Additional improvements will also include a steel picket fence, improved planting beds, formalized gathering areas, and a small children's garden. Ground-breaking took place this spring with an anticipated completion by the end of the summer. Ms. Kean's first project with NYRP was designing the Association for the Blind Garden in Queens. "We are delighted to collaborate once again with such a gifted designer," says Brian Sahd,

NYRP's Vice President for Community Development. "Edie gets it! She knows the important role gardens play in creating community."

Ms. Kean is a beloved figure in the New York City community garden movement. With a certificate in landscape design from the New York Botanical Garden, Edie went to work for the city in 1988 and produced some 1,500 community garden designs during her 16-year tenure with the New York Department of General Services and, later, the Parks Department. Edie served as the personal and first contact for hundreds of community gardeners who approached the city to take advantage of new provisions allowing citizens to cultivate gardens in abandoned city property.

The program evolved into GreenThumb, a city agency that provides lumber, plant materials, horticultural advice, and moral support to community gardeners. "These gardens stabilized communities, kept people out of institutions...you can't believe the stories!" recalls Kean. Still recognized as New York City's unofficial "Green Goddess," Kean is now a garden design consultant and enjoys working in her personal garden in the Catskills. 🍷

VOLUNTEERS HELP NYRP GROW



Goldman Sachs volunteers, McLeod Garden, May 2005.



JP Morgan volunteers, Family Garden, June 2005.

VOLUNTEERISM IS HOW NYRP GOT STARTED and keeps us growing today. Volunteers activate every area of our mission: over 1,000 volunteers participated in NYRP's park, community garden, and environmental education projects in 2005. They create an expanding network of action and goodwill that invigorates neighborhoods and our city's open spaces.

Local residents and NYRP members operate craft and face-painting booths at our annual, park festivals; other volunteers have participated in "Clean Up The World" and "International Coastal Cleanup" projects in Fort Washington and Swindler Cove Parks. Over the last few years, corporate volunteers, community groups, and school kids have joined us for planting and trail maintenance workdays in Highbridge, Fort Washington, and Bridge Parks. NYRP also received a grant in 2005 from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to conduct volunteer planting projects this spring and summer at our South Bronx park locations.

This past April, 70 employees from American Express celebrated "Make a Difference Month" at Sherman Creek, removing concrete and spreading soil and woodchips. Later in May, employees from The Home Depot's Chelsea and 59th Street stores planted native species and began construction of a pedestrian trail through the site. Back in October, 50 employees from global financial leader Lehman Brothers kicked off the Sherman Creek project with an initial shoreline cleanup.

"I enjoyed myself immensely and believe people left the event feeling fulfilled," says Michelle McGregor,

Administrative Manager, Global Client Services, Lehman Bros. "It was a great experience doing something for the Upper Manhattan community, as well as getting to know my colleagues outside of an office environment."

These and other generous corporate partners provide funding for the material and project costs of employee workdays. According to a recent survey, American companies are finding that they can attract, motivate, and retain quality employees when they provide opportunities to volunteer and give back to the community.

In our 57 community gardens, thousands of local gardeners contribute untold hours in the spring, summer, and fall growing and harvesting vegetables and flowers, and participating in community events in the gardens. To help these sites become even more productive, attractive, and stable, NYRP invites leading landscape designers to contribute garden plans, and we also encourage corporations and foundations to lend a hand.

This spring and summer, Goldman Sachs employees will participate in 8 garden workdays to help improve the McLeod Garden in Brooklyn, culminating in community workshops on canning and cooking with garden produce and a barbecue celebration in the garden. Lehman Bros. and Polaris Management employees will participate in similar projects in the restoration of the Mildred T. Rhodebeck Garden. "Volunteers are critical—we couldn't rebuild these spaces without the contributions and involvement of corporate and community volunteers," says Amy Gavaris, NYRP's Acting Executive Director.

In our Environmental Education program, high-school and college interns have contributed in many ways: testing water quality at Swindler Cove Park, assisting educators in the classroom and our gardening program at the Riley-Levin Children's Garden, and helping out at our education field office and boatbuilding workshop. Additionally, NYRP partners with Building with Books (www.buildingwithbooks.org)—an international nonprofit organizing community-service projects for youth—to conduct student volunteer projects in Highbridge Park. Every two months, about 25 northern Manhattan high-school students gather in the park to clean, prune, and plant.

Lastly, AmeriCorps members—volunteers with the U.S. Corporation for National and Community Service—play a significant role in every area of our mission. "The projects we are involved in now are very intensive and require that our field teams really mesh and work well together," says Jessie Santiago, Assistant Director of Field Operations and five-year NYRP staffer who began as a college intern. It's no coincidence that the majority of new hires at NYRP are from our AmeriCorps and other volunteer ranks. As a "good habit," volunteerism is best developed when young and feels great for a lifetime! 🍀

To plan an employee workday or other corporate giving opportunities, please contact Tom Campbell, Development Associate, Institutional Giving and Corporate Volunteer Coordinator, at (212) 333-2552, or tcampbell@nyrp.org.

For school and community volunteer opportunities, please contact Jane Jackson, Director of Programming, at (212) 333-2552, or jjackson@nyrp.org.

NYRP'S DISTRICT GARDEN MANAGERS THE MUSCLE BEHIND THE GREEN



Left to Right: William Curtis-Bey, John Wastiutynski, Jason Sheets, Sasha Rodriguez

WITH 57 COMMUNITY GARDENS under our ownership and ongoing care, NYRP is responsible for over 12 acres of non-park open space in New York City. When we helped save these distressed plots from the city auction block in 1999, there were cries of joy and then the big question...*what do we do now?!* NYRP's first challenge was to stabilize and secure the plots by repairing sidewalks and installing fencing. But a fenced lot does not a garden make—many of these open spaces had ceased to be used as gardens and become garbage dumps or automobile “chop shops.”

“After coordinating with the City to clear out garbage and debris, we pounded the pavement to meet the neighborhood gardeners and institutions who use these spaces to let them know how NYRP was going to help with technical, gardening, and programming support,” says Brian Sahd, NYRP's Vice President of Community Development, who was hired in 1999 to oversee the new community garden inventory. “But it was a big cultural change for many of these folks when they realized the land was secured, and they no longer had to worry about losing it.”

“NYRP had to start from scratch, which was a creative challenge that appealed to me,” says Jason Sheets, Director, NYRP

Community Garden Program. A New School of Social Research graduate and former inspector for the City of New York Department of Parks & Recreation, Sheets had already served a two-year AmeriCorps term with NYRP before joining the staff in 2002 to set up community garden field operations. Sheets is now in charge of the day-to-day operations of our community gardens.

To supervise garden use and stimulate community involvement, Sahd and Sheets needed help. John Wastiutynski was hired in 2003 as one of three District Garden Managers. John manages 20 NYRP plots in Brooklyn and 2 in Queens. With a biology degree from Fordham Uni-

“We can put a lot of money into these spaces, but they don't come alive without community participation...”

versity, Wastiutynski had spent two college summers in Montana, doing trail maintenance at Glacier National Park. In between, he served a six-month AmeriCorps term with NYRP.

“My primary responsibility is doing community outreach, working with local gardeners who are already using these spaces and attracting new organizational members, such as schools, churches, block associations, and youth advocacy groups,” says Wastiutynski. Currently, all but a few Brooklyn gardens boast active core members.

William Curtis-Bey, also hired in 2003, is Manhattan District Garden Manager, with a territory including 12 Manhattan gardens, 2 in Brooklyn, 2 in Queens, and 1 on Staten Island. Curtis-Bey is a Brooklyn

native who attended Southampton University's “Friends of the World” program, studying gardening and organic food distribution in Kyoto, Japan. After an apprenticeship in ecological horticulture at the UC Santa Cruz Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems, he taught environmental science to disadvantaged youth. Curtis-Bey was a naturalist with the Prospect Park Audubon Center and managed a community garden in East Harlem for the Union Settlement House Association when he saw the NYRP position posted on www.Idealist.org.

“Our job is to get these communities to the point where their gardens are self-sufficient—they all come in at different levels of development and activity,” says Curtis-Bey. Making a twice-a-week round of all the gardens, his day-to-day tasks range from general maintenance—weeding, watering, pruning, and composting—to teaching a gardening workshop or helping with a community function in one of the gardens.

The Bronx District Garden Manager, Sasha Rodriguez, was hired in December 2005 to manage 16 gardens. A Yonkers native and SUNY Purchase graduate in Women's Studies, Sasha worked summers harvesting vegetable crops on an organic farm outside Washington D.C. She started with NYRP as an AmeriCorps member working with John Wastiutynski. “I can teach about organic gardening, but community organizing is a whole other world...watching and learning from a seasoned pro like John was extremely helpful. My goal for the Bronx gardens is to see them used for diverse purposes and become active public spaces,” says Rodriguez.

“Our major goal for the next five years is to make these gardens as sustainable as possible. That means well-organized groups and a garden structure that remains in place even when individual members come and go,” says Sheets. “We can put a lot of money into these spaces, but they don't come alive without community participation, leadership, and shared responsibility.”

OVER \$700,000 FOR COMMUNITY GARDEN RESTORATIONS IN BROOKLYN



Garden of Hope, Bedford Stuyvesant, Brooklyn

This spring and summer, NYRP is setting a record with three community garden restorations in Brooklyn, thanks to generous support from our corporate and foundation partners. Each project is a collaboration between community gardeners, landscape designers, corporate volunteers, and our field crew. Combined, we have raised over \$700,000 for open-space improvements and community development in the borough.

Goldman Sachs, the global investment firm and long-time NYRP supporter, is sponsoring the \$250,000 restoration and endowment of the McLeod Community Garden—an 11,208 sq. ft. plot in the industrial neighborhood of East New York. This project is part of the company's ten-year-old Community TeamWorks program, which gives employees a day off each year to volunteer with local non-profit organizations. From 1997 to today, in partnership with 833 nonprofit community partners worldwide, over 125,574 Goldman Sachs volunteers have joined with family and friends to give a day to the communities where they work and live. From May-August, Goldman Sachs employees will

Before...
Stay tuned
for more
on these
dramatic garden
transformations!



McLeod Garden, East New York, Brooklyn

participate in eight workday projects, including cleanup, construction, planting, painting, and canning/cooking workshops with local residents at two barbecue celebrations in the garden.

"The McLeod Garden has some daring design elements," says Brian Sahd, NYRP Vice President for Community Development, describing landscape architect Lee Weintraub's garden plan developed with the local gardeners. The design has a homey feel, featuring a grove of trees at the entrance, a "living room"-style sitting area in the center, and an outdoor "kitchen" with barbecue at the back of the garden. Bioswale planting beds at the front are designed to collect rainwater runoff.

Goldman Sachs volunteers will also team up with HELP USA (www.helpusa.org), a nonprofit

organization assisting youth and the homeless, to paint the nearby Sackman Street Playground—teens and residents from HELP USA's local Genesis Home will assist in the restoration project. "Goldman Sachs has a long tradition of community involvement and we are pleased to play a role in the restoration of the McLeod Garden. It is a reflection of the commitment of our people to our community and to the environment," says Eileen White, Goldman Sachs Managing Director.

In Williamsburg, NYRP is incorporating an environmental learning garden and outdoor learning programs into an existing well-used community space, thanks to a \$300,000 grant from The Heckscher Foundation for Children. I.S. 49, across the street, is undergoing its own redesign to include The Green School: An Academy for Environmental Careers, a co-project of the Brooklyn Center for the Urban Environment (www.bcue.org) and City of New York Department of Education. The Green School, I.S. 49, and a St. Nicholas after-school program will be involved in designing, programming, and utilizing the Heckscher Foundation Children's Garden.

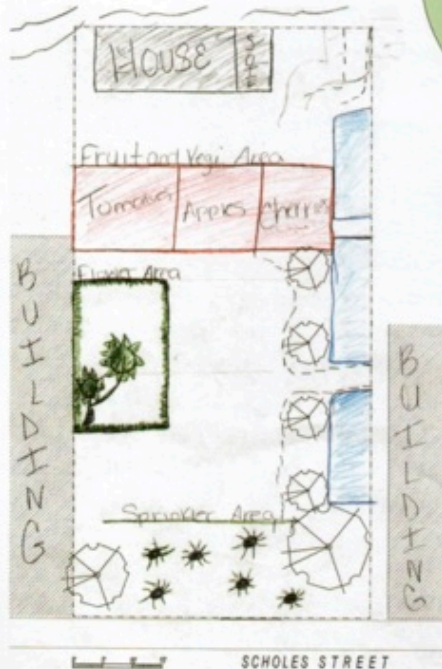
Landscape designer Billie Cohen and NYRP conducted workshops with the community in March and April to develop a plan for the garden, which incorporates educational and environmentally friendly "green design" elements, such as a rainwater collection system, permeable pavement, composting, and an outdoor science laboratory for kids. The garden will also host after-school and summer programs for kids from I.S. 49 and the St. Nicholas Neighborhood Preservation Corporation, which operates several community centers in the

Landscape architect Lee Weintraub's design for the restoration of the McLeod Community Garden in East New York, Brooklyn, sponsored by Goldman Sachs.

neighborhood. "The Heckscher Foundation for Children is delighted to support this wonderful project that will benefit the community and especially the children," says Virginia Sloane, President, The Heckscher Foundation for Children.

Ellie Cullman, renowned interior designer and Brooklyn native, has led the effort to restore NYRP's Garden of Hope in the borough's Bedford Stuyvesant neighborhood. The project is in honor of the late Hedi Kravis, fellow Brooklynite and co-founder of the design firm Cullman & Kravis. "I fell in love with this garden, which was started by local residents on Hancock Street in 1982. I was so

Below: Design for The Heckscher Foundation Children's Garden in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, by Ambra Jones, 6th grade, from the NYRP workshop.



impressed by what they had accomplished with very few resources and was determined to create a beautiful, green oasis that would serve community needs," says Cullman.

"Our restoration plan features an open space for strolling, game tables and benches, and an area for community gatherings. I am absolutely

delighted with the overwhelming support that Hedi's friends have shown for this project—to date, over seventy-five people have contributed a total of \$177,000. This project has been incredibly meaningful for me and our company. I am proud to be 'giving back' to Brooklyn and at the same time to be honoring my late partner and best friend."



Bugs and Blossoms field walk, August 2005, Bridge Park

IN EVERY SEASON, NYRP'S MONTHLY FIELD walks are an excellent way to enjoy the diversity of nature in northern Manhattan and South Bronx parks. Sponsored by the American Express Foundation, our field walks have covered many topics—in 2005, we explored the geology and natural history of Fort Tryon Park, learned about edible plants in Highbridge Park, took a bike ride through Fort Washington Park, and strolled among the blooming native plants and butterflies that we've helped to reintroduce to Bridge Park.

This year, participants enjoyed mapping Highbridge Park using GPS technology in April. In May, we observed the spring bird migration in Highbridge Park with Peter Mott, President of NYC Audubon, followed by a tour of the Highbridge Tower led by the Urban Park Rangers and High Bridge Coalition. On June 10, we'll don waders and practice seining for small fish, crab, and other invertebrates, which teem in the estuarine waters of Swindler Cove Park.

"Field walks bring in those who are mildly curious about a topic as well as stu-



Geology and History hike, January 2006, Highbridge Park

dents and scholars in particular fields, and draw audiences from all over the city," says Jane Jackson, NYRP's Director of Programming. We advertise our field walks in community calendars in *The New York Times*, *TimeOut New York*, *Manhattan Times*, *The New Yorker*, and NY1 TV (channel 10). Our walks usually take place on Saturday mornings, last a couple of hours, and are free of charge—we encourage you to call ahead to reserve a spot at (212) 333-2552. Check www.nyrp.org, "events" for our calendar of upcoming field walks and public events. 🌱

NYRP EDUCATOR HELPS PLAN NEW BRONX GREEN MIDDLE SCHOOL



Last November, our Assistant Director of Programming Philip Coffin was invited to help plan a new public middle school that will teach environmental awareness and stewardship through a project-based curriculum. Principal Emily Becker got the "green light" for the project in February from the New York City Department of Education's Office of New Schools (ONS). The plan received a building, funding, and recognition as one of 36 small schools to open in New York City next September. Philip helped to design the garden, science curriculum, and gardening program. He also contributed the school

logo design pictured here.

Principal Becker grew up in Berkeley, California, where Alice Waters' Edible Schoolyard at Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School served as a key inspiration for the Bronx project. Her proposal to ONS emphasized that the school garden will be an outdoor classroom for all subject areas and a gathering place and focal point for the school community. Proposed to serve 150 youngsters, the Bronx Green Middle school will be sited at the former JHS 135 Frank Whalen School on Wallace Avenue, within walking distance of the New York Botanical Garden. 🌱

HARLEM RIVER SHORELINE: GREAT EGRET (*Ardea alba*)

IT MUST BE SPRING—the egrets are back at Sherman Creek! A species of heron, the Great Egret has returned to our region to breed and during this time sports long plumage on its back. This tall, beautiful bird is the symbol of the National Audubon Society, which was founded in 1905 to protect birds from feather hunters. The North American population of egrets was nearly wiped out by the early 1900s but has since recovered thanks to legal protections. When allowed to flourish, its lifespan can reach twenty-three years. Egrets nest in trees and feed on fish, invertebrates, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and small mammals. The Great Egret is found across the globe, from southern Canada to Argentina, and in Europe, Africa, Asia, and Australia. 🌿



SHERMAN CREEK STEWARDS AND BIRD RESEARCH PROJECT



Sherman Creek Stewards recording on-site data for GIS project.

THIS SPRING, STUDENT INTERNS FROM MANHATTAN'S HIGH SCHOOL FOR ENVIRONMENTAL Studies and George Washington High School—working under the supervision of NYRP Environmental Educator Juan Acosta—are conducting mapping surveys of Sherman Creek, the formerly abandoned waterfront area just north of Swindler Cove Park. These “Sherman Creek Stewards” are collecting topographical, soil, and flora data to create a digital, GIS (Global Information Systems) baseline model of the site. This resource will help NYRP and our partners in the restoration and maintenance of this new shoreline parkland.

Another HSES intern is learning birding skills with Assistant Director of Programming Philip Coffin as part of the Bird Research Project. Observations and data will be compiled into profile cards on 60 native species in the Sherman Creek habitat and shared with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's “Citizen Science” program. NYRP's high-school interns commit three afternoons a week to the yearlong program and receive class credit. 🌿



Photo: Philip Coffin

NYRP Educators José Baez and Jeff Weber and student boatbuilders.

GREEN HERON... BOTH BIRD & BOAT

Jeff Weber, our Boatbuilding Educator, has been working this year with about 20 students from I.S. 143, George Washington High School, and the High School for Environmental Studies to construct three new boats. Just finished, the *Green Heron* is a classic punt-style flat-bottomed boat made from oak, pine, and marine plywood. A four-seater, the punt is maneuvered with oars and will be used for environmental education activities, as well as to lift out garbage from hard-to-reach areas of Sherman Creek.

As Philip Coffin, NYRP Assistant Director of Programming, notes, “the *Green Heron* can scoop up trash like green herons scoop up fish.” Not coincidentally, this camera-shy bird species has been lately spied in Sherman Creek. The students' punt is painted dark green with light-blue interior and decorated with an image of its feathered namesake.

Other new boats under construction include a 14-foot Whitehall sailboat—with mast, large sail and rigging, offering a new training opportunity for student boaters—and a 27-foot, two-person rowing shell with a spruce frame and mahogany trim. High-school rowers on NYRP's Peter Jay Sharp Boathouse Crew are helping to build the racing shell on free afternoons when not in training at the Boathouse.

NYRP Boatbuilding is a yearlong program that students participate in one afternoon a week at our boatbuilding workshop just north of P.S. 5 and Swindler Cove Park. The completed boats will be launched at a special christening ceremony with the students at Swindler Cove Park at the end of the school year.

NEW LEAF CAFÉ RECOMMENDED BY MICHELIN GUIDE



Called "a testimony to the evolution of our dining culture" by *The New York Times*, the new *Michelin Guide New York City 2006* has recommended NYRP's New Leaf Café, located in Fort Tryon Park. The venerable *Guide* (www.michelintravel.com) describes the café as a "cozy getaway" and notes the New Leaf's sunny terrace, park setting, on-site parking, and the kitchen's "creative instincts." The entry ends with an important suggestion: "Order freely, as all proceeds from the café go towards the upkeep of the historic park." To make reservations, please contact the New Leaf Café at (212) 568-5323.

BETTE MIDLER NAMED LOCAL HERO BY BANK OF AMERICA



As part of its Neighborhood Excellence Initiative, the Bank of America Charitable Foundation selected Bette Midler as a 2005 Local Hero. The commendation was announced at a November ceremony, where NYRP was awarded with a \$5,000 grant. The Bank of America initiative "recognizes, nurtures, and rewards organizations, local heroes, and student leaders that are helping their neighborhoods achieve excellence."

Photo: Jeff Weber



NEW NYRP AQUATIC SCIENCE EDUCATOR

New Aquatic Science Educator José Baez has joined NYRP's Environmental Education team. Baez, an Inwood resident, formerly served as a canoe guide for the Bronx River Alliance, where he educated canoers about the history, wildlife, and forests along the Bronx River. He conducted as many as 50 canoe trips a season, some full-river outings including as many as 150 paddlers. Baez was also responsible for much of the shoreline maintenance along the 25-acre waterfront, as well as

planting, cultivating, and maintaining native species. He also taught physical education at Our Lady Queen of Martyrs School. At NYRP, Baez will conduct Aquatic Science programs at Swindler Cove Park. Welcome José!

NYRP HAS MOVED!

On April 1, NYRP moved into its new location. Please make a note of our new address:

New York Restoration Project
254 West 31st Street, 10th Floor
New York, NY 10001

Our phone and fax numbers remain the same: t 212-333-2552 f 212-333-3886



A Garden by the Sea
Leila Hadley
224 pages, 2005, Rizzoli

By the author of the travel memoirs *Give Me the World* and *A Journey with Elsa Cloud*, this beautiful guide is packed with anecdotes and practical tips for coastal gardening year round. Hadley, wife of the late philanthropist Henry Luce III, has gleaned a wealth of experience and images from over 15 years of gardening at

her five-acre, beachfront home on Fisher's Island, off the coast of Connecticut. This comprehensive "how-to" for beginner and advanced gardeners alike contains maps and charts on annuals, perennials, and other seaside plantings, as well as sections on gardening in other regions and climates.

FATHER'S DAY AT THE STONE BARN CENTER FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Saturday, June 18, 12 noon



Celebrate Father's Day with a tour of the Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture followed by a delicious lunch at Blue Hill at Stone

Barns. Stone Barns combines a working farm, restaurant, and educational center in the spectacular surroundings of Pocantico Hills. A small fee will be charged for this program to cover the cost of the meal and round-trip transportation from Manhattan.

AN EVENING WITH DESIGNER MICHAEL ARAD

Tuesday, June 27, 6:30 p.m.

Photo: Gordon Levin



Meet Michael Arad, designer of the World Trade Center Memorial, *Reflecting Absence*.

Mr. Arad will trace the steps from the imme-

mediate aftermath of 9/11, through the selection process, to the status of the project today.

A VISIT TO THE GARDENS OF ROCKEFELLER CENTER

Thursday, September 14, 5 p.m.

Visit the private roof gardens of Rockefeller Center with Horticulturist Dave Murbach. The "Gardens of the Nations," including English, French, and Japanese Gardens, feature rare plant materials from all over the world. Participation is limited and reservations will be taken in the order of receipt.

For more information about Bette's Garden Club Membership and events, please contact Breanne Scanlon at (212) 333-2552, or bscanlon@nyrp.org