



# MillionTreesNYC Special Edition

## New York City Celebrates MillionTreesNYC Month

On April 1, Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg proclaimed April 2008 as MillionTreesNYC Month, kicking off a hugely successful month of volunteer tree plantings, public events and tree giveaways throughout the City's five boroughs. All activities and events supported MillionTreesNYC—the groundbreaking, public-private partnership between NYC Parks Department and New York Restoration Project (NYRP) to plant and care for one million trees across the City's five boroughs by 2017.

In celebration of New York City's first MillionTreesNYC Month—presented by BNP Paribas—NYC Parks Commissioner Adrian Benepe and NYRP Executive Director Drew Becher, along with 75 students from P.S. 134, gathered in Seward Park, Manhattan, to announce the launch of this historic month of tree planting and civic greening.

"We hope all New Yorkers will dig in and help plant, protect and preserve our city's trees, creating a healthier and more sustainable city," said Benepe, as several third graders joined him in planting a ceremonial crabapple tree to commemorate the beginning of MillionTreesNYC Month. This was the first of approximately 30,000 trees planted city-wide during April, with the help of MillionTreesNYC partners.

Aided by a record number of student, community and corporate volunteers, NYRP led its largest tree-planting projects to date—in East Harlem and Brooklyn—which planted 1,000 new trees across New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) campuses, in parks and on city streets. Additionally, New York Care's "Hands on New York Day" enlisted volunteers—including NYRP's entire staff—in planting 20,000 trees in parks across the City.

In recognition of this momentous month, NYRP, NYC Parks and MillionTreesNYC partners also hosted free citywide events—including Earth Day (April 22) and Arbor Day (April 25) celebrations, tree-planting and stewardship workshops and tree giveaways at four Council on the Environment of New York City (CENYC) Greenmarkets and the Riverdale YM-YWHA Environmental Fair. All events were designed to engage New Yorkers in learning about MillionTreesNYC and how they can contribute to greening their neighborhoods.

To cap off the month, philanthropist David Rockefeller and Bloomberg Philanthropies made a combined gift of \$10 million to MillionTreesNYC, giving an extraordinary push to our effort to plant one million trees over the next decade. In the following pages, read more about the highlights of New York City's first annual MillionTreesNYC Month. 🌱



# something big is taking root!

## Bette Midler, BNP Paribas and Friends “Green” Greenpoint, Brooklyn, on Arbor Day

“A tree grows in Brooklyn,” goes the famous book by Betty Smith. On Arbor Day, April 25, many more trees joined the ranks thanks to NYRP Founder Bette Midler, 410 volunteers, some very special guests and generous funding from BNP Paribas, the presenting sponsor of MillionTreesNYC Month. At McCarren Park and in the surrounding neighborhood of Greenpoint, Brooklyn, this enthusiastic army of green thumbs—NYRP’s largest volunteer group ever—planted 137 trees and galvanized a community of budding tree stewards. Divided into small groups, approximately 200 intermediate-school children from Children for Children teamed up with 200 BNP Paribas employees and 25 community volunteers to plant trees in the park, on the surrounding streets, in front of the Automotive High School and at the Russian Orthodox Cathedral.

In thanking the volunteers, Bette was joined by NYC Parks Commissioner Adrian Benepe, as well as Dian Ogilvie, Toyota senior vice president; Kelly Caffarelli, president of The Home Depot Foundation; and Everett Schenk, CEO of BNP Paribas North America, all very generous corporate sponsors that have taken the lead in supporting MillionTreesNYC. The Brooklyn Youth Chorus sang the National Anthem, actress Marcia Gay Harden recited a poem about tree planting and Blue Man Group fired up the volunteers with an Arbor Day chant, “Plant Trees! Go Green!” During a picnic lunch in the park, the crowd was entertained by a rising star, singer Brendan James, who also performed a song fittingly entitled “Green” during the day’s opening program. 🌱



NYRP Executive Director Drew Becher joins Mayor Bloomberg, NYCHA Commissioner Margarita Lopez, NYCHA Chairman Tino Hernandez and David Rockefeller.

## TWO NEW YORKERS GIVE BIG AND LEAD BY EXAMPLE

On Earth Day, April 22, Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and David Rockefeller each pledged \$5 million to MillionTreesNYC to plant 18,000 trees throughout the City’s five boroughs—including plantings on New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) campuses, playgrounds, schools, health centers and other public spaces. Their donations will also help to support the MillionTreesNYC Apprenticeship Program to provide green-collar job training to youth and NYCHA residents and support the long-term maintenance and stewardship of New York City’s trees.

“In New York, we’re working to observe Earth Day every day of the year,” said Mayor Bloomberg, who planted a redbud tree with Mr. Rockefeller at NYCHA’s Thomas Jefferson Houses.

“I asked Mayor Bloomberg if there was a project we might work on together that would benefit the City we both love,” said Mr. Rockefeller, adding another generous gift to a long history of leading New York City philanthropy. “We decided the MillionTreesNYC initiative would be a wonderful collaboration.”

This extraordinary gift will fund 25 percent of the MillionTreesNYC initiative. NYRP Executive Director Drew Becher hopes that every New Yorker is inspired to give to the MillionTreesNYC effort as a result of Mayor Bloomberg and David Rockefeller’s generosity.

## MillionTreesNYC Gets Help from The Police

On May 6, passersby in New York City's Times Square got a special treat — an up-close view of The Police, reunited. Holding a press conference broadcast on screens 100 feet in the air, Sting, Andy Summers and Stewart Copeland — The Police — joined Mayor Bloomberg to announce the band's pledge of \$1 million to MillionTreesNYC. The donation will be matched by the City for a total of \$2 million—a sum that will plant 10,000 trees and help to reforest city parkland. The Police also announced that the band's final concert will be in New York City in August.



## Corporations Dig In and Support MillionTreesNYC

### TOYOTA TOYOTA

On Arbor Day, April 25, Toyota—leading automaker and pioneer in hybrid vehicles—announced a three-year, \$1.4 million sponsorship of MillionTreesNYC to support tree-planting, public education and community outreach activities. “Toyota has responded loud and clear to the MillionTreesNYC call to action,” said NYC Parks Commissioner Adrian Benepe. “Its generous, financial contribution sets a strong example of how businesses and corporations can help make New York City a healthier place for all to live.” Toyota has been a longtime supporter of environmental and particularly tree-planting initiatives on a national level and has worked with the National Arbor Day Foundation since 2001. “Toyota’s support and leadership are helping to put environmental initiatives at the forefront, so we can truly change the landscape of this city and our planet,” said NYRP Executive Director Drew Becher. Read about NYRP’s Toyota Children’s Learning Garden in the front portion of *Good Dirt*.

### BNP PARIBAS The bank for a changing world

a European leader in global banking and financial services. More than 200 BNP Paribas employees participated in NYRP’s Arbor Day Celebration—NYRP’s largest volunteer planting day yet, which included planting 137 trees in McCarren Park and surrounding areas throughout Greenpoint, Brooklyn—and raised funds through an employee fundraiser to help green a school this fall. As part of its MillionTreesNYC Month sponsorship of \$250,000, BNP Paribas donated 1,250 trees that were distributed in May to home-


### BNP PARIBAS

MillionTreesNYC Month 2008 was sponsored by BNP Paribas,

owners at four Council on the Environment of New York City (CENYC) greenmarkets and the Riverdale YM-YWHA Environmental Fair. BNP Paribas also built a temporary Greenhouse featured in Union Square and Columbus Circle in late April to encourage all New Yorkers to get involved in MillionTreesNYC. “BNP Paribas is very excited to partner with MillionTreesNYC,” said Everett Schenk, CEO of BNP Paribas North America. “This is an important initiative and aligned with our long-term commitment to the environment and social responsibility.”



### THE HOME DEPOT FOUNDATION

The Home Depot Foundation was the first lead sponsor of MillionTreesNYC and provided the “seed” money to launch the citywide initiative. The Home Depot Foundation is supporting tree-planting projects throughout the City, focusing primarily on NYCHA campuses, and has also committed to contributing \$200,000 per year for 3 years, which will support the giving of small grants to community-based organizations to encourage involvement in tree planting and stewardship. The Home Depot Foundation is also restoring two NYRP community gardens. Through its Community Trees Program, The Home Depot Foundation focuses on supporting community-based programs that make trees and landscaping a part of community development plans. The Home Depot Foundation is a major supporter of the Alliance for Community Trees (ACT) and the work it does in educating policymakers on the issues, challenges and opportunities impacting our nation’s urban forests. Additional national partners include the National Arbor Day Foundation and the U.S. Conference of Mayors. 

# be one in a million!



**The MillionTreesNYC Planting Strategy:** How do you plant one million trees across New York City's five boroughs in a decade? MillionTreesNYC is both a historic, greening initiative and a logistical feat—a public-private partnership involving government agencies, corporations, community groups, private foundations, student volunteers and, of course, the residents of New York City. Below, meet the two individuals who are ultimately responsible for getting one million new trees into the ground by 2017.

## Fiona Watt NYC Parks Chief of Forestry and Horticulture

As the nation's largest, urban tree-planting campaign, MillionTreesNYC—a public-private partnership between the NYC Parks Department and New York Restoration Project (NYRP)—is aimed at expanding New York City's urban forest by 20 percent over the next decade, a historic movement that requires the utilization of all our city's land resources, both public and private. As co-partner of MillionTreesNYC, the Parks Department is responsible for all plantings that take place on public land—including streets, parks and other public spaces across the City—and has committed to planting 60 percent of MillionTreesNYC's overall tree-planting goal.

Leading the Parks side of the initiative, Fiona Watt, chief of forestry & horticulture, said the first challenge to planting one million new trees in New York City is figuring out where to plant them. To begin this massive task, Watt referred to the City's first tree census taken in 1995 and the second count from 2005-06, which tallied 590,000 street trees.

"We also worked with the U.S. Forest Service and satellite imagery to study the overall urban tree canopy (UTC)," said Watt. UTC is the area of ground covered by shade from trees anywhere in the City and is what delivers all the benefits associated with trees, from improving air and water quality to cooling and beautifying the City.

"Through our research, we discovered that NYC had 24 percent of land shaded by trees—for comparison, Chicago has 12 percent UTC and Boston has 29 percent. Our goal is to increase the City's UTC to 30 percent over the next decade, which we calculated would require planting one million additional trees," said Watt.

To successfully fulfill its commitment of planting 600,000 trees throughout New York City, Parks will first concentrate on areas of the City most in need of trees—areas more commonly known as Trees For Public Health (TPH) neighborhoods (see figure). Street trees will be planted block by block (every 30 feet) until there are no more possible spaces. In 2007, Parks planted around 6,000 street trees; in 2008, the goal is 23,000. Additionally, Parks' Greenstreets

program to beautify traffic triangles, medians and rights of way will add 800 new Greenstreets to the more than 2,000 current sites. Parks will also plant 2,000 acres of new forest in parks across the City's five boroughs and has dramatically expanded its staff of foresters and landscape architects to facilitate all of the goals involved in its tree-planting strategy.

But planting trees isn't the only benefit that MillionTreesNYC is bringing to New Yorkers of all ages. "As we increase the volume of trees in the City, we're also bringing New Yorkers into the equation and helping to cultivate tree stewards in all neighborhoods," said Watt. By bringing New Yorkers together and educating them on the challenges affecting urban trees, MillionTreesNYC is helping to foster whole communities of tree stewards, who will be instrumental in informing and educating future green thumbs for generations to come. As Watt explained, educating people on the difficulties facing urban trees is key to their survival.

"It's not enough just to plant trees—you have to sustain them through the early years when they're most vulnerable to urban stresses," said Watt. "A full-grown tree provides 65 times the benefits of a small tree. Street trees are the foot soldiers of the urban forest and need the most care, but park trees have their own challenges, such as invasive plant species and pests like the dangerous Asian Longhorned Beetle."

A Vermont native and graduate of the Yale School of Forestry, Watt says she chose urban forestry to work where trees were scarce and needed most. "PlaNYC and MillionTreesNYC have escalated the field of urban forestry to a new and exciting level. NYC's urban forestry program is now almost double the U.S. Forest Service's Urban and Community Forest program and puts NYC at the forefront of urban greening and forestry initiatives."



## Barrett Robinson NYRP Vice President of Horticulture and Construction

To help MillionTreesNYC reach its goal of planting one million new trees, New York Restoration Project (NYRP) will oversee 40 percent of the initiative's overall tree-planting objective and has committed the organization to planting thousands of trees across the City during each planting season over the next decade. Under the leadership of Barrett Robinson, vice president of horticulture and construction, NYRP is taking an innovative approach to how trees are being planted on private spaces across the City, from organizing plantings on New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) campuses to coordinating large-scale, volunteer tree plantings in neighborhoods. NYRP partners with a



wide range of organizations—including community groups, nonprofit organizations, government agencies and corporate sponsors—to realize the MillionTreesNYC goal.

The first phase of NYRP's tree-planting strategy will concentrate on NYCHA campuses throughout the five boroughs. "By focusing on NYCHA properties, we can fill a void left by city budget constraints and reach a large number of individuals

who are most affected by poorer air quality in TPH neighborhoods," Robinson said, who studied landscape construction and business management at Ohio State. "Our goal is to plant healthy, locally grown trees of varying species to diversify the current cul-


ture, while also adding new design aesthetics to NYCHA properties and other designated neighborhoods throughout the City."

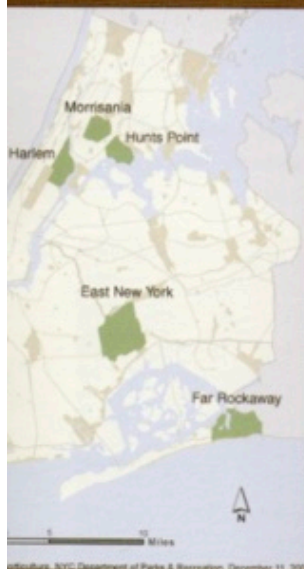
During the next 10 years, an estimated one third of NYRP's overall tree-planting commitment will be planted by teams of corporate and neighborhood volunteers, with the remaining two thirds planted by contractors. Future tree plantings will include public schoolyards and playgrounds, libraries, cultural institutions, community and recreation centers and other public properties.

To accomplish this unprecedented effort, every aspect of NYRP's tree-planting projects—including enlisting volunteers, partnering with contractors, preparing sites and securing enough healthy trees—must be organized simultaneously and roll out in quick succession. To get a sense of the scale of each project, an average tree-planting event features more than 100 trees, 200 to 400 volunteers and can run up to tens of thousands of dollars in cost. This April, NYRP conducted three such projects during Earth Day week alone—including its largest volunteer day to date in which 200 BNP Paribas employees joined 200 Children for Children volunteers on Arbor Day to plant 137 trees in McCarren Park and surrounding areas in Greenpoint, Brooklyn.

"Our volunteer projects are a lot of work and people are tired at the end of the day," said Robinson. "But tree-planting days are also enormously fulfilling, especially for the students, who will come back to see how their trees are growing and feel a personal connection to the world around them."

As part of NYRP's tree-planting strategy, Robinson is in charge of coordinating with professional partners and contractors, such as Mark Morrison Associates, to survey sites to determine where and what to plant and to produce project maps that have been invaluable in organizing large plantings. As Robinson explained, every aspect of MillionTreesNYC incorporates the skills and expertise of the initiative's many public and private partners. For example, NYC Parks provides infrastructural support, including excavating tree pits and concrete removal. Also, Artisan Gardens was engaged by NYRP to contract plant thousands of trees on NYCHA properties throughout the City.

"MillionTreesNYC is not only changing the world for the better, it's bringing a new dynamism to the green movement," said Robinson. "The initiative is creating green-collar jobs, a more active role for corporate philanthropy, new ways of thinking and organizing in local communities and healthy competition among growers—helping to raise the standard of available plant materials." 



MillionTreesNYC will focus first on neighborhoods with the greatest need for trees – these Trees for Public Health (TPH) neighborhoods are areas where air pollution, asthma and other public health concerns are alarmingly high. The City's six TPH neighborhoods will serve as test areas for all aspects of MillionTreesNYC – including tree planting, public-private partnerships, public education and organizing community tree stewards.

# dig in and get involved!

## NYRP and JetBlue Celebrate “One Thing That’s Green” in East Harlem

On April 19, New York Restoration Project (NYRP) joined with JetBlue and Clear Channel’s 106.7 Lite fm to green East Harlem. In support of MillionTreesNYC and Mayor Bloomberg’s PlaNYC, JetBlue challenged New Yorkers to do “one thing that’s green” to improve the environment. More than 200 volunteers heard the call and joined NYRP to plant approximately 270 trees on both streets and New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) campuses, starting on Pleasant Avenue near Thomas Jefferson Park. These 1.5 inch caliper trees included sophora, birch, redbud, oak and other varieties. The busy day also included fun giveaways and entertainment for the community.

East Harlem has one of New York City’s highest rates of youth asthma and has been designated as one of the City’s six Trees for Public Health (TPH) neighborhoods – by planting trees, NYRP is helping to improve air quality and bring other benefits to this densely populated neighborhood, including cooler and more beautiful streets. “Each one of us, whether an individual or a corporation, can do at least one thing that’s green to help our environment,” said Icema Gibbs, director of community relations for JetBlue Airways. For more information about JetBlue’s environmental initiatives, visit [www.onethingthatsgreen.com](http://www.onethingthatsgreen.com). 🌱



## Earth Day Greening with NBC Universal and New York City Housing Authority


On Earth Day, April 22, NYRP teamed up with 200 NBC Universal employee volunteers to plant 155 trees on New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) campuses in East Harlem, including Thomas Jefferson Houses on East 115th Street and Martin Luther King Jr. Towers on West 115th Street. NYRP Founder Bette Midler and Bravo President Lauren Zalaznick were joined for the day by on-air talent from “Saturday Night Live,” “Lipstick Jungle,” Bravo’s “Real Housewives of New York City” and local NBC-affiliate WNBC. 🌱





## Cloning New York City's Historic Trees

a grand, old European Beech tree. This is one of nine tree species throughout the City's five boroughs that will be cloned to preserve and protect New York City's most historic and environmentally significant trees, many of which are well over 100 years old.

The 12-inch cuttings were shipped to Schichtel's Nursery in Oregon, which will grow the saplings into nine genetically identical clones of each original tree. Once they're 2 to 3 feet in height, the saplings will be replanted throughout New York City as part of MillionTreesNYC. Throughout the cloning project, agriculture students at John Bowne High School will track the growth of the cloned trees as part of a new curriculum on arboriculture, supported by the Tree Research and Education Endowment Fund ([www.treefund.org](http://www.treefund.org)). 

**T**he oldest and greatest of New York City's trees won't last forever – but their clones will! In January, NYC Parks Commissioner Adrian Benepe, New York Restoration Project (NYRP) Executive Director Drew Becher and David McMaster of Bartlett Tree Experts met on Cherry Hill in Central Park with students from John Bowne High School in Flushing, Queens, to take cuttings from

## UPDATES ON CITY ORDINANCES

### NYRP EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DREW BECHER TESTIFIES BEFORE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL ON BEHALF OF STREET TREES

On April 15, NYRP's Executive Director Drew Becher went before the New York City Council to support proposed zoning changes requiring developers of commercial and residential properties to increase the planting of trees on sidewalks and other types of new frontage. Becher took the opportunity to advocate for additional reforms on behalf of NYRP, including:

- Requiring commercial developers to install permanent tree guards to protect new trees from pedestrians, dog waste, bicycles and other urban elements.
- Requiring the installation of longer tree pits to create greener corridors in business and shopping districts, which have been shown to increase business and revenues.
- Encouraging innovations in tree pit design, such as bioswales.
- Most importantly, the zoning changes must address the issue of tree stewardship, particularly watering and soil maintenance in the first two years of a new tree's lifespan – the most critical period for a tree's survival in an urban environment.

"It's estimated that along with the new regulations in the design of new surface parking lots, these zoning changes under

consideration will account for approximately 10,000 new trees annually throughout New York City," said Becher. Happily, the new zoning regulations passed the New York City Council on May 1, 2008 putting the zoning changes into effect.

### AMENDMENTS TO ZONING REGULATIONS MEAN MORE TREES ON SURFACE PARKING LOTS

Last October, the New York City Council also approved new zoning regulations that increase the amount of green required in the design of new and enlarged commercial and community parking lots. The new regulations address street tree planting, perimeter "green" screening and interior landscaping, among other considerations. For smaller lots (at least 6,000 square feet), landscaped strips with ground cover, shrubs and small ornamental trees are required along the perimeter of the lot, with trees planted every 25 feet along street frontage. Larger lots are required to plant one canopy/shade tree for every eight parking spaces, landscaped within planting islands throughout the lot. Additionally, lots must be designed to utilize green bioswales to absorb stormwater runoff, not only keeping landscape watered and green but also keeping stormwater out of the City's sewer system. New trash receptacle and bicycle storage requirements are also included. NYRP applauds these new requirements.