



Bronx River Alliance

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Bronx River Alliance



2004
Report



2004 Board and Staff

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Maggie Scott Greenfield, 2004 Annual Report Editor



Until recently, the Bronx River was invisible to most New Yorkers. Some knew it as the name of a parkway, or as the public housing development where hip hop first flourished, but few knew the river. Today the Bronx River is coming into view. Cleared of tires, trash, and choking invasive vegetation, the river can now be seen from newly-claimed parks. The river is also emerging as the home of a greenway where bikers, rollerbladers, and pedestrians will soon be able to travel the 23-mile path of the river from its source in upper Westchester County, through the heart of the Bronx, to the river's mouth at the East River. Efforts to restore the river have developed into a remarkable model of what the combined forces of community organizations, public agencies, and educational, civic, and business organizations can achieve together.

These forces come together in the Bronx River Alliance, a partnership of more than 80 organizations that acts as a coordinated voice for the river. The Alliance works collaboratively with public and private partners to protect, improve, and restore the Bronx River corridor and greenway so that they can be healthy ecological, recreational, educational, and economic resources for the Bronx communities through which the river flows.

Since the founding of the Bronx River Alliance in 2001, we have focused on three aims. One is to restore and protect the Bronx River. A second is to create a continuous Bronx River Greenway along the eight-mile stretch of the river in New York City. And the third aim, interwoven into every activity, is to ensure that the river, the greenway, and the very process of improving them strengthen and build resources for Bronx communities.

In 2004 we saw remarkable achievements. We broke ground on the first Bronx River Greenway projects, one of which—Hunts Point Riverside Park—will provide the first new waterfront park in the South Bronx in over 60 years. All the while, ecological restoration work on the river has continued, powered by the sweat equity of the Conservation Crew and hundreds of volunteers, who removed river blockages and replaced invasive species with native plantings. Public awareness of the river grew as educators and students monitored water quality and hundreds of Bronx residents came to the river by foot, bike, and canoe to appreciate and celebrate this emerging resource.



Financial Summary

REVENUE

Grants-Foundation	\$488,500
Grants-Corporate	15,000
Grants-Government	929,700
Donations-Individual	8,404
Income-Other	27,393
Income-In Kind-Other	53,961
In-Kind Contributions-Parks Department	226,205
Total	\$1,749,163



Net Assets

Temporarily Restricted	\$ 890,962
Unrestricted	\$ 221,199
Net Assets as of December 31, 2004	\$1,112,161

Expenses

Ecological Restoration	Education	Greenway	Outreach	Subtotal, Programs	Administrative & Fundraising	Total
\$421,622	\$118,972	\$144,268	\$112,572	\$797,434	\$124,948	\$922,382



Greenway

The Alliance coordinates the creation of the New York City portion of the Bronx River Greenway—a continuous bike and pedestrian path that will run the full 23-mile length of the river. The greenway will open up new green space and waterfront access in neighborhoods severely lacking it and restore existing parks.

The Greenway Team—planners, designers, and advocates from the community and government—guides the planning and implementation of the eight-mile portion of the Bronx River Greenway in New York City. Our community focus ensures that Bronx residents stand on equal footing with designers and agency representatives in discussing design concepts and implementation priorities.

In the summer of 2004, we broke ground on the first Bronx River Greenway projects: Hunts Point Riverside Park and the Bronx River Forest Floodplain Restoration. These two projects encapsulate the diverse aims of our work. Hunts Point Riverside Park is the first waterfront park in Hunts Point in 60 years and the first of many projects that will transform abandoned roadways and industrial sites in the South Bronx into new parkland. The floodplain restoration project, on the other hand, represents our commitment to restore the health of the river and improve waterfront access in existing parks. In addition to these groundbreakings, a 1.25-mile existing segment of the greenway located in Bronx Park East was repaved and stenciled.



With construction underway at the above sites, we shaped the future design of the entire greenway by adopting design standards—intended to ensure a consistent look and feel of the greenway—developed by Mathews Nielsen. Ecological principles articulated in these standards seek to minimize the environmental impact of the greenway, with the goal of actually leveraging greenway investments to restore the health of the river.

The Alliance also worked with Parks and other partner organizations in 2004 to advance designs for three greenway projects: Bronx Park North Pathways, Muskrat Cove/Westchester Connection, and the Concrete Plant Park. Groundbreaking is expected on these projects in 2005. In addition, we worked closely with the New York State Department of Transportation to finalize the schematic design for the one-mile segment of the greenway from the Concrete Plant to the West Farms neighborhood. Groundbreaking is expected on these projects in 2006.



Congressman
José E. Serrano

“The river gives Bronxites a place to dream, to imagine, and to explore nature.”

—Congressman
José E. Serrano

“During my over 30 years in public office, the restoration of our Bronx River has been almost an obsession for me. It is a gorgeous river that runs through the heart of our borough, framing the Botanical Gardens and Bronx Zoo, and providing miles of recreational opportunities for Bronx residents. The river is both wild and accessible, and there are times when you can forget you are in the middle of the biggest city in the nation when sitting on its banks, contemplating its ebbs and flows. The river gives Bronxites a place to dream, to imagine, and to explore nature — often just blocks from the crowded projects and tenements in which so many of us live.”

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration
National Park Service
Office of Congressman José E. Serrano
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
USDA Forest Service
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Bronx Borough President's Office
City of New York/Parks & Recreation
Community Boards
Cornell Cooperative Extension – NYC
Council on the Environment of New York City
New York City Department of Transportation
New York City Economic Development Corporation
New York City Department of Environmental Protection
New York City Soil & Water Conservation District
New York State Attorney General's Office
New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
New York State Department of State
New York State Department of Transportation
Westchester County Department of Parks, Recreation, and Conservation
Westchester County Planning Department
Westchester County Soil & Water Conservation District

COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATIONS

Bissel Gardens
Bronx River Art Center
Drew Gardens
Friends of Bronx Park
Friends of Brook Park
Friends of the Zoo
Harding Park Homeowners Association
Mid Bronx Desperadoes Community Housing
Moshulu Preservation Corporation
Neighborhood Initiatives Development Corporation
North Bronx River Group
Nos Quedamos
Phipps Community Development Corporation
The Point Community Development Corporation

Tri-State Transportation Campaign
Trust for Public Land
Waterfront Park Coalition
Wildlife Conservation Society - Bronx Zoo
Working Waterfront Association

SCHOOLS

Academy of Environmental Science
Banana Kelly High School
Baruch College Campus High School
Bronx Academy High School
Bronx Aerospace Academy
Bronx Guild High School
Bronx International High School
Bronx Satellite High School
Bronx Regional High School
Evander Childs High School
Fannie Lou Hamer Freedom High School
Fannie Lou Hamer Middle School
Fordham University
Gateway School of Environmental Research and Technology
Lehman College, CUNY
Lorraine Hansberry Academy
MS 80
PS 86
SUNY Maritime
Yale School of Forestry

FINANCIAL SUPPORTERS

Foundation and Government

Altman Foundation
The Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation/Bronx Initiative for Energy and the Environment
The Bodman Foundation
Congressman José E. Serrano's WCS-NOAA Lower Bronx River Partnership
The Hudson River Foundation/The New York City Environmental Fund
Independence Community Foundation
The J.M. Kaplan Fund
JP Morgan Chase Foundation
Lily Auchincloss Foundation
Merck Family Fund
New York City Council
The New York Community Trust
New York State Department of State/Environmental Protection Fund
Norcross Wildlife Foundation
The Prospect Hill Foundation
Sarah K. deCoizart Article TENTH Perpetual Charitable Trust

BRONX RIVER ALLIANCE PARTNERS & SUPPORTERS

Rocking the Boat
Seton Falls Park Preservation Coalition
South Bronx Clean Air Coalition
Sustainable South Bronx
Wave Hill
West Farms Friends of the Bronx River
Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

American Museum of Natural History
Appalachian Mountain Club
Bronx Council for Environmental Quality
Bronx Historical Society
Bronx River Parkway Reservation Conservancy
Bronx River Restoration Project, Inc.
Clearpool Education Center
Christodora, Inc.
City Parks Foundation
Gaia Institute
GLOBE, Queens College
Hudson Basin River Watch
League of Conservation Voters
Montefiore Medical Center
Nature Network
Neighborhood Open Space Coalition
New York Botanical Garden
New York Restoration Project
Partnerships for Parks
Pratt Institute Center for Community & Environmental Development
Regional Plan Association
Save the Sound
SoundWaters, Inc
Transportation Alternatives

Businesses

AKRF, Inc.
A. L. Bazzini Company
Con Edison
HSBC
Hunts Point Terminal Produce Cooperative Association
New York Power Authority
Ponce De Leon Federal Bank
Snow Fresh Food, Inc.
Vista Food Exchange, Inc.
WellCare of New York

Individuals

Peter Bourbeau
Joan Byron
Maarten de Kadt
Doreen Granai
Adam Green
Margaret M. Groake and Jordan Moss
David Kaplan
Ajamu Kitwana
James Lane
Sonia Manzano
Edith McBean
Gail Nathan
Tami Luhby and Edward Purce
Alexie Torres-Fleming
Thomas and Christine Webber
Dart Westphal

We also thank our sponsors who gave in-kind donations in 2004:

Arizona Beverages, Ben & Jerry's, Bronx River Art Center, City of New York/Parks & Recreation, Coca-Cola, Eastern Mountain Sports, HSBC, Lucky Polyethylene Mfg. Corp., New York Botanical Garden, Patagonia, Pepsi Cola Bottling Company, Wildlife Conservation Society



The Alliance works in four critical areas, each guided by a team of Alliance partners.



Outreach

The Bronx River Alliance's Outreach & Technical Assistance Program sponsors events and activities to draw people to the Bronx River and to the parks and greenway along its length. With the guidance of the Outreach Team—a group of community and business representatives who have joined together to promote the Alliance and the Bronx River—we develop creative ways to raise awareness of the river and the greenway.

The Outreach Program's signature events are the Amazing Bronx River Flotilla in the spring and the Golden Ball Festival in the fall. In addition, we organize walks and cycling events—such as the Bronx River start for the annual Tour de Bronx and greenway bike rides—that offer opportunities to experience the river.

Working closely with community partners, the Outreach Program also engages youth and community residents in the development of the Bronx River Greenway. For example, the input of Bronx residents in 2004 guided the final design for the Concrete Plant Park.

Through a series of visioning sessions, sponsored by the Alliance and our partners, community representatives came to the table with design professionals to develop design and programming concepts. Through an iterative process in which Parks designers used community input to develop design schematics and presented these back to the community for further refinement, the final design of the Concrete Plant



Urban Park Ranger Tony Archino painted the Golden Ball for its journey down the Bronx River. Tony chose images representing the Bronx neighborhoods through which it travels during the festival and the wildlife now returning to the river.

Park is one all can take pride in.

In 2004, we exceeded our expectations for community outreach and participation. Nearly 2000 people turned out to our Bronx River events. For example, the Alliance canoe program brought more than 600 paddlers to the river in canoes and kayaks. In addition, more than 700 people participated in the Sixth Annual Bronx River Golden Ball Festival, 650 in the Arts in the Parks series in River Park, and nearly 750 people in restoration projects along the river.

Ecology

The Bronx River Alliance's Ecological Restoration and River Management Program works to protect, restore, and manage the portion of the Bronx River that runs through New York City. With the guidance of the Bronx River Ecology Team—a committee of scientists, community activists, and government agency representatives—the Alliance addresses the most pressing ecological restoration needs on the river.

Our Conservation Crew serves as first responders to these needs. The Crew maintains a full-time presence on the river, stabilizing the banks, reporting cases of illegal dumping, and improving water quality and river habitat. The Alliance draws Conservation Crew members from within the community to build local career opportunities and strengthen community ties. In 2004, we expanded our capacity to protect the river by growing the Crew to eight full-time staff. The Crew worked with 16 community organizations and schools to remove four significant blockages along the river—including five cars—and plant more than 8,700 native trees, shrubs, and other types of vegetation. In addition, our volunteer base is as strong as ever, logging more than 11,000 hours on the river in 2004.

Along with this on-the-ground work, the Alliance grapples with watershed policy issues—such as stormwater runoff and wastewater discharges—that ultimately control the river's fate. In 2004, we took a critical step toward our goal of reducing stormwater runoff and pollution by organizing the *Bronx River Upland Restoration Assessment Workshop*. For three days in June, this workshop brought together 22 diverse organizations—such as the Department of Environmental Protection, the New York State Department of Transportation, Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice, and the Gaia Institute—to develop policy solutions for stormwater management in the Bronx River watershed. Participants in this workshop brainstormed ways to reduce sewage discharges into the river during periods of high precipitation. Discussion focused on methods to capture stormwater through natural systems—such as bioswales, rain gardens, and retrofits to existing paved surfaces—increasing the amount of water that seeps through soil strata, where it can be filtered and cleansed. Information gathered at the workshop will inform the forthcoming Ecological Restoration and Management Plan.

Education

The Alliance's Education Program helps schools and community organizations take advantage of the Bronx River as a rich learning laboratory. We train community volunteers as water quality monitors and engage the public in a variety of outdoor educational activities, including canoe trips and walking tours. Our philosophy is that as we educate one another about the value of the Bronx River and the environmental threats it faces, a network of stewards will grow to protect this priceless community resource.

The Education Team—a committee of teachers, scientists, and community educators—works to identify river education priorities and resources, collaborate on projects, and plan teacher workshops and student symposia. In November 2004, for example, 85 educators participated in the *5th Annual Student Activities in the Bronx River Watershed: Field Monitoring Workshop for Educators*. This workshop offered practical training on topics including aquatic fauna, water and soil quality monitoring, and the history of the Bronx River Valley. We also awarded seven grants to educators for the equipment, supplies, and services they need for river and watershed projects both in and outside of the classroom.

In addition, the Alliance trains and supports Bronx River Stewards—school groups, community groups, and individual residents who care for and monitor a particular section of the Bronx River. These Stewards are creating a scientifically valid database to evaluate the health of the river and alert agencies to water quality issues as they arise. In 2004, 23 site leaders—lead monitors charged with coordinating volunteers, monitoring the river, and providing the Alliance with data—participated in volunteer monitoring training sessions to learn how to collect, analyze, and share useful data, using Environmental Protection Agency-approved protocols and equipment. A total of 95 volunteers monitored water quality at nine sites in the spring, four in the summer, and eight in the fall.



Alexie Torres-Fleming, Founding Board Chair

"The Bronx River Alliance could easily have become just another big agency that plans and speaks for others. But the Alliance is very unique in that, since 2001, it has really insisted on hearing community voices and allowing communities to lead the planning and development of their own river. The Alliance highlights the voices of people in the community. This leads not only to the restoration of a beautiful river, but—if the process creates opportunities for employment and a forum for discussion—it can result in the restoration of whole communities, as well."

**“The restoration of a beautiful river... can result in the restoration of whole communities as well.”
—Alexie Torres-Fleming**