



**NYC Parks**  
Sustainable  
Parks

# A Plan for Sustainable Practices within NYC Parks

## 2012 Progress Update





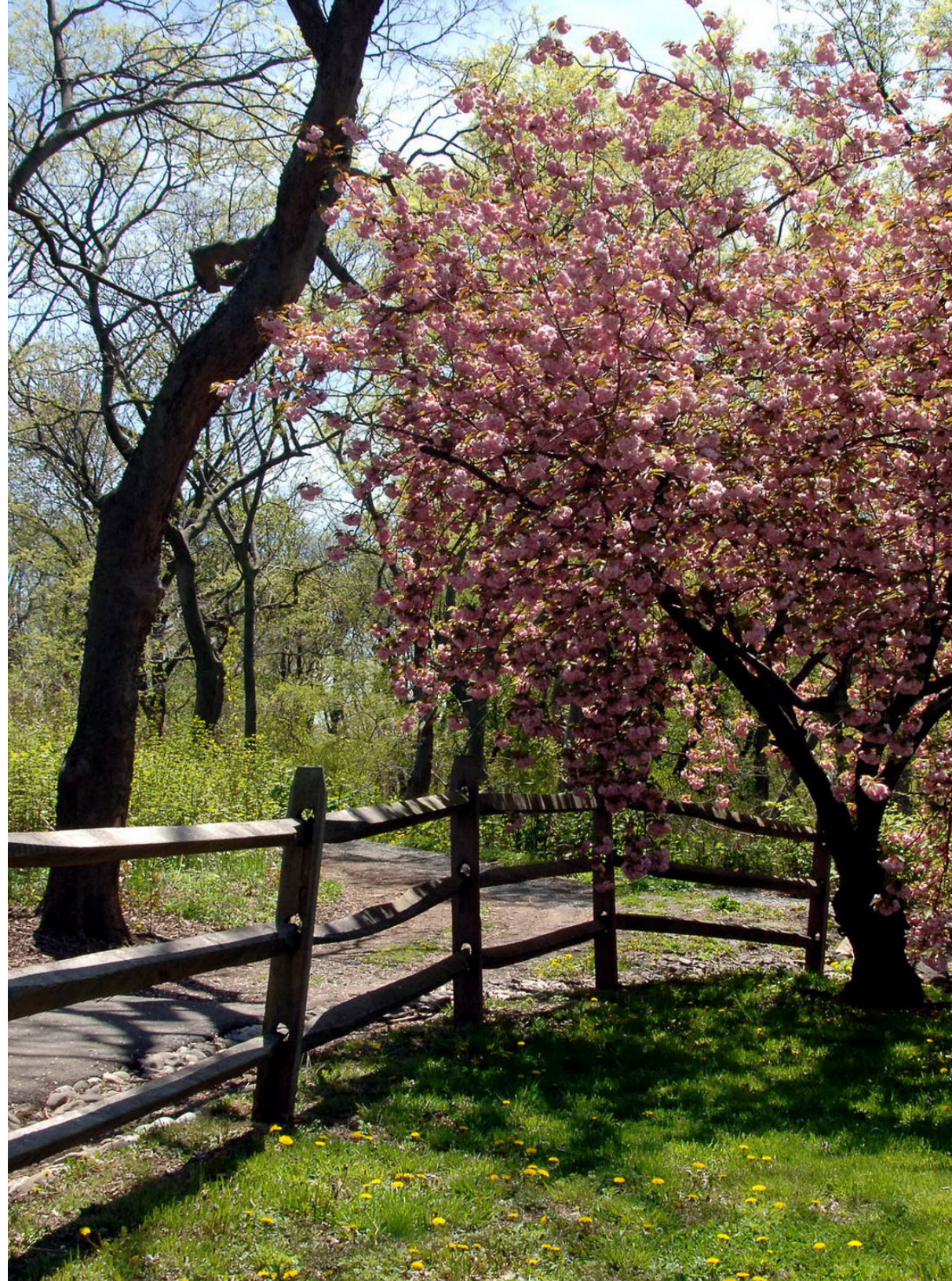
# About Sustainable Parks

## **Sustainable Parks Mission Statement:**

The Sustainable Parks Task Force measures, improves, and communicates NYC Parks' leadership in environmental sustainability to empower staff, educate and inspire park users, and serve as a resource for peers in the field.

## **About the Sustainability Initiatives Office:**

The Parks Sustainability Initiatives Office serves as a catalyst, hub, and advocate for the integration of sustainable practices throughout agency divisions. In addition to helping advance the goals of PlaNYC, the Mayor's sustainability plan, the Office brings together the divisions within the agency to develop a cohesive structure for improving sustainability initiatives.



*Conference House Park, Staten Island.  
Photo credit: Daniel Avila.*





## Introduction

In July 2011, NYC Parks released *A Plan for Sustainable Practices in NYC Parks*, its first agency-wide sustainability plan. The plan tied together our agency's varied sustainability-related projects and set goals to measure and improve sustainable practices. In order to facilitate implementation, the plan identified 12 goals and 41 milestones to be met in four focus areas: Education and Outreach, Public Recycling, Leaf Composting, and Park Design and Construction. The plan also released indicators to measure our continuing progress toward sustainability. We recognize that sustainability is more than boxes to be checked off, but rather the goals, milestones, and indicators help us understand if we are moving in the right direction. To ensure accountability, we committed to publishing this update to the July Plan to examine progress made toward goal and milestone fulfillment between July 2011 and the end of January 2012. The update also includes the latest figures for the Sustainable Parks indicators, which track performance between 2007 and 2011.

## Top Achievements toward Sustainable Parks Goals

Installed 777 recycling bins in 240 parks and community gardens in 2011.

Expanded Green Teen program citywide to reduce litter and encourage recycling in parks.

Applied for and received \$50,000 grant from City to increase energy conservation education.

Published **Leaf no Trace**, Parks' first employee handbook for sustainability.

Collected 1,015 Green Pledges from Parks staff to inspire dialogue about sustainable practices.

Installed 58 greenstreets and two green roofs, which combined captured over 11 million gallons of stormwater in FY 2011.

Educated 70,833 New Yorkers through Urban Park Ranger environmental education programs in FY 2011.

*Sustainable Parks' educational programs such as "Recycle Relay" reached over 500 Parks staff in 2011, increasing awareness about environmentally friendly practices. Photo credit: Malcolm Pinckney.*

## Individual Commitments

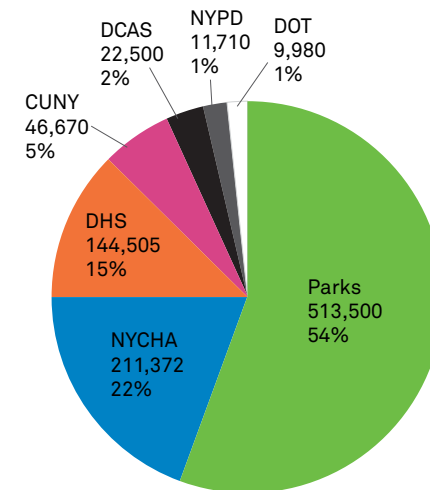
The ideas and inspiration for a greener Parks Department often come from the thousands of employees across the agency, from park designers to maintenance crews. This widespread enthusiasm and commitment to the environment has served as a driving force behind the agency's many sustainability initiatives. In March 2011, we launched the Green Pledge Campaign to provide a forum for sharing and inspiring sustainable practice among Parks staff. The 1,015 pledges received address everything from taking alternative modes of transportation to reusing materials in the field. We caught up with a few of the employees to learn how their pledge follow-through is going. Look for these "Pledge Profiles" throughout the update.

## Agency-wide Actions

Parks continues to move forward on several fronts related to sustainability. As a lead agency in the Mayor's PlaNYC, the most sweeping plan to enhance our urban environment in the city's modern history, Parks reached the halfway mark of the City's MillionTreesNYC initiative in October 2011. The agency also converted the 200th schoolyard to playground, bringing more New Yorkers within a 10-minute walk of a park, and created its

281st greenstreet from an asphalt triangle since PlaNYC was launched in 2007.

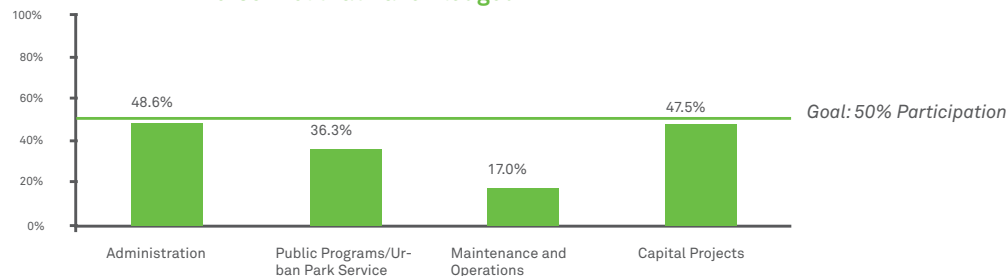
Our efforts to improve the health of New York City's 11,000 acres of natural areas were rewarded in the past year as well. The alewife, a native herring, returned to the restored waters of the Bronx River last year. They have not been recorded since the 1600s. Beavers, nicknamed Jose and Justin, have returned to the restored waters of the Bronx River, on their own. These are the first beavers in NYC in more than a century. Oyster habitat was installed off of Soundview Park, and the oyster reefs, which were outfitted with 50,000 young oysters, have allowed for the return of a healthy oyster habitat to these waters. Parks' new Green Infrastructure program was launched in 2011, and will help the City meet its goals to improve water quality in the harbor through the installation of hundreds of greenstreets and bioswales that keep rainwater from inundating wastewater treatment plants. As part of the City's Cool Roof program, which helps cut facility energy use and reduce cooling costs, Parks coated 320,000 square feet of facility rooftops with reflective paint. Parks has painted the greatest square footage of any city agency since the program began.



## Square Footage Coated by City Agencies

Since the NYC CoolRoof Program launched in 2009, Parks has led the way among City agencies in square footage painted. By reflecting solar rays, our white or "cool" roofs reduce 250,000 pounds of carbon dioxide annually, enough to power 14 homes a year. In addition to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and energy costs, white roofs extend the life of the rooftop and cooling equipment.

## Percentage of Parks Division Personnel that have Pledged



In 2011, we set a goal to collect 1000 pledges by January 2012, which we achieved when Queens Urban Park Ranger Marc Sanchez pledged to reduce paper use on January 15. We aim to collect pledges from 50% of all agency divisions by January 2013, an increase of 757 pledges.



## Goal and Milestone Implementation

The implementation of the 12 goals defined in the inaugural *Sustainable Parks Plan* has increased cross-agency collaboration and helped strengthen the culture of sustainability at Parks. 78% of the 2011 milestones are complete or in progress. The following section documents progress between July 2011 and the end of January 2012 for each milestone and outlines new steps that our agency intends to take to further its commitment to sustainability.

### Education and Outreach

Through our Green Guru network and other creative education and outreach strategies, Sustainable Parks is strengthening our workforce's commitment to environmentally-friendly practices so that we can carry out the agency's mission of greening New York City. Much of the agency's staff education and outreach efforts focused on energy conservation in response to a new City program that holds Parks responsible for its electricity budget. For example, we distributed "thumbs-up" tickets to employees who demonstrated energy-savings behavior in the office and educated staff about "Phantom" energy use around Halloween. By the end of 2013, we are committed to engaging all new and existing employees through sustainability outreach programs.

PARKS' GOAL	PROGRESS SINCE JULY 2011	2011 MILESTONE STATUS	NEXT STEPS IN 2012
Provide sustainability training and education for all Parks employees			
Increase training and awareness around energy efficiency.	Awarded \$50,000 energy outreach grant. Developed energy reduction curriculum for all staff. Held energy awareness events reaching over 500 staff.	Complete	Work with City University of New York (CUNY) to produce citywide energy awareness video. Improve energy data monitoring and increase awareness of preventative maintenance practices.
Develop sustainability checklists for recreation center managers.	Distributed checklists to over 30 recreation centers. Center managers developed three goals tied to resource conservation.	Complete	Track goal progress through site visits and support from Green Gurus.
Strengthen sustainability component in Parks' public education programming offered at recreation centers and nature centers.	Worked with Climatologist from Columbia University to develop climate change curriculum for K-8 students.	Complete	Roll-out curriculum in 2012.
Incorporate sustainability training within orientation program for Parks Opportunity Program (POP) participants.	Parks Training Academy introduced sustainability components in Personal Finance classes.	Complete	Train 1,400 POP participants in 2012. Add sustainability component to POP field training offerings.
Create a network of Green Guru point people across the agency to support sustainability initiatives			
Develop internal agency resource guide for sharing best practices.	Published <i>Leaf No Trace: How to save time, money, and energy at Parks</i> in January 2012.	Complete	Incorporate condensed version of <i>Leaf No Trace</i> in new employee and intern orientation materials.
Expand recycling at Parks office buildings.	Held recycling training for maintenance staff at Parks headquarters in collaboration with Department of Sanitation (DSNY). Distributed signage throughout Parks facilities.	In Progress	Increase the number of paper recycling bins in offices relative to trash cans to encourage recycling.
Expand network of Green Gurus.	Added Gurus at five new locations.	Complete	Work with Gurus to engage park users and recreation center visitors.
Launch Green Pledge Campaign to create community			
Collect pledges from 1000 employees, or 10% of Parks' peak headcount.	Collected the 1000th pledge in January 2012.	Complete	Collect pledges from 50% of all Parks divisions, an increase of 757 pledges.
Perform research into motivations for pledging.	Not started	Not started	Learn about barriers to follow-through from all staff that have pledged.
Increase pledges from M&O staff.	Added 151 pledges from M&O staff.	Complete	Collect pledges from 50% of M&O staff, an increase of 680 pledges.





## **Pledge Profile:** Gene Fowler, Von King Cultural Arts Center Manager, Brooklyn

**Gene's Pledge:** I pledge to reduce energy use at the Von King Center and Park.

### **Q: How is your pledge going?**

A: Really well so far. One of the first things I did when I got here, which was very recently, was to replace the light bulbs. This building is energy hungry - we do a lot of performances, and there are a ton of lights, especially in the auditorium. We had those huge 300-watt bulbs, and that's the first thing I saw and thought, "We can do better than this." So, I went out and bought 50 socket extenders and swapped out the 300-watt bulbs with 15-watt bulbs. The lumens are the same, but our estimate is about \$7,000 in savings per year from the switch. And in our kitchen, we cleaned the coils under the two freezers and two refrigerators to improve their efficiency.

### **Q: What challenges have you faced in your pledge implementation?**

A: There have been some challenges with some of the light fixtures and with the heating and cooling systems, but Capital Projects will be conducting a major overhaul of the facility, and I'm sure that will lead to more energy efficiency.

*Photo credit: Stephanie Farah.*



## Public Recycling

New Yorkers' interest in recycling, coupled with the Mayor's recently-announced goal to double the quantity of waste diverted from landfills from 15% to 30% by 2017, can provide a powerful motivation for elevating recycling in parks. In the past year, the agency continued to aggressively expand recycling opportunities in parks and at community gardens, allowing New Yorkers to literally "pitch in" to help the environment. Teams of volunteers helped promote waste reduction at public events and in Parks' recreation centers. In the year ahead, Parks will increase collaboration with sister agencies and partner groups to expand waste reduction education and to make collection more efficient.

PARKS' GOAL	PROGRESS SINCE JULY 2011	2011 MILESTONE STATUS	NEXT STEPS IN 2012
<b>Expand public recycling sites to 25% of all city parks and gardens by 2013</b>			
Increase public recycling sites to 300.	Increased public recycling to 287 sites. All Parks with recycling bins have been mapped.	Complete	Continue progress toward goal by working with members of the PlaNYC recycling taskforce. Evaluate performance of Parks' "blue bin" program.
Expand recycling at community gardens from 85 sites to 150 sites.	Completed. Community Garden volunteers manage recycling at each site.	Complete	Distribute additional bins in 2012 based on need.
Evaluate performance of pilot recycling "cage" placed at Rockaway Beach.	The cage has been used frequently for bottles and cans with little contamination.	Complete	Further expansion of recycling cages pending vendor funding plan.
Organize public education events to promote recycling and reduce litter.	130 Green Teens encouraged public to recycle and collected 3,251 bags of litter and 490 bags of recyclables from 10 parks in Queens. Started recruiting Green Teens citywide.	Complete	Launch Teen-created anti-litter PSA video at summer movies.
Encourage concessionaires in parks to recycle through education and site visits.	Visited tennis courts, beaches, golf courses, and marinas to encourage concessionaire recycling.	Complete	Conduct further outreach to concessionaires to learn about barriers to recycling.
<b>Expand and improve recycling at special events in parks</b>			
Collect and analyze survey results related to recycling at smaller special events in parks.	Survey found the greatest challenge to be recycling collection. DSNY does not collect off-schedule and recyclables have to be stored or taken directly to a centralized recycling site.	Complete	Include in the "How To" guide for Parks-produced events.
Encourage organizations that obtain a permit to produce events in parks to recycle.	Increased promotion of "GreenEvent Guidelines" - a comprehensive list of guidelines and resources for private partners to host eco-friendly events in parks.	Complete	Increase outreach and incentives to event producers.
Update "How-to" guide for recycling at privately-produced events.	Updated instructions for recycling at parks events.	Complete	Continue to promote the use of the GreenEvent guidelines and work with permit offices to improve incentives.
Create "How-to" guide for recycling at Parks-produced events.	Created guide for using the GreenTeam at large-scale citywide special events.	Complete	Create a "recycling kit" explaining recycling logistics for hosting small borough or recreation center events.
<b>Incorporate recycling storage into new park design</b>			
Conduct waste audits at parks to gauge volume of waste and recyclables to help inform future park designs.	Not started	Not started	Work with Parks operations staff and DSNY to develop scope of waste audit.
Explore opportunity to leverage existing storage options in parks, such as sheds and fenced-off areas, for recycling storage.	Not started	Not started	Survey storage options with Parks operations staff.
Incorporate storage zones into sustainable design checklist under development.	Added "Provide for storage and collection of recyclables" to the draft design checklist.	Complete	Conduct further checklist training.





## Pledge Profile:

### Chet Heald, District 1 Park Supervisor, Manhattan

**Chet's Pledge:** I pledge to walk and use my bike when making rounds in my district and to limit the use of my truck.

#### Q: How is your pledge going?

A: I walk or bike 90% of the time when making rounds in Lower Manhattan. Doing so is good for the environment, my health, and gives me a better look at my 34 properties. My staff is amazed that it's sometimes faster to walk or bike than it is to drive when visiting certain parks. In addition, it's often much easier to inspect Greenstreets on a bike since they can be hard to get to by car.

#### Q: What challenges have you faced in your pledge implementation?

A: Bad weather makes biking and walking challenging. When I was in Queens, it was hard to bike because my properties were so spread out.

*Photo credit: David Barker.*

## Leaf Composting

In the past, safety and aesthetic concerns led Parks to remove the large majority of leaves for transport to distant landfills. Over a decade ago, we began to take steps to manage the huge quantity of leaves in the fall and ensure a consistent supply of compost for our parklands. Leaf composting allows us to fortify our sustainable practices related to the nutrient cycle, environmental protection, chemical usage and carbon footprint reduction. In the past year, Parks has built on existing leaf management techniques and increased the efficiency of its leaf composting program. The agency installed the first of five new composters and expanded leaf mulching in fall 2011. We will work to further promote small-scale composting among staff and install more composters.

PARKS' GOAL	PROGRESS SINCE JULY 2011	2011 MILESTONE STATUS	NEXT STEPS IN 2012
<b>Install a new O2 composter in each borough to provide a continuous supply of compost</b>			
Install composters in Manhattan, the Bronx, Staten Island, and Brooklyn by the end of August 2011. Note: The Queens composter will be installed in 2012.	Installed Bronx composter in Van Cortlandt Park.	In progress	Complete Brooklyn, Staten Island, and Manhattan composters.
Produce at least one load of compost from each of the four units before January 2012.	Installed Bronx composter capable of converting 4,800 cubic feet of source material per year.	In Progress	Produce first load of compost in spring 2012.
<b>Expand leaf mulching in parks</b>			
Acquire and distribute 15 new mulch blades and retrofit them onto existing decks by the end of July 2011.	Deployed mulching equipment in fall 2011 in Queens parks.	Complete	Expansion contingent on funding.
Acquire, install, and distribute 43 new mulch decks at sites in all five boroughs by fall 2011.	Deployed mulching equipment in fall 2011 in Queens parks.	Complete	Expansion contingent on funding.
<b>Increase capacity for small-scale composting through training and ongoing communications.</b>			
Publish first "Compost Corner" item in Horticulture Bulletin.	Published feature in Horticulture Bulletin in July 2011.	Complete	Encourage more Gardeners to contribute to this Bulletin.
Complete a guide to types of small-scale compost bins in use in Parks.	Developed pamphlet for staff on how to build three different types of composting bins.	Complete	Promote guide among agency staff.
Include composting class in Winter Horticulture Classes series for winter 2011-2012.	Included composting at training in November 2011.	Complete	Complete
Develop metrics to measure leaf composting in parks.	Not started	Not started	Evaluate quantity of compost from new O2 composters.





## Pledge Profile:

### Jessica Kratz, Greenbelt Nature Center Coordinator, Staten Island

**Jessica's Pledge:** I pledge to avoid driving on rainy spring evenings, when amphibians travel to vernal pools to breed.

#### **Q: How is your pledge going?**

A: I have shared my pledge with others. By telling other people, I feel like there is more pressure and desire to be accountable. I do my best to practice what I preach and tell others about it through social media, by mentioning it during my book talks and readings, and on my website. It's very important; on rainy nights with temperatures above 42 degrees and little wind in March and April, frogs, salamanders, and other amphibians travel from their wintering sites in the uplands of Staten Island to the vernal pools for breeding. The rain helps keep their slimy skin moist. Some have been traveling these ancestral migration routes for hundreds of years, before there were any roads.

#### **Q: What challenges have you faced in your pledge implementation?**

A: Sometimes I can't avoid traveling on rainy spring evenings. In those cases, I try to use different routes of travel that go along more major, densely populated roads and away from the vernal pools and ponds.

*Photo credit: Jean Martini.*



## Park Design and Construction

Following our January 2011 release of the nation's first how-to manual for the design and construction of sustainable parks and open space: *High Performance Landscape Guidelines: 21st Century Parks for NYC*, we have been finding new ways to ensure that sustainability is considered in all capital projects. We have started to create a set of sustainable details and specifications for designers to use, and have drafted a sustainable design checklist modeled after the American Society of Landscape Architects' (ASLA) Sustainable Sites Initiative. We will work to fully implement the checklist and review past design installations in the field. We will also continue to improve the communication process with maintenance staff and will promote sustainability to the public through design presentations and on construction signs.

PARKS' GOAL	PROGRESS SINCE JULY 2011	2011 MILESTONE STATUS	NEXT STEPS IN 2012
<b>Create a sustainable landscape design checklist</b>			
Create tools to facilitate in-house use of the checklist, such as recommended plant lists and online calculators.	Created list of recommended plants for capital projects and presented to all park designers.	Complete	Add calculators to internal database to quantify impacts of sustainable design.
Create a training program to educate staff on how to use the checklist.	Completed training for all designers for first phase of the design checklist.	In progress	Conduct second round of training in 2012.
Begin tracking checklist compliance and monitor progress based on data entered for each project.	Not started	Not started	Begin tracking checklist compliance and monitor progress based on data entered for each project.
Compile comments on the applicability of the national standards at Parks for distribution to the American Society of Landscape Architects.	Complete. Tested checklist applicability by running example projects through the Sustainable Sites criteria. Made recommendations to the ASLA for future improvements.	Complete	Complete
<b>Create digital reference library cataloging sustainable park design elements.</b>			
Set up online digital library, working with agency's information technology staff.	Added sustainable design details from past 3-4 years.	Complete	Promote library among designers for use in every capital project.
Create a working group to evaluate success of sustainable specifications for input into the digital library.	Not started	Not started	Create a working group to evaluate success of sustainable specifications beginning Summer 2013.
Establish a system for adding future specifications to the library.	Not started	Not started	Designers to add sustainable specifications to library upon design completion.
Determine which specifications can become a universal standard for all new parks.	Not started	Not started	Evaluate success of sustainable specifications with agency divisions.
<b>Strengthen dialogue between park designers and park maintenance staff to generate sustainable park solutions.</b>			
Conduct on-site evaluations of park design features with teams of park designers and maintenance and OMP inspections staff.	Established notification process for new park construction to ensure adherence to inspection standards.	Complete	Create a working group to evaluate success of sustainable specifications beginning Summer 2013.
Identify areas to alter Parks contract language to allow for more successful sustainable designs.	Not started	Not started	Identify areas to alter Parks contract language to allow for more successful sustainable designs.
Host first in a series of forums bringing together park designers and horticultural staff.	Held seminar for 60 horticultural maintenance and capital projects staff.	In Progress	Organize further seminars in 2012.





## Pledge Profile:

### Michael Shipman, Consultant Project Manager, Queens

**Michael's Pledge:** I pledge to revise consultant standards for proposals to exclude plastic covers and binding, in an effort to reduce the amount of non-recyclable materials submitted.

#### **Q: How is your pledge going?**

A: I have inserted the following text in all Requests for Proposals (RFPs) sent to our construction supervision consultants: "In line with NYC Parks' Sustainable Parks initiative, Parks requests that proposals no longer contain plastic, since any plastic other than bottles or jugs is not recyclable in the City of New York. Acceptable binding alternatives include stapling or using a binding clip."

#### **Q: What challenges have you faced in your pledge implementation?**

A: After I instituted this change, some firms still submitted plastic covers and binding. At that point I contacted each firm that did not abide by the changes to explain the new standard. The firms seem to have listened and are submitting proposals on double-sided paper with binding clips or staples.

*Photo credit: David Barker.*

## Measuring Sustainability at Parks

In July, we presented 36 metrics to provide a starting point for quantifying our greening practices, measuring progress, and highlighting strengths and areas for improvement. For the update, we added 2011 data and examined a few of the indicators in greater detail to learn more about our environmental footprint. Inspired by PlaNYC, we added arrows in the table to indicate if the change since FY 2008 has moved in a positive or negative direction in terms of the environmental benefit. For full explanations regarding methodology, please refer to the original [Sustainability Plan](#). The bolded indicators in the table measure the cumulative environmental impact or outcome of several agency initiatives.

INDICATOR	FY10	FY11	Four-year trend (change from FY08)
<b>Material Resources (Outcome indicators bolded)</b>			
<b>Total Parks Waste to Department of Sanitation Transfer Stations (Tons)</b>	34,352*	Not available	↑
Wood chips transported by private vendor for reuse (tons)**	4,498	2,430	↑
# of Christmas Trees recycled in Parks at Mulchfest	23,615	16,505	↑
# of Parks sites with recycling operations*	47	287	↑
# of recycling bins in parks	125	902	↑
Recyclables collected at Parks-produced citywide special events (bags)	230	190	↑
GreenTeam volunteers and Greeters assisting with recycling (# of individuals)***	186	433	↑
Parks Opportunity Program (POP) Job Training Participants (JTPs) trained to compost (# of JTPs)	81	15	↑
<b>Water (Outcome indicators bolded)</b>			
<b>Total Gallons of Stormwater Captured by Green Roofs and Greenstreets built since 2008</b>	8,089,477	14,493,965	↑
<b>Stormwater Captured by Standard Greenstreets installed since FY2008 (Gallons)†</b>	5,110,524	6,881,049	↑
# of Greenstreets sites Installed per year	55	38	↑
Greenstreets area Installed per year (sq ft)	33,828	55,894	↑
<b>Stormwater Captured by Stormwater Greenstreets installed since FY2008 (Gallons)</b>	2,433,553	7,048,016	↑
# of Stormwater Greenstreets sites Installed per year	7	20	↑
Stormwater Greenstreets planting area Installed per year (sq ft)	8,142	35,664	↑
Stormwater Greenstreets catchbasin area added per year (sq ft)	26,452	139,549	↑
<b>Stormwater Captured by Green Roof Systems (Gallons) Installed since FY2008</b>	545,400	564,900	↓
# of Green Roof systems installed per year	16	2	↓

\*Results are reported by calendar year, including DSNY recycling bins and greenthumb sites.

\*\* A significant portion of the wood chips produced by Parks are reused internally within each borough. These figures are not reflected in this indicator.

\*\*\*Greeters numbers are included only from FY11 onward.

† The difference between standard and stormwater Greenstreets is explained in the Water section of the Methodology (Appendix).



Table Continued

INDICATOR	FY10	FY11	Four-year trend (change from FY08)
<b>Energy (Outcome indicators bolded)</b>			
<b>Total Annual CO2 Emissions from Vehicles, Facility Heat and Electricity (Metric tons CO2e)</b>	<b>52,336</b>	<b>51,456</b>	↑
<b>Vehicles – Annual CO2 Emissions (Metric Tons CO2e)</b>	<b>13,583</b>	<b>14,139</b>	↑
Motor gasoline annual usage (gallons)	857,893	895,757	↑
Diesel fuel annual usage (gallons)	444,721	489,183	↑
Biodiesel annual usage (gallons)	103,723	77,082	↑
<b>Facilities – Annual Heat CO2 Emissions*(Metric Tons CO2e)</b>	<b>4,752</b>	<b>4,933</b>	↑
Facilities heating oil annual usage (gallons)	570,933	583,414	↑
Biodiesel (B20) annual usage (gallons)	494,711	454,375	↑
Biodiesel (B5) annual usage (gallons)	76,222	129,039	↑
Diesel (D2) annual usage (gallons)	0	0	↑
<b>Facilities – Annual Electricity CO2 Emissions (Metric Tons CO2e)</b>	<b>34,001</b>	<b>32,384</b>	↑
Agency annual electricity usage (Kilowatt hours)	72,189,284	68,756,558	↑
<b>Green Partnerships</b>			
# of restaurants and snack bars that are members of the Green Restaurant Association (GRA), out of all contracts signed since FY08	5/49	5/63	↑
# of concessions planning to install or use Energy Star/Green Seal compliant appliances and products, out of all contracts signed since FY08	20/49	21/63	↑
# of concessions planning to use energy efficient light bulbs (CFLs), out of all contracts signed since FY08	16/49	17/63	↑
# of concessions planning to utilize alternative energy sources, out of all contracts signed since FY08	9/49	10/63	↑
# of concessions planning to implement a system for disposing recyclable waste, out of all contracts signed since FY08	6/49	8/63	↑
# of public environmental programs hosted by the Urban Park Rangers per year	3,389	3,268	↑
# of people attending Urban Park Rangers programs per year	59,665	70,833	↑

\*Data is not normalized by weather conditions.

## Behind the Numbers

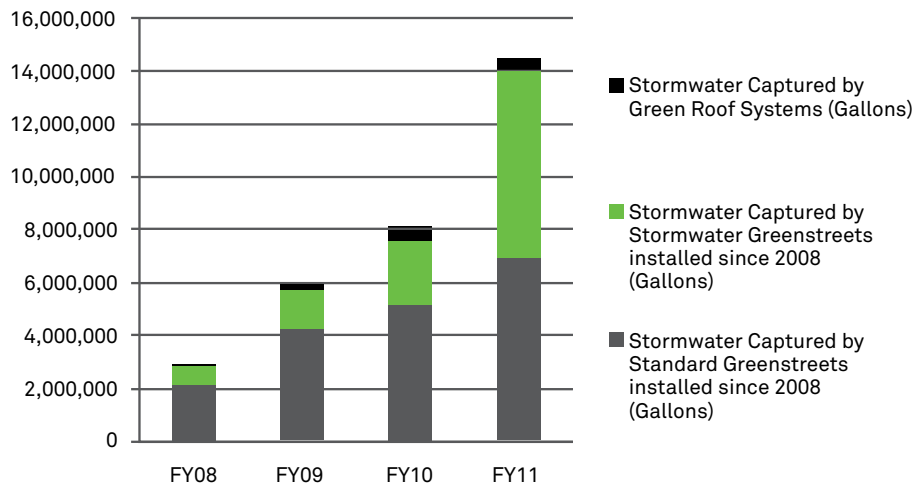
### Stormwater captured by greenstreets:

The increase in stormwater capture each year can be attributed to the continued expansion of the Greenstreets program thanks to funding from PlaNYC and other sources. Since FY 2010, the relative amount of new standard Greenstreets sites has dropped due to budgetary constraints. However, the agency has shifted to a design that has an even greater environmental benefit – the Stormwater Greenstreets. After receiving funding under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, Parks was able to experiment with new technologies and techniques to build Greenstreets that capture stormwater from not just the planting bed, but the surrounding roadbed as well. The 26 pilot sites under the program gave us tremendous experience, ultimately resulting in a long-term funding relationship with the City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Parks will be constructing 30 stormwater greenstreets and over 130 bioswales a year to help DEP achieve its water quality goals.

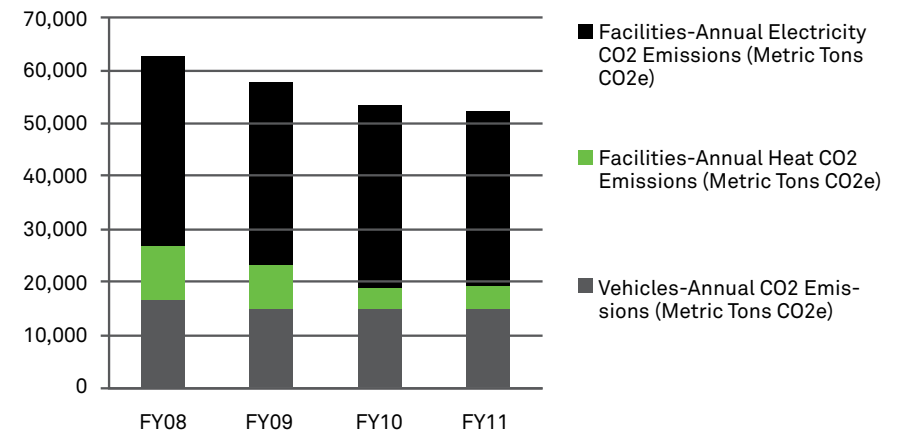
### Greenhouse gas emissions:

Combined greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles, facility heating, and facility electricity in Parks have decreased by 17% since FY08. Several factors contribute to the trend; First, Parks shifted away from diesel to use more biodiesel (B5 and B20) in its facility heating oil. Although the city law requires B2 biodiesel, Parks uses B20 in 97% of its facility tanks. A number of facilities were closed during FY 2010 and FY 2011, lowering overall electricity and heat consumption. In addition, technical problems with electricity readings have resulted in underestimation of electricity usage which is expected to lead to increased electricity use in FY 2012. Finally, new fueling systems installed in Parks facilities have greatly decreased the amount of fuel consumed by other City agencies in those facilities. Combined with adding nine extended range electric vehicles and 46 hybrid sedans to the Parks fleet, replacing gasoline vehicles, Parks was able to reduce its overall emissions from vehicle fuel use. Overall, these efforts have helped improve air quality and reduce global warming-causing emissions.

Stormwater Captured by Greenstreets



Greenhouse Gas Emissions





## Next Steps

In response to feedback from across the agency, the Sustainable Parks Task Force will convene three additional working groups to address areas vital to agency operations: fuel, water, and energy efficiency. These groups will engage field-based staff to identify and further integrate operating procedures that benefit the environment. We recognize that not all milestones have started or been completed since the release of the July Plan. We will work with our newly formed Sustainable Parks Steering Committee to allocate resources and ensure we meet our commitments. In addition to furthering outreach to Parks staff, we will work with our Green Guru network to develop messaging and materials for the public to reduce litter, promote recycling, and increase awareness about the role of parks and open spaces in improving New York City's quality of life for future generations. Sustainable Parks will publish its next update in early 2013. Together, we are able to create a greener culture at Parks and in New York City, and affirm our commitment to being "NYC's Greenest."

*Rockaway Beach, Queens.  
Photo credit: Daniel Avila.*

