

# 2017 NYC INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

## PARKS & RECREATION-013

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### AGENCY DESCRIPTION

The New York City Department of Parks and Recreation manages 14 percent of the land in New York City. These assets range from playgrounds and large parks, to tranquil wooded areas and more than 14 miles of beaches. Parks serve as New Yorkers' backyards, as vital meeting areas for outdoor play and recreation – but also as critical engines for economic growth and development.

NYC Parks' mission is to plan resilient and sustainable parks, public spaces, and recreational amenities, build a park system for present and future generations, and care for parks and public spaces to benefit New Yorkers across the five boroughs.

Through an effort to improve the quality, accessibility, efficiency and sustainability of our city parks, the Mayor's office has funded a number of equity initiatives including:

#### Community Parks Initiative

NYC Parks' Community Parks Initiative, at the center of the Mayor's plan, is completely redesigning and reconstructing nearly 60 parks in neighborhoods across the city with the greatest needs—35 of which are in construction.

#### Parks Without Borders

NYC Parks is also leading in innovative park design with Parks Without Borders, a new design approach that focuses on improving park entrances, edges, and spaces adjacent to parks. By extending parks into communities, Parks Without Borders will improve public realm.

#### Anchor Parks

Under Anchor Parks, the city selected eight parks that have historically received underinvestment, high surrounding population, and potential for park development. The Anchor Parks program is part of NYC Parks Commissioner Mitchell Silver's Framework for an Equitable Future, a commitment to create thriving public spaces for all New Yorkers.

The work of the agency goes far beyond the maintenance of New York City's nearly 30,000 acres. Parks is the City's leading programmer of cultural, athletic and social activities, including nature walks, concerts, learn-to-swim classes, sports clinics, historic house tours, and much more. Each year Parks hosts annual events such as WinterJam, Adventures NYC, and the Fall Field Day. In addition, Parks produces many special events, concerts and movie premieres, as well as providing free rental equipment for skating, baseball, and miniature golf.

The NYC Parks Commissioner is appointed by the Mayor to oversee and direct the work of the agency. The Commissioner appoints Deputy Commissioners, Borough Commissioners, and Assistant Commissioners who are responsible for managing the agency's divisions. These senior officials supervise the work of thousands of Parks employees. They work with elected officials to complete capital improvements for parks, playgrounds, and recreation centers. They work with the private sector to sponsor free public events. They get the community involved in Parks through volunteer initiatives and educational and athletic programming in recreation and nature centers. They prepare Parks' budget and monitor the work of Parks' ice-skating rinks, golf courses and other concessions.

### UNIT DESCRIPTION

Central Forestry (CF) street tree planting manages street tree planting contracts throughout the five boroughs. A working group within the division is currently working on resolving a number of specific issues pertaining to street tree soil quality. Soil issues are far reaching and affect multiple aspects of CF tree planting work impacting contractor productivity, species selection, and tree mortality rates. Resolving soil issues will have numerous benefits for improving the health and longevity of NYC street trees

Soil compaction in urban tree beds is a difficult problem for Central Forestry to resolve. It is one of the leading causes of tree mortality in urban environments. The current options available to urban forestry are expensive and difficult to administer on a large scale; however, new research using plants, specifically the tillage radish, is being conducted that could help mitigate soil compaction. Several farmers in the northeast have been using the tillage radish to alleviate soil compaction, the results thus far have been promising. A University of Vermont professor has been studying the effects of radish on compacted soil. While the application has only been used in an agricultural environment, the research indicates that it could benefit urban soil compaction as well.

To use radishes to mitigate soil compaction, the seeds must be planted in mid-summer. The plants will grow to maturity throughout the late summer/fall. Radishes have long taproots that can penetrate deep into the soil, pulling up nutrients trapped in the earth. The plants remain in the ground during winter. As they die back, the plant material in the ground becomes organic matter for the tree bed and the holes from the taproot create pore space which allows for water to percolate into the tree bed. Interns would be needed to help select sites, plant the seeds, water and monitor the plants until they are established.

The Radish Intern Project (RIP) will provide CF with useful information on a potential low cost/high impact method to remediate soil compaction, which could decrease tree mortality in NYC. The results will be analyzed the following spring and beyond, which could be a project for summer 2018.

## **POSITION TITLE**

Central Forestry Radish Intern Project Intern

## **INTERNSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Experience of conducting urban, biological field research.
- Knowledge growing/cultivating plants.
- Data compilation, mining and analysis incorporating descriptive statistical techniques (soil sample data), exploratory analysis (tree mortality data) and inferential statistical techniques (soil and mortality data).
- Report writing.

## **QUALIFICATIONS / SPECIAL SKILLS / AREAS OF STUDY**

- Research design and development.
- Problem solving.
- Urban Forestry/Ecology/Biology/Agriculture/Plant Science.
- Data management.

## **APPLICATION PROCESS**

Please email cover letter and resume to [Leslie.Nusblatt@parks.nyc.gov](mailto:Leslie.Nusblatt@parks.nyc.gov)

## **SALARY RANGE**

Unpaid