


Celebrating Earth Day!
Favorite Places in NYC to Enjoy Nature
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The Origin of Earth Day

Every year on April 22, Earth Day marks the anniversary of the birth of the modern environmental movement in 1970.

- In the decades leading up to the first Earth Day, Americans were consuming vast amounts of leaded gas through massive and inefficient automobiles. Industry belched out smoke and sludge with little fear of the consequences from either the law or bad press. Air pollution was commonly accepted as the smell of prosperity. Until this point, mainstream America remained largely oblivious to environmental concerns and how a polluted environment threatens human health.
- The stage was set for change with the publication of Rachel Carson's New York Times bestseller *Silent Spring* in 1962. The book represented a watershed moment, selling more than 500,000 copies in 24 countries as it raised public awareness and concern for living organisms, the environment and the inextricable links between pollution and public health.
- Senator Gaylord Nelson, a junior senator from Wisconsin, had long been concerned about the deteriorating environment in the United States. Then in January 1969, he and many others witnessed the ravages of a massive oil spill in Santa Barbara, California. Inspired by the student anti-war movement, Senator Nelson wanted to infuse the energy of student anti-war protests with an emerging public consciousness about air and water pollution. Senator Nelson announced the idea for a teach-in on college campuses to the national media, and persuaded Pete McCloskey, a conservation-minded Republican Congressman, to serve as his co-chair. They recruited Denis Hayes, a young activist, to organize the campus teach-ins and they choose April 22, a weekday falling between Spring Break and Final Exams, to maximize the greatest student participation.



Earth Day History Continued

- Recognizing its potential to inspire all Americans, Hayes built a national staff of 85 to promote events across the land and the effort soon broadened to include a wide range of organizations, faith groups, and others. They changed the name to Earth Day, which immediately sparked national media attention, and caught on across the country. Earth Day inspired 20 million Americans — at the time, 10% of the total population of the United States — to take to the streets, parks and auditoriums to demonstrate against the impacts of 150 years of industrial development which had left a growing legacy of serious human health impacts. Thousands of colleges and universities organized protests against the deterioration of the environment and there were massive coast-to-coast rallies in cities, towns, and communities.
- Groups that had been fighting individually against oil spills, polluting factories and power plants, raw sewage, toxic dumps, pesticides, freeways, the loss of wilderness and the extinction of wildlife united on Earth Day around these shared common values. Earth Day 1970 achieved a rare political alignment, enlisting support from Republicans and Democrats, rich and poor, urban dwellers and farmers, business and labor leaders. By the end of 1970, the first Earth Day led to the creation of the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the passage of other first of their kind environmental laws, including the National Environmental Education Act, the Occupational Safety and Health Act, and the Clean Air Act. Two years later Congress passed the Clean Water Act. A year after that, Congress passed the Endangered Species Act and soon after the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act. These laws have protected millions of men, women and children from disease and death and have protected hundreds of species from extinction.



Earth Day Goes Global

- As 1990 approached, a group of environmental leaders approached Denis Hayes to once again organize another major campaign for the planet. This time, Earth Day went global, mobilizing 200 million people in 141 countries and lifting environmental issues onto the world stage. Earth Day 1990 gave a huge boost to recycling efforts worldwide and helped pave the way for the 1992 United Nations Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. It also prompted President Bill Clinton to award Senator Nelson the Presidential Medal of Freedom — the highest honor given to civilians in the United States — for his role as Earth Day founder.
- As the millennium approached, Hayes agreed to spearhead another campaign, this time focused on global warming and a push for clean energy. With 5,000 environmental groups in a record 184 countries reaching out to hundreds of millions of people, Earth Day 2000 built both global and local conversations, leveraging the power of the Internet to organize activists around the world, while also featuring a drum chain that traveled from village to village in Gabon, Africa. Hundreds of thousands of people also gathered on the National Mall in Washington, DC for a First Amendment Rally.
- 30 years on, Earth Day 2000 sent world leaders a loud and clear message: Citizens around the world wanted quick and decisive action on global warming and clean energy.



Earth Day 2010 - Today

- As in 1970, Earth Day 2010 came at a time of great challenge for the environmental community to combat the cynicism of climate change deniers, well-funded oil lobbyists, reticent politicians, a disinterested public, and a divided environmental community with the collective power of global environmental activism. In the face of these challenges, Earth Day prevailed and Earth Day Network reestablished Earth Day as a major moment for global action for the environment.
- Over the decades, Earth Day Network has brought hundreds of millions of people into the environmental movement, creating opportunities for civic engagement and volunteerism in 193 countries. Earth Day engages more than 1 billion people every year and has become a major stepping-stone along the pathway of engagement around the protection of the planet.
- Today, Earth Day is widely recognized as the largest secular observance in the world, marked by more than a billion people every year as a day of action to change human behavior and create global, national and local policy changes.
- Now, the fight for a clean environment continues with increasing urgency, as the ravages of climate change become more and more apparent every day.
- As the awareness of our climate crisis grows, so does civil society mobilization, which is reaching a fever pitch across the globe today. Disillusioned by the low level of ambition following the adoption of the Paris Agreement in 2015 and frustrated with international environmental lethargy, citizens of the world are rising up to demand far greater action for our planet and its people.
- Courtesy of earthday.org

Mannahatta: A Natural
History of New York City
by Eric W. Sanderson
(2009: Harry N. Abrams
Inc.)



The Scenic Hudson Decision

- In September 1962, the Consolidated Edison Company announced plans to build a pumped storage facility, the largest of its kind in the world, at Storm King Mountain near Cornwall, New York. The initial application for license to construct the plant was filed with the Federal Power Commission in January 1963. On November 8, 1963, a small group of concerned citizens met at the home of Carl Carmer and formed the Scenic Hudson Preservation Conference to fight the pumped storage project on the grounds that it posed a threat to the Cornwall water supply, the Hudson River fisheries, and to the scenic beauty and historic significance of Storm King Mountain.
- The Scenic Hudson Decision was a 17-year (1963-1981) legal dispute which defeated Consolidated Edison's plan to embed the world's largest pumped storage hydroelectric plant into the face of Storm King Mountain, near Cornwall, New York. The lengthy and controversial case had an immense impact on environmental and legal issues affecting the Hudson River Valley as well as the nation. The landmark case set important precedents in environmental law including: the right of citizens to participate in environmental disputes, the emergence of environmental law as a legal specialty, ideas Congress incorporated in the country's first National Environment Policy Act (NEPA), federal and state regulation of the environment, and it is credited with launching the modern environmental movement.





Did You Know?

- According to the NYC Dept. of Parks and Recreation, the city has approximately 1,700 parks, playgrounds and recreation areas.
- New York City has 578 miles of coastline
- That we have 3 parks larger than Central park
- That over 386 species of birds have been recorded, nearly 40% of the total number of species in North America
- Over 2,179 varieties of plants and trees, approximately 2/3 of which are native.
- NYC has 51 Forever Wild Natures Preserves totaling 8,700 acres of forests, wetlands and meadows
- NYC has over 5.2 million trees and 168 species

Top Ten Parks by Area

- [Pelham Bay Park](#), [Bronx](#) - 2,765 acres (11.19 km²)^l
- [Greenbelt](#), [Staten Island](#) - 1,778 acres (7.20 km²)
- [Van Cortlandt Park](#), [Bronx](#) - 1,146 acres (4.64 km²)
- [Flushing Meadows-Corona Park](#), [Queens](#) - 897 acres (3.63 km²)
- [Central Park](#), [Manhattan](#) - 843 acres (3.41 km²)
- [Freshkills Park](#), [Staten Island](#) - 813 acres (3.29 km²)
- [Marine Park](#), [Brooklyn](#) - 798 acres (3.23 km²)
- [Bronx Park](#), [Bronx](#) - 718 acres (2.91 km²)
- [Alley Pond Park](#), [Queens](#) - 655 acres (2.65 km²)
- [Forest Park](#), [Queens](#) - 544 acres (2.20 km²)

(source: Wikipedia)

Manhattan Places: Inwood Hill Park: 196.5 acres



Inwood Hill Park



Manhattan Places: Fort Tryon Park



Manhattan Places: Central Park: The North Woods, Harlem Meer, Conservatory Gardens

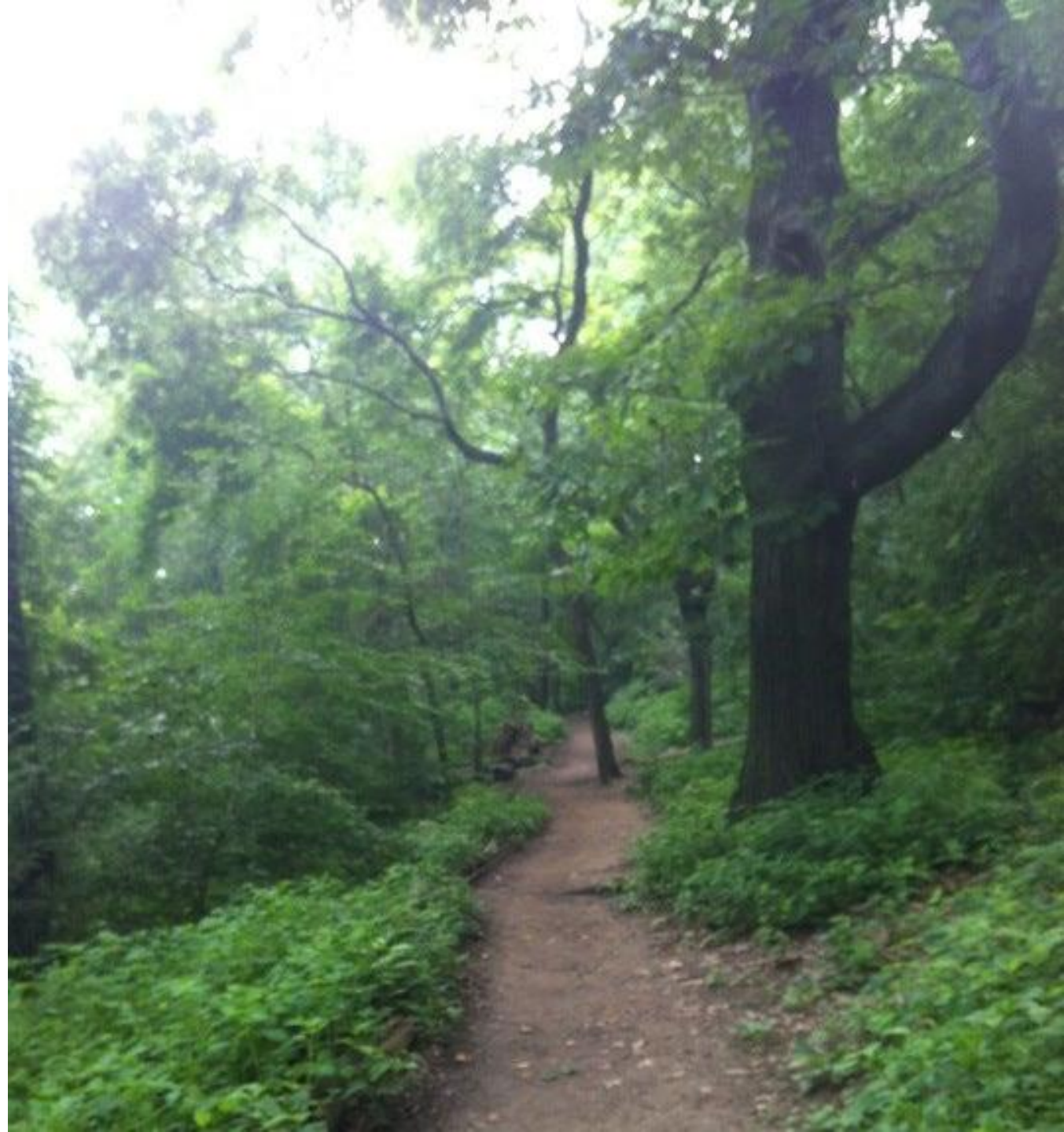


Central Park: 843 acres (1857-1873)



Riverside Park Bird Sanctuary 116-124th Sts.

- The forested and meadow areas between 116th and 124th Streets have been designated the Riverside Park Bird Sanctuary. This is the place to bird. (An annotated checklist of birds of the Sanctuary can be obtained, free of charge, from [Riverside Park Fund](#).) Since 1997, the approximately 10 acres of the Sanctuary have been undergoing reforestation, which has included the removal of invasive species, such as Japanese knotweed, Norway maple, and ailanthus, and the addition of bird-friendly native plants, such as hackberry trees, elderberry, and several species of viburnum and sumac.
- Over 3,000 plants--trees, shrubs, groundcovers--have been added, but there is still much to be done. The forest is primarily a monoculture of black cherry, and a former wildflower meadow is now a field that tends to fluctuate between being a grass lawn and a weed jungle, depending on an erratic mowing schedule.



Fort Washington Park – 155th to Dyckman Streets along the Hudson River

- Known to history buffs as the namesake of a Revolutionary War structure built for the rebels and seized by the British; known to children as the site of Manhattan's only lighthouse, the Little Red Lighthouse, the protagonist in a popular children's book; known to aesthetes as an ideal lookout spot onto the Hudson River and the Palisades, Fort Washington Park is a valued part of the Washington Heights community.
- Located along the Hudson River, Fort Washington Park also offers spectacular views of the new Jersey Palisades and the George Washington Bridge along its 160-acre ribbon of dramatic cliffs, meadows, and wooded areas.
- It's not just its history and beauty people value; baseball fields, basketball courts, tennis courts, and a playground welcome athletes of all ages.



Fort Washington Park





Prospect Park - Brooklyn

- Designed and constructed over a thirty-year period (1865-1895) by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux, the masterminds behind Central Park, Prospect Park has blossomed into a premiere destination for Brooklyn visitors and residents alike.
- Widely known for its intricate manmade watercourse (wetlands) and its trees, the bulk of Brooklyn's remaining indigenous forest, the park is a highly functional green space. Contained within its 526 acres are a zoo, the first urban-area Audubon Center in the nation, an ice rink, a band shell, a carousel, and dozens of athletic and recreational facilities.
- There are a number of hiking trails including Lullwater (1 Mile) and Midwood (.75 miles), through Brooklyn's oldest remaining forest



Brooklyn Botanical Gardens

- Opening in 1911, the gardens spans 52 acres. It is known for its 200 cherry trees, Japanese Hill and Pond Garden, Conservatory and Children's Gardens.
- There are over 1,400 varieties of plants in the gardens.

Brooklyn Botanical Gardens





Greenwood Cemetery

- Green-Wood Cemetery is a 478-acre (193 ha) cemetery in the western portion of Brooklyn, New York City. The cemetery is located between South Slope/Greenwood Heights, Park Slope, Windsor Terrace, Borough Park, Kensington, and Sunset Park, and lies several blocks southwest of Prospect Park.
- Opening in 1838 it predated both Central Park and Prospect Park and is one of their sources of inspiration.
- 163 bird species have been recorded and it is a recognized place for birding. Green-Wood's 700 varieties of trees also makes it a special place for nature.

Green-Wood Cemetery





Brooklyn: Marine Park

- Environmentally, it consists of 530 acres of grassland and precious salt marsh, protected as a [Forever Wild preserve](#). The Urban Park Rangers present bushels of educational and fun activities in its Salt Marsh Nature Center each week, and interested, independent visitors can wander along the Salt Marsh Nature Trail to observe unique regional flora and fauna.
- Recreationally, the park offers amenities as varied as a golf course, bocce courts, cricket fields, and baseball diamonds, to name but a few. The park also contains multiple playgrounds, bicycle greenways, and a launch and landing site for canoes and kayaks at Gerritsen inlet.



Brooklyn: Floyd Bennett Field (1,000+ acres).

- Floyd Bennett Field was opened as New York City's first municipal airport on May 23, 1931. Throughout the 1930's, it was the site of many important first and record breaking flights, which helped to advance aviation technology during the "Golden Age of Aviation." In 1941, Floyd Bennett Field was sold to the United States Navy and became Naval Air Station-New York. During World War II, Floyd Bennett Field was the busiest naval air station in the United States.
- Bennett Field is currently part of the [Gateway National Recreation Area](#)'s Jamaica Bay Unit, and is managed by the [National Park Service](#).
- There are hiking trails, campground, historic sites and a visitor center.
- Photo credit: hipcamp.com



Brooklyn: Owl's Head Park (Bay Ridge)

- Do you like long walks by the water? Picnicking in summertime and sledding in the winter? We have the perfect match for you! No, this isn't a personal ad; it's Owl's Head Park. The spacious property contains rolling hills, peaceful, meandering pathways, and breathtaking views of the New York skyline and striking Verrazano Narrows Bridge.

Once you fall for its aesthetics, settle in and explore its more active attractions. Basketball courts, a playground area, a spray pool, and a popular skate park fall within its borders. Four-legged visitors voice (well, bark) their approval of the 150-foot long by 40-foot wide dog run where they can romp and run with fellow canines.

- (courtesy of nycgovparks.org)

Bush Terminal Park: Sunset Park

- A quiet natural space in the industrial section of Sunset Park, Bush Terminal Piers Park is a lovely waterfront park with spectacular views of the area's tidal pools and the Bay Ridge Channel. This site, once a port complex, was cleaned up and opened as a public park in 2014.
- Visitors to the park can enter at 43rd Street, and walk along the waterfront esplanade past the tide ponds and restored wetlands. Visitors will find two multi-purpose soccer and baseball fields as well as a nature preserve that allows a fun glimpse into Brooklyn's wild side.



Bush Terminal Piers Park



Building The Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway

<http://www.brooklyngreenway.org/>

- For over a decade, Brooklyn Greenway Initiative (BGI) has acted as the catalyst for the development, establishment and long-term stewardship of the Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway, a 26-mile protected and landscaped route for pedestrians and cyclists.
- When completed in 2021, will connect Brooklyn's storied and iconic waterfront, parks and open space, commercial and cultural corridors, and new tech and innovation hubs for 2.65 million Brooklyn residents, over 1.1 million employees in Brooklyn, and 15 million annual visitors from across the City and around the world.
- The route spans from Greenpoint in NW Brooklyn following waterways and shoreline around past Canarsie in SE Brooklyn.



Queens: Forest Park

- A mix of natural treasures and man-made prizes, Forest Park is 500+ acres of options for visitors.

With a “knob and kettle” terrain (a series of small hills) and 165 acres of trees, the park is an agrarian delight. Park goers interested in exploring Forest Park’s natural settings firsthand often travel to its eastern portion, which abounds in hiking trails and bridle paths. Horses can be hired from a private stable in order to cover more ground from a higher perspective.

Heading west, Forest Park transforms into an athlete’s playground. Softball, baseball, tennis, bocce, handball, and golf are a few of your options when you wander through this portion of the park. The 110-acre, par 67 golf course was modeled after Scottish links and maintains its reputation as one of the City’s most challenging golf courses.



Queens: Alley Pond Park – 655 acres: Adjacent to the Bayside and Douglaston Neighborhoods, and Little Neck Bay

- Alley Pond Park is the 2nd largest park in Queens and offers glimpses into New York's geologic past, its colonial history, and its current conservation efforts. Because of its glacier-formed moraine, the park has numerous unique natural features, like its freshwater and saltwater wetlands, tidal flats, meadows, and forests, which create a diverse ecosystem and support abundant bird life.
- The park is also home to New York City's first public high ropes adventure course (the largest in the Northeast), part of the Urban Park Rangers' larger [Alley Pond Park Adventure](#) program. A low-cost outdoor education and adventure program, Alley Pond Park Adventure teaches participants how to canoe, use a compass, fish, and enjoy a natural setting without leaving NYC.
- To top it off, Alley Pond Park has all the amenities you'd expect from a neighborhood park--playgrounds, barbeque areas, and courts and fields galore!
- (courtesy of nycgovparks.org)



Hunters Point South & Gantry State Park, Long Island City: Two spectacular parks along the East Riverfront



Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge

- The Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge is one of the largest expanses of open space in the region, consisting of over 19,000 acres of land, bay, and ocean waters in Brooklyn and Queens.

Comprising an area almost equal to the size of Manhattan, Jamaica Bay consists of numerous islands, a labyrinth of waterways, meadowlands, and two fresh water ponds.

Enclosed by the Rockaway Peninsula and protected from the Atlantic Ocean, the region hosts over 325 species of birds, 50 species of butterflies and 100 species of fish. A favorite stop of migratory waterfowl, the area is an integral part of the larger regional ecosystem.

- According to the Audubon Society Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge is one of the best places in New York City to observe migrating species. In fact, it's a birder's paradise with 332 bird species sighted at the refuge over the last 25 years (38 are accidental, and include several New York State records); that is nearly half the species in the Northeast. It is one of the most significant bird sanctuaries in the northeastern United States. Birding is excellent year round. It is a rich area for wintering waterfowl, including Snow Goose (at least 700 at one time),
- <https://www.nps.gov/gate/planyourvisit/thingstodojamaicabay>



Bronx: Van Cortlandt Park

- Van Cortlandt Park — more than a thousand acres atop the ridges and valleys of the northwest Bronx — is New York City's third largest park. Playing fields and playgrounds are scattered about the park's edges, surrounding a richly forested heartland fed by Tibbets Brook. The park is home to the country's first public golf course, the oldest house in the Bronx, and the borough's largest freshwater lake.

From the quiet green shade of its oak forests to the crisp white mantle of cricket players atop the Parade Ground, the park boasts a past rich in culture, well-versed in history, and blessed with the intrinsic beauty of nature.



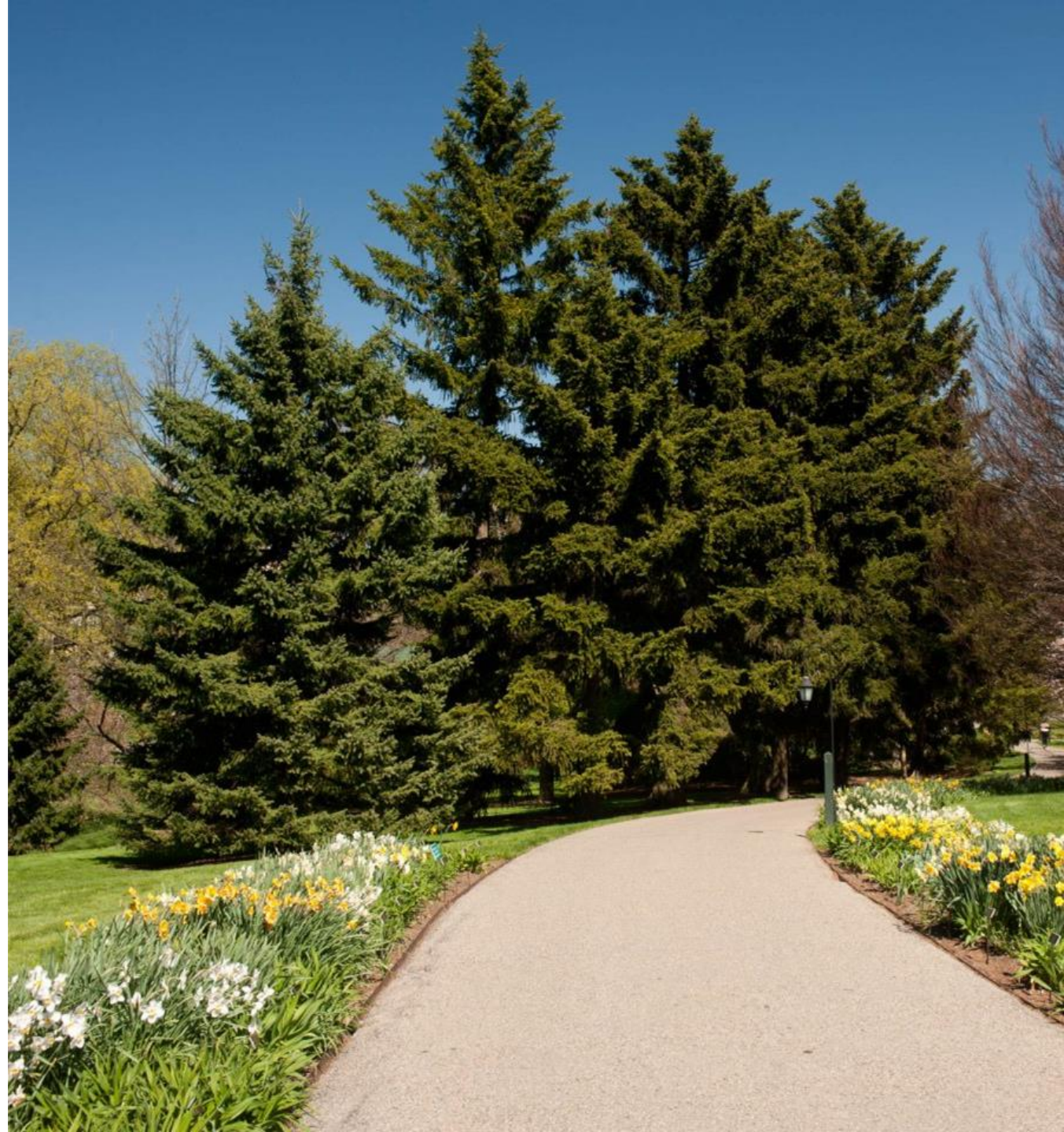
Van Cortlandt Park

Photos courtesy of nycgovparks.org (autumn scene by Malcolm Pinckney)



Bronx: The New York Botanical Gardens (1891)

- The 250-acre (100 ha) site contains a landscape with over one million living plants; the [Enid A. Haupt Conservatory](#), a [greenhouse](#) containing several habitats; and the [LuEsther T. Mertz Library](#), which contains one of the world's largest collections of botany-related texts.
- The Garden contains 50 different gardens and plant collections. There is a serene cascade waterfall, as well as wetlands and a 50-acre (20 ha) tract of original, never-logged, old-growth New York forest.
- Annual events include the Orchid Show and the Holiday Train Exhibit.



New York Botanical Garden



Pelham Bay Park: Northeast Bronx

- More than three times the size of Manhattan's Central Park, Pelham Bay Park is the City's largest park property. Visitors to the park enjoy miles of bridle paths and hiking trails, Orchard Beach, the Bartow-Pell Mansion, two golf courses, and a breathtaking 13-mile saltwater shoreline that hugs Long Island Sound. Athletes frequent its numerous fields and courts while children frolic in its playgrounds. Pelham Bay Park also has a wide and diverse range of plant and animal life and features prime locations to view one of nature's most skillful hunters, the osprey.



Pelham Bay Park



Bronx Park (North central Bronx to the SE Bronx)

- Bronx Park boasts some of the city's most beautiful outdoor space and ecologically diverse wildlife. A myriad of plants and animals make their habitat along the Bronx River and in the park's forests. The vastness of the park and the diversity of its flora and fauna make Bronx Park one of the true hidden gems of New York City.
- The Bronx River, which begins in North White Plains and flows into the East River at Soundview Park, offers numerous scenic and recreational opportunities. While walking along the river, visitors can observe a unique habitat which hosts a diverse array of invertebrates, fish, and birds. The two-mile stretch of river in Bronx Park runs through a deep gorge, where a combination of red maple hardwood swamp and floodplain forest grows on the riverbanks.



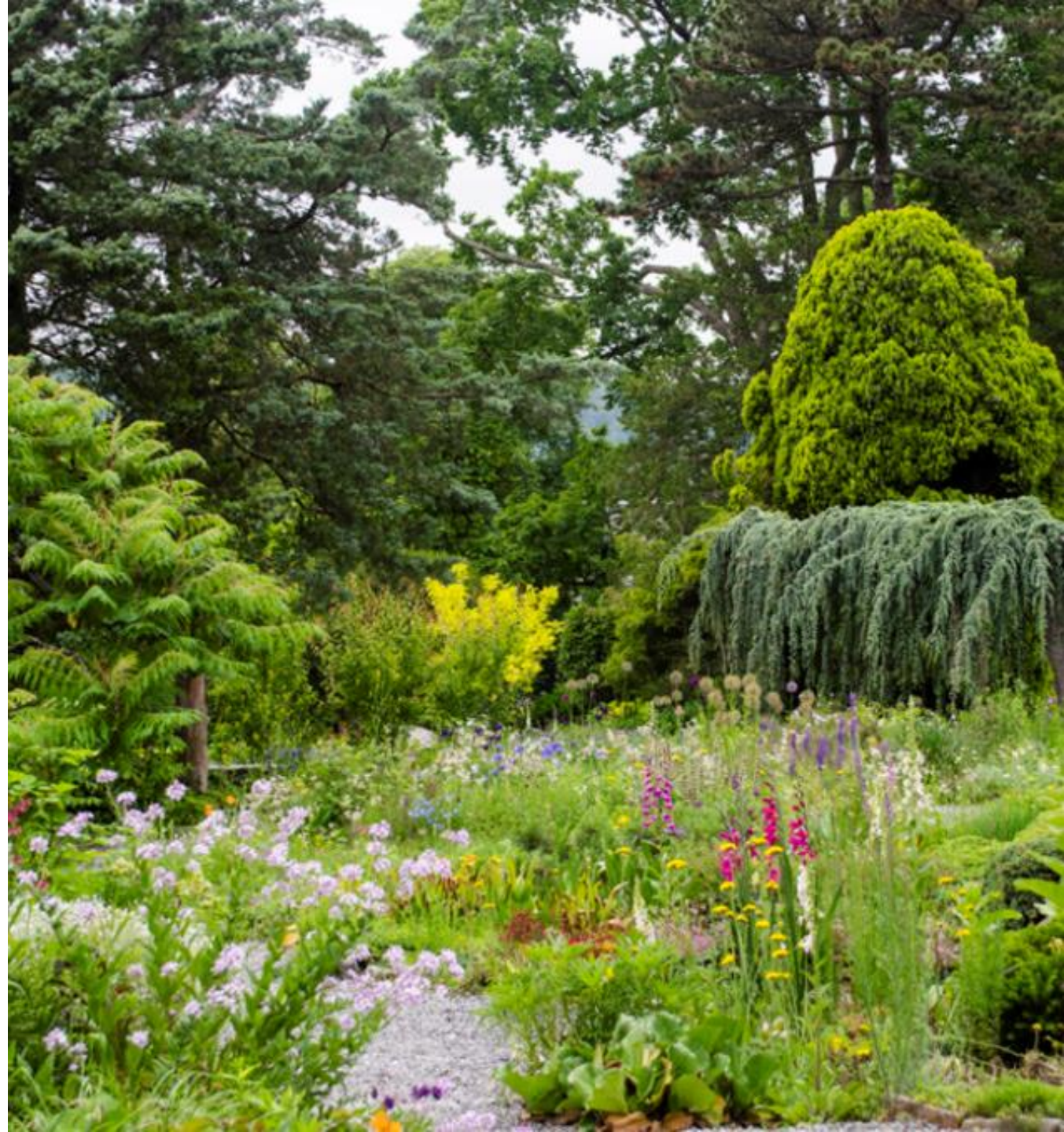
Soundview Park: Called the “Gateway to the Bronx River”

Soundview Park in the SE section of the borough is situated where the Bronx River opens into the East River. When the City of New York acquired the original 93 acres of land for this park in 1937, the entire area was composed of marshland. Today, the 205-acre park offers walking paths, interesting views, six grass baseball fields, a cricket pitch, a running track, a soccer field, six basketball courts, six handball courts, a running track with synthetic turf field, walking/biking paths and a new performance lawn. Nearby the quaint neighborhood of Clason Point leads you to another greenspace, Pugsley Creek Park.



Wave Hill (Riverdale, The Bronx)

- Wave Hill is a 28-acre (11 ha) estate in the Hudson Hill section of Riverdale, The Bronx, in New York City. Wave Hill currently consists of public horticultural gardens and a cultural center, all situated on the slopes overlooking the Hudson River, with expansive views across the river to the New Jersey Palisades. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the estate includes two houses and a botanical garden. The oldest part of the main house, Wave Hill House, dates back to 1843.
- There are nature trails, art exhibits and concerts.
- Admission Fee (Privately operated).
- Wavehill.org



Wave Hill



Staten Island: The Greenbelt



Staten Island Greenbelt: 2.800 acres of hiking paths and recreational activities

- The Staten Island Greenbelt is a system of contiguous public [parkland](#) and natural areas in the central hills of [Staten Island](#). It is the second largest component of the parks owned by the [government of New York City](#) and is maintained by the city's [Department of Parks and Recreation](#) and the Greenbelt Conservancy, a not-for-profit organization that works in partnership with NYC Parks to care for the Greenbelt and raise funds for its maintenance and programs.
- The Greenbelt is one of the most biologically diverse places in New York City. It is home to several species of amphibians; such as the eastern redback salamander, the green frog, the [American bullfrog](#), and the grey tree frog; reptiles; such as the [eastern garter snake](#), the [eastern box turtle](#), and the [northern water snake](#), as well as New York's state reptile, the [common snapping turtle](#). The Greenbelt provides year-round habitat native mammals like the [gray squirrel](#), [eastern chipmunk](#), [eastern cottontail](#), and the [white-tailed deer](#). Permanent bird residents include the [blue jay](#), [northern cardinal](#), downy woodpecker, and black-capped chickadee, while northern flickers and other migrants use the Greenbelt as a stopover on seasonal migration routes. Raptors such as Cooper's hawks, redtail hawks, and great horned owls also call the greenbelt home. The waterways are rich in fish life, and such species found here include the [largemouth bass](#), [bluegill](#), [green sunfish](#), [brown bullhead](#), [black crappie](#), [yellow perch](#), [chain pickerel](#), as well as several darter species.
- [Sigreenbelt.org](#)



Staten Island Greenbelt

– High Rock Park

- Often referred to as one of the most tranquil places in New York City, High Rock Park is noted for its quiet ponds and deep woods. Hosting the Greenbelt Conservancy's headquarters, the park has been recognized as a Natural Environmental Education Landmark by the United States Department of the Interior.
- High Rock Park contains five ponds and various wetlands, including Walker Pond and Loosestrife Swamp. There are also six walking trails, along which visitors can see stands of red maples, highbush blueberries, and patches of skunk cabbage. Wood ducks, great blue herons, and muskrats all make their homes here along with hawks, owls, migrating colorful warblers, woodpeckers, frogs and turtles. Visitors can also climb Mt. Moses, a 260-foot hill named for City builder and Parks Commissioner Robert Moses. The 360-degree panoramic view offered by the site is considered one of New York City's most spectacular.



Staten Island: Fresh Kills Park

- At 2,200 acres, Freshkills Park will be almost three times the size of Central Park and the largest park developed in New York City in over 100 years. Formerly the world's largest landfill, this enormous park will one day hold a variety of public spaces and facilities, including playgrounds, athletic fields, kayak launches, horseback riding trails, large-scale art installations, and much more. The park is being built, and is scheduled to be opened in phases, through 2036.



Staten Island: Blue Heron Park

- Blue Heron Park has become an outstanding wildlife sanctuary and educational resource. The years have seen it transformed from a wasteland filled with over 30 abandoned cars to a peaceful refuge of walking trails, meadows, ponds, streams, and woodlands. Visitors walking along any of the three main trails of the park will find an impressive array of wildflowers, including Wild columbine (*Aquilegia Canadensis*), Black-eyed Susan (*Redbeckia hirta*) and Jack-in-the-pulpit (*Arisaema triphyllum*).
- The park also holds six ponds, among them the 1.75-acre Spring Pond and the 1.4-acre Blue Heron Pond, crossed by a popular footbridge. These kettle ponds were formed 15,000 years ago by the retreating Wisconsin glacier. Today they are teeming with marine life such as the curve-billed glossy ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*), the black-crowned night heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*), wood duck (*Aix sponsa*), owls (*Strigiformes*), osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*), turtles (*Chelonia*), and white water lilies (*Nymphaea odorata*). Spring peepers (*Pseudacris crucifer*) and tree frogs (*Hylidae*) find ample breeding grounds in the ponds, where nature enthusiasts flock to observe the thriving ecosystem.
- The Visitors Center lies just inside the Poillon Avenue entrance to the park and contains several classrooms, exhibit areas, a library, an office, and rest rooms. It also has two observation decks with bird feeders and a mist net for bird banding - ideal conditions for bird watching and picnic tables for anyone to use.





Staten Island: Conference House Park

- At [Conference House Park](#), you can hike through American history. The Conference House Blue Trail extends from Shore Road and Satterlee Street all the way south to Brighton Street and Surf Avenue. Along the way, you can see a number of historic buildings, including the famed Conference House, and enjoy beautiful waterfront views of this beachside park.
- Conference House Park is a great destination for both park and history buffs. Located at the southernmost point of New York State, this park houses four historic buildings that trace the history of the borough over the course of three centuries. The Conference House, the Biddle House, the Ward House and Rutan-Beckett House all tell of a New York and an America of the past.

The Conference House, a grand stone manor house built in 1680, is named for the unsuccessful Revolutionary War peace conference that was held here on September 11, 1776 between the Americans and the English. Despite their negotiations to end the fighting, no agreement was reached and the Revolutionary War continued for another seven years.

In addition to its historic landmarks and its breathtaking views of the Raritan Bay, the 265-acre park boasts a newly refurbished playground, a Visitors Center, expanded paths and hiking and biking trails. Another great park destination is the "South Pole," marking the southernmost point of New York State.

Conference House Park



Staten Island: Wolfe's Pond Park

- As one of Staten Island's largest parks, Wolfe's Pond Park wears many different hats. To some, it is a beautiful beach. To others, it is a wildlife and plant preserve. To still others, it is a recreation area with space to run, jump, and climb. Choose Wolfe's Pond Park, and choose your own adventure!
- This beach was formed nearly 20,000 years ago during the final stages of the last ice age. As the Wisconsin ice sheet advanced southward, it pushed vast amounts of clay, sand, and gravel along in a mass called the terminal moraine. The moraine marks the southern limit of its progress; as the ice melted, the debris was left behind creating beaches such as this one. A narrow band of cobble beach lies between the high and low tide marks, and, with the more inland dunes and clay bluffs, provides a habitat for a wide variety of plants and animals.
- Archaeological evidence suggests that Native Americans settled this area as early as 6,000 years ago.



Wolfe's Pond Park



Staten Island: Clove's Lake Park



- A protected [Forever Wild](#) site because of its valuable ecological assets, Clove Lakes Park has a rich natural history and a few remnants of the past that remain and continue to thrill visitors. Chief among them are the park's lakes and ponds, outcroppings of serpentine rocks, and Staten Island's largest living things, a three hundred year-old tulip tree.
- Besides strolling down trails and paddling on its bodies of water to appreciate its beauty, visitors can also experience the park as a more modern recreation zone. Several baseball diamonds, a soccer field, basketball court, playgrounds, and football field dot the park's landscape. Then, of course, there's the Staten Island War Memorial Ice Skating Rink, an outdoor rink located in what could be called the "active" part of the park, close to its other fields and courts.



Staten Island: Clay Pit Ponds Preserve

- Clay Pit Ponds State Park Preserve is a 265-acre nature preserve near the southwest shore of Staten Island. It contains a variety of unique habitats, such as wetlands, ponds, sand barrens, spring-fed streams and woodlands. The preserve is managed to retain its unique ecology and to provide educational and recreational opportunities for people of all ages. Evidences of the Leni Lenape Indians, European settlers and the Free Blacks of Sandy Ground provide a rich cultural history. Educational programs, such as nature walks, pond ecology, birdwatching and tree and flower identification, are offered, as are many activities geared to school children. School and group programs are also welcome by advance registration. In addition, visitors may picnic or hike on designated trails. Horseback riding is also permitted on over 5 miles of bridle paths. Please note that horses are not available to rent.

Snug Harbor Cultural Center and Botanical Garden

- Snug Harbor Cultural Center & Botanical Garden, a distinguished Smithsonian Affiliate, is Staten Island's premier destination for culture and entertainment. Set within a stunning 83-acre park-like setting, Snug Harbor presents a unique blend of gardens, museums, theaters, educational opportunities, and seasonal festivals. Snug Harbor's historic grounds and Greek Revival buildings house arts organizations with the area's most vibrant and intriguing activities, providing numerous ways for visitors of all ages and backgrounds to explore.
- Visitstatenisland.com



Snug Harbor Continued: Attractions include a Heritage Farm and CSA, a Chinese Scholar's Garden, art exhibits, concerts, festivals, and walking paths.



Franklin D. Roosevelt Boardwalk & Beach

- Located along Staten Island's eastern shore, this 2.5-mile boardwalk and beach area extends southeast from Fort Wadsworth to Miller Field's Gateway Recreational Area, parallel to Father Capodanno Boulevard. Located on the Atlantic Ocean, it is one of New York City's four spacious beachfront areas.



Governor's Island

- Governors Island is a 172-acre island in the heart of New York Harbor nestled between Lower Manhattan and the Brooklyn waterfront. Eight minutes from the energy and excitement of the City, the Island is a popular seasonal destination. An award-winning new park is complemented by dozens of unique historic buildings, environmental educational facilities, a rich arts and culture program and a 22-acre National Monument managed by the National Park Service.
- Unlike anywhere else in New York, Governors Island offers peaceful settings with sweeping views of the Harbor, Lower Manhattan skyline and Statue of Liberty. Explore the island and its two large fortifications--the star-shaped Fort Jay and circular Castle Williams--which date from the American Revolution and turn of the 19th century, respectively.
- Although Governors Island is primarily known for its cultural history, it also offers an opportunity to learn about harbor and maritime ecology.
- Interested in the local bird population? Visit the [Birding Journal](#) pages by Volunteer-In-Park Annie.



HAPPY EARTH DAY!

