

Position Opening: Director of Horticulture

Position Summary

Riverside Park Conservancy seeks a strong, intuitive leader with a passion for urban horticulture and public space management for a newly created role of Director of Horticulture. The Director will work with a team of talented urban horticulturists who together are responsible for the management and long-term care of 400 acres of landscape. The Director will be a key contributor to the overall Park Operations team, and a champion of our horticulture program. They also, critically, will support the integration of horticulture with the work of the rest of the organization and day-to-day operations of our active public space. This is a full-time position and will report to the Director of Park Operations.

Background

Riverside Park Conservancy works in partnership with NYC Parks to restore, maintain and improve Riverside Park – across six miles, and five parks – running along the Hudson River in Manhattan from 59th Street to 181st Street. Over thirty-five years, the Conservancy has transformed Riverside Park from a state of neglect to a welcoming oasis.

The Conservancy has seen exponential growth over the past decade. In 2009, the organization had only three full time staff in the Park, and today, it has an \$11 million budget and over 60 paid staff positions. It has expanded to serve not only Riverside Park, but also Riverside Park South, West Harlem Piers Park, Sakura Park, and Fort Washington Park up to the George Washington Bridge.

The Conservancy leverages public and private funding to deliver high-profile capital improvements to the Park, including restoring the Field House at 102nd Street, replacing staircases and pathways, and renovating playgrounds. It runs a state-of-the-art Zone Gardener program, which now includes over 20 horticulturalists who are reshaping entire sections of the Park. The Conservancy produces over 275 free public events every year, and stewards nearly 40,000 hours of annual volunteer time from both individuals and groups. Its summer sports camp now serves more than 1,600 children from diverse communities along the length of the Park and beyond.

Under the leadership of the new President, the Conservancy is increasing its focus on sustainable practices, adapting operations to our changed climate, and addressing environmental racism through community-based action. More information can be found at <https://riversideparknyc.org/>.

Primary Responsibilities

- Evaluate, build and codify a cohesive horticultural landscape management master plan that ensures long-term sustainability, consistency in best practices, and management techniques along 6 miles of diverse, highly-visited public greenspace, including historic landmarked landscapes, new park construction, and natural areas.
- Work closely with Riverside Park’s landscape architect to implement and reinforce the Park’s design principles, while ensuring that the landscapes can adapt and react to the changing climate and infrastructural challenges.
- Work with Director of Park Operations to develop a list of key horticultural projects within the park and assign priority status to those projects.
- Actively promote and contribute to the Conservancy’s sustainability initiatives in landscape and park management.
- Create immediate and long-term strategic horticultural and landscape design goals; communicate updates and plans to different audiences, including staff, park

visitors, donors, Board members, local elected officials, NYC Parks, and the general public.

- Work with the Conservancy's Director of Volunteer Initiatives, Landscape Architect and Gardening Supervisors to provide direction related to individual and group projects.
- Work with Gardening Supervisors to select appropriate plants for new installations and replacements throughout the park.
- Assist in developing ecologically sound planting and forest succession plans for conservation areas within the park.
- Provide field staff with project packages including implementation specifications and accompanying landscape plans/drawings.
- Source and order all plant material.
- Evaluate and document existing planted areas and create a long-term plan for improved horticultural record-keeping.
- Develop and lead trainings on horticulture and landscape design for field staff.
- Communicate regularly with the President and CEO and Park Operations Director on the status of projects, providing information and feedback on horticulture and conservation.
- Work with the Director of Development and participate in donor cultivation and stewardship efforts related to horticulture, including identifying new opportunities for donor engagement around horticultural initiatives.
- Work with the Director of Programming to develop public engagement and horticultural education programming. Lead occasional horticultural tours, nature tours, talks and other public programs.
- Participate in a range of activities beyond the typical workday, including Conservancy events and programs, fundraising initiatives, tours, and stewardship and cultivation activities as needed.

Requirements

- 10+ years of horticultural and landscape design experience with in-depth knowledge of plant culture, maintenance, and identification.
- Successful track record of overseeing horticultural areas in a public park or garden, private estate, or golf course.
- Intuitive understanding of urban horticulture and the challenges that come with it.
- In-depth understanding of public/private partnerships.
- Ability to represent Riverside Park Conservancy externally by leading tours and giving presentations for a variety of audiences.
- Ability to work long hours, holidays, and weekends as necessary.
- Valid New York State driver's license or ability to obtain one.
- Solid administrative computer skills (Microsoft Word/Excel/Outlook).
- Team-player, willing to physically and intellectually collaborate on all tasks required for maintaining the highest standards of landscape management and operations, programs, development, and communications.

Preferred qualifications

- Experience engaging with a wide variety of stakeholders, including high level donors, city partners and contractors.
- Experience with landscape or facilities management software, experience with Cartegraph site management software a plus.
- Degree in landscape design, horticulture, conservation or related field.
- OSHA 10 certified or the ability to be certified.

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- Commitment to and passion for sustainable landscape management and conservation work.
- Working knowledge of Autocad and/or other design software. Able to produce simple landscape drawings for planting areas.

Abilities

- Ability to perform heavy, physical labor on a daily basis in all weather conditions (year-round)
- Ability to walk, reach, stoop, kneel, crouch, crawl, and regularly lift and/or move 40 lbs with proper tools

Salary Range: \$85,000 - \$95,000

Benefits: We offer a competitive compensation package, which includes medical, dental, vision, and disability insurance, 401(k), commuter benefits, flexible spending, and generous paid leave.

To apply: Please submit your resume along with a cover letter, detailing your interest in and fit for the position to jobs@riversideparknyc.org. Include "Director of Horticulture" in the subject line.

Riverside Park Conservancy is committed to providing an environment of mutual respect where equal employment opportunities are available to all applicants and employees without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, physical and mental disability, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, military and veteran status, and any other characteristic protected by federal, state or local laws.

Riverside Park
Conservancy