

Working
side by
Riverside

Riverside Park
Conservancy

2022 Year in Review



Our Mission

From 59th Street to 181st Street, from riverfront to city-side, we care for and enhance six miles of parkland for present and future generations. Working together with the New York City Parks Department, we make improvements as diverse as the Park itself and the city it serves.



Photo: Julianne Schaer

Warm Words from Our New President

Hello friends!

Since joining Riverside Park Conservancy in September, I've been so inspired by the depth and complexity of our work. Our staff and volunteers continuously impress me with their creativity, flexibility, and commitment to making the park beautiful and welcoming for everyone.



It's an exciting time to come onboard! In the last few years, the Conservancy has grown by leaps and bounds. What was once a grassroots organization now employs over 50 full-time professionals whose skills and talents are having a transformative effect on our 6-mile park, from 59th Street all the way up to the George Washington Bridge.

Our staff work alongside the NYC Parks Department and hundreds of volunteers to care for 400 acres of beloved public green space. In addition to maintaining our landscapes, sports fields, and dog runs, last year this team produced over 250 free public programs, hosted 1,600 young people at our summer sports camp, and trained the next generation of ecological stewards through our Teen Corps summer internships. We also launched a bold new Sustainability Initiative to keep bringing more climate-forward innovations to our operation.

While we relish these successes, our work is always "in progress," with much more on the horizon. In that spirit, I'm pleased to share the Conservancy's 2022 Year in Review - and I look forward to a long, exciting future with this remarkable organization!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Merritt".

Merritt Birnbaum
President & CEO

181st St.

181st Street

Little Red Lighthouse

Fort Washington Park

155th Street

145th Street

West Harlem Piers Park

Grant's Tomb

125th Street

Sakura Park

110th Street

Riverside Park

96th Street

Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument

81st Street

Pier I

72nd Street

Riverside Park South

59th Street

59th St.

6 miles

Our Footprint

Fort Washington Park



West Harlem Piers Park



Sakura Park



Riverside Park



Riverside Park South



Stretching nearly half the length of Manhattan, our green space encompasses **five spectacular parks.**

We are the “neighborhood park” for dozens of neighborhoods that reflect the diversity and vibrancy of New York City.

Our Gardeners at Work

Through our Zone Gardener program, staff are given primary responsibility for their own specific areas within the park, ensuring that each unique landscape receives sensitive, attuned care from a dedicated professional.



23 horticultural team members



In 2022, Conservancy gardeners removed tens of thousands of harmful invasive plants and restored landscaped and natural areas with new native plantings.

3,200 native plants added



400 acres cared for by staff



Volunteer Strong

In 2022, the Conservancy benefited from thousands of individuals, schools, companies, community groups, and others who rolled up their sleeves to help keep the Park clean and green.



360

dedicated individual volunteers



20,500

hours from individuals



4,200

volunteers in groups



9,500

hours from volunteer groups

A Place for Play

Up and down our 6 miles, our team cared for more than three dozen unique recreational areas. Hundreds of thousands of human visitors and their four-legged friends enjoyed these spaces for play every day.



16 playgrounds



6 dog runs



17 sports fields

The Conservancy created a new dedicated ballfields crew this year to provide specialized daily care for our natural turf and synthetic fields.

Summer on the Hudson

From dance parties and film screenings, to fitness classes and bird-watching, to bingo nights and family festivals – our diverse free public programming had something for everyone this year!



254

free public events



43,990

event attendees

2022 Season Highlights:



Art en Plein Air

Students of all ages enjoyed a new observational drawing class at the picturesque 91st Street Garden, taught by an instructor from the Art Students League.



Silent Disco

This summer, over 1,200 people came to Pier I to get their grooves on (quietly) at a headphone dance party under the stars!



Sunset Sounds and Saxophone Summit

A new partnership with the Jazz Foundation of America allowed us to expand our concert offerings across the Park, including jazz ensembles in beautiful sunset settings.

Sports Camp

2022 was our 10th and most popular session for our multi-sport camp, providing kids from all over the City with fun, high quality soccer, tennis, basketball, baseball, flag football and volleyball.



1,600

campers playing 6 different sports



\$253,000

scholarship assistance provided



Volleyball

premiered as a new sport option



Fort Washington

debuted as a new camp location!

Tennis in the Park

Through our subsidiary, the Riverside Clay Tennis Association, we operated and maintained 10 beautiful clay courts for public use at 96th Street. And in 2022, we expanded our commitment to the Park's two other tennis facilities with much needed repairs and programming.



40,000

players at the 96th St Clay Courts

Photo by Meg Goldman



10 sunset concerts at the courts



119th Street Courts

Recently resurfaced thanks to NY State Assemblymember Danny O'Donnell



Before



After



Fort Washington Courts

174th Street tennis lessons for the community



Plus, classes, ladders and tournaments all season long!

Sustainability Initiative

In 2022, we created a new Sustainability Department. This team works across departments to implement sustainable practices, in addition to conducting research, education and community outreach. Thanks to their efforts, the Conservancy is poised to become a leader in sustainable park management.



3 staff are leading our first ever Sustainability team



200 individuals of all ages engaged in shoreline clean up, habitat maintenance and experiential learning activities

Collaborators include:

- Billion Oyster Project
- Waterfront Alliance
- Harlem Boys and Girls Club
- Brotherhood Sister Sol
- WE ACT for Environmental Justice

"Our entire staff has been involved in envisioning what sustainable park management looks like and how we can take meaningful steps to realize it for Riverside Park."

–Anastasia Galkowski,
Sustainability Manager



Teen Corps

Local high school students from West Harlem gained hands-on learning experiences through this paid summer internship program centered around horticulture, park maintenance and environmental justice.



18 youth participants



8 weeks of restoration projects completed alongside Conservancy staff



“Overall, Teen Corps was a wonderful summer experience, and it has prepared me well for whatever is next in my career. I feel proud of all of the skills I have worked hard to develop, and I really enjoyed spending 50 hours outside in the park.”

–2022 Teen Corps Participant

Goatham

The Park's beloved goats returned for another year of eating invasive plants on a hilly slope at 120th Street. While the goats ate 25% of their body weight each day, they also drew more attention to our forest restoration efforts.



4 hungry goats



1000+ event attendees

excited to learn about the goats and the important ecological work they do



Goats return to Manhattan to help weed Riverside Park



Invasive plants, weeds are causing problems at a New York park. The solution: Hungry goats.

Goats at Work: How an Unlikely Addition Changes a Neighborhood for the Better

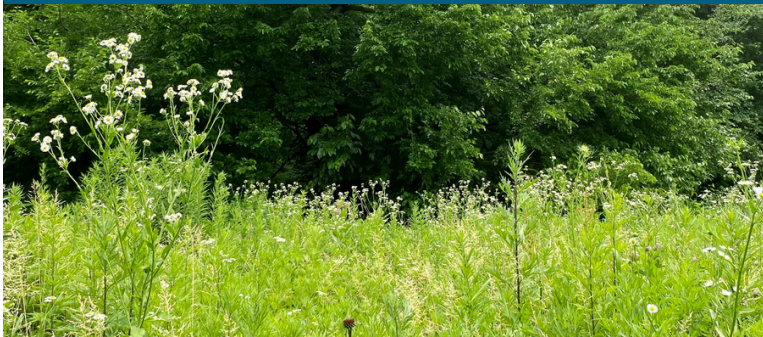


Pollinator Initiative

We strengthened our commitment to the Park's pollinators – bees, butterflies, bats, and other essential creatures – through the creation of intentional habitat and spaces for them to survive and thrive.



5 bee houses placed across the Park



5 pollinator gardens and meadows tended

We celebrated our pollinator spaces throughout the year on social media and through physical park signage.



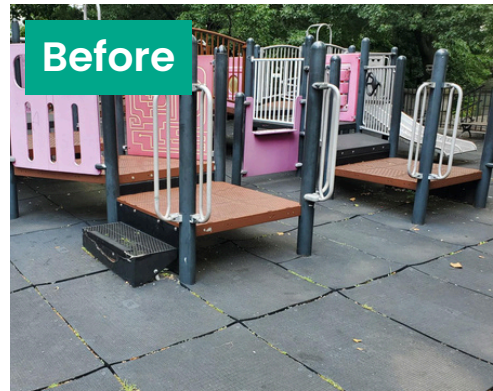
Park Improvements

The Conservancy is increasingly able to tackle much-needed capital repairs and new landscape projects. Thanks to the support of our generous donors, we completed several major projects quickly and effectively in 2022.

Fully reconstructed the deteriorated 83rd Street Stairs:



Replaced degraded safety surface at the 148th Street Tot Lot:

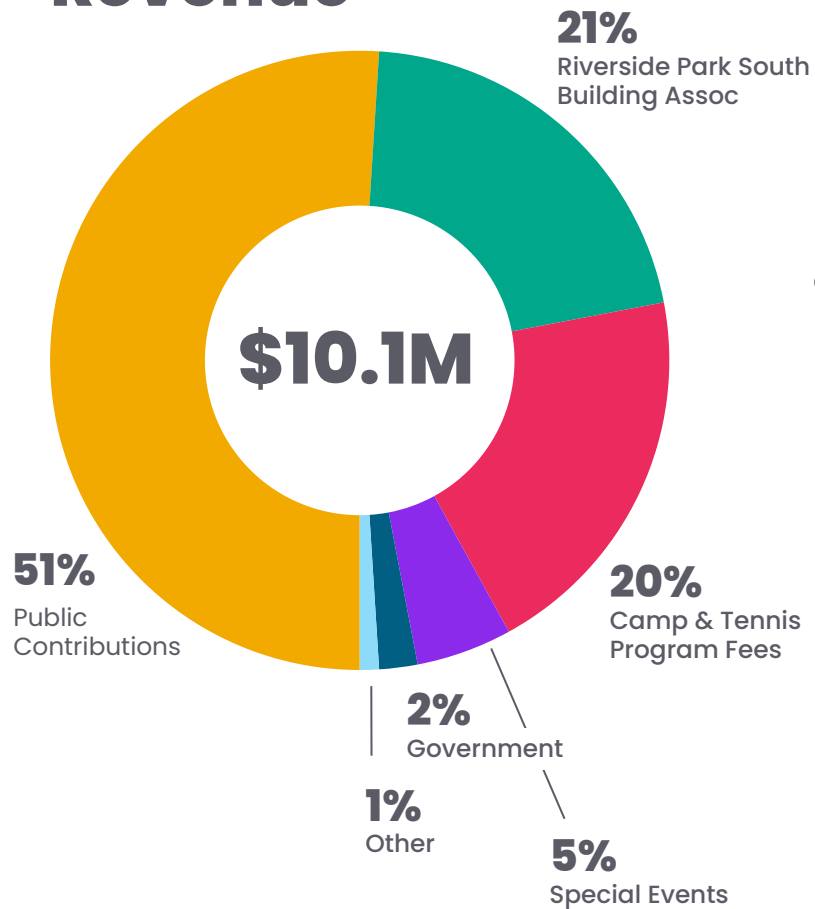


Created new pollinator meadows to increase biodiversity:

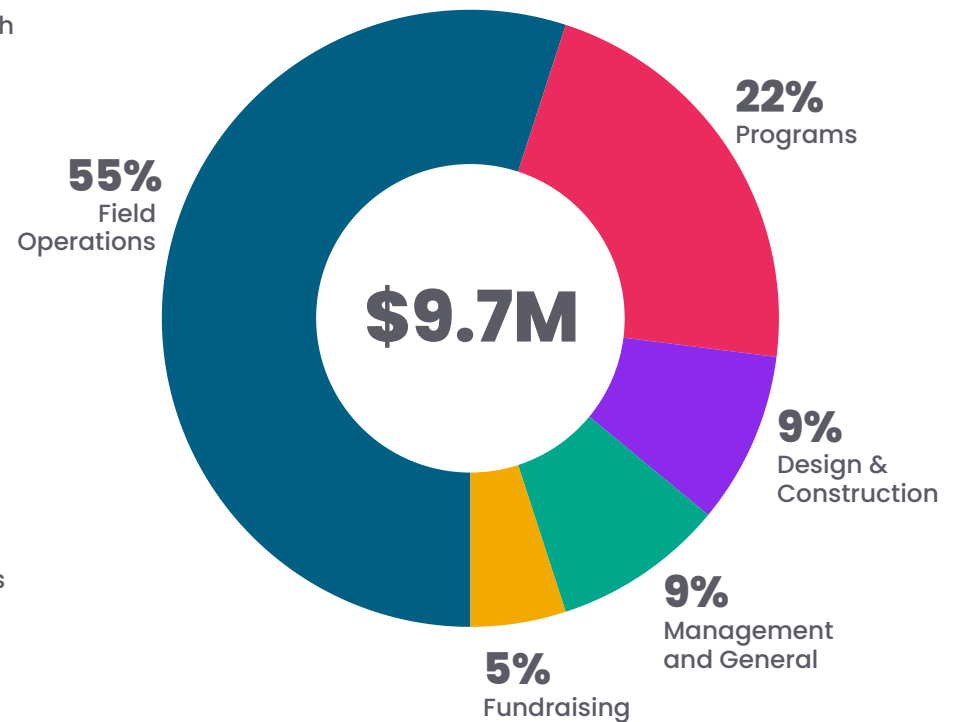


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Expenses



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\$100,000 +

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