

Environmental Stewardship in New York City Parks and Natural Areas



Assessing barriers, creating opportunities, and proposing a new way forward



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Presentation Overview

- 1. A citywide context:** 2014 social assessment of NYC parks and natural areas
 - Defining stewardship in the urban context
 - The value of parks and natural areas in the community
 - The role of culture in the use of natural space
- 2. Assessing the Stewardship Potential of Alley Pond Park and Watershed**
 - Methodologies and approach
 - Characterizing environmental stewardship groups
 - Current approaches to citizen engagement: assessing barriers
 - General recommendations
 - Specific ideas for future opportunities





Defining Environmental Stewardship in Urban Space

- Theoretical roots
- Interactions between people and natural areas bound with personal and cultural identities, social class, and personal views about nature
- Manifests on various scales:
 - Highly organized, formal programming of the NAV
 - Individual and largely subversive practices of urban foragers
- NYC Stewardship Assessment
July, 2014

The value of parks and natural areas

Public parks and open spaces are critical catalysts for improving health and being, strengthening social cohesion, fostering democratic principles and providing benefits to urban biophysical systems.

- William Burch, 1997

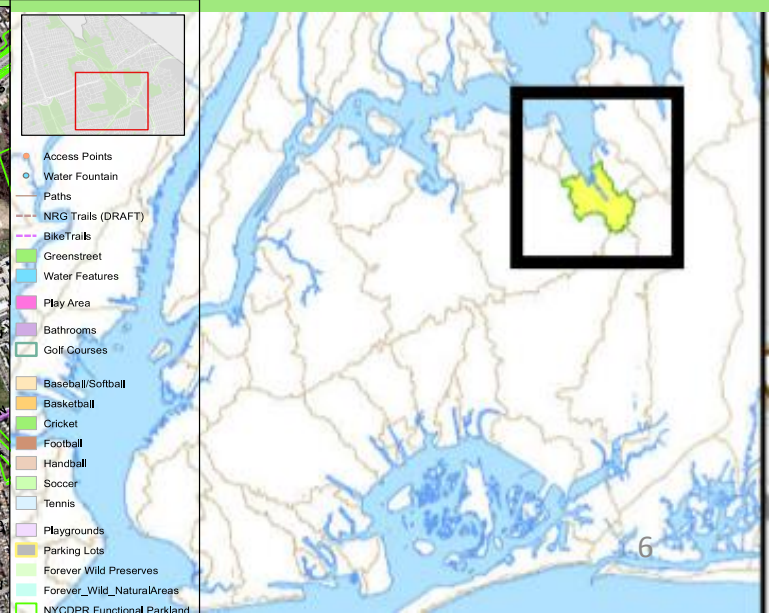
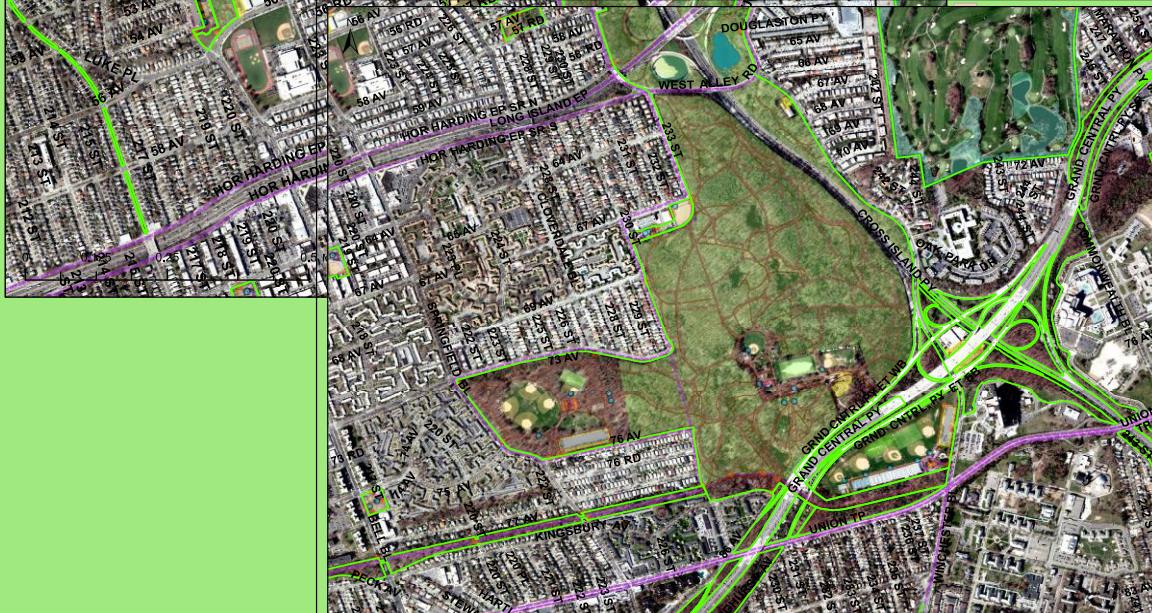


Culture and the Use of Natural Areas



Assessing the Stewardship Potential of Alley Pond Park

Methodology and Approach



Habitat Restoration in and around Alley Pond Watershed



Characterizing environmental stewardship groups in the watershed

Each group uniquely engaged in the community and surrounding environment

Organizations use different strategies to pursue institutional values and goals

Core partnering institutions:

- Alley Pond Environmental Center
- Udalls Cove Preservation Committee
- Douglas Manor Environmental Association

Other organizations:

- Alley Pond Striders
- Alley Pond Pet Lovers Association
- Alley Pond Hikers and Trail Crew Association
- Bayside Anglers





General barriers to stewardship

- Current modes of communication
- Lack of opportunities to engage in neutral setting
- The overall policy process utilized by NYC Parks
- Various visions and definitions of stewardship

General Recommendations

1. Expand partnerships and modes of engagement
2. Focus on the social process and reorient current modes of civic engagement
3. Expand scope of programming



Specific Opportunities to Explore

1. Hold community events in a variety of locations
1. Increase the use of social media
1. Institute small grant competitions
2. Support elementary and high school environmental club challenges
3. Education, training, and leadership programs for NYC Parks employees
6. Training of trainers events





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NYC Parks

