

FreshkillsPark and Freshkills Park Alliance



photo: Michael Anton, DSNY

2015 Annual Report

The generous support and partnership of stakeholders, advocates, and visitors are bringing Freshkills Park to life.

Thanks to the generosity of grantors, donors, and sponsors, thousands of people got to know Freshkills Park through big open site events, art installations and workshops, scientific research projects, races and bike events, environmental education programs, and a wide range of tours.

The process of building out the park continues. The New Springville Greenway opened this year, adding the popular 3.2 mile long facility to the already completed projects of Schmul Park, Owl Hollow fields and North Park wetland restoration. The Freshkills Park Alliance partnership with NYC Parks and Sanitation, as well as

increasing numbers of community partners, means that progress is solid and steady.

The Freshkills Park Alliance's mission is to support the creation of the park through a broad range of recreational, cultural, scientific and educational programs. The Alliance is committed to maintaining and expanding the ways for the public to experience and support this exciting time of transformation, as the work of park building moves forward. This has been an important year, as we have strengthened our organization, our partnerships and our programs.



A year of “firsts”...



First **Interior Park Project Permitted**: North Park Phase 1



First **Discovery Day** event



First Programs and Events at **East Mound**

First **Park Fitness Path** on Richmond Avenue: The New Springville Greenway



First (Offsite) **Public Artwork**: NEST



First **Biological Survey**: BioBlitz

First **Grasshopper Sparrow** Sighting



First **Conceptual Roadway Design**

First **Request for Expressions of Interest** for private development projects



First **NEA Grant**



In good company

Thank you to our partners

Government Partners and Contributing Agencies

The New York State Department of State, Office of Coastal, Local Government & Community Sustainability has provided funding to support the Freshkills Park project under Title 11 of the Environmental Protection Fund.

NYC Department of Sanitation
NYC Department of City Planning
NYC Department of Transportation
NYC Department of Environmental Protection
NYC Department of Health
NYC Department of Design and Construction
NYC Department of Cultural Affairs
Mayor's Office of Sustainability
NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
NYS Department of State, Division of Coastal Resources
NYS Department of Transportation
NYS Department of Health

Related City Initiatives

OneNYC
MillionTreesNYC
Waterfront Vision 2020

NYC Parks Partners

Arts & Antiquities
Conference House Park
The Greenbelt
Greenbelt Native Plant Center
Marketing and Special Events
Natural Resources Group
Parklands and Planning
Urban Park Rangers

Project Consultants

James Corner Field Operations
AKRF
ARUP
BioHabitats, Inc.
BKSK Architects
Daniel Frankfurt (HDR, Inc.)

Geosyntec
Philip Habib and Associates
Project Projects
Sage & Coombe Architects
Langan
Rogers Surveying
Faithful + Gould
HAKS

Cultural Partners

AIANY/ Center for Architecture
Archtober
Brooklyn Brainery
Center for Book Arts
Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP)
Chasing Sanitation
Classic Harbor Line
Creative Time
CSI WSIA
DSNY Oral History Archive
Jacques Marchais Museum of Tibetan Art
Land Art Generator Initiative
Municipal Arts Society
NYC Audubon Society
NYC DOT Urban Art Program
New York Public Library
Open House New York (OHNY)
Protectors of Pine Oaks Woods
Staten Island Arts
Staten Island MakerSpace
Staten Island Museum
Staten Island OutLOUD!
Urban Omnibus
Waterfront Alliance

Academic Partners

Barnard + Columbia Architecture
City College of New York
City University of New York
College of Staten Island
Cornell University: AAP
Gaynor McCown High School
Macaulay Honors College
New York Harbor School
NYU Wagner
Parsons School of Constructed Environments
SVA Interactive Design

Science + Research Partners

Bloomfield College
CUNY CSI
Hunter College
New Jersey City University
NY/NJ Baykeeper
Rutgers University
US Forest Service Yale University

Recreation Partners

Kayak Staten Island
New York Road Runners
Transportation Alternatives
Staten Island Athletic Club
Staten Island Bicycling Association

Community Partners

City Parks Foundation
Hilton Garden Inn
NY Cares
Showplace Entertainment Center
Staten Island Mall

Donors and Sponsors

Airbnb
Bloomberg Philanthropies
ConEdison
Fund for the City of New York
Furthermore Program/ JM Kaplan Fund
Mertz Gilmore Foundation
Mohawk
NEA Art Works
The New York Community Trust
NYS Department of State LWRP
Pratt Recycling
Public Lands Every Day/ NEEF/ Toyota
Richmond County Savings Foundation
The Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation: Art and Social Justice
Staten Island Foundation
Talas
Tauck Ritzau Innovative Philanthropy
Waste Management

Capital Projects Update

Project Timeline

COMPLETED: Summer 2015

New Springville Greenway: This 3.2-mile path along the eastern edge of Freshkills Park creates bike and pedestrian access parallel to Richmond Avenue. The Greenway provided new asphalt pavement, concrete sidewalk reconstruction and improvements, and associated drainage systems, incorporating the most sustainable techniques in bio-swale design and construction.

IN PROCUREMENT

North Park Phase 1: This 21-acre arc will be the first section to open within the former landfill boundary. It will stretch from entrances in the Travis neighborhood to the edge of Main Creek. Walking and high-speed paths will lead visitors past flowering swales and through a scenic forested plateau to an expansive picnic lawn, an overlook deck and a bird observation tower at the water's edge.





photo: Michael McWeeney

IN DESIGN

East Park Early Access: This plan will open up 482 acres of park space for recreation. East Park has beautiful expansive meadows, freshwater wetland ponds and creeks. It has also become a favorite stopping point for some of the area's birds, including the grasshopper sparrow. The early access plans for East Park include a pedestrian and maintenance entrance at Yukon Avenue, additional access points, security fencing, a permanent kayak launch, three and a half miles of paved roadway for biking, pathway connections for six miles of walking trails, and a wetland boardwalk.



IN PLANNING

South Park Phase 1: This proposal builds on Owl Hollow Soccer Fields to create a recreational corridor at the Park. South Park Phase 1 will include the construction of two new ballfields, a parking area, pedestrian connections and traffic access.

Roads: As a major feature of Freshkills Park, roads will provide access to the different areas of the park and create a connection between the West Shore Expressway (Route 440) and Richmond Avenue. This will open the park, provide site access, and address transportation needs of the community.





BioBlitz!

From August 29th to 30th, over 400 students from CUNY Macaulay Honors College, along with members of the public and over 30 expert scientists, canvassed North Park to count as many plant and animal species that they could identify in the 24-hour period.

Over 320 species were catalogued, giving a snapshot of biodiversity at this stage of ecological restoration.

Scientific Research Program



On the 15th of May, researchers recorded their first sighting of **Grasshopper Sparrows**, a state-threatened bird that has seen massive declines in New York State over the past 3 decades. In July, they were astonished to find **25+ singing males** plus **20+ fledged juvenile grasshopper sparrows** on East Mound, along with **200+ fledged juvenile Savannah Sparrows**. The researchers also recorded Eastern Meadowlarks, Horned Larks, Spotted Sandpipers, American Woodcocks, and Killdeer this season. Dr. Richard Veit from the College of Staten Island has been studying the resurgence of grassland birds on site. The Freshkills Park staff are working with the researchers to create a grasslands habitat management plan to ensure the productivity of the habitat into the future of park development.



Researchers from the U.S. Forest Service, NYC Parks, and Yale University continued their work investigating afforestation and phytoremediation at the park. They focused on a subsection of a ~10,000 MillionTrees planting that was conducted in the fall of 2015. Poplars and willows specially selected for their high growth rates and soil mediating qualities were planted, and post-planting monitoring has commenced to track tree growth and soil dynamics on an annual basis. The researchers hope to determine if these species are uniquely suited to afforestation projects in urban environments.



Researchers from New Jersey City University, the College of Staten Island, and NY/NJ Baykeeper conducted the first year of field work and pre-restoration monitoring in a study investigating the construction of a living shoreline. They used ribbed mussels along Main Creek, with biodiversity monitoring using novel environmental DNA techniques and traditional assessments.

The Freshkills Park team is sharing park research with the public. Science and research based lectures were delivered at outside venues in 2015, such as the Brooklyn Brainerd and the Staten Island Museum.



Researchers at the College of Staten Island continued studying the health of turtles at Freshkills Park this year. Between June and August, 91 turtles were captured in the Park's ponds. Many of the turtles were recaptures, which indicates that the habitat is suitable to these species. Blood chemistry was also analyzed to determine accurate baseline parameters in the species.



Art Program

In 2015, the Freshkills Park art program created new opportunities for artists and reached new audiences. The Alliance received a community commission from the NYC DOT Art Program and raised funds to support artist/designer **Kirk Finkel**'s original commission, **NEST**, which was fabricated with support from **Staten Island MakerSpace** and will remain at its location for 11 months.

A sculpture installed at the St. George Ferry Terminal, **NEST** is designed to bring Freshkills Park wildlife to the people of NYC while encouraging visitors to experience the park firsthand. The sculpture is on view along Richmond Terrace for the Ferry's 70,000 passengers per day.

The **NEST** sculpture is part of a larger effort to expand awareness through off-site installations. **Section Story**, a digital exhibition about the transformation of Fresh Kills, received support from the National Endowment for the Arts in 2015 for realization in 2017.

Artist **Tattfoo Tan** initiated his series, New Earth Resiliency Training Module (**NERTM**), at Freshkills Park, made possible by an Original Work Grant from **Staten Island Arts**, with public funding from the **New York State Council on the Arts**. The series of tours and workshops highlighted climate change, preparedness and resiliency by training self-reliance and the ethos of living closer to the earth within an urban environment. Artist **Susan Mills** continued her **UnCommon Pages** field notebook-making workshops with paper made from Freshkills Park Phragmites through a partnership with the **Center for Book Arts**. These art projects and others have been integrated into the Park's regular series of programs and events to reach a broader audience and speaks to the role of artists in the park project and our society.

Photographers are documenting the engineered landscape's evolution — from landfill to park and across all the seasons in between — as part of the **Capturing Change** project. The series serves to generate a community- and artist-driven archive of our shared landscape and the restoration of natural systems in an ever shifting urban context. An ongoing series of photo essays are published in **Urban Omnibus**, an online publication dedicated to defining and enriching the culture of citymaking.

Art and cultural programs at Freshkills Park aim to promote understanding of and access to site transformation and design, while inciting socio-environmental change through education and demonstration in this landscape that is unlike any other public space in New York City. Rotating art installations and events provide opportunities to investigate, innovate and interpret the largest landfill to park project in the world through new mediums and works at the intersection of art, environment, technology and research in an evolving landscape.

Susan Mills continues the **UnCommon Pages** field notebook-making workshops with handmade paper and partners including the Center for Book Arts.



In partnership with the Jacques Marchais Museum of Tibetan Art, Tattfoo Tan organized a meditation walk in North Park.



photo: Sebastian Choe

NEST is a series of windows onto Freshkills Park habitats at the St. George Ferry Terminal.



photo: NYC DOT Art

Photographers document the landscape in flux as part of **Capturing Change**.



photo: Michael McWeeney



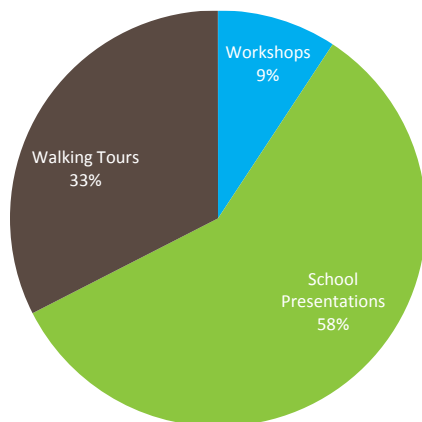
Environmental Education

Freshkills Park serves as a case study for many topics, including urban ecology, waste management, and sustainable design. In 2015, free youth environmental education programs were offered to students in schools across New York City's five boroughs. These opportunities aimed to make Freshkills Park an environmental education topic in 3rd-12th grade classrooms and to begin to establish the park as a tangible place for generations to come.

Walking tours gave students the chance to explore a section of the park usually inaccessible to the public. While on site, students played the role of park planners as they learned about the history of what was once the world's largest landfill and developed plans for the future park that took into account the needs of the environment and local community.

In-class presentations provided students with a general overview of site history, current developments, and future plans. The presentation included class discussion, photographs and diagrams, and a fabric landfill model that demonstrated how the landfill was closed.

Freshkills Park also partnered with New York Public Library to provide a design challenge program called ***Play, Plan, Prototype (PPP)***, developed by park staff. This project invited students at NYPL branches in Staten Island and Manhattan to learn about the design aspect of the Park's transformation. Students were asked to collaborate to address a design challenge, developing an idea and prototype using basic materials such as coffee filters, paper clips, cardboard, and tongue depressors.



Altogether, 3,500 students participated in youth environmental education programs in 2015, with 2,700 students learning about the park through in-class presentations and PPP workshops and 800 students visiting the park during walking tours.

The Freshkills Park Citizen Science Water Monitoring Program is a project designed to allow students in grades 6–12 to gain direct experience conducting real scientific research by monitoring the water quality within Freshkills Park. Students will measure for a variety of water properties, after having learned in detail about water quality, environmental conservation, and the scientific method by way of an accompanying lesson plan. Their findings will then be put to use in ongoing efforts to maintain and support the safety and ecological diversity of the Staten Island watershed.

NYC classrooms have integrated Freshkills Park lessons into their curriculums. Student projects, such as this one, envision alternative futures and solutions for today's trash problems.



Environmental Educators bring classes to the site and bring the lessons of Freshkills Park to the community.



A new citizen science water monitoring project will bring classrooms to the shoreline to contribute to the site research and restoration.





Recreational Programs and Tours



In 2015, free programs and events offered opportunities for the public to explore closed sections of the park, providing insights into ongoing development and chances to experience the hills and waterways before the park officially opens.

Public programs included kayaking, hikes, and bus tours. During kayaking trips, visitors paddled across creeks and waterways, seeing wildlife along the way. Hiking offered a chance to head for the hills on a 1–2 mile trek, and bus tours offered opportunities to learn about the past, present, and future of the park on a guided bus ride.

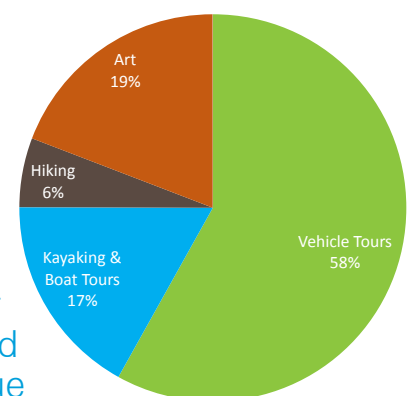
Freshkills Park held four public events in 2015. Two Discovery Days invited visitors to explore over 700 acres and 8 miles of trails with tours and recreation. Get into Gear celebrated the opening of the 3.2-mile New Springville Greenway, and Soaring Over Staten Island took visitors to the top of a hill where they could fly above the borough with kites, bird-watching, and panoramic views.

Freshkills Park also offered a volunteer cleanup program to keep open sections of the park beautiful. This program focused on Schmul Park in Travis and The New Springville Greenway along Richmond Avenue.

More than 6,550 people visited Freshkills Park during tours or public events in 2015. With the addition of off-site lectures and programs, over 9,400 people were reached in total. 224 unique volunteers participated in cleanups and event assistance, with several returning to the park after their first volunteer experience.

“My family moved to Staten Island when I was about two, so it was nice for all of us to see the transition from landfill to Freshkills Park. The views we saw were spectacular - it almost made you forget where you were for a moment. We are very excited about the future of the park.”

–Bus Tour Attendee, October 2015

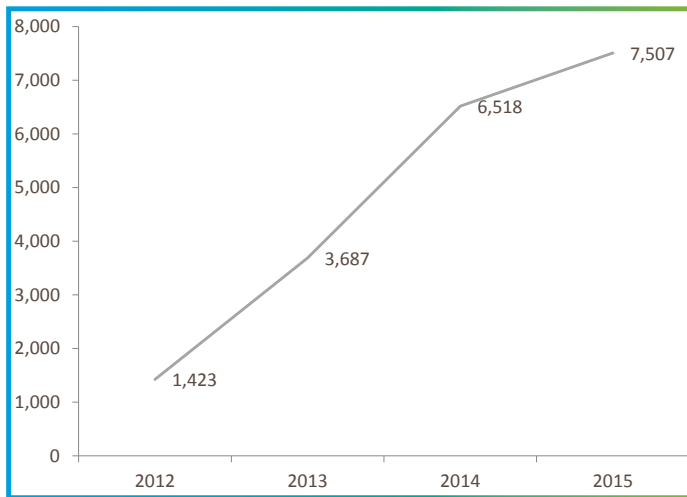


Public Programs

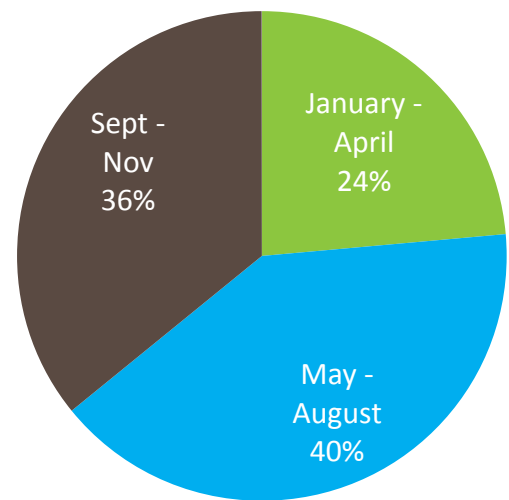


Recreational Programs and Events

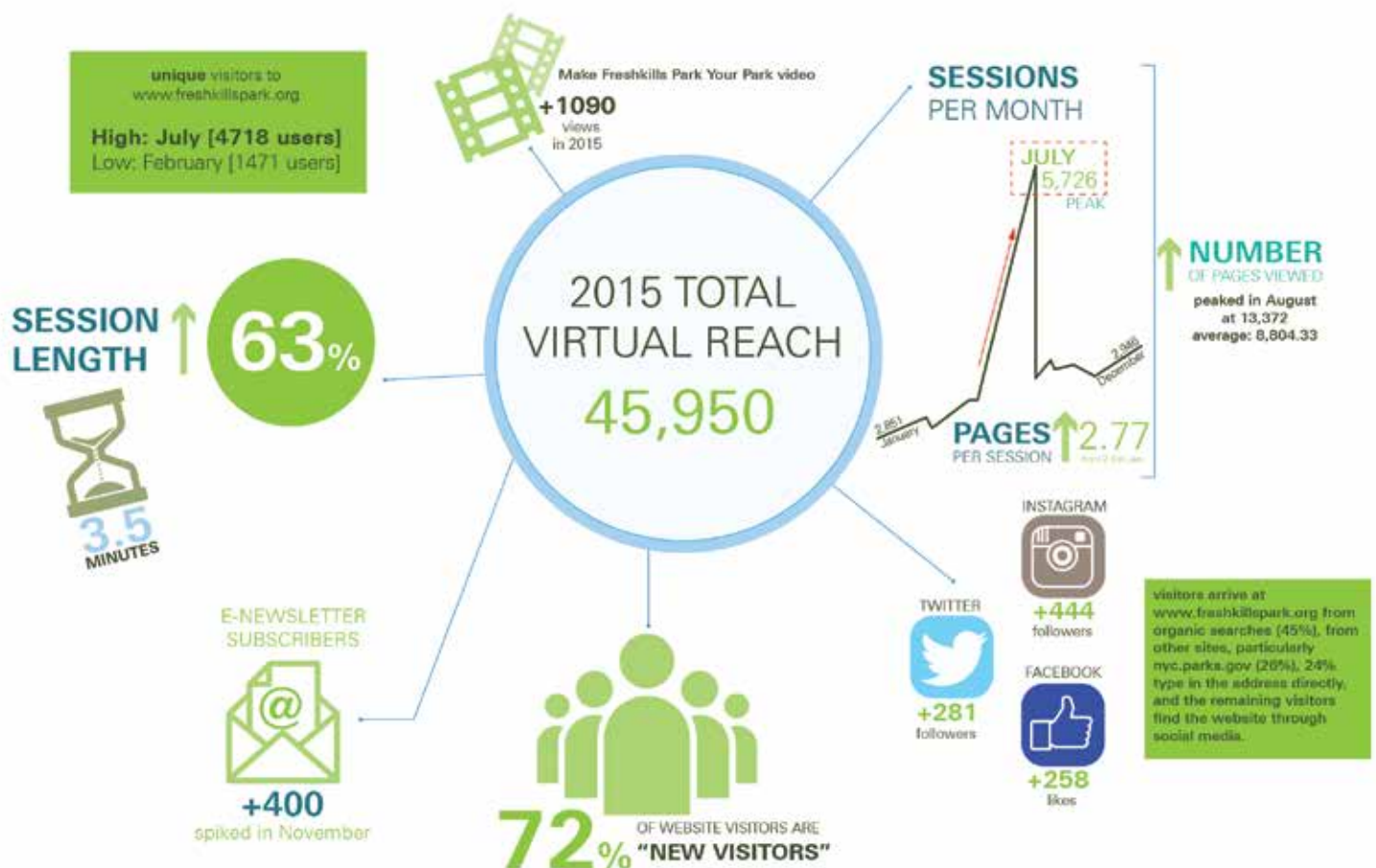
Number of individuals participating in recreational programs and events at Freshkills Park, 2012-2015



Seasonal distribution of participants in 2015 recreational programs and events



Website and Social Media Reach





About

Alliance Board Members

Paul Ainslie
Victoria Cerullo
Dr. William J. Fritz
Nancy Hechinger
Eloise Hirsh, President
Jim Perazzo, P.G.
Brendan Sexton
Allan Weissglass, Co-Chair
Joanne Witty, Co-Chair
Edward Burke (ex officio)
Joshua Laird (ex officio)
Lynda Ricciardone (ex officio)

Established in 2010, the Freshkills Park Alliance is the not-for-profit partner with the City of New York in its work to develop Freshkills Park into an extraordinary 2,200 acre urban park that will be a model for sustainable waterfront land reclamation, a source of pride for Staten Island and New York City, and a gift of open space for generations to come.

The Alliance helps ensure the Park's evolution and continuing operation by raising necessary financial resources, promoting environmental research and restoration, engaging advocates and volunteers, and sponsoring a broad range of recreational, cultural, and educational programs for the public.

Learn more at www.freshkillspark.org

[Support the Freshkills Park Alliance with a donation today!](#)

\$500 buys shirts and hats for our volunteers

\$1,000 creates a gallery space at the Richmond Avenue office

\$4,000 adds five kayaks to the fleet

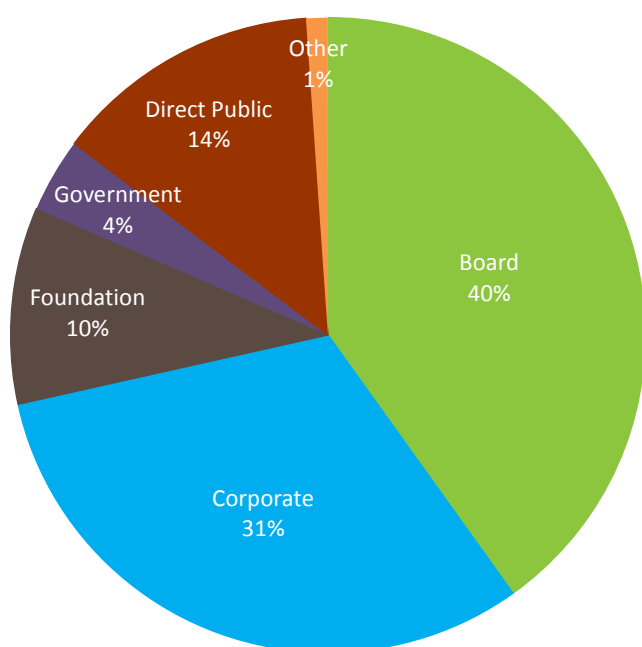
\$10,000 funds a living dock for research and the kayak program

Make your contribution: www.freshkillspark.org/mission/donate



photo: Imara Moore

Supported by



The Alliance is supported by NYC Parks staff

Commissioner Mitchell J. Silver, FAICP

Borough Commissioner Lynda Ricciardone

Freshkills Park Development Team

Park Administrator

Eloise Hirsh

Office Manager

Shane Gardiner

Park Development Manager

Laura Truettner

Programming Associate

Megan Moriarty

Landscape Architect

Andrew Deer

Programming Operations Coordinator

Agatino Cataldi

Manager for Science + Research Development

Cait Field

Environmental Education Coordinator

Arturo Romua

Manager for Programs, Arts + Grants

Mariel Villere

Citizen Science Volunteer Coordinator

Patrick Hofsommer



Freshkills Park is opening in phases from the outside in. During this transformation, programs and events offer opportunities to learn about the project and explore closed sections of the landfill-to-park project. For updates on park progress and programs, join the mailing list through our website:

www.freshkillspark.org

Join us!

Follow and tag **@freshkillspark** on:



Visit **www.freshkillspark.org/calendar** for the next opportunity to explore closed sections of the landfill-to-park project.

FreshkillsPark  
and Freshkills Park Alliance

Unless otherwise noted, all photographs are
© The City of New York and © Freshkills Park

Commissioner Mitchell J. Silver, FAICP
Mayor Bill de Blasio