Gowanus Canal CONSERVANCY
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2016

GOWANUS CANAL CONSERVANCY ANNUAL REPORT

The 2000 Gallon Project at our 2016 pop-up nursery.

GCC Executive Director Andrea Parker leads a tour of the Gowanus Canal.

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Ten years ago, Andy Simons founded the Gowanus Canal Conservancy with the vision of a healthy, vibrant, revitalized Gowanus Canal - lined with a public esplanade and stewarded by local residents. This vision was in stark contrast with the realities at hand: a filthy canal with no plans for a clean-up; an uncertain roadmap for land use; and barely a whisper of hands-on environmental programming.

At the time, Andy's vision must have seemed audacious - a pipe dream. It turned out to be prescient.

Today, GCC is a thriving community-based organization, providing robust educational and stewardship activities to thousands of volunteers and implementing leading-edge green infrastructure and planning projects throughout the Gowanus Watershed. These programs and initiatives have provided a framework for volunteers and partners to shape the priorities for a Gowanus neighborhood that is being transformed by extraordinary forces: Superfund, rezoning, development, climate change, densification, affordability, livability.

These community priorities are the building blocks for the Gowanus Greenscape, an open space masterplan that will be woven into the broader clean-up and rezoning of the neighborhood. The Greenscape will embrace resiliency and stormwater management; public access and parkland; and historic preservation, ecological protection, and community stewardship.

In other words, the Greenscape that is emerging looks a lot like Andy's original vision -- built through the hard work, passion and participation of all of you.

Ben Jones
Board Chair

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

We envision
an **OPEN, CLEAN** and **ALIVE**
Gowanus Canal and Watershed
with accessible open space;
clean water, soil and air;
and vibrant ecology, economy and culture.

VISION

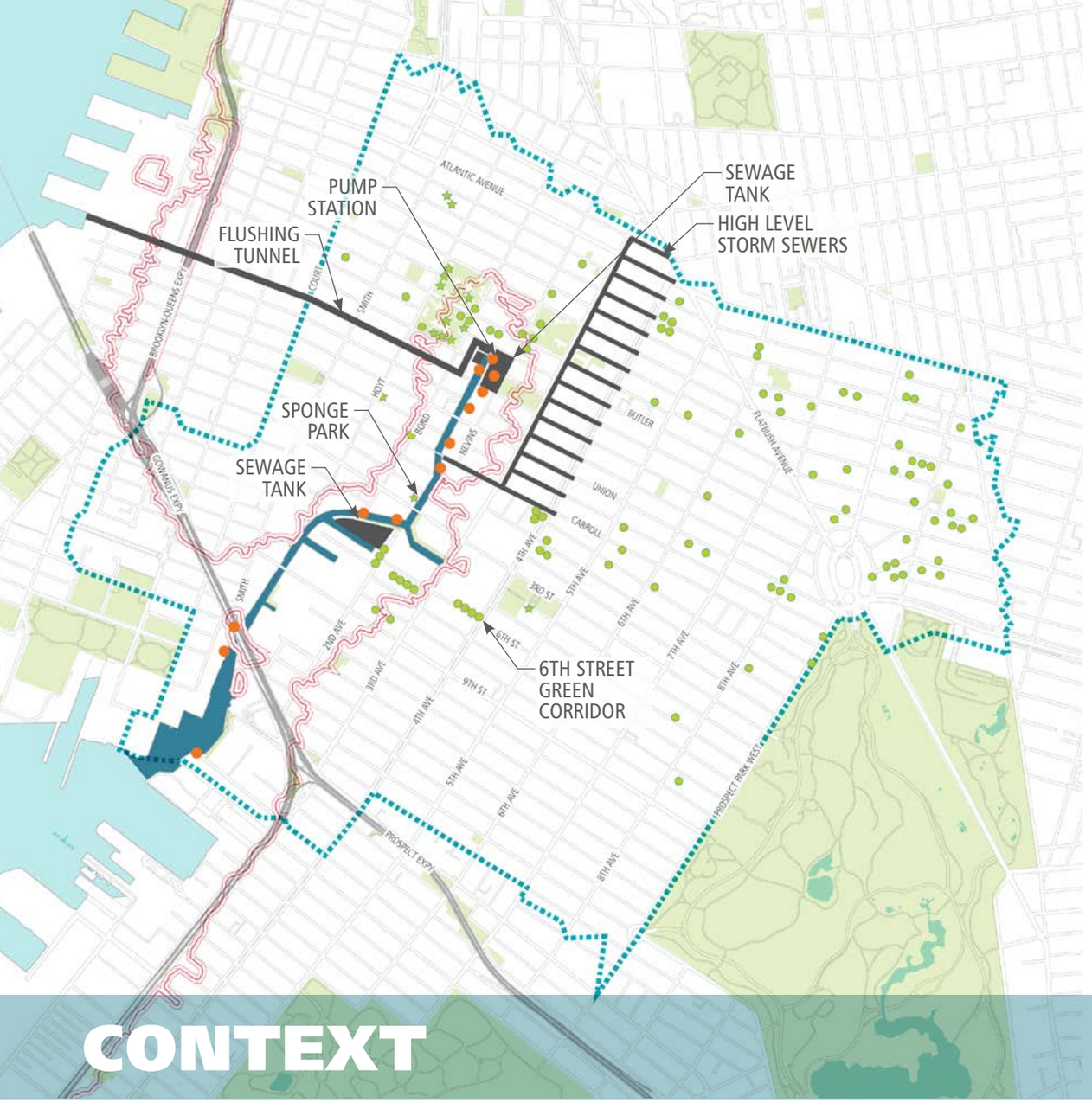
GOWANUS GREENSCAPE

Neighbors working together to design, build, and steward NYC's next great park.

+

GOWANUS BLUE

Stewards across the Watershed building infrastructure to eliminate combined sewage overflow.



CONTEXT

KEY:

- GOWANUS CANAL WATERSHED
- FEMA 100 YEAR FLOOD
- GOWANUS CANAL SUPERFUND CLEAN-UP
- GREY INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS
- GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS
- BIOSWALES
- COMBINED SEWER OUTFALL

TIMELINE OF A CHANGING NEIGHBORHOOD

The Gowanus Canal is one of America's most polluted waterways, due to historic industrial contamination and ongoing combined sewage overflow. Declared a Superfund site in 2010 by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Canal is in the beginning stages of an estimated $500 million clean-up, which will be paid for by Potentially Responsible Parties (PRPs), including Nationals Grid and the City of New York.

SUPERFUND

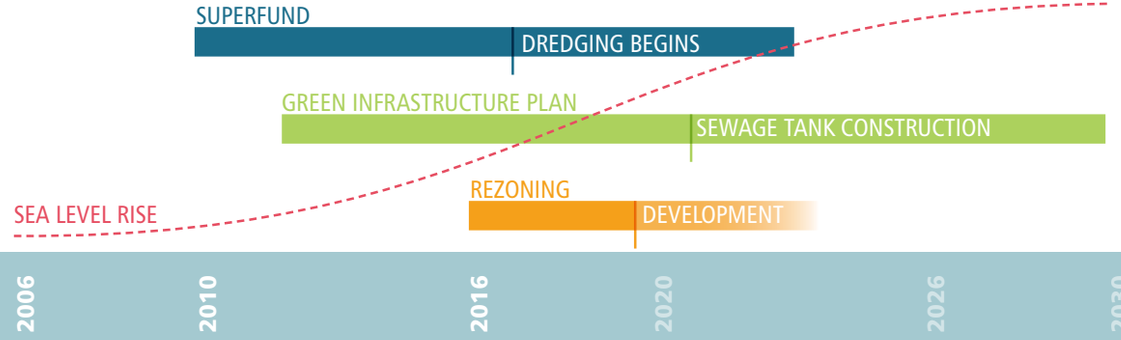
The primary historic industrial contamination in the canal is coal tar from 3 Manufactured Gas Plants (MGPs). EPA and the PRPs are working to design and coordinate dredging on average 10' of heavily contaminated sediment from the bottom of the Canal, and construct a multi-layer cap. In 2016, the team removed debris from the 4th St Turning Basin. They will dredge and cap this section in 2017.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

Annually, 377 million gallons of combined sewage overflow (CSO) outfall into the Canal from the Gowanus Watershed during rain events. The NYC Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is designing and constructing **grey** and **green** infrastructure across the Watershed to reduce CSO. DEP installations currently underway include a growing number of curbside rain gardens, or bioswales; a high level storm sewer system; and two large underground sewage detention tanks, as part of the Superfund remedy.

REZONING

In 2016, the Department of City Planning (DCP) initiated a Gowanus Neighborhood Planning Study to determine strategies for the future development of the land around the Gowanus Canal. This study is building on community priorities identified in the Bridging Gowanus process, including supporting a mix of uses, affordable housing, investment in the public realm, sustainability, resiliency, and arts and culture.



RESOURCES:
SUPERFUND: www.gowanussuperfund.com www.gowanuscag.org
GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN: http://www.nyc.gov/html/dep/html/stormwater/nyc_green_infrastructure_plan.shtml
REZONING: http://www1.nyc.gov/site/planning/plans/gowanus/gowanus.page

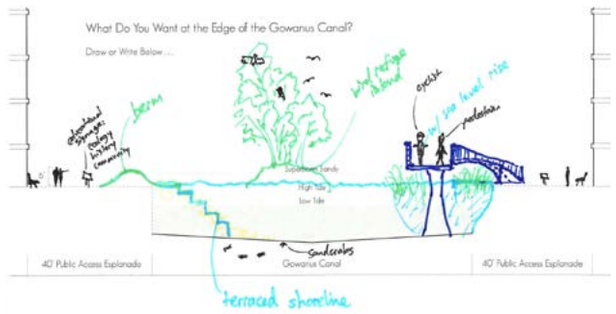
GREENSCAPE DESIGN

EXISTING:
- PARKS & PUBLIC SPACE
- INDUSTRIAL BUSINESS ZONE

EMERGING:
- ESPLANADE
- PROBABLE ESPLANADE
- GREEN CORRIDOR
- BIOSWALE
- STREET END
- TURNING BASIN
- PARK ENHANCEMENT
- PUBLIC INVESTMENT

We facilitate community visioning and design for the future of open space around the Gowanus Canal.

Greenscape visioning at EXPO Gowanus.



A community member's concept for the Canal's edge.

GOWANUS GREENSCAPE VISION

The Gowanus Canal has begun a period of rapid physical changes, that range from a $500 million clean-up to development pressure to climate change. Public open spaces are emerging as a result of these changes. We see a unique opportunity to knit together emerging public spaces into the next great New York City park.

Since 2015, GCC has led a planning process with approximately **300 community members, partner organizations, landowners, elected officials, and agency representatives** to identify open space priorities from a diverse range of neighborhood stakeholders. Outreach has resulted in emerging concepts for Greenscape elements such as right-of-ways and circulation, green infrastructure, recreation and passive space, programming, water access, facilities, and improvements to existing parks and green space.

In 2017 GCC will develop a **Gowanus Greenscape Master Plan**, to be used as a community advocacy platform to build an accessible, resilient and vibrant public realm through the changes ahead.

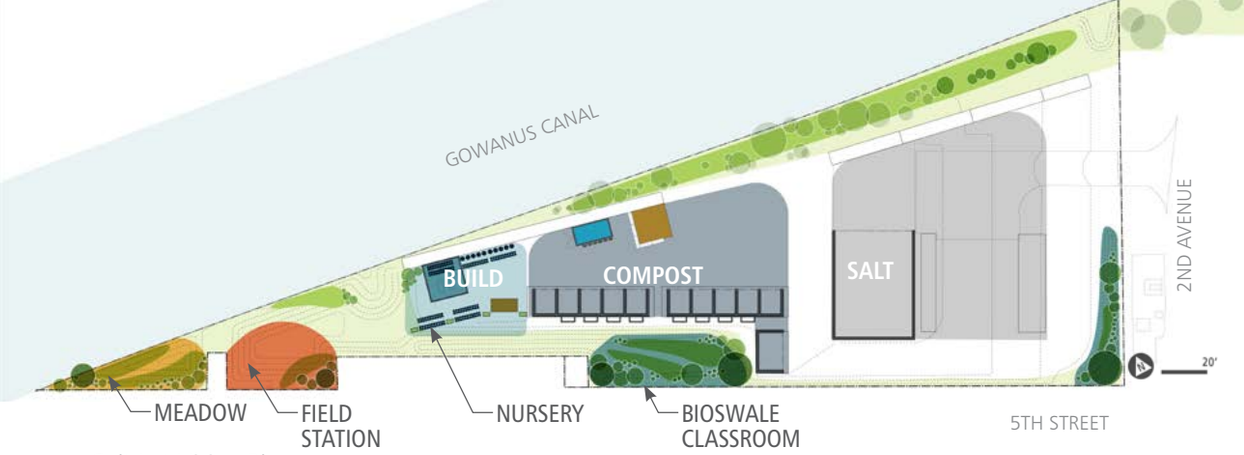
GREENSCAPE MANAGEMENT

We build community capacity to install and manage gardens, bioswales, street trees, parks, and other public spaces that support a healthy Gowanus ecosystem.

KEY:

- TREE MANAGEMENT ZONE
- TREES PLANTED 2016
- 2000 GALLON PROJECT 2016
- INSTALLATION & MANAGEMENT
- STEWARDSHIP WITH COMMUNITY PARTNERS

2000 GALLON PROJECT 2016
THOMAS GREENE PARK
CARROLL & BOND BIOSWALE
2016 NURSERY
SPONGE PARK
GREENSPACE ON 4TH
THE SALT LOT
3RD & 3RD GARDEN
6TH STREET GREEN CORRIDOR
WASHINGTON PARK
ENNIS PARK



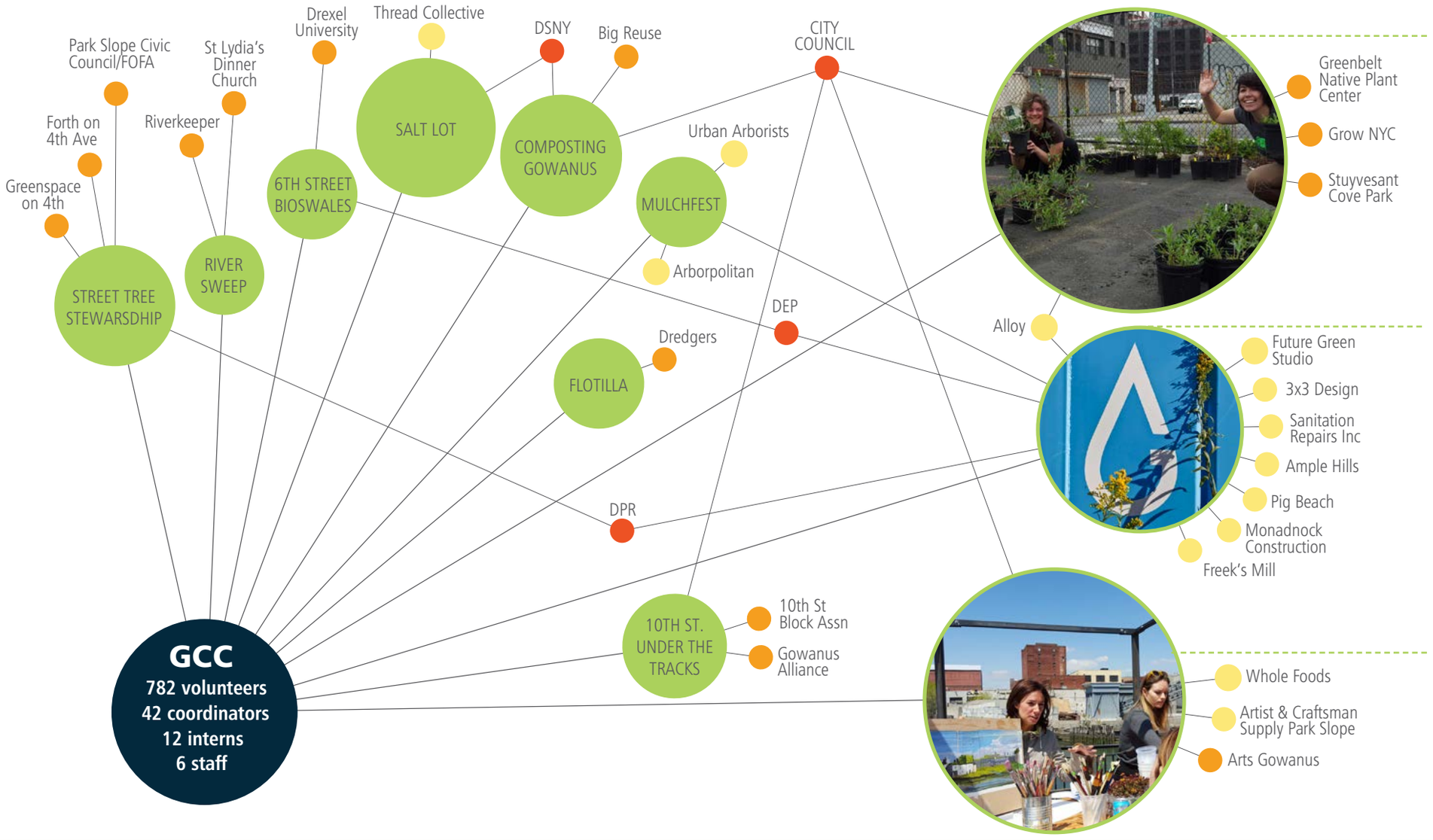
Salt Lot Vision Plan

DSNY plowblades alongside GCC gardens at the Salt Lot

THE SALT LOT

The hub of GCC's stewardship and education programs, the Salt Lot, saw a major overhaul in 2016 thanks to a collaboration among GCC, DSNY, and Big Reuse and funding from District 39 participatory budgeting. The NYC Compost Project hosted by GCC and Big Reuse will greatly expand the site's composting capacity, with a new estimated annual throughput of up to **400 tons of organic material**. In 2017, the Salt Lot will again host GCC's **native plant nursery, demonstration gardens, and rainwater harvesting system** and serve as a **stewardship and education hub.**

FUNDERS:
NYC Dept of Environmental Protection, US Environmental Protection Agency, NYC Dept of Sanitation, NYC Parks Equity Initiatve, Greener NYC Initiative, Council District 39 Participatory Budgeting, Council Member Brad Lander, Council Member Steve Levin, Council Member Sara Gonzalez, Borough President Marty Markowitz, Alloy Development, Future Green Studio, Langan, Sotheby's, Cushman & Wakefield, Sanitation Repairs, Inc. (SRI), Monadnock Construction, Inc.



POP-UP NURSERY

While the Salt Lot compost facility was under constuction (p.11) GCC built a pop-up stewardship site at Carroll & Nevins Street, complete with a native plant nursery and rainwater harvesting system. Over the course of 2016, GCC hosted **114 volunteer events, 15 service-learning events, and 19 green infrastructure workshops** at this pop-up site.

2000 GALLON PROJECT

GCC partnered with Alloy Development to build this public art installation, consisting of **10 blue dumpsters** filled with **500 perennials** and **20 trees** across the neighborhood. Each dumpster was 2,000 gallons, an above-ground visualization of the volume of stormwater managed by the bioswales popping up around the watershed. In the fall, volunteers transplanted the trees and perennials to tree beds and gardens around the Canal.

ART LAB

Designed and built by GCC volunteer coordinators, Art Lab is a steel-framed structure for art-making & environmental discovery. In 2016, GCC hosted **9 workshops** featuring local artists as instructors.

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

We empower our Clean & Green program volunteers to implement positive change through hands-on projects, many driven by our dedicated team of volunteer coordinators.

KEY:

- CIVIC
- GOVERNMENT
- PROJECT PARTNERSHIP
- BUSINESS

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM FUNDERS:

Patagonia Soho, Whole Foods, Brooklyn Brewery, Citi Foundation, Cushman & Wakefield, Langan Engineering, Monadnock Construction, Inc, NY State Pollution Prevention Institute, Sotheby's, Rockefeller Foundation, Piper Jaffray, Council Member Brad Lander (D39), Council Member Stephen Levin (D33), Veolia

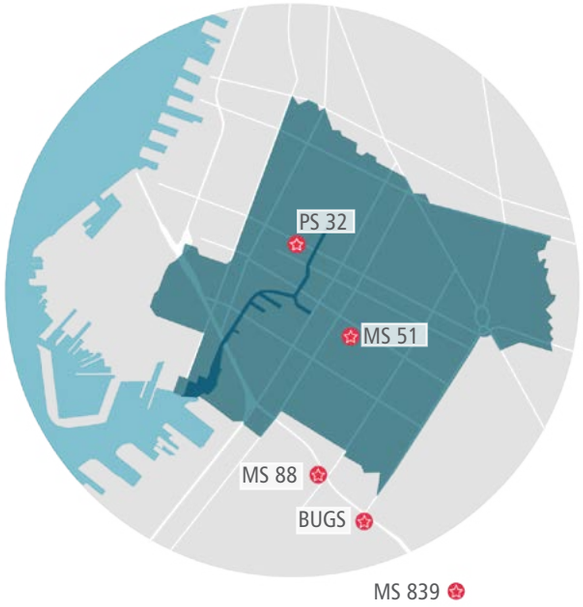
STEM GOWANUS

940 students *from local schools conducted field studies at the Canal during 2016.*

Highlight: Using GCC's **STEM Gowanus Curriculum Unit on Climate Change**, 7th grade students at MS 88 looked at the impact of climate change on canal ecology and the surrounding community. Students created adaptive designs for the waterfront to address sea level rise and flooding, focusing on a neglected public space under the 9th St viaduct. Working with landscape architecture firm SCAPE, students improved their proposals by replacing asphalt in the parking lot with permeable landscape to catch runoff and buffer storm surge.

> **"I've seen my students transformed into not only knowledgeable citizens but also stewards of this unique and dynamic setting. [As a teacher] you'll find yourself learning a lot about your neighborhood's history in the process."**

-Steven Sandman, 8th grade science teacher, on using the STEM Gowanus Curriculum



A student presents her public space design to Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez at EXPO Gowanus.

EXPO GOWANUS

45 students from MS 88, MS 51, MS 839, PS 32 and Brooklyn Urban Garden School presented their visions for the future of public space along the canal to share at **EXPO Gowanus,** a large public event in Washington Park.

> **"EXPO Gowanus has given my students an opportunity to share their design solutions, which contributes to building a stronger and healthier Gowanus community."**

- Lynn Shon, MS 88 7th Grade teacher

Students visit our plant nursery for a School Clean and Green during fall 2016.

EDUCATION

We teach community members of all ages about the complex environmental, social and political issues of the Gowanus so that they can become better advocates for change.

MAP KEY:

STEM SCHOOLS

FUNDERS

AECOM, Climate Systems Urban Partnership (CUSP), Con Edison, National Fish & Wildlife Foundation, National Grid, USDA Forest Service

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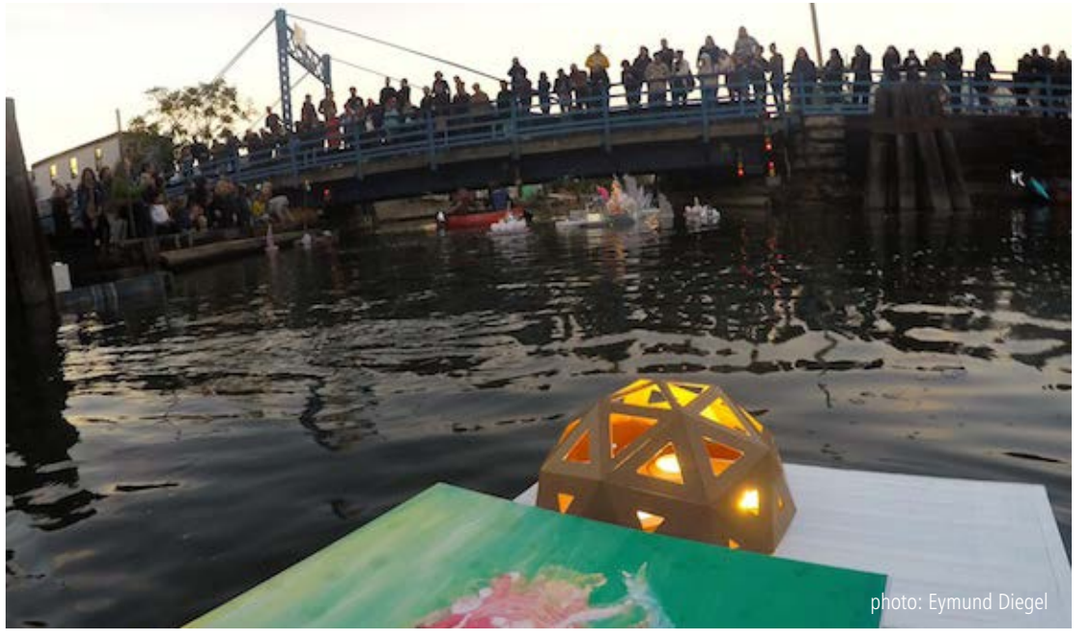


photo: Eymund Diegel

Staff

Andrea Parker
Executive Director

Christine Petro
Education Director

Natasia Sidarta
Program Manager

Diana Gruberg
Horticultural Manager

Michael Wasserman
Stewardship Coordinator
NYC Civic Corps 2015-17

Shelby Hyatt
Education Coordinator
NYC Civic Corps 2016/17

Sean DiLuccio
Outreach Coordinator
NYC Civic Corps 2015/16

Contractors

Christine Facella - Bioswale Stewardship Curriculum Illustrator
Benjamin Mack - Bookkeeper
Grame Daubert - Educator, Spring 2016
Diana Gruberg - Educator, Fall 2016
Suzanne Lipton - Event Planner
Ruth Nervig - Gardener, 2KGP Project Manager
Sarah Snow - Gardener, 2KGP Project Manager
Phil Silva & Sophie Plitt, TreeKIT - Tree Management Plan Developer

Interns/Fellows

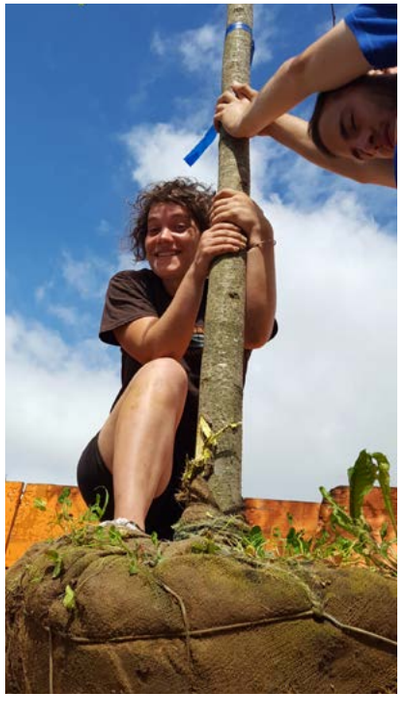
Noah Brooks Katz - Gowanus Blue Green Infrastructure Fellow
Emma Garrison - Citizen Science Fellow
Chris Anderson - Sussman Fellow in Landscape Architecture
Caitlin Murphy - Landscape Architecture Fellow
Alex Lola - Garden Intern
Annabelle Tsaboukas - Garden Intern
Anthony Kerrigan - Garden Intern
Ben Kaltman - Garden Intern
Edward Antonio - Garden Intern
Jose Prunty-Russo - Garden Intern
Juliana Castro - Garden Intern
Nicholas Shannon - Garden Intern
Zoe Miller - Garden Intern

PEOPLE

Volunteer Coordinators

Jason Mortara, Design/Build Co-Chair - Artist & Carpenter
Wendy Andringa, Design/Build Co-Chair - Landscape Designer
Shanna Blanchard, Horticulture/Green Infrastructure Co-Chair - Gardener
Ruth Nervig, Horticulture/Green Infrastructure Co-Chair - Landscape Designer
Erin Johnson, Outreach Co-Chair - Gardener and Composter
Leah Wener, Outreach Co-Chair - Landscape Designer
Bob Lesko, Urban Forestry Co-Chair - Tree Steward
Leila Mougoui Bakhtiari, Urban Foresty Co-Chair - Forester
Bryan Simpson - Compost Chair - Composter

Adriana Jovanovic - Gardener
Alexandria Donati - Designer
Andrea Solk - Architect
Annie Bergelin - Landscape Designer
Bess Hauser - Community Organizer
Brian Dentz - Videographer
Brieanne (Brie) Berry - Tree Steward
Claire Snavely - Composter
Eymund Diegel - Environmental Planner & Historian
Frederick Phillips - Composter
Greg Thornberg - Tree Steward
Greta Ruedisueli - Designer
Hannah Edmunds - Gardener and Horticulturalist
Hans Hesselein - Landscape Architect
Ian Quate - Landscape Designer
James Papadopoulos - Tree and Plant Steward
Jared McGuire - Composter
Jennifer Roberts - Painter
Jessica Dalrymple - Artist, Painter, Garden Enthusiast
Jody Reiss - Educator
John Craver - Architect, Construction Manager
Jonathan Hammett Chesley - Architect
Joy Wang - Designer
Julian Macrone - Bioswale Steward
Liam Mahoney - Landscape Architect
Lindsay Karich - Composter
Michelle Kamerath - Gardener
Nermin Kajosi - Composter & Bioswale Steward
Olivia Weber - Beekeeper
Prospero Herrera - Urban Planner
Ruth Hofheimer - Artist
Sam Silver - Tech Wizard
Shari Baitcher - Graphic Designer
Suzanne Lipton - Composter
Suzanne Smith - Gardener and Horticulturalist



PEOPLE

Partners

27th Street Block Association
826NYC
8th Street Block Association
Ample Hills Creamery
Arab American Association of New York
Arborpolitan
ArtBuilt Mobile Studio
ArtsGowanus
Atlantic Ave BID
ASLA
Balmori Associates
Billion Oyster Project
BKBioreactor
Bronx River Alliance
Brooklyn Bird Club
Brooklyn Botanic Garden
Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservancy
Brooklyn Community Board 6
BIG Reuse
Central Park Conservancy
Citizens Committee for New York City
DecadesOut
Detective Joseph Mayrose Community Garden
dlandstudios
Dykes Lumber
eDesign Dynamics
Families United for Racial and Economic Equality
Fifth Avenue Committee
Forth on Fourth Avenue
Friends of Thomas Greene Park
Future Green Studio
Gowanus Alliance
Gowanus by Design
Gowanus Community Advisory Group (CAG)
Gowanus Dredgers Canoe Club
Gowanus Houses Art Collective
Gowanus Souvenir Shop
Gowanus Swim Society
Greenspace on Fourth
GrowNYC
ioby
Littlefield
Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance
MillionTreesNYC
National Parks Service SENCER Project
Natural Areas Conservancy
New York Botanical Garden
New York Cares
New York Restoration Project
North Creek Nurseries
NY ASLA
NYC Urban Sketchers
NYC Wildflower Week
NYU Furman Center
NYC Urban Field Station
Oil Painters of America
Old Stone House
Open House New York Inc.
Open Sewer Atlas
Park Slope Civic Council
Prospect Park Alliance
Public Laboratory
Riverkeeper
Runner & Stone
Sharon Davis Studio
SCAPE
Slade Architecture
Steeplechase Coffee
The POOP Project
The V Spot
thread collective
Threes Brewing
TreeKIT
Trees New York
Trilox Millworks
Urban Arborists
Urban Sketchers
USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center
Washington Park/JJ Byrne Playground
WeDesign
Working Harbor Committee

University Partners

Brooklyn College STEM Academy
City College of New York
Columbia University
Drexel University
Long Island University Brooklyn Learning Community
New York University
NYC College of Technology
NYC DCC Labor Technical College
Parsons School of Design
Rutgers University
School of Visual Arts
SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry
The New School
University of Florida
University of Oregon

K-12 Partners

Avenues: The World School
Beacon School
Brooklyn Technical School Key Club
Brooklyn Technical School Red Cross Club
Brooklyn Friends School
Brooklyn Urban Garden School
Buckley School
Compass Charter School
Girl Scout Troop 2462
Hannah Senesh Community Day School
MS 447
MS 51
MS 839
MS 88
Packer Collegiate Institute
Poly Prep Country Day School
PS 261
PS 32
PS 636 - One to World
St. Ann's School
Stevenson School
Stuyvesant High School
Success Academy High School
The Spectrum School
Urban Academy High School

PARTNERS

Foundations

Climate Systems Urban Partnership (CUSP)
Hudson River Foundation
Leibowitz Living Trust
Lily Auchincloss Foundation
Rockefeller Foundation
National Fish & Wildlife Foundation
New York State Council on the Arts
Sussman Foundation

Agencies

NYC Civic Corps
NYC Dept of Environmental Protection
NYC Dept of Sanitation
NYC Dept of Youth & Community Development
NYC Parks Dept- Greenbelt Native Plant Center
NYS Dept of Environmental Conservation
NYC Dept of Sanitation
NYC Soil & Water Conservation District
NY State Pollution Prevention Institute
US Environmental Protection Agency
US Forest Service, US Dept of Agriculture

Elected Officials

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City Council Member Steve Levin
US Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez

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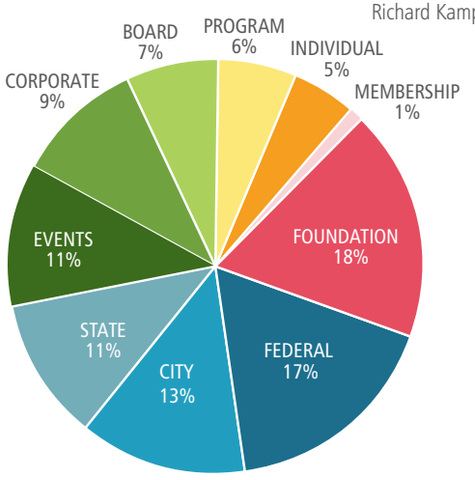

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