

**New York City  
Urban Field Station  
Annual Progress Report 2018**

# New York City Urban Field Station

The New York City Urban Field Station (NYC UFS) seeks to improve the quality of life in urban areas by conducting, communicating, and supporting research about social-ecological systems and natural resource management.

The NYC Urban Field Station is both a physical place to conduct research and a network of relationships among scientists, land managers, designers, practitioners, artists, and community members. The NYC UFS is sustained through a core partnership between the US Department of Agriculture Forest Service (USDA FS) Northern Research Station, the NYC Department of Parks & Recreation (NYC Parks), and the non-profit Natural Areas Conservancy (NAC). Since its founding in 2006, the NYC UFS has actively collaborated with non-profits, academic institutions, local stewards, artists, the private sector, and government partners to support land management and sustainability initiatives in New York City.



NYC Urban Field Station staff. *Top row from left:* Rich Hallett, Ben Mertz, Brady Simmons, Bram Gunther, Caitlin Boas, Lauren Smalls-Mantey, Jamie Ong, Laura Landau; *Bottom row from left:* Jennifer Smith, Novem Auyeung, Michelle Johnson, Erika Svendsen. *Not pictured:* Lindsay Campbell, Helen Forgione, Jesse Krauss, Ellen Pehek, and Clara Pregitzer. / *Photo credit:* NYC Parks

## Data in Action

The NYC UFS plays an important role as a model - in NYC, regionally, and even globally - for the generation of knowledge about urban natural resource management and stewardship. The NYC UFS is also focused on the integration of this information into decision-making and practice. These complementary roles are fulfilled through both in-house research and partnerships. Our work spans the social and the ecological, including natural resource management, ecology, green infrastructure, governance, and civic engagement. We believe that science leads to better planning, better programming, and better responses to community and ecological needs. The spirit behind our projects is the desire to see nature in the city play a positive role in quality of life for our communities and to restore and conserve nature and its biodiversity. It is our hope that what we do will help create a sustainable future for NYC.

This report includes our 2018 projects and speaks to our mission and objectives. It covers multiple areas in which the NYC UFS works: Consensus Building, Research and Analytics, Informing Best Practice, Science of the Living City, and People at the Field Station. Here are a few highlights:

### Harlem River Watershed Plan

NYC Parks and partners produced a draft Harlem River Watershed and Natural Resources Management Plan for the Bronx. Based on a wealth of ecological data and community input, the plan is intended to serve as a roadmap to restore and enhance natural resources, manage stormwater, improve waterfront access and connectivity, and increase community engagement and education.

### Forest Management Framework for NYC

Produced by the NAC in partnership with NYC Parks, the Forest Management Framework is a call to action, road map, and set of best practices for the long-term care of NYC's forested natural areas. Based on years of ecological data, the plan lays out guidelines and costs for best management and restoration of this complex resource, and calls for a \$385 million investment over the next twenty-five years.

### Stewardship Mapping and Assessment Project

A USDA FS initiative, the Stewardship Mapping and Assessment Project (STEW-MAP) is designed to highlight the existence, goals, and activities of civic environmental stewardship groups citywide. It is an essential tool in the attempt to understand the universe of environmental stewardship and the possibilities of partnerships. It began with the collection of stewardship activity data in NYC and has since grown to an international scale.

## Consensus Building

### NYC Nature Goals 2050

[New York City Nature Goals 2050](#) (NYC2050) is a coalition of 78 environmental organizations, spearheaded by the NAC. Its purpose is to increase the role of nature in planning and policy by 2050 to make for a more sustainable city. The coalition developed shared goals, a Declaration of Rights to NYC Nature, and a set of 25 actionable and measurable targets. In 2018, NYC2050 formed a working group of nine coalition organizations to manage the public engagement phase of the initiative.

The goal of the working group is to increase the visibility of the initiative and recruit new members through events and engagement, including adding 10,000 signatories to the Declaration. The working group also developed an “event kit” that allows member organizations to include NYC2050 at their events. NYC2050 launched its new website in April 2019. An early goal of the coalition was to have NYC2050 integrated into the city’s sustainability plan, [OneNYC](#), which it was on Earth Day 2019.

*Lead: Bram Gunther*

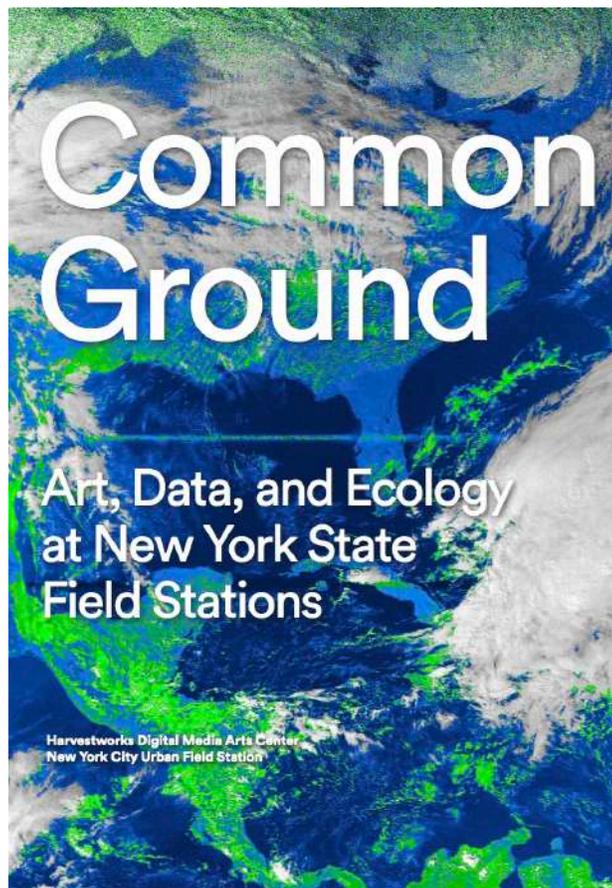


REI SoHo Member Jam in October: The Natural Area Conservancy’s Gabriel Cummings discussing NYC 2050 and encouraging visitors to sign the Declaration of Rights to New York City Nature. / Photo credit: Leila Mougoui

## Common Ground

With partners Kevin Duggan and [Harvestworks](#), we led a survey, held a daylong workshop, and produced the report, “[Common Ground: Art, Data, and Ecology and New York State Field Stations](#).” The report assesses, and hopes to foster, collaboration in New York State between the arts and field stations, as well as the data and land management tools they generate. It provides an overview of how and where this transdisciplinary work is currently taking place.

*UFS Leads: Lindsay Campbell and Bram Gunther*



The final published report, “Common Ground”  
*Credit to Harvestworks Digital Media Arts Center  
 and NYC Urban Field Station*

## National Survey of Urban Forested Natural Areas Land Managers

The NAC, The Trust for Public Land, and the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies completed the first national survey of organizations that manage the nation’s urban forested natural areas. The survey received responses from 125 organization in 111 cities across the country. The report was published in early 2019. A convening of participating organizations will take place later in 2019, with the potential to start a new national network to share best practices.

*UFS Leads: Bram Gunther and Clara Pregitzer*

### Data in Action

Over 84% of the land area of urban parks in American cities (50,000+ people) are natural areas: 1.7 million acres, an area larger than the state of Delaware.

## International Programs Urban Seminar

The International Seminar on Urban Forestry is one of ten annual seminars organized by USDA FS [International Programs](#). Representatives from 15 countries convened in New York City and Chicago in June with USDA FS staff and partners to discuss urban resource management best practices.

*UFS Lead: Jennifer Smith*

## Research and Analytics

### City-Scale Forest Assessment

The NAC published “[A city-scale assessment reveals that native forest types and overstory species dominate New York City forests](#)” (Pregitzer et al., 2018) in *Ecological Applications*. The authors analyzed data from the NAC’s Ecological Assessment, seeking to answer the extent to which the trees in New York City’s urban forest are native vs. nonnative. The authors found the NYC urban forest canopy is very similar to New York State’s rural forests, but that its understory is composed of a greater proportion of invasive species. These younger non-native trees demonstrate- along with the arrival of new pest species- a future threat to NYC’s native-dominated forests. While urban forest dynamics are not yet well understood, the similarity of NYC’s forest to those in the surrounding region indicates that rural silvicultural practices may provide a template for urban forest management practices.

*UFS Leads: Clara Pregitzer and Bram Gunther*

### Cool Neighborhoods

As cited in the [Cool Neighborhoods NYC Report](#), heat kills more Americans than all other extreme weather events combined. The lethal effects of heat are exacerbated in urban areas by the [urban heat island](#). In response to this threat, the City of New York has funded Cool Neighborhoods as a part of [OneNYC](#). Research conducted by the NYC UFS is looking at how street trees affect local air temperature. This data set is being compared to the Healthy Tree, Healthy Cities data set, looking for connections between a tree’s health and its capacity to provide cooling.

*UFS Lead: Lauren Smalls-Mantey*

### Research Permits

Via the NYC UFS, 84 research permits were issued by NYC Parks to researchers interested in conducting studies on NYC Parks properties. Permits were issued to more than 50 organizations. A majority of the permit holders were from academic institutions (38%), with non-profit organizations conducting 31% of the projects. More permits were issued in Queens than other boroughs, followed by Manhattan. Pelham Bay Park and Central Park were the two most frequently studied individual parks, and 175 other NYC Parks properties or study sites were represented in research permits. Vegetation monitoring was the most common project focus.

*UFS Lead: Brady Simmons*

#### Data in Action

The number of projects with a genetic component has grown by 21% since Parks began tracking research permits in 2009. Through the [Urban Barcode Project](#), NYC Parks has been playing an active role in teaching students about genetics, field collection, and the role of permitting in research.

## Healthy Trees, Healthy Cities Initiative

Researchers at the NYC UFS partnered with The Nature Conservancy's [Healthy Trees, Healthy Cities](#) (HTHC) initiative to develop a [tree health assessment app](#) using the tree health monitoring protocol (below). Improvements to the HTHC mobile app and web dashboard were completed last year, and all data collected with the HTHC app will be included in a larger nationwide database. Rich Hallett published a paper comparing [data collected by a Wisconsin Boy Scout troop using the app to the same assessment completed by experts](#). Their data was similar to a professional assessment of the same trees, indicating that citizen scientists can use this tool to collect high-quality data that can be used to inform land management. A report is in the works that outlines the scientific basis for the protocol and includes a field guide for use alongside the app.

*UFS Leads: Rich Hallett, Ben Mertz, and Michelle Johnson*

## Urban Tree Health Monitoring Protocol

Researchers at the NYC UFS developed a protocol for [assessing the health of trees in urban settings](#) based on work in rural forests by Pontius and Hallett (2014). After Hurricane Sandy, this protocol was used by the NYC UFS to collect data for a [study on the impacts of salt water inundation on street trees](#). The report demonstrates certain tree species are more resilient than others. During the summer of 2018 the protocol was also used to monitor tree health for NYC's Cool Neighborhoods Program, in order to examine how street trees reduce heat. We further partnered with the US Geological Survey to study the effects of new planting methods on tree health outcomes.

*UFS Lead: Rich Hallett*

## Alley Pond Vernal Pools Creation and Monitoring

In 2012, NYC Parks ecologists began collaborating with USDA FS researcher Tom Biebighauser to design the first artificial vernal pools in New York City at Alley Pond Park. The pools were constructed in 2016, and monitoring continued through 2018. A number of amphibian and insect species quickly colonized the pools, and the presence of the pools led to changes in nearby plant life. NYC Parks recommended design and maintenance modifications to more closely mimic vernal pools at future sites. NYC Parks will work with Queens Community College to continue monitoring water level, water quality, and microbial communities in the pools.

*UFS Lead: Brady Simmons*



Aerial view of vernal pools at the northern edge of Alley Pond Park. / Photo credit: NYC Parks

## Citywide i-Tree Report

“[The Urban Forest of New York City](#)” report on i-Tree findings has been published. A collaboration between all three NYC UFS partner organizations, the report summarizes the value of trees in NYC. Data came from LiDAR and aerial images of nearly 300 plots, and the Ecological Assessment conducted by the NAC. The University of Vermont’s Spatial Analytics Lab (O’Neil-Dunne 2012) and the i-Tree Eco model (Nowak and Crane, 2000 & Nowak et al., 2008) were key partners. The report’s findings reveal that tree canopy that covers 21% of the city. These trees generate ecosystem services valued at more than \$100 million annually by cooling the city, cleaning the air, lowering energy costs, reducing ultraviolet radiation, and reducing stormwater runoff.

*UFS Lead: Novem Auyeung*

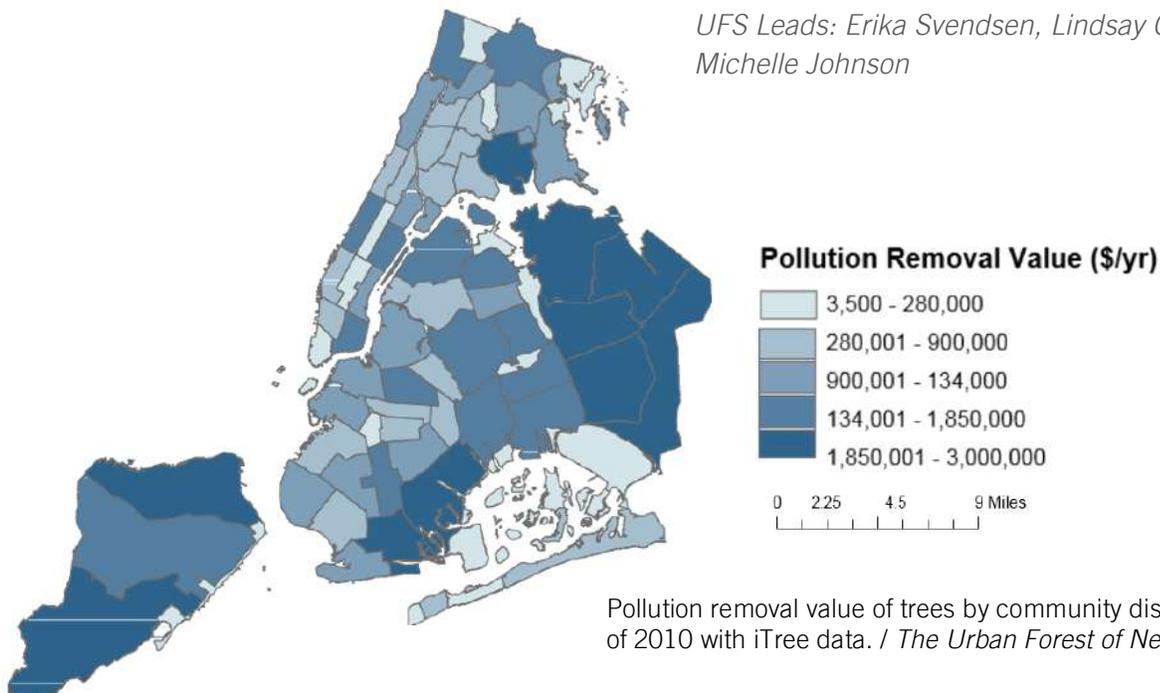
### Data in Action

According to this report, trees in NYC provide carbon storage equivalent to the yearly emissions of 814,000 cars.

## Social Assessment of Parks & Natural Areas

The social assessment is a project led by the NYC UFS. It explores the use and social meaning of green spaces in New York City, and was conducted in parallel with the ecological assessment of natural areas by the NAC. Several publications from 2016 onward have been highlighted in prior annual reports and are available on the NYC UFS website. Most recently “[The Written Park: Reading Multiple Urban Park Subjectivities Through Signage, Writing, and Graffiti](#)” (Campbell et al., 2019) was published in *Space and Culture*. This paper discusses writings found in 42 parks throughout NYC, including signage, flyers, stickers, murals, art, and graffiti. In their analysis, the authors identify and discuss the experiences and expectations created by these written messages. Other publications based on the assessment are currently in preparation, including a study of factors that attract or detract from the use of natural areas (Sonti) and an in-depth case study of Prospect Park (Svendsen).

*UFS Leads: Erika Svendsen, Lindsay Campbell, and Michelle Johnson*



Pollution removal value of trees by community district in NYC as of 2010 with iTree data. / *The Urban Forest of New York City*

## Stewardship Mapping and Assessment Project

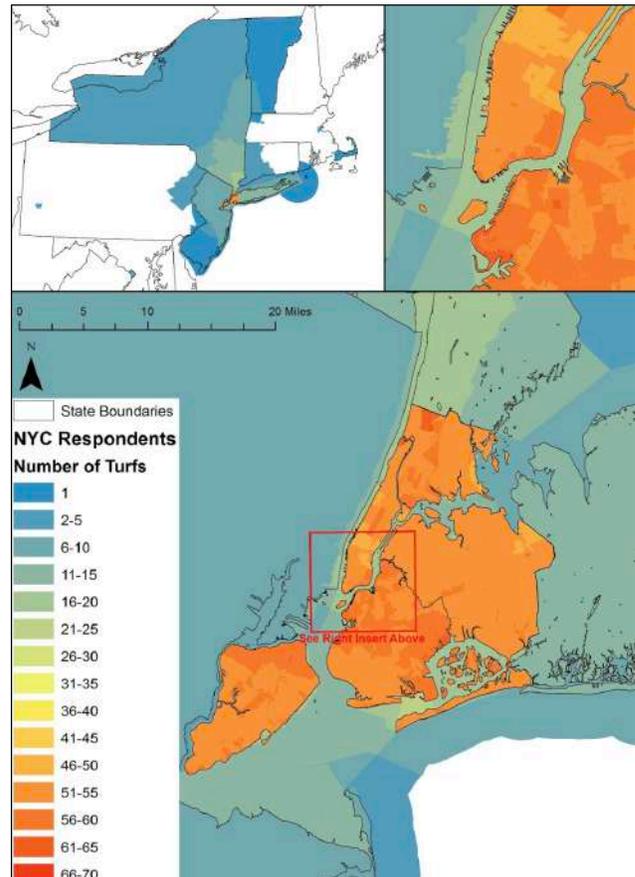
The Stewardship Mapping and Assessment Project (STEW-MAP) is a spatial map, database, and set of tools for better understanding and visualizing civic stewardship. The project is led by USDA FS staff at the NYC UFS. In the 2018, the STEW-MAP team completed the collection, cleaning, and analysis of STEW-MAP 2017 NYC region update. The cleaned data are viewable on the new online [ArcGIS map](#), where the public can find stewardship groups and organizations can discover potential partners. A white paper covering overall findings will be released in 2019. The [STEW-MAP web portal](#) was revamped, including a series of “how to” guides to help with the implementation of new projects. STEW-MAP was featured in Wave Hill’s summer exhibition, [Ecological Consciousness: Artist as an Instigator](#). The team also collected elementary and middle school students’ stories through a partnership with the Friends of Van Cortlandt Park. In November 2018, the STEW-MAP team traveled to the World Forum on Urban Forests in Mantova, Italy, to facilitate the activity for a global audience.

*UFS Leads: Erika Svendsen, Lindsay Campbell, Michelle Johnson, Laura Landau*



### Data in Action

In late 2018, the STEW-MAP team, in partnership with SAVI (Pratt), began to lay out plans for an exhibit showcasing their work and the work of associated artists at the Queens Museum. This exhibition, "Who Takes Care of New York", will run from September 12th to September 29th, 2019.



Above: State, City, and Neighborhood level maps demonstrating the overlap of where stewardship is occurring, according to participating respondents.

Left: Stewardship in action.

## Informing Best Practice

### Harlem River Watershed Plan

NYC Parks and partners produced a [draft Harlem River Watershed and Natural Resources Management Plan for the Bronx](#). The plan is intended to serve as a roadmap to restore and enhance natural resources, manage stormwater, improve waterfront access and connectivity, and increase community engagement and education. Development of the plan involved consultation with members of the Watershed Advisory Committee, comprised of 16 City, State, and Federal agencies and local NGOs, including the USDA FS. You can read more about the plan in the article [Reconnecting Urban Communities with Their Waterways](#), which appeared in the December issue of *Parks & Recreation* (National Recreation and Parks Association).

To address watershed goals, the Plan introduces 14 broad strategies, 75 watershed-wide management recommendations, and 98 site-specific recommended actions. The final Plan is in preparation and will be completed by 2020 with funding provided by the New York State Department of State under Title 11 of the Environmental Protection Fund.

*UFS Leads: Katie Friedman, Sara Powell, and Jamie Ong*

#### Data in Action

About half the population of the Bronx, roughly 700,000 people, live within the Harlem River watershed. Planners held a series of public events to share news about the plan and receive community input.



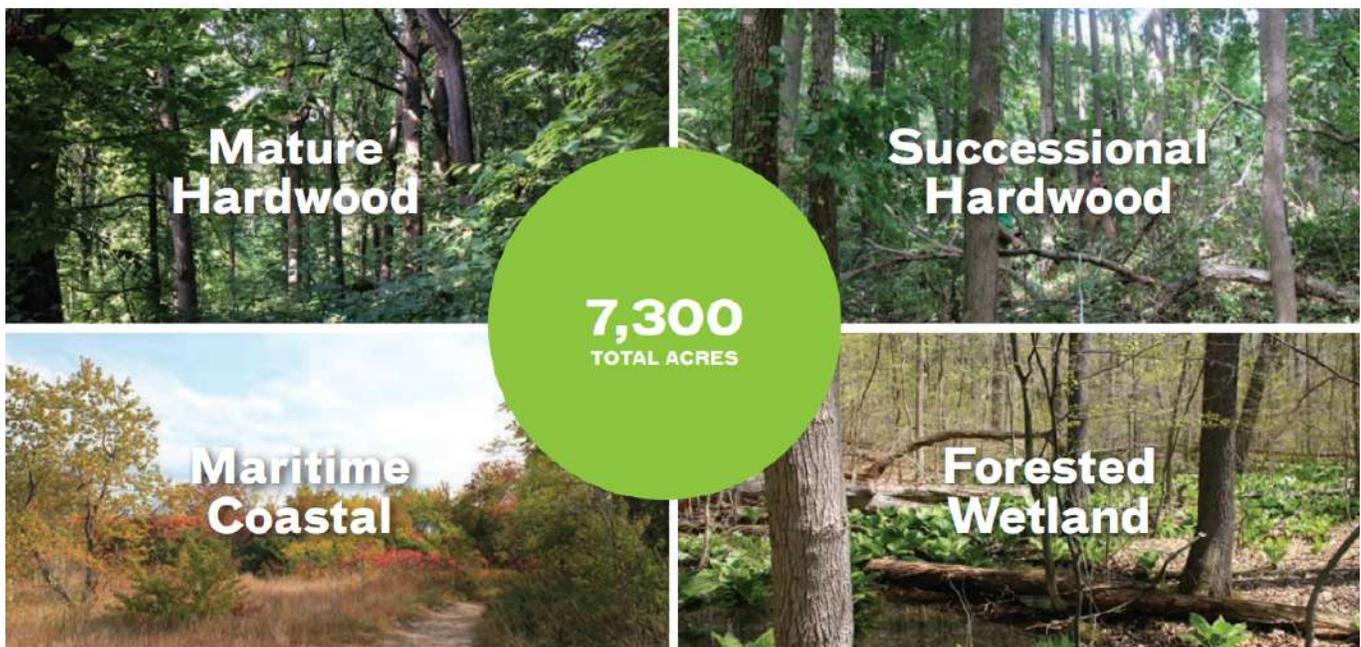
The Harlem River at Mill Pond Park. / Photo credit Sara Powell, Bronx and Harlem Rivers Urban Waters Ambassador.

## Forest Management Framework

The NAC and NYC Parks developed a 25-year [Forest Management Framework](#) intended to guide the restoration and management of NYC Parks' 7,300 acres of forested natural areas. The framework, NYC's first citywide forest management plan, is based on comprehensive data that include both ecological conditions and visitor perceptions. The framework categorizes the condition of forests in more than 50 parks across the five boroughs, based on metrics for ecological health and threat. Each condition category is matched with recommended best practices, staffing and contractual structures, and cost estimates.

This approach facilitates the prioritization of future restoration activities, the ability to track changes in forest health over time, and the ability to estimate the level of investment needed to maximize ecological condition and visitor experience. The framework calls for an investment of \$385 million over 25 years to ensure that NYC's forests achieve their full potential for recreation and conservation.

*UFS Leads: Helen Forgione*



Broad categories of natural forests found in NYC. / Source: Natural Areas Conservancy's Ecological Assessment of NYC.

## Salt Marsh Guidelines:

### Restoration Design and Monitoring

NYC UFS contributed to two new reports detailing NYC Parks’ management strategy for salt marshes in the city. These are the “[Salt Marsh Restoration Design Guidelines](#)” and the “[Salt Marsh Restoration Monitoring Guidelines](#).” They were written to serve as resources for restoration practitioners, such as natural resource managers and landscape architects. These guidelines build upon the recommendations of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation’s Salt Marsh Restoration and Monitoring Guidelines (2000). Updates are based on an NYC Parks study of 22 past salt marsh restoration projects conducted in city parks. Together, the guidelines are instructions for executing all phases of a salt marsh restoration project, from conception and planning to post-restoration monitoring.

*UFS Lead: Novem Auyeung*



Examples of impacts to salt marsh: an oil spill in Calvert Vaux Park. / *Photo credit: NYC Parks*



Goose fencing constructed surrounding newly planted salt marsh at Calver Vaux Park, Brooklyn. / *Photo credit: Salt Marsh Restoration Design Guidelines, NYC Parks*

## Science of the Living City

The Science of the Living City (SoLC) program encompasses all of the Field Station’s convening and communication events. The program was developed to engage with partners and advance knowledge and to engage the general public about the environmental work being done in NYC. In 2018, Science of the Living City events attracted over 800 people and represent participation by more than 25 unique organizations.

### Brown Bags

Brown bags are focused on continuing education for staff and provide a forum for a diversity of experts and projects from our broad community of practice. Highlights from 2018 include a presentation and performance by Lisa Schonberg and her Secret Drum Band, based on her work at Lab Verde, Brazil

and at Joshua Tree National Park in which the band is capturing the sounds of nature through percussion, and a presentation by Zach Garcia, a student at Yale Forestry on his research into Hindu religious and stewardship practices in Jamaica Bay, New York City.



Lisa Schonberg and the Secret Drum Band performing at the NYC Urban Field Station. / Photo credit: NYC Parks



Journalist and photographer Nathan Kensinger shares his experiences at the salt marsh at Alley Pond Park with the crowd attended *NYC's Wetlands 2050*, at the Helen Marshall Cultural Center. / Photo credit: Jesse Krauss

## Seminars

For the first seminar of the year, Robin Nagle presented *How Street Cleaners Saved the City* at PACE University. In May, the NYC UFS partnered with the Bronx River Alliance and THE POINT Community Development Center on a seminar about *New York City's Freshwaters from Headlands to Harbor: Alewives and the Bronx River* in June. *City as Ecosystem*, a seminar held in tandem with an art show at the Arsenal Gallery, featured 6 NYC UFS Arts and Humanities Residents and their work. The final seminar of the year, *NYC's Wetlands 2050*, was held with NYC H2O and the Alley Pond Environmental Center at the Helen K. Marshall Cultural Center at Queens Borough Hall. This last event, attended by over 100 community members, was kicked off by NYC Council Member Barry Grodenchik.

## Stewardship Salons

Continuing for their second year, Stewardship Salons are a community of practice focusing on “the stewards of stewardship”- including land managers, researchers, educators, and artists, who come together to co-produce knowledge and learn from place. The salons focused on topics and practices, including a Tu B’ Shevat Seder and discussion of Jewish environmentalism, local ecological knowledge in Greenpoint, Brooklyn and the Menominee Nation, and progressive Hindu spirituality and stewardship in Jamaica Bay. The salons will continue in 2019, along with a series of publications in production.

## Artists and Humanities Residency

The [Arts and Humanities Residency Program](#) aims to bring perspectives and insights from arts and humanities fields to urban social-ecological research and land management. As well, we hope to advance the knowledge and data available to these artists interested in the intersection between art, data, and ecology to create complex art that can also be used to bring the public’s attention to nature in the city and all its complexities. In 2018, the NYC UFS partnered with the Arts and Antiquities team at NYC Parks to host the [City as Ecosystem](#) gallery at the Arsenal in Central Park, featuring work by [all six](#)

[prior Arts and Humanities Residents](#). These artists held a panel discussion dedicated to discussing their projects at the Arsenal on October 23, 2018.

Updates from the 2017-18 class of Arts and Humanities residents: Heidi Neilson’s [Moon Arrow](#) has been making its rounds of the city, Katie Holten’s [Tree Alphabet](#) will soon be inspiring planting projects in NYC, and Matt Jensen continues to [develop and lead walks](#) that highlight the natural and historical significance of outdoor spaces in NYC and other cities.



**Julia Oldham** is an artist and storyteller from Maryland. She blends digital media and drawing to tell stories that she finds both troubling and beautiful, ranging from the historical tale of Laika the Soviet Space Dog to science fiction visions of a post-apocalyptic world populated by high-tech chihuahuas. She received her MFA from the University of Chicago and currently lives and works between Eugene, OR and Brooklyn, NY. For her latest project, she traveled to the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone in Ukraine to make a film about the stray dogs that live there. Julia Oldham's current project, “Undiscovered City,” is a series of altered 360-degree landscapes of New York City that illustrate the dreams of current NYC stewards for a future city.



**Dylan Gauthier** is a Brooklyn-based artist and curator, who works through a research-based and collaborative practice centered on experiences of urban ecology, architecture, landscape, and social change. He is a founder of the boat-building and publishing collective Mare Liberum, and of the Sunview Luncheonette, a co-op in Greenpoint, Brooklyn. He is co-organizer, with Mariel Villeré, of Freshkills Field R/D. Dylan teaches courses at Hunter College, Parsons, and The New School. His proposal for the NYC UFS Residency program is to explore NYC Parks Forever Wild Sites and natural areas. He intends to launch a multi-media publication series, inspired by field guides and comprised of interrelated works, taking the form of printed handbooks, 360 degree videos, web-text, maps, interactive events, and installations.

## Fresh Kills: Reclaimed Lands Conference

Creative reuses of disturbed lands (such as brownfields and former landfills) are critical in the quest to increase ecological function in urban regions. The NYC UFS was a planning partner of the [Freshkills Reclaimed Lands conference](#), which was held from June 28 to July 1. This four-day conference brought together researchers, practitioners, planners, ecologists, artists, designers, community groups, and students to bridge the gaps between these disciplines and explore the issues surrounding reclaimed lands, such as monitoring changes in biodiversity, designing ecologically sustainable re-development, engaging residents in stewardship, transforming public perceptions, and inspiring future projects.

## Workshops

In 2018, the Field Station sponsored, “Friend or Foe: Weeds and Street Trees” to reflect on the best ways to design and manage street tree beds. The Urban Foraging Workshop focused on the growing activity of foraging in urban parkland. Officially against NYC Parks’ rules, foraging is taking place all over the city. The workshop explored the tension between the goals of preservation and the existing demand for foraging opportunities. The workshop featured presentations by representatives from seven different universities and city-level government organizations from NYC and Seattle.

### Data in Action

The Urban Foraging Workshop included a presentation about the [Concrete Plant Park Foodway](#). A collaboration between NYC Parks, Partnerships for Parks, and three local community groups, the Foodway is the first official foraging project on NYC Parks property.



Concrete Plant Park Foodway in the Bronx, featured in the Urban Foraging Workshop. / Photo credit: Danielle Beurteaux

## People at the Urban Field Station

In addition to its regular staff, the NYC UFS provides opportunities for researchers, students, land managers, community stewards, and artists to visit temporarily. These visitors collaborate with UFS scientists and NYC Parks’ managers by participating in varied programs, which include workshops, internships, traineeships, fellowships, and residencies.

### Research Fellows



**Zach Garcia** is a graduate student at Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies pursuing a degree in environmental management. As a [Yale Hixon Center for Urban Ecology Fellow](#), Zach worked with a team of USDA FS researchers and community organizations, [Sadhana](#), and [United Madrassi Association](#) to explore the [spiritual and ecological ethics of Indo-Caribbean Hindu communities](#) who worship on the beaches in Jamaica Bay. He is currently co-authoring a this work with Sonya Sachdeva of the USDA FS in Chicago, Lindsay Campbell, and Erika Svendsen.



**Holly Berman** is a first-year doctoral student in the Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers University. She is a graduate research assistant in the Department of Human Ecology, working with an interdisciplinary team on a

National Science Foundation research project that will investigate household consumption and analyze the impacts of interventions supporting conservation. Additionally, she is a Coastal Climate Risk and Resilience Trainee working to bridge communication gaps between scientists, policy makers, and coastal community stakeholders around climate adaptation issues. As a Rutgers CRL fellow, Holly worked with the STEW-MAP 2017 dataset to look into groups that transform the local environment. She plans to continue to work with STEW-MAP data to propose ways in which grassroots stewardship groups can be included in deliberative planning processes towards sustainable climate futures.



**Justine Marchal-Appleton** recently completed her masters’ dissertation for Université Paris Diderot on evaluating the outcomes of stewardship activities. She focused her study on groups working in community gardens, street trees, parks and urban forests in New York City. While at the field station, she worked on the STEW-MAP Project, helping the team to clean data that were collected in 2017. Justine mapped the geographic areas where the groups worked in NYC and the broader region, and coded open-ended questions in the survey related to the changes stewardship groups want to achieve.

## Visiting Researchers

The NYC UFS hosts visiting researchers and students from all over the country and often internationally. These researchers use the Field Station's lab and living space to conduct research in NYC. In 2018, representatives from more than 20 organizations made use of the Field Station's facilities. A few highlights include JD Garrah (McGill University), who studied social-ecological 'bright spots' in NYC neighborhood; Alison Kocek (SUNY Environmental Science and Forestry), a repeat visitor who brings her students to study salt marsh birds; Nathan Caplan (Drexel University), studying stormwater capture throughout the city; and three Bahamian students, who visited NYC as part of an internship exchange with CUNY, funded by the Leon Levy Foundation and Jerome Levy Foundation. Finally, for the third year in a row, two West Point cadets joined the NYC UFS for a 2-week summer internship that focused on urban forestry research, monitoring, and management. John Franklin and Tyler Konyak learned about social science methods from USDA FS staff, assisted NYC Parks with emerald ash borer monitoring, and assisted the NRG Conservation Team with their Idlewild terrapin project.



West Point Cadets Tyler Konyak and John Franklin in front of the NYC Field Station. / Photo: NYC Parks

## New Arrivals



**Ben Mertz**, with The Nature Conservancy, is the Conservation Coordinator for the Healthy Trees, Healthy Cities Initiative. Ben works closely with USDA FS on data management, creating training materials, and coordinating improvements to the Healthy Trees, Healthy Cities mobile app and web dashboard. Ben has worked for the New York Botanical Garden, the USDA, and the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy in various positions related to ecology and volunteer engagement. Ben has an MS in Environmental Science, MS in Public Affairs, and BS in Environmental Management, all from Indiana University.



**Lauren Smalls-Mantey** is the Program Manager for the Cool Neighborhood Heat Resilience initiative at NYC Parks. She has her doctorate in Environmental Engineering from Drexel University, where she worked with the Sustainable Water Resource Engineering Laboratory. Her dissertation research investigated the role of green infrastructure in the mitigation of the urban heat island in NYC. Lauren's current research explores the influence of vegetation and land use characteristics on air temperature in heat-vulnerable neighborhoods in NYC.



**Caitlin Boas** is the Program Coordinator and Facilities Manager, and oversees programming, communication, and outreach for Science of the Living City. Over the past six years, she's navigated the intersection of analytical research, public engagement, and science communication as an invertebrate paleontologist at the American Museum of Natural History and the Smithsonian Institute, and as an educator and outreach liaison at UC Berkeley. Caitlin holds a degree in Geology from Brooklyn College and, after a few years enjoying west coast tacos, returned to NYC for the pizza and received her MPA in Environmental Science and Policy from Columbia University. Although no longer in an official capacity, she can be found hunting for fossils and sharing her love for all things science across NYC.



## **NYC Urban Field Station Staff**

### **Erika Svendsen**

Co-Director and Research Social Scientist  
USDA Forest Service | [erika.svendsen@usda.gov](mailto:erika.svendsen@usda.gov)

### **Bram Gunther**

Co-Director and Senior Advisor to NAC  
NYC Parks | [bram.gunther@parks.nyc.gov](mailto:bram.gunther@parks.nyc.gov)

### **Novem Auyeung**

Senior Scientist  
NYC Parks | [novem.ayeung@parks.nyc.gov](mailto:novem.ayeung@parks.nyc.gov)

### **Caitlin Boas**

Program Coordinator  
NYC Parks | [caitlin.boas@parks.nyc.gov](mailto:caitlin.boas@parks.nyc.gov)

### **Lindsay Campbell**

Research Social Scientist  
USDA Forest Service | [lindsay.campbell@usda.gov](mailto:lindsay.campbell@usda.gov)

### **Helen Forgione**

Senior Project Manager of Ecological Assessment  
Natural Areas Conservancy | [helen.forgione@parks.nyc.gov](mailto:helen.forgione@parks.nyc.gov)

### **Richard Hallett**

Research Ecologist  
USDA Forest Service | [richard.hallett@usda.gov](mailto:richard.hallett@usda.gov)

### **Michelle Johnson**

Research Ecologist  
USDA Forest Service | [michelle.l.johnson@usda.gov](mailto:michelle.l.johnson@usda.gov)

### **Jesse Krauss**

Communications Associate  
Natural Areas Conservancy | [jesse.krauss@parks.nyc.gov](mailto:jesse.krauss@parks.nyc.gov)



**Laura Landau**

Project Manager, STEW-MAP  
USDA Forest Service | [lauralandau.ufs@gmail.com](mailto:lauralandau.ufs@gmail.com)

**Benjamin Mertz**

Conservation Coordinator, Healthy Trees Healthy Cities  
The Nature Conservancy | [benjamin.mertz@tnc.org](mailto:benjamin.mertz@tnc.org)

**Jamie Ong**

Project Manager, Wetlands and Riparian Restoration  
NYC Parks | [jamie.ong@parks.nyc.gov](mailto:jamie.ong@parks.nyc.gov)

**Ellen Pehek**

Principle Ecologist  
NYC Parks | [ellen.pehek@parks.nyc.gov](mailto:ellen.pehek@parks.nyc.gov)

**Clara Pregitzer**

Ecological Assessment Field Coordinator  
Natural Areas Conservancy | [clara.pregitzer@parks.nyc.gov](mailto:clara.pregitzer@parks.nyc.gov)

**Brady Simmons**

Research Ecologist  
NYC Parks | [brady.simmons@parks.nyc.gov](mailto:brady.simmons@parks.nyc.gov)

**Lauren Smalls-Mantey**

Heat Resilience Project Coordinator  
NYC Parks | [l.smalls-mantey@parks.nyc.gov](mailto:l.smalls-mantey@parks.nyc.gov)

**Jennifer Smith**

International Programs  
USDA Forest Service | [jennifer.c.smith@usda.gov](mailto:jennifer.c.smith@usda.gov)

