We Believe in the Power of Parks
Westchester Parks Foundation engages the public to advocate for and invest in the preservation, conservation, use, and enjoyment of the 18,000 acres of parks, trails, and open spaces within the Westchester County Parks system.
Westchester Parks Foundation is here for a very simple reason. To be the voice of the public and users of the county park system. Without proper care and investment, parks can and HAVE deteriorated to the point where they are unsafe and unusable. One only has to look to Central Park and Bryant Park in Manhattan to see what can happen when citizens are not engaged in their public spaces and more importantly, what can be done when they ARE! That’s why we believe that the park system and programs make our county vigorous, exciting, and a great place to live, work and play. It is our collective responsibility to ensure that these valuable parks and programs not only survive, but thrive. It is the legacy that we were handed by people of Westchester who came before us. We have been given an incomparable gift. What a shame it would be to see it diminished or ruined through apathy or poor decisions. The impact of those kinds of actions would have a calamitous impact on all of us. Not on our watch!
Our Volunteer Program had another strong season, updating our signature program to reflect the great interest that Westchester’s individuals, community groups, and businesses have in service to our unparalleled county parks. This year, we launched the Clean River Project with a seed grant from Entergy, on the Bronx River Reservation in White Plains with the help of Mount Pleasant Cottage School’s volunteers. This program addresses floatable trash, one of the three major water quality issues on the Bronx River. The information collected will help find the sources and stop trash from entering the river in the first place. The project engages volunteers by promoting outreach to local businesses whose products end up in and along the river, uniting messages around the harm to our waterways caused by non-biodegradable products.

We also continued our Graffiti Squad, thanks to the generous sponsorship of Thalle Industries, on the Bronx River Reservation. This dedicated team spent their time focused on the persistent graffiti problem on the stonework and underpasses, cleaning up 155 feet of the trailway. Our Graffiti Squad and Clean River Projects received additional support through a partner grant from REI, in support of our efforts and helping us participate in International Coastal Cleanup Day on the Bronx River in September. Our Green Squad reached four parks and four nature centers this year accounting for over 130 volunteer hours.

Through a partnership with Friends of Van Cortlandt Park, WPF began focusing volunteer efforts at Tibbetts Lake in Yonkers. Over several weeks in July and August, volunteers used canoes and waders to hand-harvest what has become an overwhelming invasion of “water chestnut” plants in the lake. The vegetation has grown over several years to encompass all visible water in the lake, and is spreading downstream to Van Cortlandt Park in the Bronx. Over 400 hours of time were dedicated this season to pulling the weed. This effort has led WPF to highlight Tibbetts Lake and the surrounding area as a priority location to address the issue of invasive species and the overall use of this part of Tibbetts Brook Park as a conservation and recreation area.

In 2018, 2,187 volunteers contributed 6,937 hours of service to our parks. This is equivalent to an incredible $202,674.96 worth of investment of sweat equity into Westchester’s parks, according to the Independent Sector’s estimate of the value of Volunteer Time in New York.
York State. Since the founding of our volunteer program in 2015, over 21,500 hours of service have been done in our parks. This year, our volunteers updated 12,000 light bulbs for Winter Wonderland, removed 7,337 items of trash from the Bronx River, pruned 2,125 feet of shrubbery, cleared 1,800 feet of seawall, removed 1,590 feet of invasive species, painted 825 feet of deck and fence, removed 630 yards of leaves, planted 430 plants, cleared 300 feet of marshlands, removed 294 wheel barrel trips, 63 tarps & 5 truckloads of Water Chestnut from Tibbetts Brook Park Lake, contributed 215 yards of mulch, removed 210 barrels and 8 truckloads of refuse, removed 155 feet of graffiti, cleaned 110 feet of the 9/11 Memorial, installed 100 new trail markers, added 100 feet of chicken wire under boardwalks, removed 83 bags of trash, installed 50 new split rail fence pieces, rebuilt a 25 foot stone wall, planted 15 trees, refinished 14 grills, cleared 12 miles of trails, painted 11 benches, installed 10 water bars, built 10 puncheons, split 9 yards of wood, cleaned and power washed 7 picnic areas, repaired and built 6 boardwalks and bridges, installed 5 new fence panels, painted 5 buildings, installed and painted 4 Adirondack chairs as well as assisted at 4 special events.

Pitch In for Parks, the county-wide cleanup day that WPF holds in partnership with the Westchester County Parks Department, was held in April, featuring projects county-wide and over 800 volunteers digging in to prepare our parks for spring!

Our Corporate Volunteer Program had an outstanding year with our corporate partners contributing $27,825 and 771 individuals, in addition to raising another $25,200 in grants for sponsorships of existing programs.

2015-2018 BY THE NUMBERS

6,972 Volunteers
22,742 Hours of Service
$633,650.06 Worth of Sweat Equity

We believe that parks deserve our passion.
Westchester Parks Foundation kicked off a fifth successful season of Winter Wonderland on Friday, November 23 with the lighting of Westchester’s favorite Christmas Tree – over 40’ tall and arguably the tallest in the County. We staged an incredible light show, using the generous donation received in 2017, with a theme of “Goodwill Towards All”, dazzling the over 31,000 people that attended this year. 10 Rides in the new “FUNderland Village”, incredible Circus, Silly Elf Show, outdoor ice skating and more rounded out a great experience for all.

WPF is extremely proud to sponsor Winter Wonderland each year, produced by our partners, the dedicated staff and administration of the Westchester County Parks Department. We are sincerely grateful to our founding presenting sponsor WMC Health, and returning Platinum Sponsors Con Edison and Party Line Tent Rentals, in addition to tree lighting sponsor Robison Oil, New Year’s Eve sponsor M&T Bank, and media sponsors Westchester County Tourism, Westchester Magazine, Altice Media, and Pamal Broadcasting.

Over 130,000 people have experienced Winter Wonderland since the program began. PR coverage of the event was comprehensive including all-day coverage by News12 on Christmas Day, as well as WABC-7, CBS-2, and FiOS1.

The use and enjoyment of our parks is core to our mission, and Winter Wonderland invites people of all ages to enjoy the spectacular beauty of Kensico Dam Plaza during the holiday season. Proceeds from this event directly benefit Westchester Parks Foundation and allow us to serve the park system year round through programming, advocacy, and direct support.
WPF continues to operate two Westchester County Driving Ranges: Dunwoodie in Yonkers and Mohansic in Yorktown. In 2018, investments in modernizing our golf ball dispensers and golf picking equipment, refurbishing the hitting stations and covered areas, as well as updated time keeping systems, have all led to another successful year. We grew sales by leveraging existing POS technology in the form of a computerized “E-Range Key”. Proceeds from the two driving ranges and vending operations at Kensico Dam Plaza directly benefit WPF’s mission and the parks and programs in our community. We will continue our “drive” towards success in 2019 focusing on creating amazing experiences and memories in our parks.

DUNWOODIE AND MOHANSIC DRIVING RANGES

WPF’s board authorized funding for a special project of the Westchester Parks Department on “Distribution and Activity Patterns of Mesocarnivores”. This preliminary work is part of a multi-year investigation conducted by Parks Wildlife staff and looks at the distribution, activity, and occupancy of mesocarnivores (small predators) in our county. These species are more numerous and diverse than larger carnivores, and often reside in closer proximity to humans, however little is known about their overall effect on animal communities and ecosystems, even in our own backyards. This study was designed to provide an improved understanding of these species in terms of distribution and activity patterns in the northern Westchester County, NY. WPF’s mission to invest in the preservation and conservation of our parks includes initiatives such as this, that assist in the maintenance and overall quality of our parks and open space.

CONSERVATION PROJECT: MESOCARNIVORES

We welcomed back Co-Presenting Sponsors Con Edison and NewYork-Presbyterian, who continue their generous support for another season of car-free fitness, fresh air, and environmental appreciation on the historic Bronx River Parkway. Sponsors celebrated with “Fun Days” along the way, and had giveaways, music, raffles and more to add to the great local character of this beloved Westchester tradition. Danny’s Cycles celebrated a third year as the exclusive bike shop of Bicycle Sundays, continuing to provide their unique and important means of support for cyclists out on the parkway by performing quick repairs. Our community here in Westchester continues to show their love for this iconic program, contributing to fundraising, voicing support through social media, and showing strong attendance on event Sundays in May, June, and September. We love that people get out of their cars each week to make incredible memories on the parkway, for an estimated 780,000 miles biked, walked, and jogged each season!

WPF participated in Wine & Food Week for a seventh straight year, as the beneficiary of the Burger Blast and the Grand Tasting Village. Burger Blast was held on yet another spectacular Thursday evening at Kensico Dam Plaza, and the Grand Tasting Village brought hundreds of amazing wines and signature bites that Saturday afternoon. WPF has the opportunity to engage with the public and build support for our mission and upcoming events and programs. Including the generous donations made to WPF by Westchester Magazine, we raised over $35,000.

WPF continues to participate in initiatives at Kensico Dam Plaza, adding more beautiful hanging baskets and sponsoring July 3rd MusicFest and Screening Under the Stars.
In 2018, Camp Morty’s 12th season, we continued to give Westchester’s most vulnerable children an amazing, unforgettable camp experience. We again increased our application numbers, spreading the word about camp to all corners of the county. This means that more underserved kids than ever before experienced the benefits of camp.

Camp Morty is integral to the mission of WPF. Thanks to Camp Morty, thousands of Westchester’s children have experienced their first outdoor campfire, first hike, first swim in a lake, catching their first frogs, and countless other moments that all add up to a love of the outdoors and for Westchester’s amazing parks. In addition to all of the traditional camp activities, we strive to inspire the next generation of “Parksters”, creating unique and transformative memories in parks.

This year, we received a record 604 complete applications and were able to bring 403 individual campers to camp with 467 camper spaces filled. In addition, 160 campers were from our most challenging population – those that come from homeless shelters, foster care, or child protective services. We were also able to expand outreach to homeless youth through a grant from the Westchester Community Foundation that allowed us to send shuttles from our bus sites to the Coachman Center in White Plains and Westhelp in Mount Vernon. This allowed us to take the first steps towards addressing the challenge of getting homeless youths to camp – with so many in transitional and uncertain situations, transportation options are few. Camp Morty was able to meet them where they were to help them take the steps needed to get to camp this year.

On the dining front, we continued to improve with even more fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean proteins, with produce sourced from Hilltop Hanover Farm, Muscoot Farm and meat from JD Farms. This year campers participated in programs designed around healthy eating and cooking, and even took their learning to action by participating in the preparation of some of their meals.

Thank you to our dedicated partners, the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Conservation, the Department of Social Services, and the Department of Community Mental Health! WPF is proud of the experience that our campers receive – in addition to an unparalleled experience outdoors at Sal J. Prezioso Mountain Lakes, they are in the care of an outstanding staff of leadership and counselors. With an incredible 27 staff members hailing from outside of the US, and domestic staff from 10 different states, our campers learn about different cultures without having to leave Westchester. Our staff are also excellent role models, with this year’s group comprised of 14 “Counselors-in-Training”, 6 former campers as Counselors, and a former camper on the leadership team. Our staff show the campers what they can achieve through hard work and teamwork.
We believe that children everywhere deserve a safe place to go out and explore.
We received several grants or sponsorships from our outstanding corporate and local partners, including:

- **Impact100 Transformational Project Grant** of $90,000 that will fund the construction of a second covered pavilion at Camp Morty at Sal J. Prezioso Mountain Lakes Park in North Salem.

- Continued support from Entergy for our newest initiative: The Clean River Project and Silver Sponsorship of our Annual Gala for $20,000.

- Con Edison’s Trail Promotion and Environmental Awareness for $20,000, in addition to $5,000 for the Annual Gala. Their continued generous $25,000 support of Bicycle Sundays on the Bronx River Parkway and funding of $24,000 for WPF’s Pocket Ranger Mobile Parks App.

- New York Presbyterian’s support of Bicycle Sundays and Sunset Yoga for $30,000.

- Continued support from Thalle Industries, for $7,500, as our sponsor of the Bronx River Reservation “Graffiti Squad” and $17,500 in support of our Annual Gala.

- Support from Fujifilm for $7,500 and a team of employees beautifying Kensico Dam Plaza around the 9/11 Memorial.

- $3,000 from the Westchester Community Foundation for a shuttle service van to bring our underserved homeless population of Camp Morty campers to our pick-up stations.

We believe that philanthropy is critical to a thriving park system.
In 2018, Westchester Parks Foundation celebrated “The Power of Parks” annual gala to recognize remarkable vision and leadership in our community by individuals, businesses and #Parksters who help our Westchester County parks grow and flourish:

- **Christine and Pete Monteleone, Philanthropy Leadership Award,** for their appreciation of the benefits that county parks provide to the public – specifically, their vital role in the construction of both the Veterans Memorial and Glass House Conservatory at Lasdon Park.

- **Michael Fosina, NewYork-Presbyterian, Business Impact Award,** recognized for years of deep commitment to health & wellness in our communities and for the unwavering support of Westchester Parks Foundation’s treasured programs, Bicycle Sundays and Sunset Yoga.

- **New York State Turf & Landscape Association, Community Partner Award,** recognized for their mission to uphold ideals and standards within the Green Industry, and dedication to the support of parks and open space through donation of trees and years of assistance in keeping our parks beautiful.

- **Mount Vernon High School Eco-Classroom, Special Recognition for Service to Parks,** recognized for their “adoption” of Willson’s Woods Park, and their ongoing commitment to environmental science and stewardship of this beloved green space in their home city of Mount Vernon.

The iconic Westchester County Center was transformed, once again, into a fun-filled, exciting and majestic arena and guests were treated to an evening Emceed by News12’s Tara Rosenblum, and enjoyed cocktails, great food, music, silent auction and our signature indoor beer garden sponsored by Captain Lawrence Brewing Co., and a program that made you proud to support our parks! New this year, was the entertaining Steve Max who brought our guests to their feet with his rendition of Simon Sez, and our first ever paddle raise, led by our Auctioneer and Executive Director.
WPF is focused on #MyParkStory, recognizing the important role that parks play in our lives. Parks are places where we create memories with friends and family, go for a respite, and enjoy some of our happiest times. In addition, treasured events including Bicycle Sundays, Sunset Yoga, Golf Classic, and our Annual Gala continuing to energize our communities, and the need for collaboration with our donors and supporters is stronger than ever. We value what parks mean to all of us – conservation, social equity and health & wellness – and with the strength and talent of our Board of Trustees and Staff, we promise to continue to help keep our parks relevant, safe and accessible for generations to come.
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Westchester Parks Foundation continues to support the professional development of the management and staff of the Westchester County Department of Parks, Recreation, and Conservation. Professional Development contributes to the high quality of service that PRC staff provide, enabling our park system to be clean, safe, and well-managed. Staff provide park visitors with a level of excellence that they have come to expect. WPF is proud to sponsor PRC Staff Training, Staff Conference, and development seminars and conferences throughout the year.

FINANCES

WPF ended 2018 with revenues of $2,496,654 and expenses of $2,537,437 (unaudited). An increase in program and personnel expenses and a net loss in investment portfolio contributed to an overall 2% net loss for the year.

REVENUES:

- Programs and special projects: 83.7%
- Fundraising & Grants: 13.9%
- Administrative: 2.4%

EXPENDITURES:

- Program and facility support: 83.2%
- Administration: 10.4%
- Fundraising: 6.4%
Adopt A Park - Nielsen

The Staff of Westchester Parks Foundation
Westchester Parks Foundation wishes to thank the following members of our 2018 Board of Trustees, who are not continuing with us. We cannot support parks and open spaces in Westchester County without our talented and dedicated Trustees, and while we are sad to see Marlane Amelio and Linda Carrington depart our board, we thank them for their service to WPF and wish them all the best!

We welcome new Trustees April Horton, Donna Layne, Chris O’Callaghan, and Avi Spira, and for 2019, Martin A. Kamarck.

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