

ANNUAL REPORT



2021-22

BRONX
river alliance

MISSION + VALUES



MISSION

The Bronx River Alliance serves as a coordinated voice for the river and works in harmonious partnership to protect, improve and restore the Bronx River corridor so that it can be a healthy ecological, recreational, educational and economic resource for the communities through which the river flows.

The Alliance works in close partnership with the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation (NYC Parks) as well as dozens of community-based partners, regional nonprofits, businesses and all levels of government.

VALUES

The Bronx River Alliance is committed to practicing and upholding the values of inclusion, collaboration, environmental justice, responsiveness, communication, ecological restoration, innovation, respect, integrity and public access.



WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BRING BACK A RIVER?



Over 20 years ago, a band of passionate community leaders joined together to realize their vision of a Bronx River that would be a force for environmental reclamation and community development in the heart of the Bronx.

The river, once a neglected, shunned eyesore, is now a source of community pride, where people come to canoe, bike, picnic, and learn. Today, parks and trails line the river, where weeds, vacant factories, and trash-strewn lots existed before. Thousands of people paddle, row and sail every year on a river that not too long ago was choked with cars and invasive species. The river is getting cleaner and more beautiful year by year, and above all, the communities along the river are making it more and more their own.

Together with our partners, we have:

- Removed 725+ tons of garbage and debris from the river, including 20,000+ tires and 89 cars
- Opened 22 new acres of waterfront parkland in the South Bronx
- Led 26,000+ people on paddling adventures
- Empowered 22,000+ volunteers to donate 120,000+ hours to the river and its parks
- Enabled 3,900+ educators & 21,500 students to use the river as an outdoor classroom
- Planted 136,000+ native trees and plants & removed 4 million cubic yards of choking, invasive vegetation

The transformation has been remarkable, thanks to this unique partnership powered equally by community and government resources, including NYC Parks. Once an abandoned, trash-filled river, today the Bronx River is a healthy community resource and source of pride.

A LETTER FROM OUR LEADERS

Greetings from the Bronx River!

As the COVID-19 pandemic stretched into 2021 and 2022, **we salute the Bronx River staff** who demonstrated tremendous tenacity and resiliency during the second and third years of the pandemic to serve the river, our parks, and the people who flocked to them.

Not only did our essential staff do the hard work of keeping our riverfront parks clean and safe, we moved into **River House**, a new NYC Parks-owned environmental classroom, boathouse, and community gathering space in 2021. We were thrilled to begin opening River House slowly to the public. We launched an annual Open House celebration in 2021 to celebrate Earth Day and this new center of learning, stewardship and activism for the river.

In addition, staff launched new programs and coalitions:

- **The EELS environmental justice internship:** a 14-month internship program in partnership with Lehman College. Students earn a \$4000 stipend, gain college credit in environmental science, and conduct hands-on research project mentored by experts in the field.
- **RAIN (Rain garden Action in Neighborhoods) Coalition:** in 2021, the Bronx River Alliance, along with Gowanus Canal Conservancy, Newtown Creek Alliance, and the HOPE Program formed RAIN to pilot and advocate for green infrastructure stewardship across NYC that provides high quality maintenance, as well as career ladders into sustainable jobs for communities most affected by historic environmental harms.



Students from the Fall 2023 EELS cohort.

The disproportionate health and economic impacts of COVID-19 on low-income communities already burdened by environmental and social injustices will be felt for years to come. Bronx River communities were some of the most affected in the nation. The Bronx River and its parks were one of the few places where people who could not flee the city could go for recreation, safe gathering with family and friends, and health and healing.

The Bronx River Alliance's work to restore the river so that it can be a healthy resource for the communities through which it flows is therefore as urgent as ever. It takes a community of people to bring back a river--thank you for your steadfast support. And if you haven't had a chance to see our work for yourself, please join us at the river!








Elena Conte
Interim Executive Director

Nilka Martell
Chair

July 2023

HIGHLIGHTS 2021-2022

Bronx River By the Numbers (2021-2022)

						
2500 Paddlers led on water	2800 students engaged in outdoor learning	427 educators supported in using the river as an outdoor classroom	50 tons of garbage removed	8000 native trees and plants installed	1,000,000 cubic yards of choking, invasive plants removed	2500 volunteers engaged



Growth and Learning at the Bronx River Foodway

The Bronx River Foodway at Concrete Plant Park is NYC's only edible food forest on public land. At the Foodway, we communicate traditional knowledge and cultural practices; reconnect historically marginalized communities back to the land; and teach about plant-based medicines for a healthy body, mind, and spirit.



New Parks and Trails Along the River

In 2022, two significant missing links were completed in the Bronx River Greenway: a bike lane on E 233rd St and Webster Ave and a tunnel underneath the Bruckner Expressway that now connects Concrete Plant Park and Garrison Park.



Wildlife Returning to the Bronx River

After not seeing a bald eagle on the river in decades, in 2022 we were blessed to spot this magnificent creature 5 times on the river! We can't say for sure that the eagle has a nest on the river but because they are visiting so often, it means that the Bronx River is a hospitable spot for this once endangered species.



EELS - a new paid environmental science internship

Our Education Program opens doors for youth from historically excluded communities who face disproportionate environmental health and safety hazards to authentically engage in science, environmental policy, education, and advocacy. The Alliance Education Program provides hands-on opportunities for youth and educators to use the Bronx River as an outdoor classroom.

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Bharati Foundation	Groundwork Hudson Valley	Save the Sound
Big Reuse	Guardians of Flushing Bay	Sebago Canoe Club
Bike New York	Gowanus Canal Conservancy	Solar One
Bronx Children's Museum	Henry Street Settlement	SWALE
Bronx Council for Environmental Quality	Here to Here	S.W.I.M Coalition (Storm Water Infrastructure Matters)
Bronx Health REACH	High Line Network	Sustainable South Bronx / The Hope Program
Bronx Park East Community Association	Hudson River Watershed Alliance	THE POINT CDC
Bronx River Parkway Reservation Conservancy	Intervine	Tools of War
Bronx River Art Center	Kips Bay Boys & Girls Club	Transportation Alternatives, Bronx and Uptown Committee
Bronx River Senior Center	Long Island Sound Study	Transportation Alternatives TOPSoccer
Bronx Sole	Loving the Bronx	United By Blue
BX Girl Bike Gang	Lower Hudson PRISM	Uptown & Boogie Cycling Advocacy
BuildOn	LYFE Coalition	Urban Health Plan
Central Park Conservancy, Institute for Urban Parks	Mary Mitchell Community Center	Van Cortlandt Park Alliance
Children's Aid Society	The Mission Continues	Waterfront Alliance
Christodora	Montefiore Medical Center	Westchester Parks Foundation
City Parks Foundation	Mount Vernon Youth Bureau	Wildlife Conservation Society, Bronx Zoo
The Climate Museum	Natural Areas Conservancy	Women of Woodlawn
Concrete Friends	Natural Resources Defense Council	Woodlawn Collective
Cyclopedia	Newtown Creek Alliance	Yoga 4 the Bronx
Deep Routes	New Settlement Apartments	Yonkers Paddle and Recreation Club
Destination Tomorrow	New York Botanical Garden	Youth Ministries for Peace & Justice
Discover Outdoors Foundation	NYC Audubon	
Dreamyard	NYC H2O	
Drew Gardens	NYC Water Trail Association	
East Bronx History Forum	NY/NJ Baykeeper	
East Coast Greenway Alliance	NY/NJ Harbor Estuary Program	
Federated Conservationists of Westchester	NY Public Library	
Five Borough Bicycle Club	The Osborne Association	
Forest For All NYC	Partnerships for Parks	
Friends of Inwood Hill Park	Patagonia	
Friends of Soundview Park	Phipps Community Development Corporation	
Greenburgh Nature Center	RAIN (Rain garden Action In Neighborhoods)	
Green Girls	REI	
	Riders Alliance	
	Riverkeeper	
	Rocking the Boat	

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American Dream School
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High School
Bronx Community Charter School
Bronx Green Middle School
Bronx Helpers
Bronx International High School

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AUDITED FINANCIALS 21-22

	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total 12/31/22	Total 12/31/21
Public support and revenue:				
Contributions	\$340,341	\$706,636	\$1,046,977	\$630,622
Government grants	\$424,632		\$424,632	\$271,045
Forgiveness of Paycheck Protection Program loan			0	\$132,500
In-kind contributions	\$821,778		\$821,778	\$747,218
Special event income (net of expenses with a direct benefit to donors)	\$140,854		\$140,854	\$155,295
Investment return	\$(17,029)		\$(17,029)	\$4,315
Other income	\$65,490		\$65,490	\$38,109
Net assets released from restrictions	\$606,797	\$(606,797)	0	0
Total public support and revenue	\$2,382,863	\$99,839	\$2,482,702	\$1,979,104
Expenses:				
Program services	\$1,691,754		\$1,691,754	\$1,393,400
Supporting services:				
Management and general	\$357,842		\$357,842	\$229,515
Fundraising	\$226,280		\$226,280	\$194,884
Total supporting services	\$584,122	0	\$584,122	\$424,399
Total expenses	\$2,275,876	0	\$2,275,876	\$1,817,799
Net assets - beginning of year	\$824,872	\$815,289	\$1,640,161	\$1,478,856
Change in net assets	\$106,987	\$99,839	\$206,826	\$161,305
Net assets - end of year	\$931,859	\$915,128	\$1,846,987	\$1,640,161

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We thank you for your continued support
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