BRONX river alliance

Annual Report 2023-24



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www.bronxriver.org

Our 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 all the communities through which the river flows.



The Alliance works in close partnership with the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (NYC Parks) as well as hundreds of community-based groups, regional nonprofits, local businesses and corporate partners, and all levels of government.

www.bronxriver.org

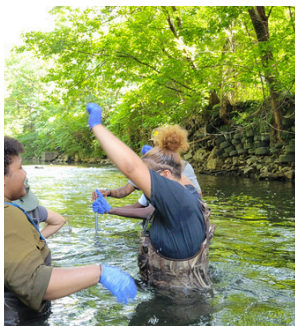
Our Values

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











Dear Partners, Allies, and River Stewards,

The Bronx River has always told a story of renewal — and these past two years, that story has surged forward with new energy, new partnerships, and visible transformation across our watershed.
From dolphins leaping in Starlight Park to the opening of long-awaited Greenway links, from Bronx students leading scientific research to the care of community members foraging the edible landscape that is our Foodway, the Bronx River Alliance has continued to turn possibility into progress.

2023 marked a turning point.

- We celebrated the long-pursued opening of Starlight Park Phase II, adding two pedestrian bridges, three community access points, and 1.3 miles of new waterfront parkland — closing a critical Greenway gap and knitting together neighborhoods once divided by infrastructure
- Wildlife returned in record numbers — including two dolphins that made national headlines — a testament to improving water quality and two decades of restoration work.
- We engaged 1,400 students and supported 427 educators in using the Bronx River as an outdoor classroom.
- 1,500+ volunteers helped plant over 8,000 native trees and plants, while 1,100+ paddlers experienced the river firsthand.

Behind these visible wins was transition and endurance. Our longtime Conservation Crew celebrated 20 years of stewardship; Executive Director Maggie Greenfield concluded 18 years of extraordinary service; and Interim Director Elena Conte helped guide the organization with the support of Daniel Ranells, Christian Murphy, and Victoria Toro. I am honored to now lead the Bronx River Alliance into its next era.

2024 was a year of fresh leadership and deepening purpose. Together, we:

- Launched a Bronx Climate Justice Task Force to advance nature-based, community-driven climate-resilience projects across the borough.
- Partnered with The Nature Conservancy and Westchester stakeholders to address upstream sewage pollution, advocating for upgraded infrastructure and improved intermunicipal collaboration.
- Grew volunteer power to 5,300+ participants, planting 3,300 trees and native plants, and leading 1,200 paddlers on the water — living proof of a movement rooted in care and continuity

As I stepped into this role in April 2024, I was struck by how deeply the Bronx River Alliance embodies what it means to be of, by, and for community. This is not work done in isolation — it's a living collaboration among residents, educators, advocates, and city and state partners who understand that a healthy river equals a healthy Bronx.

Looking ahead, our ambitions are bold and necessary: restoring floodplain forests, wetlands, parks; expanding equitable access to green space; building infrastructure that makes our watershed communities more climate-resilient while improving the river's health; empowering youth with the tools and confidence to lead our environmental movements for decades to come, and ensuring that this river — once polluted and neglected — continues its transformation into a thriving ecological and cultural lifeline.

To everyone who has planted, paddled, donated, or simply shown up along the water's edge: thank you. You are part of this movement, and together we will continue to make the Bronx River a model for urban restoration and environmental justice.

With gratitude and resolve,

Siddhartha Sanchez
Executive Director

Nilka Martell
Board Chair

BRONX river alliance





Celebrating 50 Years of Restoring the Bronx River

The restoration of the Bronx River began in the 1970s, when local residents, led by Ruth Anderberg and Anthony Bouza, came together around a bold vision: to transform the Bronx River into a clean, swimmable waterway accessible to all. Through community cleanups and workshops, their grassroots efforts sparked a movement that grew throughout the decades. By the 1990s, momentum had spread across the Bronx's waterfront neighborhoods, uniting community partners such as Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice and The Point CDC with institutional stakeholders like the Wildlife Conservation Society, Partnerships for Parks, and the Army Corps of Engineers.

In 2001, the Bronx River Alliance was formed, bringing together government agencies, community groups, and residents to carry the mission forward. In 2024, we proudly celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Bronx River Restoration, a tribute to five decades of dedication from community leaders, public and private partners, elected officials, and generous supporters. This milestone honored those who paved the way and reaffirmed our shared vision of a thriving, healthy Bronx River for generations to come.









Early Bronx River restoration efforts, including the Youth Conservation Corps, river cleanups, and tree planting (above); and the Bronx River Alliance's incorporation as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit by the Bronx River Working Group in 2001 (below).

Highlights 2023-2024

2,300+ Paddlers led on water	**3,000+** Students engaged in outdoor learning	**300+** Educators using the river as an outdoor classroom	**4,200+** Native trees and plants installed	**3,000+** Volunteers engaged



Flowing like the River, welcoming New Leadership

2024 begins a new era for the Alliance as Siddhartha Sanchez picks up the baton as our new Executive Director. For decades Siddhartha has been a champion of the Bronx River, directing federal funding, managing grants, and connecting watershed communities to the Bronx River. A lifelong paddler, cyclist, and gardener, Siddh shares his passion for the River with his wife, parents, and three children, who love paddling together as a family.

2023 was the Year of the Dolphin(s) A wildlife first on the Bronx River!

In January, two dolphins went viral after they were spotted frolicking in the Bronx River, at Starlight Park! Other thriving wildlife include eels, fish, and even crabs. This marine life is a testament to the improved water quality and striking impact of our efforts to restore the river.





Opening of Greenway Link and Park Expansion, Starlight Park Phase II!

In April, Starlight Phase II opened, adding 2 pedestrian bridges, 3 community access points, and new waterfront parkland. This asset - 20 years in the making! - closes a critical gap, creates a 1.3 mile connection, and knits together previously divided neighborhoods.

Highlights 2023-2024

Celebrating Longtime Leadership

In 2023 we acknowledged the commitment and leadership of Penny Brown and Elaine Feliciano celebrating their milestone of 20 years at the Bronx River Alliance. Conservation Manager Mike Mendez (also pictured) rounds out the longtime leadership of the trio whose deep knowledge of the river is at the heart of our success





Advancing Climate Justice Bronxwide

In 2024 we launched the Bronx Climate Justice Task Force to engage local communities in advocating for climate resiliency projects that use nature-based solutions. Similarly, efforts to organize partners and advocates from across the Bronx and beyond will inform the future of the region as it relates to the Cross Bronx Expressway and the River by Reimagining the Cross Bronx overall.

Activating the Foodway with Community as Partners

In November of 2023 & 2024 we held the 2nd and 3rd annual Community Banquet at Concrete Plant Park highlighting plants foraged from the fooway and live recipes they can be crafted into. The event was possible thanks to unique partnerships with chefs, foragers, and herbalists who regularly activate the space throughout the year.





Next level of intensive internships for Bronx Students - EELS & our new BOBCATS

We continued our EELS internship program, our yearlong paid internship program where high-schoolers gain college credit in science, conduct hands-on research projects and receive mentorship by experts, continued in partnership with Lehman College. We also launched BOBCATS, a Summer Youth Employment internship in partnership with Fannie Lou Hamer Freedom High School.

Our Team

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Community Based Organizations

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Bharati Foundation
Big Reuse
Bike New York
Billion Oyster Project
Bronx Children's Museum
Bronx Council for Environmental Quality
Bronx Health REACH
Bronx Park East Community Association
Bronx River Art Center
Bronx River Community Garden
Bronx River Parkway Reservation Conservancy
Bronx River Senior Center
Bronx Sole
BuildOn
BX Girl Bike Gang
Center for the Urban River at Beczak (CURB)
Central Park Conservancy, Institute for Urban Parks
Children's Aid Society
Christodora
City Parks Foundation
Concrete Friends
Cyclopedia
Deep Routes
Destination Tomorrow
Discover Outdoors Foundation
Dreamyard
Drew Gardens
East Bronx History Forum
East Coast Greenway Alliance
Federated Conservationists of Westchester
Five Borough Bicycle Club
Fordham In Community
Forest For All NYC
Friends of Inwood Hill Park
Friends of Soundview Park
Gowanus Canal Conservancy
Green Girls
Green Thumb
Greenburgh Nature Center
Groundwork Hudson Valley
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Mount Vernon Youth Bureau
Natural Areas Conservancy
Natural Resources Defense Council
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New York Botanical Garden
New York State Outdoor Educators Association (NYSOEA
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NY/NJ Baykeeper
NY/NJ Harbor Estuary Program
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NYC H2O
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Urban Health Plan
Van Cortlandt Park Alliance
Waterfront Alliance
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Westchester Parks Foundation
Wildlife Conservation Society
Women of Woodlawn
Woodlawn Collective
Yoga 4 the Bronx
Yonkers Paddle and Recreation Club
Youth Ministries for Peace & Justice

Non-Profit Organizations

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The Nature Conservancy

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Coalitions

RAIN (Rain Garden Action In Neighborhoods)
S.W.I.M Coalition (Storm Water Infrastructure Matters)

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Office of Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
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Fannie Lou Hamer Freedom High School
Lehman College, CUNY
Riverdale Country School
Samara Community School

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Bronx Park Middle School
Community School for Social Justice
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Theodore and Beth Marks
Theresa Karle
Thomas Maeglin
Thomas Semler
Thomas Webler
Thuy Pham
Timothy Brown
Tina Bayer
Tonia Waterbury
Tracy & Daniel Salvatore
Tracy Brown
Trish Tchume
Tristan Leclere
Twahira Khan
Tyeisha Pugh
Vicki Weiner
Vladimir Nikulichev
Wendy Zimny
Will Sweeny
Yvette Resto
Zoe Holland











FINANCIAL STATEMENT

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

For the year ended December 31, 2023 and totals for the year ended December 31, 2024.

PUBLIC SUPPORT AND REVENUE	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total 12/31/24	Total 12/31/23
Contributions	$432,322	$677,130	$1,109,452	$1,048,728
Government grants	614,721		614,721	576,776
In-kind contributions	1,023,439		1,023,439	892,999
Special event income	152,026		152,026	55,838
Investment return	45,289		45,289	60,828
Miscellaneous	42,811		42,811	51,368
Net assets released from restrictions	554,219	(554,219)		
TOTAL PUBLIC SUPPORT REVENUE	**2,864,827**	**122,911**	**2,987,738**	**2,686,537**
EXPENSES				
Program services	2,331,305		2,331,305	2,047,104
Supporting services:				
Management and general	373,143		373,143	448,214
Fundraising	480,313		480,313	348,369
Total supporting services	853,456		853,456	796,583
TOTAL EXPENSES	**$3,184,761**		**3,184,761**	**2,843,687**
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	(319,934)	122,911	(197,023)	(157,150)
NET ASSETS AT BEGINNING OF YEAR	853,315	836,522	1,689,837	1,846,987
NET ASSETS AT END OF YEAR	**$533,381**	**$959,433**	**$1,492,814**	**$1,689,837**

We thank each of you for your continued support and commitment. Together, we remain strong, and together, we will continue to transform the Bronx River corridor for the benefit of our community and generations to come!



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