Institute for Urban Parks
Community Engagement in Central Park: Connecting with Park Users in Our Public Parks
Caroline Greenleaf, Director of Community Relations
Webinar Objectives

- **Define** what community engagement means in the care and management of urban parks
- **Examine** the challenges that shape community relations in Central Park
- **Describe** the Conservancy’s approach to community relations in the field
- **Detail** the crucial role of Operations staff
- **Share** five key principles to consider for your community relations efforts
The Shape of Community Relations
Factors in Central Park

- Increasing and changing use demands
- Determining the best use of space
- Preserving the integrity of the Park
- The growing number of Park visitors
- Instilling and nurturing a sense of Park stewardship in Park visitors
- Establishing the proper balance between commercial versus public use of the Park
- Public opinion
What is Community Relations?
ACTION = COMMUNICATION

OUTREACH
- Park visitors
- User groups
- Community organizations

COLLABORATION
- Advisory groups
- Support agencies
- STAFF

CENTRAL PARK CONSERVANCY
central to the park
The Central Park Community: Park Visitors
The Central Park Community: User Groups
Map-out Event/Permit Areas
Permit Area Definition

NORTH RESERVOIR LANDSCAPE

- **N Reservoir Landscp A**
  - Capacity: 30 people
  - Activities: All permitted sports and recreation. Preference: youth activities and programs

- **N Reservoir Landscp B**
  - Capacity: 20 people
  - Activities: All permitted sports and recreation. Preference: youth activities and programs

- **N Reservoir Landscp C**
  - Capacity: 300 people
  - Activities: All permitted sports and recreation except youth/adult soccer
Managing Park Space

North Meadow Permit Area, Summer 2014

North Meadow Permit Area, Fall 2015
Meet with Park staff who have a stake in maintenance and management of permit sites

Meet with permits office to review permit sites and explain landscape use and restrictions

Meet with regular permit holders to assign permit space and review proper use of sites

Review Parkwide permit applications for consistency with intended landscape uses

Monitor landscape use throughout season
Three Advisory Committees

- Recreation Roundtable
- Woodlands Advisory Board
- Paws Advisory Committee
Support Agencies
Engaging With and Supporting Park Operations Staff

- Reach out to introduce Community Relations staff to Operations staff
- Spend time one-on-one to identify area issues
- Explain to Operations staff any plans for dealing with issues
- Involve Operations staff in engagement with the Park users
- Encourage Operations staff to reach out to Community Relations staff
- Make sure issues are addressed and documented by Community Relations staff
- Stay in touch and follow-up with Operations staff
Engaging the Central Park Community
Key Principles for Community Relations in the Field

- Equip and support field staff
- Know your park’s user groups and establish relationships
- Know and understand your park’s rules and regulations
- Be familiar with all of your park’s landscapes
- Be pro-active
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