



NEW YORK
RESTORATION
PROJECT

ANNUAL
REPORT

2025



Bette Midler founded NYRP in 1995 with the belief that everyone deserves equal access to beautiful, maintained green space no matter where they live.



BEFORE

HIGHBRIDGE PARK IN THE MID-1990S. When NYRP began working in Northern Manhattan parks in the mid-1990s, many were informal dumps, overrun with debris.

AFTER

HIGHBRIDGE AND SHERMAN CREEK PARKS TODAY. Today, NYRP stewards 80+ acres of parkland, including Highbridge and Sherman Creek—beloved community spaces with innovative restoration projects including a hybrid American chestnut grove, living shoreline, and urban teaching garden.



From our Executive Director

As a lifelong New Yorker, I am in awe of what Bette Midler started in 1995. I remember when parks across the city were chronically neglected and overflowing with garbage. I also remember the transformation Ms. Midler helped spark three decades ago by founding New York Restoration Project.

Rather than simply lamenting the state of our city's green spaces, she chose to do something. Now, as I lead NYRP 30 years later, I stand on a remarkable legacy that has helped change our city for the better.

Today, NYRP stewards more than 80+ acres of parkland, owns and operates more than 50 community gardens, and builds or renovates an average of ten new gardens each year.

The numbers speak for themselves. Since our founding, NYRP has:

- removed more than 6,113,390 pounds of trash (the weight of nearly ten Statues of Liberty);
- planted more than 200,000 trees (more than three times the number of trees in Manhattan); and
- built or renovated more than 300 green spaces citywide.

Looking ahead to 2026, we're excited to plant and distribute thousands of trees, overhaul one of our largest community gardens, and continue to expand our reach across the city.

Thank you, as ever, for helping NYRP make nature accessible to all New Yorkers. I look forward to working together toward a greener, healthier, and more resilient city in 2026.

Yours,

Lynn Bodnar Kelly
Executive Director

OUR 2025 IMPACT



Removed **98,000+** pounds of trash

Making neighborhood green spaces safer, cleaner, and more inviting



Built or renovated **8** new green spaces in underserved neighborhoods

Creating vibrant public green spaces where they're needed most

Welcomed **1,200+** volunteers

Connecting New Yorkers to meaningful green space stewardship



Hosted **110** free public programs for **8,200+** community members

Supporting community-driven activities in public green spaces



Organized **217** urban agriculture workshops for **1,500+** individuals

Helping New Yorkers grow fresh and affordable produce



Planted and distributed **4,649** trees

Lowering temperatures, supporting public health, and increasing biodiversity

2025 Project Spotlight: AMERICAN CHESTNUT RESTORATION

For NYRP, 2025 was the year of the American chestnut, a once-dominant tree nearly driven to extinction by fungal blight. Since 2017, we have partnered with NYC Parks and the American Chestnut Foundation to plant more than 200 blight-resistant hybrids in northern Manhattan's Highbridge Park, where they began producing nuts in 2023. Building on this success in 2025, NYRP launched the 1,000 Chestnut Challenge to distribute and monitor locally-grown American chestnut saplings citywide. The effort drew international attention and strong community interest. NYRP also helped open New York City's first official Chestnut Trail in Highbridge Park in 2025, showcasing the thriving grove of hybrid American chestnut trees.

