Buttonwood Park, New Bedford, MA
Protecting the Park from Zoo Expansion

Buttonwood Park Master Plan


Buttonwood Park Fall Tree

Organization Name:
The Friends of Buttonwood Park,
www.buttonwoodpark.org

Organizational Category:
Non-profit organization

Introduction/Organization Description:
The Friends of Buttonwood Park is a volunteer non-profit organization established in 1986, in accordance with a recommendation of the Massachusetts DCA's 1986 Olmsted Master Plan for the Renewal of Buttonwood Park. Its mission is to support the maintenance, management and improvement of the park and to oversee the implementation of the Master Plan.

Program Goals/Description:
In 1895, Charles Eliot of Olmsted, Olmsted & Eliot developed a master plan for Buttonwood Park in New Bedford, Massachusetts. Buttonwood Park today is a 97-acre urban oasis listed on the National Register of Historic Places. But over the years, various facilities were placed in the park, including a zoo, and the design of the park and its naturalistic setting were becoming submerged by a jumble of buildings.

Then in 1986, $15 million was authorized for the Olmsted Program, a statewide effort to preserve and rehabilitate public open spaces designed by the Olmsted firm. $1.55 million was devoted to planning the rehabilitation of Buttonwood Park according to Olmsted design principles. The City of New Bedford adopted the master plan for all future park related improvements, nominated the park to the National Register and formed the Friends of Buttonwood Park, all requirements of the grant.

Buttonwood Park Lake

Buttonwood Park Path

Implementation of the plan succeeded in relocating several facilities from the park's center. The Olmsted-designed grand pedestrian concourse was rehabilitated. Buttonwood Park received a further boost from the Historic Landscape Preservation Grant Program. From 1996–1998, over $200,000 was invested in the park. At that time, the Buttonwood Park Zoo requested an expansion. After negotiations, the Friends of Buttonwood Park agreed that the Zoo could take three additional acres in the park The Friends of Buttonwood Park engaged in many stewardship activities, leading walks in the park, park cleanups and planting over 250 trees.

Notwithstanding the agreement, the zoo announced plans to expand 15 more acres into the park, construct a fence, and add more hardscape to provide additional parking.The Friends of Buttonwood Park (FOBP) swung into action. The group's president (and former Buttonwood Park Zoo director) Lou Garibaldi testified at a September, 2010 hearing that:

"The Friends of Buttonwood Park recognize that the Zoo is a valuable asset to this community. However, as the designated stewards of the Park, the Friends are mandated by the 1987 Master Plan to protect the historic vision for the Park which calls for a pastoral, naturalistic, and democratic setting where the urban population can enjoy both passive and active recreation unencumbered by barriers and fences. Therefore, the Friends are opposed to the new Master Plan, as presented, which extends the Zoo's footprint north of the existing boundary."

When public meetings were scheduled on short notice and with very little advertising, FOBP knocked on doors and sent postcards to residents of the surrounding neighborhoods. They mobilized their own members and contacted other preservation groups. They met with reporters. And they contacted the National Association for Olmsted Parks (NAOP).

As the national organization charged with safeguarding and enhancing the Olmsteds' legacy, NAOP was concerned about the erosion of one of the historical 19th century parks. In advance of a critical public hearing in January, 2011, NAOP sent a letter to New Bedford's mayor, city council and local press advocating that Buttonwood Park be preserved from zoo expansion. NAOP pointed out that the grant awarded in 1996 required the City to maintain the park as publicly-accessible open space.

At the urging of the Friends, the proposed Zoo Master Plan (view a PDF of the plan by clicking here) became accessible for viewing on the city's website and in hardcover at the zoo and public libraries. Various mailings and two newspaper ads alerted the community to speak out at three public hearings.

Subsequent to the first hearing, the Mayor joined neighbors and other interested stakeholders on walks along the perimeter of the land in question. Lou Garibaldi appeared on 'talk radio' shows and several op-ed pieces were written by members and supporters. The Park Board was presented with over 250 signatures on petitions opposing the zoo's expansion. Additionally, members of the Friends' executive board were invited to meet with the editorial board of the local newspaper, which proclaimed its

opposition to the Zoo Master Plan. As a result of the efforts of the Friends of Buttonwood Park, the Mayor appointed a task force to make recommendations to the Park Commissioners as to whether the zoo could expand beyond its existing footprint. Task force members, including Lou Garibaldi, the President of FOBP, the director of the Zoo, the President of the Park Commission and neighborhood representatives had several meetings and sought a facilitator to help manage discussions and develop recommendations.

The publicity generated by the Friends had a beneficial side effect: many more people became aware of the historic nature of Buttonwood Park. To capitalize on growing interest, the Friends of Buttonwood Park planned a spring membership drive and special events to attract and educate new supporters. The Friends have learned, after long experience, that the only security for a historic landscape is the passion and knowledge of its advocates and community.

Click here to find a photographic review of the proposed expansion area.

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City of Rochester Park System, NY
Master Plan for Genesee Valley Park West

Organization Name:
City of Rochester

Program Goals/Description:
The City of Rochester selected a team led by Bayer Landscape Architecture, PLLC, a Honeoye Falls-based firm with expertise in restoration and rehabilitation of historic landscapes, to produce a master plan for Genesee Valley Park West, designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. The plan would include documentation and analysis of the Park's Olmsted heritage and surviving features. The aim was to analyze current conditions of buildings and landscape features, provide recommendations for historic landscape treatment, and produce schematic designs for the park, particularly focusing on a redesign of boating facilities.

The team included an architectural historian from a local firm, and Charles Beveridge, a member of the NAOP Leadership Council, to provide additional historic landscape analysis from a national perspective. Also on the team were architecture firm LaBella Associates and waterfront design specialists Moffatt & Nichol.

Two of the consultants had previously collaborated on the Inventory of Historic Parklands in the City of Rochester, which received an Honor Award of Excellence from the New York Upstate chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects in 2010.

That project involved documentation and analysis of all parkland in the city over 50 years old, as well as a handful of more recent parks with potential for "exceptional significance" under National Register guidelines. Parks examined included the Olmsted parks, later large-scale city parks, as well as other elements included in the city park system such as street malls and historic cemeteries. The resulting report provided the City with extensive documentation, including historic photographs and maps, evaluation of current condition and integrity, and analysis of National Register eligibility potential for each park. The team concluded that twelve of the parks not currently listed in the National Register appeared eligible for listing, and that the system as a whole could qualify for National Historic Landmark status.

Genesee Valley Park is one of three large "pleasure ground" parks anchoring Rochester's Olmsted Park system, designed in 1888–1893. The system was designed to include connecting parkways and to incorporate existing neighborhood parks and squares. While not all the

parkways were built as planned, the three large parks were substantially implemented and are at the heart of what is now an extensive municipal park system. The Olmsted firm remained involved in the development of the Rochester system into the 1910s, helping the local park commission design and implement new facilities, and, significantly, helping to mitigate damage to Genesee Valley Park when the new route of the Erie Canal bisected the park.

Genesee Valley Park is an example of Olmsted's distinctive pastoral style, taking advantage of gently rolling terrain around the Genesee River south of downtown Rochester. Olmsted designated the portion of the park west of the river for active recreational use, such as boating. John C. Olmsted advised the Park Commission on appropriate ways to incorporate additional sports venues into this west section of the park as he oversaw implementation of the original design into the early 20th century. Genesee Valley Park West remains the most intensively developed portion of the park, now containing an ice rink, pool, rowing center, tennis and baseball courts, and other facilities.

Contact Information
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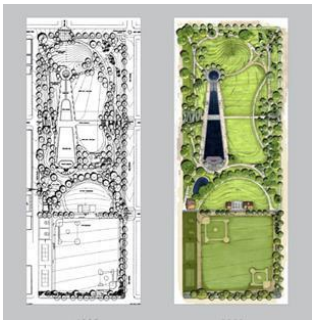
Groundswell Off Broadway, Seattle, WA
Creating Cal Anderson Park

Cal Anderson Park Plan



Cal Anderson Evolving Park Master Plans

Original Chs. Saunders Shelterhouse

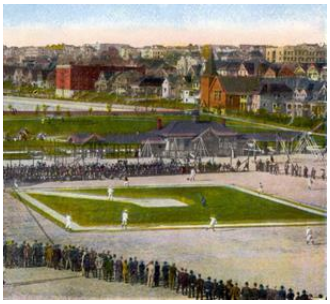
Groundswell Off Broadway
Organizational Category: Non-profit park organization

Groundswell Off Broadway began as a group of neighbors who simply wanted their neighborhood park to be safer, more attractive, and more accessible. The first meetings took place on sidewalks around the park, where they asked themselves why, in the middle of Seattle's most densely populated Capitol Hill neighborhood, eleven acres of parkland were so neglected that they resembled a dusty prison yard?

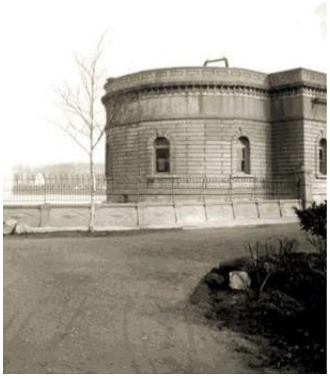
Groundswell formed as a classic grassroots neighborhood-based organization, finding support and learning as it went along. Anyone who volunteered for a work party (or any task), gave a donation of cash or materials, or came to a meeting was a member, of which there were about 500 at the peak. Groundswell had no dues or bylaws; money for projects was raised through grants and donations. Four key people acted as volunteer project managers over the life of the project, scores more worked on small projects; all were volunteers.

Overall, Groundswell put in twelve years and worked with three different city mayors and their administrators to advocate, raise funds, lobby, plan and help transform the park.

Program Description:
Groundswell's first hands-on project was creating a large perennial entry garden in 1994, designed, planted and paid for by volunteers, with cooperation from the Parks Department. The group then moved on to collaborate with Parks Department plans already in progress at the playfield on the park's southern side, where it worked to expand improvements park-wide. Two formal park entrances were designed and built as a result, with a palette of materials and standard of quality that was referenced and repeated throughout the park over the long term.


Historic Lincoln Park Playground


Bobby Morris Playfield at Cal Anderson Park, 2005


Lincoln Reservoir Gatehouse, 1923


Kids at Historic Lincoln Park, c. 1910

The group began learning about local opportunities to raise both money and community consciousness. Learning that the park was originally Lincoln Park and designed by the Olmsted Brothers in 1904 made them aware of the site's historic legacy. They partnered with the local Friends of Seattle's Olmsted Parks (FSOP), which acted as its fiscal agent and lent two experienced project managers to the effort. Well-attended public meetings were held where the great desire in the wider community for a revitalized park became apparent.

Groundswell applied successfully for three successive City of Seattle Department of Neighborhoods matching fund grants. By the terms of these grants, Groundswell "matched" dollar for dollar—and usually beyond—with cash, donated services and materials, and volunteer labor.

The grants were:

1995: A $5,000 planning grant was awarded to develop a Conceptual Park Master Plan through a series of guided meetings and workshops. Detailed priority lists were created as community members submitted their ideas and discussed what they most wanted in the park. These lists guided Groundswell throughout the next ten years.

1996: A $66,000 construction grant enabled tangible park improvements including plantings, hundreds of feet of new fence to replace rusty old fencing, historic Worlds Fair benches, traditional lamp fixtures and trash containers.

2000: A $250,000 construction grant was awarded to build the three-part Shelter house complex (community meeting space, restroom and maintenance buildings). Groundswell's goals expanded with the City's decision to cover all its open-air water reservoirs. Suddenly there was a possibility for an additional four acres of open space to be gained for parkland by covering the reservoir within the park, a very energizing possibility. It was clear that this was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to create a quality neighborhood park on land where none had existed before. City Council and various city departments were lobbied by Groundswell to make sure it was a buried, not a lidded, reservoir. The City's reservoir replacement planning began in 1997. [Note: Not all reservoirs were buried. Some received a plastic cover, sitting on the water's surface. Only the more expensive buried infrastructure method provided usable open space aboveground.]

In an intense and productive series of five plan/design meetings with the project's landscape architecture firm, The Berger Partnership, Groundswell

collaborated on a Park Site Master Plan which encompassed the park's entire eleven acres, with the Bobby Morris Playfield on the south, grassy meadow in the middle, and new parkland on the north. Community priority lists were updated and found to be remarkably consistent with previous ones. Safety, attractiveness, accessibility and quality were repeatedly mentioned as goals.

Concurrently, thirty-seven Seattle neighborhoods were engaged in the Neighborhood Planning project, a city-wide community involvement process. After several years, what Groundswell and the wider community now already referred to as Cal Anderson Park emerged as the Capitol Hill neighborhood's top priority in the concluding community Neighborhood Plan validation event. Groundswell representatives kept in close touch with all the major community organizations and served on their boards and councils

Cal Anderson, a State Representative and State Senator, was the first openly gay legislator in Washington and a revered role model when he died of complications from AIDS in 1995. The park had gone nameless since 1922 and the idea of naming the new park after Anderson had arisen spontaneously.
During this time, Groundswell worked with the Parks and Water Departments and assisted the Seattle Landmarks Preservation Board on the designation, and consequently selection in 1999, of the site as a Seattle Historic Landmark Site.

In 1999, a funding request for $250,000submitted to State Rep. Ed Murray three years before was awarded from the State to help implement the Park Site Master Plan. Groundswell used this to match a city grant to build the park Shelter house complex.

Groundswell campaigned for the $198.2 million Parks for All Levy in 2000, and when it passed, $5 million was allocated to help implement the park plan. By now many different City departments were involved in the engineering and scheduling challenges presented.

Groundswell participated in the Mayor-convened Interdepartmental Team (IDT), which met monthly for seven years. Groundswell negotiated a Memorandum of Agreement with the Water Department clarifying the community's and the utility's needs for the duration of the project. On April 13, 2003, the Shelter house was dedicated, the park was named Cal Anderson Park and Phase Two of the reservoir project was begun. By the fall of 2005, the Lincoln Reservoir project and an extensive above-ground water feature were complete. The Parks Department completed entrances, plantings, paths, a children's play area, open lawns and a basketball court. The celebratory grand re-opening of the park took place on September 25, 2005, at which time Groundswell Off Broadway was put to rest.

Program Goals/Issues Addressed:
Cal Anderson Park is today safer than it has been in decades, enjoys thousands of visitors weekly, engages people in both planned and spontaneous activities, all within a beautiful park design that accommodates it all while acknowledging its historic past. People have taken ownership of this public space with great affection.

Time Frame: 1993 - 2005

Annual Program Budget:
Total of grants obtained, money raised and leveraged; labor, services and materials contributed by Groundswell Off Broadway to Cal Anderson Park: $1.12 million. The combined total reservoir and park budget is estimated at about $20 million.

Funding Sources/Partnerships and Type of Support Provided:
Groundswell received funds from the City of Seattle Department of Neighborhood Matching Fund Grants, State of Washington general fund through Seattle Central Community College, Washington State Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC), local businesses and individuals. Parks and Water Department funds paid for the reservoir replacement, parks build-out and playfield improvements.

Results Achieved/Impact:
The transformed park today has become the heart of the community. It is well-loved and well-used by hundreds of people every day. It is generally acknowledged that it has achieved something very near its highest and best use. Safety, attractiveness, accessibility and quality were repeatedly mentioned as goals.

Archives documenting community-based civic improvements are quite rare in the Northwest region. The Groundswell Off Broadway Archive has been accepted into the University of Washington Special Collections – Northwest Collection. Unfortunately, funding gaps have prevented the material from being processed and made searchable for the public at this time. *Landscape Architecture Magazine* featured the park with a photo spread/story in its October 2006 issue. Washington Recreation and Park Association named the park the best new Washington State Park in 2006. In December 2009 Cal Anderson Park was named one of "America's Twelve Best Urban Parks" by Forbes.com.

In 2006, a new organization, the Cal Anderson Park Alliance, was convened to continue the community voice in Cal Anderson Park. See www.calandersonpark.org. Its mission is to plan and fund creative programs and events in the park to keep it healthy, safe and active.

Lessons Learned:
By going to the community at the very beginning of the process to solicit a community priority list, Groundswell had a vetted roadmap for the years ahead. Unpaid volunteers strove to work as professionals and uphold the highest standards of process and design.

Because Groundswell began its work years before the major earth works began, it became the community group of record, able to establish existing conditions and needs, putting Groundswell in line for future funding.

Groundswell established strong partnerships with other community groups, which lent it weight and standing.

“Large projects get political pretty quickly.” Reminding the “power brokers” that community goals and city goals were essentially the same—a safe, accessible and attractive park, with quality design and lasting materials, which honored history and the neighborhood.

Many conflicts were overcome by demonstrating a willingness to be flexible, and by being very, very persistent. Groundswell aimed to be problem solvers, not adversaries.

Groundswell recommends always staying until the end of the meeting!

Cal Anderson Park Background, Selected Articles, and Links:
Read about the Cal Anderson Park Alliance mission, vision and plans: www.calandersonpark.org

Seattle Parks Department website: www.seattle.gov

“Born Again in Seattle,” by Mark Hinshaw, Landscape Architecture, the national magazine of the American Society of Landscape Architects, October 2006. This publication is not online’ pdf copies by request.

“Creating Cal Anderson Park: Blue Sky on Capitol Hill,” on historylink.org. This essay by Kay Rood recounts the story of the community’s twelve-year involvement in the park’s renewal.

“Ugly Duckling Capitol Hill Park Becomes a Swan,” by Mark Stiles, Daily Journal of Commerce, Jan. 8, 2004.

“Celebrating a park's rebirth” by Marc Ramirez, Seattle Times, Sep. 23, 2005.

“Pooling our Resources” “Now & Then” column by Paul Dorpat, Seattle Times, Dec. 12, 2006 (historic photo).


Dellwood


Dellwood Bench


Oak Grove


Deepdene Wood

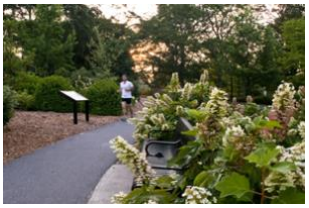
Olmsted Linear Park
Restoration of Linear Park, Atlanta GA

Organization Name:
Olmsted Linear Park Alliance (OLPA)

Introduction:
OLPA is a public-private partnership dedicated to ensuring a sustainable and inviting park that maintains Frederick Law Olmsted's legacy and connects people. Its mission is to inspire the community surrounding the Olmsted Linear Park and beyond to promote the park as a refuge for all. The OLPA board of directors is composed of representatives from the Druid Hills (Atlanta) community, the local neighborhood Planning Unit, private citizens, and ex officio directors from the City of Atlanta, DeKalb County, and Fernbank, Inc.

Organization Description History:
In 1890, Atlanta businessman Joel Hurt engaged Frederick Law Olmsted (1822–1903) to prepare a plan for developing the Druid Hills area in Atlanta. By 1905, two years after Olmsted's death, the final plan, completed by the Olmsted Brothers, revealed a linear park that consists of six segments totaling 45 acres: Springdale, Virgilee, Oak Grove, Shadyside, Dellwood, and Deepdene.

Over the years, the park conditions deteriorated, erosion occurred and modifications were made that were not in adherence with Olmsteds' design. Instead of being a destination, the park became a place to avoid. This indifference was reinforced by plans for a highway that might divide the community and the park. This threat reduced commitment even among those most engaged. For example, members of the Druid Hills Garden Club, which had been vested in the Oak Grove segment since the late 1920s, were initially


Virgilee Pathway


Before


After


Springdale

discouraged. The Olmsted Parks Society of Atlanta was established in 1983 with the intent to stop the highway as well as to restore the park. In 1992, after a decade of fierce opposition, the court ruled that the Georgia Department of Transportation could not take parkland for the road. Following court-ordered mediation, the road was planned to avoid the park altogether. In 1995, a new coalition emerged consisting of the Olmsted Parks Society of Atlanta, Inc., Druid Hills Civic Association, Park Pride, Druid Hills Garden Club, City of Atlanta, DeKalb County and Fernbank, Inc., with the goal of developing a Master Plan for the Park. In 1997, the Olmsted Linear Park Alliance was created.

Restoration:

OLPA's restoration of Linear Park began in 1998 and was completed in 2012. The work included: (1) reinstating original contours and turf, (2) reestablishing the allee of trees along Ponce de Leon Avenue, (3) planting thousands of perennials, trees and shrubs that were in accordance with the original drawings from the Olmsted firm with a plant code identifying quantities of plants and the plant mix, (4) removing invasive plants, (5) addressing storm water runoff by installing rustic-looking granite curbstones that prevent road water from entering the park and causing erosion, (6) burying utility lines,(7) installing period street lights, (8) constructing pedestrian paths that meet ADA requirements, (9)installing benches, (10) building bridges and (11) posting interpretive signage, among other major projects

A playground, not included in the original plan, remained in the park but in a new location and it has become a destination for a diverse group of children from all over the Atlanta area.

Funding and other support sources:

Numerous citizens have contributed to OLPA through generous gifts, as have corporate sponsors. Key partners are the Druid Hills Civic Association, Fernbank Inc, including the Fernbank Museum of Natural History, local foundations such as the Robert W. Woodruff Foundation and the Arthur Blank Foundation, the City of Atlanta,

DeKalb County, and the Georgia Department of transportation. The City of Atlanta and DeKalb County mow the park segments. The Hare Krishna organization and the Paideia School, both of which are adjacent to the park, provide storage space for maintenance equipment. Fernbank, Inc., which operates the Fernbank Museum of Natural History, allows OLPA to use a residence on the park rent-free for office space. Finally, OLPA could not function as effectively without its volunteers.

Lessons Learned:

I. Organic community resistance and commitment can have a long–lasting impact. By resisting the threat to the community and the park created by plans for a highway, community members came together and were able to successfully win a battle against local and state governments.

II. Demonstrate the historical and ecological value of the park. Provide volunteer-staffed educational tours of the park, including its historical background, contemporary characteristics, and potential for the future. Install interpretative signage so that visitors can recognize the extensive variety of horticultural species. Seek recognition. In 2012, OLPA received an Award of Excellence from the Atlanta Urban Design Commission, and an Excellence in Rehabilitation Award and the Marguerite Williams Award from The Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation.

Promote the park through the newsletter, traditional media. website, and social media. Organize community events and fundraising gala.

III. Park restoration requires broad support, especially when guided by collective efficacy in the community.

Partner with a wide range of stakeholders such as community and neighborhood organizations, environmental, public health, and park advocates, other local non-profit entities, educational institutions, and local governments as these provide a broad platform from which to operate and advocate.

Consider alternative plans (e.g., the playground). The park has gained a reputation for a safe haven for residents from beyond the adjacent neighborhoods, thereby bringing a diverse group of people to the park and becoming a destination beyond

the local community. Prepare for the challenges caused by success. For example, the park's popularity has made it a destination for events by third parties, leaving OLPA with the need to repair minor damage after days of tents and heavy foot traffic.

IV. Park maintenance is much less attractive to private donors, corporate sponsors and others than is restoration.

Explain to the wider community that restoration is only the beginning. Maintenance will be a challenge moving forward. Work with all stakeholders to develop a maintenance plan, including funding. Maintenance is costly, time-consuming and often undervalued.

Utilize expert assistants, as they are invaluable, including volunteer experts. Similarly, a volunteer force is essential to maintenance.

Develop demonstration projects to stimulate interest and funds for larger projects.

V. Be persistent.

Ask the Experts:
Olmsted Linear Park Alliance:
www.atlantaolmstedpark.org

The Atlanta Preservation Center Tours: www.atlantapreservationcenter.com

Seneca Park Alliance, Rochester, NY
Save our Seneca Park Advocacy Campaign


Seneca Park

Newspaper


Seneca Park Lake

Seneca Park Alliance

Introduction:
The Landmark Society of Western New York is a not-for-profit membership organization dedicated to preserving, interpreting and fostering interest in the architectural, historical and cultural heritage of its nine-county region, centered on Rochester. Activities include operation of two house museums and a historic garden, educational programs, technical assistance, advocacy activities, book publication, and tours and other events. The Landmark Society is one of the central members of the Seneca Park Alliance, a coalition of neighborhood, environmental, and parks groups. The Landmark Society of Western New York is also a member of the Olmsted Network (formerly National Association for Olmsted Parks).

Program Title:
"Save Our Seneca Park" Advocacy Campaign

Program Description:
For over 20 years, the Landmark Society has been involved in efforts to protect Seneca Park, one of three large urban parks in Rochester designed by Frederick Law Olmsted in the 1890s. The main threat to the park has been the ongoing expansion of the Seneca Park Zoo. Seneca Park is a linear, nearly 300-acre park located a few miles north of downtown Rochester. Its original design included lands on the east and west sides of the Genesee River, which in this area cuts through a dramatic gorge with steep wooded banks. For most of its length the park is quite narrow, consisting of little more than the steep river banks themselves. In the area known as the Lower Park, the park broadens across a flat tableland, where Olmsted designed a man-made pond, picnic groves, scenic loop drive, woodland paths, gorge overlooks and other distinctive landscape effects. This is the section of the park that best represents Olmsted's original design intent, and remains highly intact today.

The Seneca Park Zoo began as a seasonal collection of small-scale enclosures for native animals, such as deer and birds, within the Lower Park. In the 1930s, a permanent menagerie building was constructed atop a natural ridge

southeast of the Lower Park, in an area that, while within the park boundaries, was well screened by both topography and vegetation. Given the location, expansion opportunities were extremely limited.

Aerial view of the Lower Park with Seneca Park Zoo in the foreground. Photo courtesy of Democrat and chronicle.

In response to two efforts to dramatically expand the zoo into the Lower Park, the Landmark Society joined forces with other local organizations to advocate for the preservation of the historic park. The earlier campaign culminated with a park/zoo master planning process that incorporated the input of Olmsted experts and developed a successful compromise, allowing the zoo to expand within a reasonable boundary while protecting the core of the park.

In 2000, following the creation by the County (without the input of parks advocates or scholars) of a new zoo master plan that envisioned a 600-car parking lot in the heart of the Lower Park, the Landmark Society and several other groups joined together as the Seneca Park Alliance. This group used a variety of tactics, described in "Lessons Learned," in its efforts to put a halt to this destructive plan.

After the immediate threat of the 2000 Plan abated, the Landmark Society and other core alliance groups focused their advocacy efforts on proactive measures to educate the public, and key public officials, about the value of the city's Olmsted parks, in the belief that increased awareness of the parks' historic and cultural significance would lead to better stewardship of these treasured resources.

Lessons Learned:

1) Demonstrate that park preservation has broad, credible support.

a. Establish a coalition representing various constituencies with similar positions on the issue; the more varied the coalition, the better.

i. The Landmark Society's coalition included environmental, park advocacy and neighborhood groups, including a group representing a low-income neighborhood. This showed that the position had widespread support and countered the potential charge of "elitism."

ii. Working together helped the various groups share knowledge and resources.

iii. Working together also allowed groups to coordinate their message and to have a single, credible and identifiable spokesperson (and avoid a platform for more extreme positions).

iv. Having the Landmark Society, an established organization with 501c3 status, as a lead player enabled the group to focus on advocacy instead of administrative start-up tasks, and also enabled the group to accept tax-deductible donations.

b. Support or propose an alternative plan.

i. At various times the Landmark Society/Seneca Park Alliance supported a more modest zoo expansion plan or proposed alternatives, such as shuttle parking, that would accommodate zoo improvements with minimal harm to the park.
ii. Positioning your organization "for" rather than only "against" something casts it in a more positive light and can show that your position is reasonable.

c. Take every available opportunity to provide spoken and written comments as part of the official public process.

i. While in this case, there was little hope of influencing the outcome via the normal public process, it was important to participate to establish a record of involvement.
ii. Spokespeople prepared detailed remarks, carefully crafted in advance, and never spoke "off the cuff" or emotionally.
iii. Spokespeople kept their message positive (supporting a different zoo expansion plan; opposing the unpopular parking lot without opposing the zoo itself) and professional.

d. Show, rather than tell, how broad the support is for the cause.

i. Lawn signs were used to demonstrate the geographic range of concern for the park.
ii. Tactics such as petitions or disruptive demonstrations can be dismissed or get lost in a sea of similar efforts.

e. Work closely with the media.

i. Do the media's work for them: create detailed press releases with pertinent contact information (and make sure someone can be reached easily to answer follow-up questions); hold press conferences to coincide with newsworthy events; provide as much information as possible.
ii. Find ways to use the media to advance your educational aims. For example, Dan, an interested reporter who had been covering the topic in the local paper put together a major feature story about Olmsted and his role in Rochester when the zoo controversy was relatively quiet

2) Demonstrate the value of the park (historic, aesthetic, economic, etc.)

a. Bring in outside experts to educate the public and decision-makers.

i. The Landmark Society sponsored lectures by Olmsted experts, particularly in the 1980s; in addition to helping in the short term, this built a base of support that was critical later.
ii. Keep in mind that while Olmsted is well known within landscape/history/park fields, his name is not necessarily well-known outside those areas; to those outside those fields the phrase "Olmsted park" does not have the cachet it does to those who already value Olmsted parks, and will not be enough to stop an intrusive project.

iii. Most people are unfamiliar with historic landscapes and need to be educated as to why they are significant, how to see their design features, and appropriate treatment.

b. Nominate the landscape as a local landmark and to State and National Registers.

i. The Landmark Society obtained a determination that the park was eligible for the National Register in the 1980s; this is a simple process.
ii. Park advocates nominated the park for local landmark designation in 2003; normally local landmark designation has the "teeth" that can stop a destructive project.
iii. Landmark Society staff researched and wrote a National Register nomination for the park and multiple Property Documentation Form for the entire Municipal Park System— a detailed, time-consuming, costly effort.
iv. Successful designation demonstrated that it wasn't just the Landmark Society or unhappy neighbors claiming the park was historic, but that state and national experts agreed.
v. Designation would have been more effective if it had been done ahead of time rather than in the midst of controversy.

c. Offer public tours of the park.

d. Set up a Web site.

3) Demonstrate the true impact by using visuals and analogies (show, rather than tell).

a. Those promoting zoo expansion had flashy graphics to portray their project as exciting (but never showed the actual impact on the park); preservationists had to counter these with something more memorable and exciting than static landscape images.

b. Seneca Park Alliance staked out the area of a proposed parking lot with yellow police tape and held a press conference at that site.

c. The Alliance used a 17-foot tall banner at a press conference/rally held shortly before the County Legislature's vote on the 2000 Plan to show how much fill would need to be brought in to level the site. (Photo courtesy of Seneca Park Alliance)

d. They photographed a familiar 600-car parking lot to demonstrate the scale of the lot proposed for Lower Seneca Park.
e. They calculated the volume of fill that would be required to level the site for the parking and expressed it in recognizable terms—number of truckloads, size of a familiar building.
f. They mounted poster-sized photographs of the park to bring to public presentations, events, etc.

4) Try to prevent the implementation of the plan through political or legal means.

a. Historic preservation and environmental law did not protect the park in this case: Section 106 was not relevant since no government funding or permits were to be used for zoo expansion—but the knowledge that the project could not be approved under Section 106 may have limited the funding sources available to the county.

b. When approaching lawmakers, make the case as simply as possible, using visuals, figures and arguments tailored to their specific interests and constituencies.

c. Seneca Park Alliance ultimately sued the county on the grounds that its environmental review was flawed; the Alliance lost the original case and appeal. This was an expensive, last-resort option that failed to kill the plan directly but may have contributed to delays that ultimately prevented the plan's immediate implementation.

5) Think past the current controversy and toward the future.

a. Despite ongoing differences about the future of the zoo, the county and the Landmark Society found ways to work together on the common goal of promoting the Olmsted parks, creating the "Olmsted Task Force" in 2005 to work on projects such as tour brochures and interpretive signage; this kept the Landmark Society at the table.
b. Ongoing advocacy efforts are focused on encouraging more appropriate zoo planning that takes park preservation into account.
c. Educational efforts must continue to raise awareness among decision makers and build strong support for park preservation.

For more info, contact info@olmsted.org.

Weequahic Park Association, Newark, NJ
Weequahic Park Urban Forest Inventory

Introduction:
Dedicated to the restoration of Weequahic Park, the WPA is a nationally recognized grassroots urban environmental organization that has met weekly for over 15 years. In 1995, it became the first park conservancy in New Jersey to enter a partnership agreement with Essex County, (owners of the system). TWPA is dedicated to enhancing the urban quality of life, by restoring this 311-acre natural resource and capitalizing upon the economic, educational and vocational opportunities available for the community.

Project Name:
Weequahic Park Urban Forest Inventory Program

Description:
The Weequahic Park Association's Forestry and Botanical Inventory Project sought to count, identify and catalog the condition of the trees in the park, in partnership with the Center for Urban Restoration Ecology (CURE) at Rutgers University in New Jersey. The Center is a collaborative effort between Rutgers and the Brooklyn Botanic Garden in Brooklyn, NY.

The inventory sought to examine the biodiversity of the park and create a management plan. The project also incorporated community youth trained and supervised by graduate students and professors from Rutgers and employed, by the WPA, to do the inventory activities.

The project identified (genus & species), tagged and characterized tree health and canopy condition for a permanent database and future resource management tool. The inventory activity included the mapping of trees, to within 3' of their position on the Earth, and utilizing GPS (Global Positioning System) technology in predetermined management zones. The trees were then tagged and cataloged so that they could be referenced with a GIS (Global Information System) map, which includes a database to identify the tree and specific characteristics. This methodology allows the user to highlight a tree (tag number) on the map and find species, tree health and general condition of the tree.

Rutgers University's CURE program was selected through a community based approach. After initial community outreach to explain the need and importance of the project and methodology, the project began in the northeast region of the park. Rutgers University, with the WPA, also facilitated progress demonstrations to keep the community informed (See the Site Map, Informational Handout 1 and Information Handout 2).

Students learned to use several tree measuring instruments, gained a new appreciation for the park as a natural resource and learned new educational and career pursuits. Tools were also created (see Weequahic Park Tree Survey) to assist the interns in the collection of data. Several class field trips were arranged with local schools to demonstrate the inventory activities to schoolchildren so they could see their peers engaged in the project.
The project demonstrated the WPA's commitment to community education and its intent to "create the next generation of urban environmental voices," determined to change and enhance the urban quality of life.

Program Goals/Issues Addressed:
The project's goals were to combine practical state of the art natural resource management technology with environmental education. The inventory project, while generating the scientific data, took advantage of the community building process that has linked the community, Weequahic Park and local schools taking advantage of educational and career opportunities.

The WPA established contacts at area grammar and middle schools to enhance student educational experiences with explanatory tours of the inventory activities. Staff representatives from respective schools and community members received an Informational handout developed for and distributed to further explain the inventory activities. Stakeholder constituencies of school children and underemployed community residents benefited directly from the project.

Timeframe:
Six months for consultant and funding strategy development. Three months for community outreach and orientation. Two months for inventory (can be dependent upon seasonal conditions).

Annual Program Budget:
$166,700 (included $67,000 of in-kind support from Rutgers University)

Funding sources/partnerships and type of support provided: Private foundations and in-kind contributions from Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey; The Schumann Fund for New Jersey and the Prudential Foundation.

Lessons Learned:

1. The project motivated students in secondary education to consider future schooling at Rutgers University School of Natural Resource Management. Students and teachers saw the park through a fresh perspective (as a natural resource) as opposed to the traditional view of a park as a place for active recreation. Teachers also began to include restoration

activities in their lesson plans as real life demonstrations of the New Jersey CORE curriculum requirements for science-- a "win-win" for teachers and students.

The project included a second phase to contrast and compare the current vegetation to the original planting plans and to understand the original selection of plant material.

Once finished, the information will help park planners understand how the plant material has adapted to urban environmental stresses over time. This information will be the cornerstone of future natural resource management.

It is important to remember that natural resource management has a cultural component. Human decisions influenced the tree canopy and species make-up and should be reflected in the inventory work.

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Photos courtesy of Weequahic Park Association, Inc