

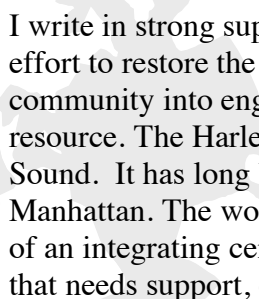


The Gaia Institute

July 21, 2009

National Park Service
River, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program
1849 C Street, NW Code 2220
Washington, DC 20240

To Whom It May Concern:



I write in strong support of the application of the Harlem River Working Group in their effort to restore the river. The aim of this partnership is to bring the surrounding community into engaged contact with what should become an emerging regional natural resource. The Harlem River connects the Hudson and East River's with Long Island Sound. It has long been the separating line between neighborhoods in the Bronx and Manhattan. The work of the Harlem River Working Group aims to change it's role to that of an integrating centerpiece for communities with few green amenities. This is a goal that needs support, even celebration.

The Gaia Institute is a 501 (c) 3 not-for-profit corporation which has carried out restoration efforts with community partners in and around New York City for the past two decades. We worked with BCEQ, Manhattan College, the Bronx Borough President's Office, and Community Board #5 in the first phase of the New York State Harlem River Brownfield's Opportunity Area grant. This work make it clear that, more than any other feature of geography, this tidal straight provides open space, a vista, and destination with the power to bring surrounding communities together. This juncture of estuary, neighborhoods, ecological and human communities is a development opportunity waiting to be recognized and acted upon. We expect that now is the time.

I have worked with Jerry Willis, New York Director of River, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program, since he arrived in New York, a more than a decade ago. I know his participation in this effort will ground and connect it to larger efforts throughout the City and in the Tri-state region. It is not hard to see the potential of this team,- BCEQ and Jerry Willis and a number of other participants in the Harlem River Working Group have

The work of the Gaia Institute couples ecological engineering and restoration with the integration of human communities in natural systems. While much environmental engineering has the worthy aim of minimizing harm, the Gaia Institute explores, through research and development, design and construction, how human activities and waste products can be treated to increase ecological productivity, biodiversity, environmental quality, and economic well being.

July 29, 2009

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already worked together, and, if progress on the Bronx River is any measure, have achieved results far beyond expectation.

While every new step has uncertainties, given the accomplishments of the partners involved here to date, I have to expect that water quality, biological diversity, public access and appreciation of the Harlem River will all take a turn for the better as the Harlem River Working Group brings energy, effort, resources and public interest to bear, enriching the landscape and estuary in the process.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Paul S. Mankiewicz". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Paul S. Mankiewicz, Ph.D.

Executive Director

HELEN DIANE FOSTER
COUNCIL MEMBER, 16TH DISTRICT

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National Park Service
River Trails and Conservation Assistance Program
1849 C Street, NW Code 2220
Washington D.C. 20240

July 29, 2009

Dear National Park Service:

I am pleased to write this support letter for the Harlem River Working Group's application for funding and partnership with the National Park Service. My office has been a supporter of and active partner with this group from its inception.

We have had for many years a community and government campaign to reopen access of the waterfront to the community for educational, environmental, recreational, and economic development of the Harlem River. The highlight of this campaign so far has been to get the City to fund \$60 million to re-open the High Bridge, an architectural gem built in the 1840s and the first bridge in NYC, to bring water to Manhattan. I await the day when the youth of my community can walk across the High Bridge to the huge swimming pool on the other side of the High Bridge.

My office restored the High Bridge Park at a cost of more than a million dollars. I have also funded some \$400,000 to restore the grand step streets from the heights of my district down to the Harlem River. Further, I funded a park and a greenway that will stretch from the base of the High Bridge to the Roberto Clemente State Park. Although not yet complete, what a joy it was to see young people from the community hired in the summer to lead tours along the Harlem River.

Although there is much more to be done, I am most appreciative of how this campaign has brought together the community in partnership with government and environmental groups to build a movement to reopen access to the water for my Sixteenth Council District's residents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Helen Diane Foster".

Helen Diane Foster

JOEL R. RIVERA
Director



14 West 170th Street
Bronx, NY 10452

July 28, 2009

National Park Service
River Trails and Conservation Assistance Program
1849 C Street, NW Code 2220
Washington, DC 20240

To whom it may concern:

Servicing Our Youth (SOY) supports the efforts of the Harlem River Working Group to organize the community and restore the Harlem River to its glory days.

SOY services youth from ages thirteen to twenty-one. We feel that our youth should have the same opportunity of experiences as other youth around the city.

Sincerely,

Joel Rivera
Founder & Director

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Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr.

July 28, 2009

Mr. Steven Golden, Program Leader
North Atlantic Region
The National Park Service
River Trails and Conservation Assistance Program
15 State Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02109

Dear Mr. Golden:

As the chief elected official representing 1.4 million residents of Bronx County, I am pleased to offer this letter of support on behalf of my office and the Harlem River Working Group (HRWG) for technical assistance to advance Bronx projects through the National Park Service's River Trails and Conservation Assistance Program.

The HRWG is a consortium of public agencies, elected officials, and non-profit organizations including:

- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)
- New York City Department of Parks and Recreation
- Elected representatives from the federal, state and city
- Trust for Public Land

The mission of this consortium is to how to best care for and improve the Harlem River and its environs. Projects critical to the Bronx include:


- 1) Restoration of the historic Highbridge pedestrian bridge, \$65 million investment
- 2) Metro North Railroad-Highbridge Yard easement
- 3) Fordham Landing acquisition (4.2 acres of property)
- 4) Lower Grand Concourse park designation at East 144th Street on the Harlem River (2.2 acres)
- 5) Yankee Stadium/Mill Pond Park expansion onto Pier Parcel #5
- 6) Acquisition of the New Tabernacle Baptist Church Properties (1/2 acre)
- 7) Design and construction of Bridge Park
- 8) Depot Place segment of the Harlem River Greenway

PRESIDENT OF THE BOROUGH OF THE BRONX

Mr. Steven Golden
July 28, 2009
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Given this broad spectrum of projects, all of which directly impact the Harlem River and the Bronx, assistance provided by the National Park Service through its River Trails and Conservation Assistance Program would be invaluable.

Sincerely,



Ruben Diaz Jr.

RD:p&d/sg