Parks often serve as central hubs within communities. We are proud of our work in Pittsburgh’s historic regional parks, and we know that your park is likely one of the more than 160 community or neighborhood parks in our great city. Thanks to your support we are able to partner with civic groups in more of these parks each year to truly impact the green spaces near your home.

Cliffside Park in the Hill District is currently undergoing a complete renovation. The citizen-driven design incorporates art elements honoring the cultural heritage of one of Pittsburgh’s most storied neighborhoods.

In Lawrenceville’s Arsenal Park, the park plan respects its deep history while adapting the park to the needs of an evolving community. In nearby Leslie Park we have identified new uses for existing spaces to improve the park and better serve residents. In Allegheny Commons our partnership with community groups is underway with preparations to reconstruct the historic fountain and entrance at the park’s northeast corner.

Looking south: the McKinley Park entrance restoration in Beltzhoover was completed in 2013 and features green, stormwater management infrastructure along with accessible parking and pathways. In this community park, we continue to lead regular volunteer days and collaborate with the community on future plans that link the park to a newly envisioned residential and greenspace corridor.

Eastward, the Parks Conservancy is working with the Larimer and East Liberty communities to bring their vision for parks and greenspace to life. Last fall, in the West End, the Parks Conservancy hosted its first volunteer day with City Councilwoman Theresa Kail-Smith in Sheraden Park.

Your support helps Pittsburgh’s community parks

Contact Kathleen Gaines at kgaines@pittsburghparks.org or 412.682.7275 x213

Engage
It may seem odd to see Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy staff and City of Pittsburgh crews out in the bitter wind and cold, but winter months are a crucial time for the maintenance of your park trees. In fact, winter prunings are an effective way to manage current threats to urban forests. “In winter the fresh cuts have time to dry out,” says Angela Yuele, Parks Conservancy horticulturalist. “When insects and diseases become active in the spring, the wood isn’t susceptible to colonization.”

Proper pruning can help save our urban forest

Proper pruning helps a tree send its resources to the best branches so that it grows stronger and is less of a liability during a storm or when bearing the weight of heavy snow. In addition, “A well-maintained tree will serve the community best through stormwater management, carbon capture, erosion control, and shade,” says Parks Conservancy field ecologist Bryan Dolney.

Proper pruning can help save our urban forest

When pruning, Parks Conservancy field staff looks for a few primary issues: dead branches which may indicate disease or become safety hazards, rubbing branches which can result in fallen limbs, deformed branches which can grow to be dangerous as a tree becomes larger, and suckers which are tiny limbs growing vertically out of the ground at the base of a tree.

This is the fourth year that Alcoa has supported reforestation efforts in Riverview Park, making a huge difference in the kind of city we live in and the neighborhood the children of the North Side will inherit.

Programs you make possible

Your Tree Fund is hard at work in the parks this winter

Alcoa donates trees to North Side park

A generous grant from Alcoa allowed 180 volunteers to plant and care for nearly 200 trees in Riverview Park during 2015. This investment provides much-needed reforestation of one of Pittsburgh’s most wooded parks where the invasive emerald ash borer has been claiming hundreds of trees.

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Thanks to your support we plant hundreds of new trees in your parks every year. Winter pruning of these new trees as they develop allows them to grow to provide the greatest benefit to our community.

Trees near the Allegheny Observatory in Riverview Park during winter

Local companies pitch in

When prunings are an effective way to manage current threats to urban forests.

Pipitone Group volunteers planted more than 80 trees in Riverview Park last fall.

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You transform our cherished spaces

Then and Now: McKinley Park

You renewed a park entrance in Beltzhoover

A few years ago, we began a project to improve McKinley Park. Accessible pathways from the street to park facilities (including a playground and basketball court) were added. A “rain garden” parking lot with porous pavement was installed, and a historic stone wall beautifully restored.

Your commitment to historic rehabilitation of McKinley Park by replacing its aging amenities has made it much more relevant.

2015 tree stats

Your tree donations grow in the parks

Did you know that you helped the Parks Conservancy plant a total of 427 trees during 2015? This includes 382 restoration trees planted via volunteers and field staff during the spring and fall, plus 45 additional tree plantings sponsored by donations to our Tree Fund.

Remember: spending time with trees reduces stress and brain fatigue which improves concentration (The British Journal of Sports Medicine), and trees reduce urban noise – which is known to cause anxiety, tension, illness or hearing loss in the long term – by 50%, according to the USDA National Agroforestry.
At home in Beltzhoover’s McKinley Park

Lifelong park enthusiast Jamil Bey wants to keep kids coming to the park

“When my siblings and cousins and I were growing up in the 1970s, McKinley Park was our park – all 79 acres,” recalls Jamil Bey, PhD. He spent some time away from Beltzhoover as a young adult, but lives now in the neighborhood he’s always called home. “The park offered a world of adventure for all of the neighborhood kids.” Now you’ll find Jamil in McKinley Park usually three times a week – often joined by his 80-year-old father – always proud of his park and serving as an ambassador.

“The park was always a place to be uninhibited. We used our imaginations and had fun exploring. It was a magical place for us,” Jamil remembers.

Jamil’s father, Nathaniel, knows McKinley Park as an oasis and also as a place where wild food grows: he knows when and where to find wild greens, black raspberries and hen-of-the-woods mushrooms. And he gladly teaches the neighborhood kids about what grows wild in the park, and to be respectful of what the park offers.

Today, Jamil looks forward to spearheading a new program when he’ll work with about a dozen youths to inventory McKinley Park’s trees and track how pollution reduction benefits them. This project is a joint effort with The Penn State Center, Tree Pittsburgh, the Student Conservation Association (SCA), the Allegheny County Health Department, Pittsburgh Public Schools and Jamil’s company, PGHWorks. He always looks for such opportunities to bring neighborhood kids into “his park.”

Plant a tree

A $75 donation allows our volunteers to plant a restoration tree in the parks. We can send a beautiful card either to you or to the recipient on your behalf to notify them of your gift.

☐ I would like to plant a tree in one of Pittsburgh’s parks! $75
   ☐ Frick Park  ☐ Highland Park  ☐ Riverview Park  ☐ Schenley Park

☐ I would like to contribute a different amount to the Park Tree Fund $_____

Please send a card notifying (name) ______ of (address) ______

my gift in his/her honor to the following address:

Please return with enclosed envelope or call 412.682.7275 for more information.