

Philip J. Gruszka

Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy Director of Horticulture and Forestry



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Philip J. Gruszka is the Director of Horticulture and Forestry for the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy. He has 40 years of experience in the green industry and is an International Society of Arboriculture Certified Arborist. His job is to supervise PPC staff in horticultural and forest maintenance and to advise the Parks Conservancy and the City on ecological, horticultural and other maintenance issues facing Pittsburgh's public park system. Mr. Gruszka has occupied his current position for fifteen years. He is a member of the senior leadership team of the 20 year old Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, the non-profit partner to the City of Pittsburgh whose mission is "to improve quality of life for the people of Pittsburgh by restoring the parks system to excellence."

Mr. Gruszka is a leader in testing historically significant populations of trees and their contemporary replacements for genetic diversity and in developing protocols for managing those historic collections to maximize biodiversity and maintain aesthetic attributes. He and Dr. Cynthia Morton co-authored an article on genetic research into the London Plane tree population at Schenley Plaza Park in the *Journal of Horticultural Science and Biotechnology* in 2008 and are currently completing a study of Red maple. Gruszka/Morton present at National and International conferences regarding genetic diversity in the Urban Forest.

Prior to coming to Pittsburgh, Mr. Gruszka spent 11 years at Longwood Gardens in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania, one of America's horticultural showplaces, as foreman of arboriculture and grounds-keeping. He supervised 20 staff, plus volunteers and student interns. In addition to his horticultural duties covering more than 1,000 formally planted areas, he initiated a woodland management program for the 700 forested Longwood acres aimed



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largely at stopping the spread of invasive Norway maple. Prior to his Longwood experience, Mr. Gruszka founded and operated his own tree care business in the Chicago area.

Mr. Gruszka received a Bachelor of Science degree in Forestry from the University of Illinois and interned with the United States Forest Service in Kremmling, Colorado. He graduated at the top of his class from the Davey Institute of Tree Sciences and continues to learn and teach about tree planting and maintenance techniques.

Mr. Gruszka is an active member of the National American Chestnut foundation, and its local chapter. He is involved in efforts to breed disease-resistant hybrid chestnuts at test locations in Pittsburgh's parks.