



# Catherine's CLIFF NOTES

Colleagues,

At the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, we accomplish so much individually and collectively every day. The work you do matters to the organization, park visitors, and the citizens of Pittsburgh.

As we continue progressing our mission of restoring Pittsburgh's park system to excellence and ensuring that every Pittsburgher has access to a safe, clean, and beautiful park space, it's essential to highlight the critical work you perform daily.

Read below and learn more about the significant organizational and departmental accomplishments for the first quarter of the new year.

Thank you for all you do to make Pittsburgh's park system a better place for all!

Sincerely,  
Catherine



### **McKinley Park**

DPW has hired a consultant to redesign the deficient trails, and construction is planned for late summer/early fall 2022, contingent of funding and permitting requirements.

### **Flagstaff Hill**

Work has commenced at the west entry stairs and walls first (across from Phipps) with a scheduled completion date of April 15. The contractor will then shift to address the walls uphill from Schenley drive.

### **Allegheny Commons Hartzell Monument**

The planning and design process underway for the relocation and restoration of the Hartzell Monument, and construction is anticipated to begin this summer.

### **Allegheny Commons Segment B**

The team is starting the process of advancing the design, permitting, and construction documents for Segment B. Construction is anticipated to begin in spring of 2023.



### **Mellon Park Action Plan**

Community meetings are scheduled for March 22nd, 24th and 26th where Brandon will present the preferred plan for Mellon Park. This plan was developed based on extensive community feedback received through multiple public presentations, stakeholder meetings, and online survey responses.

### **Smart Parks**

The team wrapped up the initial community engagement process that involved gathering City, PPC, non-profit/organization partners, and public input to identify problems or gaps in parks spaces that can be improved by adding a type of technology. Our intern, Yashasvi, is compiling and analyzing data from the three surveys to determine the best recommendations for the Smart Parks report.

### **Park Waters**

PPC is overseeing the Watershed Task Forces and is planning spring watershed walks with each of the task forces thanks to assistance from community partners. PPC is working with PWSA around projects, stormwater fee, and stormwater master plan.

### **Parks Rx**

The Community Engagement & Education Teams are working with Hazelwood partners to plan a summer series for young children and families. PPC was also awarded a DCNR grant to partner with Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh and Adagio Health on the park prescription program.

### **Spring Internships**

This semester, the CE department has 6 interns working on a variety of different projects including research, community meeting involvement, updating public calendars with PPC events, and much more. Thank you to these dedicated students for joining our team this semester!



an update from...

# THE ED TEAM



## **What has the team been up to at FEC?**

While there have been a few bumps in the road, fall 2021 saw a return to (almost) normalcy at the Frick Environmental Center. The building has been open to the public on weekends since early November 2021, the team was able to see all their school partners in person (and most of them in the park), and they even started some new programs and partnerships. Through school programs from PreK through high school, we've served over 1100 learners in person, most with multiple engagements.

- Bump in the Night returned in a similar format to 2020, with 358 attendees over four nights, despite some challenging October weather.
- We grew our partnership with Propel schools to include a biweekly afterschool Outdoors club at two school sites.
- Through dedicated workshops and a professional development session for Pittsburgh Public Schools science teachers, over 50 area teachers have interacted with the Frick Environmental Center sustainability dashboard... with more to come!
- Public programs have restarted, with a mix of virtual and in-person offerings including story times, natural history walks, and garden programs.

## **What's on Deck?**

Earth Day is now Earth Month! Following last year's successful experiment, we've expanded Earth Day into a collection of different types of programs offered at park sites across the city throughout the month of April. Working in close coordination with the Community Engagement team and responding to the communities' wishes, we're offering a broad variety of programs from animal presentations to yoga.

For most school programs, we have one more engagement planned before the end of the school year, and we have our fingers crossed that everyone will be able to make it out to Frick Park. For our 8th grade Ecosystem Investigators, that means exploring Fern Hollow stream and working to document the ecological impact of the bridge collapse on water quality and biotic activity in the stream. Our elementary school partners will be exploring the more intact Falls Ravine stream, while our high schoolers will be taking an active role in stewardship on Clayton Hill.

Summer 2022 is fully booked with camps and the Young Naturalist summer internship program. New this summer, we will launch a "Junior Young Naturalists" program for middle schoolers, recruiting from our afterschool and 8th grade school-year programs. We'll also be doing regular outreach programming in the Hill District and Hazelwood throughout the summer.



let's talk about...

# VISITOR EXPERIENCE



## **Schenley Plaza is coming to life!**

The PNC Carousel is set to open for the season on April 11 and will be open seven days a week through October 16. The Oakland Open—a free miniature golf course—is also coming back to the Plaza!

## **New and Returning Programs**

We brought back some wonderful programming partners like WYEP, Roland Ford, P3R and the YMCA. We are developing some great new partnerships for the season, including High Five Productions, Queerling Collective (hosting a Tea Lounge and Brunchouse in the parks), Azure Pittsburgh (concerts for families living with autism and related challenges), and hosting the Short Short Fest (festival dedicated to the creative animation industry). Don't forget to join Saul for E-Parks (video game play and DJ under the Plaza tent)!



a word from...

# DEVELOPMENT



## **A New Partner**

We recently partnered with Carnegie Mellon University students for a group statistics project that will utilize data science methods to link and clean donor records across our databases.

## **Commemorative Tree Plantings**

As warmer weather arrives, we're looking forward to the spring commemorative tree planting in early April. Sadly, this is the final planting for Phil before his retirement in May. Working with Phil and the H&F team is always a great experience.

## **Dig Into Spring!**

The change in season also brings the newest direct mail appeal to donors and supporters. Our theme is "Dig Into Spring" and will feature Janet Pazzynski, a longtime volunteer at Riverview Park. We are all eager to get back outside and are looking forward to featuring the many ways people can be active and engaged with us here at the Parks Conservancy. Donors who make a recurring gift through this appeal will also receive a special gift for helping the parks grow.



### **Tis the Season for.... Programming!**

Marketing is busy helping teams prepare for another year of spectacular programs and events. Promotion for Earth Month, the Hat Luncheon, and spring programming is in full swing!

### **Spring Programming Guide**

As part of a mission to focus on accessibility in Pittsburgh's Parks, the marketing team has put together a Spring Programming Guide that outlines the many free programs happening in the parks through June. The guides will be available in all major park locations for visitors to pick up and take with them! A digital version of the guide will also be available online... check it out here!

### **Let's Talk about TikTok:**

Our social media has been bursting with new and engaging content, including an active TikTok account! If you're not already, be sure to follow us @pittsburghparks for tons of exciting vids!



### **Managing the Audit**

The office crew has been hard at work managing the annual audit for the past few months, along with preparing to send files/boxes to Access storage that no longer need to be kept in the office.

### **DEI Training**

As you all know, our year-long training with ISP kicked off last month. Cheers to Ashley for getting this meaningful and impactful program off the ground!

### **Clockify**

A friendly reminder to please continue tracking your time each week into our new timesheet system, Clockify.

In other news, construction in the Highline office is underway where a new space will be built for our incoming Finance Director!



in the field with...

# HORTICULTURE and FORESTRY

## **Winter Work**

The team has been focusing on invasive plant removals, vines in particular (bittersweet, Japanese honeysuckle, grapevine, porcelain berry) that have been climbing their way into the tree canopy. Throughout the past two winter seasons, they have removed many truckloads of old tree cages from all of our restoration sites. The plants have either grown large enough that they no longer need the protections or in some cases died. We were able to recycle most of these materials at the scrap yard or give them to other organizations to repurpose.

## **Deer Enclosures**

Deer enclosures are coming along nicely this year! The team recently worked on the Greenleaf enclosure in Emerald View Park as well as the Clayton Hill enclosure in Frick Park.

## **Riverview Park Chapel Shelter**

A Belgian Block border was added along the trail by the shelter, and it looks beautiful! Uniquely, this border was created by reusing materials already in the park.

## **Spring Plantings**

It's official spring! You know what that means... flowers! The team has been preparing for spring plantings by ordering all the seeds they will need. Plantings will begin soon!

## **Spotted Lanternfly Scouting**

H&F is on high alert within all work sites and with work vehicles. Observing, reporting, and smashing!

## **Congrats Brandon!**

Brandon recently passed the Pennsylvania Certified Horticulturist exam! Way to go!

## **Staff Area Changes**

Brandon is covering the FEC while still at Emerald View Park and McKinley Park, and Angela returned to Highland Park and remains at Walled Garden.

## **And SO much more!**

Invasive plant removal, building deer enclosures, spring plantings, and more! That's only a small bit of what our H&F team works on each and every day. While we can't thank them enough for representing us in the field, we can share a few photos of their awesome work! [Click here to view the photos!](#)



**Julianna Hunt (Community Engagement)**

I am an Urban Studies and Environmental Studies double major pursuing a Spanish minor at the University of Pittsburgh, making my position as one of the Community Engagement interns with the PPC really relevant to my studies. So far, most of my work with the PPC has been research and sitting in on various community meetings. One project I found especially interesting was in taking notes for a committee formed to address the deer over-browsing problem in Pittsburgh neighborhoods. It was valuable to see how the PPC connects directly and helps address problems raised by the community. I'm looking forward especially to the in-person events that will be ramping up with the warmer months, and being able to talk directly with the community on behalf of the conservancy!

**Neil Bradley (Marketing)**

I am an Environmental Studies major at University of Pittsburgh, and this is my second internship with Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy. This spring, I've been working closely with the Communications and Marketing team. I've been spending most of my time organizing our participant and donor contact information into targeted e-mail lists for marketing future events and fundraisers, but I've also written quite a few PPC blog posts and created social media content as well. I've learned a lot about how crucial targeted advertising and marketing is in ensuring success and turnout at PPC events!

**Nicole Dugan (Restoration)**

This winter, the PPC launched it's new restoration internship program. This program offers on-the-ground field experience for college and graduate students looking to better understand the processes and techniques used to manage and restore urban ecosystems. Our pilot intern Nicole is a graduate student in Environmental Science and Management at Duquesne University.