



Gateway National Recreation Area News Release

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Living Shoreline and Restoration Project Begins at the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge

Queens, N.Y. - The National Park Service (NPS), in partnership with the Jamaica Bay-Rockaway Parks Conservancy, a project of the Fund for the City of New York, is pleased to announce the groundbreaking of an innovative living shoreline and restoration project at the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, Gateway National Recreation Area (Gateway). This green infrastructure project, designed by Dirtworks Landscape Architecture PC, Rippled Waters Engineering and Great Ecology, will provide a resilient edge along the Refuge's West Pond, an area breached during Superstorm Sandy and repaired by NPS in 2017.

The West Pond Restoration Project will restore 2,400 linear feet of heavily eroded shoreline at the Refuge with the placement of 44,000 cubic yards of sand creating nearly 9-acres of new marsh habitat. The project includes a living shoreline that will provide a resilient edge to protect against climate change and sea level rise encompassing over 200,000 new native plantings, a 5,000 oyster shell bag breakwater system and natural erosion control features utilizing recycled trees and bio-degradable coir logs. Construction of the project is being led and managed by the Jamaica Bay-Rockaway Parks Conservancy.

“Our investment post-Sandy repairing the West Pond breach was only the first step. This project will protect the most vulnerable area of the pond from storm surge for years to come, while restoring valuable habitat,” said Jen Nersesian, Gateway superintendent. “We appreciate the support of our partners. This is a great demonstration of what we can accomplish together – a mark of true resilience.”

“As a partner of the National Park Service and Gateway National Recreation Area, the Conservancy is ready to restore this vulnerable edge of the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge at West Pond with a living shoreline that will protect the pond and trail from extreme weather and climate change while enhancing visitor experience and the ecology of the

bay with hundreds of thousands of native plants,” **Tom Secunda**, Chairman, Jamaica Bay-Rockaway Parks Conservancy said.

“Construction of this innovative living shoreline project is only possible through partnership and the Conservancy recognizes the work of governmental agencies, elected officials and local organizations like the Jamaica Bay Ecowatchers and American Littoral Society for supporting the project through design and ensuring that the project be built in Jamaica Bay. This project will create acres of new habitat at the refuge while enhancing and protecting West Pond and the beloved loop trail,” **Alex Zablocki**, Executive Director, Jamaica Bay-Rockaway Parks Conservancy said.

"The Jamaica Bay-Rockaway Parks Conservancy, under the leadership of its chair and executive director continues to be a leader in environmental conservation in Jamaica Bay and Rockaway with its impressive award of \$4 million to construct a Living Shoreline at West Pond. Our city and state and visitors to Gateway National Recreation Area will benefit greatly from this project," **Lisette Nieves**, President, Fund for the City of New York said.

The project development team includes the Billion Oyster Project (BOP) which is providing 120 cubic yards of shell for the project from their citywide Oyster Shell Collection and Recycling Program. Volunteers worked with BOP on Governors Island to fill bio-degradable bags with cured shell that will be delivered to the site during construction to build out the unique breakwater feature.

“This restoration project has been a true collaboration between our crew at Billion Oyster Project, shell collection restaurant partners, and dedicated volunteers, said Pete Malinowski, Executive Director of Billion Oyster Project. “We can’t wait to witness the habitat these oyster shells can create for Jamaica Bay’s remarkable marine wildlife.”

The project began in mid-May and is expected to be completed by early fall. Funding for the project was made possible through private donations and the Nitrogen Settlement Fund, in partnership with the Jamaica Bay Ecowatchers, NYC Department of Environmental Protection, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and the NYS Attorney General’s Office.

“The Jamaica Bay Ecowatcher’s are proud to have worked with this great collaborative group on this amazing resiliency project which will protect the West Pond, long considered the crown jewel of this national park. This effort, led by the Jamaica Bay-Rockaway Parks Conservancy in partnership with the National Park Service, New York City Department of Environmental Protection, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the Jamaica Bay Ecowatcher’s is a great example of a unique partnership that pulled together multiple resources in a short time to address

this emergency condition,” Dan Mundy, Jr., Jamaica Bay Ecowatcher’s said. “Multiple bureaucratic hurdles were overcome by the direct and consistent assistance of Assembly Member Amato who chaired a monthly task force on this effort. Her efforts and those of Senator Addabbo helped to streamline this process, cut red tape and make this concept a reality! We are pleased to know that the West Pond will now be protected by new wetlands which will not only provide storm protection for the pond but will also provide new habitat in the bay. It is fulfilling to know that future generations will be able to enjoy this amazing resource,” **Dan Mundy, Jr.** concluded.

“West Pond’s restoration and living shoreline is a meaningful project for Dirtworks’ portfolio. It strengthens our commitment to resiliency, sustainable design and stewardship of the land. We hope the expanded high and low marshes and living shoreline will be an important project for resilient coastal design strategies; particularly as we see our coastlines and coastal cities changing. We are grateful for the collaborative effort among the inter-governmental agencies, NPS, JBRPC, and project stakeholders – all who helped expedite the protection of this vital freshwater habitat” **Britt Zuckerman**, Project Manager, Dirtworks Landscape Architecture PC said.

"Creation of a Living Shoreline and working with nature will help solve the erosion threatening the West Pond trail as well as add additional marsh habitat to the bay. This project will benefit marine life and also enhance the visitor experience at the refuge,” **Don Riepe**, Jamaica Bay Guardian and Jamaica Bay Director, American Littoral Society, said.

About Gateway National Recreation Area

A large diverse urban park spanning two states, Gateway combines recreational activities with natural beauty, wildlife preservation, military history and more. Visitors can hike, picnic, swim, sunbathe, bike, visit the oldest lighthouse in the nation, see an airplane collection and camp overnight, all in the New York metropolitan area. Gateway is one of the ten most visited national parks in the country. For information about Gateway's upcoming public programs, see the park's website at www.nps.gov/gate. Follow Gateway on social media - Facebook, Twitter and Instagram @GatewayNPS.

About Jamaica Bay-Rockaway Parks Conservancy

The Jamaica Bay-Rockaway Parks Conservancy (JBRPC) is a public-private partnership established in 2013 that is dedicated to improving the 10,000 acres of public parkland throughout Jamaica Bay and the Rockaway peninsula for local residents and visitors alike. With its partners at the National Park Service, the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation and the New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, JBRPC works to expand public access; increase recreational and educational opportunities; foster citizen stewardship and volunteerism; preserve and

restore natural areas, including wetland and wildlife habitat; enhance cultural resources; and ensure the long-term sustainability of the parklands. The Jamaica Bay-Rockaway Parks Conservancy, Inc. is a partner project of the Fund for the City of New York (FCNY). FCNY is a Philanthropic Partner with the National Park Service. For more information about JBRPC, visit www.jbrpc.org.