

# VAN CORTLANDT PARK

## Fall Newsletter 2008

## Ground Breaking News

This fall we will break ground on six significant renovation projects in Van Cortlandt Park, representing the largest investment in the park since the 1930s. Projects will include re-grading ballfields, filling erosion sites, landscaping hillsides and renovating lawns. Detailed preservation work, such as re-pointing and replacing bricks, will also be completed. During this construction period, we are making every effort to minimize disruption to public usage of the park.

These projects were made possible by the Croton Water Filtration Plant Mitigation funds and are as follows:

**1. Old Croton Aqueduct Trail** follows the tunnel designed by Chief Engineer John B. Jarvis in the 1830s to bring drinking water from upstate reservoirs to New York City. Improved trail drainage and new plantings will strengthen erosion control measures; an exposed section of the historic brick tunnel will be preserved and covered and some stairs will be reset. The total cost of this project is \$3 million.

**2. Bronx Greenhouse and Nursery** renovations and expansion will include upgrades to the 'cold frames,' greenhouses, loading docks, irrigation lines, sewer lines and access ways at a cost of \$2.7 million.



*Numbers on this thumbnail map correspond with project descriptions.*

**3. Park Headquarters and Comfort Station** located at Broadway and West 242nd Street was designed in the 1930s by Max Hausle who also co-designed the architecturally influential Bronx County Court House. The comfort station's rehabilitation will include new ramping at its front entrance for ADA accessibility and re-pointing of the building's fascia to make it water tight. The cost of this project is \$1.4 million.

**4. Shandler Recreation Area's** barbecue site will receive new tables, paths and grills in the area surrounding the comfort station, while the two ballfields near the expressway will be re-graded to improve drainage. The cost of this project is \$1.2 million.

**5. Van Cortlandt Stadium Infield** will receive the first synthetic turf in the park. It will be the one soccer/football field where teams can play all year long.

**6. Parade Ground** restoration starts with an archeological dig and re-grading. An extensive drainage and irrigation system will be installed throughout most of the fields and parts of the running

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# Fall Calendar 2008

## September

### Birding Club

**Saturday, September 6, 9 am**

Once a month, every month, bird with the Rangers!

Meet at the Nature Center and bring your own binoculars.

### Papermaking

**Saturday, September 6, 2 pm**

Join New York's Greenest (y'know, the Rangers!) for this recycling activity.

Meet at the Nature Center.

### Chimney Swift Sighting

**Tuesday, September 9, 6:30 pm**

280 chimney swifts were counted last year at St. Ann's Catholic School as they circled and funneled their way into the school's chimney, looking to roost. Join our Wildlife Manager for a short walk to see if this natural spectacle happens again.

Meet at Sachkerah Woods, Gun Hill Rd. & Jerome Ave.

### Wildflower Walk

**Saturday, September 13, 1 pm**

Discover late-in-the-season blooms like starburst asters and bright goldenrod on this final summer walk.

Meet the Rangers at the Nature Center.

### Beginner Canoeing

**Saturday, September 20, 11 am**

Learn the basics or practice what you know!

First-come—first-served. Bring water, sunscreen and a snack. Ages 8 and up.

Meet the Rangers at the Nature Center.

## October

### Birding Club

**Saturday, October 4, 9 am**

See September 6.

### Blessing of the Animals

**Sunday, October 5, Noon - 2 pm**

Creatures great and small are

invited to the park to be blessed for the year to come.

Canine Court. Enter park at Broadway & 252 St.

### Autumn Colors Hike

**Saturday, October 11, 11 am**

Walk through the woods and admire the trees before they lose their leaves.

Meet the Rangers at the Nature Center.

### Cass Gallagher Trail Hike

**Saturday, October 18, 11 am**

Delight in the crisp, cool air of the Northwest Forest while hiking this lovely trail with the Rangers.

Meet at Broadway & Mosholu Ave.

## It's My Park! Day Saturday, October 25

### Classic Clean Up 10 am

Plant bulbs, paint benches, remove garbage or rake leaves. It's a wonderful way to pitch in and feel, "Hey, it's my park!"

Meet the Friends of Van Cortlandt Park at Classic Playground.

### Fall Migration 11 am

Each year flocks of tiny, colorful migratory warblers fly south for the winter, unnoticed by the untrained eye. Observe these stealthy passerines as they

travel through New York City.

Meet the Rangers at the Nature Center.

### Halloween Fun Run 2 pm

Run like a bunny, or leap like a frog. Just make sure you do it in costume!

For kids ages 2 - 10 years old.

Meet at the Tortoise and Hare Statue at Broadway & 246 St.



### Howl-O-Ween

**Sunday, October 26 Noon - 2 pm**

They're back—fabulous, furry friends in their costumed finest. Bring your dog to compete, or just stop by to observe unleashed cuteness.

Fee: \$10 per dog. Preregistration required, call 718-796-4541.

Canine Court. Enter park at Broadway & 252 St.





Programs are FREE unless noted. Call 718-430-1890 for information or directions.

# November

## Birding Club

**Saturday, November 1, 9 am**

See September 6.



## Washington's Evacuation Day

**Saturday, November 8, 11 am - 4 pm**

Commemorate the 225th Anniversary of General George Washington's triumphant return to New York which marked the end of the Revolutionary War! On Washington's way down from temporary headquarters in Newburgh, he spent the night at the Van Cortlandts' house. His arrival in the Bronx and departure for Manhattan, complete with mounted escort unit, will be re-enacted.

Call 718-543-3344 for more information.

Van Cortlandt House Museum

## Creature Feature: Night Hike

**Saturday, November 8, 7 pm**

Owls, bats, coyotes and muskrats—are they visitors, residents or just urban legend? Search for signs and find answers.

Meet the Rangers at the Nature Center.



## Veterans Day Remembrance

**Sunday, November 9, Noon**

Pay homage to the men and women who gave their lives for our country.

Memorial Grove,  
Broadway & 246 St.

## Medicinal Plants

**Saturday, November 15, 11 am**

Throughout history and around the globe, plants have been used as remedies for all kinds of maladies. Identify the useful plants that make Van Cortlandt Park home, and learn their varied uses.

Meet at the Nature Center.

## Post-Turkey Super Hike

**Saturday, November 29, 11 am**

Walk off that enormous dinner as we hike the park's northern trails. Breathe deep!

Meet at Broadway & Mosholu Ave.

# December

## Birding Club

**Saturday, December 6, 9 am**

See September 6.

## Saint Nicholas Day

**Saturday, December 6,  
11 am - 4 pm**

A popular feast day for children, Saint Nicholas Day was celebrated by the Van Cortlandt family in the 18th century. Enjoy special tours, a cup of hot chocolate or mulled cider around the campfire, and look for Saint Nicholas's arrival on horseback.

Call 718-543-3344 for fees and information.

Van Cortlandt House Museum

## Christmas in the Colonies

**Saturday & Sunday,  
December 13 & 14, 4 pm - 7 pm**

The halls will be decked with holly and decorated in Colonial style. Enjoy live holiday music and dance, refreshments and guided tours focusing on the history of St. Nicholas Day, Christmas, and Twelfth Night.

Call 718-543-3344 for fees and reservations.

Van Cortlandt House Museum

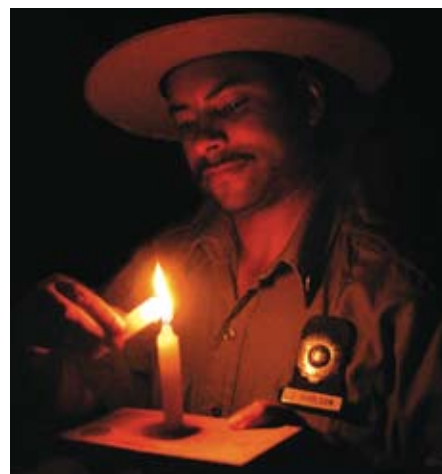


## John Muir Trail Hike

**Saturday, December 20, 11 am**

Explore the park's only east-west trail and discover different animal habitats along the way.

Meet at Broadway & Mosholu Ave.



## Solstice Candle-Boats

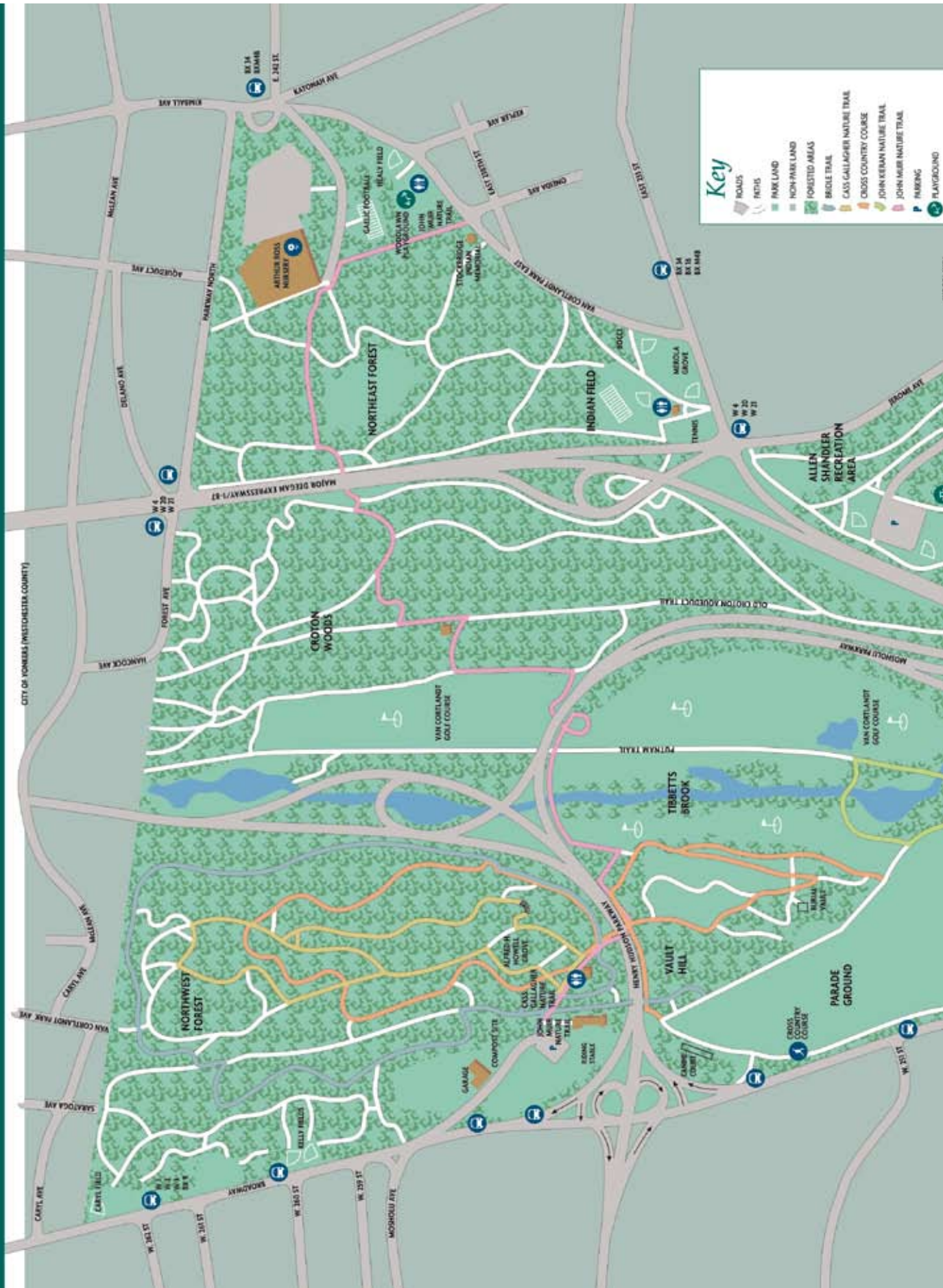
**Sunday, December 21, 5 pm**

Set afloat your wishes for the season on this shortest day of the year. Candles and floats provided.

Van Cortlandt Lake. Enter at Bailey Ave. & Van Cortlandt Park South.



# Van Cortlandt Park





## Directions

**By Car:** The Major Deegan Expressway has two park exits: Van Cortlandt Park South, which serves the south and west portions of the park and East 233rd Street, which serves the north and east. The Henry Hudson Parkway's Broadway exits also serve the park. Moshulu Parkway links Van Cortlandt Park with the Bronx River and Pelham Parkways. Broadway runs along the park's western perimeter; Jerome Avenue and Van Cortlandt Park East border the park on the east side.

**By Bus:** The Bx9 travels along Broadway on the western edge of Van Cortlandt Park. The BxM3, an express line serving Manhattan, offers access to the park's western border. The park's east side is served by the Bx16, Bx 31 and Bx34. Westchester bus lines – numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 20 and 21 also serve the park.

**By Subway:** The northern terminus of the IRT #1 train at W. 242nd Street is near the Parade Ground.

The IRT #4 train's last stop at Woodlawn serves the park's southeastern area.

## Phone Numbers

- Administrator's Office  
718.430.1890
- Friends of Van Cortlandt Park  
718.601.1553
- Moshulu Golf Center and Driving Range  
718.655.9164
- Park Enforcement Patrol  
718.430.1815
- Riverdale Equestrian Center  
718.548.4848
- Urban Park Rangers  
718.548.0912
- Van Cortlandt Golf Course  
718.543.4595

## Van Cortlandt House

Museum  
718.543.3344

Van Cortlandt Nature Center  
718.548.0912

Events and General Information  
311

## Bronx Recreation

General Information  
718.430.1825

Permits—Special Events  
718.430.1848

Permits—Sports  
718.430.1840



## City of New York Parks & Recreation

[www.nyc.gov/parks/vancortlandt](http://www.nyc.gov/parks/vancortlandt)

Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor

Adrian Benepe, Commissioner

Hector M. Aponte, Bronx Borough Commissioner

Margot Perron, Van Cortlandt Park Administrator

Stephanie Ehrlich, Editor

Margot Perron, Articles & Photographs

Cliff Harris, Designer

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# Teen Internships: **Look Who's Working!**

If English teachers ask these terrific teens to write about their summer vacation, essay highlights are likely to include tales of hard work, hot weather and good times.

Students might also recount how they learned the importance of reporting to work on time and ready to go. Maybe they'll talk about the skills they gained like plant identification, tool safety, and teamwork. They could share the great feeling of pride they got for contributing to the well-being of the park as a vital community resource. Or, perhaps they'll just remember laughing in the lush, green woodlands with the new friends they made – like minded teens, dedicated to improving the park for all its visitors.

The following teen groups worked hard to improve Van Cortlandt Park this summer:

## **Lehman College's GEAR UP**

10th graders received Street Tree Care training and certification from TreesNY then assisted our forest staff with tree work throughout the woods. This pilot program was modeled after Wave Hill's successful Forest Project Summer Collaborative.

## **The Friends of Van Cortlandt Park**

utilized NYC's Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) to pay and train teens. They maintained the Old Croton Aqueduct and John Muir Trails plus kept invasive weeds at bay. This well-established program is in its 17th year.

The park's concessionaires also hired teens. **Van Cortlandt Golf Course** recruited twelve SYEP interns from Kips Bay Boys & Girls Club to work on the course and in the golf house. **Mosholu Golf Course** hired ten

teens through The First Tee of Metropolitan NY to teach younger children golf skills and maintain the course. **Riverdale Equestrian Center** employed five interns to groom and care for the horses as well as teach younger children to ride. All five girls learned to ride at the center when they were younger.

We appreciate all our interns and their efforts to keep Van Cortlandt Park green and fun. Look for them next summer when they return as experienced peer leaders, ready to share their training and work in their beloved park once again.



*Teens in their internship groups:  
Top Row: Van Cortlandt Golf Course,  
Mosholu Golf Course, Riverdale Equestrian Center  
Bottom Row: Friends of Van Cortlandt Park,  
Lehman College GEAR UP*

# Volunteering Does a Body Good

## Select Saturdays 10 am - 1 pm

Get fit and give back to the park by volunteering with the Friends of Van Cortlandt Park.

Wear comfortable clothing and bring a snack and a drink.

For more information about any of these opportunities, call 718-601-1553, visit [www.vancortlandt.org](http://www.vancortlandt.org) or email [info@vancortlandt.org](mailto:info@vancortlandt.org).



## Southeast Forest Project

September 13, 27 & October 18

Strengthen the diversity of our woodland ecosystem along the Croton Extension Trail by pulling out invasive weeds and putting in native plants. Meet at southwest corner of the Shandler Recreation Area parking lot. Enter the park off Jerome Ave., south of East 233 St.

*Funded by New York Community Trust.*

## John Muir Trail

October 4 & November 15

Honor the man who put nature preservation on the map and founded the Sierra Club by working on his namesake trail. Volunteers are needed to remove invasive plants and help plant native trees and shrubs. Meet at the Riding Stables. Enter the park at Broadway & Mosholu Ave.

*Funded by BJ's Charitable Foundation and American Hiking Society.*

## Family Day at the Garden

October 4

Note time: 11 am - 2 pm

Green up the Nature Center Garden with plantings of jewelweed, mayapple, ferns, and Solomon's seal. Bring the kids and create EcoCrafts or plant seeds in a peat pot to take home.

Meet the Rangers at the Nature Center.

## Environmental Internship

Young people ages 14-18 learn first-hand about one of New York City's greatest resources, Van Cortlandt Park while carrying out trail maintenance and beautification projects. Interns are required to commit Fridays after school and every other Saturday, October - June.

Applications are available at [www.vancortlandt.org](http://www.vancortlandt.org).

## Ground Breaking News

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path will be refurbished. This 65-acre site was a plantation in Revolutionary War days. Before Europeans set foot in the Bronx, local Lenape Indians lived in an extensive village here. The cost of this restoration project includes the Stadium Infield at \$15 million.

Look for these additional projects in the future:

**7. Putnam Trail**, an old railroad bed, is currently in design to become a greenway for hikers, bikers and wheelchair users. This project is made possible by a combination of

federal, state and local funds.

**8. Memorial Grove** at West 246th Street will receive landscaping makeovers, and **Healy Field** will be renovated. Councilman G. Oliver Koppell recently committed funds to these much-needed upgrades. Bronx Borough President Adolfo Carrión, Jr. is assisting with costs for the field.

**9.** A grant application for funds to renovate the asphalt field at **Southwest Playground** for wheelchair football and wheelchair baseball with ramped connections to the Putnam

Trail has been submitted to NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

**10.** We are currently seeking funds to replace the play equipment and upgrade the comfort station at **Woodlawn Playground**.

We encourage you to visit the park and take a peek at these projects as they progress. Please refer to the numbered map of the park's projects or call the Administrator's office at 718-430-1890 for information.



# LOOKING BACK at SUMMER

This summer visitors paddled canoes, danced barefoot, aced the ball and enjoyed fireworks -

## All in Van Cortlandt Park!

(Left) Bronx Borough President Adolfo Carrión, Jr. and wife Linda Baldwin brought family and friends to savor a perfect evening with the NY Philharmonic.

This year, one of the highlights of Barefoot Dancing, our outdoor music and dance series, was a partnership with Mind-Builders Creative Arts Center which brought master performer, Mamadou Dahoue to the park. Dahoue's Ancestral Messengers shared Ivory Coast drumming and dance, while student-interns from Mind-Builders explained the country's folk customs.

(Below left) Breana Lafortune leads the participatory dancing.

(Below right) Idrissa Kone drums while Mamadou Dahoue charms the crowd. (photos-Jade!)



(Above left) CityParks' Tennis was a big hit with kids and seniors alike on our east side and west side courts.

Pictured here, the entrance garden at Indian Field Tennis Court on the park's east side.

(Above right) Folks lined up for the excitement of canoeing with the Rangers at Van Cortlandt Lake.