



# ROCK CREEK CONSERVANCY

## 2019 Impact Report

### THROUGH PEOPLE-POWERED RESTORATION, THE CONSERVANCY:

In partnership with the National Park Service, **empowered a growing community to steward the unique, urban wilderness of Rock Creek Park.**

In collaboration with government and nonprofit partners, **supported legislative and regulatory action to protect the watershed** in Washington, D.C. and Montgomery County, Maryland.

**Restored and protected natural habitats by reducing stormwater runoff**, removing litter and invasive plants from Rock Creek and its parklands, and planting native plants.

**Promoted a culture of environmental stewardship** inside and outside of the park through **people-powered restoration** and community engagement.

**Connected diverse communities** to Rock Creek Park through hundreds of events, community outreach, and Rock Creek Conservation Corps summer programming.

*“Rock Creek Conservancy plays a unique role coordinating cost-effective strategies with public and private partners to protect the watershed. This people-powered restoration secures a natural buffer for Rock Creek Park, and catalyzes greater community stewardship.”*

– Executive Director Jeanne Braha

### WATERSHED LEADERSHIP

**Engaging hundreds of volunteers to remove litter** on MLK Day of Service outside the park during the federal government shutdown in January.

Hosting the Regional Friends Alliance meeting in April and **sharing park partnership best practices.**

Inspiring volunteers to remove litter from 70 locations in Washington, D.C. and Montgomery County, Maryland for Extreme Cleanup in April, **helping to restore the entire Rock Creek watershed.**

**Defending Rock Creek** amidst expansion plans for I-495 and I-270 by rallying public outcry that successfully moved work along Rock Creek to phase two of the interstate project to allow additional time to consider environmental impact concerns.

## By the NUMBERS

This year, Rock Creek Conservancy invested its efforts in restoring five mini-oasis sites, but that's not all!



1,018

trees freed from English ivy



32,280

pounds of litter removed



48,943

sq. ft. of invasives cleared



133

downspouts disconnected



220

volunteer events



12,153

volunteer hours



4,512

volunteers engaged



20 WEEKS

creek bacteria monitoring



18

new Rock Creek Conservation Corps members



17°F

difference from Rock Creek vs. Georgia Ave.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INCLUSION

Providing DC high school students with environmental education and employment opportunity through the Rock Creek Conservation Corps (RC3), **growing a culture of conservation** and healthy use of public lands.

Celebrating the Crestwood neighborhood's 300th birthday at the Carter Barron Party in July and **raising funds to support Rock Creek Park**.

**Engaging more than 175 volunteers** as a signature site for National Public Lands Day in September.

**Gathering nearly 300 people** for the 2019 Rock Creek Gala in October at the Embassy of New Zealand, raising more than \$220,000 to advance the Conservancy's mission.

Unveiling designs for identification and orientation **signage to help diverse communities connect** to Rock Creek Park's recreational, historic, cultural, and educational opportunities.

*"We want everyone to feel at home in Rock Creek Park— a remarkable urban oasis that serves our community in so many ways, including giving us space to learn and play, providing a habitat for wildlife and plants, and protecting historical resources."*

*- Rock Creek Park Superintendent Julia Washburn*



## ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

**Focusing people-powered restoration** efforts across 15 acres of forest habitat, at five mini-oases in Rock Creek Park, a proof of concept for landscape-scale habitat restoration.

Hosting weekly volunteer activities and training volunteer leaders to help neighbors **remove litter and invasive plants and build stewardship** inside and outside of the park.

**Monitoring water quality and litter** as part of watershed collaborations with volunteers and regional environmental organizations.

**Conducting stormwater management** through the Downspout Disconnection Program, funded by DC Water, and a rain barrel program in Aspen Hill, Maryland made possible in part by a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

**Supporting biodiversity conservation projects** on America's public lands with the award of a \$47,500 Biodiversity Conservation Grant from the National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF), with major support from Toyota Motor North America.

## LOOKING AHEAD IN 2020, THE CONSERVANCY WILL:

**Build capacity and stewardship** by training volunteer Stream Team Leaders, Weed Warriors, and Water Monitors and hosting events throughout the year.

**Develop and install wayfinding and identification signage** in Rock Creek Park, with donor support, to meet the NPS Centennial Challenge Grant of \$225,000.

**Reduce stormwater runoff** through green infrastructure initiatives.

**Celebrate Rock Creek Park as a natural, cultural, and recreational oasis** at the Rock Creek Gala in October.

**Steward mini-oases** as active proof of the model of **people-powered restoration** of the natural habitat of Rock Creek.

Engage community partners, park users, thought leaders, government officials, and residents of the region as part of **developing the Conservancy's next strategic plan**.

Rock Creek Conservancy is a 501(c)(3) organization funded by private foundations, corporate sponsors, government grants, and generous individual donors providing an annual revenue of approximately \$1 million. An audited financial statement is available at [www.rockcreekconservancy.org](http://www.rockcreekconservancy.org).

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