

Dispatches from the some of the city's top urban ecology educators, published by **Nurture New York's Nature** in honor of **National Environmental Education Week** April 16-22, 2006



THE SCIENCE OF TEACHING SCIENCE

When you ask Melina Furman if science education in New York City is getting better, prepare to be pleasantly surprised. "I'm seeing a lot of success," says Furman, a doctoral student at Teachers College's Urban Science Education Center. "Part of it is having really good teachers."

Throughout New York City, the push is on to attract, train and retain great teachers, and not a moment too soon for science. Over half of all of New York's science teachers aren't certified, with that percentage spiking higher in the schools with the fewest resources.

Enter the Urban Science Education Center (USEC). The USEC's mission is to promote science in impoverished urban settings and reach minorities underrepresented in the sciences. Much of the USEC's work aims to give teachers the instructional tools they need to be effective when they're in the classroom, so they won't be overcome by frustration and be tempted to leave.

What's the secret to successful science instruction? Furman says it's helping kids make the connection between science and their lives. As part of this effort, the USEC is compiling and testing New York City-based environmental science lesson plans structured around the NYC Department of Education's educational standards. Called GO WILD IN NYC, TEACHERS, the collection draws its basic outline from a children's introduction to urban ecology, GO WILD IN NEW YORK CITY, published by the National Geographic Society with support from Nurture New York's Nature. (And, not coincidentally, the inspiration for this newsletter.)

On a recent day out on the town with the Urban Science Education Center, MS 328, the Manhattan Middle School for Scientific Inquiry in Washington Heights, took a trip to Inwood Hill Park to see the metamorphic and igneous rock on the grounds. The expedition was interrupted by rain, so students headed



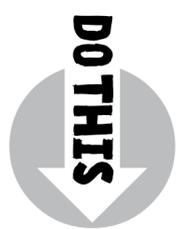
to the Nature Center where they waited out the storm doing hands-on bug study with live hissing cockroaches. "Science teaches you how to think critically," says Furman, explaining why engaging science instruction is so critical to educational achievement. "And there's so much to do for the environment."

LEARN LOCALLY

FRED KOONTZ, PH. D.
Executive Director of the Teatown Lake Reservation; Founder of the Wildlife Trust's New York Bioscape Initiative

"It's important for people, starting with children, to have a much more powerful sense of place. There are so many TV nature shows and radio shows and people have the opportunity to travel around world, which are all great. But what is most exciting and fun is identifying animals in your own region. There was an old saying in the 70s: think globally; act locally. Now the question is how we can really tie together a sense of place with biodiversity conservation, health and long-term sustainability of regions. What we're trying to do is come up with ways for people to feel more connected to the regions they live in. Thoreau said you could spend a lifetime exploring the area 20 miles from where you live. I would extend that to a general 50-100 miles from where you live. People didn't have cars when he said that. There's a whole lifetime of exploration."

HOT LINK: For more on the NY Bioscape Initiative: www.nybioscape.org



INTERESTED IN SPENDING A YEAR MAKING NEW YORK CITY A BETTER PLACE? YOU MIGHT BE AMERICORPS MATERIAL—FIND OUT MORE BY HEADING TO THE NEW YORK RESTORATION PROJECT'S INFORMATION PAGE: NYRP.ORG/AMERICORPS_LEARN.HTM.

LOCAL NATURE MAKES GOOD SCIENCE

"I'm all for panda bears and rain forests," says Philip Coffin, education director of the New York Restoration Project (NYRP). But when it comes to teaching New York City students about the natural sciences, "it has to deal with their environment and their lives."

His educational programs have three goals—to support New York City and New York State standards in science, to encourage a sense of stewardship for New York's open spaces and to introduce kids to the basic natural history of the city. Working largely with schools within a 5-10 minute walk from the northern Manhattan and South Bronx parks that

the NYRP has brought back to life, Coffin has his hands full: "In the elementary ages, in many cases, we're the only science that they get."

His approach has evolved since he joined the NYRP, fresh from a formative year in the AmeriCorps national service program. No longer interested in the classic one-time nature class, "I'm more and more serious about fitting into the existing school curriculum." And so after establishing a connection with local schools each September, he says, he and his team "go in there, find out what they need, and support that."



GREEN QUEENS

Teacher FRAN BOSI of PS 205 Q in Bayside, Queens, may take the prize for NYC elementary school teacher with the most urban science irons in the fire. Here is a partial listing: Bosi and her students are regular contributors to the international student science project called GLOBE, collecting data on local precipitation and the moment new leaves emerged on pin oak trees. The official New York City tree census also benefited from the work of Bosi's students, who identified the trees around the school and evaluated their condition. Bosi's classes participate in the Cornell University Extension program called NY Kids Growing Food in which crops are cultivated on school grounds without pesticides. And children under Bosi's watch have been part of Golden Apple's Team Up and Clean Up and the Reduce, Reuse and Recycle Contest. But Bosi is modest about the roster of projects, saying that throughout, "I learned as much as my students!"

HOT LINKS: www.kidsgardening.com/, cerp.cornell.edu, www.hort.cornell.edu, qcpages.qc.cuny.edu/qcgllobe/

**HEY, NEW YORKERS:
"PS 205Q children care about Our Green EARTH!"
—Fran Bosi**

TEENS FOR CLEAN

You may have heard about City Hall's Green Apple Initiatives, designed to promote ecologically sound development from the top down. But did you know there's a group at the same address working to cultivate ecologists from the ground up?

The group is the 36-year-old Council on the Environment of New York City (CENYC), which oversees the Greenmarkets, assists the city's many gardening groups and, under CENYC's Mike Zamm, brings ecological awareness to more than a thousand high school and middle school students in the Bronx, Manhattan, Queens and Brooklyn every year. Participants in the Teaching Student Organizers (TSO) program do creative awareness-raising work, staging energy fairs and distribu-

ting student-developed informational brochures on issues such as asthma, energy and recycling. They collect their own data on the state of life in the city, monitoring urban environmental services and strategically agitating for improvements. And they lead conservation efforts around town, restoring and preserving green spaces.

How do kids like the TSO classes? Wrote one participant, "If I were in charge of all school programs, I would encourage students all over to try this course." Zamm says his office has collected piles of case studies on their graduates, who inevitably go on to be model citizens, organizing neighborhood clean ups and leading their peers in water conservation.

NYC EARTH DAY EVERY SCHOOL DAY?

At schools around town, New York City's nature is cropping up at the top of the curriculum. Students at institutions like the High School for Environmental Studies in Manhattan and the New York Harbor School in Brooklyn (with a campus at the South Street Seaport) study their immediate environment to meet their educational requirements. And the success of these schools is inspiring the cultivation of others.

In February, New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg announced the latest additions to the city's ecology-themed schools: The Academy for Environmental Leadership in Bushwick and The Green School: An Academy for Environmental Careers in Williamsburg. The Brooklyn Center for the Urban Environment will be playing a lead role at these institutions, and given the Center's achievements to date, students will be in very good hands.

The Center, which currently reaches around 100,000 students, teachers and parents each year, has developed a master curriculum based on New York City's environment and its educational standards.

The flexible lesson plans combine hands-on learning with community stewardship. At one Center-led high school, the Academy of Urban Planning, students used professional-grade Geographic Information Systems technology to collect data on zoning, planning and land-use issues and presented their findings to the local community board.

But high-tech work doesn't distract the Center from the fundamentals: "The root of community development is people," says Associate Director for Development & Public Affairs, Aisha Browne. While improving options for the city's high school students, the Center finds ways to help other populations benefit from lessons the city itself can teach. Last year they ran a six-week program for children and parents from three Brooklyn homeless shelters, which culminated in a day of ad hoc entomology in Prospect Park. Says Browne, "They were observing ant and bee colonies and comparing it to city life. Our programs and partnerships allow New Yorkers to look at the urban environment through a new lens."

JOIN AN URBAN TOUR, SPONSORED BY THE BROOKLYN CENTER FOR THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT EVERY WEEKEND AND RANGING FROM CIVIL WAR WALKS TO SUSTAINABLE BIKE TOURS: WWW.BCUE.ORG/?GO=CMN.49.

DO THIS



GET INTO THE FIELD

JOHN T. TANACREDI
Chairman, Department of Earth and Marine Sciences
Dowling College, Kramer Science Center

"What I think is the unfortunate thing about elementary and high school science programs: there's a tremendous emphasis on science fairs, which give students the opportunity to learn about science, but when you look at the categories there's a tremendous emphasis on technology: computers, engineering, bioengineering, biotechnology—the lab aspects of science. This is important, but extremely rarely are field science, biodiversity, etc. found in elementary schools. We're not training new taxonomists or natural history scientists with backgrounds in observation and cataloging. We've tried to place technology at a higher level in schools. We don't have courses in geography, taxonomy. Whole departments of geography have disappeared. This is something that really needs to be resurrected and brought back. The best way to do that is to have active and vibrant field ecology/biology programs integrated into every science discipline. Physics and chemistry should have field components too."

HELP DR. TANACREDI TRACK THE NUMBER OF HORSESHOE CRABS IN QUEENS,

BROOKLYN AND LONG ISLAND. GO TO WWW.DOWLING.EDU/SCHOOL-ARTS-SCIENCE/EARTHMARINE/HORSESHOE.SHTM TO FIND OUT MORE.

DO THIS

A RIVER RUNS THROUGH IT (THE BRONX)

When MAARTEN DE KADT arrived at Fannie Lou Hamer High School in the South Bronx, the Bronx River was a supporting player in the urban studies program he crafted: "The river provided another location to use the community as a classroom for our students." That was 1997. Now the river, just a quarter mile from the school, is the focus of de Kad't's 11th and 12th graders' social studies and history curriculum. The students combine their in-class studies with serious field work, even on days when the field is frigid. "I took a group of students to the Concrete Plant Park to test the water on a below freezing day—they complained a lot but they also produced very good data. I was very proud of them," recalls de Kad't.

READ DAVID M. BOLLING ON HOW TO SAVE A RIVER: A HANDBOOK FOR CITIZEN

ACTION. DE KADT SAYS, "IT HAS GIVEN MY STUDENTS A SENSE THAT THERE ARE MANY RIVERS

OTHER THAN THE BRONX RIVER THAT HAVE BEEN SAVED."

DO THIS

HEY, NEW YORKERS: "The Bronx River is the city's only fresh water river. It is a regional gem! The work my students do, as well as the work of a great many others including e.g. the Bronx River Alliance, is resulting in a greatly improved and restored Bronx River."
-- Maarten de Kad't



AT HOME ON THE URBAN PARK RANGE

Adelaida Del Pilar grew up running through the countryside in Puerto Rico. Although she's been a New Yorker for a long time now, she hasn't abandoned her love of open spaces. For the last 18 years, Del Pilar has been an Urban Park Ranger in the Bronx's Van Cortlandt Park. "I feel comfortable here," she says of its 1,146 acres. And, by teaching students from elementary school up into college, she's helped a lot of other New Yorkers feel comfortable with urban wildness.

New York City has over 28,000 acres of green space—much of which

is patrolled by Urban Park Rangers. But getting New Yorkers to comprehend the natural side of their city setting is harder than you might think. Once when Del Pilar was introducing a group of children to the native inhabitants of Central Park, the kids asked what the Rangers did with the animals at the end of the day: "They thought it was a zoo!"

Del Pilar uses every part of the park in her classes, leading hikes, canoeing or hunkering down in one of the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation's "Natural Classrooms" to teach bird and bug basics. "You never know what method you're going to use until the kids are in front of you," she says. Her student-tailored approach works: "At the end of the hour and a half, they

always have something to remember," says Del Pilar.

However, after all her years introducing city kids to their own backyard, she suffers the occasional memory lapse.

When children bound up to greet her, "I always feel bad if I can't recognize them—they'll say, 'You came to my class!'"

CALL 311 TO FIND OUT WHAT THE URBAN PARK RANGERS IN THE URBAN PARK NEAREST YOU ARE UP TO THIS WEEKEND. IN ADDITION TO CLASSES, THERE ARE SLEEPOVERS, JUNIOR RANGER PROGRAMS AND URBAN ENVIRONMENT INTERNSHIPS FOR ALL AGES.

DO THIS

SAY IT LOUD AND SAY IT PROUD

New York City has more teachers and students working to understand and improve the urban environment than any other city in the country. (For regular updates on what New York's junior enviro heroes are doing, go to gowildnyc.blogspot.com.)



© Valerie Druguet/NNYN

WILD ON THE WATERFRONT

When Sergeant Tony Prastaro first set about building the student-staffed Ranger Conservation Corps (RCC) for the Salt Marsh Nature Center at Marine Park in Brooklyn, he recalls, "It was us showing up with our uniforms and funny hats at the high school secretaries' offices."

But those days are over. Now word has gotten out that New York City high school students can fulfill their service requirements while enjoying some of the city's fascinating waterfront parkland. And students are hooked—some coming back term after term. Says Prastaro, "We have kids we knew as freshmen!"

This season at Marine Park the RCC is planting a native

species wildlife pollinator garden—which means a field of native wildflowers aiming to attract pollinators like butterflies and bees. Luckily, the Salt Marsh Nature Center has an in-house beehive, so there will be takers as soon as there are blooms on the stems. And the RCC will be there to chart the insects' behavior in the field and back in the hive.

What if some of the students decide to follow in Prastaro's footsteps and join the Urban Park Rangers—will they have to wear the uniforms and funny hats? Prastaro says not to worry. Though the uniform does include a significant amount of polyester, it's not uncomfortable. Says Prastaro, "As long as you get your wicking base layers down, you'll be okay."



PROSTARO STRONGLY RECOMMENDS CANOEING EITHER ON GERRITSEN CREEK AT THE MARINE PARK OR THE LULLWATER IN PROSPECT PARK. "IT'S ABSOLUTELY FREE, EVERY WEEKEND," HE SAYS, THOUGH HE NOTES IT'S FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED. FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO WWW.NYC.GOV/PARKS AND CLICK ON THINGS TO DO.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

What's the best way to feed a young New Yorker? It's a question that nutritionist Elizabeth Solomon of Food Change's Eatwise high school internship program has been helping kids tackle since 2004. "It's exciting work—we train teens to be nutrition educators for their peers." She's seen shy kids turn around and teach a roomful of students about good eating habits, and teens that have single handedly changed the way their families buy and eat food.

The fastest way to take a cool-obsessed high school kid and turn them into an advocate for ecologically sound eating is to teach them about the food industry, says Solomon. Kids' attitudes change as soon as they realize that the things they consume are made by companies "interested in profits and not in health," she notes. After that awakening, participants in the program search out healthy alternatives in the closest store (look for bananas, salsa, nuts, yogurt, whole wheat bread). Then they track down greenmarkets and community supported agriculture (CSA) groups in their neighborhoods, and study the systems that bring food to the city—all of which they then teach other teens, their families and members in the broader community.

GOODBYE, FROOT LOOPS: "Now that I've joined EATWISE, I am more aware of what I eat and what my family buys while food shopping. Before, I barely had time to go food shopping with my mom because of all the work I do at school. I never blamed her for choosing the bad foods she bought shopping on her own. She didn't have someone that knew about healthy foods beside her to help her shop. Besides, with as little English as she knows, my mom does not know how to read a nutrition label.

The first week of January, I went grocery shopping with my mom. It was both fun and educational. As we strolled down the aisles, I told her what was healthy and not healthy. Some things we got from the market were brown rice, whole wheat bread, pasta, vegetables, fruits, non-fat milk, lentils, corn, tuna and healthy cereals that were whole grain such as Life, Honey Bunches of Oats, and Special K. This time, instead of buying four packs of 24 cans of Pepsi, she bought 4 gallons of natural Tropicana orange juice." — Eatwise Intern Alexandra Munoz

"WE ENCOURAGE KIDS TO TALK TO STORE OWNERS," SAYS SOLOMON, WHO MAINTAINS THAT JUST SEVEN REQUESTS CAN GET A HEALTHIER PRODUCT ON THE SHELVES.



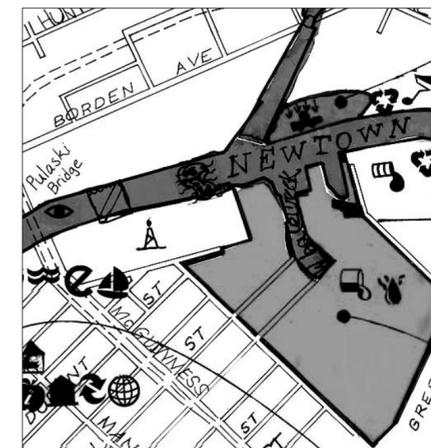
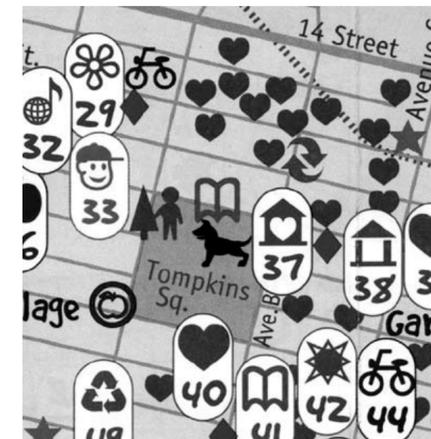
HOT LINKS: Foodchange.org, themeatrix.com, supersize.com, cenyc.org

PUTTING A GREENER APPLE ON THE MAP

Wendy Brawer says she ate a paint box at four, and after that there was no stopping her creative drive: "I was always making things." Born in Detroit, she went to college in Seattle ("We composted, we went to the food co-op—it was just normal") then did a stint in Tokyo ("They use a third of the energy we do here") before settling in Manhattan where she decided to be a designer. But in the early 90s she had an epiphany: "I didn't want to make more garbage." Instead of adding to the heaps of well-designed but disposable products, she concocted a sort of perpetual, inedible paint box—a system for designing maps aimed at helping humans appreciate their local ecologies, which she called green maps. Why maps? Brawer says, "There's nothing like a map to provide a worldview and provide guidance." Plus, she says, "Maps encourage exploration—and I'm all for that."

The first Green Map, *Green Apple NYC*, was released in 1992, to wild acclaim. Brawer then convened designers from around the world to refine a set of icons and tools that could be used by speakers of any language—"We created the world's only universal symbol system for maps"—and in 1995 made the Green Map System available online. To date there have been 335 green map projects in 46 countries around the planet.

Here in New York City, Brawer and the Green Map team train teachers to use mapping as an extension of every variety of lesson. Some of her favorite homegrown, kid-created maps include the 2001 Brooklyn Recycle-a-Bicycle map of how to get around NYC without a car (including the Demand Man who has some strong words about respecting the rights of cyclists) and the 2003 North Harlem Sprout to Action! Map of greenmarkets and community supported agriculture sites.



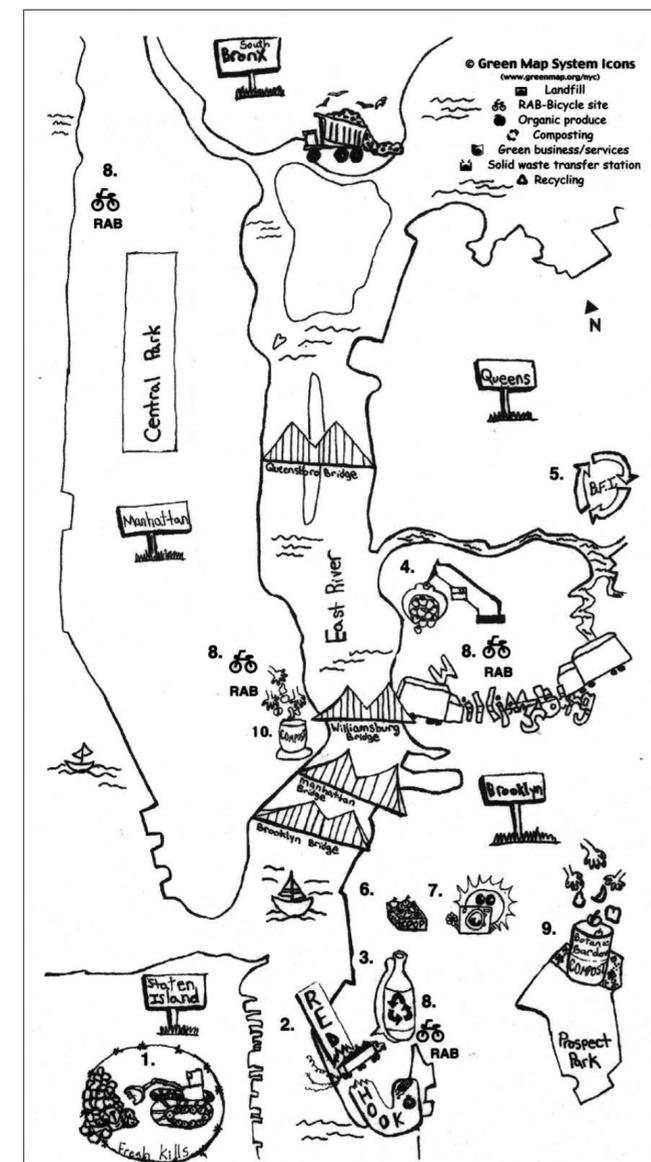
GREEN MAPS HQ HAS JUST RELEASED ITS FIFTH CITYWIDE MAP, POWERFUL GREEN MAP NYC. IT'S PACKED WITH INFORMATION ON ENERGY-SAVING EFFORTS AROUND TOWN AND GIVES A GLIMPSE OF WHAT



GLOBAL WARMING MAY DO TO THE CITY'S PROFILE. THE MAP IS ALSO STUDDED WITH EASY ENERGY-SAVING TIPS, SO WHEN YOU'RE NOT TREKKING TO

SUSTAINABLE LIVING SITES, YOU CAN BE SAVING MONEY (AND THE CITY). YOU CAN DOWNLOAD IT NOW AT GREENAPPLEMAP.ORG/PAGE/POWER.

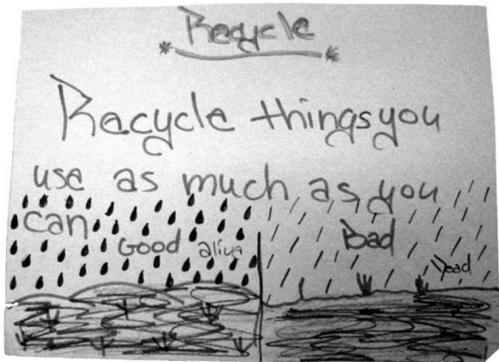
AND THIS: BRAWER RECOMMENDS A FREE OCEAN VOYAGE ON THE STATEN ISLAND FERRY. THE TERMINALS ON EITHER END ARE GREEN AND THERE'S NO EASIER, CHEAPER WAY TO RELISH NYC'S SALTWATER SETTING.



Left, *Are We Trashing the Apple* is by Recycle A Bicycle, 2000; *LoMap*, top, the lower Manhattan youth-authored Green Map, is by Green Map System, 2001 & 2004; below, the *Newtown Creek Green Map* is by the East River Apprentice Shop, 2003

WHAT IS NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION WEEK?

National Environmental Education (EE) Week, coordinated by the National Environmental Education & Training Foundation (NEETF) is the single largest organized environmental education event in U.S. history, involving thousands of educators and millions of students from hundreds of outstanding schools, environmental education organizations, education associations, state and federal agencies. For more information, visit www.eeweek.org.



WHAT IS GO WILD IN NEW YORK CITY NEWS?

Go Wild in New York City News is a production of the Urban Nature Media Workshop and the not-for-profit foundation Nurture New York's Nature, Inc. It is the latest offshoot of an effort to promote awareness of urban ecology that includes a book—*GO WILD IN NEW YORK CITY* (National Geographic Society 2005), a website—gowildnyc.org, and a collection of lesson plans created in conjunction with Teachers College which will be completed in the summer of 2006.

Nurture New York's Nature was founded in 2002 by Theodore W. Kheel with proceeds from an exclusive, world-wide, royalty-free license granted by the artists Christo and Jeanne-Claude for the Gates Project for Central Park. Additional support has been provided by Deutsche Bank, the law firm of Paul, Hastings, Janofsky & Walker, Verizon, and the Center for Environmental Research and Conservation. Nurture New York's Nature sponsors research, books, lectures, conferences, publicity campaigns and events, and encourages alliances among groups and organizations dedicated to resolving the conflicts between nature and development that arise in the urban environment. The Urban Nature Media Workshop is a production house dedicated to furthering that mission. For more information, visit nny.org.

Posters created by members of the Bronx School of Science Inquiry and Investigation's *Go Wild Science Club*.

MORE HOT LINKS FROM GOWILDNYC.ORG

Celebrate New York City's amazing water supply at the Department of Environmental Protection's site: nyc.gov/html/dep/html/celebrate.html. Don't miss the interactive feature on **City Water Tunnel Number 3**—it's buried, like the tunnel, but totally awesome (ditto).

For terrific information on the **Hudson River** and guidance on how to get involved with its preservation (let's just say spying may be involved) visit www.riverkeeper.org.

National Parks in New York City? Head to Jamaica Bay or Staten Island to enjoy them: www.nps.gov/gate/jbu/jbu_home.htm and www.nps.gov/gate/siu/siu_home.ht.

New York City's top source for **ozone** information, including online games and quizzes and a real time indicator of the city's current ozone is www.ozone.org.

The **South Street Seaport** has exhibits and education programs on, among other cool things, New York urban archaeology, involving unearthing the past in the dirt and rock beneath our feet: www.southstreetseaportmuseum.org.

The **NYC Parks Department's** Web site has online games, educational resources, great facts, lists of local events, info about tree plantings, info on tons of public programs for kids, a greenstreets map and a map of community gardens (you'll have to dig—but it will get you in the mood): www.nycgovparks.org.

New Yorkers for Parks' Web site includes information about what neigh-

borhoods are doing to protect and promote their parks: www.ny4p.org.

The **New York Botanical Garden** (www.nybg.org) and the **Brooklyn Botanic Garden** (www.bbg.org) have sites to help children learn about plants as well as listings of their many kid-pleasing programs.

TreesNY offers information about the urgent need for trees in NYC, as well as schedules for tree plantings and youth activities/courses: www.treesny.com.

Go dancing cheek to beak with the wildlife at **Alley Pond**, one of NYC's great nature sites. They offer dozens of classes for kids on every aspect of big city nature: www.alleypond.com.

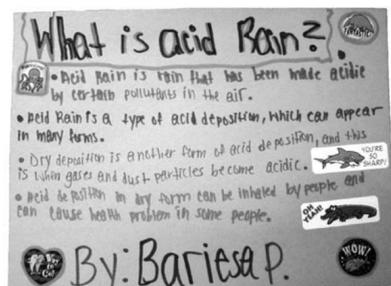
The **American Museum of Natural History** and its Hall of BioDiversity also has on-site programs, classes and clubs for city kids who want to learn more and more: www.amnh.org.

New York City's **Audubon Web** site devoted to the birds of NYC and where to find them TODAY is at www.nycas.org.

If you are really into the idea of city science, go immediately to the **New York Academy of Sciences** (www.nyas.org) and sign up for their Science & the City listings. The world's top scientists are speaking around town—and you can get a front-row seat.

Want to find out more about environmental justice efforts? The **New York Environmental Justice Alliance** has a central listing: www.nyceja.org.

To learn about community supported



agriculture in New York City and find out about **farms here in town** (no kidding!) head to www.justfood.org.

When you're eating healthy, most of your garbage can be turned into rich soil with, for example, the help of some well-behaved **worms** (the perfect city pet). Here's an organization that works with several neighborhood groups to help New Yorkers get started turning scraps into "pay dirt": www.nyccompost.org.

And for home-grown advice on how to make less garbage, go to **NYC Wasteless** www.nyc.gov/html/nycwasteless/html/home/home.shtml.

PSST, **TEACHERS AND GUNG-HO PARENTS**: For a comprehensive list of New York City's environmental education resources, visit NYU's Wallerstein Collaborative for Urban Environmental Education online at education.nyu.edu/wallerstein and click on "Publications."

YO, **STUDENTS AND TEACHERS**: Tell the world about what you're doing to turn the Big Apple green. Send news of your latest New York nature-nurturing projects to info@gowildnyc.org and you'll be featured on the **Go Wild in New York City blog** (for starters).

TIMES SWAMP

ERIC W. SANDERSON, PH.D.
Associate Director, Landscape Ecology and Geographic Analysis Program

Sanderson is working with the Wildlife Conservation Society and Columbia University's Earth Institute—plus a lot of cool satellite and computer graphics technology—to create a map of Manhattan in 1609: "The main goal is to get New Yorkers to realize their heritage. You'll be able to see what your block would look like in 1609. We're hoping to build exhibits in the Bronx Zoo and the Central Park Zoo where you can type in your address and see what animals used to live in your area. We want to put markers around the city that mark where streams used to be, hills, etc. Nice ones with descriptions. Most of Times Square used to be a red maple swamp so there would be a marker there that describes what it used to be like and why it was important for wood ducks and otters."

HOT LINK: Learn more about the Mannhatta project, go to www.wcs.org/sw-high_tech_tools/landscapeecology/mannhatta.

BACK TO NATURE IN BROOKLYN



Photos © Christoph Winkler/VE



WHY GO WILD IN NYC? "Some friends from the Parks Department kind of nailed it for us: 'Face it the world is urban, they said. The world is totally connected. So you will not save the Amazon by being in the Amazon. You'll save it here, in NY, where the voters are.'" - David Rosane

IN-CLASS ADVOCATE FOR THE OUTDOORS



Although he would never say it, teacher PAUL BERIZZI of Bedford Stuyvesant's new Urban Assembly School for the Urban Environment is a big cheese in NYC environmentalist circles. He has been chief of environmental services for the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation, head of the Environmental Action Coalition, a member of New York City's Regional Open Space Advisory Committee and Administrator for Van Cortlandt and Pelham Bay Parks, among other posts. However, for the past few years, he has been trying a new tack to nurture New York's nature, working with kids as a New York City Teaching Fellow first in Red Hook and now in Bedford Stuyvesant. After years wrestling

with developers and bureaucracies in New York City, his philosophy has become, "Take it one class at a time." When not in class, Berizzi is crafting an environmental justice-based curriculum that will allow middle school students at his school to fulfill their math and English requirements while getting involved in, for example, the issue of urban outdoor air pollution.



Ashley Solomon at the Y-Explorers Afterschool Program, an experiential nature and science scholarship funded by the 92nd Street Y and developed by WildMetro (wildmetro.org).



Every weekend, CUNY College Now instructor DAVID ROSANE takes a host of Brooklyn-based Abraham Lincoln High School students, a handful of CUNY language immersion students and assorted curious adults into the wild. Given Rosane's background as an ornithologist working in the jungles of South America, one might assume that he drags his charges deep into the Adirondacks. But nothing more than a Metro Card is necessary to keep up with Rosane and his wife, the filmmaker Valerie Druguet, who captures the treks on video. Scooting from Van Cortlandt Park in the Bronx to Brooklyn's Jamaica Bay and every urban wilderness in between, Rosane says, "We teach that nature works by collaborating, through symbioses; that by recycling, nature grows outwards, is self-creating, self-pollinating"—and that New Yorkers can follow suit. "The real, good news," Rosane says, "is that as a species we can use our smarts to learn to live ecologically. Mostly because we already have, for hundreds of thousands of years. We'd just forgotten. Kids get this stuff, intuitively, quickly, with busloads of built-in empathy to boot."

HOT LINK: nny.org/videos/index.html