



PRESS ALERT

CELEBRATE THE HARLEM RIVER - October 15-20 Roberto Clemente State Park in the Bronx on the Harlem River

This year's **2012 Harlem River Festival** will be on the land and in the water. Plans include a week of events centering on the Bronx' own New York State Park: *Roberto Clemente State Park*, which has docks providing access onto the water.

- Students will paddle canoes on the river during the week. [The Wilderness Inquiry](#) programming will enable hundreds of school children to get into a large (and supervised) canoe to learn firsthand about the river.
- **Please Note:** A Press conference will be held on **Wednesday October 17th** at 3 pm at the Roberto Clemente State Park. Following questions and answers, the group of media, community representatives, agency and elected officials will board canoes for a trip up and down the river.
- An Environmental Conference will be held in the evening of **Wednesday, October 17th**. [The Bronx Council for Environmental Quality](#) invited representatives from the USGS, US EPA, NYS DEC and others to discuss **developing a Watershed Plan for the Harlem River**.
- On Saturday October 20, the community can join the "Party on the River". Come participate in the Flotilla Water Parade of big fire boats and human powered canoes and kayaks, led by [The Wilderness Inquiry](#). Cheer on your favorite borough during the Battle of the Boroughs Regatta where the borough presidents will race in crew shells with [Row NY](#) (from Manhattan) and [Harlem River Community Rowing](#) (from the Bronx). US Forest Service staff from the NYC Urban Field Station will organize an artistic and educational mural painting activity, as well as distributing copies of the Natural Inquirer and other informational materials. Rich Hallett, a Forest Service scientist at the NYC Urban Field Station, will organize a real life demonstration of getting trees from "stump to ship" by putting on a logrolling show in the Harlem River and then turning it over to the State University of New York – Cobleskill woodsmen team for a demonstration of wood cutting skills, using axes and cross-cut saws. Finally Rocking the Boat, a Bronx-based boatbuilding community group will demonstrate how the cut timber is used in boat building. The festivities will include food, music and live entertainment, bouncy castles, and interesting and informative booths and tables throughout the day.

"These events aim to be a celebration of the Harlem River Greenway," says Chauncy Young, Coordinator for the Harlem River Working Group. "When completed, the Greenway will include parks, bike and pedestrian paths and entirely new waterfront spaces for Bronx residents to enjoy. This will become the last interconnected link to the Putnam Trail, the South Bronx Greenway, the Randall's Island connector, the soon to be newly opened Highbridge and its connection to Manhattan, and the east-west Greenway through the large strips of parkland in the northern Bronx."

This is the third annual public event organized by the Harlem River Working Group (HRWG), a group of community organizations, governmental agencies and other commercial stakeholders, focused on improving environmental quality and access to and along the Harlem River -- from the Randall's Island to the Hudson River in Bronx County, New York City. Formed in 2009, we have met monthly to organize and develop goals to ensure that a green corridor is established along as much of the length of the Harlem as possible, with habitat buffer, bike and walking path greenways and river access points.

"It is important that people experience the wonder of the waterfront. Then they will fight for their right to have clean water and greater access in a linear greenway," stated Karen Argenti, BCEQ Board Member. "The sooner we get the Greenway connected, the more people will come to own the waterway, and the cleaner our water will be!"

Contacts:

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Participants (in formation): *Bike the Bronx, Bronx Children's Museum, Bronx Council for Environmental Quality, Bronx Health Reach, Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation, Con Edison, De La Salle Christian Brothers, Empire State Rowing Association, Friends of Brook Park, Friends of Sherman Creek, Friends of the Woods, Gaia Institute, Harlem River Community Rowing, Highbridge Community Life Center, Manhattan College, Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance, National Park Service (Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program), NYC Department of Parks and Recreation, NYC Partnerships for Parks, NYPD 46 Precinct Community Council, NYC Soil and Water Conservation District, NYS Office of Parks Recreation and Historic Preservation (Roberto Clemente State Park), Row NY, The Trust for Public Land, U.S. Forest Service, Wilderness Inquiry, Wildlife Conservation Society* check the web for updates