

# GROW OUR GRASSROOTS!

Saturday March 15, 2014

9:30AM-2:30PM

Location: New School

## About

On Earth Day 2007, the City made a pledge to create a greener environment through PlaNYC. City agencies accepted the challenge of implementing a series of ambitious initiatives to address climate change and resiliency. New Yorkers also heard this challenge and since then have taken the Plan and made it their own on their blocks, in their parks, and in their community gardens. Grow Our Grassroots aims to connect and empower New Yorkers who are transforming their neighborhoods through tree care, composting, community gardening, and park stewardship by connecting them with City resources. In this third annual summit, Grow Our Grassroots will build momentum for stewards and gardeners city-wide by providing technical information and skills, policy/community organizing education, and up-to-date information about accessing City agency resources and programs. We welcome attendees to network with fellow community members who are engaged in urban greening, while learning and sharing new skills. Together we are building a network of committed community organizers who are collectively working toward a greener, greater and more socially and environmentally resilient city.

Founded in February 2012, the first annual Grow Our Grassroots Summit worked to increase City agency transparency while connecting volunteers with resources and other organizers. This year our workshops and keynote address are focused around how to use research and data to support community needs and how greening projects help to define and improve civic engagement.

## Agenda

8:00 *Staff Check-in and Orientation*

8:30-9:15 Guest Presenters/Tabling set up

9:30 Registration

10:00 **Welcome Remarks**

The New School's Milano School of International Affairs, Management, and Urban Policy, Professor Alex Schwartz  
NYC Environmental Protection Project Manager for Green Infrastructure Partnerships, Mikelle Adgate  
NYC Parks First Deputy Commissioner, Liam Kavanagh

10:15 **Plenary**

Dana R. Fisher, Director of the Program for Society and the Environment and Associate Professor at the University of Maryland  
Topic: Connecting Environmentalism to Democracy through Environmental Stewardship

11:15 Break- walk to morning workshops

11:30 Morning Workshops

12:30 Tabling

1:30 Afternoon Workshops

2:30 Closing Remarks—Event Ends

## **Plenary Overview TISHMAN AUDITORIUM**

Title: Connecting Environmentalism to Democracy through Environmental Stewardship, Dana R. Fisher

Who participates in volunteer stewardship in urban areas? Are these types of activities related to other kinds of environmental and civic participation? What does it mean for democracy? This presentation will weave together the individual voices of volunteer stewards to discuss how their work is part of a wave of civic activity that is helping to improve the environment, as well as strengthening democracy in America.

## **Workshop Topics**

### MORNING SESSIONS (11:30-12:30)

#### **How Diverse is Our Urban Forest? ROOM 304**

Did you know NYC Parks plants over 150 types of trees along City streets? The presentation will give an overview of the current status of street trees diversity in NYC, as well as highlight Parks' tree planting diversity strategy. The presentation will also highlight how Parks' strategy has evolved after Hurricane Sandy. Finally, a brief overview of the five most common and five rarest street trees will be presented.

#### **Learning from Citizens to Improve Street Tree Programs ROOM 622**

This presentation will discuss research projects that studied citizen responses to new street trees planted in New York City by the Parks Department and informed programs and policies. One study looked at how some of the public reacted to MTNYC new street tree block planting through the analysis of correspondence received by NYC Parks Department. The other research project involves surveys sent to people who had requested and then received new street trees, and how these were improved over time. Both projects reflect a concern for the voices of citizens and customer service ethic present in the NYC Parks Department.

#### **Street Tree and Bioswale Care Workshop ROOM 617**

Parks and DEP will co-present about street trees and bioswales and the different ways you can get involved in caring for them. Parks will discuss some of the challenges that newly planted street trees face and how stakes and ties help support young street trees, allow for adequate root growth and help anchor roots in the soil. Find out how you can get your community involved in caring for street trees by properly removing stakes, maintaining and beautifying tree beds, and more. DEP will discuss green infrastructure projects such as right-of-way bioswales and stormwater greenstreets and how they collect and manage stormwater runoff from City streets and sidewalks. Green infrastructure typically features trees and plants and beautifies neighborhoods and improves air quality; all while reducing pollution into New York City's waterways. Learn about how green infrastructure functions and how to become a volunteer steward.

### AFTERNOON SESSIONS (1:30-2:30)

#### **Using Research at the Grassroots Level to Affect Change ROOM 304**

Residents who play an active role in the care, programming, and advocacy for their parks spaces become stronger community advocates when this passion is combined with data. Stewardship, as a form of civic participation, when combined with research empowers residents and enables them to advocate for more community resources. Learn more about various research tools that help to identify open space needs and how you as a community member can access existing data to build a case for advocacy. Further, we will share examples of how diverse community groups create data at the local level that have been successful at enhancing their park communities. We will share successful ways that you can organize around your local green spaces and gain access to community resources that will help make the case for better green spaces for all. Presented by New Yorkers for Parks and Partnerships for Parks.

#### **Community Organizing with Citizens Committee for New York City ROOM 617**

So you have an idea for a community project, now what? Learn how to bring neighbors together to work on issues that matter in your community. This workshop will teach the fundamentals of community organizing, including how to start your project and strategies for outreach. Presented by Citizens Committee for New York City.

#### **New York City Compost Project Panel: Resources, Educational Opportunities and More! ROOM 620**

Learn about the many resources the NYC Compost Project provides, including composting educational programs and compost distribution, and ask the composting experts all your pressing questions about composting in New York City! Panelists will include NYC Compost Project staff from Build It Green!NYC, the Queens Botanical Garden, and the Lower East Side Ecology Center. The New York City Compost Project is a program of the Department of Sanitation's Bureau of Waste Prevention, Reuse and Recycling.