

Jerome Park Conservancy

The Outdoor Urban Ecology Lab (OUEL)

What is it?

The Outdoor Urban Ecology Lab is one of two demonstration projects that the Jerome Park Conservancy is creating with the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation and the NYC Department of Environmental Protection. These projects are part of the 125-acre park being proposed for Jerome Park. The Ecology Lab is about one acre in size and will include planting beds, a pond, a greenhouse and cold frames – all for the study of urban ecology.

Who is it for?

The Outdoor Urban Ecology Lab is for the entire community:

Schools – teachers, students and staff

Residents – youth, families and senior citizens

Community groups – institutions and neighborhood organizations

How will it be used?

1. Schools (or community groups) will visit with classes for formal presentations, sign-guided field trips, or teacher-led field trips.
2. Teachers will be trained in urban ecology.
3. Students, teachers and community members will conduct research.
4. Experiments will be conducted in water ecology. Best management practices for improving water quality and natural purification methods will be demonstrated.
5. Native species will be grown for transplanting into parkland
6. Residents will help maintain garden plots during the summer (grandparent mentors).
7. Residents will have community gardens and will hold small group gatherings.

Where is it?

The Outdoor Urban Ecology Lab will be located in Harris Park Annex, which runs along Goulden Avenue. The demonstration project will be near the intersection of 205th Street, across the street from the Bronx High School of Science.

When will it be open?

The Outdoor Urban Ecology Lab will be open by appointment. Depending upon the availability of staff and funding, it could be open in all seasons, seven days a week, during daylight and dusk.

A groundbreaking ceremony was held on October 21, 1997 and the first seeds will be planted in the spring of 1998.

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The Outdoor Urban Ecology Lab - October 1997



The future scientists of P.S. 246 pose for a picture. The students of Class 3-2 were on a walking tour "Inside the Fence" of Jerome Park Reservoir on October 21, 1997. They joined the Jerome Park Conservancy in celebrating the groundbreaking for the Outdoor Urban Ecology Lab.

Groundbreaking for the Jerome Park Conservancy's Outdoor Urban Ecology Lab was held on October 21st at 11 am in Harris Park Annex, on Goulden Avenue just north of 205th Street in the Bronx. The one-acre Ecology Lab will include planting beds, a pond, a greenhouse and cold frames. The planting areas will be available to teachers, students and residents for "hands-on" study of urban ecology; the pond will exhibit natural methods of purifying water.

Two New York City Commissioners, Henry J. Stern, of Parks and Recreation, and Joel A. Miele, Sr., of Environmental Protection addressed the gathering of local residents and the principals, teachers and students of the surrounding schools. These include Lehman College, the Bronx High School of Science and DeWitt Clinton High School.

"Those of us who live and work around the Jerome Park Reservoir are excited about the possibilities for environmental education at this site," said Ricardo R. Fernandez, President of Lehman College and founding chairman of the Jerome Park Conservancy. "The new Urban Ecology Lab will be a wonderful resource for the more than 25,000 students who attend schools in this neighborhood."

The Ecology Lab is part of the Conservancy's plan for a 125-acre park in and around the Jerome Park Reservoir. On the day of the groundbreaking ceremony the "inside path" of the reservoir was open to the public from 11 am to 6 pm.

A grant from the Fund for the City of New York paid for the design of the Outdoor Urban Ecology Lab. And a recent award from the New York Times Foundation will enable the Conservancy to continue its park planning and environmental education.

Online at <http://members.aol.com/jeromepark/ouel.htm> - courtesy of the *Friends of Jerome Park Reservoir*. Reprinted for distribution June 19, 2008