

# 2025 NYC SUMMER INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

## PARKS & RECREATION-042

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### AGENCY DESCRIPTION

The New York City Department of Parks & Recreation manages 14 percent of the land in New York City with facilities ranging from playgrounds and large parks, to tranquil wooded areas and more than 14 miles of beaches. Parks serve as New Yorkers' backyards, as vital meeting areas for outdoor play and recreation – but also as an important tool in mitigating the effects of climate change, critical engines for economic growth and development.

NYC Parks' mission is to grow, maintain, and program a world-class park system prioritizing equity, access, safety, and nature.

Highlights of Parks' work over the last year include:

- Launching the Vital Parks for All plan, an initial investment of over \$3.2 billion across ten strategic initiatives to expand greenspace access, promote public safety, and engage New Yorkers in the stewardship of their local parks. Vital Parks for All delivers a plan to restore aging park facilities, bring new park resources where they are needed most, and empower New Yorkers with the data they need to advocate for their public greenspaces. This included the creation of the Vital Parks Explorer, a digital map that provides New Yorkers with data on park conditions to help them advocate for strategic investments and show how their parks compare to other communities across NYC.

- Joining Mayor Adams to launch “Let’s Swim NYC,” a more than \$1 billion capital investment in building, improving, and protecting New York City’s public pools over the course of five years. This funding marks the city’s highest investment in swimming infrastructure since the 1970s and includes two brand-new pools.

- Keeping New Yorkers healthy in the face of extreme heat by planting nearly 18,000 new trees, our highest tree planting total in the past six fiscal years — with a special focus on neighborhoods impacted by high heat vulnerability.

- Deploying additional “second shift” maintenance services to approximately 100 hot spots throughout the five boroughs, giving extra cleaning attention to the sites that most needed it. We also unveiled special trash receptacles designed specifically for pizza boxes, giving New Yorkers a place to dispose of their bulky boxes while limiting the food available to rodents.

- Helping visitors enjoy our greenspaces more comfortably by installing new baby changing tables in over 1,200 restrooms citywide, while also launching an ambitious initiative to build 46 new restrooms and renovate 36 existing restrooms throughout the five boroughs.

The work of our staff goes far beyond the maintenance of New York City’s nearly 30,000 acres and more than 2.5 million trees. Parks is the City’s leading programmer of cultural, athletic, and social activities, including nature walks, volunteer programs, sports clinics, historic house tours, and much more. In addition, Parks produces special events, concerts and movie premieres, and manages agreements with more than 300 businesses that operate on public parkland.

### UNIT DESCRIPTION

NYC Parks Natural Areas Management and its Citywide Trails team are a part of the Natural Resources Group (NRG), which sits within the Environment and Planning Division of NYC Parks. NRG’s mission is to protect, restore, expand and manage New York City’s natural spaces and green infrastructure to maximize their benefits to both ecological function and quality of life. The division is responsible for planning, citywide urban forestry, ecological and horticulture initiatives. Our core values are: Champion Urban Nature, Apply Science and Embrace Innovation, Be Respectful and Inclusive, and Advance an Ecological Legacy.

The Citywide Trails Program at NYC Parks began in 2013, completing a citywide inventory of trails in natural areas parkland in 2016. Parks then partnered with the Natural Areas Conservancy (NAC) in a public-private partnership to formalize and improve trails citywide. As most inventoried trails were unmarked and difficult to navigate, the Citywide Trails Program staff began a trail formalization process in 2016 that includes park managers, community outreach and volunteers to create marked official trail networks and digitized web maps to improve public access. Official trail network maps for 48 parks have been created and uploaded to the NYC Parks website [Hiking in NYC Parks : NYC Parks](#) for public use. There are three facets of the Citywide Trails Program: trail formalization, trail improvements, and volunteer engagement.

Trail Formalization: Trail management involves a variety of tasks. The first is a planning exercise in creating the formalized trail network and accurate trail maps for each park using ArcGIS. This is useful to Parks for a host of reasons:

- Formalizing official trails with navigational and structural improvements allows for increased visitor access to these areas. Online maps provide a more seamless interface for the public to interact with natural areas. With multiple features presented through a clearly defined cartography, New Yorkers will be able to choose the best experience for their day in the park.
- For natural areas management, the creation and availability of official trail network maps will encourage positive visitor use (e.g. hiking, bird watching), discourage negative park uses (e.g. fires, ATV use), and improve the ecological health of the natural area.
- For operations, maps with labelled trails can improve the routing and efficiency of crews and increase the speed of emergency response.

Trail Improvements: Once the trail networks for each park are formalized by NYC Parks staff and relevant stakeholders, trail improvement projects can proceed.

- NYC Parks' small Trails Crew of 2-3 staff work daily on improvement projects citywide. Parks collaborates with NAC staff on project design and implementation as per the Strategic Trails Plan developed and published in 2021. [Strategic Trails Plan](#)
- These projects include trail marker installation, erosion control structure installation, corridor clearing, & invasive removals along the trail.
- Additionally, the crew works to close unwanted trails using forest restoration techniques of decompaction, seeding and planting of native vegetation.

Volunteer engagement:

- NRG has helped increase volunteer engagement in NYC through the creation of the Super Steward program. The program trains volunteers to independently care for forests, wetlands, or street trees across the five boroughs. In 2019, we partnered with NAC to create Trail Maintainers, a type of Super Steward that focuses exclusively on trails.
- Currently, there are over eighty trail maintainers enrolled across the five boroughs, and they have adopted 100 miles of trail. We eventually want to have every mile of formal trail adopted by a trail maintainer or local stewardship group.
- NYC Parks and the Natural Areas Conservancy also host volunteer trail improvement events that are open to the public.

## POSITION TITLE

Trail Management Intern

## INTERNSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES

The Citywide Trails team intern (1 position) will support the management of the trails GIS database, increase the capacity of the team to collect trails related data in natural areas of NYC Parks, and will engage in fieldwork to implement trail improvement projects. The intern will have the opportunity to build upon their basic knowledge of ArcGIS Pro while learning about NRG's trails GIS database and how it is used to document and manage natural area trails in NYC Parks citywide. The intern will also learn how to collect data using Field Maps and to implement trail improvement projects on the ground.

- **GIS trails data management (Approx 2 days per week).** In ArcGIS Pro software, the intern will:
  - Edit and perform quality assurance, filling in missing data, using GIS tools to improve trails data layers.
  - Assist in creating draft maps of trail networks for sharing with partners for planning trail projects.
- **Mapping trails and trail management concerns (Approx 1 day per week).** Working outside in natural areas, the intern will

Use ESRI Field Maps application to collect point data and line data for NRG's trails database. Data collected will document trails networks, as well as management concerns such as erosion issues, trail structures that have been installed and archival trail features such as scenic points and trail signs.

- **Trail improvement techniques fieldwork/ training (Approx 1 day per week).** Outside in natural areas and with the Citywide Trails crew, the intern will:
  - Implement trail improvement projects that mitigate erosion concerns and will help to clear trail corridors. Specific skills learned will include construction of trail structures, proper tree pruning techniques, plant ID including native and invasive plants in NYC, as well as how to close undesirable social trails.

## QUALIFICATIONS/SPECIAL SKILLS/AREAS OF INTEREST

- At least one semester of coursework completed in ArcGIS, preferably using ArcGIS Pro
- Interest in working outdoors, sometimes in adverse conditions (e.g., heat, muddy, or wet conditions)
- Ability to work independently
- Willingness to work with others, including other interns and staff across a wide range of expertise
- Proficient with Microsoft Office
- Interest and/or coursework in biology, forestry or other related fields

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This is a 4-5 day/week position from June to August. Start and end dates are flexible. Please describe your availability in these months in your cover letter. There may be additional opportunities to engage with other teams at NRG and the Environment & Planning division as per the intern's interest, as well as weekend opportunities to assist with volunteer engagement in natural areas.

## APPLICATION PROCESS

Please email cover letter and resume to [Leslie.Nusblatt@parks.nyc.gov](mailto:Leslie.Nusblatt@parks.nyc.gov)

[nyc.gov/internships](http://nyc.gov/internships)