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**NEW YORK RESTORATION PROJECT AND DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION TRANSFORM BROOKLYN COMMUNITY GARDEN INTO NEIGHBORHOOD OASIS THAT HELPS TO IMPROVE THE HEALTH OF THE GOWANUS CANAL**

*Green infrastructure at NYRP's Gil Hodges Community Garden will absorb 150,000 gallons of stormwater each year, ease pressure on the City's sewer system, and reduce pollution in the Gowanus Canal*

New York Restoration Project (NYRP) recently completed the renovation of its Gil Hodges Community Garden in Brooklyn's Gowanus neighborhood, thanks to support from Jo Malone London and a New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Green Infrastructure Grant. The transformation turns the space into the first NYRP community garden with high-performance storm water infrastructure. The 3,140-square-foot garden is located at the flood-prone intersection of Carroll Street and Denton Place, just a few blocks from the Gowanus Canal. NYRP resolved to address the immediate hydrological needs of the neighborhood by retrofitting the garden with permeable pavers, flood-tolerant plants, and a rain garden. NYRP also installed a DEP-designed bioswale, or curbside rain garden, in the sidewalk adjacent to the garden that manages stormwater runoff from Denton Place and the sidewalk. In total, these components will manage 150,000 gallons of stormwater annually, thereby easing pressure on the City's sewer system and reducing overflows into the Gowanus Canal.

"Renovation of the Gil Hodges Community Garden showcases a powerful public-private partnership between NYRP, Jo Malone London, and the NYC Department of Environmental Protection," said Amy Freitag, NYRP Executive Director. "Each partner is committed to building a vital community space that will reduce pollution, increase biodiversity and protect water quality."

"By managing stormwater where it falls, and keeping it out of the combined sewer system, the Gil Hodges Community Garden will reduce overflows and contribute to a healthier and cleaner Gowanus Canal," said DEP Commissioner Carter Strickland. "We are pleased to partner with NYRP on the renovation of the garden that will serve as a beautiful community amenity and help to increase awareness about environmental stewardship."

The design in and around the garden incorporates new elements that naturally absorb and filter rain water. On Denton Place, the DEP-designed bioswale diverts and reuses nearly 65,000 gallons of stormwater annually. Bioswales resemble standard street tree pits but they are significantly larger and have curb cuts that allow stormwater to enter and exit. During construction they are excavated to a depth of five feet and are backfilled with layers of broken stone and engineered soil. These layers contain void spaces which store stormwater and promote infiltration. The addition of a tree and hardy plants further encourages infiltration through root

growth and increases the capacity of the bioswale through evapotranspiration. Monitoring equipment has also been installed in the bioswale that will record data for three years and be analyzed by the City College of New York. This data will supply helpful information about how the bioswale performs over time. To view a video of a bioswale absorbing stormwater go [here](#).

A rain garden and permeable pavers will manage the nearly 85,000 gallons of stormwater that falls on the garden each year, making it a model for outdoor urban architecture and landscape design. In addition, the garden plays a crucial role as a public community asset that cultivates social resilience. Community members will be able to enjoy the garden's new fragrance walk, inspired by Jo Malone London, featuring lush, textural and aromatic plants, including sweetbay magnolia, ruby spice summersweet, orange azalea and mountainmint. A birch reading grove and patio provide quiet getaways for passive recreation. The garden also has an outdoor classroom area complete with blackboard, and a composting station and raised vegetable beds. Together, these garden features make Gil Hodges a beautiful retreat for all ages and seasons.

"Gardens are the heart of communities all over the world and represent a major source of inspiration for Jo Malone London," says Maureen Case, President of Jo Malone London and Bobbi Brown Cosmetics, The Estee Lauder Companies. "We are thrilled to partner with NYRP and continue our mission of supporting charities that bring beauty – and enhanced environmental health – to urban spaces. We hope the Brooklyn garden renovation will inspire other neighborhood green spaces."

The garden was designed by Yvi McEvelly, NYRP's Director of Design, and Stantec Consulting Inc., with help from EDesign Dynamics and Patrick Cullina, former High Line VP of Horticulture and Park Operations, and consulting from George Smith of The City College of New York. One of 52 community gardens owned and managed by NYRP throughout the city, the Gil Hodges Community Garden is located at 534 Carroll Street in Brooklyn, New York.

Like many older cities in the United States, New York City is largely serviced by a combined sewer system where stormwater that falls on pavement, rooftops, and other impervious surfaces, and wastewater from homes and businesses, are carried through a single sewer pipe to treatment plants. During heavy rainfall, the capacity of the sewer system can be overwhelmed and, to avoid back-ups into homes and businesses, a combination of stormwater and wastewater – called a combined sewer overflow (CSO) – can be discharged into local waterways. Since 2002, DEP has invested more than \$10 billion in upgrades to wastewater treatment plants and related efforts to reduce CSOs and today New York Harbor is cleaner and healthier than it has been in more than a century. However, CSOs remain the city's top harbor water quality challenge.

In 2010, the City launched the Green Infrastructure Plan, an alternative approach to reducing CSOs and improving water quality that combines traditional infrastructure upgrades with cost effective green infrastructure installations that capture and retain stormwater runoff before it ever enters the sewer system. Over the next 20 years, DEP is planning for \$2.4 billion in public and private funding for targeted green infrastructure installations, as well as an estimated \$2.9 billion in cost-effective grey infrastructure upgrades, to significantly reduce CSOs.

The Grant Program is one part of DEP's Green Infrastructure strategy and NYRP is one of 29 different projects that DEP has committed funding to since the launch of the program in 2011. In total, DEP has committed over \$11.5 million to its Grant Program partners who, in

turn, have contributed \$5.6 million in matching funds. Preference for grants is given to proposals that provide cost-effective stormwater controls, matching funds or other contributions, and ancillary benefits such as increased shade, decreased energy use for cooling buildings, increased awareness about stormwater management, and increased community stewardship.

Founded by Bette Midler in 1995, New York Restoration Project (NYRP) is a non-profit organization dedicated to transforming open space in under-resourced communities to create a greener, more sustainable New York City. Unlike traditional conservancies that care for a specific place, NYRP is the only New York City conservancy that works citywide, bringing private resources to spaces that lack adequate municipal support. NYRP is also the leading private partner of the City of New York in MillionTreesNYC – an initiative to plant and care for one million new trees throughout New York City’s five boroughs. To learn more, please visit [www.nyrp.org](http://www.nyrp.org).

DEP manages New York City’s water supply, providing more than one billion gallons of water each day to more than nine million residents, including eight million in New York City. The water is delivered from a watershed that extends more than 125 miles from the city, comprising 19 reservoirs and three controlled lakes. Approximately 7,000 miles of water mains, tunnels and aqueducts bring water to homes and businesses throughout the five boroughs, and 7,500 miles of sewer lines and 96 pump stations take wastewater to 14 in-city treatment plants. DEP has nearly 6,000 employees, including almost 1,000 in the upstate watershed. In addition, DEP has a robust capital program, with a planned \$14 billion in investments over the next 10 years that will create up to 3,000 construction-related jobs per year. This capital program is responsible for critical projects like City Water Tunnel No. 3 and the city’s Watershed Protection Program, which protects sensitive lands upstate near the city’s reservoirs in order to maintain their high water quality. For more information, visit [nyc.gov/dep](http://nyc.gov/dep).

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