

NYC Parks



The New York City Department of Parks & Recreation, also known as NYC Parks, is the steward of more than 30,000 acres of land — 14 percent of New York City — including more than 5,000 individual properties ranging from Coney Island Beach and Central Park to community gardens and Greenstreets. We operate more than 800 athletic fields and nearly 1,000 playgrounds, 1,800 basketball courts, 550 tennis courts, 65 public pools, 51 recreational facilities, 15 nature centers, 14 golf courses, and 14 miles of beaches. We care for 1,200 monuments and 23 historic house museums. We look after 600,000 street trees, and two million more in parks. We are New York City's principal providers of recreational and athletic facilities and programs. We are home to free concerts, world-class sports events, and cultural festivals.

The department is a mayoral agency, headed by a commissioner who reports to the Deputy Mayor for Housing and Economic Development.[4] The current Parks Commissioner is Susan Donoghue, who was appointed on February 4, 2022.[5] The current chair of the New York City Council Committee on Parks & Recreation is Shekar Krishnan.[6]

The department is allocated an expense budget and a capital budget. The expense budget covers the total expenses incurred by the agency, including salaries. The capital budget is dedicated solely for new construction projects, as well as major repairs in parks that have a useful life of more than five years and cost at least \$35,000.

Its regulations are compiled in Title 56 of the New York City Rules.[7]

NYC Parks produces many special events, including concerts and movie premieres. In the summer, the busiest season, the agency organizes free carnivals and concerts, and sends mobile recreation vans to travel throughout the five boroughs providing free rental equipment for skating, baseball, and miniature golf.

The symbol of the department is a cross between the leaf of the London plane and a maple leaf. It is prominently featured on signs and buildings in public parks across the city.



History

The original Parks Commission was formed in 1856 and was responsible only for Central Park. In 1870 the Tweed Charter gave it jurisdiction for all the parks in Manhattan. In addition each borough had its independent Park Commission. A unified citywide New York City Parks Department was formed in 1934 with Robert Moses as the commissioner, a position he held until 1960. In 1968 it was reorganized as the "Parks, Recreation & Cultural Affairs Administration. In 1976 it was given its current name.[8]

In 2001, the department underwent an investigation after the U.S. Attorney's Office received complaints from employees that they had suffered employment discrimination. The lawsuit alleged that NYC Parks violated the Civil Rights Act of 1964; according to the complaint, the NYC Parks' senior managers sought out and promoted whites to management positions without announcing job openings for those positions or conducting any formal interview processes. The complaint also said that since at least 1995, minorities have been significantly under-represented in NYC Parks' managerial ranks. In 2008, the City of New York agreed to pay a \$21 million settlement to avoid going to trial.[9]

It now has an Assistant Commissioner for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging and is an Equal Opportunity Employer.