



EMBARGOED UNTIL MAY 23, 12 PM

Fairmount Park Conservancy Receives \$10 Million Grant for FDR Park Ecological Transformation

PHILADELPHIA - Today, the Fairmount Park Conservancy announced a \$10 million grant from the William Penn Foundation to implement the transformation of Philadelphia's iconic FDR Park. The new funding will support the continued implementation of the [FDR Park Plan](#), a once-in-a-generation opportunity to build a sustainable future for this historic Olmsted Park to serve the recreational and environmental needs of a 21st-century Philadelphia.

The FDR Park Plan, first released in 2019, responds to the challenges posed by climate change and the overwhelming unmet need to balance active and passive recreation space in South Philadelphia. The Conservancy is the nonprofit partner leading implementation of the FDR Park Plan. With the support of this grant, the Conservancy will be well positioned to complete the Nature Phase of the FDR Park Plan, including Shedbrook Creek, the Sedge Meadow Wetland, Wildflower Meadow, and the Forested Wetland.

"The Conservancy is committed to delivering the community's vision to build a future-proof, flood-resistant FDR Park that serves the needs of South Philadelphia youth and families," **said Maura McCarthy, Ph.D., CEO of Fairmount Park Conservancy.** "In collaboration with community leaders, volunteers, and a network of partners who use this park every day, we're committed to realizing FDR's long-term ecological and recreational value. FDR Park must remain equitable and accessible for all who use it, so that every stakeholder — from youth sports leagues to hikers and naturalists to vendors at the Southeast Asian Market — can benefit from the park's hundreds of acres of green space and natural assets."

"FDR Park has been a place to gather and experience nature and recreation for over 100 years, but because of ecological and environmental issues, sections of the park become unusable even after a modest or mild storm," **explained Shawn McCaney, Executive Director of the William Penn Foundation.** "WPF's \$10 million investment in FDR Park's natural areas will help mitigate these issues by establishing 100 acres of accessible natural lands that community members can utilize and enjoy for years to come."

The William Penn Foundation's \$10 million grant was leveraged with public and private investment and community support, and brings the [FDR Park Plan](#)'s fundraising total to \$100 million. Through 2026, priority projects at FDR Park will include:

- Completing the design and engineering work of the Nature Phase of the FDR Park Plan.

- Restoration of Shedbrook Creek, the Forested Wetland, and the Sedge Meadow Wetland, a project that will establish unfragmented high-quality wetlands, and restore thousands of linear feet of streams.
- Continued community engagement and public information updates about the FDR Park Plan.
- Expanding the quality and quantity of environmental education programming available to the public at FDR Park.
- Hiring a Parkforce Manager responsible for connecting the vast maintenance requirements of a large urban park with existing workforce development opportunities.
- Establishing an operations and maintenance headquarters on-site.
- Developing an annual park maintenance program to provide critical support for the improvements implemented through the FDR Park Plan.

“Thanks to this tremendous commitment of support from the William Penn Foundation, FDR Park will be able to serve so many more Philadelphians for many years into the future,” **said Philadelphia Parks & Recreation Commissioner Kathryn Ott Lovell**. “FDR Park is a jewel of the Philadelphia parks system, and thanks to the vision put forward through this community-based planning process, FDR is poised to be a model for environmental restoration that is well used and well loved by a diverse cross section of Philadelphians.”

Fairmount Park Conservancy hosts hikes, kayak tours, volunteer opportunities, scavenger hunts and more year-round at FDR Park. For a list of events at FDR, visit: <https://myphillypark.org/events-calendar/category/fdr-park>.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt Park (FDR Park) is Philadelphia’s iconic 348-acre park carved out of the tidal marshes in South Philadelphia. Designed by the Olmsted Brothers in 1914, FDR Park’s sequence of picturesque lakes with adjacent lawns are connected by a network of carriage and foot paths. In 1926, the park hosted the national Sesquicentennial Exhibition and several grand civic buildings, including the iconic Boathouse, opened for the first time. Today, FDR Park hosts a playground, 4 baseball diamonds, a renowned skate park, a network of lakes, the Swedish American Museum, and 126 acres of woodland. In 2019, after engaging with nearly 3,000 community members and stakeholders, Philadelphia Parks & Recreation and the Fairmount Park Conservancy published a park plan to reimagine a historic Olmsted Park to serve 21st-century Philadelphians. The plan, designed by WRT, creates an ecologically sustainable vision for FDR Park that inspires investment, meets the needs of all users today and tomorrow, and focuses on resiliency in the face of a changing climate. Read more at: myphillypark.org/fdrplan.

Fairmount Park Conservancy brings parks to life. We work with the City of Philadelphia and its communities to steward our parks and nurture our shared environment, cultural resources, and public health. We lead capital projects and historic preservation efforts, foster neighborhood park stewardship, attract and leverage investments, and develop innovative programs throughout the 10,200 acres that include Fairmount Park, six other watershed parks and more than 130 neighborhood parks and gardens around the city. For more information, please visit myphillypark.org, and follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter @myphillypark.

Philadelphia Parks & Recreation (PPR) advances the prosperity of the city and the progress of its people through stewardship of nearly 10,200 acres of public land and waterways, and management of 500 recreation buildings, 166 miles of trail, and 250 playgrounds. PPR offers safe, enjoyable recreation, environmental, and cultural programs and events throughout Philadelphia's parks and recreation system. PPR promotes the well-being and growth of the city's residents by connecting them to the natural world, to each other and to fun, physical and social opportunities. In 2017, Philadelphia Parks & Recreation Commissioner Kathryn Ott Lovell set about implementing the park system's first strategic plan: Our Path to 2020 and Beyond. As a result, PPR is undertaking a period of historic change, setting the department on a course to become a modern, equitable and exceptional parks and recreation system. Visit us at www.phila.gov/parksandrec, and follow @philaparkandrec on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram.

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