

## Urban Field Station Artist Residency: Collaborative arts for the urban environment 2020 Call for Artists

[The Urban Field Station Artist Residency program](#) is a residency<sup>1</sup> created by the [USDA Forest Service](#), [NYC Parks](#), and [The Nature of Cities](#). Selected artists engage with land managers and researchers to better understand, represent, and communicate about urban social-ecological systems through works of art and imagination. Applications are due on September 15, 2020 and residencies will begin November 2020.

The program's mission is to promote understanding of and engagement with urban ecology through art. The Urban Field Station Network understands cities as social-ecological systems, and this year's call for artists focuses on the theme of *connectivity*.

Specifically, the Artist Residency Program seeks to build creative explorations of new knowledge by:

1. Facilitating creative and transdisciplinary collaboration between artists, scientists, and land managers in the creation of new artworks; and
2. Curating events and public engagements that explore ideas that emerge from creative works and collaborations resulting from the Residency. There are no limits to the types of artistic approaches.

We are attracted to artists interested in creating work of collaborative imagination about urban environments, and investigations of new knowledge that may emerge from the frontiers where art, science, and practice meet. With these residencies we desire to support artists in a process of co-creation with land managers and scientists, which we recognize may not result in the production of new work immediately during the residency. While the creation of new work is welcome, it is not a requirement.

In the fourth year of this Artist Residency, we are updating and expanding our program in several ways. In 2020, our Artist Residency Program will focus on curating creative relationships between artists and teams of scientists and land management practitioners, through a pairing process further described below. We will be selecting up to three artists whose residencies will begin virtually and evolve as Covid-19 permits. In addition to the New York City Urban Field Station (where this program began), we have added two other potential Agency Teams in Baltimore and Hawaii with which artists may propose to collaborate. This year, we have updated our program to better address diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout the process. For more information, consult our [diversity, equity and inclusion fact sheet](#).

### Artists in Residence will each receive:

- An honorarium of \$3,000
- Support from the Urban Field Station team
- Featured content on [The Nature of Cities](#) website
- Pairing with an agency team member, self-selected by the artist from the provided list of Participating Agency Teams (see [appendix](#) for descriptions), who will bring artists “under the hood” of their team's work

<sup>1</sup> In 2020 – 2021, the residency will be virtual and evolve as Covid-19 safety permits



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## Artists in Residence are expected to, over the course of one year:

- Work with an agency team through the artistic process, and meet with a point person from this team regularly as needed
- Check in periodically with Urban Field Station Artist Residency organizers to facilitate the work
- Participate in one or more [Science of the Living City](#) events
- Create a piece of virtual content (essay, photo series, blog, etc., as suits the ideas) for The Nature of Cities exploring the ideas embedded in the artistic work and how they are supported by collaboration with non-artists. This content can be authored in collaboration with Agency Teams.
- Participate in a joint exhibition of work with other resident artists. Works shown may be from any period in the artist's career that relate the key ideas explored in the residency. (Additional resources for the production of the exhibit may be provided, as necessary)

## Priority will be given to projects that:

- Demonstrate artistic merit
- Align with the Urban Field Station goal, which is to create new knowledge and perspectives about urban social-ecological systems and natural resources management
- Reveal new possibilities for collaboration between artists, scientists, and land managers
- Support our diversity goals; see [diversity, equity, and inclusion fact sheet](#)
- Propose an innovative perspective on *connectivity*

## Eligibility

- We invite artists from any discipline.
- We invite applicants from anywhere in the world.
- Applicants must be 18 years of age or older.

## TO APPLY

Submit a complete application package *as a single combined pdf* to [NYCUFSArts@parks.nyc.gov](mailto:NYCUFSArts@parks.nyc.gov) with the subject line "UFS Artist Residency Application" by September 15, 2020.

A complete application package includes:

1. [2020 Application Form](#)
2. **Letter of interest** with a statement that describes your proposed topic or approach during your time in the residency, what attracts you to a collaborative residency like this, and what guided your selection of Participating Agency Teams – 2 page limit
3. **Examples of previous work**, labeled and succinctly described, in a format that suits the artistic work (e.g. up to 5 images, up to 5 pages of text, or a link to up to 5 minutes of audio/ video)
4. **Three references** of people familiar with your work, with phone and email address listed
5. **Resume or CV**

Any questions should be directed to [NYCUFSArts@parks.nyc.gov](mailto:NYCUFSArts@parks.nyc.gov).



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## Background

Urban Field Stations exist as a network of sites supported by the USDA Forest Service in collaboration with municipal, state, nonprofit, and academic partners across the United States. The NYC Urban Field Station (NYC UFS) is a partnership between researchers and land managers at the USDA Forest Service, New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (NYC Parks), and the Natural Areas Conservancy (NAC). The mission of the NYC UFS is *to improve quality of life in urban areas by conducting, communicating, and supporting research about social-ecological systems and natural resource management.*

The Urban Field Station Network is interested in bringing new perspectives, unique planning and design ideas, and creative problem solving from the arts and humanities to advance our collective understanding and management of social-ecological systems in New York City and beyond. The Artist in Residence program has been in place for three years at the NYC UFS, and in 2020 the program is expanding to two other urban locations through our collaborative networks: Baltimore and Hawaii (see Participating Agency Teams below). Artists in Residence will have the opportunity to participate in and gain exposure to the research and management processes currently underway at Urban Field Stations through our partners, including other USDA Forest Service field station locations and selected agency teams. All interested applicants are encouraged to explore the current work underway at the NYC UFS via the [website](#) and by reviewing the descriptions from the Participating Agency Teams in the [appendix](#) in order to develop a proposal that resonates with and takes advantage of the expertise of the Urban Field Station partners.

Two to three selected artists will be institutionally affiliated with the Urban Field Station for a one-year residency from November 2020 to November 2021. All residents will be expected to develop a final product from their residency that is at minimum a public presentation or event, coordinated as part of the Science of the Living City program, but could be more depending upon the relationship and project being developed.

The NYC UFS has a residential and research facility based in Fort Totten Park in Bayside, Queens. Due to Covid-19, the facility is currently closed to visitors, but should it reopen artists may be eligible to use it as a live and/or work space. Over the past three years, the residential space has been used by over 100 individuals consisting of visiting professors, researchers, and students. These collaborators conduct research in and around New York City, from different disciplinary perspectives, including design, engineering, ecology, forestry, botany, hydrology, and the social sciences such as sociology, geography, psychology, and human ecology. When open, the space is available for short-term stays of a minimum of three days and long-term stays of up to three months, all free of charge.

**Theme:** This year's residency focuses on **connectivity**. We take a broad understanding of this concept; examples include, but are not limited to: human-nature connections, people-place relationships, physical access and green space connectivity, wildlife corridors and migrations, human migrations, social and organizational networks, virtual connectivity, wayfinding, and the transformation of connectivity amidst Covid-19 restrictions. The Urban Field Station engages with theme of connectivity in multiple ways, presenting diverse opportunities for artists in residence to get involved.



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**Participating Agency Teams:** The Urban Field Station engages with a number of teams across our core partners and locations. Below is a list of interested teams of scientists, practitioners, and land managers that artists may engage with through the course of their one-year virtual residency. Over the course of the residency, artists will be brought “under the hood” of the work of one of these teams, which may include going out in the field, having access to datasets or priority research/ management questions, or connecting with a broader network. Artists are asked to identify up to three teams with whom their work connects and what guided your selection of Participating Agency Teams. With summaries for each team provided in the [appendix](#) of this document, the list of Participating Agency Teams are :

- Baltimore Field Station - USDA Forest Service
- Central Horticulture - NYC Parks Forestry, Horticulture, and Natural Resources Division
- City Trees, Country Trees - Smart Forests, USDA Forest Service
- Conservation Team - NYC Parks Forestry, Horticulture, and Natural Resources Division
- Design and Construction - NYC Parks Forestry, Horticulture, and Natural Resources Division
- Forest Restoration Team - NYC Parks Forestry, Horticulture, and Natural Resources Division
- GreenThumb - NYC Parks
- Kaulunani, Hawaii’s Urban and Community Forestry Program
- Natural Areas Conservancy
- NYC Urban Field Station, STEW-MAP Team - USDA Forest Service
- Partnerships for Parks - NYC Parks
- Public Engagement Division - NYC Parks
- Stewardship Team - NYC Parks Forestry, Horticulture, and Natural Resources Division
- Tree Planting Team - NYC Parks Forestry, Horticulture, and Natural Resources Division
- Urban Park Rangers - NYC Parks
- Wetlands Team - NYC Parks Forestry, Horticulture, and Natural Resources Division
- Wildlife Unit - NYC Parks



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## APPENDIX

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### Summaries of Participating Agency Teams

#### **Baltimore Field Station - USDA Forest Service**

The [Baltimore Field Station](#) (BFS) is part of the [USDA Forest Service's Network of Urban Field Stations](#) and strives to improve the quality of life in Baltimore and surrounding communities, and to mitigate impacts on the Chesapeake Bay, through applied social-ecological research. In addition, BFS plays a significant role in the [Baltimore Ecosystem Study](#) (BES), which is a long-term ecological research (LTER) project of the National Science Foundation. Primary research and partnerships include understanding the ecological manifestations of racial segregation and environmental injustices to inform change toward a more equitable and just urban future; developing opportunities for urban wood re-use to serve as a driver for social, ecological, and economic transformation; and engaging with partner organizations to understand and improve the ecological functions, stewardship values, and public health benefits of forest patches in the community. Artists who prioritize working with the Baltimore Field Station may work with the team to explore a variety of these themes and then choose one or more, based on interest, to artistically unpack and express.

#### **Central Horticulture - NYC Parks Forestry, Horticulture and Natural Resources Division**

The role of Central Horticulture is to investigate and coordinate best management practices in urban horticulture and be the clearinghouse for IPM and other progressive horticultural methodologies. We train staff in the classroom and in the field. Our mission is to build lasting relationships between NYC Parks divisions and our partnering organizations across New York City, in keeping with our shared goals of creating and sustaining robust and vibrant horticulture and biodiversity in our city's parks.

#### **City Trees, Country Trees, Smart Forests - USDA Forest Service**

We are forest ecologists interested in exploring alternative ways to communicate our science and data from across the urban to rural continuum. Can data and art be made more accessible to the blind? How can we demonstrate the linkages between the green infrastructure in the city and the forests in the mountains? We work with sensor technology to bring data about trees and forests to the cloud in near real time through our [Smart Forest](#) initiative. An example of how we have collaborated to combine art and science can be found [here](#).

#### **Conservation Team - NYC Parks Forestry, Horticulture and Natural Resources Division**

The NYC Parks Conservation Team is a group of ecologists with expertise in different areas (e.g., conservation biology, wetland ecology, botany, wildlife biology, soil science). Their role is to guide and conduct monitoring and research to inform planning, protection, design & construction, maintenance, and adaptive management of natural resources in NYC. Their projects include monitoring rare species (e.g., mountain mint in Staten Island, seabeach amaranth in Queens); outcomes of forest, grassland, and wetland restoration; ecosystem services of trees and parkland in general in NYC; and more. There are a number of projects that speak directly to the theme of *connectivity*. For example, the reconstruction and raising of Travis Avenue in Staten Island, which bisects William T. Davis Refuge, will include ecopassages and culverts for wildlife, and the team will be studying changes in habitat connectivity for fish and diamondback terrapins in the Refuge. The Conservation Team also manages the research permits program, which connects external



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researchers and educators who are interested in conducting research on NYC Parks properties to NYC Parks staff.

### **Design and Construction - NYC Parks Forestry, Horticulture and Natural Resources Division**

Natural Resources Capital Design and Construction is a team of designers, foresters, project managers, and construction managers who translate Natural Areas Management goals for Parks' forests, wetlands, and waterways into capital-funded construction projects. We design and construct wetland, shoreline, riverine, and forest restoration projects, green infrastructure retrofits, and public access corridors within sensitive habitats and natural areas.

### **Forest Restoration Team - NYC Parks Forestry, Horticulture and Natural Resources Division**

The overarching goal of forest restoration is to manage NYC Parks' forested natural areas as an integrated landscape through the application and continuing development of best practices to conserve intact forests and manage those that are degraded and threatened. This work is guided by the Forest Management Framework for New York City, which is a 25-year plan that outlines the process, costs, steps, recommendations, best practices, and goals for forest management in NYC. The forest restoration team is composed of technical field staff, analytical support staff, and project managers. They are experts in forest ecology and invasive species management.

### **GreenThumb - NYC Parks**

Established in 1978, NYC Parks GreenThumb is proud to be the nation's largest urban gardening program, assisting over 550 community gardens and over 20,000 volunteer gardeners throughout New York City. GreenThumb gardens create hubs of neighborhood pride and provide a myriad of environmental, economic, and social benefits to the neighborhoods in which they thrive. GreenThumb's mission is to support community gardens and gardeners across the five boroughs, while preserving open space. By providing free garden materials, technical assistance, educational workshops, and seasonal programs, GreenThumb supports neighborhood volunteers who steward community gardens as active resources that strengthen communities.

### **Kaulunani, Hawaii's Urban & Community Forestry Program**

Aloha! The Hawaii Urban and Community Forestry Program, [Kaulunani](#) (Hawaiian for 'the beautiful growth'), and its [partners](#), are excited about the opportunity to engage with an Artist in Residence. Communities in Hawaii have rich traditions and practices based on a love of the land. In Hawaii and around the world, people regard natural resources as more than 'our environment'. They are cultural resources, reservoirs of resilience, keepers of stories, and family members. This is true across our islands and in both highly urbanized and rural settings. Artists might consider comparisons between islands (of NYC and Hawaii) or indigeneity in urban settings or connectivity in terms of ancestry or something else altogether that Hawaii inspires.

### **Natural Areas Conservancy**

The [Natural Areas Conservancy](#) (NAC) is the non-profit partner of the NYC UFS that works citywide to restore and conserve NYC Parks' 12,000 acres of forests and wetlands. Additionally, NYC Parks and the NAC run a trails program that will engage volunteers to repair trails, close off redundant, unpermitted, and ecologically harmful paths, and restore natural areas to make for safe recreation in local forests and wetlands. Through the artist program there is an opportunity to propose more interesting and inviting gateway installations at trailheads to welcome and entice park users from manicured sections of parks into natural areas trail systems.



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## **NYC Urban Field Station, STEW-MAP Team - USDA Forest Service**

The [Stewardship Mapping and Assessment Project](#) (STEW-MAP) is a national Forest Service research program that answers the question: who takes care of our environment? STEW-MAP surveys civic groups who work to conserve, manage, monitor, transform, educate on and/or advocate for the environment across a defined city, region, or landscape. It is both a study of a region's civic environmental stewardship resource and a publicly available online database and visualization tool that allow land managers, community organizations, non-profits, and the public to see where hundreds of environmental stewardship groups are working in a particular landscape of interest. This community organizing tool can be applied to strengthen capacity, promote engagement with on-the-ground projects, and build more effective partnerships among stakeholders. STEW-MAP was developed first in NYC and has since spread to a dozen different locations across the country and world. Artists would be invited to learn more about our methods, datasets, and collaborators by being embedded with our NYC-based team, who are also the global leads for the growing STEW-MAP network.

## **Partnerships for Parks - NYC Parks**

By developing occasional volunteers into community leaders, we build long-term investment in public space and strengthen the social fabric of our neighborhoods. Partnerships for Parks is a unique public-private partnership between City Parks Foundation and NYC Parks that supports and champions neighborhood volunteers by giving them the tools they need to advocate and care for their neighborhood parks and green spaces. We equip people, organizations and government with the skills and tools they need to transform these spaces into dynamic community assets.

## **Public Engagement Division - NYC Parks**

NYC Parks' Public Engagement division develops strategies and programs to increase communities' involvement in existing and new engagement efforts, park programming, and agency-wide initiatives to ensure that as many people as possible are actively involved in shaping their parks and communities. Engagement efforts include improving community visioning meetings and events, implementing placemaking initiatives, and working to enhance interagency collaboration. The Public Engagement Division also plays a role in shaping a citywide dialogue on the importance of parks and public space by elevating the role NYC Parks plays in creating a greener, more resilient, and more equitable New York City.

## **Stewardship Team - NYC Parks Forestry, Horticulture and Natural Resources Division**

The NYC Parks Stewardship Team works with volunteer stewards across the city to help with forest and wetland restoration, planting and pruning street trees, harvesting and propagating native seed and monitoring local wildlife. They host public events that bring together New Yorkers from every walk of life to get their hands dirty making the city better. The Stewardship Team also runs the Super Steward program, which provides training and resources for individuals to work independently to make an impact on their own.

## **Tree Planting Team - NYC Parks Forestry, Horticulture and Natural Resources Division**

The mission of the NYC Parks Tree Planting Team is to enhance the quality of life for New Yorkers and connect them to the environment by planting, maintaining, and protecting street trees throughout the five boroughs. We research and execute innovative arboriculture techniques to advance New York City as a leader of urban forestry. Our focus is planting street trees and trees within landscaped areas of parks (as opposed to natural or forested areas). We also install tree guards as a routine part of our work. Currently we are focused on the mayor's Cool



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Neighborhoods initiative, which aims to plant trees to mitigate the heat island effect in areas of the city deemed most vulnerable by the NYC Department of Health.

## **Urban Park Rangers - NYC Parks**

The Urban Park Rangers are New York City's premier environmental educators and interpreters. With staff across the city, the Rangers strive to connect New Yorkers to the natural world through environmental education, outdoor recreation, wildlife management and active conservation. The Rangers have programs that serve a wide variety of audiences and can be done in parks across the city. In addition to offering programs, Rangers also respond to animal conditions such as sick and injured wildlife or removing animals that don't belong. Finally, Rangers conduct patrol to enforce Parks rules and regulations.

## **Wetlands Team - NYC Parks Forestry, Horticulture and Natural Resources Division**

The NYC Parks Wetlands Team advances restoration and management goals to ensure NYC's wetlands are healthy and resilient by understanding the condition of and threats to our wetlands, establishing priorities, and implementing restoration projects with a suite of local and regional partners. We also provide guidance for best management to other agencies through development of guidelines and review of projects impacting parkland.

## **Wildlife Unit - NYC Parks**

The Wildlife Unit promotes coexistence between people and urban wildlife, and is an informed resource for citizens and policymakers. The unit serves as the ambassador for the diverse wildlife communities found within New York City. Through research, management, educational outreach, and policy recommendations, the unit seeks to create a future where urban wildlife are an understood and appreciated part of New York City. The Wildlife Unit is also very active in a multi-agency citywide campaign called WildlifeNYC. Visit [nyc.gov/wildlife](http://nyc.gov/wildlife) to learn more.

## **The Fine Print**

1. All rights to any artwork created by a resident artist (including copyright and intellectual property) are fully retained by the artist.
2. All intellectual property rights of the work of teams is held by the teams.
3. Submissions will not be considered if they (a) arrive after the deadline; (b) do not use the official format.
4. All fees and taxes that result from prize money and its transfer to a Resident is the responsibility of the Resident; this includes bank transfer fees.
5. The organizers reserve the right to award fewer or more Residencies than originally announced.
6. All decisions by the organizers concerning the administration and rules of the Residency, including the selection of Residents, are final.



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