

Coalition for the Daylighting of Tibbetts Brook

We, the undersigned, support the efforts of the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation (NYC Parks) to daylight Tibbetts Brook and create a greenway south of Van Cortlandt Park down to the Harlem River. We are thankful for all of the hard work and effort that NYC Parks has done to help make this a reality. The project would have tremendous economic, environmental, recreational and aesthetic benefits for the Bronx. Moreover, it would help connect neighborhoods that have been cut off from each other and from Van Cortlandt Park.

Currently, the water from Van Cortlandt Lake enters the Broadway sewer at a rate of 4 to 5 million gallons of water per day -- and that's on a dry day. This water is then treated - for no reason- at the Wards Island Stormwater Treatment Plant. Then when it does rain, the combination of sewage, street runoff and the brook enters the combined sewer, bypassing the treatment plant and flowing directly into the Harlem River. This one Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO), WI-056, connected to the Broadway sewer makes up more than half of the CSO water entering the Harlem River. This clean water needs to be removed from the sewer to reduce CSO occurrences on the Harlem River and help with flooding issues along Broadway and other areas of the Tibbetts Brook Watershed.

We support NYC Parks efforts to study and plan for daylighting within Van Cortlandt Park by enhancing and expanding the wetlands southwest of Van Cortlandt Lake, which will enable it to hold more water thus reducing the amount of water entering the sewer. However, this is a minor step in the right direction. In order to provide a potential route, and daylighting opportunity for Tibbetts Brook outside the Broadway sewer, NYC Parks needs to obtain the land that CSX owns between Van Cortlandt South and West 230th Street . We support any effort by the City to continue this path southward past 225th Street to a place along the Harlem River waterfront where Tibbetts Brook could flow directly into the Harlem River.

We ask that CSX be good stewards of the land. The company has not used this abandoned rail line in decades. It is less than a mile long and between 25 and 50 feet wide, has no independent development potential and is used for illegal dumping. NYC Parks has made a fair monetary offer to purchase the land and CSX should accept. Better still, the company should be encouraged to donate the land, which is what they did with their old rail line in Lower Manhattan that became the High Line. Why not donate land in the Bronx where it will have positive impact on fragile economy?

Daylighting Tibbetts Brook is a key project in the Van Cortlandt Park 2034 Master Plan. We are dedicated to helping make this dream become a reality and are actively planning for it.

Signed,

Friends of Van Cortlandt Park
Bronx Council for Environmental Quality
NYC H2O
Bronx Community Board 7
NYC Councilman Andrew Cohen
NYS Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz
Congressman Eliot Engel
Fort Independence Park Neighborhood Association
Kingsbridge Business Improvement District
NYC Councilman Mark Levine
NYS Senator Jeffrey Klein
The Natural Areas Conservancy
New Yorkers for Parks
Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition
Old Blue RFC
NYS Senator Gustavo Rivera
Riverkeeper, Inc.
S.W.I.M. Coalition
Trust for Public Land
Van Cortlandt Park Conservancy

**Visit www.vancortlandt.org to
sign onto a petition and show
your support or
reach out to Christina Taylor at
Christina@vancortlandt.org to
add your organization.**

Coalition Efforts Supported By:

Bronx Community Board 8 (see resolution on back)

Resolution
Bronx Community Board 8*
Environment and Sanitation Committee
March 16, 2016

Whereas, daylighting Tibbetts Brook, that is, bringing it back to the surface instead of burying it underground to flow through our sewer system, is a key project in the Van Cortlandt Park Master Plan endorsed by Community Board 8;

Whereas, a Coalition for the Daylighting of Tibbetts Brook, spearheaded by the Friends of Van Cortlandt Park, has begun an advocacy campaign and asks that Bronx Community Board 8 join with other community and environmental groups in support;

Whereas, according to the NYC Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), when there are heavy rains and the sewer system is at full capacity, a mixture of rainwater and raw sewage may overflow into local waterways as a combined sewer overflow (CSO);

Whereas, during and after rainstorms, the large volume of clean water from Tibbetts Brook overwhelms the Wards Island Stormwater Treatment Plant beyond its capacity, causing raw sewage to be discharged into the Harlem River, violating the Clean Water Act and contributing to an environmental and public health hazard;

Whereas, during both wet and dry weather large volumes of clean water from Tibbetts Brook overwhelm Van Cortlandt Park, as there is no municipal separate storm water sewer system (MS4) within its more than one thousand acres;

Whereas, this is an environmental problem which involves many agencies including the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (NYC DEP) and the use of their CSO and MS4 programs both in and outside Van Cortlandt Park;

Whereas, daylighting Tibbetts Brook will not only reduce CSO's and pollution in our water bodies, but will help with severe flooding issues along the Broadway corridor;

Whereas, the Environment and Sanitation committee has a long history of supporting the Coalition's goal of daylighting the stream inside and outside of the park to relieve the problem caused by either CSO's or the absence of MS4, and has held numerous meetings including a joint meeting with the Parks Committee in 2015 to explore these issues;

Therefore be it resolved, that the Environment and Sanitation Committee recommends that Community Board 8 support the efforts of the Coalition for the Daylighting of Tibbetts Brook.

Vote: 6 in favor, none opposed, no abstentions

In favor: Laura Spalter, Bob Bender, Bob Fanuzzi, Robert Press, David Kornbluh
Committee member: Rob Spalter

*Passed unanimously by full board on April 12th, 2016.