



Park Stewardship Learning Cohort: How Friends of Groups Build Strong Communities

March 20, 2025

Connecting everyone to the outdoors™

Welcome!

Please introduce yourself in the chat with:

- Your name
- Your city
- Your agency
- Your favorite thing about spring



Welcome!

Think quietly and write down a few words that come to mind when you consider...

- *What does it look like when your parks are activated?*
- *How does it make you feel?*
- *What would your perfect park activation look like?*



Agenda

- Program Overview & Goals
- Defining Park Stewardship
- Park Stewardship & Social Capital
- Reflection Exercise & Discussion
- Action Planning Exercise
- Next Steps



Trust for Public Land is a national nonprofit, working to create parks and protect land for people, ensuring healthy, livable communities for generations to come.

**We believe in
OUTSIDE FOR ALL**





Today, 100 million people across the U.S, including 28 million kids, don't have a park within a 10-minute walk of home.



10-Minute Walk[®] Mission: Closing the Park Equity Gap

Present day inequities in park space and outdoor access are often the result of decades of problematic policy decisions.

Without policy solutions, the gap will continue to widen.

Park Equity Communities of Practice



**Policy
Incubator**



**Connecting People
to Parks**



**Parks Plus:
Economic
Vitality**



**Park
Stewardship**



The Common Ground Framework

Trust for Public Land believes that **parks are powerful and effective civic infrastructure that support a healthy democracy.**

[Download the Common Ground Framework](#)



On Common Ground Program

Capacity Building

Share training and resources are necessary to empower park leaders to do this work. Small grants for park projects that connect people across difference.

Evaluation

Measure and evaluate park success in terms of *social* outcomes, expanding on well-documented physical ones such as number of trees planted.

Communications

Tell persuasive and influential stories that move skeptics.

Policy Tools

Match park activation with policy instruments that land activation work with park agencies, fund it sustainably, and provide resources to make activation easily adoptable.

Partnerships

Galvanize other agencies, like departments of transportation, libraries, offices of new americans, or public housing agencies as partners in park activation.



Removing Barriers for Public Space Programming

Untaped

Untaped Background

2021-2022
Neighborhood Commons



2021-2023
Turnout NYC



2021-2023
Alfresco NYC

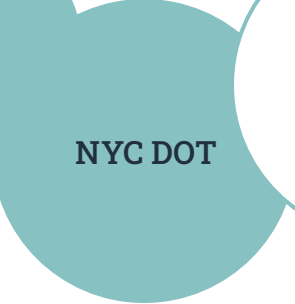
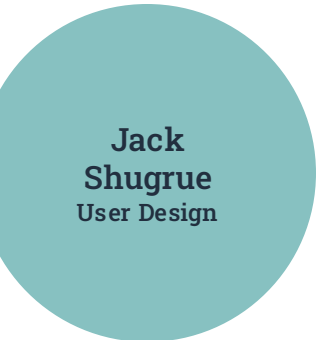
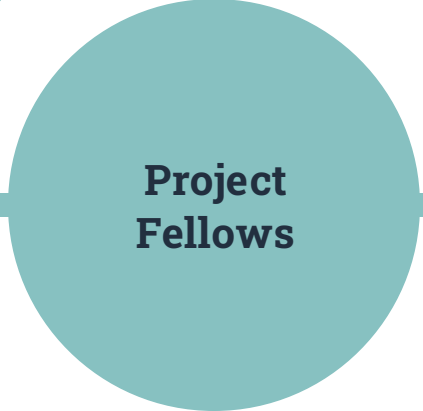
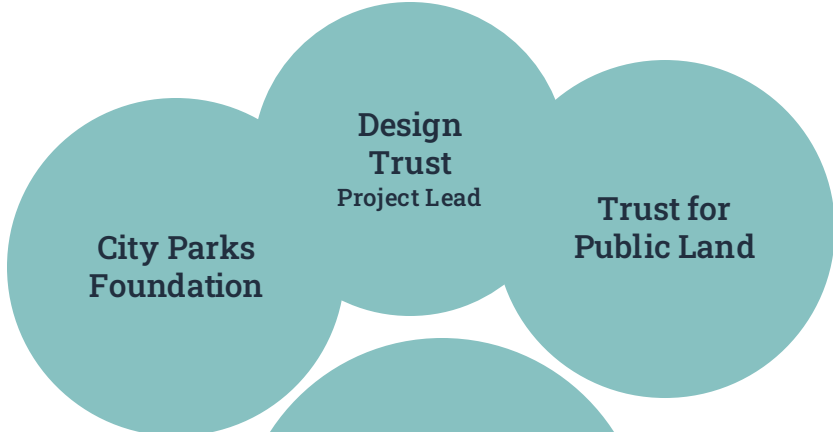


The Challenge

From hosting simple block parties to planning a performance in the park, community organizations and neighbors face an unwieldy maze of permitting and insurance requirements to use their communal spaces freely. **This exacerbates inequities present in communities across New York City.** These issues include:

- Challenging user experience on public websites to gain permits.
- Multiple, conflicting agencies needed to gain permits.
- Outsized requirements for permits/liability for small- and medium-sized organizations.
- Lack of affordable options for necessary insurance requirements.
- Outsized requirements for insurance to small and medium-sized organizations and events.
- Lack of resources for small organizations and unclear expectations for how to use these resources.

Untaped Team



Untaped Goals

1. Make **public space inherently more open and accessible** to arts, cultural, culinary, educational, and social organizations looking to utilize the public realm, especially in historically marginalized and underinvested neighborhoods.
2. **Unlock private resources** for New Yorkers to experience the many benefits of programming in their own neighborhoods, especially during a time of dramatic public contraction.
3. Build a consensus about the **value of public programming** in New York City as it creates positive health, economic, and social impacts on its residents.



Our Goals

By the end of this track, you will...

1. Identify **national promising practices** for supporting the development of and/or better partnership with stewardship groups in your local context.
2. Explore how park stewardship groups can **build community cohesion and social capital** in your community.
3. Incorporate new knowledge of the opportunities and challenges related to stewardship groups into **actionable plans**.



What is Park Stewardship?

**Tell us how you define
park stewardship!**

*Scan the QR code or use the link
in the chat to submit your
response*





What is Park Stewardship?

In this Learning Cohort, we're focusing on the aspect of park stewardship that is...

Community-driven leadership and participation in the care, activation, and preservation of public parks and green spaces.





Community relationships facilitate the development of community identity, which is a foundation for building community power.



Form relationships

Hire **community organizers**

Spend time at existing **community events**

Build **trust with residents** who have close ties to the community

Communicate in **accessible languages**

Build place identity

Activate the site with **consistent programming**

Identify and invest in **community skills and assets**

Intentionally organize around **arts and culture**

Seed community power

Include community members in strategic **decision-making**

Support the establishment of park **stewardship groups**

Transfer knowledge on navigating public processes



Reflection

Find a piece of paper or a blank document. For the next few minutes, quietly brainstorm:

- *Who are they key players in your city related to park stewardship?
(Communities, organizations, city?)*
- *What do each of these groups do well?*
- *What could each of these groups do better?*

**In a moment, you'll be split into breakout rooms to discuss.
*Questions?***

Group Report-Out

What did you hear?



Action Planning

Scan the QR Code or use the link in the chat to open the Action Planner

- Complete the reflection questions individually
- In your breakout rooms, briefly report out on the first 3 questions and set action items together

Wait to click “Submit” until the end of your breakout room

*Responses will be sent to the email address you provide.
Kate, Christina or Sophie can resend responses as needed.*





Since 1972, TPL has protected 4 million acres of public land; created 5,364 parks, trails, schoolyards, and iconic outdoor places; raised \$93 billion in public funding for parks and public lands; and connected nearly 9.4 million people to the outdoors.

To learn more, visit [tpl.org](https://www.tpl.org).

Connecting everyone to the outdoors™

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Next Steps

- Submit your Action Planning Form
- Complete your assigned tasks
- Report-Out Slides & Recording

- **Session 2: April 17, 2025**

Reducing Red Tape: Right-Sizing Requirements & Streamlining Systems

Thank You!