



Rebuilding Central Park: A Management and Restoration Plan

Elizabeth Barlow Rogers

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Central Park's legacy is unique. It was America's first great open space designed specifically for public use, inspiring the creation of hundreds of other municipal parks across the nation and spawning the profession of landscape architecture in the United States. This plan for the restoration, conservation, and management of the Park is the most comprehensive program of research, restoration, and management ever applied to a great historic landscape. It is significant in its broad concept of curatorship and provides a model for approaching and carrying out any work of scenic restoration; several of the projects it advocates to reverse the Park's steady decline are in progress or have already been completed.

Illustrated throughout with 2-color and tinted maps and drawings and numerous photographs, *Rebuilding Central Park* is the first close examination of these invaluable 843 acres in more than a century. It unfolds a masterful design and management plan to overcome the effects of years of city budget cuts, natural aging, and human use and abuse.

The book opens with a discussion of the principles and philosophy of the original design by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux and a history of the Park's management. It assesses the Park's distinct but interrelated systems - circulation, topography, vegetation, and wildlife - and presents a sector-by-sector analysis of 21 project areas. Problems and their causes are discussed on every level as are proposals for solving them.

Sections of the book take up the restoration of such historic structures as the cast-iron bridges, stone arches and Victorian Gothic Belvedere and Dairy, which were features of the original Olmsted design; and the conservation of such varied landscapes as the Ramble, the East Meadow, the Great Hill, and Strawberry Fields. Maps reveal the kinds and pace of park activities, patterns of circulation - drives, paths, trails, lighting and visitor amenities - ground plans, vegetation, and historic and present tree canopy as well as the Park rebuilt. There are many recommendations, including recommendations for maintenance and security.

A separate chapter describes the methodology used for approaching and carrying out this, and any other, major work of landscape restoration.

Elizabeth Barlow Rogers is the Administrator of Central Park and the author of several books on park and landscape history. John Berendt is former editor of *New York* magazine.

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