

About Us

The Bronx Council for Environmental Quality (BCEQ), a non-profit 501(c)3 membership organization, is located in New York City's only mainland borough. Founded to do for the Bronx what Earth Day does for the country, BCEQ works for a future with better air, land, and water quality.

BCEQ's annual membership meetings focus on water and other environmental issues in the Bronx.



Fall at the Van Cortlandt Lake

History

BCEQ has fought many battles to protect the Bronx's ecology. The only borough-wide environmental group in NYC, BCEQ was founded by Theresa Lato, Helen Reel and other Bronx preservationists who believed local community exchanges could work toward creating, "an aesthetic and unpolluted environment, with a natural and historic heritage."

Since that time, BCEQ has been a leader in cleaning waterways for swimming, boating and fishing; preserving pristine drinking watersheds; limiting garbage-filled landfills by recycling, reusing and waste reducing; guarding regional and local parkland as natural cleansers for surrounding waterways, as temperature lowering of the heat island effect, and as air purifiers through natural tree canopies.

How did BCEQ impact these projects?

Jerome Park Reservoir

BCEQ members worked tirelessly for years to save the Jerome Park Reservoir from plans to build a filtration plant in the reservoir-lake surrounded by a 2-mile public pathway, densely populated high rise buildings, and "education mile."

Harlem River

Based on concerns raised at annual membership meetings, BCEQ was challenged to improve the river's natural resources and its linkage to the East River, Hudson River and New York Harbor Estuary. Once a popular area for recreational boating, limited public access adversely impacts the river's health and recreational use today. The Harlem River Working Group was formed to tackle all the issues facing the river.

Pelham Bay

One of the causes on which BCEQ was founded was the clean up of thousands of gallons of toxic waste illegally dumped into the large landfill in Pelham Bay Park. BCEQ members joined the community to ensure this mountain of garbage was remediated and restored to beautiful parkland.

Bronx River

As one of the founding members of the Bronx River Alliance, BCEQ worked up and down the river. They organized stakeholders, identified problems and potential solutions, and worked with the government to enforce the Clean Water Act in order to provide access for swimming, as well as boating and fishing.

Accomplishments

BCEQ works cooperatively with partners and community groups to improve and organize for a better environment.

BCEQ is a founding member and sponsor of *Bronx Parks Speak Up*. For 15 years, along with many partner groups, BCEQ has presented this annual spring networking conference for environmental and park stakeholders. One direct outcome of Speak Up was the creation of the Bronx River Alliance.

When the City decided to take parkland to build a filtration plant in Van Cortlandt Park, BCEQ joined with the Friends of Van Cortlandt Park and other community groups, to guarantee mitigation promises were kept.

Macomb's Dam Park was the central park for the Highbridge neighborhood and countless sports leagues before it was alienated for the Yankees to build their new stadium. BCEQ joined the surrounding community effort to ensure replacement parkland was usable and accessible.

In response to development that tears down rather than restores, BCEQ created *Low Impact Development* guidelines that advocate for things like green roofs to absorb runoff generated by concrete footprints.

Greenroof at St. Simon Stock School



Each June BCEQ presents three *Keeping it Reel Awards*: to an outstanding environmental educator, student, and community leader. The awards are named in honor of co-founder Helen Reel.

For over 35 years, BCEQ has been writing and publishing the *Environmental Focus* newsletter, also available at www.bceq.org. BCEQ maintains a calendar of Bronx events on its web page, and annually publishes the Bronx environment photo calendar.



Clockwise from top left: Farmers Market at Poe Park; Canoeing on the Harlem River; Enjoying the sun at Orchard Beach; Tour de Bronx on Pelham Parkway.

Pelham Bay



Get Involved!

Become a member of the oldest volunteer environmental group in the Bronx. BCEQ's issues are the public's issues.

For more information, to become a member or to donate, please visit : www.bceq.org

To get on our email list of notifications, contact: info@bceq.org

As President Ira Charles Levenberg-Engel says: **Keep in Touch!**

Credits

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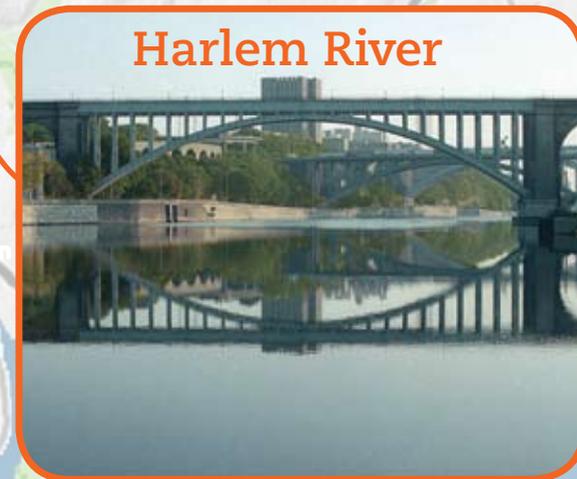
Jerome Park



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