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November 17, 2015

Marit Larson, Director of Wetlands and Riparian Restoration
Natural Resources Group, NYC Parks & Recreation
Arsenal North
1234 Fifth Avenue, Room 229
New York, NY 10029

**Re: Letter of Commitment for City of New York Department of Parks and Recreation (Parks),
Natural Resources Group: 2015 EPA Urban Waters Small Grants – *Community and Watershed-based Urban Stream Assessment for Habitat and Water Quality Protection***

Dear Ms. Larson:

As a longtime partner and collaborator with the City of New York Department of Parks & Recreation's Natural Resources Group (NRG), the Bronx Council on Environmental Quality (BCEQ) is writing to express our commitment and full support for your proposal for Community- and Watershed-based Urban Stream Assessment for Habitat and Water Quality Protection being submitted to the Environmental Protection Agency's Urban Waters Program. This project will help ensure aquatic habitat conservation and restoration through New York City and enhance local community engagement to support citizen science and water quality awareness.

BCEQ has worked with the Natural Resources Group to provide information to the community about stormwater management and stream day-lighting plans. We have worked with NYC Parks to address water quality issues across the Bronx and helped identify opportunities to improve management practices for water and habitat protection, including the WCS-NOAA research project under NRG in the Pier 5 Park, and the NYS Brownfields Opportunity Area project Step 1 and 2 under Parks Capital -- both on the Harlem River.

Formed in 1971, BCEQ is an volunteer membership group which has sought to establish — as an Inherent Human Right — *a sound, forward-looking environmental policy regarding an aesthetic, unpolluted, environment protecting a natural and historic heritage*. Since 2001, we focused on developing connections to and along the Harlem River and created on-water access and activities in an effort to improve water quality, which in 2011, became part of the Urban Waters Federal Partnership because of the “strong restoration effort underway, spearheaded by local governments and community organizations.”

We look forward to partnering with NRG on this project by providing outreach to the community about the project through our annual conferences and workshops. We also look forward to being trained in the stream assessment protocol, trialing it in Van Cortland Park, and helping to connect interested stakeholders, volunteers and educators with NRG to receive the training. The proposed project by NYC Parks will help us better communicate about the condition of our streams, and how they are connected to water quality downstream in the Harlem River and to the health and vitality of our communities.

We urge you to support their efforts and promise, as a community-based organization, to be actively engaged as needed.

Sincerely,

Karen Argenti

Karen Argenti

Co-Chairs, Water Committee, BCEQ

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