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**MAYOR BLOOMBERG AND AGRICULTURE SECRETARY VILSACK ANNOUNCE \$2 MILLION FEDERAL GRANT TO CREATE GREEN JOBS AS PART OF MILLIONTREESNYC CAMPAIGN**

*MillionTreesNYC has Already Planted More Than 174,000 Trees Towards Million-Tree Goal, Exceeded First Year Planting Goal by 17,700 Trees*

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and US Department of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced that the Department of Agriculture has awarded a \$2 million grant to create green jobs and restore urban forests in New York City. The grant will create up to 20 new jobs in horticulture and forestry over the next two years for graduates of the MillionTreesNYC training program. MillionTreesNYC is a public-private partnership between the Bloomberg Administration and New York Restoration Project (NYRP) that aims to plant one million new trees throughout the five boroughs by 2017. The Mayor and Secretary Vilsack were joined at today's announcement by US Representative Jose E. Serrano, First Deputy Mayor Patricia E. Harris, Parks Commissioner Adrian Benepe, United States Forest Service Chief Abigail R. Kimball, and other elected officials.

"This grant will put New Yorkers to work, help pump more money into our economy, and create jobs," said Mayor Bloomberg. "The MillionTreesNYC training program, which this grant will support, is part of PlaNYC, our vision of a greener, greater New York. And it ties into our Center for Economic Opportunity's efforts to reduce chronic poverty by getting more New Yorkers working and making sure that work pays."

"This funding will provide work and training to young adults from low income communities in New York City while restoring the City's urban ecosystems making it a healthier place to live," said Secretary Vilsack. "These young Americans will embark on careers in the growing field of urban natural resource management and restoration and help show others that green jobs programs can be a path out of poverty."

The \$2 million grant will create full-time jobs preserving or restoring parks and other green areas of New York City for graduates of the MillionTreesNYC training program. The training program, managed by the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation and New York Restoration Project, provides paid on-the-job forestry and horticulture training to unemployed young adults not enrolled in school or on a career path. Participants learn job skills through a training and certification program at New York Botanical Garden. In conjunction with other educational partners, the program prepares them for green jobs that involve tree planting, pruning and stewardship of urban ecosystems.

Through their full-time employment, MillionTreesNYC training program graduates will restore the natural environment of neighborhoods, parks, gardens, wetlands and forest areas in the five boroughs. Restoration work will focus on designated "Trees for Public Health" neighborhoods, areas that receive the highest priority for new trees because of lower than average tree canopy cover and higher than average asthma rates and other health problems. These neighborhoods include Hunts Point and Morrisania in the Bronx, East New York in Brooklyn, East Harlem in Manhattan, the Rockaways in Queens, and Stapleton on Staten Island.

Created as one of the more than 40 innovative programs of the Mayor's Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO) aimed to reduce the number of New Yorkers living in poverty, the program recruits participants from New York City Housing Authority campuses, the Department of Youth and Community Development's CEO programs and from local community-based organizations. The training program, supported by private donations made to the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City, also aims to create stronger linkages between environmental health and community stability.

"The Center for Economic Opportunity has become a nationally recognized research and development laboratory for testing new anti-poverty strategies," said Executive Director Veronica M. White. "One of our key populations - that this program targets directly - are young adults who are at-risk because they are neither working nor in school, and our goal is to help them connect to GED programs, internships or jobs which will lead to a path of stability and self sufficiency."

This innovative restoration project will augment the economic stimulus principals set forth in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 through the creation of new jobs and improved green infrastructure. The project is funded jointly through the State and Private Forestry and Research and Development mission areas of the Forest Service and addresses the agency's mission that is characterized by the slogan, "caring for the land and serving people."

"The overarching purpose of our emphasis on green jobs is to get money moving through the economy again while investing in the future of great cities like New York," said U.S. Forest Service Chief Gail R. Kimbell. "Through these jobs people from all backgrounds can learn valuable skills, connect to the outdoors, and build the green infrastructure that they will benefit from and enjoy for generations

"Green jobs are good jobs that lead to long-term careers and a strong commitment to improving the environment," said Commissioner Benepe. "With the federal government's investment of \$2 million in creating up to 20 new positions in New York City's environmental industry, the Parks Department, New York Restoration Project, and other MillionTreesNYC partners can hire well-trained green thumbs who can contribute to the important work of restoring New York City's ecosystems."

MillionTreesNYC is a 10-year initiative to plant and care for one million new trees throughout the City's five boroughs and a key aspect of PlaNYC. It will ultimately expand the City's urban forest by 20 percent, provide New Yorkers important health, economic and environmental benefits, and create a more sustainable urban environment. Since its launch in October 2007, public, private and non-profit organizations rallied almost 4,000 citizen volunteers to plant trees in what has become an unprecedented tree planting campaign and citywide environmental movement. MillionTreesNYC has exceeded our first year planting goal (originally set at 93,397 trees) by 17,714 trees and has already planted more than 174,000 trees towards our million-tree goal.

The Mayor allocated nearly \$400 million to the Parks Department over a period of ten years to plant 600,000 trees by reforesting 2,000 acres of existing parkland and lining New York City streets with trees. The New York Restoration Project (NYRP) is planting nearly 100,000 trees on public housing developments, in collaboration with the Greening of NYCHA initiative, and on schoolyards and playgrounds, community gardens, cultural institutions and other publicly-accessible properties. Along with NYRP, a MillionTreesNYC Advisory committee of over 80 public and non-profit partners was established to enlist community organizations, businesses, residential and commercial developers and everyday New Yorkers to plant and maintain the remaining 300,000 trees.

To reach this ambitious goal, NYRP and the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City are raising corporate, foundation and individual contributions to support plantings. The Mayor's Fund is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization designed to aid City programs and support innovative public-private partnerships. Funding for the MillionTreesNYC Training Program has been generously provided by the Altman Foundation, David Rockefeller, the Ross Foundation and the Dodge Foundation. Lead sponsors of MillionTreesNYC include The Home Depot Foundation and Toyota and major donors include David Rockefeller and Bloomberg Philanthropies.

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## The RIVERDALE PRESS

### Park gets a big green thumbs up

PRINT

By Megan James

In just two days, a team of about 30 young adults swooped into Riverdale Park and planted 1,345 trees. When their work was done they packed into vans and took off, on to another corner of the city in need of their green thumbs.

“We’re like a combination of the Power Rangers and Captain Planet,” said 20-year-old Theone Adonis Ash from Queens, a trainee with the MillionTreesNYC Training Program.

The workers, ranging in age from 18 to 25, are part of a job-training program focused on forestry and horticulture that aims to plant and care for one million trees throughout the five boroughs by 2017.

A joint initiative between the city and the New York Restoration Project, the seven-month paid program was designed to prepare participants for green jobs involving tree planting, pruning and stewardship. Standing among the newly planted trees on the morning of Nov. 4, Mr. Ash described the work he and his colleagues had done.

“There’s a certain composition to it ... it’ll open to a canopy,” he said.

Jason Stein, a MillionTrees crew leader, explained the trainees and volunteers from the city’s Natural Resources Group (NRG) were planting native tree species like chestnut, red oak, gray dogwood, tulip trees and types of elm trees to outpace the invasive, nonnative species like Norway maple that now dominate Riverdale Park.

Most of the invasive tree species were planted in the 1950s, Mr. Stein said, because at the time they were believed to be heartier than native trees. Trouble is, they created a monoculture, an area covered primarily by one species. If a disease affecting that species strikes, it could wipe out most of the park’s woodland.

And since the park abuts the Hudson River, any loss of trees increases the threat of erosion.

After boasting that his MillionTrees training has taught him to identify most types of trees in the city, trainee Wahdada Stennett, 21, peered at one leaning above a parking lot behind Riverdale Country School.

“Is that a pin oak?” he asked. “I’m gonna go look at the leaves, though.”

Upon closer inspection, he said, it was, indeed, a pin oak.

When Riverdale Country School teacher Ella Pastor spotted the wheelbarrows crisscrossing the park on her weekly nature walk with her 5- and 6-year-olds, she seized the opportunity to teach.

Out in the park, each child got a chance to place a tree in the earth and cover its roots with soil. Then they counted all the new saplings they could find — they made it up to 80.

“They had a very good time ... we talked about how this would be the only time they’ll be taller than those trees,” Ms. Pastor said.

Before loading into the van, Mr. Ash said the program had taught him more than just how to plant a tree.

“Planting trees takes energy, will, focus,” he said. “If you focus, you’re going to succeed.”

*N. Clark Judd contributed to this article.*



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## New York City Gets Federal Grant for Green Jobs

**NEW YORK (AP)** -- New York City is getting \$2 million from the federal government that will go toward horticulture and forestry jobs.

Mayor Michael Bloomberg and Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced the grant Wednesday.

The mayor says as many as 20 new jobs will be created.

It will benefit graduates of a program that trains people to preserve and restore green areas like parks, gardens, wetlands and forests.



### NYC gets fed grant for green jobs

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# \$2 Million to NYC Green Jobs

By Joshua Philipp  
Epoch Times Staff Apr 9, 2009



**FIRST SCOOP:** Mayor Michael Bloomberg (center left) and several other officials join the MillionTreesNYC training program's inaugural class in moving the first scoops of earth at what will soon be a park along the Bronx River. (Joshua Philipp/The Epoch Times)

**NEW YORK**—The City is in for a makeover with the help of a \$2 million grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The money will go towards creating new jobs in horticulture and forestry and lending some extra hands to the city's MillionTreesNYC project.

The announcement was made on Wednesday at the edge of the Bronx River at Hunts Point by Mayor Michael Bloomberg and U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. They were joined by U.S. Representative Jose Serrano, Forest Service chief Abigail Kimball, and other elected officials.

The money will be used to employ the graduates of the MillionTreesNYC training program, whose inaugural class was attending the event. The participants, most of whom in their mid-20s, were previously not enrolled in school and were not on any career path. The program will provide 20 full-time jobs and pay them \$12 an hour for the next two years as they beautify the city and help New York move towards a greener landscape.

“Everybody talks about green jobs in this country, but we're actually trying to create them. These are some,” Bloomberg said.

According to Bloomberg, one of their first tasks will be to reforest the approximately two-acre empty lot next to the Bronx River where the announcement was made. The land is owned by the Parks Department.

“They're hard work is going to continue opening up the Bronx River waterfront,” Bloomberg said. “The future of MillionTrees is about to get even brighter thanks to a big boost from our federal government.”

The MillionTreesNYC program was started in October 2007. It is a 10-year initiative to plant and care for more than 1 million trees throughout New York's five boroughs. Thus far, more than 174,000 trees have been planted through the program.

According to U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, trees bring several benefits to the city. They help communities come closer together by creating parks and gardens, protect the environment, and improve the overall health of local residents.



**CLIMBING HIGH:** Members of the inaugural class of the MillionTreesNYC training program work together to prune a tree. Once they've completed the class they will be employed in the City, helping to beautify the landscape. (Joshua Philipp/The Epoch Times)

“When you plant trees, especially in areas like this one where the asthma rates are high, you have the opportunity to improve air quality and therefore health,” Vilsack said.

“The reality in America today is that there's a lot of difficulty, a lot of stress, but today's a positive day. When we plant these trees and begin this process, I think we renew our faith and confidence in the future,” he said.

“This \$2 million will allow an opportunity for 50 of these young men and women to be involved in this program over the course of the next two years.”

Following their two-year employment through the program, Parks Commissioner Adrian Benepe said the workers will have the opportunity to move on to other horticulture and park-related jobs,

including jobs in the NYC Parks Department. Vilsack added that they may also be eligible for positions in the Forest Service.

For the South Bronx community, such work is needed. U.S. Representative Jose Serrano said that a few years back, volunteer groups took this type of work on their own shoulders. “Folks that are in the audience decided that the South Bronx, the Hunts Point area wasn’t being treated fairly,” he said.

They started a local environmental movement and focused their first efforts on cleaning the Bronx River. “I remember that first Saturday when we took everything [out of the river,] including half a jeep,” Serrano said.

Following their efforts, herring were reintroduced to the river a couple years ago and just recently, a beaver has returned to the river for the first time in 200 years. “It turns out New York City was a beaver pelt colony and that was the beginnings of New York City. Now a beaver comes back and these fine folks decided to name the beaver Jose,” he said.

The beaver was named Jose in honor of Serrano.

“This means that the South Bronx is making a full comeback and what happens today is then an indication of the federal government, with the City, joining hands and saying we plant trees, we plant life.”

## CNBC

### So What's A Green Job, Anyway?

By: [Joseph Pisani](#), News Associate | 26 Feb 2009

Everyone's talking about green-collar jobs, but defining what one is is a pretty grey issue.

"There's no answer. We don't really know what one is," says Joel Makower, executive editor of [GreenBiz.com](#), a Web site that covers corporate and environmental practices. "It's a big problem because there's a lot at stake politically."



Eric Risberg / AP

President Barack Obama's New Energy for America plan would commit \$150 billion for the creation of five million green jobs over the next ten years. But experts remain split on what makes a job a green one.

For instance, does a person who builds an SUV one week and a hybrid the next week at the same car plant have a green job?

What about the truck driver who delivers solar panels, or the accountant who works at the office of a wind turbine producer?

Despite all the questions, there is some consensus about who will benefit from Obama's plan and that's workers with lower skill and education levels. Driving those types of jobs will be Obama's plan to overhaul federal buildings, schools and weatherize one million low-income homes a year. Those measures will be covered under the recently approved stimulus plan, with \$500 million allocated to a green job training program.

"The jobs will require a low enough skill that they can train someone at a vocational school or a community college, or even in high school," says George Hawkins, the director of the District Department of the Environment.

Much of the training is expected to take place at community colleges. "They're like the National Guard of education, they're in every community," says Makower. "That's where it is likely to happen. It's an existing infrastructure."

Also getting into the game are non-profit organizations, which have begun training people for green-collar jobs. MillionTreesNYC, a partnership between the New York Restoration Project,

Mayor Michael Bloomberg's PlaNYC initiative and the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation, started a seven-month training program in 2008. The program pays and trains individuals in urban greening, forestry, ecological restoration and landscape design according to Drew Becher, executive director of the New York Restoration Project.

Those skills are becoming increasingly valuable as more large cities around the country continue to expand their green initiatives. Finding trained workers is a challenge. "We had an arborist job that paid \$60,000 a year open for a year and a half because we couldn't find anybody to fill it," said Becher.

In Washington D.C. the District Department of Environment trains 14 to 21 year olds during the summer to maintain trees, parks, install watershed protection and learn about energy efficiency technologies.

Besides jobs on the lower level of the green ladder, jobs for more highly-educated workers are expected to pick up. In fact, while white-collar workers are mostly suit-wearing professionals, and blue-collar workers are doing manual labor, green-collar jobs will be a mix of the two and "actually bridge the gap," says Jen Boulden, cofounder of [Ideal Bite](#), a service that emails readers daily green tips.

Green and sustainability courses have been taught at MBA programs across the country for years, but are getting more attention from students. The Erb Institute for Global Sustainable Enterprise at the University of Michigan have been giving MBA students a masters degree in sustainability for 15 years, but has seen the number of students in the program grow over the last five years, according to Rick Bunch the managing director of the institute. Over that time he has seen more students go on to work "at big companies."

Many large companies have been changing their corporate strategy on environmental issues, opening up more jobs for highly educated green workers. "Every major company has some sort of corporate responsibility and sustainability program," said Boulden.