



## **NEW YORK UNIVERSITY**

*A private university in the public service*

### **Facilities & Construction Management**

Sustainability, Energy & Technical Services

740 Broadway, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor

New York, NY 10003

Telephone: (212) 992-8263

Fax: (212) 995-4579

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To Whom It May Concern,

This document confirms that the Native Woodland Garden at New York University meets the criteria of AASHE's STARS Reporting Framework for Innovation credits.

On September 12, 1609, Henry Hudson first laid eyes on the island named Mannahatta by its local residents, the Lenape people. Since then, Manhattan has developed into one of the world's most altered landscapes. Today, few vestiges remain of the forests, grasslands, and streams that once combined to form a uniquely varied ecosystem on the island. Public perception of this transformation was raised over the past five years through the "Mannahatta Project," Wildlife Conservation Society ecologist Dr. Eric Sanderson's digital reconstruction of the ecology of Manhattan as it existed before European settlement.

New York University's Native Woodland Garden is located in Schwartz Plaza, on the east face of the main University Library, and is the first planting done in association with the Mannahatta Project. The garden features a variety of plant species identified by Dr. Sanderson as likely to have been present on the day Henry Hudson first sailed by the island. Native trees, shrubs, and perennials were planted among the existing non-native trees to mimic the natural process of ecological species succession, and the garden currently boasts 39 species of native plants.

While the University's Garden Shop uses organic landscaping management techniques in all areas of its operation, the Woodland Garden is unique in its meticulous recreation of a pre-European ecology. There is no other place on the island of Manhattan that would enable a visitor to experience the understory of the forest primeval as can be found at this site. As it inhabits one of the most densely populated areas in North America, it is thus able to serve a variety of functions, including teaching, research, demonstrating low-water and hardy native plantings, and public education, as well as beauty.

This truly innovative initiative has helped advance sustainability within the Landscaping department while also fostering understanding of native ecology among the students living in University residences, thus furthering the academic mission of the University.

Signed,

Cecil Scheib  
Director, Energy and Sustainability  
New York University