

## Green Girls Working to Protect Our Parks!

The City Parks Foundation's Green Girls Summer Institute is a 5-week program that engages 30 middle school girls in hands-on environmental science, advocacy and stewardship in New York City parks. Students spend the summer learning about urban forestry and the environmental benefits that NYC's green spaces provide. By linking students with professional scientists, engaging them in data collection and citizen science projects, and developing them as scientifically literate young adults, we are working to make our communities greener and healthier than ever!



Last summer, the Green Girls participated in a three-part invasive species removal project in partnership with the New York City Parks Department. Working alongside female ecologists and restoration specialists, students learned how to identify and remove invasive plants such as

mugwort, porcelain berry, Japanese knotweed, and mile-a-minute. The girls learned why it is so crucial to remove these plants and saw first-hand the damage that can be done to an ecosystem when the spread of these invasive species is not controlled.



The Green Girls spent three full days restoring areas of the forest in Pelham Bay Park, Inwood Hill Park and Forest Park during the summer program. During that time, the girls used all methods of removal from digging to pulling to cutting in order to be as effective as possible and to be careful not spread any seeds from these mighty invaders! Students also collected samples of each species we identified and pressed them in the book to create a Green Girl's invasive species herbarium and identification guide.

Our students had a great time learning about this critical threat to our natural areas while getting to explore the native

flora and fauna that call these urban forest's home! We left each day knowing that we had done something good for our city and we are looking forward to another wonderful summer of stewardship and fun in New York City's amazing parks!

For more information about this program, contact Kaari Casey at [kcasey@cityparksfoundation.org](mailto:kcasey@cityparksfoundation.org), (212) 360-2788



*The Green Girls after removing invasive plants, mugwort and porcelain berry, from Inwood Hill Park.*