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PRESS RELEASE

Six Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy numbers to know as 2015 ends, three for 2016

- 1). **118 Parks Conservancy staff and volunteers spent the equivalent of 29 eight-hour days scouting and removing invasive plant species from our city parks in 2015.** Thousands of bags of 54 different species of plants that threaten our city's valuable tree canopy were removed. "Our staff and volunteers' work is vital to keeping our tree canopy healthy. They help us ensure that Pittsburgh keeps the benefits of cleaner air, pollution filtration, and healthier greenspace that a healthy tree canopy provides", said Erin Copeland, Senior Restoration Ecologist.
- 2). **The Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy planted 15,618 annual flowers, bulbs, perennials, shrubs and trees** in our city and community parks in 2015. While most were paid for by the Parks Conservancy and City of Pittsburgh, 1,500 flowers and bulbs were donated by generous Pittsburghers. And Parks Conservancy staff will be at it all winter, too, pruning and protecting to ensure that when spring rolls around, you'll see brilliant colors in every corner of a park near you.
- 3). What could you do with the **3,000 hours** that **Parks Conservancy gardening staff spent weeding** in 2015? You could watch the new *Star Wars* movie 1, 323 times, listen to *Stairway to Heaven* nearly 22,500 times in a row, or run 750 marathons. Luckily, the Parks Conservancy did the weeding for you, and freed up 125 days of your valuable time so you could bike, hike, picnic, swim, or just plain play in our city's parkland instead.
- 4). Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy staff managed 851 **volunteers** that worked in our parks this year to **give 3,080 hours of time and dedication valued at \$71,079.** That's how much Pittsburghers value their parks – so much so that they will give generously of their time to make certain that they have a stake in the greenspace they love.
- 5). **One** is the number of memorials that include a **statue designed by a world-renowned sculptor** that the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy began restoration of in 2015 - **the George Westinghouse Memorial and Pond in Schenley Park.** Designed by Daniel Chester French – **the sculptor of the famous statue in the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC** – and originally funded by donations from Westinghouse employees when built in 1930, this past year saw the restoration project's groundbreaking. Inspired by the September groundbreaking, present-day Westinghouse employees have announced a January 1 – June 30th, 2016 international fundraising drive to raise money to help with the restoration. The restoration will not only be beautiful, but will include new storm-water management installations that will help improve the health of the Panther Hollow Watershed.

6). "Pittsburgh's parks are the best classroom to learn science, technology, engineering, art, and math," says Marijke Hecht, Director of Education for the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy. "Kids senses come alive when they're outdoors, and learning is just more fun." 2015 the **Parks Conservancy's education staff made environmental education a blast for Pittsburgh kids with 6,663 contact hours** in 47 classes in 18 different public, private, and charter schools.

7). **18 is the number of geothermal wells that will help keep the new Frick Environmental Center a net zero energy building when it opens in 2016.** The Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, in partnership with the City of Pittsburgh, made incredible progress in 2015 on the construction of the new [Frick Environmental Center](#) at Frick Park. Hundreds of construction items have been vetted so far in the project, ensuring that the new Frick Environmental Center will meet stringent requirements for Living Building Challenge and LEED Platinum certification. There are only eight buildings in the world that have been fully designated as Living Buildings, and the new Frick Environmental Center is slated to be the only one that will be free and open to the public.

8) **305,842 residents - the entire population of Pittsburgh -** will benefit from the **Parks Conservancy's planning and improvement efforts for community parks in 2016.** Heth's Run, McKinley Park, Allegheny Commons, Arsenal and Leslie Parks, and Cliffside Park are among the community parks that the Parks Conservancy and their partners will work to improve in 2016. "Pittsburghers have great pride in their community parks, and their support and enthusiasm energizes us as we work to make them the best they can be for all to enjoy," said Heather Sage, Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy Director of Community Projects. "Healthy greenspace brings great value to our communities, and that's a positive thing for everyone in our city."

9) **20 is the number of years that the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy will celebrate in 2016.** In two decades of working to better our city's parks, the Parks Conservancy has raised \$90 million toward park improvements. The Parks Conservancy works with thousands of volunteers annually, stewards over 1,700 acres, and has completed 14 major park improvement projects. **This momentous anniversary year** will bring new work in community parks, a completed Frick Environmental Center, public celebrations, and an ongoing commitment to making Pittsburgh's parkland the very best it can be for all to enjoy.

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About Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy:

The Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy was founded in December 1996 by a group of citizens concerned with the deteriorating conditions of Pittsburgh's historic city parks. A nonprofit organization, the Parks Conservancy works closely with the City of Pittsburgh under an official public-private partnership agreement to restore and improve the city's park system to its full potential. Originally including Highland, Schenley, Frick, and Riverview Parks, the scope of the Park Conservancy's work now includes a focus on community parks including Allegheny Commons, Arsenal Park, Cliffside Park, McKinley Park, and Mellon Park. To date, the Parks Conservancy has raised \$90 million toward park improvements. The Parks Conservancy works with thousands of volunteers annually, stewards over 1,700 acres, and has completed 14 major park improvement projects.