

Forests Forever: The New York City Cycle

A proposal to produce a twenty-eight-minute video interpretation of the Forests in New York City.

The video will present the continuous self-regulating life of native forest communities in a way that includes aesthetic appreciation of their beauty as well as a recognition of the disturbances that threaten these communities. Disturbances range from exotic plants to excessive human traffic to arson. All four seasons of forest life in New York City would be presented using the Earthscore Method of video production. This method was developed by Paul Ryan of Earth Environmental Group to interpret natural ecologies. The proposed tape would be non-didactic and use the power of imagery rather than voice-over to convey the value of New York City's urban forest.

While the entire cityscape of forests will be presented, this tape will concentrate on a few sites. This strategy will allow the viewer intimacy with the cycle of the forest at specific sites. Five minutes will be given to each season and eight minutes to a medley of images from all four seasons.

The project will benefit all New Yorkers whose appreciation of the urban forest will be enhanced by seeing the tape. Those benefits can accrue over the years with repeated viewing.

The tape can be useful in five different ways:

- 1) As a broadcast and/or cablecast twenty-eight-minute video with a trailer which indicates where people can write or call for more information about the forest. Because the program would be dense with imagery it will bear multiple repeat viewings.
- 2) To support those doing technical, voluntary, and educational work with the forest. Copies of the tape will be made available at cost to these workers to be used to augment their work in whatever ways they see fit.
- 3) As a seven-minute, four-monitor video installation at nature centers and community centers as well as art institutions throughout the city.
- 4) As part of a classroom curriculum about the urban forest. Of course, this use depends on the structure of the curriculum itself. There are a range of possibilities. For example, a printed guide to the video could explain the way it was made and invite students to compare the video presentation of the forest with their actual experience of the forest. A more ambitious option would be to integrate the tape into an interdisciplinary, multimedia, interactive video disc.
- 5) As an incentive gift to funders to support New York City's forests.

Please Note: The tape will be produced using the natural sounds of the forest. However, it would also be desirable to have versions of the tape produced that use sound tracks from musical idioms enjoyed by different New Yorkers such as jazz, classical, ethnic, and new music.