



For Immediate Release
June 29, 2010

For more information, contact:
Cheryl Huber 212.838.9410 x. 311
Mobile: 917.363.1237

New Yorkers for Parks Releases First Ever Report Card on Artificial Turf

June 29, 2010 - New York, NY The *Report Card on Artificial Turf* published today by New Yorkers for Parks highlights maintenance needs and makes recommendations for artificial turf fields in New York City parks. As part of its *Report Card on Parks Project*, an annual inspection of Parks Department properties in all five boroughs, New Yorkers for Parks evaluated the 48 artificial turf fields located in New York City's 40 parks that are less than 40 acres in size.

"While these fields provide great year-round recreational opportunities to New Yorkers, they present a unique set of maintenance challenges," said Lee Stuart, New Yorkers for Parks' Executive Director. "The City must dedicate more resources to their upkeep to ensure safe conditions for athletes and children."

The *Report Card on Artificial Turf* reveals that the overall condition of the 48 fields declined from an average grade of B- (80%) in 2008 to C- (72%) in 2009. While litter, seating, and fencing received high marks and there was little evidence of vandalism at most fields, the condition of the artificial turf blades, seams and structure declined significantly. These conditions impede play and can increase risk of injury.

"Worn turf blades and loose seams can result in turf becoming completely detached from the field, leaving the field's foundation and drainage system exposed," said Alyson Beha, New Yorkers for Parks' Manager of Research & Planning, "Nearly a third of the fields surveyed experienced missing or detached sections of turf."

The City of New York is a leading purchaser of artificial turf, and its fields arguably experience more use than any other city in the nation. The report calls on the Parks Department to use this position of market significance to encourage the artificial turf industry to use more innovative and sustainable practices with respect to materials, installation, maintenance, and removal.

New Yorkers for Parks offers the following recommendations:

1. Ensure sufficient funding for park maintenance staff. Increase maintenance resources for artificial turf fields, including staff training, to combat turf deterioration.
2. Develop and implement a maintenance strategy for quick replacement of torn, missing and worn areas of artificial turf.
3. Explore with turf manufacturers improvements to technology, such as more resilient blades that can withstand the unusually high level of use that NYC fields experience. This could decrease maintenance needs and extend the lifespan of the field.

New Yorkers for Parks is the independent organization fighting for greener, cleaner and safer parks in all five boroughs.

#