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**Central Park Conservancy's Historian Tells the Story of the Park's Vintage
Playscapes**

LSU Press to publish Central Park's Adventure-Style Playgrounds in November

Baton Rouge— In *Central Park's Adventure-Style Playgrounds*, Marie Warsh tells the engrossing story of playscapes built in the famous New York City park in the 1960s and 1970s as part of the midcentury experimental “playground revolution.” Warsh explores their connections to the art, recreational design, urbanism, grassroots movements, and child-development theories of the period. She brings the narrative up to the present, detailing the preservation and renewal of the playgrounds decades later by the Central Park Conservancy.

So-called adventure-style playgrounds featured interconnected forms including pyramids, mounds, and steps, and basic materials such as water and sand, encouraging new levels of creativity and interaction. By the end of the 1970s, ten of Central Park's twenty-two existing playgrounds—formerly paved, sterile, standard-equipment-filled lots dating to the 1930s—had been transformed according to the new design ideals. With time, deterioration prompted concerns about safety, and much of the equipment was removed. However, community interest led the Central Park Conservancy to update and preserve the playgrounds that remained in the park.

Building on successful aspects of the playgrounds, designers incorporated new technologies, materials, and equipment that reflect contemporary ideas about children's play and approaches to urban park management. They also developed strategies to better integrate them into the landscapes of the park. Today, Central Park's adventure-style playgrounds represent significant works of renewed modern landscape architecture as well as models for novel thinking about playground design.

Marie Warsh is the historian for the Central Park Conservancy.

M. Paul Friedberg, FASLA, is renowned for his design of urban play environments, plazas, malls, and parks. He founded the urban landscape architecture program at City University of New York.

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Landscape Architecture /Sports & Recreation History

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