The Green Space Guide
The Leadership Scholars Certificate Program is a two-year selective, interdisciplinary certificate program that prepares Rutgers undergraduate women to be informed, innovative, and socially responsible leaders.

Leadership Scholars design and implement social action projects to expand their understanding of issues and problems and to develop leadership skills.

This project gives Scholars the opportunity to apply the theoretical knowledge they have gained about leadership, advocacy, and social change with the practical and experiential knowledge they have developed about a particular policy issue or problem through the field site placement. It also further develops leadership skills by giving undergraduates the opportunity to *practice* leadership *through* action.

To find out more please visit the Institute for Women’s Leadership’s website at [http://iwl.rutgers.edu](http://iwl.rutgers.edu).
Goal Statement

The Green Space Guide Project aims to address access to a healthy environment and green spaces to improve mental and physical health for college kids at Rutgers-New Brunswick.

It is important for women to feel empowered to use these spaces but first, they need to feel that those spaces are safe and accessible.

The Green Space Guide is a platform that will increase awareness of nature spaces on campus and connect people to a broader community to explore these spaces with.
## Foundational concepts

### Importance of access to spaces

Rapid urbanization is leading to chronic human health issues along with less frequent interaction with the natural world (Warber).

Access to green space was associated with improved mental well-being (McCormick).

### College & Mental Health

In 2022, over three-quarters of college students experienced moderate to serious psychological distress (College Student).

77%

### More barriers for women to access spaces

Women share common risk perceptions linked to male violence (Greene).

Feeling vulnerable limits participation in recreation (Wesley).
Mission Statement

- Raise awareness of green spaces on campus
- Connect people to a broader community
- Make green spaces more accessible
- Make green spaces feel safe for everyone
Methods

Research
Looking at Rutgers Spaces, Surveying students

Collaboration
Working with Scarlet Media, Communications class, and Advisor

Education
Using the guide to raise awareness of spaces and organizations to join
My Website

https://rutgersgreenspaceguide.netlify.app/
My Video

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CZhprskBt1M
## Survey Summary:

### 12 Questions Asked:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q1: What are your favorite nature areas at Rutgers?</th>
<th>Q7: When/how did you learn about any of these areas?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q2: Who or what (classes, organizations, programs etc.) introduced you to your favorite nature areas?</td>
<td>Q8: Why do you use these areas?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q3: What nature areas would you like to know more about?</td>
<td>Q9: Why do you not use these areas?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q4: What nature areas did you wish you knew more about when you came to Rutgers?</td>
<td>Q10: What would make Rutgers nature spaces more appealing to you?</td>
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<td>Q5: How would you like to learn more about the nature areas at Rutgers?</td>
<td>Q11: This question relates to an overall feeling of safety in any/all nature areas.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q6: Are you familiar with these nature areas at Rutgers?</td>
<td>Q12: Please describe yourself: Undergraduate, Graduate, Faculty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Survey Key Findings:

101 Responses from SEBS students and faculty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>People use spaces to</strong>...</th>
<th>relax, recreation, observe nature, hang out, and study</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>People like</strong>...</td>
<td>Rutgers gardens, eco preserve, passion puddle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Why people do not use spaces:</strong></td>
<td>alone, fear of harm, lack of awareness, poorly lit, distance, less seating, busy, access, and cold weather</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Finding out about spaces...</strong></td>
<td>found them because of classes, orientation, clubs, self-exploring</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Making spaces appealing:</strong></td>
<td>Guided walks, transportation, signage, knowledge of area, and seating</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Know more about...</strong></td>
<td>walking paths, greenhouse, study areas, eco preserve, Rutgers Gardens, Canal trail, bike paths, parks, all of them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How safe people feel:</strong></td>
<td>Average 3/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learn more about spaces with...</strong></td>
<td>organized activity, guided walks, during class, website, Instagram, flyers, and emails</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Who took the survey

- Grad students: 7%
- Undergrad Students: 51%
- Staff & Faculty: 43%
Feminist Leadership

Collaborative Approach

- Working with different teams to strengthen the project’s impact
- Learning from organizations already doing similar work
- Working with faculty to create more institutional change

Gendered Lens

- Researching barriers to access for different gender identities
- Surveying people including women on safety concerns
- Video highlighting women in outdoor spaces and including women’s exercise groups for resources
Future Impact & Evaluation
Addressing Survey Needs

- Information on Greens Spaces Accessible
  Website provides, maps and links to learn about different spaces

- Connecting people to different organizations
  Building community and having access to different organizations to join

- Spreading awareness of importance of these spaces
  Video highlights the mental and physical benefits of spaces and importance of accessibility
Timeline

**Planning**
*July-September*
Coordinating with collaborators, Brainstorming content

**Creating**
*October-November*
Putting together the website, video, and survey

**Implementing**
*Spring semester*
Showcasing Project on an institutional level (CAPS, OCA)

**Advocating**
*Spring semester*
Spreading awareness of the project and its importance
Lessons Learned

More representation
Importance of surveying large population and having a gendered lens

Collaborating
Good communication when working with a team

Flexibility
Adjusting goals to be more realistic

Knowing your Why
Grounding yourself in the importance of your work
Acknowledgements

SAP Advisor:
Dr. Mary Nucci

Scarlet Media Team:
Andrew Alexander
Morgan Andrews

Film Team:
Aimee Heart
Trina Chatterjee
Sam Thornton
Christoper Austin Williams
Yunhui Yang

Institute for Women’s Leadership:
Dr. Mary Trigg
Sasha Taner
Emily Haran


Thank You!