

DREHER PARK PROJECT

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WEST PALM BEACH, FLORIDA 2003-2004

The City of West Palm Beach redesigned Dreher Park, the premier park within the City's park system. The Park is a multi-use public park, surrounded on three sides by diverse neighborhoods. A major component of the Park's redesign was to revamp the Park's water flow and flood control systems. Eight acres of inter-connecting lakes and retention ponds have been built to catch, hold, and drain storm water within this 113-acre urban regional park.

Ecological artists, Jackie Brookner and Angelo Ciotti, collaborated on art concepts throughout the park and worked on its new design as part of the Dreher Park Design Team. Brookner and Ciotti created a 14-foot biosculpture that aerates and filters water in one of the park's new retention ponds. Called "Elder's Cove," the sculpture is a place for gathering and contemplation, and is a homage to the Seminole history of this area. Its form reflects the elaborate trunks of the Banyan trees that are abundant throughout the park. The artists' other concepts include islands featuring Cypress Swamp

ecosystems, which recall the history of the Park's land as part of the Everglades, and earthen mounds that reclaim and sculpt the soil from the lake excavations.

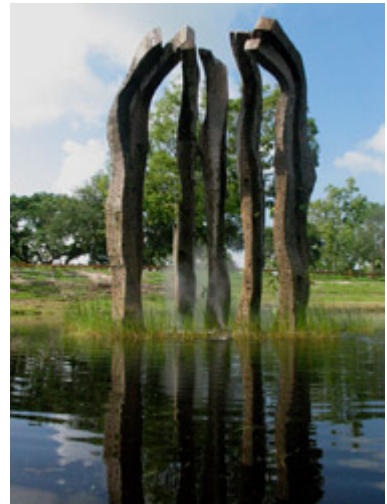
The mounds surround play areas and playgrounds. In the North end is the Choko Lochi Seminole Village playground, that was designed in consultation with Seminole elders. It features vegetation that Seminoles used as part of their daily lives--for baskets, textiles, food, etc. The 'Playground of Today and Tomorrow' in the South end looks to the future, and features other native flora of Florida.

Ecological artist Jackie Brookner works collaboratively with ecologists, design professionals, communities and policy makers on water remediation/public art projects for wetlands, rivers, and stormwater runoff-- with recent and current projects near Dresden, Germany, in West Palm Beach, FL, Cincinnati and Toledo, OH, San Jose, CA, New York City, and 3 towns in the Pacific Northwest working with the National Park Service.

Her projects demonstrate how the undervalued resources of stormwater and other polluted water can be reclaimed and used to create lush environments, expressive and multifunctional public spaces. They range from Biosculptures™ that are vegetated water filtration systems, to municipal planning where local water resources become the focal point of community revitalization. Brookner was Guest Editor of the 1992 Art Journal issue, "Art and Ecology. " Her essays can be found in M/E/A/N/I/N/G, in Natural Reality/Artistic Positions Between Nature and Culture, and in Cultures and Settlements.

She received her B.A. from Wellesley College and holds M.A. and A.B.D. degrees from Harvard University. She lives and works in New York and teaches at Parsons School of Design.

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Jackie Brookner and Angelo Ciotti,
"Elders' Cove Biosculpture,"
Dreher Park, Palm Beach,
Florida, 2005