Funded primarily by individual donations, the nonprofit Central Park Conservancy cares for the entire Park, tending to the largest and smallest details of its maintenance and restoration.

A WALK THROUGH THE HEART OF CENTRAL PARK
Journey through the center of the Park.

1 **Central Park Zoo**
The Wildlife Conservation Society keeps the Zoo open year-round, and winter is a great time to visit. The crowds die down, and many of the animals are more active in the cooler weather. Catch a glimpse of the sea lions as you pass through, or step inside to meet all of the Zoo’s residents, including penguins, seals, and snow leopards. Families with children can continue north to the Tisch Children’s Zoo, home to potbellied pigs, sheep, and the only cow in Manhattan.

2 **Delacorte Clock**
Before you exit the Zoo, stop at the Delacorte Clock to hear the nursery rhymes or seasonal tunes that play every half hour. Donated by philanthropist George Delacorte, the clock was dedicated in 1965 and features a band of whimsical animals—a penguin banging a drum, a hippo on violin, a bear and his tambourine, a concertina-playing elephant, a goat with pipes, and a kangaroo blowing his horn—that circle the tower as the music plays. The Conservancy works to make sure the outdoor clock spreads musical cheer all year-round.

3 **Balto**
In honor of this month’s Iditarod Great Sled Race, we pay a visit to the statue of Balto, a sled dog who helped deliver diphtheria medicine to the residents of Nome, Alaska, after an outbreak in 1925. Only 10 months later, a monument to Balto and his team was erected in Central Park, and it has since become one of the Park’s most popular statues. Balto himself, along with his musher, Gunnar Kassen, were present at the dedication ceremony, making this the only statue in Central Park to have had the honoree present at the unveiling.

4 **Rumsey Playfield**
Now synonymous with the popular cultural series SummerStage, Rumsey Playfield has always been an area for entertainment. Over the last century, this space has housed the Ladies’ Refreshment Saloon, a respectable place where women could dine in public without a male escort; the Casino, the Park’s first formal restaurant for coed dining and an Art Deco night club; a playground; and SummerStage, which continues today. In 2016, the Conservancy restored the landscape around Rumsey Playfield, rebuilding paths and expanding the irrigation infrastructure.

5 **The Mall**
When Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux designed Central Park, they envisioned a formal promenade as one of the Park’s most important features. The only straight line in the Park, the Mall is lined with rows of American elm trees, displaying one of the largest and last remaining stands of these majestic trees in North America. The trees create a canopy above the pedestrian walkway. This design was intended to rival the famous Gothic cathedrals of Europe and evoke feelings akin to a religious experience for those walking down the path.

6 **Bethesda Terrace**
The Mall culminates at Bethesda Terrace, which is considered the heart of Central Park. On the Terrace’s piers, ramps, and balustrades, you’ll notice elaborate carvings that represent time and the four seasons. Down the steps is the Arcade, an atmospheric space underneath the Terrace, which was originally conceived as an open-air reception hall. Its highlight is the magnificent Minton tile ceiling, which the Conservancy restored in the 1980s. Finally, walk out to the main plaza and take in the bronze statue, Angel of the Waters, a symbol of purity and healing.

Want even more of the inside scoop?
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