Central Park Conservancy and Macaulay Honors College at CUNY sponsor ‘bioBlitz’: Students, volunteers document species of flora and fauna in New York park

The researchers were outfitted with Google glasses, notebooks and magnifying lenses during the overnight hunt.

BY MAYARA GUIMARES AND GINGER ADAMS OTIS / NEW YORK DAILY NEWS
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The aim of BioBlitz is to document the plant and animal species of the park.

The hunt is on in Central Park.

Over 500 students, scientists, teachers and volunteers on loan from Google headed out Monday afternoon for a 24-hour expedition to find out what flora and fauna call Manhattan’s biggest space home.
Terri Carta (left), director of programs at the Central Park Conservancy, talks with students participating in BioBlitz.

The army of researchers was equipped with Google glasses, notebooks and magnifying lenses to help them spot creepy-crawlies and other critters.

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Google employees (left-right) Alyssa Ortez, 23, Beau Hanley, 33, and Carlos Salguero, 24, use Google Glass to examine various plant and animal species.

The event was sponsored by The Central Park Conservancy and Macaulay Honors College at CUNY — with Google also pitching in.

The overnight hunt was mandatory for the entire sophomore class at Macaulay College, organizers said.
Danielle Haley (left), 18, and Erica Siudzinski, 19, help to document the plant and animal species of the park.

“This is really out of my comfort zone. I am an Arts major. All I really know is that plants grow here, now I am about to go find out how many different species of plants Central Park has. I am excited,” said Sam Meyerson, 19.

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Researchers first documented all the animal and plant life in Central Park 10 years ago with the Explorers Club.

At that time some 500 species were found living in the middle of Manhattan.
Isabel Jenkins, 19, a student at Macaulay Honors College, is surprised at what she sees as she uses Google Glass to examine various plant and animal species.

This year researchers expect to find more than 800 species — and they are counting on Google glasses to help them capture in-the-moment images.

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“While wearing the Google Glasses all they have to do is say ‘Take a picture’ while looking at the bird or plant they found,” said Carlos Salguero, 24, who works for the tech company.

The bioblitz got a thumbs up from Jihae Lee.