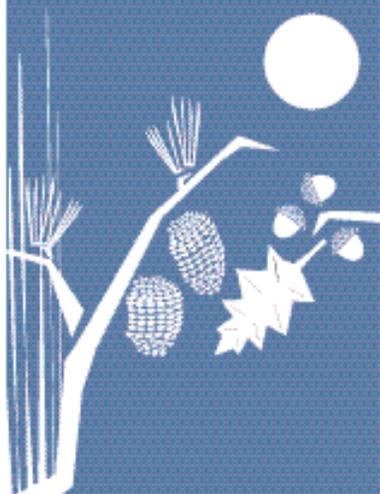


PROTECTORS

OF PINE OAK WOODS



STATEN ISLAND'S LAND CONSERVATION ORGANIZATION

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CALENDAR

INSERT

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

RESPONSE TO THE STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE OUR OPINION EDITORIAL ON TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2002 ENTITLED "BALLFIELD BREAKTHROUGH"

By Dick Buegler

Yes, there is an agreement. Yes, there is a compromise. However Protectors of Pine Oak Woods was never involved in any discussions, negotiations or compromises in the recent modified planning for recreational fields at Bloomingdale Park. Mind you, they didn't just forget to invite Protectors of Pine Oak Woods to the discussions. Neither elected officials, nor the parks or environmental agencies, nor the consultants, who produced the environmental impact statements, ever wanted us there. They had never wanted any kind of environmentalist involvement at the bargaining table. WHY? Because we bring up too many sticky issues they do not want to deal with. There are many environmental laws and regulations they do not want to be reminded of, would try to ignore or even fight in the courts to destroy or weaken. Those environmental protections were built into our US government only recently in the past two to three decades. Most world nations have very few of the wonderful environmental protections past US and NYS legislators voted for in order to protect our national natural environment. Unfortunately there are frequent attempts to remove or weaken that environmental legislation.

At the onset, when the NYC Department of Design and Construction first planned ballfields at Bloomingdale Woods, they never asked us what we thought. They had already disagreed with the NYC Department of Parks environmental consultants who advised against their original plan. They got rid of the involvement of Commissioner Henry Stern and his Department of Parks by hiring their own consultants. They then forgot to offer Protectors an opportunity to compromise when they argued among themselves with their conflicting plans. We sued to be heard, to get them to listen, but they still were not interested in our wetland tree species study, our finding fault with their carving level dry playing fields into soggy, wet hill slopes, or in our enlisting the aid of recognized specialists who showed what would happen to mammals, reptiles, birds, fish and plants as interior forest was lost to recreational fields

We also told them that their plan, any plan in Bloomingdale Park woodlands, by law, required an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and that an EIS always takes years to complete. But still they did not listen. So why complain so much now how

(continued on page 2)

PROTECTORS OF PINE OAK WOODS SPRING MEMBERS MEETING WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2ND, 2003, STATEN ISLAND ZOO 6:30-9:30 PM, ADMISSION FREE

6:30: Refreshments

7:30: Special Program:

- Eileen Monreale introduces her new book "Mathilde Weingartner, A Staten Island Naturalist"
- Breakout sessions exploring various issues pertaining to Staten Island's environment:
 - Wetlands
 - Preservation of Open Space
 - Park Preservation and Protection
 - What kind of environmentalist do we need on SI?

9:15: Closing remarks and raffle

Call 761-7496 for more information.

WINTER 2003

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RESPONSE TO THE STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE OUR OPINION EDITORIAL ON TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2002 ENTITLED "BALLFIELD BREAKTHROUGH"

(continued from page 1)

Protectors delayed the ball field construction for three years?

It was Mayor Bloomberg and Parks Department Commissioner Benepe who struck a compromise with Borough President Molinaro and his Borough Engineer. It was not Protectors compromise, nor could it be called our defeat. We were never involved or consulted.

But nature and the environment were defeated by planners, and nature and the environment were compromised, including our air, water, trees, birds, wildlife, insects, flowers and human health. Who but Protectors fought for the environment? Who but Protectors cared about the forest, our earth and its wildlife? Who but Protectors cared what kind of natural heritage we leave for future generations in our local neighborhoods?

The forest core has NOT been spared as suggested in the editorial. It has been pared down, whittled away, piece by piece. And the more it is pared, the less healthy the true forest becomes. Each wildlife species knows how much true forest it requires to survive. Wildlife will leave when the forest is not large enough for it, or if fresh water does not flow clearly through it, or if noise, air pollution and our domestic pets intrude into the safety of its interior.

The New York City elected officials who accomplished this compromise cannot call themselves or each other environmentalists as they so often do. We call them all politicians. Unfortunately, it is the politicians, at the present, who rule and control the environment on much of Staten Island, particularly in Bloomingdale Park. Those politicians have never tried to work with us. Do they not know how to work with us? Do they fear our knowledge? They should, for we strongly support all environmental regulations and legislation. If they are not avoiding us completely, they may refer to us disparagingly as tree huggers, birders, even those "not good people." They have never recognized us as the naturalists, ecologists, botanists or scientists we may be for that would give us a status they are not willing to grant us.

FARM COLONY STUDY

. A STEP FORWARD

In mid-November N.Y. City's Economic Development Corporation (EDC) held a public meeting at Colony Hall, SeaView about the New York City Farm Colony - Reuse Study, just completed by Page Ayres Cowley Architects. Articles in the Advance on 10/11/02 (p. A 3) and 11/15/02, (p. A 11) refer to this planning effort.

Page Ayres Cowley is a member of the Regional Open Space Advisory Committee which meets biennially to recommend land and historic property for protection under the NYS Open Space Plan. Protectors is also a member of the OSA Committee. Ms. Cowley is held in high esteem as a brilliant and fair evaluator and a creator of historic preservation and stabilization projects. Her team researched the history of all buildings in the Farm Colony, including exact specifics of size, design, construction, location, topography, current condition. This provides a base for studying which of the buildings might be stabilized, rehabilitated and reused in some manner; and which might be most suitable to demolish, partially restore or to reconstruct.

The Reuse Study proposed three zones be created out of the remaining 75-acre Farm Colony. Zone A, a 25.7 acre 'open space parcel' lies between the Great Swamp and the former morgue buildings and Farm Colony roads and buildings. The Great Swamp and morgue buildings have been transferred to NYC Parks-S.I. Greenbelt and are not in zone A. Zone A open space includes the new Verrazano Little League fields leased directly from the City. The remaining open space is proposed to be transferred to Parks.

The Reuse Study focuses primarily on Zone B, "the 23.4 acre "Historic Core" - the portion with the most development. The B Site includes landscaped and developed areas and all existing and (the 2) demolished buildings. Buildings and landscape will be either rehabilitated, removed, re-designed in context, or reconstructed as part of the proposal selected by EDC, when the site is advertised as available.

(continued on page 3)

(continued from page 2)

Zone C, 16 acres of 'unused' land bordering Walcott Avenue, Forest Hill Road and Colonial Avenue (minus the Potter's Field) would be part of EDC's Request for Proposals (RFP). It is proposed by The Study to be developed – with strict design, setback, landscape and other constraints –(some of which were proposed in the Report). This development area would enable the developer to produce income from whatever is built, to compensate for the high cost, complexity and difficulty of redeveloping Zone B. There are many review processes (Landmarks Commission, EDC, Buildings Dept., City Planning and ULURP). It will be a MIRACLE and a wonderful tribute to thoughtful leadership on all parts – developers, agencies, Island political leaders and the Mayor – if a viable reuse plan can be produced– economically viable, acceptable to "the community"(local, citywide and local preservation, the developer and environmental community), and respectful of The landmarked SeaView Historic District, Greenbelt Natural Areas District and Greenbelt and the local community.

It was clear that few of the citizens in the audience, (which included PPOW Board members Dick Buegler, Elaine Croteau and me and two other members of PPOW) had any access to the Report, or to the 6 page Report Summary.

Most members of the audience who were not political aides, political evaluators agency staff or potential developers, were members of the closely knit adjacent Willowbrook (primarily) Jewish community, who are very concerned about impacts of whatever might be developed.

I spoke about PPOW's 1980 lawsuit to halt the sale of the Farm Colony, and our request that the 50-acre Northern SeaView property planned for sale be considered when discussing the sale/reuse of the Farm Colony.

THIS IS AN IMPORTANT STEP FORWARD...beginning to understand exactly what is on the site and developing some proposals for sites B and C. Next is "stabilizing" two major historic buildings which can most easily be reused; funding to do this stabilization was passed in the City's June Budget.

In my opinion, the complicated process of adapting the Farm Colony to become a community asset would be a great service to every Islander. Done right, it will require determination and extraordinary skill. Expertise in working with agencies and political leaders is essential. Rebuilding the Farm Colony into a community asset would require unusual dedication. I am among those who hope that an experienced and resourceful organization like the Jewish Community Center of SI will respond to EDC's Request for Proposals by offering to exchange the Manor Road property it owns and leases to redevelop the Farm Colony's Historic Core and currently unused acres into a treasure all Islanders will admire.

- Ellen Pratt

RESTORATION WORKSHOPS

As some of you will recall, last year Chuck Perry and I acquired a considerable donation of trees from Pinelands Nursery. You will be happy to know that these trees have found permanent homes in Staten Island's green spaces. We planted many of the Green Ash and River Birch in Ft. Wadsworth National Park and

the Greenbelt, while many of the Beach Plum and Bayberry found homes in Great Kills National Recreation Area. Despite the intense heat this summer, most of these trees made it through, with a little help from us by way of weekly watering. New plantings need almost constant care and checking, depending on the species, to help them along while they expand their root system and adjust to their new surroundings. It is safe to say that without watering, many of our trees wouldn't have made it into winter.

I am pleased to announce that once again Pinelands Nursery has offered to donate a large number of trees to our ecological restoration efforts. Some of the trees we will be acquiring are the rare Swamp White Oak, Atlantic White Cedar, Sassafras, Sweet Bay Magnolia and Grey Birch, to name a few. This donation will allow us to replace the exotic vegetation we remove with native trees, shrubs and herbs that will be of benefit to humans, by providing fresh oxygen, and to wildlife by providing food and shelter.

Protectors of Pine Oak Woods' restoration team is dedicated to restoring large parts of Staten Island's green spaces to ecological health, by removing aggressive and pernicious exotic vegetation, such as Wisteria, Honeysuckle, Oriental Bittersweet, Norway Maple and Porcelain Berry. These exotic plant species literally strangle and shade out our native trees, wildflowers and herbs, causing great ecological harm and impoverishment. It is truly amazing to see a tree that has been strangled to death by a Wisteria vine, and it is also quite wonderful to see a dedicated individual cut that vine to pieces while rescuing a young tree from the same fate.

If you feel like doing something good for Staten Island, for the Earth and for your health, do join us on our monthly workshops. You too can have the pleasure of rescuing a native tree, planting a young seedling, and cleaning up the forest so that you and others can breathe easier, and enjoy the unsurpassed beauty of healthy native woodland. Not only will you experience the beauty of the forest, you will also meet some extraordinary people and walk away with a feeling of having accomplished something worthwhile. Now, where else can you do that...for free???

- Glenn Cronick

We Want You!!!

Join Our Activist Network
And make a difference!

Please send us your name and email. We will notify you when you can send a fax, send an email, write a letter or make a phone call to an elected official concerning an environmental/community issue. Your voice makes a difference, so exercise it!

Send your email address to:

Sylvia Zaage
sylhz@con2.com

LAST CHANCE FOR LAST CHANCE POND

Staten Islanders have fought to protect Last Chance Pond in Dongan Hills for more than twenty-five years. The Staten Island Community has been promised repeatedly that this pond area will be preserved.

Permit applications now before the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) force the government to address the future of Last Chance Pond. Will the pond become dominated by townhouses, diminishing its use and value as a wildlife, human, wetland and storm water management resource? The 20 townhouses proposed in the permit applications are inside the 'footprint' of Last Chance Pond Park-Bluebelt. In our opinion, as park advocacy and natural lands ecologists, the townhouses are within the minimum area required for a park and bluebelt which has been promised to the local community and all of Staten Island. Our political leaders must save Last Chance Pond NOW !

If built, these dwellings will limit the City's storm water management options and increase the cost of the New York City Department of Environmental Conservation (NYCDEP) proposed Last Chance Pond Bluebelt. They will also limit public access to the Pond and destroy the beauty, environmental integrity and the use of the Pond area as a storm water management filtering and retention basin, as a wildlife habitat and as a natural areas park. If housing is built on either parcel, the potential public asset of Last Chance Pond Park-Bluebelt, which can permanently enhance property values and the quality of life of the surrounding community, will be lost. Truly, this IS the last chance for Last Chance Pond !

In the 1970's this area was funded as a State Park due to its outstanding resource and community enhancement value, but it was judged too small for State Park ownership. City Parks now owns 8-acres of the site and The Trust for Public Land holds several lots. The 1.65 acres owned by Mr. Borg, and several acres owned by Florence Rand MUST BE PURCHASED BY N.Y.C.D.E.P. to create a functioning park and bluebelt. If protected from development, the pond and its buffer zone park, bordered by Stobe Avenue, and Husson, Vera and Zoe Streets, will be a tremendous benefit to water quality in coastal waters, limit downstream flooding in Midland Beach (NA-9) and become a true community quality of life asset as a storm water management pond, completely surrounded by publicly accessible parkland.

We must urge NYSDEC to stop development within the buffer zone, considering the community's great interest in, and need for, protection of this tiny wetland-wildlife-potential public resource. These applications should be treated as a "special case," based on the site's significance, history and widespread community concern. DEC must work intensively on these proposals with City DEP and City Parks to seek protection for Last Chance Pond, even in these difficult fiscal times.

Protectors remains alarmed at the increasing leniency in freshwater wetland permitting on Staten Island. Increasing numbers of permit applications are being submitted to build houses entirely within the wetland buffer zone. In the past, until the early 1990's, occasionally DEC would allow a patio, shed, pool or the interior wall of a house to be sited within 60 feet of the wetland border. That sixty feet distance from the wetland itself has,

in recent years, become forty feet, sometimes less. Housing is being permitted by DEC closer and closer to the actual wetland, increasing the chances of flooding for all homeowners adjacent to that wetland who depend upon it for drainage. We now regularly see applications for ENTIRE HOUSES to be sited fully WITHIN THE ADJACENT AREA. DEC is not taking adequate consideration of the huge importance of coastal and migratory flyway wetlands on Staten Island to the over all public welfare in coastal fisheries, coastal water quality, and public and wildlife welfare. We see the erosion of wetland buffer zone protections as contrary to over-all public interest and welfare, and contrary to the environmental responsibilities of NYS DEC, the public's and the environment's ONLY DEFENSE.

Please write to:

John Cryan, Regional Permit Administrator
& Harold J. Dickey, Permit Administrator
at
N.Y.S. Dept. of Environmental Conservation
47-40 21st Street
LIC, NY 11301

and urge them to deny the permit applications and save Last Chance Pond.

- Ellen Pratt

THE TEN MILER FOR THOSE WHO NEVER WALKED IT OR THOSE WHO WISH TO FONDLY REMINISCE WHAT YOU HAVE BEEN MISSING ALL THESE YEARS

PART ONE: FROM CLOVE LAKES PARK TO STATEN ISLAND'S HIGHEST POINT INCLUDING MOSES' FOLLY, THE ABANDONED ALTERNATE ONE OVERPASS OF RICHMOND PARKWAY

Ever since Protectors began in the early 1970s, there have been ten mile Greenbelt Walks, most of them led by Protectors of Pine Oak Woods. At first Herman Zaage and I did a traditional Spring walk, celebrating that season as the most beautiful and promising of hope for the future of the Staten Island Environment.

But after a few years we also wanted to share the beauty of the fall season with its promise to return life to the forest in the following year but after a reasonable winter rest. And in preparation for that rest, nature puts on a painter's palette of colors in a new design each year. A few years later, Herman and I took one final step. We decided to lead our walkers into the depth of Staten Island's winter. We even find beauty in tree shapes and their bare branching, the snow and ice patterns, and even ourselves, bundled each in our own way to protect from whatever elements might surprise us.

Three times annually now, members of Protectors and our metropolitan area friends walk a ten mile circular through the S. I. Greenbelt. Traditionally, for the last 33 years, such walks have started at the Clove Lakes Parking lot, for the convenience of off-Islanders who take the S. I. Ferry and the #60 bus to join us near the Lake Club restaurant and the convenient rest facilities. Each season, Spring, Fall and Winter presents the walkers with an entirely different impression of the Greenbelt. Many join us several times each year to see the changing magic of the seasons as they unfold.

The Spring walk is timed to catch both the blooming of the native Pinxter Azalea, with its large rose/pink flowers, and the flowering of the high bush blueberry with its delicate white bells promising early July fruits in great abundance. This year, the 2003 Spring walk is a week earlier than ever before, the first Saturday of the Month, May 3rd. Two or three decades ago found us walking the third weekend of the month. Recently, we moved it up to the second weekend of May, but last year, we saw the last of the blooms of Azalea near the end of the second week. We agreed we had to be earlier than ever and so we moved it up one more week. This earlier blooming of many Spring species is due in part to the global warming our planet is experiencing and is predicted to continue and worsen at least for many decades to come. Join us May 3rd to see if we predicted correctly.

When we cross the two stone arch bridges in front of the Lake Club, I point out the native redbud in bloom on our left at the end of the second bridge. Redbuds not only flower at the ends of branches, but also along all the branches and all the major trunks as well. It is a small understory tree covered with lavender-rose half inch pea-like blossoms and perfectly heart shaped 3 to 5 inch leaves.

We rapidly enter very mature woodland as we ascend the hill. If the trail ascending to the left is muddy or running with water, we take the paved path up through the picnic area and turn towards Victory Boulevard, passing many majestic and ancient giant trees. Dr. Andrew Greller, of Queens College and Torrey Botanic Society, once marveled at their age and health. Bruce Kershner, author of *Secret Places of Staten Island* (see pages 36-41), aged these trees between 150 and 180 years old. That corner of Clove Lakes Park, just above the skating rink is the oldest forest of Clove Lakes Park, and also the least disturbed, with Tulip trees, Oaks, Beeches and Hickories and a fine understory of wildflowers including wild sarsaparilla, thin-leaved sunflower and a large stand of wild leek (prized down south as the mild onion flavored Ramps).

We cross Victory Boulevard near the Dialysis office that keeps many Staten Islanders alive as they await kidney transplants. We walk the suburban streets and pass an old Vanderbilt Victorian mansion with two modern additions that is now the Swedish Home for the Aged.

Our route takes us across Little Clove Road and a legal opening through the State Dept. of Transportation (DOT) fence, marked with the blue rectangle of the 16 mile long Blue Trail that starts at Forest Avenue and Clove Road, near the largest and oldest NYC Tulip tree and eventually continues on past the S. I. Mall to return along a more westerly route back to its end on Brielle Avenue just North of Sea View Hospital and Home.

We now climb the steepest ascent of the entire ten miles to reach the unused overpass of the connection between the SI Expressway and the unbuilt section of Alternate One of Robert Moses' Richmond Parkway, stopped forever by a Federal suit in the late 1950s filed by the late Terence Benbow and the committed group of men and women who created SIGNAL, the Staten Island Greenbelt Natural Areas League, including Bob Hagenhofer, John Mitchell (now with national Geographic as Environmental Editor) and Sally Williams (now of the Greenbelt Conservancy).

As we cross the unused viaduct over the S. I. Expressway, the roar of the traffic below is a wonderful reminder of why we are there: to get away from paved roads, deafening traffic and the resulting pollution from such oil energy wasting. And we thank those SIGNAL friends for having preserved the Greenbelt for us.

We enter this woodland from the unused viaduct. We call the unused viaduct "Moses' Folly" for Bob Moses the planner of most of the major bridges and highways for many decades in NYC.

Moses always built the interchanges for the next of his proposed superhighways so that when he was ready to submit plans for new highway construction, he could complain that it was not fiscally responsible to waste so many millions by scrapping his completed viaducts already in place for the next highway. He won with this logic elsewhere but the Signal group stopped him from proceeding with Richmond Parkway. Thus "Moses' Folly." But SIGNAL cared more about the native woodlands, than they did for Bob Moses' expensive tastes in highway construction. They sued and were among the first to win against the mighty Moses.

We always stop at the end of the viaduct, before entering the Greenbelt proper to look back at the wonders of man's works, the viaducts, the traffic, and the vehicles and off some 10 to 12 miles away, the grand vista of Manhattan and the Empire State Bldg. We can never stop there without remembering what we experienced **9/11/01** and those several hundred Staten Islanders we lost.

We enter the woodlands from Moses' Folly. The hill we ascend on the other side, overlooking the old S. I. Community College (now the Petrides Complex) is rich in native hardwood trees, including much Chestnut oak whose multilobed leaf and deeply furrowed bark make it one of our most distinctive trees. The barren trail shows evidence of the native Serpentine, the rock of which the whole highland ridge of Staten Island is composed.

But we proceed deeper into natural history as we ascend the hill above the Petrides Complex. The shrub understory, here, is dominated by the Pinxter Azalea which blooms so beautifully in the Spring, along with the Maple Leaved Viburnum which gives a lavender/white tinge to the Fall woodlands as its leaves age, fade and change color.

The trail ascends to the top of Todt Hill where it intersects with Ocean Terrace some 412 feet above mean sea level. Here is a small plateau, covered with hundreds of younger trees 30 to 40 years old, mostly sweet gum that must have all entered at the same time after a destructive forest fire had burned through prior to our having first walked the Blue Trail. (Part II which will follow next issue will take us from Todt Hill's high point through Camp Kaufman, Pouch Boy Scout Camp and to lunch in High Rock)

- Dick Buegler

PROTECTORS OF PINE OAK WOODS CALENDAR WINTER/SPRING 2003

Saturday, January 18

Sunset Moonrise walk at Mt Moses--4:15 p.m. to 6:15 p.m. (sunset is at 4:58 p.m., Moonrise is at 5:10 p.m.) Meet at the entry road to Eger Nursing Home at the intersection of Rockland Avenue and Meisner Avenue. Bring a few refreshments to share with others and a flashlight for each person. Call Dick Buegler 761-7496 for more information.

Saturday, January 25

Annual Winter Greenbelt Walk--9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Ten moderate miles, roundtrip at a comfortable pace. Meet at the Lakes Cafe in Clove Lakes Park. Bring lunch, beverage and wear sturdy shoes. We go in all weather but hike shortened on high pollution days. Call Dick Buegler at 761-7496 or Herman Zaage at 727-0772 for more details.

Wednesday, January 29

Protectors Board Meeting -- 7:45 p.m., Art Lab Snug Harbor. Call Dick Buegler 761-7496 for more information.

Saturday, February 8

Forest Restoration Workshop--Mt. Loretto Conservation Area, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Meet at corner of Hylan Boulevard and Richard Avenue. Gloves, tools and refreshments provided. Call Dick Buegler at 761-7496 for more information.

Saturday, February 15

Natural History Walk at Clay Pit Ponds State Park--10 a.m. to 12 noon. Meet at Visitors' Center, 84 Nielsen Avenue. Call Glenn Cronick (a Forest Restoration Team Leader) at 987-9246 for more information.

Sunday, February 16

Sunset Moonrise Walk at Mt Moses--4:45 p.m. to 6:45 p.m. (Sunset is at 5:33 p.m., Moonrise is earlier at 5:14 p.m.) Meet at the entry road to Eger Nursing Home at the intersection of Rockland Avenue with Meisner Avenue. Bring a few refreshments to share with others and a flashlight for each person. Call Dick Buegler 761-7496 for more information.

Monday, February 17

Presidents' Day Walk of the Greenbelt to Mt Moses--10a.m.-12:30 p.m. A three mile walk along Greenbelt trails to the top of Mt Moses. Meet along the rear side of S. Wagner High School on Manor Road. Wear sturdy shoes, dress warmly and bring a light refreshment and beverage. Binoculars and cameras encouraged. Call Dick Buegler for more information

Wednesday, February 19

Protectors Executive Board Meeting--7:45 p.m. 80 Mann Ave

Saturday, February 22

SeaView Senior Housing Site Tour--10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. See the site for \$2500 senior apartments with 2,696 trees tagged for some reason. Several have diameters of 3 foot and 4+ feet. Meet at the corner of Walcott Avenue and Brielle Avenue near SeaView Hospital. Leaders Chuck Perry and Glenn Cronick from the forest restoration team. Call Chuck, 667-1393, for more information.

Tuesday, February 25

Owl Prowl Through the Greenbelt---5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Park at the top of Nevada Avenue, outside the High Rock gate. Sun sets during walk, so bring a flashlight. This is the beginning of the owls' day. Call Cliff Hagen, 227-8839, for more information.

Saturday, March 8

Forest Restoration Workshop--Buck's Hollow, Latourette Park--10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Meet at the entry road to Eger Nursing Home at the intersection of Rockland Avenue with Meisner Avenue. Gloves, tools and refreshments provided. Call Dick Buegler at 761-7496 for more information.

Tuesday, March 11

Owl Prowl through Long Pond Park--5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Park at the corner of Page Avenue and Amboy Road. Sun sets during walk, so bring a flashlight. This is the beginning of the owls' day. Call Cliff Hagen, 227-8839, for more information.

Wednesday, March 12

Protectors Board Meeting--7:45 p.m. Art Lab, Snug Harbor

Tuesday, March 18

Sunset Moonrise Walk at Mt Moses--5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. (sunset is at 6:07 p.m., Moonrise is at 6:34 p.m.) Meet at the entry road to Eger Nursing Home at the intersection of Rockland Avenue and Meisner Avenue. Bring a few refreshments to share with others and a flashlight for each person, also a camera and/or binoculars. Call Dick Buegler 761-7496 for more information.

Wednesday, March 26

Protectors Executive Board Meeting--7:45 p.m. 80 Mann Ave

Saturday, March 29

Creating a Backyard Wildlife Habitat, Claypit Ponds State Park, 10 a.m. to 12 noon. Meet at Visitors' Center, 84 Nielsen Avenue. Call Glenn Cronick at 987-9246 for more information.

Sunday, March 30

Ancient Trees of Wolfe's Pond Park--1:00 to 3:30 p.m. Trees 100 to 200 years old. Meet in the parking lot off Cornelia Avenue. Call Dick Buegler 761-7496 for more information.

Wednesday, April 2 6:30 to 9:30 pm.

Semi-Annual Spring Members' Meeting--Speaker Eileen Monreale introducing her new book, "Mathilde Weingartner, a Staten Island Naturalist" and a repeat of last Fall's successful workshop on "Getting Involved With Staten Island's Environment," including parks, wetlands, open space and forest restoration. Call Dick Buegler, 761-7496 for more information.

Saturday, April 5

Botanical Tour of Bloodroot Valley and High Rock Park--10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Meet with Torrey Botanic Society, 10 a.m. at passenger ramp of S. I. Ferry Terminal or at 10:30 a.m. at Manor Road Side of S. Wagner High School. Call Dick Buegler, 761-7496 to make reservation or arrange car pool. Lunch and beverage a must.

Sunday, April 6

Greenbrook Sanctuary in Early Spring -- 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Meet on Staten Island to car pool to this fabulous wildlife preserve in New Jersey. Registration, \$4. Bring lunch and beverage. Call Dick Buegler at 761-7496 or Herman Zaage at 727-0772 for more details.

Saturday, April 12

Forest Restoration Workshop--S. W. Latourette, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Meet at parking lot by the Duck Pond in Richmontown, Richmond Hill Road. Gloves, tools and refreshments provided. Call Dick Buegler at 761-7496 for more information.

Sunday, April 13

Bloomingdale Woods Early Spring Flowers 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. See Staten Island's best wildflower display in a 2 mile stroll in mature forest and along a meandering stream. Meet at the intersection of Maguire Avenue and Drumgoole Road West. Wear sturdy shoes. Call Dick Buegler at 761-7496 for more information.

Wednesday, April 16

Sunset Moonrise Walk at Mt Moses--7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. (Sunset is at 7:37 p.m., Moonrise is at 7:40 p.m.) Meet at the entry road to Eger Nursing Home at the intersection of Rockland Avenue and Meisner Avenue. Bring a few refreshments to share with others and a flashlight for each person, also a camera and/or binoculars. Call Dick Buegler 761-7496 for more information.

Wednesday, April 23

Full Board Meeting at the Art Lab, Snug Harbor--7:45 p.m.

Sunday, April 27

Clay Pit Ponds Park Wildflowers, Wildlife and Trees--1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Revisit this sampling of the rare Pine Barrens of NJ, LI and Albany, NY. Find out why Protectors

wanted it to become a State Park/Preserve. Meet at Visitors' Center, 84 Nielsen Avenue. Call Dick Buegler for more information.

Saturday, May 3

Annual Spring Greenbelt Walk--9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Ten moderate miles, roundtrip at a comfortable pace. See wonderful vistas and the Wild Azalea and Highbush Blueberry in full bloom. Meet at the Lakes Cafe in Clove Lakes Park. Bring lunch, beverage, cameras, binoculars and field guides. Wear sturdy shoes. We go in all weather but hike shortened on high pollution days. Call Dick Buegler at 761-7496 or Herman Zaage at 727-0772 for more details.

Sunday, May 4

Long Pond Park in Springtime--1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Tour the varied woodlands and kettle hole ponds of the South Shore's newest City Park, including the majestic Beech Forest behind Mt. Loretto. Meet at the corner of Richard Avenue and Hylan Boulevard. Call Dick Buegler, 761-7496 or Dominick Durso at 967-0379 for more information.

Saturday, May 10

Forest Restoration Workshop--Greta Moulton Tract at High Rock, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Meet at Nevada Avenue parking lot of High Rock Park. See how this forest has been regenerated over the last 11 years. Gloves, tools and refreshments provided. Call Dick Buegler at 761-7496 for more information.

Thursday, May 15

Sunset Moonrise Walk at Mt Moses--7:15 p.m. to 9:15 p.m. (Sunset is at 8:07 p.m., Moonrise is earlier at 7:49 p.m.) Meet at the entry road to Eger Nursing Home at the intersection of Rockland Avenue with Meisner Avenue. Bring a few refreshments to share with others and a flashlight for each person, also a camera and/or binoculars. Call Dick Buegler 761-7496 for more information.

Saturday, May 17

SeaView Senior Housing Site Tour--11:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. See the site for \$2500 senior apartments with 2,696 trees tagged for some reason. Several have diameters of 3 foot and 4+ feet. Meet at the corner of Walcott Avenue and Brielle Avenue near SeaView Hospital. Leaders Chuck Perry and Glenn Cronick from the forest restoration team. Call Chuck, 667-1393, for more information.

Sunday, May 18

Meadows, Wetlands, Bluff and Beach of Loretto State Conservation Area--1:00 p.m. -- 3:30 p.m. See the mowed Meadows come alive. Meet at the corner of Richard Avenue and Hylan Boulevard. Call Dick Buegler, 761-7496 or Dominick Durso at 967-0379 for more information.

PACK FOREST CAMP SCHOLARSHIPS FOR TEENS

By Cliff Hagen

What started as the dawning of a good idea in 1987, is today shining as bright as the noonday sun. For 15 years the dedication and diligence of Dick Buegler, Sylvia Zaage and Helen Kravetz have been lighting the way for Staten Island teens interested in the natural world.

Protectors of Pine Oak Woods, concerned for the future of Staten Island's natural environment, sponsors a group of 15- to 17-year-old high school students each summer at the Teenage Environmental Workshop at Pack Forest camp.

The camp, designed and operated by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, is located just a few hours' hike from Lake George in Warren County, New York. Participants are immersed in a weeklong study of ecology. Under the guidance of highly skilled instructors, the teens gain practical, hands-on experience in areas of study such as forestry, soil ecology, hydrology, aquatic biology and the impacts of human activities in a natural setting.

Ultimately, campers come away with a heightened awareness of and a deeper respect for nature (see the letters below). And it is this awareness, this respect, that motivates campers towards conservation. Camp participants have gone on to research populations of Southwestern Willow Flycatchers in Arizona, take a census of breeding tern populations on the California coast and study the impacts of human intrusions on Alaskan woodlands.

A small light on Staten Island can burn bright on the national stage. If you have any interest in sparking a flame in the hearts and minds of Staten Island teens, call Cliff Hagen at (718) 227-8839.

August 14, 2001

Dear Ms. Kravetz,

Thank you so much for giving me the chance to experience the outdoors of

the Adirondacks. I had such a great time at Camp Pack Forest. The counselors were funny, the other campers were friendly, and the food wasn't bad. In the beginning of the week, we played many name games and did other activities that allowed us to bond. I made friends from all over New York State. I miss them a lot now, but we still keep in touch by writing and e-mailing each other.

I thoroughly enjoyed the lessons we learned. One of the lessons I chose was about the bog, so one of the counselors and some other camper and I went into the bog and onto the mat of tall grass that grew there. The smell wasn't that pleasant because it is all decaying material, but it was still a very interesting experience. After the journey through the bog, we went into a swampy area and rolled around in the mud. My group had a mud fight and we came back to the campsite looking like a bunch of pigs, great fun! After that we all took a swim in the lake to clean off and then took showers to get the rest of the mud out of our hair. I also went on mini hikes to go bird watching and we were able to reach the top of a mountain looking down on the camp. That is where I took the pictures of Natalie, Ximena, and me. There were little toads hopping around everywhere. We had to be extra careful not to step on any; they were hard to see because of their ability to camouflage.

A highlight of the week was an overnight hike around Pharoah Lake. The scenery was absolutely gorgeous. Our camp site was at the tip of a peninsula. I took many pictures of the view. We cooked macaroni and cheese by the campfire. I've never actually experienced a campfire in person. We ate lunch on the trail and we sang songs and did minute mysteries. The bugs weren't that bad either.

Camp Pack Forest had only one major rule and that was to have no ort. Ort is excess food and if you don't have any, that's no ort. We were the first group of new campers to have no ort! The whole camp had eaten everything that they put on their plates. As a reward, we received a clean plate that said NO ORT. I was very proud of that.

Even though I had fun everyday at camp, my favorite time was when we had the campfires. The first day we had a campfire and the last day we had a

campfire. The first day, the counselors entertained us with funny skits and stories. We passed a stick around telling our name and what we would like to achieve at camp and then that stick was tossed in the fire. The last day, we did the same thing, except we entertained the counselors. We had to come up with little skits about the whole camp experience. I thought they went well. Then we sang songs for the last time and held hands as we sang "Adirondack Blue". That was when it really hit me that camp was over. I felt really sad. As the time came for all of us to say goodbye, we all knew that camp would be a memory never forgotten. Thank you again, for I have learned much and done things I would have never had the chance to do, and I owe it all to you.

Sincerely,
Katherine Tulimieri

August 12, 2002

Dear Ms. Kravetz and Protectors of Pine Oak Woods,

Thank you so much for giving me the scholarship for a week at Pack Forest. It was such a great experience! I learned new things about caring for, and being part of, our environment, and met the greatest people. I also caught frogs and snakes, tested lake water, went kayaking and went on an 11.3 mile hike near Lake George.

It was really a treat to get out of the City. The Adirondacks are our beautiful "backyard" and it was so wonderful to spend some time there. I appreciate the gift you've given me and I'll always remember the things I learned at Pack Forest.

Please thank the members of the Protectors for sponsoring kids. It shows that you really care that we learn about the earth.

Sincerely,
Sara Mazes



PROTECTORS OF PINE OAK WOODS

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

A reminder to those of you who have e-mail:

Our new **E-MAIL NETWORK** is growing rapidly! Our e-mail members are kept informed regularly about exciting events like the Sunset/Full-Moon walks on Moses Mountain, as well as fast breaking news about our many environmental involvements. If you're not in the Network yet, just send me your name and e-mail address at sylhz@con2.com

NEW MEMBERS: Denise Alton, Margaret Benjamin, Tina Bliss & Tim Moran, Angela Fumando, Carmela Groce, Gloria Hefferan, Rosanne Levitt, Andrew Lipkin, Anne Louros, Abraham & Rose Levy, Patrick Shalhoub, William Shea, Anita Wadas

DONORS: Mr. & Mrs. F. Pepper Birchard, Bill Ince, Gillian Rosenfeld

PATRONS: Margaret Benjamin, Alfred Caime, Catherine Greene-Manzi, Kevin Kelly, Randal Leason, Naomi & Bob Lonergan, William Palm, Peter Proeller

CONTRIBUTING MEMBERS: Mr. & Mrs. David Avrin, Anna Connors, Angela Fumando, Joyce & Ira Goldstein, Carmela Groce, Dr. Alfred Levine, Harry & Donna Madden, Edith Miraldi, Anthony Rose, William Shea, Meg Smith, Frances Spatola, Mr. & Mrs. Jeffrey Sperber, Gaile Tucker

ORGANIZATIONS: AARP Chapter 3306, Natural Resources Protective Assn.

PROTECTORS DEFENSE FUND: Catherine Barron, Dr. & Mrs. Joel & Judy Berger, Tina Bliss & Tim Moran, Rose Caggiano, Mr. & Mrs. Carl Dujmich, Mr. & Mrs. John Grandinetti, Michael Manna, Stephen Petrowicz (Life Member), Constance Quanci, George Robinson, JoAnn Sinatra, Babette Thomasy

SPECIAL DONATION IN MEMORY OF: Helen Rudolph, by Diane Gurgone

NOTE: If you received a letter with 2 little sad birds saying "We miss you" - we do hope to hear from you soon!

Best wishes for a healthy, fulfilling New Year!

- Sylvia Zaage

CLIP AND MAIL



ARE YOU A MEMBER? HAVE YOU RENEWED?

YES, I WANT TO HELP STATEN ISLAND'S FINEST REMAINING NATURAL AREAS AND SEE THE GREENBELT PROTECTED.

Please enroll me as a member in the following category:

- NEW RENEWAL
- \$ 5.00...Student
- \$ 5.00...Senior Citizen
- \$ 10.00...Individual
- \$ 15.00...Family
- \$ 25.00...Organizational
- \$ 25.00...Contributing (includes free lapel pin)*
- \$ 50.00...Patron (includes 2 lapel pins)*
- \$100.00...Donor (includes 2 lapel pins)*
- \$100.00 & Up...Corporate (includes 2 lapel pins)*
- \$250 & Up...Protector
- \$500 & Up...Lifetime member
- \$ 3.50...Lapel Pin, mailed to me

Already a member? Please use this form to continue to generously support Protectors' Defense Fund or other projects.

Enclosed is an additional donation of \$ _____ to defray special expenses for

Protectors' Defense Fund (\$500 or more earns lifetime membership and a print by mezzotint artist Herman Zaage. Limited supply.)

Other (specify) _____

CAN YOUR EMPLOYER OFFER MATCHING GRANTS? _____

* Please help us defray costs. Check here only if you would like to receive lapel pins in return for your donation.

NAME(Mr./Mrs./Ms.) _____

ADDRESS _____ ZIP _____

TELEPHONE () _____ E-mail address _____

Phone me. I want to volunteer my help: _____

ENCLOSED is my tax deductible check for \$ _____ made payable to PROTECTORS OF PINE OAK WOODS, INC.

Mail to: Sylvia Zaage 160 Simonson Avenue, Staten Island, NY 10303

RE-TOOLING PROTECTORS FOR THE CHALLENGES AHEAD

If you didn't attend Protectors' semi-annual fall meeting last year, you missed an opportunity to participate in a hands-on discussion about Protectors' role in environmental issues on Staten Island.

Chuck Perry began the program with a video of Protectors' recent work at Bloomingdale Park, covering the extensive tree damage there as a result of improper trail maintenance, and the restoration workshops underway in disturbed forested areas of parks Islandwide. Our thanks to Chuck for his good presentation.

Following a short break for refreshments, our members and friends assembled in small groups to examine the issues and concerns of environmentalism and land conservation on Staten Island. Here are some of the topics:

Protectors' methodology: Using the preservation of Northern Seaview as a model, one group examined how Protectors develops a strategy of working with the law and government agencies to prevent the improper use of

sensitive natural areas, with the goal of securing their protection through park creation. Protectors involves the public through hikes and letter writing campaigns, works to acquire field data from expert sources, and suggests alternate sites for the proposed project. Failure to have an open space parcel preserved and protected despite of public support, usually requires some sort of legal action, but this is understandably only a measure of last resort. Our common aim is to achieve our goals through good faith negotiation.

Protectors' enhancement: One group came up with strategies Protectors might adopt to enhance its effectiveness in land preservation issues and broaden its support base throughout the Island. The overall opinion was that Protectors should develop a proactive stance in its environmental mission, through sponsoring more effective environmental laws, networking with other civic and environmental organizations and working to better educate and shape the community as stakeholders in their environment.

Bluebelts: Another group focused on the health and maintenance of the

Bluebelt system. Is an adequate funding source available to monitor how these Bluebelts function and will these funds be available to deal with dredging, plant management, restoration and protection? How can we preserve these wonderful natural oases and ensure their continued function as stormwater management systems? Again, the public and agency heads must be made to understand that Bluebelts are now as essential to their communities as roads, schools and police, fire and sanitation services, and should be adequately funded.

Other input sought

During the summer, Protectors board members met with a group of our members at the home of Jack Deitch to discuss other ways Protectors could involve its membership in the future. Our guests emphasized the need to get younger people more directly involved through environmental education and hands-on work. In these and other ways Protectors will work to emphasize its relevance to Staten Islanders and to enhance its effectiveness in environmental issues ahead.

- Hillel Lofaso

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