

Natural Resources Protective Association

Coalition Against Water Disposal of Contaminated Sediments

Post Office Box 050328 • Staten Island, NY 10305



Established in 1977

In Memory of Edward "Kerry" Sullivan

Summer 2023

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THE LONG, LONG STORY OF THE HATS

By Ida Sanoff

Eons ago, around 2019 B.C. (Before Covid) your NRPA board members trekked to the island called Manhattan, to attend a meeting on something that from that day forward would be known as "the HATS". But this was not about headgear, it was about a vast U.S. Army Corps of Engineers project called "The NY/NJ Harbor and Tributaries (HATS) Coastal Storm Risk Management Project."



As we filed into the large room at the Borough of Manhattan Community College, we recognized many of our brethren, some from large agencies and others from small local groups. All of us knew each other because we were shoreline people. The purpose of the HATS was "... to manage future flood risk in ways that support the long-term resilience and sustainability of the coastal ecosystem and surrounding communities, and reduce the economic costs and risks associated with flood and storm events for the New York-New Jersey Harbor and Tributaries (NYNJHAT) study area. The alternative concepts proposed would help the region manage flood risk that is expected to be exacerbated by relative sea level rise (RSLC)."

The HATS is the largest, most complex flood risk project ever undertaken for our area. It encompasses the NY/NJ metro area, the area along the Hudson River almost all the way up to Poughkeepsie, a little bit of Westchester and part of the north shore of Long Island, an area of over 2100 square miles, including 900 miles of shoreline.

As in all Army Corps projects, there are several Alternatives in the HATS. The first is always the No Action Alternative. That means that you do nothing and let everything remain the way it is. Several other Alternatives always follow and usually range from scenarios with lots of engineered features, decreasing all the way down to scenarios with few engineered features. The first Alternative proposed an enormous, five-mile-long flood gate that would stretch across the NY Bight from Breezy Point, Rockaway to Sandy Hook, NJ. It would be built on a series of artificial islands. A few people really liked this one, but it creped out almost everyone else, including us. There were several other Alternatives, containing various combinations of constructed and natural measures. All of the Alternatives are accompanied by an exhausting amount of information, including environmental impacts and cost to benefit ratios. The cost to benefit ratios are interesting. Someone, somewhere, figured out how much bang for the buck each Alternative will provide. If, for example, they select Alternative 2 as the best plan, it will cost X dollars to construct and will reduce flooding by a certain per cent, thus eliminating so many dollars in flood damages.

Ultimately, the Corps chooses a Tentatively Selected Plan (TSP) which they feel will provide the most benefits in relation to the cost of the project, have the fewest adverse impacts and can be constructed in a reasonable amount of time. Keep in mind that many of us will not agree on what "reasonable

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time” may mean.

The TSP, if it moves forward as presented, will change the shoreline of the entire NY Bight. It includes several flood gates, flood walls, levees, and some natural measures. Even with a relatively small flood gate, when a storm surge hits it, the water is deflected to the sides of the gate. So, you have to armor the shoreline on either side of the gate, by piling up rip rap, or building a seawall or levee. Now you don't want water to sneak in around that area that you armored, so you have to keep building those walls/levees all along the shoreline. Those other structures are now called “tie-ins.” By the time you're finished, you've raised and armored the entire shoreline.



Already, there are some stumbling blocks. The Army Corps either cannot or does not want to work in areas that need to be cleaned up. For example, several years ago, radium was found in the soil at Staten Island's Miller Field. This area is part of the National Parks Service and the radium may have been introduced there years ago via landfill. Until that area is cleaned up, the Army Corps flood control project that was planned will not begin. In southern Brooklyn, Coney Island



Creek is being evaluated for inclusion in the Superfund. Although flood gates and seawalls are planned for the Creek, it is highly unlikely that this construction will begin until a decision has been made about Superfund, a process that can take years.

Federal funding for the HATS study was stopped in 2020-2021 and resumed in 2022. That's when things really ramped up, with numerous virtual meetings, slide presentations, virtual illustrations, brochures and eventually, as COVID restrictions eased, in person meetings too. The Army Corps of Engineers deserves kudos for this part of the process because they've gone above and beyond to reach out to as many people as possible to explain this complex project. There have been many stories in the media too.

Now here we are in 2023 and we're getting down to the wire. The HATS is a voluminous document, well over a thousand pages, maybe a lot more, I didn't add it all up. There are various Appendices too. As with all studies such as these, there is a public comment period which has already been extended twice. Everyone has been asking everyone else, “Did you get your HATS comments done yet?” Well yes, NRPA finally got them done and sent in several addenda as well.

Right now, we are still in the Planning Stage of the project. After getting the comments from the agencies and the public, the Army Corps is supposed to figure out how (or if) to include any of the points submitted in the comments. This was supposed to happen by April 2023, but will probably be delayed somewhat. A Final Feasibility Report is to be submitted in January 2024 and the study officially ends with the Chief of Engineer's Report in June, 2024. That report is submitted to Congress, which must approve the plan and provide two thirds of the estimated \$52 billion cost. The remaining third has to come from city and state coffers: “At current price levels (Fiscal Year 2022 price level), the Tentatively Selected Plan has an estimated project first cost of \$52,627,325,000 and an annualized cost of \$2,551,663,000 (based on 2.25% discount rate). The annualized cost includes planning, engineering and design, construction management, interest during construction, and operation and maintenance, including contingencies. The Tentatively Selected Plan provides an estimated \$3,707,484,000 in annualized net benefits and has a benefit-cost ratio

of 2.5. The plan would be cost shared as 65 percent Federal (\$34,207,761,000) and 35 percent Non-Federal (\$18,419,564,000). Within the non-federal share, the costs for the value of lands, easements, rights-of-way, and relocations are estimated to be \$5,805,739,000. The cost of operation and maintenance is estimated at \$346,764,000 annually. The nonfederal sponsors, NYSDEC and NJDEP, have indicated their support for releasing this report for public.”

Remember the words “operation and maintenance.” We'll look at that in a moment.

The HATS proposes construction of a lot of flood gates, including across the Narrows, Sheepshead Bay, and Jamaica Bay, just to name a few. Flood gates are not “one size fits all.” There are many different types of flood gates and all are complex structures with many moving parts. The scale of these things is difficult to comprehend. Many need to be constructed on land adjacent to a body of water. Picture a massive building sitting on either side of a body of water and each building pivoting on its axis to extend out over the waterway and meet in the center. Now imagine how much land will be taken up by those buildings. Wider waterways will require a combination of structures, some of which will require the creation of artificial islands to support them. This raises the question of what will be used to build the islands. Will it be the awful, contaminated Type F dredge material that the agencies have been trying to figure out how to dump into our waterways under the guise of “restoration”? Whatever the island will be made out of, it will destroy bottom habitat.



Here's a brief rundown of just a few types of flood gates:

- Vertical lift gates: As their name implies, they lift up and don't

need as much upland space. But their movement can be impeded by the growth of marine organisms.

- Rotating Segment Gate: This one lies in a concrete "sill," that is usually placed in a riverbed. But the mechanical operating system is complex and maintenance can be challenging.
- Sector Gate: These are shaped sort of like a piece of pie that can swing around at its point. You need one on either side of the waterway. But you need a big piece of land to build them on and maintenance, especially corrosion of the hinges, can be a problem.
- Flap Gates: It's not just one flap, you need a series of them. They lie flat on the bottom of a waterway and when they need to be deployed, each flap pivots on one end and lifts straight up. These are difficult to inspect and maintain because they stay on the bottom of the waterway and their hinges can be abraded by sediments.

Operation and Maintenance (O & M) is the kicker. You need to be able to close flood gates when the flood comes and open them back up when the water recedes. If you've got a massive Nor'easter coming, they may need to be closed a couple of days ahead of the storm, as water is pushed onto the shoreline. If something malfunctions and you can't get a gate shut in time, well, you'll get flooded. But what is far worse is if you can't reopen it. Storm water and sewage will continue to flow into that waterway and it will be retained. Oxygen levels will drop and bacterial and toxin levels will rise. The impacts on marine life in that area will be catastrophic.

Now who will maintain these complex pieces of machinery, as well as all of the other structures that the HATS entails? It will NOT be the Army Corps of Engineers. No, the responsibility for O & M will fall on an as yet unnamed and unformed state or city agency. There is no room for error with the complex structures of the HATS. They're no darn good if they don't work when you need them.

But NYC and NYS are not good at

maintaining infrastructure. NYC's track record is horrible. In the 1970's, part of the West Side Highway collapsed. A 25-foot section of the FDR Drive fell down in the early 1980's and nearly half of the 2,000 plus bridges in NYC were structurally deficient and there was no money to repair them. In the 1990's, the East River bridges were found to be badly corroded.

NYS is not much better. A 2021 report by the American Society of Engineers New York State Council, gave NYS a rating of only "C" for maintaining infrastructure.

Of course, the flood control measures proposed in the HATS will not happen overnight. If everything is approved, it will be several years before construction of any of the HATS features begins and many more years until everything is completed, if it is ever completed. The next phase, which does not yet have a timetable, will be Pre-construction, Engineering and Design and finally – sometime around 2030 to 2044, construction will finally take place.

Now what? What are we supposed to do in the next seven to eleven years while we wait for these proposed flood control measures to become reality? Every day, we are inundated (sorry for the choice of word) with dramatic images of how our coastline will flood in the coming years and how far inland the flood waters will ultimately go. If you've lived by the shoreline long enough, you know that flooding is a way of life. Even more importantly, will the measures proposed in the HATS end up doing more harm than good? And how will these measures impact our daily lives?

As I read and re-read the HATS, attended more virtual meetings than I can remember, wrote, and re-wrote comments and talked with my NRPA colleagues who were on similar paths, I felt like I was going down a rabbit hole. The more I looked at this HATS stuff, the more contradictions I saw and the more questions I had.

Take for example, the southern facing shorelines of Staten Island, Rockaway Beach, and Coney Island/Brighton Beach. For Staten Island,

where the planning began around 2015, before the HATS, the plan is for a buried seawall about 21 feet high, with a boardwalk/promenade on top, plus some groins.

For Rockaway Beach, the plan calls for "reinforced dunes" in front of their existing boardwalk. But when it comes to Coney Island/Brighton Beach, the plan calls for an "elevated promenade", which is depicted as a second elevated boardwalk, in front of the existing boardwalk and about five feet higher than it.

Now if you go east of Brighton Beach you get to Sheepshead Bay and Manhattan Beach. But for Manhattan Beach, what is planned is a flood wall along the street at the back of the beach. And if you go a little farther east, you get to Plumb Beach. Plumb Beach is a relatively short stretch, maybe two thirds of a mile long and it's fairly narrow. No boardwalk here, just a "natural area." But the Belt (Southern) Pkwy is right behind Plumb Beach. If a storm surge comes over Plumb Beach, it will easily flood this major arterial highway. So, what is planned for Plumb Beach? A reinforced dune. But if a reinforced dune is good enough to protect the Belt Pkwy and the Rockway shoreline, then how did Brighton Beach and Coney Island end up with a bi-level boardwalk?

Speaking of dunes, after Hurricane Sandy there were many articles and studies that showed that in areas where there were vegetated sand dunes, there was less property damage. Dunes are far from perfect, but they are easy to construct and this can be done quickly and cheaply. All you need is a bulldozer to pile up the sand and a bunch of volunteers to stick grass stems into little holes. Right now, most of have zero protection against flooding. If dunes provide at least some protection, then why aren't they being constructed all over the place? Well, if you're talking about a city beach, the NYC Parks Dept. has jurisdiction. And they're not thrilled about dunes because they can't use trucks to mechanically sift debris out of the sand near them.

The bottom line is that right now, the HATS is just the starting point. There

are some good ideas in there, some lousy ideas and many more questions to be answered and issues to address. Global warming and sea level rise are no longer a theory, they're already here. We expect some supplementary documents to come out in the near future and we hope that our concerns will be addressed.

LEMON CREEK PARK AT SEGUINE AVENUE 2023

By Jim Scarcella

In April, NRPA joined NYCH2O and about 190 school kids and their parents for a rousing cleanup and party at Lemon Creek Park at Seguine Point. The weather was sunny with a fairly steady wind off the water. We set up near the H2O table and tent, and marveled at the beauty of this park, home of NRPA founder Lou Figurelli. Howie Fishbein, Johnny Benedetto, and Kathy Infuso, all were there as well as the H2O team of Matt, Marisa, Katie, Megan.

There was distribution of gloves, bags and reachers, and teams of students and parents hit the beach. Marisa and I grabbed the H2O Quattro Cart and went around Seguine Point, for transport of larger objects and/or bags filled with trash. We looked out towards Sandy Hook. It was a clear, calm day and about 70 boats were fishing for Striped Bass. We trucked on back, and calling in the forensic team, determined that some bones up on the dunes were from a canine mammal.

Back to the parking lot, the knotweed and vines were again trying to overtake the park border wood fence with post and railing assembly, Howie and I chopped it down to size to keep the road accessible. Through no fault of their own, dozens of people bought back bags with little or no trash, Johnny Bikeman and I combined the bags and separated out the items for recycling. There was a total of 24 full bags of trash, along with busted beach chairs, rusted iron ship pieces, single use plastic cups, fast food containers, cigarettes, vape products, and a decommissioned drone.

Marisa and the crew extricated a large piece of shipping facility dock

buffer, it was 16 feet long by 18-inch high with wood backing.



Councilman Borelli generously provided pizza, which was gladly devoured by the volunteers. All in all, a successful clean-up, over 700 lbs. of debris removed and the Lemon Creek (Lou Figurelli) Park looks great!

NEW CREEK BLUEBELT: A HISTORIC CREEK BECOMES A MODERN STORMWATER MANAGEMENT FACILITY

By Karen E. Lund

As soon as I arrived three Egrets lifted off from the opposite side of the pond. But my disappointment was brief; a Killdeer fluttered in on my left and landed among the short grass. The bird's light brown body was almost invisible against the tan brush and dirt, except for its distinctive black and white striped throat. A black streak that might have been a Starling sped by, too fast to be certain of its identification. Meanwhile the Mallards on the pond paddled calmly, unbothered by the more active visitors.



Egrets are a common sight at the New Creek Bluebelt, as are Mallards and Canada Geese.

I had walked less than 200 feet from the bus stop. This isn't a park; it's a stormwater management facility. To be precise, it's the recently

completed section of the New Creek Bluebelt on the southeast side of Hylan Boulevard.

Despite its name, New Creek is, in fact, one of the historic waterways of Staten Island. It appears on maps dating back to colonial days and has been fed by creeks bearing the historic names of Mersereau, Perrine and Moravian. But although there are records of a creek existing at this location, the origin of its name is disputed.

According to Morris's Memorial History of Staten Island, "Many years ago a creek emptied near the Narrows following nearly, if not the same course as the present Old Town or Pole Creek. The mouth of this old creek became closed and New Creek was opened—hence the name. This must have happened previous to the making of the map in 1797."

But in Staten Island and Its People, Leng & Davis name some of the historic streams that fed into New Creek and then write that "by their names [they] recall old time inhabitants, New Creek for instance was named for Peter Noue or New, an early Huguenot settler." (When in doubt I usually go with Leng & Davis.)

Much of the New Creek Bluebelt is still under construction. It starts at Last Chance Pond Park, meandering through the Park (which does not have trails or public amenities), then behind a baseball field and small shopping center. There's a section that looks like it will one day have public access, but whenever I've been there the gates were locked.

The Creek then crosses under Hylan Boulevard and emerges on the opposite side, which is where I saw the birds. This part of the Bluebelt is open to the public, with gravel paths on either side of the pond. New Creek then winds its way toward the beach between Seaver and Jefferson Avenues. Right now most of that stretch is under construction and hidden behind private homes in the neighborhood, but you can get glimpses of it from the side streets.

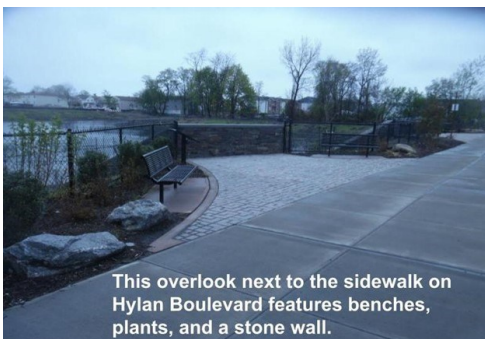
"But what is a bluebelt?" you ask. The identifying signs call it a



Construction on the Bluebelt has moved from Hylan Boulevard to Olympia Boulevard.

stormwater management facility, which is true but doesn't explain fully. Technical reports call them Best Management Practices (BMP), but that leaves non-experts wondering "Management of what?" (Spoiler alert: stormwater run-off.)

One of the interesting things about bluebelts (to my mind) is that they are neither purely natural features nor entirely human-made. The bluebelts of Staten Island—and there are many—are what I've come to think of as enhanced natural waterways. Bluebelts follow existing streams, creeks and ponds in areas that are prone to flooding during moderate to heavy rainstorms. Typically there is a creek or stream connecting one to three pond(s) 12 to 24 inches deep that allow dirt and debris to settle and, during heavy rain, collect water so it doesn't overflow the creek. In the event of extreme rainstorms the water can overtop the weirs to provide rapid drainage. Enhancements along bluebelt routes may include grating that collects large debris, additional ponds, pipes that cross under roadways, and—more rarely—park-like amenities such as benches. New Creek Bluebelt has benches along the Hylan Boulevard side.



This overlook next to the sidewalk on Hylan Boulevard features benches, plants, and a stone wall.

New Creek is but one of several bluebelts on Staten Island. Many wind through our parks—Conference House, Lemon Creek, Blue Heron,

the Greenbelt—and are easily mistaken for natural ponds and streams. As already mentioned, most bluebelts are built on natural waterways, enhanced and expanded to perform their role as stormwater management facilities. They are recognizable by their distinctive stone walls and weirs, that mimic the old stone walls seen in places like Richmondtown, and their permeable paving stones that allow rainwater to seep into the ground below rather than cause run-off.



These water permeable pavers are seen in most bluebelts.

A web search for "Staten Island Bluebelts" will show how much attention our new stormwater management infrastructure has garnered; but as we have the privilege of living here the best way to appreciate our bluebelts is to visit one, and New Creek is not only the newest and one of the largest, it is one of the most accessible. So get out there, bring your binoculars to see the birds, and maybe visit one of the nearby businesses that suffered a loss of business during the construction.

For detailed information, check out the following:

Bluebelt Beginnings
(<http://urbanomnibus.net/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2010/12/Bluebelt-Beginnings.pdf>)

On Staten Island, a Centuries-old Waterway Helps Shape New Wetlands
(<https://ny.curbed.com/2016/12/1/13799758/staten-island-new-creek-bluebelt-photo-essay>)

New Creek Bluebelt Implementation Project (a more technical report)
(<https://stormrecovery.ny.gov/sites/default/files/crp/community/documents/New%20Crk%20Imp%20Flood%20Plan%20with%20cover.pdf>)

As I was waiting for a bus after my last visit before finishing this article I saw a young woman stop on the sidewalk and take a selfie with the Bluebelt in the background. People are noticing this new "natural" treasure!



If you visit, wear shoes (such as sneakers or hiking boots) that have thick soles—the gravel paths are hard on the feet if your soles are thin. Access is easy by bus, either the S78 to Seaver Avenue or the S79 to Liberty Avenue, or by train to Jefferson Avenue (a longer walk, but downhill and you can start at Last Chance Pond Park). There are two bike racks on the sidewalk along Hylan Boulevard and on-street parking in the neighborhood.

RIVERKEEPER SWEEP AT ALICE AUSTEN HOUSE, MATTHEW BUONO BEACH

By Jim Scarcella

In May NRPA cleaned up Buono Beach in Rosebank. It was a beautiful morning, Cathy Infuso and Johnny Benedetto, Howie Fishbein and Vinny Rocconova were all there when I arrived.

We set up and Johnny was retrieving plastic bottles and fishing bait





packages from in between the rocks. The tide was outgoing, the water was olive green. There were some Herring Gulls and sea geese (Brant) bobbing around. Some fishermen were trying their luck and the Municipal Art Society (MAS) was conducting a 'meet n greet' on the lawn of the park.



We got to work, removing plywood, plastic household garbage, bait boxes, hook packaging, and beverage containers. An old wooden baby's crib from 1960 was removed from the beach. An abandoned tree that had been voyaging the harbor came to rest on the rip rap rocks of the beach. It had a NYC Parks tag from 2020-2021. There was a contractor working at the west end of the park to restore the walkway and memorial to Matthew Buono.

We got all the garbage together and reported our results to Riverkeeper Sweeps leader Katie Leung. Adriano,



Jack and I walked to Tony's Brick Oven pizza on Bay Street and we each had a delicious slice. Our friend José Conception stopped by to say hello. One of the team went in for a refreshing swim.

All in all, a great day, 300 lbs. of trash removed with another 10 lbs. recycled.

TINY FORESTS

By Ida Sanoff

I live in a high rise building on the densely populated southern Brooklyn shoreline. Almost every day, I am reminded about how important every last sliver of habitat is. Earlier this week, someone who lives a few blocks away from me in another high rise, posted a photo of a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker pecking away at a birch tree in front of her building. A couple of years back, someone in



Yellow-bellied Sap Sucker

the high rise across the street from her had a Merlin – a small hawk – hanging out on her balcony for a few days. The Parks Dept. planted shrubbery and trees along a narrow strip of land alongside the Coney Island Boardwalk and it's loaded with Monarch Butterflies on their late summer migration and I can spot some really good birds hanging out in the brush. I always take a close look at the wide lawn on the building around the corner from me. All sorts of warblers can be spotted there. Green spaces are good for people



Merlin

too. They are nice to look at, provide welcome shade and make you feel good. The Japanese are fond of something called "forest bathing", basically, a walk in the woods to get away from the pressures of everyday life.



Yellow Rumped Warbler

The NYC Parks Department already has a Green Streets program, where they try to turn little strips and triangles of land into attractive vegetated spaces, maybe with a bench. But what if this could be taken one step further so we could have "mini forests"? Sounds crazy? It's not. In the June 20, 2021 edition of National Geographic, there was an article about this. The title of the article was "Why tiny forests are popping up in big cities". The article describes how India, the Netherlands and other European nations are creating tiny native forests to try to address bigger

problems.



The practice began in Japan in the 1970's as a way to deal with degraded land. Ideally the mini forest should be in an area about the size of a tennis court, but it will also work in a much smaller area. It focuses on planting native trees fairly close together, with about three saplings planted in a square meter. Ideally, there should be between 20 to 40 species of shrubs and other plants in each mini forest.



What is really amazing is how much biodiversity these mini forests support. In a survey of 11 mini forests within part of the Netherlands, 298 plant species (in addition to the ones that had been purposely planted) were recorded and 636 animal species. Remember that bugs, snails, and worms are important parts of the ecosystem too and provide food for birds.

But there are even greater benefits! Of course, open space absorbs storm water, ultimately reducing Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO). And the forests also sequester carbon, which helps reduce global warming. Plus, they increase biodiversity and provide cooling.

Here's hoping that this idea will catch on in NYC. It looks like it can provide

a heap of benefits for a very small investment.

EARTH DAY AT FORT WADSWORTH

By Jim Scarcella

NRPA worked with National Park Service (NPS) to clean the beach at Fort Wadsworth, Gateway NPS for Earth Day 2023.

It was a beautiful day at the park, Ranger Kathy Garofalo was on hand, with informative displays on plastic pollution and our marine ecology. We had great help from Nicole Doz, Johnny Benedetto, Howie, Vince, Tiffany from SI Boro President Vito Fossella's office and many other volunteers.

During the event, Lakisha from Councilmember Kamillah Hank's office presented a 'Certificate of Appreciation' to Jack Bolembach for his work on North Shore Community parks. Congratulations, and thank you, Jack!

It was a little bit of too much too soon because unbeknownst to us, the Coast Guard families had performed a cleanup two days prior. However, plastic debris in the marine environment is a continuous problem so we had plenty to clean up.



Some fishermen seeking bass do not clean up after themselves, and it's a mess. Kathryn Carse and Gail Middleton of 'Swimmers of Anarchy' found a box with two large sandworms, that were released unharmed back into our waters. We also found a Coast Guard issued marine sounding indicator.

The team cleaned up trash and debris, including Dunkin' Donuts and Starbucks beverage containers, a multitude of straws, plastic bags,

vape pens, plastic bottles, traffic guidance equipment, and more. All in all, 26 people removed over 340 lbs. of garbage and we recycled 8 lbs. of aluminum and glass.

A hearty thank you to Kathy Garofalo and all who helped!

NRPA/COA STUDENT SUMMIT

By Jim Scarcella

Clean Ocean Action and the Natural Resources Protective Association teamed up with the National Park Service, NYCH2O, Billion Oyster Project, NY/NJ Baykeeper, Urban Park Rangers, and the Staten Island Zoo for our annual Student Summit. One hundred and fifty middle school students participated on April 27.



We had a beautiful day. Kristen Grazioso of Clean Ocean Action and her team had the location at Great Kills Park beach house set up and all the tables and field trip leaders were ready! The Staten Island Zoo presented a mammal and a box turtle, for the joy of all the people. On hand was Staten Island Academy, IS 51, IS 24, IS 72 and more.

The kids and their teachers/chaperones circulated to the lesson tables. Jim Scarcella of NRPA presented Horseshoe Crabs and related critters, Atlantic Whelk, and Blue Crabs. Urban Park Rangers presented a live Diamondback

**ALL DUES HAVE EXPIRED ON
DECEMBER 31st.**

**PLEASE SEND IN YOUR 2023
MEMBERSHIP DUES IF YOU HAVE
NOT DONE SO.**

RENEWAL FORM ON PAGE 10

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Terrapin turtle along with displays about their work. The Billion Oyster Project presented shellfish, Oysters, Quahog and Razor Clams, and Mussels. NYCH2O presented the topics of water ecology, water resources, the water cycle, condensation, and evaporation. Tony Rose and Joe Schiavone presented scuba diving, snorkeling, kayaking, and canoeing. Keilon Walker from NY/NJ Baykeeper presented oyster restoration and the dangers of combined sewer overflow. Howie Fishbein, Vince, Johnny Malizia and Roy Fishman presented the topics of fishing, crabbing and more.



There were field trips and beach cleanups with Kathy Garofalo, beach discoveries with John Kilcullen, tree and vegetation studies with Ken Chaya and much more.



It was exhilarating to have the opportunity to reach the young inquiring minds with humor and

smiles. The kids had the opportunity to learn, ask, explain, and explore.

Special thanks to Tony Rose, Kristen Graziano, Kathy, Andrew, Anna, Katie, John, Roy, Howie, the students, teachers, and parents.

Let's do this again next year!

LEMON CREEK AT SHARROTT 2023

By Jim Scarcella

It was a breezy and beautiful day when NRPA and NYCH2O teamed up to clean Lemon Creek Park at Sharrott Avenue/Dorothy Fitzgerald Fishing Pier. Ms. Dorothy Fitzgerald was the Community Board 3 Chair and a dear friend of community leader Lorraine Sorge. Robb Trocciola and Karen Lund were joined by Jennifer Frydberg and us to get the cleaning going with Farrell HS and the Sea Vikings. Also on hand were Nicole Doz, Johnny "Bike Man" Benedetto, Joseph Egitto, the H2O crew of Katie, Megan, Marissa, and Charlie Olsen of Environment TV.



Well, it wasn't long before folks started bringing back the garbage, it was like a plastic overflow with water bottles, straws, Dunkin and Starbucks crushed cups, sundries, toys of all sorts including a 'Frisco' toy train, boat parts, and more.

Marisa and I set up the killifish funnel trap in the nearby pond, using fresh clam bellies for bait. Unfortunately, we had no takers, pieces of bread with some egg or cheese may work better.

Many of the cleanup participants walked about 800 feet south to the shoreline of Mount Loretto State

Park.

The harbor seals were resting on a rock about 150 feet offshore.

One lucky participant even found one half set of deer antlers!

The Osage tree at the pier had deposited 80 to 100 fruits in November. By March, each one looked like dog poop, so I gathered them together to add extra fertilizer to the base of the tree. Doris from Parks borrowed my saw and went to cut up the long piece of dock buffer.

Thank you so much to the Marzocco family, NYC H2O, Farrell HS, Jenn Frydberg, Jack Bolembach, Robb, Johnny, Nicole, Karen, and everyone who helped!

BALD EAGLE AT MOUNT LORETTO

By Jack Bolembach

I enjoy walking at the Mount Loretto Unique Natural Area on Staten Island. This two-hundred-acre nature reserve, under the auspices of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, is a treasure to protect for current and future generations. I have seen a variety of wildlife such as deer, skunk, groundhogs, rabbits, squirrels, raccoons, opossums, seals, dolphins, owls, ospreys, bald eagles, red fox and more animals. A few people have seen humpback Whales during their migration, usually in spring and fall.



Beginning in the 1880's, the Archdiocese of New York established a children's orphanage called Mount Loretto on what had been a farm and adjoining acres. I enjoy this natural area, but ironically, my grandfather, age 9 and his brothers lived there, beginning in



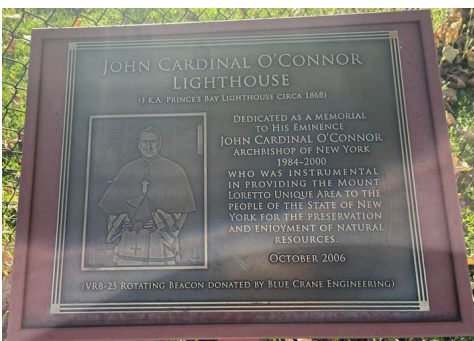
1904, after their father died. Hundreds of other orphans lived there too. My great grandmother did



not have the financial means to provide for her sons, but she worked as a domestic servant to keep her daughters out of the orphanage.



Unlike the Jesuits, who sold the fifteen acre, beautiful, Mount Manresa to a ruthless construction company, the Archdiocese of New York under Cardinal O'Conner, worked with the state and environmentalists to protect Mount Loretto.



The Protectors of Pine Oak Woods, a Staten Island environmental

organization, helped to save this unique natural landscape. There is a rich geological history at the bluffs along the beach and if you're lucky, you may find a Native American artifact while walking along the shore. During the Revolutionary War, the British Army had a small redoubt fortification atop the bluff where the lighthouse, which was built in 1866, still stands today.



The bald eagle in the photo was perched on a nearby large tree and it observed the osprey catching the fish. It swooped in fast, attacking the osprey, which then dropped the fish so it could escape the eagle. The bald eagle then went after the fish. It was amazing to watch this happening. Migrating ospreys use this pond as a feeding location on their journey north. They travel up the coast to New England and the Maritime Provinces, after spending the winter in Florida and South America.



Only 25 years ago, you would have never witnessed this happening in the NYC metropolitan area, because the harbor was too polluted to

sustain enough fish to support bald eagles and ospreys. In 1970, barely a dozen bald eagles were estimated to live in New York State. The common use of the toxic chemical DDT, acid rain from coal fired power plants and the common practice of discharging untreated industrial/residential wastes, heavily polluted our streams, lakes, rivers, bays, and estuaries, devastating our wildlife habitat. In the early 1970s, the President and Congress passed the Clean Water Act and Clean Air Act in the nick of time. They appropriated the necessary funds to establish the Environmental Protection Agency. One of its first actions was to upgrade existing wastewater treatment plants and mandate the construction of new wastewater treatment facilities throughout the country.

By the mid-1980s the long arduous road to recovery of the fragile environment was finally in full swing. Forty years later the fabulous results are self-evident. The bald eagle was on the Endangered Species List.



Today, several pairs of bald eagles are nesting on Staten Island and many pairs of ospreys are nesting too, especially along the Arthur Kill waterway.

In 2023, thousands of bald eagles and ospreys live throughout New York State. It's an environmental success story!

Join NRPA Today

Schedule of Events:

NRPA Calendar All events, including *face to face* monthly meetings are **TENATIVE** due to **COVID-19**, please call to confirm Jim Scarcella to confirm - 718-873-4291

Tuesday, June 6, 2023, NRPA monthly meeting, by Zoom **7:30 PM**, info Jim Scarcella (718) 873-4291

Thursday June 8, 2023, World Oceans Day celebration at Cedar Grove Beach Park, **10 AM to 12 PM**, gloves, bags, refreshments provided, community service certified, info Jim Scarcella (718) 873-4291

Saturday, June 24, 2023, Gateway Great Kills Park Beach cleanup, from **10 AM to 12 PM**, meet at the beach house, gloves, bags, refreshments provided, community service certified, info Jim Scarcella (718) 873-4291

Saturday, July 15, 2023, City of Water Day celebration at Wolfe's Pond Park, Cornelia Street with NYCH2O, **10 AM to 12 PM**, gloves, bags, refreshments provided, community service certified, info Jim Scarcella (718) 873-4291

Saturday, July 29, 2023, Volunteer Day at Fort Wadsworth Beach, **10 AM to 12:30 PM**, gloves, bags, refreshments provided, community service certified, info Jim Scarcella (718) 873-4291

Saturday, August 19, 2023, Alice Austen Park clean up, 2 Hylan Blvd., **10 AM to 12:30 PM**, gloves, bags, refreshments provided, community service certified, info Jim Scarcella (718) 873-4291

Tuesday, September 5, 2023, NRPA monthly meeting by Zoom, **7:30 PM to 8:30 PM**, info Jim Scarcella (718) 873-4291

Saturday, September 16, 2023, Lemon Creek Sharrott clean up, with NYCH2O, part of International Beach Cleanup Day, **10 AM to 12:30 PM**, gloves, bags, refreshments provided, community service certified, info Jim Scarcella (718) 873-4291

Tuesday, October 3, 2023, NRPA monthly meeting, by Zoom **7:30 PM to 8:30 PM**, info Jim Scarcella (718) 873-4291

Saturday, October 9, 2023, Beach Cleanup and celebration with Kayak Staten Island, **time and location TBD**, gloves, bags, refreshments provided, community service certified, info Jim Scarcella (718) 873-4291

Saturday, October 21, 2023, Oakwood Beach cleanup, with NYCH2O meet at Tarlton Street, Oakwood Beach Park, info Jim scarcella (718) 873-4291, **10 AM to 12:30 PM** gloves, bags, refreshments provided, community service certified

Dedicated to preserving the marine environment, the Natural Resources Protective Association is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. All contributions are tax deductible.

All memberships expire on December 31, so please renew NOW!

(All **NEW** memberships paid after October 1 will also receive credit for the upcoming year)

Are You A Member? Have You Renewed? Please Join Us NOW!

- \$15.00 Individual**
- \$25.00 Organization**
- \$500.00 Lifetime Member**

- \$20.00 Family**
- \$100.00 Sponsor** (after 5 payments you become a Lifetime member)

YES! I/We want to join the fight!

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Mail to: Natural Resources Protective Association
C/O Richard Chan, Treasurer
Post Office Box 050328
Staten Island, NY 10305

Join NRPA today