

Wildlife Refuge, Massapequa Preserve, Jones Beach, Oceanside Marine Nature Study Area, Planting Fields Arboretum, Tackapausha, Tanglewood, Fahnestock State Park, Rhinebeck, Hawk Mountain, Chincoteague, Corkscrew Swamp, Everglades, Sanibel Island, St. Augustine, Audubon Camp in Wyoming, Glacier National Park, Washington, and the Bahamas.

BIRDSEED & BROOKSIDE

Michael Sperling

I'd like to thank everyone who helped out at our birdseed sale on Halloween and at our fall cleanup at Brookside Preserve seven days later. The birdseed volunteers who joined me and 26,500 pounds of seed were Joan & Paul Butkerei, Joe Grupp, Mike Higgiston, Therese Lucas, Chris Schmitt, and Betty Borowsky.

There were more Brookside volunteers in and above Milburn Creek than I could count. Here's a partial list:

From SSAS: Bill Boccio; Betty Borowsky; Susan Brychcy; Joan & Paul Butkerei; Michael Goldsmith with daughter Alexandra; Betsy Gulotta; Judy Hoyer; Joan & Rod Kincaid; Jenny Krivanek & Dan Marsh with daughter Hannah; Therese Lucas; Ruthe McKeown; Scott Oglesby; Marianne & George Peters (who brought lunch, some of it donated by Freeport's Dunkin' Donuts, and guest Allen Marshall from PA); Vince Puglisi; Jackie Richichi; Dolores Rogers; Chris Schmitt; Alvira Serdock; Jonathan Staller; Sue & Maurice Tobey; Tom Torma; Karen Wheeler; John Zarudsky; and maybe more

From Citizens' Campaign for the Environment: George Kiesel

From the Community: Marie Brown; Sharifa Small; Mike Staton, Sr. and son Michael II (who posted signs publicizing the cleanup); Audrean & Tiffani Williams; and quite a few others

From Trout Unlimited: Cliff Dies, John Fischer, Sol Harz, Julie Hecht, Brian Nazinitsky, Boyd Shockley, and Brian Stamm

Apologies to those whose names I failed to jot down; please let me know who you are and I'll write a sequel.

SSAS Mission Statement — The mission of South Shore Audubon Society is to promote environmental education, and preserve and restore our environment, through responsible activism, for the benefit of both people and wildlife.

SSAS Post Office Statement — South Shore Skimmer is published monthly from September through December and February through May by South Shore Audubon Society, P.O. Box 31, Freeport, NY 11520-0031.



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Jackie Richichi

SSAS welcomes this month's new members. We hope that you'll become active members of our very active chapter — join us at a meeting, weekly bird walk, or special event.

[To receive an application for membership in National Audubon Society and SSAS, please call our Membership Chairperson, Jackie Richichi, at 691-1855, or send e-mail to Jacee13@aol.com. Introductory membership is \$20; \$15 for students and senior citizens.]

- Baldwin..... Gloria Antonson, James Hauser, Emil E. Hoefler
- Bellmore William Boccio, Ken Gobright
- East Meadow David Balaban
- Freeport..... John Hancock, Jr.; Dolores Sperling
- Hempstead..... Beverly Batroni
- Hewlett Fran Stempler
- Hicksville..... Laura Bodnar, Janice Pilla
- Island Park Scott Albin
- Levittown Hilda Hare, Spiro Vardoulis
- Long Beach Diane L. Glickman, Vicki L. Ilardi, Peter Kerrigan, Sandra Mackston
- Malverne Gilbert Leib
- Massapequa Barbara M. DeVincent, Michael Haberlack
- Massapequa Park..... Donald F. Johnson
- Merrick William Corrigan, Lawrence Hornstein, Flossie Kusnick
- Oceanside Dorothy Bertolini
- Plainview Caroline Sheridan
- Rockville Centre..... Allen Lanner, Marshall L. Rosenberg
- Valley Stream..... Henry E. Boesch, Jr.; Mrs. Ease
- Wantagh Edna Bronzino
- West Hempstead Carmen Alvarez



DUCK SURVEY HELPERS WANTED

Since February of 1989, SSAS Duck Survey Chairperson Joe Grupp has spent one Saturday every wintertime month counting ducks in 28 locations from Valley Stream to Massapequa Park, with Paul Butkerei doing the same at 10 locations in southwestern Nassau. The data being collected provides essential and unprecedented information about the populations of every duck species wintering on our lakes and ponds.

Joe is looking for volunteers willing to spend a half day or full day viewing and learning about our waterfowl. If you're interested, please call him at 481-4208. The first count will be held on **Saturday, December 11th**, rain or shine.



HELP SAVE BROOKSIDE PRESERVE!

Joan Bulkerel

The South Shore Audubon Society's Board of Directors is appalled over Nassau County's decision to grant a permanent right-of-way over Brookside Preserve.

The Issue: Gary Melius (Water Works Realty Corp.), owner of the Brooklyn Water Works property adjacent to Brookside Preserve in Freeport and Baldwin, has asked Nassau County to grant him a 20-foot wide by 400-foot deep easement for fire emergencies on Nassau County open space land known as Brookside Preserve. The reason he wants the easement is because he wants to construct a 246-bed nursing home whose plans call for the building to be built right up to the property line bordering the Preserve, leaving no room on his own property for the necessary fire access. *Question: Why can't he pull back 20 feet from his property line and not use Brookside Preserve as his setback?*

Mr. Melius' plans call for large parking areas on either side of the stream, Milburn Creek, that runs through the Preserve. To provide adequate parking for this size nursing home, up to 70 trees must be taken down near the stream, which will impact on the wetland habitat. *Question: Why won't he even discuss scaling down the size of the project?*

The Nassau County Legislature is voting on the issue within the next few weeks. SSAS is opposed to the granting of the right-of-way as well as the size and scope of the project due to its impact on the quality of the Preserve for its intended purpose: to protect wetlands and adjacent land as defined by law, and to provide a place for education and enjoyment for the public, as well as a place for wildlife to thrive.

Our Fear: SSAS's requests for a review of this issue have been ignored. Mr. Melius is a very large contributor to political campaign fund-raisers, even using his Oheka Castle for such events. Is this government by checkbook and cocktails? Mr. Melius may be powerfully influential, but we at South Shore Audubon want to get a fair hearing from our elected officials.

History: SSAS has managed Brookside Preserve since 1988, when we helped protect the 20-acre freshwater wetland habitat from development and it became the first Nassau County open space preserve to be put into the perpetual preservation program. Since 1988, we have developed an extensive environmental education program at the Preserve, free to the public. Volunteers give school programs and lead tours for local schools, scouts, and other community groups. We have facilitated Eagle Scout projects to enhance the Preserve; a special Freeport school program, "Learn & Serve America"; and a project with Trout Unlimited to restock native brook trout into Milburn Creek. Audubon members are conducting an extensive field project to reintroduce native grasses and wildflowers

onto our field habitat. It is through the middle of this field that the proposed right-of-way would be granted.

What You Can Do: Write, call, and pester your County Legislators, Thomas S. Gulotta, and the Town of Hempstead Department of Conservation and Waterways (addresses are listed below). It is wrong for a private developer to use public land for his own monetary gain. The multistory building will come right up to the property line, shading the wildflower field and intruding visually. The size of the project as it is currently proposed will affect the wetlands and adjacent protected land. We object to the removal of 70 trees along Milburn Creek for a parking lot. And, finally, *we feel that the granting of this right-of-way sets a terrible precedent for all Nassau County Preserves which could be chipped away by similar requests.* Only 3% of Nassau County land remains in protected open space and we cannot afford to lose any of it.

Sample Letter #1

Dear Mr. Gulotta:

I write this letter to voice my concerns regarding the County's Bureau of Real Estate's decision to grant a right-of-way over a portion of the Brookside Preserve to the Water Works Realty Corp. ("grantee").

First, I don't understand why, if there is a common law right for emergency vehicles to cross another person's land, the County believes it is in its best interest to present a formal, written easement agreement to the grantee. The perpetual preservation designation on our land should be sufficient to assure that the land will be available for access in case of an emergency. Quite frankly, *the alienation of the Preserve via even a right-of-way seems to me a violation of the perpetual preservation designation and, therefore, a hazardous precedent to establish.*

Perhaps the grantee seeks this written easement/right-of-way for reasons that exceed a belt and suspenders mentality, i.e., the true reason Water Works Realty Corp. wants this County land is to allow it to build a bigger complex, by using County land to meet its setback requirements. If that is so, this is certainly a good business decision for the grantee. Brookside Preserve was the first to receive protection under your Perpetual Preservation designation and I hope it will not be the first to be alienated. I do not believe that the granting of the right-of-way is appropriate use of Preserve land, and payment to the County of a *measly* \$750 for such use of its land is not even a good business deal for Nassau County. In this deal, the taxpayers and residents of Nassau County will not be adequately compensated for the significant loss of the quality of the open space within the Brookside Preserve. So just why are we doing it?

I have enjoyed working with you on various environmental and conservation projects over the past years. I trust that you will revisit this proposed alienation of a portion of the Brookside Preserve and not undo the good work that you have done in creating the Perpetual Preservation designation.

cc: Hon. [your County Legislator]

Cheryl Petri, Deputy County Executive

Peter Visconti, Deputy County Attorney

Jonathan Staller, South Shore Audubon Society

HELP!

Sample Letter #2 (for the Mayor of Freeport)

Dear Sir:

This is to express my dismay over the size and placement of the proposed three extensions to the Water Works Realty building adjacent to Brookside Preserve, a County natural park. The proposed new additions to the building identified as Sheffield Towers, a 246-bed nursing facility, bring the structure right up to the property line, with no setback to the north. This will require a 20-foot wide by 400-foot long right-of-way through the middle of the adjoining County Preserve. The owner of the Water Works building has never entertained the thought that he could expand and develop his property while leaving a margin of 20 feet for his own use on his own property. The idea that County Preserve land should be used for the developer's setback requirements is abhorrent. County Executive Gulotta assured me by letter that Brookside Preserve will forever remain protected and free from alteration, but neither the County's legal document granting this right-of-way, nor any reassurance from the Village of Freeport, has asserted that there will not be alteration to meet Fire Department or Village criteria. The main reason that the redesign of the proposed structure puts its overly large rear end sitting right on the property line of Brookside Preserve is because the landmark status was granted to only the front of the building. That dictates that all changes have to occur to the wetland side on the west and the Preserve side on the north. These architectural plans look fine until you see what havoc they create to the pristine stream corridor and the adjoining wildflower field.

Although we are in hopes that the Brooklyn Water Works building on Mr. Melius' property can be resurrected in spite of years of neglect, we do not want to see Brookside Preserve so heavily impacted by these proposed plans. Please inform us of any future hearings on the matter. I have enclosed a copy of a video we have produced about Freeport's Brookside Preserve. I hope you will take time to reflect on the above situation.

Addresses

Honorable Thomas S. Gulotta, County Executive Building, 1 West St, Mineola, NY 11501

Nassau County Legislator xxx, County Executive Building, 1 West St, Mineola, NY 11501

Honorable William Glacken, Mayor of Freeport, 46 N Ocean Ave, Freeport, NY 11520

Ron Masters, Commissioner, Town of Hempstead Dept. of Conservation and Waterways, PO Box 180, Lido Blvd, Point Lookout, NY 11569

A FAVORITE QUOTATION

The following first appeared in the June 1994 Skimmer; your editor found it in A Dictionary of Environmental Quotations, compiled by Barbara K. Rodes and Rice Odell (published by Simon & Schuster, copyright © 1992):

"If people destroy something replaceable made by mankind, they are called vandals; if they destroy something irreplaceable made by God, they are called developers." — Joseph Wood Krutch (1893-1970), quoted in Mother Earth News, March-April 1990

GET YOUR FREE PERMITS

It's time once again for SSAS director Mike Higgiston's annual reminder that all of us should renew or get the free permits required for access to John F. Kennedy Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary (just east of Jones Beach) and Connetquot River State Park Preserve. This is an easy way of letting the Town of Oyster Bay and New York State know that you care about these places and wildlife habitat in general.

To obtain a JFK Sanctuary permit, write to Town of Oyster Bay Department of Parks, 977 Hicksville Road, Massapequa, NY 11758.

The Park Use Permit for Connetquot is available from the NY State Office of Parks, Long Island Region — Belmont Lake State Park, P.O. Box 247, Babylon, NY 11702-0247.

SSAS HELPS MARINE NATURE STUDY AREA

SSAS received the following letter from Bill Overton, Supervisor of the Town of Hempstead's chronically underfunded Oceanside Marine Nature Study Area and Wildlife Sanctuary:

"On behalf of the entire staff at the Marine Nature Study Area, I want to thank your organization for your contribution. We were able to fund the purchase of several items of equipment to better house our collection of native fish.



The tanks, covers, and lights help show off these wonderful creatures to their best advantage. Thousands of visitors, both schoolchildren and families, will benefit from your generosity."

SSAS's \$400 donation also allowed the purchase of a 32-foot seining net and a reptiles & amphibians poster. Thanks to Jackie Richichi's efforts, a supply of Audubon membership applications has been maintained at the Marine Nature Study Area for the past year; we thank the staff for helping us recruit new members.

- Seed - Feeders
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Books - Gifts
(516) 694-2180



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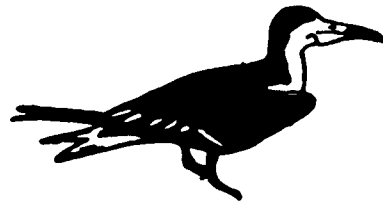
- NASSAU COUNTY POLLUTION HOTLINE 739-6666
AUDUBON ACTIONLINE (800) 659-2622
TAPE-RECORDED UPDATES FROM WASHINGTON, DC

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