

Save the Forge River

SUMMER NEWSLETTER

2009

Lupski & Lesko Working together to Save The Forge River

Brookhaven Town Supervisor Mark Lesko announced at the Forge River Fundraiser that the Town would soon sign the cost share agreement to partner with the Army Corps of Engineers on the feasibility study. During this phase the Army Corp's will isolate the rivers problems and determine the best

course of action for remediation. Ron Lupski, president of Save The Forge River, stated, "I have been working closely with Supervisor Lesko on this issue.



Even before Supervisor Lesko was elected, he and I sat in on meetings with Congressman Bishop and the Army Corps of Engineers to learn more about the three-phase river project. Having a town supervisor that is aware of the problems affecting the Forge River and taking action to address the problems is truly a breath of fresh air. I look forward to working with Supervisor Lesko to remediate the Forge River." Supervisor Lesko referred to the Forge River as the top environmental issue in Brookhaven Town.

Forging ahead To Save The Forge River

In this Edition

- A Sight to be Seen— **Duck Farm Discharge Pictures and a vivid account of what is happening right now!**
- Beechwood Property to remain open space
- LITIGATION UPDATE!
- Infrastructure Education
- 4th Annual Fundraiser

Dredging of Intercoastal Waterway and Mouth of the Forge River

Congressman Bishop announced at the Forge River Fundraiser that the intercoastal waterway would be dredged early this winter. Once the applause died down he further stated that one of his first priorities is to get the dredge to open up the mouth of the river. Ron Lupski commented, " Since the inception of Save The Forge River; we have stated that increased tidal flow will have a positive effect on the river.

While it is not the ultimate solution it is a big step forward. A step that will allow the river to continue to live as we begin to address the pollution problems." Lupski went on to say, " On days when we have a good east wind our water quality improves significantly. Once the intercoastal and the mouth of the river is dredged we will see a noticeable improvement."

A Sight to be Seen

As you know, Save the Forge River took part in the second and hopefully annual island launch in the West Mill Pond in the spring of this year. This all made possible due to the generosity of William Floyd Community Summit and Brookhaven National Lab. Through the hard work and coordination between Save The Forge River, William Floyd and Paca Middle Schools, this floating island project has been deemed a major success. Appreciation and gratitude goes out to all involved.



In an attempt to document the success of this project, a canoe and camera visit out to the islands proved what is clearly visible from the busy Montauk Highway border. The island structure is fully colonized by beneficial bacteria, which steadily churn through the never-ending supply of nutrients in the water, and there is much to be churned. The plants growing on and through the island matrix can best be described as thriving; freakishly thriving with their root structures growing deep into the murky water below and adding yet more surface area for our friends, the nitrifying bacteria to grow on.

This murky water, this “fresh” water tributary, this Forge River is indeed the very reason that the growing plants are perhaps double the size of what they would normally be. The water cannot be looked into; hardly it can only be looked at. It is an unnatural, opaque and coal colored facsimile of what it should be, completely devoid of any fish life where aquatic plants cannot survive below the water line for lack of

sunlight. The adjoining East Mill Pond is the antithesis of this spectacle, with clear water running from its most northern origins down to its spill over under Montauk Highway into the Forge River proper. And unlike the West Mill Pond, it doesn't smell.



Like a train wreck to the morbidly curious, the odor from the north in the West Mill Pond beckoned further examination. A five-minute canoe ride up this flowing debacle revealed a sight that is beyond description; a sight that has to be seen to be believed. The water quality steadily declined, from the metallic looking grayness of the south end of the pond up to what can only be compared to as paddling through a milk shake on the north end. A milk shake consistency of blended horrific colors that have no specific name. The source? It all comes from the discharge pipe emanating from the duck farm; right by the green sign proudly marked with a DEC SPEDES permit number that allows the farm to do so.



At this point, the assault on the olfactory system is relentless, as bubbles of gas percolate through the oily soup like

a bottle of soda opened too quickly. Gases that most probably include methane, an extremely potent greenhouse gas, escape from this cauldron non-stop along with the flow of insidious duck excrement. Truly, this is a sight to be seen.



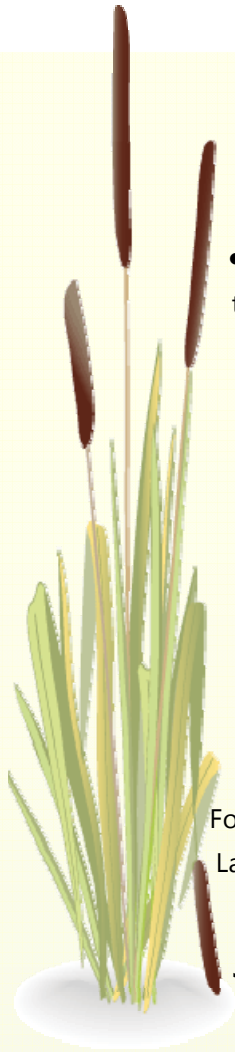
Turning a mere fifteen yards upstream, a second discharge point is found. It is clearly discernible from the downstream bile as its color is a chalky white that rides atop the heavier sludge that creeps below it. What is most disconcerting here is that this white substance is the demarcation line between the clear water from the north and the ruin to the south. It's that obvious to see; the clear water north of this supposedly government regulated discharge point flows as it should. It is clean and full of aquatic life. Underwater plants grow naturally with proper sunlight and normal amounts of nutrition. This too, is a sight to be seen.



It has been suggested that all who can go and see this spectacle for themselves. For those who want, a canoe ride is always available and certainly encouraged. For those who can't, see the pictures and understand that this is happening around the clock, every day. Perhaps in the future it won't be a sight to see.

Beechwood Property to Remain Open Space

The state has joined the efforts to make sure that the Beechwood Property remains open space. The Beechwood Property lies in the headwaters of the Forge River and was originally slated to be a 462 unit planned retirement community. The Town, County and State are working together to prevent this property from being built on and to preserve it as open space. Save the Forge River President Ron Lupski is thrilled that the property is to be acquired for open space. "Anytime we can protect an undeveloped environmentally sensitive piece of property from being developed is a win for Long Island and our waterways. As we move into the future it is important that we redevelop our downtown areas and try to generate income to preserve more open space."



Update on Litigation Proceedings:

- On February 4th, 2009 STFR sent a Notice of Violations and Intent to File Suit letter to Jurgielewicz Duck Farm, DEC and others.
- On June 2nd, 2009 Save The Forge River, Inc. followed up on its Notice letter by filing a complaint for declaratory and injunctive relief and civil penalties against the respondent in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of New York.
- On June 23rd, 2009 the attorneys for Save The Forge River, Inc. sent a letter to the Chief Administrative Law Judge expressing Save The Forge River Inc.'s intent to file a petition to intervene.

Jurgielewicz Duck Farm is due to respond to DEC's motion before August 26th, 2009.

Cause and Effect

During the 1970's and 1980's, it came to be known that the local well water in the tri-hamlet area was becoming increasingly contaminated. Although the causes of this contamination were many, the effect was the same....unhealthy ground water. The answer was to supply municipally treated water from a different location and abandon the now contaminated wells. Problem solved, right? Not so fast.

By not utilizing local well water in this area, the local ground water table has risen. This, along with increased pressure from rising seawater has now turned into the cause of a new effect. The higher ground water is now in much closer contact with our numerous and antiquated cesspools, which readily give up a steady flow of contaminants from human waste. This new contamination now has the ability to enter the Forge River from the bottom up.

So the answer to handle an effect has turned into the cause of a new effect, one that cannot be tolerated. If we are to have a productive River once again, the leaching of cesspools from rising water tables must be addressed by sewerage collection and proper treatment. We need to increase our lobbying efforts to drive federal funding for the formation of a Sewer District in our area so that we can prosper along with the River. The effect is inevitable.

Fundraising SUCCESS

Save the Forge River, Inc. held its fourth annual fundraiser at Rock Hill Country Club in Manorville. The benefit produced a tremendous turnout and welcomed several government officials and civic leaders. STFR honored Paula Cooper & Jack Macrae, The William Floyd Community Summit, and The William Floyd School District. Honorees were presented citations for their upstanding involvement in saving the river. The evening was complimented by a phenomenal firework display provided by Gucci. As always the members and directors of STFR are overwhelmed by the continuous support and dedication from the community. The 4th annual fundraiser was a massive success, and we look forward to carrying this positive momentum into saving the Forge River.



4th Annual Fundraiser- August 13, 2009
Rockhill Country Club

Save the Forge River
PO Box 96
Mastic, NY 11950

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