Appendix N

Public Engagement and Summary of Comments and Responses

INTRODUCTION

This appendix includes summaries of comments received during the Hempstead Lake State Park project public comment period, which was open during the preparation of the Draft Environmental Assessment. The comment period was open from June 15, 2017 to July 17, 2017. During that time, public comments could be submitted in writing to GOSR. A public hearing was held at the Town of Hempstead Town Hall on July 6, 2017, to solicit verbal comments, and a transcript was prepared of all comments received during that hearing. Public comments were solicited for three purposes.

First, public comments were solicited to provide the public an opportunity to express their concerns and share information about the Proposed Activity. A "Project Information Document," consisting of a portion of the Environmental Assessment (EA) of the Project pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) was provided at the public hearing held on July 6, 2017 and made available to the public online.

Second, when the government determines it will participate in actions taking place in wetlands, it must inform those who may be put at greater continued risk. Comments were received pursuant to 24 CFR Part 55, which seeks public feedback when projects funded by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development are in or adjacent to wetlands. Further, public outreach enhances governmental efforts to reduce the risks associated with the occupancy and modification of these special areas.

Third, pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, as implemented in 36 CFR Part 800, Section 800.2(d), as well as Section 14.09 of the New York State Historic Preservation Act, as implemented in 9 CRR-NY Part 426, outreach was performed to ensure the public was effectively informed about the nature of the undertaking, the analysis of its potential effects on cultural resources, and the public's likely interest in it.

Comments in this document are categorized into topics ("Environmental Assessment Process," "Biological Resources," etc.), and individual related comments are grouped together and summarized under a single comment number ("Comment 1," "Comment 2," etc.). Responses are numbered to correspond to Comment number ("Response 1," "Response 2," etc.).

The comments are coded by the last name or organization name of the commenter, followed by the comment number ("Sperling-3," "CAC-2," etc.). Commenters who submitted comments at both the public hearing and in writing have their public hearing comments denoted with "Transcript" in the comment code. The coded comment letters and e-mails, as well as the coded public hearing transcript, can be found at the end of this document.

LIST OF ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS WHO COMMENTED ON THE PROPOSED PROJECT

Mark Albarano
Ms. Borowsky (South Shore Audubon Society)
Mr. Brown (South Shore Audubon Society)
Daniel Caracciolo (Living With the Bay Citizen's Advisory Committee)
Judy Clark
Susana Dawson
Joe Forgione (Living With the Bay Citizen's Advisory Committee)

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Alex Jacobson (New York Equestrian Center)
Guy Jacob (Nassau Hiking & Outdoor Club, Inc.)
Jay T. Korth
Mr. Landesberg (South Shore Audubon Society)
Art Mattson
Edgar Mendez
New York Equestrian Center
Raymond Pagano (Living With the Bay Citizen's Advisory Committee)
Priscilla Quansah (on behalf of Legislator Siela A. Bynoe of the 2nd District)
Tom Rozakis (Living With the Bay Citizen's Advisory Committee)
Jim Ruocco (Living With the Bay Citizen's Advisory Committee)
Brian Schwagerl
Fred Senti (Lakeview Fire Department)
Michael Sperling (South Shore Audubon Society)
David Stern (Living with the Bay Citizen's Advisory Committee)
Suzanne Sullivan (Village of Rockville Center)
Nancy Tognan
Faith Varley
Ms. Weiner (South Shore Audubon Society, Living With the Bay Citizen's Advisory Committee)

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COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

<u>Environmental Assessment Process and General Comments</u>

Comment 1

Which agency is the Lead Agency for environmental review? (Sperling-3, Weiner-3, Brown-1)

Response 1

Please see the cover sheet of the Environmental Assessment (EA).

The State of New York, as the "Responsible Entity," as that term is defined by 24 CFR 58(a)(7)(i), is preparing the environmental review of the proposed project that evaluates alternatives for improving and enhancing the resilience of Hempstead Lake State Park and its infrastructure and help to avoid or minimize adverse impacts to the quality of the human environment. The State of New York is the Grantee of Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funds appropriated by the Disaster Relief Appropriations Act, 2013 (Pub. L. 113-2, approved January 29, 2013) related to disaster relief, long-term recovery, restoration of infrastructure and housing, and economic revitalization in the most impacted and distressed areas resulting from a major disaster declared pursuant to the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act of 1974 (Stafford Act) in calendar years 2011, 2012, and 2013. The Governor's Office of Storm Recovery (GOSR) implements the State's obligations under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) through duly authorized Certifying Officers. GOSR was formed under the auspices of the New York State Homes and Community Renewal's Housing Trust Fund Corporation (HTFC), a public benefit corporation and subsidiary of the New York State Housing Finance Agency, 99 Washington Avenue, Suite 1224, Albany, New York 12260.

The state lead agency under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) is GOSR. GOSR distributed the SEQRA lead agency letter on May 19, 2017.

The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation is the project applicant.

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Comment 2

The EA segments the Hempstead Lake State Park project from the remainder of the Living with the Bay project. This approach does not address downstream impacts. The entire of the Living with the Bay project should be analyzed in one environmental review document to adequately analyze the impacts of Living with the Bay. (Mattson-1, CAC-3, Sperling-2, Sperling-4, Pagano-3, Forgione-3, Stern-3, Weiner-2, Brown-2, Mattson Transcript-2, Mattson Transcript-3, Stern Transcript-1, Ruocco-2)

Response 2

Please see the Description of the Proposed Project section of the Draft EA. The Rebuild By Design competition and Living with the Bay Project and Resiliency Strategy are configured such that projects can advance independently, subject to availability of funding.

Please see the Cumulative Impact Analysis section of the Draft EA for an explanation of the scope of cumulative impact analysis and the analysis of cumulative impacts.

The goals of New York State's RBD implementation plan are to make communities more physically, economically, and socially resilient in the face of intense storm events. RBD is focused on promoting projects that strengthen resiliency throughout all aspects of the community, including ecological, economic, and social elements. The built environment helps maintain the natural ecosystem, which lessens vulnerability to disaster impacts and provides collateral benefits to the economy, public health, overall well-being, and quality of life in the community. RBD resiliency projects strive to implement innovative, flexible, and scalable interventions that could be replicated in other parts of the state, nation, and globally. Diversity, redundancy, networked connectivity, modularity, and adaptability are important features of resiliency projects promoted by RBD.

To date, the Resiliency Strategy has identified approximately 31 potential projects (including the HLSP Project) scattered throughout the approximately 7,700 acre LWTB Program Area. All 31 potential projects vary in both type and scale. The HLSP Project is functionally independent of the remaining interventions identified in the Resiliency Strategy. Implementation of the HLSP Project neither commits funding to the remaining interventions, which are still under development, nor requires the issuance of regulatory permits for the remaining potential projects. Given the variety and geographic separation of the 31 potential projects proposed by the Resiliency Strategy, a permissibly separate environmental review process for the HLSP Project will best inform decision makers and the public of the potential environmental impacts presented by the HLSP Project. An assessment of cumulative impacts will be completed within every environmental review prepared for all interventions proposed through the LWTB Program.

Therefore, a permissibly separate environmental review process for this project has been completed with a rigorous assessment of cumulative impacts to ensure that the review would be no less protective of the environment. This EA addresses the proposed Hempstead Lake State Park Project (proposed project), which is a component of the larger LWTB Project and Resiliency Strategy. Upon submittal of formal funding applications to GOSR for any additional projects, environmental reviews—inclusive of a robust cumulative impact analysis that considers Hempstead Lake State Park and other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects—will be undertaken for each of these projects.

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Comment 3

A full environmental impact statement (EIS) should be prepared for the Hempstead Lake State Park project, given that (a) the lake is the largest freshwater body in Nassau County, (b) the park is largest continuous tract of forested land in southern Nassau County, and (c) that the project budget would comprise one-third of the total Living with the Bay budget.

The environmental document process should follow standard procedures.

- It should include maps and diagrams showing the final location and characteristics of all project features.
- It should include all details of both existing conditions and the proposed project, as well as alternatives.
- The environmental review should address water quantity, water quality, biological and natural resources (including migratory patterns and growth cycles of affected species), scenic/aesthetic

resources, and historic and cultural resources. All supporting data environmental and scientific data used in the review must be provided, including surveys, soundings, water quality tests, and stream flow metrics.

- It should provide the public adequate time to comment on the environmental document. There has been inadequate public input in the planning process to date.
  (Clark-1, Rozakis-1, Rozakis-2, CAC-1, CAC-2, CAC-4, CAC-5, Sperling-1, Pagano-1, Pagano-2, Pagano-4, Pagano-5, Forgione-1, Forgione-2, Forgione-4, Forgione-5, Jacob-14, Stern-1, Stern-2, Stern-4, Stern-5, Weiner-1, Landesberg-1, Rozakis Transcript-1, Stern Transcript-2, Stern Transcript-3, Stern Transcript-4, Stern Transcript-5, Stern Transcript-6, Stern Transcript-7, Jacobs Transcript-1, Quansah-2, Caracciolo-3, Caracciolo-4, Schwagerl-3, Schwagerl-6, Tongan-4)

Response 3

Federal agencies prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) if a proposed major federal action is determined to significantly affect the quality of the human environment. The regulatory requirements for an EIS are more detailed and rigorous than the requirements for an EA. Based on the analyses presented in this EA, the project would not significantly affect the quality of the human environment.

The EA includes a project description with applicable figures and maps. Additional figures and maps are included in the EA appendices. The EA includes a description of existing conditions and the proposed project. Impact analyses are categorized using the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) EA template, which includes both the "Statutory Checklist" and the "Environmental Assessment Factors" analyses. Alternatives are analyzed under the "Alternatives" header.

All studies used in the impact analyses are referenced in the analysis text and listed in the EA References section. Please also see "Additional Studies Performed" for technical studies prepared for the proposed project.

See the "Public Outreach" section of the EA for a description of the environmental review public outreach process.

Additional opportunity for public comment will be provided upon issuance of the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). A 15-day public comment period will follow publication of the FONSI, during with GOSR will solicit comments on the EA and FONSI.

Upon completion of the FONSI, HUD will publish the Request for Release of Funds (RROF), which will entail an additional 15-day public comment period.

Comment 4

Will the project include annual funding to maintain the project components? (Tongan-1, Sperling-6, Sperling-8, Sperling-109, Landesberg-3, Landesberg-4, Albarano-2)

Response 4

The Draft EA analyzes the proposed action, which is the approval of funding of the proposed project construction for $35 million. Funding for operation and maintenance of the project will be assumed by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

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Comment 5

The project should meet the following standards:

● A net gain of flood water storage (upstream of the tidal wetlands) including increasing areas for backwaters,

● A net gain of storm surge wave attenuating wetlands (with in the bay)

● No net loss of natural and open space areas

● No net increase in storm water flow elevations into the Mill river corridor

● No net loss in base flow in the Mill River or its open waters

● A net increase in fish habitat

● No net loss of bird habitat

● Priority on non-structural alternatives (with passive – more natural elements) (CAC-8, Pagano-8, Forgione-8, Stern-8, Korth-1)

Response 5
Please see "Statement of Purpose and Need for the Proposal," which explains the proposed project's storm resilience purpose. See also "Hazards and Nuisances including Site Safety" section for an explanation of the project's effects on dam safety and overtopping, and Mill River flows.

See the "Endangered Species," "Wetlands Protection," and "Vegetation, Wildlife" sections of the Draft EA for analyses of this project's impacts on habitats. See "Parks, Open Space and Recreation" for an analysis of the project's effects on open space. The project is too distant from the bay to contribute to wave attenuation.

The proposed project includes one new man-made structure: The Environmental Education and Resiliency Center. The proposed center will be constructed on the west side of Hempstead Lake, across Lakeside Drive, situated in between the entranceway to Field 1 and the existing playground, bound by the existing asphalt parking lot to the west and Lakeside Drive to the east. The building will be installed within a perimeter of a 4-6 foot chain link fence, accompanied by a series of concrete walkways for building access. It is proposed to comprise approximately 8,000 square feet on an approximately 52 feet x 96 feet footprint. The building will feature standard security features. It will not be staffed 24/7. It is estimated that approximately ten trees will require removal to accommodate the construction of the Education and Resiliency Center and accompanying features. Please see the Project Description, Education and Resiliency Center for additional details and building specifications, and please see "Statement of Purpose and Need for the Proposal."

Living with the Bay (LWTB) provides a comprehensive suite of potential interventions intended to provide long-term resilience and climate change adaption for Nassau County communities in the Mill River Watershed. The LWTB Project and Resiliency Strategy includes developing a program of specific projects and potential project locations, consistent with the RBD principles outlined above in response to **Comment 2**, that will address flooding caused by storm surge and rainfall (flood defense), improve

coastal habitat and water quality (ecological restoration), ease public access to the waterfront (access and urban quality), and educate the public on stormwater and environmental management (social resiliency). The LWTB Project and Resiliency Strategy will identify, analyze, and prioritize potential resiliency interventions that will best serve the community.

Documented flooding problems within the LWTB project area are caused by inadequate drainage collection and conveyance capacity, high tailwater conditions (the level of water downstream of hydraulic structures, i.e., dams, culverts, and outfalls) deeming the existing stormwater systems inadequate for critical storms, and overtopping storm surge events. Other documented problems within the LWTB project area include degradation and loss of habitat, shoreline degradation, and compromised water quality. The LWTB Project and Resiliency Strategy will consider and incorporate sea level rise projections throughout the development of resiliency interventions.

The proposed project consists of the following four components intended to improve stormwater management, enhance natural ecosystems, provide connectivity among diverse populations, enhance safety, and promote education programs at the park:

- The Dams, Gatehouses and Bridges component would restore the operation of the dams and associated water flow control infrastructure within the Park to improve stormwater management, including dam improvements to meet current regulatory standards, gatehouse repairs, and installation of pedestrian bridges over park waterways.
- The Northeast and Northwest Ponds component would involve the installation of floatables catchers and sediment basins at pond inlets, as well as creation of stormwater filtering wetlands and dredging of the ponds to remove debris, improve water quality, improve fish habitat, and increase impoundment capacity. The project would also include the repair of the dam on the Northwest Pond that will restore normal water elevations and hydrology to the shallow aquatic habitat and emergent wetlands.
- The Environmental Education and Resiliency Center component would comprise construction of a new, two-story, approximately 8,000-square-foot building west of Lakeside Drive.
- The Greenways, Trails, Gateways and Waterfront Access component would comprise expansion and improvement to the existing path system within the park, including connection points to the surrounding neighborhoods, as well as installation of observation areas, piers, and kayak launches along Hempstead Lake.

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Comment 6

It would be more effective to catch floatables upstream of the Park. (Sperling-6, Ruocco-1)

Response 6

The drainage systems along Mill Creek and other outfalls do not prevent floatables from entering the piped system, and substantial levels of floatables are carried through the system and into the park during each rain event. Floatables and pollution brought in by the stormwater, coupled with sedimentation, has negatively affected the function of the ponds and wetland areas. With nothing in place upstream to capture sediment and floatables, the NW and NE Ponds act as sediment and garbage retention basins. Ultimately, the plastics and garbage end up farther downstream as they breakdown or

are dislodged, finally affecting the bay and ocean. Pollutants also continue downstream, increasing the pollutant load for downstream communities and waters.

Although catching and removing floatables prior to their entry into the Mill River system would benefit the overall watershed, the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation does not control the catchment areas upstream of Hempstead Lake State Park. The Park is taking advantage of its location downstream of several communities to collect and removal the floatables before they travel farther downstream. Please see "Statement of Purpose and Need for the Proposal."

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Comment 7

The project should include a new way to dispose of horse manure. (Jacob-2)

Response 7

The commenter is describing an existing condition and not a component of the project. The comment is noted and has been forwarded to the project applicant.

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<u>The Living with the Bay Project and Resiliency Strategy</u>

Comment 8

The Living with the Bay project prioritization does not address issues affecting the Village of West Hempstead. The Hempstead Lake State Park project should include more outreach to West Hempstead. (Mendez-1, Mendez-4, Mendez Attach-1, Mendez Attach-2, Mendez Attach-3, Mendez Attach-4)

Response 8

This comment is regarding the Living with the Bay project and Resiliency Strategy. Please see the Draft EA "Project Description." As stated there, the Hempstead Lake State Park project is a project identified by the Resiliency Strategy and can advance independently of other projects. On the West Hempstead side of the park, there would be improvements to the existing informal dirt parking lot north of the Southern State Parkway at Eagle Avenue (see **Figure 2a**). A 0.91-acre formalized parking lot with 4 stormwater retention basins, 48 car spaces, and 3 bus spaces would be constructed. The entrances to the parking lot would also have direct access to/from the Long Island Railroad local stations and access from other public transportation. Also, a 64-square-foot gateway from the surrounding neighborhood would be created at Eagle Avenue. It would include signage and direct access to the greenway or trails.

Additionally, the greenways component of the project is anticipated to include approximately 5 miles of new or renovated trails within the park and improved access to the various ecosystems in the park. Improved gateways at Eagle Avenue and Graham Avenue would improve pedestrian and bicycle access to the park from neighboring communities. Improvements to access, visibility, and signage of existing gateways would likewise increase connectivity to adjoining neighborhoods. The dams component would add three new pedestrian bridges to the greenway/trail network, improving connectivity of the network for all users.

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See also the Draft EA "Public Outreach" section for a description of the public involvement process for this environmental review.

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Comment 9

The EA should include information on how costs were developed and what consideration was given to less costly options. Lack of this information makes it difficult to evaluate the proposed project within the Living with the Bay project prioritization. (Mattson-2, Mattson-3)

Response 9

This comment is regarding the Living with the Bay project and Resiliency Strategy, which develops a list of prioritized projects. Please see the Draft EA "Project Description." As stated there, the Hempstead Lake State Park project is a project identified by the Resiliency Strategy and can advance independently of other projects. The comment has been forwarded to the Resiliency Strategy planning team.

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<u>Hazards and Site Safety, Including Flooding</u>

Comment 10

Are there other options to removal of the twin culverts? (Jacob-9)

Response 10

Please see the Draft EA "Project Description." The proposed project would improve the channel by removing the twin culverts and replacing them with an open-bottom bridge to improve flow and minimize the risk of the culverts failing during large storm events. Coupled with dam improvements, this replacement would also reduce erosion compared to existing conditions. The comment has been forwarded to the project design team for consideration.

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Comment 11

The project does not adequately contribute to storm resiliency. It fails in the original concept of a "slow stream" to create or restore ponds, lakes, and river volume capacities, and to increase stormwater storage to reduce flooding of river plains. The project doesn't include dredging of Hempstead Lake, which would increase water volume capacity but improve open water habitat. Funds for the project would be better spent on their intended purpose, which is the improvement of storm resiliency on the south shore of Nassau County. (CAC-6, CAC-7, Sperling-11, Pagano-6, Pagano-7, Forgione-6, Forgione-7, Jacob-13, Stern-6, Stern-7, Weiner-4, Brown-4, Caracciolo-1, Caracciolo-2, Ruocco-1, Korth-2)

Response 11

Please see "Statement of Purpose and Need for the Proposal," which explains the proposed project's storm resilience purpose. See also "Hazards and Nuisances including Site Safety" section for an explanation of the project's effects on dam safety and flood risk.

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The comments suggesting dredging of the lake have been forwarded to the project design team for consideration. Of note, however, is that the proposed dredging at the NE and NW Ponds would allow for additional pond volume and would improve channel flow by removing large sediment deposits that currently inhibit storm runoff from reaching the existing open channels that flow to the lake.

Additionally, the restoration of the Hempstead Lake dam's sluice gates will allow for the improved control of flow, thereby improving the maintenance of the water levels at Hempstead Lake. Specifically, with the implementation of restored sluice gates, from May 1 to September 1, the two top gates would be open, retaining more water in the lake during the dry season. Between October 1 to April 1, the top gates and middle gate would be open, lowering the water level in the lake to accommodate the seasonal rise in water levels from storms and snowmelt. April and September would be transitional periods when the middle gate is closed or opened at the rate of 9 inches per week to adjust the lake water level. The two lower gates would be used for maintenance purposes and would typically remain closed. Adjusting the water level in this manner would provide additional storage in Hempstead Lake to attenuate peak flows and would also allow for better management of the lake habitat.

Comments regarding the best use of funding for the project have been forward to the project design team for consideration.

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<u>Biological Resources</u>

Comment 12

The project should include fish ladders. (Tongan-3)

Response 12

The project does not include fish ladders. The comment has been forward to the project design team for consideration.

Overall, the project would result in a minor, beneficial impact on vegetation and wildlife. The project would improve water quality and existing wetland and aquatic habitat and result in a net increase in wetland functions. Establishment of wetlands in the two northern channels located between the ponds would reestablish flow and create emergent wetlands. Replacement of the existing double culvert with a bridge would improve flow and aquatic connectivity. Fish, benthic invertebrates, and waterfowl and waterbirds that use the ponds in Hempstead Lake State Park and the downstream waters of Mill River would benefit from improved water and sediment quality that would result from enhanced wetland filtration, sediment capture, and removal of floatables that come from the upper watershed and flow out to Hewlett Bay. The proposed dam repair will restore the normal surface water elevation and restore the wetland hydrology to support the shallow open water and mudflat habitat to the benefit of both waterfowl and waterbirds; however, the use of the NW and NE Ponds by these groups of wildlife may be diminished because of an increase in human disturbance related to the reduction in buffer distances and increased human activity along trails. The use of additional native planting along trails to provide a living screen between humans and waterfowl/waterbirds could be used to minimize potential impacts. An Operations and Management Plan would be developed and implemented to avoid detrimental impacts on wildlife.

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See the "Endangered Species," "Wetlands Protection," and "Vegetation, Wildlife" sections of the Draft EA for additional details regarding the analyses of this project's impacts on habitats.

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Comment 13

The project could affect bald eagles that are present in the park. (Mendez-2)

Response 13

Please see Draft EA Existing Conditions, "Threatened and Endangered Species." Impacts to endangered species are addressed in the Statutory Checklist under "Endangered Species."

Twenty-seven species of migratory birds may be present near the project site, including bald eagle (non-breeding). Tree removal associated with the project would result in loss of forest habitat for migratory birds; however, the impact would be considered minor since similar habitat would remain available in Hempstead Lake State Park. Migratory birds are expected to temporarily leave the area during construction because of noise and disturbance. Because of a November 1 to March 31 tree clearing window proposed to protect northern long-eared bats, trees would not be removed during the migratory bird breeding season, which occurs between April 1 and August 31. Limiting tree removal activities to between November 1 and December 31 would further minimize impacts on migratory bird species.

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Comment 14

The project will result in the removal of too many trees. Removed trees should be replaced and/or there should be a net increase in total trees in the park with the project, as well as vine removal. Tree roots stabilize the dam, and vegetation mitigates flooding. Trees provide habitat. Vegetation removal will result in erosion and habitat loss. A more gradual replacement plan should be pursued. (Mendez-3, Dawson-2, Tongan-2, Sperling-8, Jacob-5, Jacob-7, Jacob-10, Jacob-11, Jacob-12, Jacob-13, Borowsky-2, Borowsky-4, Brown-3, Jacobs Transcript-2, Jacobs Transcript-3, Jacobs-Transcript-4, Schwagerl-5)

Response 14

See the "Endangered Species," "Wetlands Protection," and "Vegetation, Wildlife" sections of the Draft EA for analyses of this project's impacts related to loss of vegetation, including trees.

To allow for wetland creation and enhancement, dam improvements, and enhancement and expansion of visitor access to the waterfront and trails, up to 2,850 trees at various locations throughout the project site would be removed. Tree removal is primarily proposed along the Hempstead Lake Dam and South Pond Dam. The clearing of trees in these locations would result in permanent loss of vegetation and a reduction of this habitat type. Larger stands of mature upland forest in Hempstead Lake State Park would remain undisturbed. Mitigation measures for impacts from tree removal include implementing removal restrictions (undertaken during the November 1 to March 31 window) to avoid impacts on northern long-eared bats and migratory birds.

In total, project work in the northern ponds would remove 4.48 acres of wetlands and open water and add 0.27 acre of open water, for a net loss of 4.21 acres.

- Northwest Pond: The project would remove 0.55 acre of emergent wetland and add 0.27 acre of open water for a net loss of 0.28 acre, resulting in a change from 16.29 to 15.74 acres of emergent wetlands, and 13.71 to 13.98 acres of open water.
- Northeast Pond: The project would remove 0.24 acres of emergent wetland and add 7.1 acres, for a net gain of 6.31 acres, resulting in a change from 2.2 acres to 9.06 acres. The project would remove 2.02 acres of open water, and convert 7.1 acres to emergent wetland, resulting in a change from 19.73 acres of open water to 10.61 acres.
- Northeast Pond: The project would remove 1.67 acres of red maple forested/scrub shrub wetland, for a net loss of 1.67 acres, and resulting in a change from 2.44 to 0.77 acres.

The creation of additional recreational trails would have minor impacts on existing wetlands where the construction of culverts to cross stream channels would be required.

A Freshwater Wetlands Permit, Protection of Waters Permit, and 401 Water Quality Certification from NYSDEC would be required to physically disturb the wetlands and open waters. Prior to construction, the project sponsor would be required to secure a Clean Water Act Section 404 Individual Permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. An 8-step wetlands analysis is included in **Appendix M**. NYSDEC and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will determine the need for compensatory mitigation during the permitting process; however, the net gain in wetland functions and services through the implementation of the project is likely to be sufficient to offset impacts.

Comment 15

The project will instead result in a net loss of wetlands. (CAC-6)

Response 15

See the Draft EA, "Wetlands Protection" section for an analysis of the project's impact on wetlands. In total, project work in the northern ponds would remove 4.48 acres of wetlands and open water and add 0.27 acre of open water, for a net loss of 4.21 acres.

- Northwest Pond: The project would remove 0.55 acre of emergent wetland and add 0.27 acre of open water for a net loss of 0.28 acre, resulting in a change from 16.29 to 15.74 acres of emergent wetlands, and 13.71 to 13.98 acres of open water.
- Northeast Pond: The project would remove 0.24 acres of emergent wetland and add 7.1 acres, for a net gain of 6.31 acres, resulting in a change from 2.2 acres to 9.06 acres. The project would remove 2.02 acres of open water, and convert 7.1 acres to emergent wetland, resulting in a change from 19.73 acres of open water to 10.61 acres.
- Northeast Pond: The project would remove 1.67 acres of red maple forested/scrub shrub wetland, for a net loss of 1.67 acres, and resulting in a change from 2.44 to 0.77 acres.

A Freshwater Wetlands Permit, Protection of Waters Permit, and 401 Water Quality Certification from NYSDEC would be required to physically disturb the wetlands and open waters. Prior to construction, the project sponsor would be required to secure a Clean Water Act Section 404 Individual Permit from

the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. An 8-step wetlands analysis is included in **Appendix M**. NYSDEC and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will determine the need for compensatory mitigation during the permitting process; however, the net gain in wetland functions and services through the implementation of the project is likely to be sufficient to offset impacts.

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Comment 16

The Northeast and Northwest Ponds provide valuable and rare wetland habitat of shallow open water and mudflats for several birds. Care should be given not to fully flood the pond basin with the rebuilt dam because this would eliminate habitat. Dredging should be limited to the area near the dam. Habitat should not be lost. (Tongan-4, Sperling -7, Sperling-8, Jacob-3, Jacob-5, Jacob-11, Jacob-12, Landesberg-2, Borowsky-1, Boroskwy-4, Brown-3)

Response 16

Please see EA "Project Description" and Figure 2c for the location of proposed interventions at the northern ponds. See the "Endangered Species," "Wetlands Protection," and "Vegetation, Wildlife" sections of the Draft EA for analyses of this project's impacts on wetlands, wetland habitats, and birds.

The repair of the NW pond outlet will prevent the current draining of the emergent marsh area by repairing the headcut within the dam. If not addressed, the water level will continue to lower and the aquatic habitat will degrade over time resulting in the continued loss of the shallow water habitat. The proposed dam repair will restore the normal surface water elevation and restore the wetland hydrology to support the shallow open water and mudflat habitat to the benefit of both waterfowl and waterbirds**.** The proposed dredging will be limited to an area of open water in front of the dam and will not impact shallow open water habitat.

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<u>Transportation and Accessibility</u>

Comment 17

Multi-purpose trails will result in conflicts among bikers, pedestrians, pets, and equestrians and associated adverse impacts to safety. Keep separate bridle paths for equestrians. Don't allow motorbikes on trails. (Dawson-1, Tongan-4, Sperling-9, NYEC-1, NYEC-2, NYEC-3, NYEC-4, NYEC-5, NYEC-6, NYEC-7, NYEC-8, NYEC-9, NYEC-10, NYEC-11, NYEC-12, NYEC-13, NYEC-14, NYEC-15, NYEC-16, NYEC-17, NYEC-18, NYEC-19¸ NYEC-20), NYEC-12, NYEC-22, NYEC-23, NYEC-24, NYEC-25, NYEC-26, Borowsky-3, Jacobson-1, Jacobson-3, Jacobson-4).

Response 17

Multi-modal circulation is analyzed in the Draft EA "Transportation and Accessibility" section. Greenway section designs are context-sensitive and would minimize conflict between users, with delineation between the pedestrian/cyclist portion of the path and the equestrian portion in most sections. Within the most heavily used part of the park, along Lakeside Drive and near the Education Center, the proposed greenway would be divided by a four-foot buffer between the pedestrian/cyclist section and the equestrian section to eliminate conflicts between these modes.

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Comment 18

The project's kayak launch demand will result in inadequate parking. (Sullivan-1)

Response 18

The project's impacts to parking are analyzed in the Draft EA "Transportation and Accessibility" section. The waterfront and greenway component, as well as the dam component, improvements would likely generate a small increase in auto trips compared to the future without the proposed project. Given the dispersed nature of these improvements, it is anticipated that any increase in parking demand would be accommodated by the three existing parking lots and the proposed Eagle Avenue lot.

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Comment 19

The project's impacts on traffic should be analyzed in an impact study. (Albarano-1)

Response 19

The project's impacts to traffic are analyzed in the Draft EA "Transportation and Accessibility" section. Per the analysis, the project is expected to add minimal traffic to the area roadways during project construction but would overall have a minor beneficial impact on transportation and accessibility in and around the project area.

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<u>Historic Resources</u>

Comment 20

The historic sites along the river should be addressed. (Mattson Transcript-3)

Response 20

The project's impacts to historic resources are analyzed in the Draft EA "Historic Preservation" section.

Hempstead Lake State Park was determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places by the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation on June 5, 2017, and 10 individual resources have been determined to be contributing or eligible within that district. The park meets Criterion A in the areas of recreation, conservation, and park planning as one of a network of state parks established on Long Island in 1924 as part of New York's comprehensive state park and parkway plan. The park also meets Criterion C in the area of design.

The Hempstead Lake Dam is not identified as a contributor or eligible within the district. However, because the Hempstead Lake Dam is composed of historic structures, all design and construction work would strive to maintain historic accuracy and would be completed in accordance with state and federal requirements. Aesthetic design would be balanced with security concerns and functionality. Interpretive signage would also be installed to inform visitors about the history and function of the Hempstead Lake Dam.

DRAFT

On June 21, 2017, the New York State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) found that the proposed project would have No Adverse Impact on the park or any related historical resources.

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Comment 21

Signage should reflect the local history (Schwagerl-4)

Response 21

The project's impacts to historic resources in the park are analyzed in the Draft EA "Historic Preservation" section. As part of restoration to the Hempstead Lake Dam, interpretive signage would be installed to inform visitors about the history and function of the dam. The comment is noted and has been forwarded to the project design team.

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Comment 22

The project should incorporate the park's equestrian history into the Education Center. (Jacobson-2)

Response 22

The project's impacts to historic resources are analyzed in the Draft EA "Historic Preservation" section. Approximately 26 comments were received from children attending New York Equestrian Center's (NYEC) summer camp. The proposed project will not restrict horseback riding at the park. The comment is noted and has been forwarded to the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

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<u>Parks, Open Space and Recreation</u>

Comment 23

The Greenway trail should connect to areas to the north, including Hempstead High School. (Mattson-4)

Response 23

Please see Figures 2a through 2c, which depict the location of the proposed greenway. See also the Draft EA "Parks, Open Space and Recreation" section. The comment has been forwarded to the project design team for consideration. The greenways component is anticipated to include approximately 5 miles of new or renovated trails within the park and improved access to the various ecosystems in the park. Improved gateways at Eagle Avenue and Graham Avenue would improve pedestrian and bicycle access to the park from neighboring communities. Improvements to access, visibility, and signage of existing gateways would likewise increase connectivity to adjoining neighborhoods. The dams component would add three new pedestrian bridges to the greenway/trail network, improving connectivity of the network for all users.

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DRAFT

Comment 24

The Northern Ponds area of the park should be designated as a Park Preservation Area pursuant to New York State law. (Sperling-7, Jacob-1, Landesberg-2)

Response 24

Designation of a Park Preservation Area is not included in the proposed project. The Draft EA "Parks, Open Space and Recreation" section addresses the project's impacts on open space. The comment has been forwarded to the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

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Public Safety

Comment 25

The project should include adequate emergency access, as well as proper equipment to ensure protection and rescue related to new park components, such as kayak launch. (Senti-1, Senti-2)

Response 25

The project's impacts to public safety are analyzed in the Draft EA "Public Safety" section. The comments are noted and have been forwarded to the project design team. As part of the proposed action, the Environmental Education and Resiliency Center will include the installation of an emergency generator adjacent to the building for use during power outages. The Environmental Education and Resiliency Center would also serve as a command station during storm emergencies and as an information center for local residents after a storm event. The proposed greenway will be designed to accommodate for the width of emergency vehicles. Points of access and egress on all fencing and gates, either existing or newly installed, will be incorporated and/or maintained. Pursuant to Chapter 510 of the Laws of 2004 and Part 3030 of Title 9 of the NYCRR, an AED will be maintained in the Environmental Education and Resiliency Center.

The Rockville Fire Department has a boat to provide in-lake rescue services. In addition, should the NY State Park Police (Long Island Region) need to make an in-lake rescue, equipment can be requested from Rockville or the Nassau County Marine Borough. All staff have marine training. A paved path around the lake and adequate cell-phone service are also in place in the park.

The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation has presented the project to local emergency service providers and will continue to coordinate with these entities to ensure adequate provision of public safety services.

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Comment 26

Increased access could result in loitering and illegal dumping or littering. A sturdy locked gate should be installed at new access points, and coordination should be undertaken with local police to ensure adequate patrolling and perimeter security. Public safety is a concern. (Jacob-6, NYEC-22, Albarano-3, Varley-1)

Response 26

The project's impacts to public safety are analyzed in the Draft EA "Public Safety" section. The comments are noted and have been forwarded to the project design team. The park is open year-round, from sunrise to sunset. This is an existing condition and would not change with the proposed project. The proposed greenway would be open on a daily basis during these times for public recreational use as well. Outside of these specified hours, the park is closed and gated entrances to the park would be locked.

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Comment 27

The Education and Resiliency Center is too big, and it may not be needed. Will it include security cameras to discourage graffiti? Will it be staffed 24/7 to serve as an emergency response facility? There are questions regarding future needs and the costs of this building. (Dawson-2)

Response 27

The comment has been forward to the project design team for consideration. The proposed Environmental Education and Resiliency Center will be constructed on the west side of Hempstead Lake, situated in between the entranceway to Field 1 and the existing playground, bound by the existing asphalt parking lot to the west and Lakeside Drive to the east. The building will be installed within a perimeter of a 4-6 foot chain link fence, accompanied by a series of concrete walkways for building access. It is proposed to comprise approximately 8,000 square feet on an approximately 52 feet x 96 feet footprint. The building will feature standard security features. It will not be staffed 24/7. It is estimated that approximately nine trees will require removal to accommodate the construction of the Education and Resiliency Center and accompanying features. Please see the Project Description, Education and Resiliency Center for additional details and building specifications, and please refer to the "Public Safety – Police, Fire and Emergency for an analysis of the project's impacts to public safety.

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<u>Project Support</u>

Comment 28

The floatables catcher and wetlands restoration are applauded. (Jacob-4)

Response 28

The comment is noted and has been forwarded to the project applicant.

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Comment 29

A learning center in the park is an excellent way to combine the environmental and recreational park components. (Schwagerl-1)

DRAFT

Response 29

The comment is noted and has been forwarded to the project applicant.

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NEW YORK STATE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
OF STORM RECOVERY

PUBLIC HEARING

July 6, 2017

----------X

1 JULY 6, 2017

2 MR. ACCARDI: Good evening. My name
3 is Matt Accardi and I am Assistant General
4 Counsel and Certifying Environmental
5 Officer for the New York State Governor's
6 Office of Storm Recovery, which is
7 abbreviated as GOSR. Thank you for
8 attending this evening's public hearing.
9 The purpose of tonight's hearing is
10 to receive public comments on the
11 Hempstead Lake State Park Project proposed
12 in the Town of Hempstead, New York, with
13 respect to the following requirements.
14 First, public comments will be
15 received on a "Project Information
16 Document," which consists of a portion of
17 an Environmental Assessment of the Project
18 that is currently under preparation and
19 will be published pursuant to the National
20 Environmental Policy Act, abbreviated as
21 NEPA.
22 Additionally, a full environmental
23 assessment form is also under preparation
24 pursuant to the New York State
25 Environmental Quality Review Act,

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abbreviated as SEQRA.

Second, comments will be received pursuant to 24CFR Part 55, which seeks public feedback when projects funded by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development are located in or adjacent to wetlands.

Third, comments will be received pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, as well as Section 14.09 of the New York State Historic Preservation Act, regarding the analysis of potential effects on historic and/or cultural resources.

GOSR will not respond to any of the comments or questions on the project during tonight's hearing. Comments will be considered in the preparation of the environmental Assessment.

Prior to opening tonight's public comments, I will make a brief presentation on the environmental review process, 24 CFR Part 55, and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. I

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will then provide a brief overview of the project and set forth tonight's ground rules.

I will now discuss the NEPA and SEQRA processes:

The GOSR has completed and made available for public review and comment a project information document that describes the Hempstead Lake State Park Project and the project's purpose and need and the existing environmental conditions in and around the park.

New York State is the Grantee of Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funds appropriated by the Disaster Relief Appropriations Act of 2013 (Public Law 113-2) related to disaster relief, long term recovery, restoration of infrastructure and housing, and economic revitalization in the most impacted and distressed areas resulting from a major disaster declared pursuant to the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act of 1974.

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GOSR implements the State's obligations under the NEPA through duly authorized certifying environmental officers. GOSR is an office within the New York State Homes and Community Renewal's Housing Trust Fund Corporation, which is a public benefit corporation.

After the close of the public comment period, which is Monday, July 17th, GOSR will review all comments and incorporate recommendations and revisions into the environmental analysis, as applicable.

GOSR will then publish the environmental assessment. GOSR will solicit comments on the environmental assessment for a fifteen day period. Depending on the receipt of any public comments, GOSR will the request the release of funds for the proposed project at Hempstead Lake State Park.

GOSR will simultaneously prepare a statement of findings under SEQRA, which will also be published in the New York

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State Department of Environmental Conversation's Environmental Notices Bulletin.

Pursuant to 24 CFR Part 55, GOSR is proving notice that is conducting an evaluation of the proposed project as required by the executive order 11990-Protection of Wetlands. There are three primary purposes of this hearing related to 24 CFR Part 55.

First, to provide the public an opportunity to express their concerns and share information about the proposed activities located in a wetland.

Second, adequate public notice is an important public education tool. Third, as a matter of fairness, when the government determines it will participate in actions taking place in wetlands, it must inform those who may be put at greater or continued risk.

The proposed project is anticipated to result in impacts to 4.18 acres of existing wetlands as mapped by National

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Wetland inventory and/or New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. The following impacts would occur:

The proposed activity would remove 1.94 acres of emergent wetland and add 8.18 acres, for a net gain of 6.24 acres.

The proposed activity would remove 2.24 acres of shrub red maple wetland, for a net loss of 2.24 acres.

With respect to historic and/or cultural resources, pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act as well as Section 14.09 of the New York State Historic Preservation Act, the environmental assessment will include an analysis of the project's potential effects on historic and/or cultural resources.

The project information document describing the proposed Hempstead Lake State Park Project is available on GOSR's website at www.stormrecovery.ny.gov/environmental-docs.

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2 GOSR proposes to provide 34 million
3 dollars in CDBG-DR funding to implement
4 the Hempstead Lake State Park Project.
5 The proposed activity would occur on
6 public lands managed by the New York State
7 Office or Parks, Recreation and Historic
8 Preservation. The proposed activity
9 consists of four components, as follows.
10 The dams, gatehouses and bridges
11 component would restore the operation of
12 the dams and associated water flow control
13 infrastructure within the park to improve
14 storm water management, including dam
15 improvements to meet current regulatory
16 standards, gatehouse repairs, and the
17 installation of pedestrian bridges over
18 park waterways.
19 The northeast and northwest ponds
20 component would involve the installation
21 of floatable catchers and sediment basins
22 at pond inlets, as well as creation of
23 storm water filtering wetlands and
24 dredging of the ponds to remove debris,
25 improve water quality and increase

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impoundment capacity.

The Environmental Education and Resiliency Center component would comprise of construction of a new, two-story approximately 8,000 square foot building west of Lakeside Drive. The focus of the Education and Resiliency Center would be on environmental stewardship and climate change adaptation resiliency.

The greenways, gateways and waterfront access component would comprise expansion and improvement of the existing path system within the park, including connection points to the surrounding neighborhoods, as well as installation of observation areas, piers, and kayak launches along Hempstead Lake.

Combined, these components would address the project's purpose and need, which is to improve storm water management, enhance natural ecosystems, provide connectivity around diverse populations, enhance safety, and promote education programs at the park.

1 JULY 6, 2017
2 We will now open this evening's
3 public comments. Each speaker must sign
4 in at the table. We will call speakers up
5 at three at a time. Each speaker has
6 three minutes. After providing your
7 comment, you must return to the audience.
8 Again, GOSR will not respond to any
9 of the comments or questions on the
10 project during tonight's hearing. All
11 comments will be included and responded to
12 in the Environmental Assessment of the
13 project that is currently under
14 preparation and will be published pursuant
15 to NEPA.
16 Additional comments can be submitted
17 in writing to GOSR at, Governor's Office
18 of Storm Recovery, 25 Beaver Street, fifth
19 floor, New York, New York 10004, or by
20 e-mail at NYSCDBG_DR_ER@nyshcr.org.
21 Both addresses I just mentioned are
22 provided onto info sheet available at the
23 sign-in table. All comments received
24 before 5 P.M. on Monday, July 17th will be
25 considered.

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We are now going over the public comments. As a courtesy, we will invite any elected officials or representative to come up and make the first comment.

New York State Senator Todd Kaminsky.

MR. KAMINSKY: Good evening, everybody. Thank you so much for coming out. I just have a very a brief message that I and my staff who is here as well, we are listening to you and we would like to do our best to be a conduit between State agencies that are working very hard on this. We spent a lot of time on this and we want to get it right.

There is no doubt that having lived through Sandy on the South Shore in making sure that we have resiliency to prevent flooding in our waterway is of the utmost importance.

We have this natural jewel that we do not want to do any damage to. There is a great recreational opportunity there as well. I really believe we can do all of

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these great things.

First, I want to thank the agencies that are here for putting in a lot of time and effort into this. I would like to see this as a silver lining after Sandy so we can really do some big things.

Just going by the park, any of us can see there is lot of pollution, we have to tackle that, the operations last year that they spent a lot of time working on that.

I'm here listening as well. My office is open to meet as well after this, and I hope we can work together to make this a great project.

Thank you, everybody.

MR. ACCARDI: Before we get started, we have the clock going on the wall there. We also have a yellow card that will be flashed at thirty seconds and red when your time is up.

MS. WEINER: My name is Brien Weiner. I am the current vice president and co-chair of the South Shore Audubon Society

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and also a member of Living with the Bay.

On behalf of the South Shore Audubon Society and many other chapters of the National Audubon Society, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Environmental Review of the Hempstead Lake State Park portion of the Living with the Bay Project.

The South Shore Audubon Society has 1,300 members who live on the South Shore of Nassau County where Hempstead Lake State Park is located. Its' mission is to promote environmental education, conduct research pertaining to local bird populations, wildlife, and habitat and to preserve and restore our environment, through responsible activism for the benefit of both people and wildlife.

We have prepared detailed comments that I will submit in writing. These have already been endorsed by nine other chapters of the National Audubon Society, and other endorsements are pending. We have broken down our comments into three

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minute segments, as each speaker has only three minutes to comment. I am speaking first to summarize the main points of our comments.

1 Our most important comment can be summarized in a nutshell: We have been given the opportunity to comment on a plan we have not seen. The document upon which we are to comment is not only not the final version of the plan, but we are not told what version it is.

Although we have been informed that the plans have been modified, we do not have those modifications in writing. It is possible that our comments are actually moot.

2 Let's assume that the main points in the Environmental Review document that we have similar to the ones in the final plan. That leads to our second strong objection to this process. We find the Environmental Review by the Governor's Office of Storm Recovery to be inadequate and possibly illegal.

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2 GOSR is segmenting the HLSP project from the Living with the Bay project and avoiding the completion of a full Environmental Impact Statement to assess the cumulative impact of Living with the Bay. This violates the State Environmental Quality Review Act.

3 We have been in discussions with staff of three organizations, Stantec, the office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and the Governor's Office of Storm Recovery but we do not know which of these is designated as lead agency on projects to be done at Hempstead Lake State Park and, therefore, we do not know who is making the final decision.

4 Last but certainly not least, aspects of the plan have nothing to do with the stated purpose of storm recovery or resilience. Funds should be used for their intended purpose, which is the improvement of storm resilience on the South Shore of Nassau County.

Thank you.

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MR. LANDESBERG: Just to tell you who I am, Treasurer of South Shore Audubon Society and I'm also Professor of Chemistry Emeritus of Adelphi University, and I lost my teaching voice so I'll do the best I can.

I would like to elaborate on our call to conduct a full environmental impact statement.

Common sense dictates that it is folly to assess one of the plan's elements without considering the environment as a whole. Even though executing the projects might be separated by time and space, they are all still part of the same Mill River ecosystem, and clearly, if one part is altered, it will affect all the others.

1 We believe that according to the New York's State Environmental Quality Review Act and the National Environmental Policy Act, a full environmental impact statement is necessary to assess the cumulative impact of Living with the Bay.

2 I would also like to speak to the

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2 plans for the northwest and northeast
2 ponds. Again, the remarks are addressed
to the only written environmental
assessment document that we have.

These ponds provide valuable and
rare wetland habitat of shallow open water
and mudflats that are used by an abundance
and diversity of birds. South Shore
Audubon bird surveys, both with the
Seatuck Environmental Association this
year, and independently, over twenty
years, have confirmed the presence of
numerous species of freshwater shorebirds,
wading birds, and dabbling ducks. Some of
these are rare.

We are concerned that dredging and
increasing water capacity will flood the
habitat and make it unusable by these
at-risk species, as happened at Massapequa
Preserve, where two species are not
extirpated from the preserve.

The South Shore Audubon Society is
in agreement with the Seatuck Environmental
Association that the wetlands and

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2 woodlands north of the Southern State Parkway be designated as a Park Preservation area pursuant to the New York law governing state parks.

3 Finally, we see no mention of sustainability for the projects proposed. How will the proposed floatables collector be maintained once the funding for this grant is spent?

Once it fills up, unless there is a regular process of emptying it, conditions will be worse than they were without it. Even a well maintained floatables collector, however, should only be a backup.

It would be far better to prevent floatables from entering the watershed in the first place. Measurements should be taken to catch floatables at their source.

4 In addition, the park is chronically under funded and under staffed, and we see no written commitment to staffing a new education center and to continue to remove invasive species when they inevitably

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4 reappear.

Thank you.

MS. BOROWSKY: I have a PHD in physiological ecology. I'm a professor at Nassau Community College. I'm a past president of South Shore Audubon Society, but my main credential is that I have loved Hempstead Lake State Park for the last fifty years and I have come to know some parts of it very well.

I can take you to where the witch hazel is growing. I can show you the blueberry bushes. I know where a pair of great horned owls is roosting, where the warbling vireos' nest which has a cow bird chick in it is, and where you can hear the song of a wood thrush, truly a miracle of nature.

I cannot take you to the indigo bunting's nest. For twenty years or more a pair of indigo buntings nested in the shrubbery in the northeastern part of the park until recently, all but a few trees were mowed down a few years ago. It is

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now a tangle of alien vines that is quite uninviting to anybody.

1 This is why I and the South Shore Audubon Society are most strongly opposed to any alterations to Hempstead Lake State Park that will result in the loss of wildlife habitat. Birds have specific nesting requirements, but also require the entire part to survive.

The proposed greenways, trails and waterfront access will fragment and/or eliminate that habitat and make it unable to support the many species we have documented there.

2 We oppose any expansion of trails with its concomitant removal of vegetation. We are told that the State regulations require removal of trees from the dams. We urge that if, in fact, that is necessary, that the smaller non-native plants be replaced with native ones one at a time.

Non-native plants should be identified individually and when they are

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2 removed, they should be immediately
3 replaced with a native species.

4 We also oppose to making the trails
5 available to both pedestrians and
6 bicyclists at the same time because this
7 will not only disrupt nature, but will
8 create hazardous conditions. The
9 multi-use paths in Massapequa Preserve are
10 dangerous to everyone because of the
11 constant threat of collisions.

12 Amazingly, Hempstead Lake State Park
13 currently offers opportunities for almost
14 any kind of outdoor activity, including
15 biking, hiking, horseback riding, fishing,
16 boating, ice skating, cross-country
17 skiing, barbecuing and picnicking. It has
18 a carousel, a playground, tennis and
19 basketball courts, a ball field and a dog
20 run, while at the same time still offers
21 the diverse and abundant habitat that
22 attracts wildlife.

23 In summary we oppose any effort to
24 alter that balance.

25 MR. ACCARDI: That's your time.

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Thank you.

MR. BROWN: My name is Jim Brown and I'm conservation co-chair and also past president.

I want to thank you all for listening to our comments tonight. We are very happy to work with you to modify the plan the way that would work within your constraint and also preserve the environment.

Hempstead Lake Park you may or may not know is a bird area much to love by the South Shore Audubon Society and other birders for many years. People come from all over the country to go to Hempstead Lake State Park, that's a fact.

We would like to know -- you know, we have certain concerns that I mentioned before and I'm going to summarize them.

1 First is, we would like to know who is the lead agency for the development plans for Hempstead Lake State Park. We request a copy of more detailed and updated plans so our comments will be more

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1 to the point.

2 We urge that a full environmental impact statement of the cumulative effect of all of the proposed projects that are part of the Living with the Bay Plan be conducted, and we are most strongly opposed

3 to any alterations to Hempstead Lake State Park that will result in the loss of wildlife habitat.

There is so little wildlife habitat that is being left in Nassau County, especially along the south shore. We want it all to be preserved intact so we can enjoy it and not be turned over totally to kinds of recreation.

4 We object to the use of these funds for projects outside of their stated purpose of storm recovery, which is important in building storm resiliency and we would like to see plans for sustainability and how the projects are going to be taken care of.

Thank you very much for letting us talk to you a little bit about the

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importance of the habitat, the importance of birds, and how important it is for birders and the general public to have something that is so natural in our county.

Thank you very much.

MR. ACCARDI: Art Mattson, Living with the Bay and Lynbrook Village.

MR. MATTSON:

I'm not representing the Village of Lynbrook, this is my own views.

The Mill River should be looked at in its entirety, not segments. It's about a six mile long river. We are here because the Mill River is the most historic river on Long Island.

We are here because Carmen came across from Camden and saw the great fields of the Hempstead plains and the fresh water of the Mill River which flowed all the way down to the bay.

Mills were along the river, along Mill River and off Pine Brook. They was one that put locks to have shipping from

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Hempstead down to the bay. There is tremendous history with this entire river.

I don't understand why the GOSR looks continually at the segmentation of the various parts of the project. Greenway and throughway that's going to encompass the entire river, but somehow there's been a number of 7.4 million dollars put to this but the greenway is in the park.

The greenway is part of the greenway

2 down in Smith Pond. There's a greenway down by East Rockaway High School, let's connect it. Let's make the Mill River the gem of Nassau County and of Long Island, that it could be by connecting Hempstead to the bay. I'll admit it would be difficult to get across Sunrise Highway but something has to be done along those lines.

I also want to question the historic

3 sites along the river and, I guess, that will come up as a topic with the project review because there are tremendous

numbers of sites.

3 There are the pipes they are now putting under Sunrise Highway that carry sewage out to Cedar Creek. Those things -- pipes are also in the park and they should not be covered up or bulldozed away. There are extra dams at Smith Pond that showed how they had a series of dams where there was a revolutionary war battle just north of Tanglewood.

There should be connectivity for the entire river. I don't understand why the GOSR continues to segment all the pieces of this puzzle rather than putting it together.

Gee, I didn't think I would get done in three minutes. I actually have a lot more, but I think I'll just let it sit at that. Thank you.

MR. ACCARDI: Thomas Rozakis.

MR. ROZAKIS: In case anyone is wondering what the CAC means, it's the Citizens Advisory Committee, which was chosen by the Governor's Office of Storm

Recovery to assist it in planning the project, which is approximately one hundred and twenty-five million dollars.

My background is in construction and land surveyor for 35 years. I have done wetland restoration. It's dangerous work in the sense that you really have to know what you are doing. It's not that every one can do it. It has to be planned properly and scheduled.

1 If you really care about the migratory patterns and the growth cycles of these species that you are trying to protect, you have to know what you are doing, and that's based on information. We do not quite have that information in the proposal and information given to us.

I would say this, anything is possible if you are careful and it's based on knowledge. I'm not sure we have all the information to here to make that decision or I don't think any other environmental review board or experts have that information based on GOSRs' plans at

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1 the moment.

Thank you very much and thank you for this opportunity.

MR. ACCARDI: David Stern, co-chair of the CAC.

1 MR. STERN: David Stern. I'm co-chair of the CAC. The CAC was establish in order for the state to meet it's requirement for HUD with the 120 million dollar budget.

GOSR decided to go a quarter of the whole project just for this particular project. As you heard before, the CAC has a consensus that we object to the segmentation of this project from the other projects, from the complete project.

2 We also are concerned that there is such limited information. We have asked GOSR many times over the last month or so to provide additional detailed information about the plans at Hempstead Lake State Park.

3 I'm very concerned that we will only have 15 days to comment, and I'm hoping

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3 that will include information that we have asked for. The information provided so far is really very cryptic in order to decide on an environmental impact at this point.

4 Looking at other park plans, if we were to just look at this segment of the total project, many of our state parks have a park management plan, Hempstead Lake State Park does not.

5 What is noted in the outline of the information that was provided, the limited information provided -- I've highlighted what is unique about Hempstead Lake State Park. It's the largest open water body in Nassau County. It also is the largest continuous open space forested area on the south shore of Nassau County.

You would think those two statements would require that the State and the Parks Department in their environmental assessment to highlight how that is being preserved. There is not enough information in the information provided to

1 JULY 6, 2017

2 5 date to provide that.

3 To start off, you have to identify

4 6 what are the existing conditions. If you

5 look at the other state parks when they

6 did their master plan, they went to a full

7 environmental impact statement, they did

8 not shortcut the environmental review to

9 an environmental assessment with a 15 day

10 commentary.

11 What they did do was, they looked at

12 7 several aspects including the physical

13 conditions, the water quality, the water

14 quantity, the biological conditions, the

15 natural conditions, scenic, historical,

16 cultural and aesthetic, the park provided

17 for many of that.

18 We have asked the state and we ask

19 that this environmental review provide

20 conditions, existing conditions, no net

21 loss of open space, no net loss of

22 wetlands, which has been documented will be

23 lost. Changing one type of ecosystem to

24 another is a loss.

25 Changes in the flow, since this is

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7 flow management, the essence of this project is to deal with flow, the description provided in the documents provide very little information and there should be a --

MR. ACCARDI: That is your time. Thank you for you time. Guy Jacobs.

MR. JACOBS: My name is Guy Jacobs.

1 Hempstead Lake State Park lays victim to lost weed space. We need some historical context, because of the number and size of the lakes and no other park in Nassau County compares to Hempstead Lake State Park.

Unfortunately over the past decade, we have witnessed the removal of open space the tree density in this park. Dean Skelos, then the senate majority leader and now sitting in jail on corruption charges, negotiated a deal to convert park land into a ball field with 250 paid parking spaces.

McDonald Pond was traded for park land where the ball field now sits.

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This diminutive manmade pond adjacent to Hempstead Lake State Park could fit about 20 parking spaces if it were filled and paved over.

Consequently the Dean Skelos Sports Complex, which was made for Skelos, had a net loss of open space for Hempstead Lake State Park. This sports complex stands, spans five Rockville Centre blocks.

On his conviction Skelos stated, somewhere along the way my judgment became cloudy, so to was his judgment cloudy when he decided to eradicate New York State park land to create ball fields that could have been built in a number of other locations.

Subsequently, trees adjacent to the sports complex were removed for no clear reason leaving a deteriorating trail of invasive vines taking over. That tangle of vines grows larger every year and the trees are gone.

2 This unique park lays victim already to lost green space. We don't need more

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2 poor planning. Trail widening is unnecessary and it will instigate the removal of more trees that will further lead to the destruction of the parks' tranquil appeal and valuable wildlife habitat.

There is already an extensive wide trail system both south and north of the Southern State Parkway, and public access to Hempstead Lake itself could be accomplished with designation of one simple short trail that leads to and from the lake itself.

3 What Hempstead Lake State Park really needs is a significant healthy mix of native deciduous and native tree replanting with the removal of invasive vines increasing tree coverage is the kind of ecological restoration that will alleviate danger from title and storm water flooding, moreover it will protect the important bird habitat.

4 Hempstead Lake provides crucial habitat for a variety of species. The

4 public needs this oasis in a natural setting, not more of the same suburban sprawl that they left in neighborhoods to get a respite from.

Your plan for our project with the removal of trees to create a view, which is entirely inconsistent with the mission. Trees are an integral part of the landscaping. Thank you.

MR. ACCARDI: Suzanne Sullivan.

MS. SULLIVAN: The Village of Rockville Centre has concerns regarding

1 the ball field he just mentioned, kayak launches and proposed docks, fishing docks which are going to be by those fields, but there is no parking other than the ball field parking which is heavily used by non residents, Molloy College and other entities.

The concern is when people come to kayak, where are they -- the parking lot can't afford more people coming in with kayaks. That's it.

MR. ACCARDI: Alex Jacobson.

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MR. JACOBSON: Good evening, everyone. My name is Alex Jacobson. I'm the owner of the New York Equestrian Center, which organizes and has organized for the last decade cleanup in Hempstead Lake State Park so I commend the effort to clean up and improve the park here.

I also operate the equestrian center, that has over sixty horses and thousands of kids that use this park every day. I'm going to come across with a few bullet points:

1 Major safety concerns of ours, and I can speak on behalf of the equestrian center of horse owners of Long Island that live on the south shore of Nassau County and all of the children, your children that use our facility on a regular basis.

First and foremost, the Grant Avenue entrance behind Hempstead High School is dangerous, including horses on bridle paths with bicyclists and pedestrians is also dangerous and a danger to our children, so we look to avoid that in these

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plans.

1 I have brought up this topic several times both with that entrance as well as diminishing horseback riding trails in Hempstead Lake State Park, we are not only one of the only State permit holders for the park but we are using it on a daily basis.

2 As far as the history, the rich horse history, and whatever recreation center you are building, everyone knows Hempstead State Lake Park for its horse history, and that should be included in the child development and education center.

3 Connecting the greenway with East Rockaway is a great idea, but more importantly the safety of the horses and the access to the trails that are existing are more important to the safety of the children that are using it on a daily basis.

4 That is pretty much it. We are looking to preserve tourism in the Town of Hempstead and to preserve the trail system

4 and not take away from the trail system as well as not put our children in hazard with bicyclists and pedestrians on the same trails as horses on a daily basis.

Thank you.

MR. ACCARDI: Mark Albarano.

MR. ALBARANO: Good evening, everyone. Thank you for allowing us an opportunity to speak here today. I think this plan is great. I grew up in the Village of Rockville Centre. I teach at John Jay College, I'm also a New York City Police Department lieutenant for 25 years.

1 I have concerns as a village resident. It seems like it's enormous and it's got a great vision and it's got great potential, however, there are several concerns that will affect our village residents.

Everyone is speaking about an impact study. I think that is something that is definitely needed, something that is necessary. We have to know what the influx of people is and the traffic in the

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1 area.

We already have those challenges on a daily basis. Just going through the Village of Rockville Centre going from north to south shore, when I was 17 years old to now, it's like 45 to 50 minutes; how is this going to impact the area, that's problem number one.

2 The other concern I have is, this is great design and a great plan but money is always an issue and, I think one of the biggest concerns is we are going to develop the park but at the end of it all, how do we sustain it? What is the sustainability, what's the plan we have, where is that money coming from, how is this park not going to become a dilapidated sight after all of this is done?

3 Third concern, being in law enforcement, being in the Village and being in law enforcement for 25 years, security is an issue. We have a problem right now with trespassers in that park

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3 as it is.

It does not have the greatest history with crime if you go back. If we open up this facility and make it as grand as it is, I think, if there's one police officer that's patrolling the entire park right now and he or she actually gets stretched across the county to different facilities, what is our plan about security, how are we going secure this?

When all is said and done, how do we patrol in the evening. How do you do perimeter security. How do we prevent other people from coming in to do bad things in this park. We have another issue that's going on right now. We have two Nassau County cops threatened because of the heroine epidemic that is plaguing Nassau County right now.

My other theory is if we do not secure this park properly, this might become a haven for these bad guys to come in. That's it. Thank you for your time.

MR. ACCARDI: Priscilla Quansah.

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MS. QUANSAH: I'm here to speak on behalf of Legislator Siela A. Bynoe who represents the second district. I'm reading a statement on her behalf. She says:

1 "Overall I support any improvement to the Hempstead Lake State Park that will enhance the community's use and enjoyment of the natural surroundings, protect the environment and provide an opportunity for vocational, educational experiences for residents.

2 The environmental review of the project information documents for the proposed improvement is a necessary step that requires public review and comment, and I'm concerned that residents are not given ample time and opportunity to review the plans and submit comments.

I do not believe that the community was provided with sufficient information about the hearing so that they can prepare comments and questions orally or in writing.

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2 However, as the Nassau County
3 2 Legislator for the residents that live in
4 the area surrounding Hempstead Lake State
5 Park, I'm encouraged by the recent
6 commitment by GOSR to hold monthly
7 conference calls to provide updates
8 regarding the project.
9 I look forward to working alongside
10 GOSR to make this worthy endeavor come to
11 fruition. Thank you."
12 MR. ACCARDI: Daniel Caracciolo.
13 MR. CARACCIOLO: My name is Daniel
14 Caracciolo. I am a Village resident of
15 East Rockaway. I am on the Living with
16 the Bay Citizens Advisory Committee and I
17 want to read the project description
18 again.
19 It says, "The New York State
20 Governor's Office of Storm Recovery
21 1 proposes to provide 35 million dollars in
22 community development block grant disaster
23 recovery to implement the Hempstead Lake
24 Park Project.
25 Let me tell you, that 35 million

1

dollars was stolen from the 125 million dollar project that's for Build by Design. What I mean by that is we have had -- I've been on this committee for about 18 months. The first 12 months, we had three different project managers. We had two or three different design firms making this particular project and we had a grandiose idea of what we wanted to do.

Fast forward to around quarter three of 2016, this project is implemented from New York State Parks. My opinion is that Parks stole 35 million dollars from the full residency from Hempstead all the way to down to East Rockaway Village, Bay Park and Oceanside.

Please understand that this is probably here today in order to meet deadlines so it's not necessarily to make Hempstead Lake State Park really nice, it's a mish mosh of, you know, projects.

However, I am reasonable and I understand that dams, gatehouse, bridges, that will restore flood storm risk

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1 mitigation downstream. I am vehemently

2 opposed to any structures of an eight thousand square foot capacity to add concrete and other structures to a project that is really driven for storm mitigation and flood mitigation.

The Environmental Education Act is important to the CAC, but we do not want to add physical structures to this project, which is, again, from Hewlett Bay which goes all the way down to Island Park, many of us don't know how far that goes down to, all the way up to Hempstead High School, eleven thousand acres, 125 million dollar total, not a lot of money when you are talking about that kind of space.

So here we are, we have a 35 million

3 dollar project where we have no insight to the actual plan, as a citizen advisory community member that was selected by New York State.

Lastly, this week we have been

4 working with our team to get some of the Technical Advisory Committee members, the

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4 TAC is the actual municipality that is involved in this planning process, guess who is not on the TAC, the Parks Department. Thank you.

MR. ACCARDI: Jim Ruocco, CAC, Operation Splash.

MR. RUOCCO: I really wasn't prepared to speak tonight, but after hearing everybody's comments I figured I could fill in a couple of gaps, my own personal opinion. I'm a member of the Citizen Advisory Committee.

I was hoping this project was going to be something that we could use throughout the dignitaries of Long Island as an example of what to do and as an example of what not to do.

I am on the Environmental Board for the sewage treatment plant at Cedar Creek so I'm familiar with a lot of the infrastructure. I'm an avid member and environmentalist that worked with Operation Splash, and with that background going into this, I feel like I will be

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able to add something to this.

I agree -- I've learned a lot from the Audubon people, historians, local community people, and our co-chairs, and professors and historians and I kind of had a pie in the sky view of a holistic project that was basically funded because of storm recovery.

We were told in the very, very beginning that the objectives of this program were to be flood mitigation, water detention and retention and pollution control. As a member of Splash we have deployed storm drains all over Long Island.

1 This project does not go to Point Source. If you are an environmentalist and you have an environmental problem, you have pollution, you go to Point Source.

We are talking about collecting floatables, that's garbage, okay. Floatables and floatable catchers and it's mostly plastic and paper and as the plastic degrades -- that is not what we

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call pollution control.

1 You don't bring pollution into an area to take it out, you go to the Point Source. The project has gotten -- the idea was originally, was a slow stream to protect us from flooding and to protect the bay.

All this money came from the health of the bay. Had the bays been healthy, we wouldn't have had quite an impact here. We are allowing the pollution into the river and into the bays and it's not being addressed.

2 The segmentation of this project, you can't take the park and separate it from the rest of the whole ecosystem, and I object to the fact that we can just pass through, the State of all people, can pass through something like EA and not just say, hey we are going build a --

MR. ACCARDI: Thank you. That's your time.

Fred Senti.

MR. SENTI: I'm not going to speak

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too much. I'm also representing the fire department. I just wish funds would be appropriated so that emergency services during this project, EMS being a little bit more included in some say.

We would like to be notified a little bit more about what goes on in the up and up of the project.

I don't have any objection to the project. I have looked through it and it looks petty good from top to bottom. The impact of the people and obviously access for emergency vehicles is the number one concern.

Secondarily, just if you were bringing in more volume, obviously making sure we are staffed and have the proper equipment, especially if we are going to be utilizing the lake to a higher capacity, we would need to adapt to the new, you know, situation, and that's pretty much it.

MR. ACCARDI: Is there anyone else in the room that wants to fill out a

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commentary card?

MR. SCHWAGERL: I'm Brian Schwagerl and I'm a resident of Rockville Centre. I want to thank you Senator Kaminsky for at least posting -- my wife sent me an e-mail saying can you make it at the last minute.

I ran over here, I live near the park. I use the park on a daily basis. I appreciate the trails that are there. They are in desperate need of repair. I understand the parking problem.

My kids use that field nonstop, so do all the residents of Rockville Centre. It has been a blessing to the children of Rockville Centre and it has been an amazing use of recreation. We need to figure out how to combine the environment and recreation and I think a learning center in the park would be an excellent way to do it.

I will say though, overwhelmingly, every comment that has been made here tonight, it says there has not been enough outreach to the communities themselves so

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there's been good feedback from the birdwatchers, the Audubon Society, the environmentalist community, but for me to just find out about this at the last second before running down here in the car is not a proper way to go.

I think that we should take advantage of the money that is available to us and not loose it. We need to think carefully about how the money is being used judiciously and if there is a plan in place, it must be reviewed with everyone involved.

We are not Rockville Centre alone. We are a community in Nassau County in the Town of Hempstead. We have to be cognizant of our neighbors whether they be in Bay Park, East Rockaway or Lynbrook.

There is a town history here that Mr. Mattson described that must really be reflective in the signage. This is a State park, it's not a park for the village itself but the village coexists happily with the State and the State needs

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4 to know that.

Take care of the parking problems

5 that may be entailed and listen to us in terms of not going down the street one day and finding out that all of your trees are disappearing, which is what happened the last time around when the park was changed.

I thank you for holding today's

6 hearing and I am glad I was able to make it, but I guarantee you that there are plenty of Rockville Centre residents, Bay Park Residents, East Rockaway Residents, Lakeview Residents, that had no idea that this hearing was being held today, so thank you.

MR. KORTH: We are happily represented by our chair and I will be quite brief.

There are many worthy goals for this project. 125 million dollars does sound like a lot but those of us involved in large construction projects knows that it dissipates quite quickly.

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1 What we need at Hempstead Lake State Park, what we need in Long Island, what we need in our world is more open space and more natural space, not more structures that are permanent and have reflective surfaces and require grading and painting. We need infrastructure that is natural and not man made.

2 I would ask everyone to think very seriously whether the 3.5 million dollars is an appropriate allocation when we have flooding, remediation concerns, water quality concerns and other things that are really the intent of this Federal money going to the State. Thank you.

MR. ACCARDI: Is there anyone else that wants to comment right now? What we will do is go off the record and if anyone else wants to comment, please fill out a card.

(Whereupon, at this time there was a pause in the proceeding.)

MR. ACCARDI: Back on the record. Faith Varley.

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MS. VARLEY: Faith Varley for Rockville Centre. My comment or question to the committee is that I love Hempstead Lake State Park. I grew up in New Jersey near a park that was similar. The only huge difference is it was safe for me to go into the park alone and I was able to run, bike and grow up in that park.

I have done EMS for a number of years and when I moved to Long Island, I was told unequivocally by a number of Rockville Centre Police Officers, do not go into that park alone, and it just seems like such a crime to me that we live near such a beautiful place that I as someone that enjoys nature can't go in without my husband or without my teenage son on a bike.

1 I guess my question is, is safety also part of this program, because I often do run in those trails with my husband who is six feet and over 200 pounds, and I'm constantly wondering, how can we fix that? Maybe if we cut the brush back just a

little bit more or made the path just a
1 little bit wider, it would be safer.
It is just such a beautiful park and
for me to sit on the other side of those
bridges for fear that I can be hurt, just
seems like a waste of a beautiful resource
so thank you.
MR. ACCARDI: I think we have one
more. Fred Senti, Jr.
MR. SENTI: I can remember my father
who was born in this town in 1927 in
Lakeview and how much Hempstead Lake State
Park meant to them, the history, the
carousel. Today my sons talk about the
concerns they have just getting entrance
there.
To make everybody happy here
especially the Audubon, this guy
Bruce -- used to be here, used to come
here and he was into conservation, the
birds, the sanctuary, everything.
We have been here all our lives
to -- put the money where it's supposed to
go instead of somebody's pocket and fix

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the environment and regain the sanctuary that we always had to where you stop on Sunrise Highway. That's where you cut a lot of environment off and maybe that's what needs to be re-looked at, the whole system. Go east of Massapequa and look at the nice trail that we have. Do something positive. That's all.

MR. ACCARDI: We can come off the record again and try again in another ten or fifteen minutes if anyone new has arrived, if anyone would like to make a comment. Thank you.

(Whereupon, at this time there was a pause in the proceeding.)

MR. ACCARDI: Off the record.

(Time noted: 8:21 P.M.)

1

2 C E R T I F I C A T I O N

3 I, NANCY LASKARIS, a Notary Public

4 in and for the State of New York, do

5 hereby certify:

6 THAT the foregoing is a true and

7 accurate transcript of my stenographic

8 notes.

9 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto

10 set my hand this 27th day of July, 2017.

11

12 _____

NANCY LASKARIS

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Living with the Bay
Citizens Advisory Committee

Comments on the Hempstead Lake State Park Environmental Review

1 The following represents the consensus comments of the members of the Living with the Bay Citizens Advisory Committee (LWTB CAC). The LWTB CAC requests that a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) be completed prior to a final decision on the Hempstead Lake State Park (HLSP) project. Our request is based (in part) on the State's acknowledgement that Hempstead Lake State Park represents "the largest freshwater body in Nassau County" and "the largest continuous track of forested land in southern Nassau County" as well as the cost of $35 Million (or 1/3 of the total Living with the Bay grant). The need for a thorough EIS is also supported by the following:

2 After repeated requests over the last several months, the Governor's Office of Storm Recovery (GOSR) and the New York State Parks Department have still not provided the detailed plans for the proposal. GOSR's public presentation of a full EIS should include all the details of the HLSP project plan as well as alternatives.

3 The HLSP project plan proposal represents a segmentation of the overall LWTB project. The LWTB project incorporates the length of the Mill River as well as the tidal bay it empties into. By segmenting the HLSP project from the rest of the Mill River basin, the environmental impacts downstream of the proposed project are not being assessed.

4 The New York State Parks Department has not completed a Master Plan for HLSP. Such plans exist for other state parks. These plans identify the most important assets of the park and provide a strategy to preserve them. The materials provided to the public identified two of the most unique and important assets of HLSP: once more the "largest freshwater body in Nassau County" and "the largest continuous track of forested land in southern Nassau County", however actions identified in the proposal would significantly impact these assets.

5 Information on important aspects of a Park's resources has been routinely collected for the environmental reviews of other NYS Park projects. Some of these other projects were significantly less disruptive to existing conditions as the proposed HLSP project.

Accordingly, the environmental review should assess:

5

- Water quantity (including flows)
- Water quality
- Biological
- Natural
- Scenic
- Historical
- Cultural
- Aesthetic
- All supporting data

6 The proposed projects fails to include the original concept of a “slow stream” which was intended to create or restore ponds, lakes and river volume capacities in conjunction with existing water recharge basins and create additional sites for a greater amount of water detention and bio filtration as a means to address the vast amounts of storm water pollution. The concept was also to bring the historic capacity of the river back to offset the filling (flooding) of its river plains and daylight urbanized feeder streams. The current proposal will destroy open water wetlands to create emergent wetlands and destroy emergent wetlands to create a floatable catchment. The result will be a net loss of wetlands and storage capacity of the river.

7 The proposed project is missing perhaps the most important component: dredging the decades accumulated sediment from Hempstead Lake. The original LWTB project included the removal of over six feet of sediment from the Lake (not the northern Ponds). Not only would this dredging restore the water volume capacity of this reservoir, but it would greatly improve the open water habitat for the fauna of the Park.

The environmental review should also consider the holistic standards proposed by the LWTB CAC as the metrics for the cumulative effectiveness of the plan. These standards include:

8

- A net gain of flood water storage (upstream of the tidal wetlands) including increasing areas for backwaters.
- A net gain of storm surge wave attenuating wetlands (with in the bay)
- No net loss of natural and open space areas
- No net increase in storm water flow elevations into the Mill river corridor
- No net loss in base flow in the Mill River or its open waters
- A net increase in fish habitat
- No net loss of bird habitat
- Priority on non-structural alternatives (with passive – more natural elements)

The CAC stands ready to work with GOSR to resolve these concerns and address the entire LWTB project area. Feel free to contact us with any questions or comments.

On Behalf of the LWTB CAC,

David Stern, Co-Chair
Joe Forgione, Co-Chair

.

FW: Hempstead Lake State Park

Clark

nyshcr.sm.nyscdbg.dr.er

Mon 07/17/2017 1:39 PM

To: Accardi, Matt (STORMRECOVERY) <Matt.Accardi@stormrecovery.ny.gov>;

More comments from the ER inbox.

-----Original Message-----
From: JUDY CLARK [mailto:judyblue55@optonline.net]
Sent: Monday, July 17, 2017 12:19 PM
To: nyshcr.sm.nyscdbg.dr.er <nyscdbg_dr_er@nyshcr.org>
Subject: Hempstead Lake State Park

ATTENTION: This email came from an external source. Do not open attachments or click on links from unknown senders or unexpected emails.

To Whom It May Concern:

1 My husband and I are very concerned about the proposed renovations to the Park. Further environmental study is needed. From what we could gather from the article in the Malverne/West Hempstead Herald, this plan does not appear to be well thought out and may in fact ruin this beautiful park. Further study is needed.

Sincerely,

Albert and Judy Clark

FW: Hempstead Lake State Park renovations

Dawson

nyshcr.sm.nyscdbg.dr.er

Fri 07/14/2017 3:59 PM

To: Accardi, Matt (STORMRECOVERY) <Matt.Accardi@stormrecovery.ny.gov>;

FYI:

Comments from the ER inbox.

Thanks,

Mary

From: Susana Dawson [mailto:susanadawson@att.net]
Sent: Friday, July 14, 2017 3:32 PM
To: nyshcr.sm.nyscdbg.dr.er <nyscdbg_dr_er@nyshcr.org>
Subject: Hempstead Lake State Park renovations

ATTENTION: This email came from an external source. Do not open attachments or click on links from unknown senders or unexpected emails.

I am a resident of Nassau County and the Town of Hempstead and I am presenting my views on the renovations proposed for Hempstead Lake State Park (HLSP). I did not attend the July meeting at Hempstead Town Hall. Therefore, my comments are based on limited information in a newspaper article.

1 Multi-Purpose Trails: HLSP provides horseback riding, biking and hiking. These trails wind through the park deep into the natural surroundings and abut high-traffic areas where soccer fields, basketball courts and other sports are played regularly and bleachers are provided for spectators. That requires special care when bike riding or walking on common sidewalks and crossing side streets. It would be very difficult to have safe multipurpose trails anywhere. I believe the trails should remain as they are.

2 Construction of an Education and Resiliency Center and loss of vegetation: HLSP is a more like a natural preserve than a manicured park. It is rugged and wild, minimally staffed, and home to numerous types of wildlife. The loss of over two acres of trees and widening the trails changes the park's natural setting. Also, how does removing trees and creating wide, bare trails help offset the effects of future storms and flooding? As for the building itself, at 8,000 square feet it is too large and obtrusive. Will it require security cameras to discourage mischief and graffiti (a problem plaguing some areas of the park)? Will it need to be staffed 24/7 to act as an emergency response facility? Also, questions remain about the future needs and costs of this building.

The majority of the project will improve the park for all residents. Thank you for your attention.

Susana Dawson

Hempstead Lake State Park Environmental Review

Forgione

Joe Forgione <joe.forgione@gmail.com>

Mon 7/17/2017 4:14 PM

To: nyshcr.sm.nyscdbg.dr.er <nyscdbg_dr_er@nyshcr.org>;

Cc: Pardus, Drew (STORMRECOVERY) <Drew.Pardus@stormrecovery.ny.gov>; Munafo, Laura (STORMRECOVERY) <Laura.Munafo@stormrecovery.ny.gov>; Stern, David A. <david.stern@ncc.edu>;

ATTENTION: This email came from an external source. Do not open attachments or click on links from unknown senders or unexpected emails.

Attention Mr. Matt Accardi:

The attached consensus comments are submitted for proper registering and recording.

On behalf of The Living with the Bay Citizen Advisory Committee

LWTB CAC Comments on HLSP Environmental Review ...

Living with the Bay
Citizens Advisory Committee

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3 The HLSP project plan proposal represents a segmentation of the overall LWTB project. The LWTB project incorporates the length of the Mill River as well as the tidal bay it empties into. By segmenting the HLSP project from the rest of the Mill River basin, the environmental impacts downstream of the proposed project are not being assessed.

4 The New York State Parks Department has not completed a Master Plan for HLSP. Such plans exist for other state parks. These plans identify the most important assets of the park and provide a strategy to preserve them. The materials provided to the public identified two of the most unique and important assets of HLSP: once more the "largest freshwater body in Nassau County" and "the largest continuous track of forested land in southern Nassau County", however actions identified in the proposal would significantly impact these assets.

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8

- A net gain of flood water storage (upstream of the tidal wetlands) including increasing areas for backwaters.
- A net gain of storm surge wave attenuating wetlands (with in the bay)
- No net loss of natural and open space areas
- No net increase in storm water flow elevations into the Mill river corridor
- No net loss in base flow in the Mill River or its open waters
- A net increase in fish habitat
- No net loss of bird habitat
- Priority on non-structural alternatives (with passive – more natural elements)

The CAC stands ready to work with GOSR to resolve these concerns and address the entire LWTB project area. Feel free to contact us with any questions or comments.

On Behalf of the LWTB CAC,

David Stern, Co-Chair
Joe Forgione, Co-Chair

.

Nassau Hiking & Outdoor Club, Inc.
Affiliated With N. Y. - N. J. Trail Conference
www.nassauhiking.org

PO Box 037207
Elmont, NY 11003

July 14, 2017

Re: Hempstead Lake State Park Project: Draft Environmental Assessment, wetlands and cultural resources

Matt Acardi
Governor's Office of Storm Recovery
25 Beaver St, 5th Floor
New York, NY 10004

Dear Mr. Acardi:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on your plans for Hempstead Lake State Park. Nassau Hiking & Outdoor Club, Inc. is a 500-member organization. Our members, their friends and family members recreate in Hempstead Lake State Park (HLSP) and care deeply about its future. We enjoy hiking, birding, cross country skiing, biking and picnicking in the park.

Northern HLSP:
Care must be given to maintain the integrity of valuable wildlife habitat within HLSP. The northern section of the park is a hidden ecological gem, and it needs special protection. Please give serious consideration to designating the area north of the Southern State Parkway as a Park Preservation Area, which, by law, would restrict infrastructure development even as it prioritizes wildlife preservation. Further fragmentation of the old growth forest must be avoided. Priority must be given to managing invasive species and planting a rich variety of native deciduous and evergreen trees. Great horned owls, diverse woodpecker species and migratory songbirds rely on this habitat.

Commented [CM1]: 1

Sections of the North ponds area have unsightly, smelly hills of horse manure that have been randomly dumped on the site for years. This should be mixed with leaf matter and otherwise properly composted. Continued dumping of

horse manure should be strictly controlled. Finding alternate means of removing manure from horse stables must be a priority.

Commented [CM2]: 2

At times, wildlife benefit when human engineering fails. Such is the case with the breached dam at Northwest Pond. The mudflats and freshwater meadows are frequented by a variety of freshwater shorebirds, including great blue herons, glossy ibis, as well as several species of egrets and sandpipers. Consequently, when rebuilding the dam care should be given not to fully flood the pond basin because this would eliminate valuable wading freshwater bird habitat. Dredging should be limited to very close proximity to the rebuilt dam. Precise and strictly controlled dredging that species depth and breadth of the project is critical.

Commented [CM3]: 3

We applaud your Northwest and Northeast Ponds plan to install a floatables catcher and to restore the wetlands. There was a net catching device that was destroyed a number of years ago. Since then, a tremendous amount of litter finds its way into Hempstead Lake and along its shoreline. Planting wetland plants adjacent to this catcher will also enhance the ecosystem. We celebrate your plans to create wetlands that will filter other pollutants from the runoff and create marine habitat.

Commented [CM4]: 4

Your North Ponds project plan calls for additional trails north of the Southern State Parkway. There is already an extensive, wide trail system in that area. However, some of the trails near the ponds are quite sandy, and, therefore, difficult to negotiate; these sandy trails could be revegetated to increase forest coverage. We object to the further removal of open space and the net removal of trees to create more trails when sufficient ones already exist.

Commented [CM5]: 5

Your plan calls for increasing the ability of residents who live the north of the park to access the park and the trails. Connecting people with nature is always a good idea, but this generally underutilized section could quickly become an abused hangout area or an area subjected to dumping and fires, particularly after dark when visitors have left. A sturdy locked gate at dusk would help. Dialog with the Rockville Centre and Hempstead Police Departments would involve important stake holders regarding safety plans.

Commented [CM6]: 6

We support your plans for dam reconstruction, as this will be a major component of water flow control. If trees must be removed from the dam area as per DEC requirements, then more trees should be planted in other areas of the park in order to compensate for the loss near the dam. Your plan discusses the construction of a multiuse bridge; it would be for more for than just pedestrians, but the specifics of its design are unknown. Generating a map that shows its exact planned location as well as its size in length and width would be most helpful. Your plan says that the installation of the bridge will allow removal of existing twin 60” diameter pipes that currently limit flow

Commented [CM7]: 7

Commented [CM8]: 8

through the channel. Does this mean that if you don't install a bridge, you can't remove these pipes? Are there other options?

Commented [CM9]: 9

Southern HLSP Lake and Pond View Corridor Plans:
Your plan calls for tree removal in the South Pond area so as to improve the vantage point of the pond from the adjacent roadway. But it's the trees that provide part of the natural landscape beauty as well as the wildlife habitat.

Because of the number and size of its lakes, no other park in Nassau County compares to HLSP. Unfortunately, however, in the past decade we have witnessed the removal of both open space and tree density in this park. The Dean Skelos Sports Complex engendered a net loss of open space in HLSP. This sports complex spans five Rockville Centre blocks.

Subsequently, trees adjacent to the sports complex were removed for no clear reason, leaving a deteriorating trail with invasive vines taking over. The tangle of vines grows larger each year. Particular attention should be given to reforesting this area.

Commented [CM10]: 10

This unique park already lays victim to lost greenspace. We don't need more of the same poor planning. HLS does not need trail widening that would instigate the removal of more trees and with that the further destruction of the park's tranquil appeal and valuable wildlife habitat. There is already an extensive, wide trail system, both south and north of the Southern State Parkway. Improved public access to Hempstead Lake itself could be accomplished with the designation of one simple, short trail that leads from the main trail to the lake itself.

Commented [CM11]: 11

What Hempstead Lake State Park really needs is a significant healthy mix of native deciduous and evergreen tree replanting with the concurrent removal of invasive vines. Increasing tree coverage is the kind of ecological restoration that will alleviate danger from tidal and storm water flooding. Moreover, it will protect important bird habitat. HLSP provides crucial habitat for great horned owls, osprey, bald eagles, herons, egrets, as well as migrating warblers, vireos, tanagers flycatchers and waterfowl.

Commented [CM12]: 12

As it stands now, your plan will leave the park with fewer trees, and consequently, a diminished natural setting that wildlife need and the public yearns for. Instead of calling for net tree removal, your plan should be calling for an overall increase in native tree density throughout the park, particularly adjacent to existing trails. Otherwise, you're calling for a sterile, developed park. The plan to establish a new trail on the western side of South Pond would eliminate valuable bird habitat and further fragment the park.

The public needs an oasis in a natural setting, not more of the same suburban sprawl they left their neighborhoods to get a respite from. Your plan prioritizes the removal of trees so as to create a view, which is entirely inconsistent with your mission. Trees are an integral part of the viewscape. Any tree removal should be mitigated by planting in another area of the park. We need more trees, not less of them. We hope you will commit to a net gain in tree density. Our communities need resiliency in the face of future storms. Financial priority should be given to restoring the infrastructure and habitat of HLSP and to restoring and protecting the Mill River neighborhoods battered by Hurricane Sandy and in harm's way of future storms.

Until you can definitively state that your plan will leave HLSP with more trees than exist today, you're moving in the wrong direction. We call on your agency to pursue a complete Environmental Impact Statement that fully discloses the specifics of your plans and the impact it will have on the park. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Commented [CM13]: 13

Commented [CM14]: 14

For our environment,

Guy Jacob, Conservation Chair
Nassau Hiking & Outdoor Club, Inc.

Email: conservation@nassauhike.org

CC:
The Honorable Todd D. Kaminsky, NYS Senator

FW: Public Hearing for the Improvements in Hempstead Lake State Park (HLSP)

Mattson

nyshcr.sm.nyscdbg.dr.er

Tue 07/11/2017 9:09 AM

To: Accardi, Matt (STORMRECOVERY) <Matt.Accardi@stormrecovery.ny.gov>;

FYI-

Comments from the ER inbox for you for this project.

Let me know who else I should forward it to.

Thanks,

Mary

From: LYNHISTORY@aol.com [mailto:LYNHISTORY@aol.com]
Sent: Monday, July 10, 2017 11:25 PM
To: nyshcr.sm.nyscdbg.dr.er <nyscdbg_dr_er@nyshcr.org>
Subject: Public Hearing for the Improvements in Hempstead Lake State Park (HLSP)

ATTENTION: This email came from an external source. Do not open attachments or click on links from unknown senders or unexpected emails.

Mr. Matt Accardi
Governor's Office of Storm Recovery

25 Beaver Street, 5th Floor

New York, NY 10004

Dear Matt:
I hope it is not too late to add these written comments to the oral ones I made the July 6, 2017 public hearing concerning the improvements in Hempstead Lake State Park (HLSP) under the Living with the Bay (LWTB) program.

1 - By looking at the HSLP project separate from all the other LWTB projects, as was done last night, it was not possible to discuss in any depth a Greenway Trail that would connect the HSLP project trails to other trails such as those at Smith Pond and Tangelwood. When Smith Pond is eventually discussed at a public hearing (again, separately), the problem will be repeated. And it will be done again for the ER High School Project. And on and on.

2 - Another problem is that each LWTB project (including the HSLP and Greenway) is presented to the public as "take-it-as-is," with no lesser-cost options are ever presented, even though they exist. Backup is never provided to show how costs were developed. This has had a terrible impact on the pubic's ability to evaluate projects. This is especially true of the Greenway Trail Project.

- The GOSR's consultants have assigned a $7,350,000 price tag for the Greenway connecting trails and various extensions. I am upset that:

3
  - I am unable -- despite requests -- to see the details behind this grandiose project, or how it was costed-out.
  - No lower-cost alternatives to the consultants' exorbitant recommendations have ever been presented. By sticking with the $7.35MM cost, the project gets a low rating and falls out of contention on the Tetra-Tech matrix. I am convinced that connecting trails can be accomplished at a fraction of the $7.35MM price tag.
  - The fact that a connecting Greenway trail will enable the public to continually monitor the health of the entire river and estuary system is not considered in the matrix, further knocking the connecting trail out of contention.

4 - On a quite different matter, one or two speakers were concerned that the HSLP Greenway trail, at its northernmost extension near Hempstead HS, might encroach upon an area they deem "unsafe." While I understand these concerns, it is against the spirit of our great country to revise the HSLP trail plan in order to create a barrier to public entry on the basis that it is near a perceived "unsafe" largely-minority area. Moreover, it is essential that the public be able to observe the required, ongoing, maintenance of the North Pond floatables-collectors, especially the crucial collector near Hempstead HS.

Art Mattson
Lynbrook

Re: Hempstead Lake State Park Project Information Document

Mendez

Edgar Mendez <emx51@optimum.net>

Thu 07/13/2017 3:15 PM

To: Accardi, Matt (STORMRECOVERY) <Matt.Accardi@stormrecovery.ny.gov>;

ATTENTION: This email came from an external source. Do not open attachments or click on links from unknown senders or unexpected emails.

Below are several links to the problems areas I mentioned in my comments re: Hempstead Lake State Park Project
Both are aerial views and LOT descriptions of said areas.

4 1. Halls Pond TRASH GATE : SBL : 35J21 North East segment
https://lrv.nassaucountyny.gov/map/?s=35&b=J&l=355

2. LIRR Lakeview Station "Run-Off": SBL : 35 437 74 and adjacent lot
https://lrv.nassaucountyny.gov/map/?s=35&b=437&l=74

On Jul 13, 2017, at 2:47 PM, Edgar Mendez <emx51@optimum.net> wrote:

Hi Matt, at the last CAC meeting you mentioned there is a deadline for submitting comments re: Hempstead Lake State Park Project. I read half of the document quickly and I like to know how much more time will be allowed for comments.

Thanx, Ed

On Jul 13, 2017, at 8:52 AM, Accardi, Matt (STORMRECOVERY) <Matt.Accardi@stormrecovery.ny.gov> wrote:

We received your comment. Thank you very much for taking the time to share your concerns.

Be well,
Matt

Matt Accardi
Bureau of Environmental Review and Assessment
Assistant General Counsel
Governor's Office of Storm Recovery
25 Beaver Street, 5th Floor, New York, NY 10004
O: (212) 480-6265 I C: (646) 830-6902
Matt.accardi@stormrecovery.ny.gov I www.stormrecovery.ny.gov

From: Edgar Mendez <emx51@optimum.net>
Sent: Thursday, July 13, 2017 12:38 AM
To: Accardi, Matt (STORMRECOVERY)
Subject: Hempstead Lake State Park Project Information Document

ATTENTION: This email came from an external source. Do not open attachments or click on links from unknown senders or unexpected emails.

We met at one of the CAC/ LWTB meetings. You mentioned that I could send a letter in lieu of going to the Hempstead Town Hall meeting.

I email a letter to the address beginning with NYSCDBG, If this is not the correct destination of my written concerns, pleas forward my letter to the correct organization.

Thanks, Edgar Mendez

the following are concerns in regards to Hempstead Lake State Park Project Information Document:

First I'd like to submit a letter I wrote to various parties that were running the meetings of the CAC / LWTB projects (ex. TetraTech, GOSR, etc.) :

1 Although I submitted this letter as a concerned resident of the West Hempstead Village, none of the resulting prioritized projects dealt with the issues affecting the West Hempstead community. I was especially concerned with a neglected trash gate in the Northern part of Halls Pond. There's also a run-off from the Lakeview LIRR Train Station (east of the tracks, adjacent to the parking lot of 510 Eagle Ave.) that needs attention. This run-off eventually leads into the Schodack Brook that is shown on Figure 2b of the Info Document.

2 I'm also very concerned about the proposed excavation of the Sediment Basin in the existing wetland in the Northwest Pond, figure 2c. Last month my wife and I sighted a BALD EAGLE in the same area. I'm afraid that any loud and developmental intrusion will

2 scare away these noble creatures. I also saw a young BALD EAGLE in South Pond area several months ago.

3 Although I'm very happy to learn about the removal of debris and flotables, I'm NOT happy about the 1,500 + trees that would be removed to deal with the renovation of the dams. As of yet, I have not read in the document that these trees will be replaced in other parts of the park.

I'm hoping that these concerns will be addressed, so that the overall environmental and esthetic factors can be improved and maintain.

Sincerely, Edgar Mendez

FW: Hempstead Lake State Park Project Information Document:

nyshcr.sm.nyscdbg.dr.er

Thu 07/13/2017 8:31 AM

To: Accardi, Matt (STORMRECOVERY) <Matt.Accardi@stormrecovery.ny.gov>;

1 attachments (3 KB)

LWtBRBD.rtf;

FYI:

Comment from the ER inbox.

From: Edgar Mendez [mailto:emx51@optimum.net]
Sent: Thursday, July 13, 2017 12:31 AM
To: nyshcr.sm.nyscdbg.dr.er <nyscdbg_dr_er@nyshcr.org>
Subject: Hempstead Lake State Park Project Information Document:

ATTENTION: This email came from an external source. Do not open attachments or click on links from unknown senders or unexpected emails.

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I'm hoping that these concerns will be addressed, so that the overall environmental and esthetic factors can be improved and maintain.

Sincerely, Edgar Mendez

830 Arthur Street
West Hempstead, NY 11552

October 4, 2016

Att: Living With The Bay / Rebuild By Design

After careful consideration of the materials submitted at the Malverne CAC meeting on August 22, 2016, I feel that the community of West Hempstead (WH) has been totally ignored. Mention was made, that funding will not cover every subsequent interest that will manifest as more people become aware of these projects but, the Greenways, ponds and streams that are in WH lead to the Pinebrook Estuary. It doesn't make any sense to make the Pinebrook Estuary more resilient if some work isn't done on the Greenway that is in WH ! Said Greenway and stream begin North of the "Echo Park Pool Complex" close to Hempstead Tnpk. It continues South to Halls Pond where there is a forest area and "Trash Gate" that needs maintenance. The pond has a DAM system on the South side that also needs extensive maintenance. The stream continues below Hempstead Avenue adjacent to "MacDonalds" and runs adjacent to the "Saint Thomas Chapel" property. It continues to 100 ft West of the corner of Taylor Rd. & Glenwood Rd (use 2D aerial views) and proceeds under the Southern State Pkwy. After that it continues up to Atlas Ct. All of the aforementioned areas are in West Hempstead.

Considering that the Northern part of Hempstead Lake State Park is also in West Hempstead, I feel that there should

Commented [CM1]: 1

Commented [CM2]: 2

have been greater outreach in WH. Although, I wouldn't want to see any funds pulled from existing programs, I do feel that consideration should be given to incorporating the ideas presented into any supplemental funds and other funding that can be solicited. The following is a list of institutions in WH that border with the Greenway mentioned or that are close to it. It would be extremely beneficial to have educational programs and ecological awareness forums in the areas indicated by an asterisk. These institutions have auditoriums and meeting rooms that can be used for said purpose. Possible plaques & info maps can be situated in the commercials areas mentioned that will make the community more aware of the need for the maintenance and care of these GREEN & Water Areas. The institutions will be outlined in Geographical order that can be followed from NORTH to SOUTH on any GOOGLE Map:

1. Echo Park Pool Complex *
2. West Hempstead Mid & HS
3. West Hempstead Library *
4. Young Israel (School & Synagogue) *
5. PAL *
6. Halls Pond Park
7. CVS, Exxon, Gulf, Carvel, MacDonalds (all border the Halls Pond and Stream) - possible info plaques & maps
8. Saint Thomas Chapel *
8. Cornwell Elementary School *
9. NY Equestrian Society (uses the Hempstead Lake Park TRAILS) *

Thank You for your consideration.

Commented [CM3]: 3

Commented [CM4]: 4

Sincerely, Edgar Mendez (member of the West Hempstead Community Support Association)

Dear governers office of storm recovery,

NYEC (New York Equestrian Center)

Hi! My name is Sarah Collins.

I was devastated when I heard that our horse trail wont be used. My Favorite horse, Deegan, is rarely used in the ring and isn't very good in the ring. But, in trail he is awesome! But, if you take it away, he doesn't have a purpose. Please re-think.

-Sarah Collins, Garden city s. 11 yo

NYEC-1

Dear Governers Office of storm recovery,

I love going on trail. Its so fun. Horses are scared of people they don't know. I want my friends and horses to be safe and have fun. No trail world be bad !! Tink is my best horse. She likes trail. White House is fun. He is scared of dogs on trail, please don't let dogs on trail.

From,
Tommy
Age 7
Lynbrook

To the governors offic of storm recovery,

camp is my favorite thing. Trail helped me face my fears. when I found out there could be no more trail ride, Tinkebell started to cry. Pleas let me have fun. I even feed her grass from the meadow. She is my good friend.

From,

Jake, 7

Rockville Centre

Dear governers Office of storm recovery

My name is Emerson Boettelmann and I ride at the new york Equesman centers. My friend Cappy is to go out on the trails. He is scard of Bicliys and I dont want him to be scard.

Love,
Emmie

NYEC-3

Dear goveners office of storm recovery,

Hi, my name is Olivia Siouka and I ride at the New York Equestrian center. I am so upset that part of the trails will not be avalible to us. The horses are scared of dirt bikes so we would never be aloud to ride on trail again. My best friend Cappy's favorite thing to do is go on trail. Please don't take it from us.

From,

Olivia Siouka 9.
Garden City

Dear governers office of State recovery,

My name is Eva and I ride at equestrein Center. My bestie deagan/cappy/ Wyn. they love to go on trail with there buddies. he is scared of bicycles and I want him to be safe. If he's scared I can fall off. I told everyone about my horses and I want more people to ride them. I love to go on trail. Please let us keep it.

Dear governers of
Storm recovery my
favorite horse
layla loves trail
so pease. I am
from vally Steam

love
Jaelise

Dear governers
of storm recovery

I'm Amanda Marino
and I'm 11. Gilly might
have to leve he is
my fav horse and
I will hart broking
if he will leve because
he can't go on trial
and we can loos the
barn and that will
be hard for a girl
who bin here for her
hol life
from -

NYEC-5

Dear governers office of storm recovery,

My name is Ellie and I ride at the easterin center. I love to ride the horsen on the trails and I hope they don't get rid of them.

From, Ellie

NYEC-6

Dear governers office of storm recovery

My name is Sile Kelly and I
(she-la)
ride at NYEC. My best friend
duke the horse is [redacted] scared of
bikes and it would be horrible
if he couldnt go on a
trail ride any more and if
we cant go on trail they
will have to ~~get~~ sell the trail
horses

from,
Sile 12
South
hempsted

NYEC-7

Dear governers office of storm recovery.

My name is Kelly Connolly and I ride at the NYEC. I'm So Sad to hear that part of the trails will not be ours to use anymore. My Best friend Cappy's favorite thing to do is go hang out on trail and eat Some grass. He is so Scared of loud noises like bicycles and I alway want all the Horses to feel Safe. If we don't do trail anymore the NYEC won't get paid anymore and they might have to get rid of the barn :(

From, Kelly Connolly, 10
Garden City

Please Help NYEC ♡

NYEC-8

Dear governers office of storm recovery,

Hi, I'm Shane Adams and I'd love to keep the trail. My favorite horse Wyn loves to eat the plants and walk on it. I love seeing the plants. Wyn gets slightly nervous around cars and if he sees a bike flying past he'll spook and both of us can get injured. Also if the trail is closed one of the sweetest horses Oakley will have to be sold. Please don't make the horses and many kids sad.

From

Shane Adams II

Wantagh

Dear governevs office of storm recovery. My name is chelsea santos and I ride at New York Equesmia center I live at queens 195 street and I am 11 years old. My favonte hores name is bronx, rocky, deegan, I ride them in trail and going on trail is fun. The bad part about trail is the bicycies and the cars and its bad for the hoses. But trail is good for ~~the~~ us and the hoses.

Chelsea santos

NYEC-9

Hello, my name is Ella DeCamp. I am 12 years old, I live in RVC and I ride at NYEC. At NYEC, we have about 35 horses. Some of these horses, like Duke, are mainly trail horses. If the trails are taken away, the barn would not be able to keep horses like Duke or Deegan. Please don't take away our trails!!

Sincerely,
Ella DeCamp

Dear governers office of storm recovery,

I've been riding for 3 years and I love trail. My favorite trail horse is Duke and I don't want to lose him.

Sincerly,

Gianna, 17
Levittown

NYEC-10

Dear governers office of storm recovery,

Hi, my name is zoya khan and I am a camper a NYEC. I would really apreciate if you kept the trail for the horses. my favorite trail horse is deegen and if you ofen the trail to dirtbikes they will scare the horses and alot of people and horse will get hurt. Please keep the trail open to horses Only.

from,
Zoya khan
age 9
Jericho, NY

Dear Governers Office of Storm recovery,

I've recently heard that you would like to stop horses from going on the trail. It would upset me to not let the horses get fresh air and exercise. My favourite horse is Deegan. Deegan only rides on the trail, so if you decided to let other people ride bikes etc. I'm sure he wouldn't be happy.

I hope you understand,
Elana F. Cedarhurst, LI

NYEC-11

Dear goveners office of storm recovery,

Hi! my name is Grace Loughlin and I recently started riding here at New York Equestrian center. My favorite horse is Oakley who loves and always goes on trails with me and his other horse friends like gilligan, deegan and ranger. If we dont have the trails than lots of my favorite horses wont have a purpose here and will have to leave. Take this into conciderea-tion! PLEASE!

Sincerely,

Grace Loughlin, 9
Garden City

7/14/17

Dear governers office of storm recovery,

PLEASE LET US GO ON TRAIL! I Promised my friends from school to come on trail. The coolest horse cappuccino loves 2 ride and play. THANK U.

♡,

Sarah B

Queens

NYEC-12

Dear Governors office of storm recovery,

My name is Danielle. I ride out NYEC. Me and Gilly love trail!! Gilly gets scared when people crowd him. I want to keep going on trail with Gilly but don't want him to be scared. **Please** make sure we can keep being safe and can have fun!

Danielle
Age 12
Baldwin

NYEC-13

Dear Governors Office of storm recovery,
My name is Paige, I love Tink! Tink loves trail!
I will be upset if we cant go on trail! I want to be safe and have fun!

Paige,
Age 8
RVC

NYEC-14

Dear Governers office of storm recovery,

I love Layla! We love going on trail for camp. Don't take trail away please. I want to be happy! My horses need their own trails. Please help me.

Stacy
Age 11
West Hampton

Hello,
I heard we might not go on trail anymore.
It is so beautiful.
Tinkerbell and Twix got married at the lake. We brot carrots and cookies. I want them to live happily ever after in the forest.

From,
Julie
9
oceanside

NYEC-15

Dear governers office of stormy recovery, 7-14-17

Hi! My name is Junias Maeng and I ride horses in the New York Equestion center. I am very upset that the trail that we use will not be used for horses and will be used for other stuff. My best friend is windwyn who is also my favorite horse. I know these horses will be very sad and scared. They are going to be sad because they wont be able to go on trails anymore. They will also be scared by the dirtbikes that will use this trail instead. When I come back and we can't go on the trail I would be heart broken

Sad,
Junias Maeng

9 years old
N.Y. Garden City Park

Dear governors office of storm recovery,

Hi my name is Katie O'Brien. I go to camp at the New York Equestrian Center (NYEC). I am writing to ask you to please save our trail. If you take away the trail we will have to get rid of some of our horses. These horses have touched the hearts of everyone at the NYEC. My best friends Wyn, Gilligan, and Picasso would be so sad and scared by the sound of motor bikes. They get spooked. Imagine being surrounded by something that scares you most and all you can do is scream and run. They have panic attacks and run away.

Also, I couldn't bare to have my Picasso taken away. These people, including myself, come here to feel good. Please don't take this away from us. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Katie O'Brien
from Bellmore, N.Y.

NYEC-17

Dear goveners office of storm discovery,

My name is Selma Botvinik and I ride at NYEC. I was so sad when I heard that the trail was not for us to use. Gilligan, my best friend is afraid of the cars. Trail is one of the best parts of camp! I love trail. When there is no trail the horses on trail won't be used so much anymore. That would be really sad. Gilly is the best horse and feels great when we ren trail. I would be terribly sad because things wouldn't be the same!

From:
Selma Botvinik, 8
Far Rockaway

Keep
our
Trail

NYEC

NYEC-18

Dear governers office of stormy recovery, 7/14/17

Hi, My name Yuna Sung and I ride horses/ponies at New York Equestrian Center. The Horses ~~in the~~ that we ride love the wood and when bike and motorcycles come to ride in the woods it will ~~scare scare scare~~ get scared. My friend Tinkerbell loves to eat the grasses there. We love going on horses and letting them feel the nature. Please don't let bikes and motorcycles come to ride in the woods.

love, Yuna

age: 10 years old

town: Queen Village

NYEC-19

7/14/17

Dear Governers of Storm Recovery,

My name is Eunseo Lee and I am a camper at NYEC. Please, Please, Please PLEASE don't replace the trail with dirtbike tracks that are SERIOUSLY harmfu to nature. As a little girl, I've always wanted to ridt horses outdoors. So, if you replace the trail with dirtbike tracks YOU'RE CRUSHING A LITTLE GIRL'S DREAMS

From,
Eunseo Lee
Age: 10
-Mom Bas

NYEC-20

Dear Governers office of storm Recovery,

My name is Lindsay Loughlin. I love riding Gilligan on trail. It is so fun. I herd that You Are taking some of the trailsaway. ☹ Please keep them.

Love
Lindsay
Loughlin
Age: 10
town: Garden City

Amanda

Dear governer

Hi I'm Amanda and I love tiral BUB the way I'm ll I want to keep every one safe

NYEC-21

Dear governers office of storm recovery,

My name is Haley Baschnagel. I rode here at the New york equestrian center. I am dissapointed to hear that a part of the trails we wont be able to use anymore. My fayerite horses are Twix and wyn the will be devistated if they cant hang with there friends on trail. One of my favorite things to do here is go on trail with the horses. I would be heartbroken if things changed.

Love,
Haley Baschnagel, 10
Garden City

NYEC-22

To the Governor's Office of Storm Recovery,

I am writing to you in regard of the Hempstead Lake State Park project. I believe that many of the plans in place are a wonderful and needed for the area. However I am troubled by the thought that the limited area that is available for horseback riding will be further reduced and future equestrians will be put in harms way. While this park does need a cleanup I believe that the bridle paths should be left just for the horses to operate on. Horseback riding through the park has been a tradition here and there are entire generations of families that come to enjoy it. The people that come to ride range from being experienced equestrians to beginners that are just finding their passion for horses. While all the horses that are available to the public are safe and reliable horses; the addition of a second entrance to the back of the park can result in objectionable activities that would not combine well with the horses. Also allowing the trails to become "multi-purpose trails" would contribute to conflicts that will spook the horses that are in the park. I think that it is important to keep the park and trails safe and accessible for those that are interested in keeping the tradition of trail rides going. The New York Equestrian Center is the only facility in Nassau County where horseback riding is accessible to the public in such a way and if this project goes through as planned without alteration then we would be choosing to lose a monumental piece of Nassau County history.

Sincerely,

Alina Semenova

Plan to revamp Hempstead Lake State Park irks residents, businesses

Posted: Jul 14, 2017 1:16 PM EDT
Updated: Jul 14, 2017 7:58 PM EDT

WEST HEMPSTEAD - A proposed $34.5 million renovation of Hempstead Lake State Park is concerning residents and businesses owners who say it would negatively impact the area.

The New York State Parks Department recently discussed restoring the 521-acre park's northwest and northeast ponds and creating new areas to treat stormwater runoff and collect pollutants.

The work would include the loss of 2.4 acres of trees and a widening of the park's trails.

It would also make current bridle and hiking paths into multipurpose trails that could be used by cyclists. Alex Jacobson, owner and founder of the New York Equestrian Center at the park, says horses and cyclists do not mix well together.

He says if a horse were to get spooked while children were on a path, it could be the "source of a disaster."

The proposal also calls for putting a new entrance to the park near Hempstead High School in a wooded area. Some residents told News 12 that it will be "more trouble than it's worth" – anticipating students using the area as a hangout.

State parks officials say their utmost priority is the safety of visitors and that they have a full-time police station on the premises. The design phase for the project should be completed this fall.

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$35M renovation to Hempstead Lake State Park prompts concerns

Posted July 13, 2017

Start slideshow

(/uploads/original/1499960545_bbc9.jpg)

Government officials are seeking to renovate Hempstead Lake State Park, but residents are concerned about the environmental and historical impact.
CHRISTINA DALY

Buy this photo

By Rossana Weltekamp (mailto:rweltekamp@liherald.com)

The New York State Parks Department hosted an environmental review hearing for a proposed $35 million project to rejuvenate Hempstead Lake State Park last week at Hempstead Town Hall, but residents and businesses expressed concerns.

The meeting, which was attended by roughly 30 people, discussed restoring the 521-acre park's northwest and northeast ponds and creating new areas to treat storm water runoff and collect pollutants. Other renovations included improvements to Hempstead Lake's dam and construction of an 8,000 square foot Environmental Education and Resiliency Center that would monitor the lake's water levels and act as an educational and emergency response facility for the community.

(http://liherald.ads.communityq.com/www/delivery/ck.php?

To accomplish the work, the loss of 2.4 acres of trees is expected, some of which would be removed to widen the park's trails. The South Shore Audubon Society expressed concern that the loss of the trees would result in fewer bird habitats. They also showed frustration from a lack of communication with those leading the project. "We want a complete environmental impact statement," said Jim Brown, a conservation coach and past president of the South Shore Audubon Society. "We don't really know everything about the habitat and wildlife that's in the park and how it should be managed. It just seems like they're rushing this through."

Alex Jacobson, owner and founder of the New York Equestrian Center, one of the largest permit holders at Hempstead Lake State Park, said the government's plans would take away over a mile of bridle paths that have been used for horse back riding exclusively for decades. "They're turning some of the bridle paths into multi-purpose trails," said Jacobson, who said the government should consider the area's historical equestrian past. West Hempstead has been home to horseback riding schools for over a century. "We're looking to preserve the horse history in this town."

Jacobson said that a mile's worth of bridle path on the park's north side, and a third of the path on the south would be converted to multi-purpose trails, which does not work for horses. "They're calling it a proposed hiking, cycling and bridle path, but you can't have cycling and bridle on the same path," said Jacobson. "It will spook the horses."

[illegible] security concerns.

Governor's Office of Storm Recovery will accept public comments about the project until July 17 by email nyscdbg_dr_er@nyshcr.org or by writing to them at 25 Beaver Street, 5th Floor, New York, NY 10004.

Sen. Todd Kaminsky, who attended the meeting, commented, "Hempstead Lake State Park is a jewel of our community that we must preserve for future generations. Any project of this magnitude must be scrutinized. Ultimately, we need to protect our communities from flooding, protect the environment and capitalize on the opportunity to build a first-class recreational park."

The effort is part of the state's $125 million "Living with the Bay" initiative which aims to make South Shore communities along Mill River — which runs from Hempstead Lake south to Hewlett Bay — more resistant to future storms. Living with the Bay is funded through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The Citizens Advisory Committee meeting to discuss proposed renovations to the park will be held on July 25 from 5:30 to 9:30 at Knights of Columbus, 2985 Kenneth Place in Oceanside.

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Two beachgoers hit by police vehicle in Long Beach (/glencove/stories/two-beachgoers-hit-by-police-vehicle-in-long-beach,93733)

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Comments

Report an inappropriate comment (/report_item.html?sub_id=93674&referring_url=%2Fglencove%2Fstories%2F35m-renovation-to-hempstead-lake-state-park-prompts-concerns%2C93674)

NYEC-23

Dear governers

Hi! My name is Alexa Scherfend.

I love going on trail and our horses do too Deegan and Gilly are trail horses O.N.L.Y.! Deegan is bad in the rang and Gilly is too. All the bikes will scare them. Our best horses will leave

!Please!

Then we will have some bad horses. Can you please give us the trail road and dirtbike somewhere else!!P.L.E.A.S.E! Thank you!

Love,

Alexa, Merrick NY

Dear Governors of storm recovery

My name is Shahar Ben-Simon. You know what my favorite part of N.Y.E.C is?! not just the fact that the horses here are sooo adorable and fun to ride and pet... I especially like going on trail... My favorite horse is Gilligan. We both LOVE going on trail with our buddies. By the way, I am 11 years old and I live in Woodmere. Yes, Yes, I came all the way here to see Gilly and all the other horses. I can't imagine life without Gilly-Gill, and if you take him away... I don't know what will happen... but it'll be BAD. I can't imagine that even in my crazeyest imagination... And if there will be dirty bikes all over the place, the horses get scared and the riders will

NYEC-24

fall of and never ride agian!
in addition - if there will be durt bikes all over the place, the air will get very durty. If you stop trail, you stop the horses that go on trail like: Gilly, Oaklee, Deegan, Duke, and even more... So N.Y.E.C will have to send them away, someplace else, not safe... I dont even want to see how that happens...
So please!! Do not stop our horses!!
You maby think that it dosent really mater to us.. But it really - really does!

From Shahar Ben-Simon 17 age
Woodmere

NYEC-25

Dear Governers of Storm Recovery,

My name is Rohail Khan and I ride at the NYEC. My friend Gilligan Loves to Go on trail. If he doesn't get to go the barn won't need him. The barn might shut down due to lack of

NYEC-25

Money. Please don't let the vehicles go on trail. Thank you. :)

from,
Rohail, 11
Jericho, NY

NYEC-26

Dear governers,

Rohail

my name is lily Pow-ell my friend tinker-Bell loves the trail and Loves to eat and if you take the trail away I'm afaid that tinker-bell might have to Leave the Barn and I, infact we will be sad Because

most of our favointe horses will leave and we wount like that. PLEASE LEAVE THE TRIAL!

Love Lily, 9
26 court st

if you leave the trial

Living with the Bay
Citizens Advisory Committee

Comments on the Hempstead Lake State Park Environmental Review

1 The following represents the consensus comments of the members of the Living with the Bay Citizens Advisory Committee (LWTB CAC). The LWTB CAC requests that a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) be completed prior to a final decision on the Hempstead Lake State Park (HLSP) project. Our request is based (in part) on the State's acknowledgement that Hempstead Lake State Park represents "the largest freshwater body in Nassau County" and "the largest continuous track of forested land in southern Nassau County" as well as the cost of $35 Million (or 1/3 of the total Living with the Bay grant). The need for a thorough EIS is also supported by the following:

2 After repeated requests over the last several months, the Governor's Office of Storm Recovery (GOSR) and the New York State Parks Department have still not provided the detailed plans for the proposal. GOSR's public presentation of a full EIS should include all the details of the HLSP project plan as well as alternatives.

3 The HLSP project plan proposal represents a segmentation of the overall LWTB project. The LWTB project incorporates the length of the Mill River as well as the tidal bay it empties into. By segmenting the HLSP project from the rest of the Mill River basin, the environmental impacts downstream of the proposed project are not being assessed.

4 The New York State Parks Department has not completed a Master Plan for HLSP. Such plans exist for other state parks. These plans identify the most important assets of the park and provide a strategy to preserve them. The materials provided to the public identified two of the most unique and important assets of HLSP: once more the "largest freshwater body in Nassau County" and "the largest continuous track of forested land in southern Nassau County", however actions identified in the proposal would significantly impact these assets.

5 Information on important aspects of a Park's resources has been routinely collected for the environmental reviews of other NYS Park projects. Some of these other projects were significantly less disruptive to existing conditions as the proposed HLSP project.

Accordingly, the environmental review should assess:

5

- Water quantity (including flows)
- Water quality
- Biological
- Natural
- Scenic
- Historical
- Cultural
- Aesthetic
- All supporting data

6 The proposed projects fails to include the original concept of a “slow stream” which was intended to create or restore ponds, lakes and river volume capacities in conjunction with existing water recharge basins and create additional sites for a greater amount of water detention and bio filtration as a means to address the vast amounts of storm water pollution. The concept was also to bring the historic capacity of the river back to offset the filling (flooding) of its river plains and daylight urbanized feeder streams. The current proposal will destroy open water wetlands to create emergent wetlands and destroy emergent wetlands to create a floatable catchment. The result will be a net loss of wetlands and storage capacity of the river.

7 The proposed project is missing perhaps the most important component: dredging the decades accumulated sediment from Hempstead Lake. The original LWTB project included the removal of over six feet of sediment from the Lake (not the northern Ponds). Not only would this dredging restore the water volume capacity of this reservoir, but it would greatly improve the open water habitat for the fauna of the Park.

The environmental review should also consider the holistic standards proposed by the LWTB CAC as the metrics for the cumulative effectiveness of the plan. These standards include:

8

- A net gain of flood water storage (upstream of the tidal wetlands) including increasing areas for backwaters.
- A net gain of storm surge wave attenuating wetlands (with in the bay)
- No net loss of natural and open space areas
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- No net loss in base flow in the Mill River or its open waters
- A net increase in fish habitat
- No net loss of bird habitat
- Priority on non-structural alternatives (with passive – more natural elements)

The CAC stands ready to work with GOSR to resolve these concerns and address the entire LWTB project area. Feel free to contact us with any questions or comments.

On Behalf of the LWTB CAC,

David Stern, Co-Chair
Joe Forgione, Co-Chair

.

Rozakis Comment HLSP

Rozakis

greenheron1@verizon.net

Mon 7/17/2017 4:48 PM

To: nyshcr.sm.nyscdbg.dr.er <nyscdbg_dr_er@nyshcr.org>;

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Mr. Matt Accardi
Governor's Office of Storm Recovery
25 Beaver Street, 5th Floor
New York, NY 10004 re: Hempstead Lake State Project Park

Dear Sir:

I concur with the consensus statement of the LWTB CAC.

1 I was at a CAC meeting where our chairman asked GOSR staff, directly, for any environmental and scientific data that would be used in your review, and he was not accommodated. He repeated those requests before and after that meeting.

3 If the CAC or the public had had access to the various surveys, soundings, water quality tests and stream flow metrics that were determined in the studies funded by and I presume carried out in the accordance with August 3, 2015 Amendment 1 to MOU dated Nov. 17, 2014, a more informed and comprehensive critique would be on your desk.

Sincerely,

Tom Rozakis
member, LWTB CAC

FW: Comments on Hempstead Lake State Park Environmental Review

Sperling

nyshcr.sm.nyscdbg.dr.er

Mon 07/17/2017 12:02 PM

To: Accardi, Matt (STORMRECOVERY) <Matt.Accardi@stormrecovery.ny.gov>;

1 attachments (3 MB)

Comments on HLSP ER.pdf;

Comments from the ER inbox received today.

-----Original Message-----
From: Michael Sperling [mailto:mssperling@optonline.net]
Sent: Monday, July 17, 2017 11:16 AM
To: nyshcr.sm.nyscdbg.dr.er <nyscdbg_dr_er@nyshcr.org>
Subject: Comments on Hempstead Lake State Park Environmental Review

ATTENTION: This email came from an external source. Do not open attachments or click on links from unknown senders or unexpected emails.

Greetings. The attached four-page PDF file contains ER comments from South Shore Audubon Society and other NY Audubon chapters. My chapter serves the southern half of Nassau County, including all of the communities adjacent to Hempstead Lake State Park, and is an active participant in the Citizens Advisory Committee for Living with the Bay as well as a very frequent visitor to Hempstead Lake State Park.

Please confirm receipt of this e-mail.

Michael Sperling
President, South Shore Audubon Society
www.ssaudubon.org

South Shore Audubon Society

P.O. Box 31
Freeport, NY 11520-0031

Comments on the Hempstead Lake State Park Environmental Review

Presented at the Governor's Office of Storm Recovery Public Hearing at Hempstead Town Hall
July 2017

Summary Statement. Following are the main comments of the South Shore Audubon Society and other chapters of the National Audubon Society:

1) we would like to know who the "lead agency" for the development plans for Hempstead Lake State Park is;

2) we request a copy of more detailed and updated plans so our comments will be more to the point;

3) we urge that a full Environmental Impact Statement of the cumulative effect of all the proposed projects that are part of the Living with the Bay project be conducted;

4) we are most strongly opposed to any alterations to Hempstead Lake State Park that will result in the loss of wildlife habitat;

5) we object to the use of these funds for projects outside their stated purpose of storm recovery and building storm resiliency;

6) we would like to see plans for sustainability in writing.

On behalf of the South Shore Audubon Society and the other undersigned chapters of the National Audubon Society, thank you for the opportunity to provide the following comments on the Environmental Assessment of the Hempstead Lake State Park (HLSP) portion of the Living with the Bay (LWTB) project.

1 Our most important comment can be summarized in a nutshell: **we have been given the opportunity to comment on a plan we have not seen**. The document upon which we are to comment is not only not the final version of the plan, but we are not told what version it is. That is our first strong objection to this process. It is possible that some of our comments are actually moot.

2 But let us assume that the main points in this document are similar to the ones in the final plan. That leads to our second strong objection to this process: **we find the Environmental Review by the Governor's Office of Storm Recovery (GOSR) to be inadequate and possibly illegal**.

3 We have been in discussions with staff of Stantec; the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation; and the Governor's Office of Storm Recovery; but **we do not know which of these three is the designated "Lead Agency,"** and therefore we do not know who is making final decisions.

4 GOSR states the following in Action Plan Amendment 16: "Based on the available information pertaining to the potential projects that will be completed through LWTB, GOSR does not anticipate a need to complete an EIS (Environmental Impact Statement) for the LWTB Project. Rather, GOSR intends to complete Environmental Assessments and to issue Findings of No Significant Impact for

multiple projects and groups of projects. Environmental permitting and Environmental Assessments
4 will be performed as each LWTB focus area enters the 30% design stage…"

According to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), this amounts to segmentation: "In Part 617.2(ag), segmentation is defined as the division of the environmental review of an action so that various activities or stages are addressed as though they were independent, unrelated activities needing individual determinations of significance. Except in special circumstances, considering only a part, or segment, of an overall action is contrary to the intent of SEQR (the State Environmental Quality Review Act)."

Common sense dictates that it is folly to assess one of the plan's elements without considering the environment as a whole. Even though executing the projects might be separated by time and space, they are all still part of the same Mill River ecosystem and, clearly, if one part is altered, it will affect all the others.

In fact, according to the DEC, segmentation typically occurs either "where a project sponsor attempts to avoid a thorough environmental review (often an EIS) of a whole action by splitting a project into two or more smaller projects," or "where activities that may be occurring at different times or places are excluded from the scope of the environmental review … [so] the project may appear more acceptable to the reviewing agencies and the public."

As the DEC further states: "Reviewing the 'whole action' is an important principle in SEQR; interrelated or phased decisions should not be made without consideration of their consequences for the whole action, even if several agencies are involved in such decisions. Each agency should consider the environmental impacts of the entire action before approving, funding or undertaking any specific element of the action (see subdivision 617.3(g))."

Thus, a full EIS according to New York's State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is necessary to assess the cumulative impact of LWTB.

Following are our specific comments on the version of the plans for the HLSP project that we have been given. These plans provide little detail. Further, although we have been informed that many of these plans have been modified, we do not have these modifications in writing, and so we must comment on what we have.

5 We are very concerned about the destruction of habitat in the Northeast and Northwest Ponds that is alluded to in this document. These Ponds provide valuable and rare wetland habitat of shallow open water and mudflats that are used by an abundance and diversity of birds. South Shore Audubon Society bird surveys, both with the Seatuck Environmental Association and independently, have confirmed the presence of freshwater shorebirds (Least Sandpiper, Spotted Sandpiper, Solitary Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Semipalmated Plover, Greater Yellowlegs, Lesser Yellowlegs), wading birds (Great Egret, Snowy Egret, Great Blue Heron, Green Heron, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Glossy Ibis), and dabbling ducks (American Black Duck, Wood Duck, Green-winged Teal, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, American Wigeon, Gadwall, Northern Pintail). Such abundance and diversity is rare in Nassau County, and is crucial to the survival of these species.

We are concerned that dredging and increasing water capacity will flood the habitat and make it unusable by these at-risk species, as happened at Massapequa Preserve, where a similar project made wetlands unsuitable for Wilson's Snipe and Long-billed Dowitcher, now extirpated from the preserve.

6 Further, it is pointless to install a floatables collector unless monies are available to sustain its effectiveness. Once it fills up, unless there is a regular process of emptying it, conditions will be worse than they were without it. Even a well-maintained floatables collector, however, should only be a backup; it would be far better to prevent floatables from entering the watershed in the first place. Measures should be taken to catch floatables at their source.

7 Finally, the expansion of trails and creation of viewing points around the North Ponds is gratuitous destruction of habitat and removal of vegetation that provides crucial food and shelter for birds. The North Ponds area is one of the last wild areas in Nassau County and as much as possible should be preserved as such. Interior trails should be allowed to return to their natural state. Further fragmenting the woodlands and wetlands with trails, and disturbing the area with increasing recreational traffic, defeat the purpose of increasing access to nature by removing nature from the equation.

The South Shore Audubon Society is in agreement with the Seatuck Environmental Association that the wetlands and woodlands north of the Southern State Parkway be designated as a Park Preservation Area pursuant to New York Law governing State Parks [see NY Pks, Rec & His Pres L § 20.02 (2016)].

Hempstead Lake State Park currently offers opportunities for almost any kind of outdoor activity, such as biking, hiking, horseback riding, fishing, boating, ice skating, cross-country skiing, barbecuing, and picnicking; and features a carousel, a playground, tennis and basketball courts, a ball field, and a dog run, as well as habitat that attracts wildlife. Although the overall size of the Park is small, to nesting and migrating birds it is an oasis of green and blue within a sea of suburbs, and therefore it is Nassau County's best terrestrial bird-watching site and a designated New York State Important Bird Area (IBA). Amazingly, the Park provides crucial habitat for nesting Great Horned Owls, resident Ospreys, Bald Eagles, and many other sensitive species, including migrating warblers, vireos, tanagers, and flycatchers. The Bald Eagle is listed as a New York State Threatened Species, and the Osprey is listed as a New York State Species of Concern. Species of Concern seen on migration include Red-headed Woodpecker and Cerulean Warbler.

7 Birds inhabit the entire Park and need continuous habitat to survive. The proposed greenways, trails, and waterfront access fragment the Park's habitat, and change the fundamental character of the Park and its function as a refuge for nesting and migrating birds.

8 **We oppose any expansion of trails with its concomitant removal of vegetation**. We also object to removing swaths of vegetation even if they are predominantly non-native plants. We are told that state regulations require the removal of trees from the dams. It should be taken into consideration that the current vegetation on the dam on the southern part of the lake provides stabilizing roots, and the Park's vegetation in general absorbs water and mitigates flooding. Removing all plants from the dams at once will not only deprive birds and other wildlife of necessary food and shelter, but promote erosion. A more piecemeal and gradual approach to replacing non-native species with native ones should be pursued: identifying and removing only the non-native species and then immediately planting appropriate ones in their place. And, as stated before, any plant removal is useless unless there are funds, staff, and a plan for continued maintenance. The significant negative impacts of plant removal are all the more reason that a full EIS is needed.

9 We oppose expanding the trails to permit both pedestrians and bicyclists because this will not only disrupt nature, but will create hazardous conditions. Again we cite the example of Massapequa Preserve, where multi-use paths are plagued by the danger of collisions between walkers and bikers,

9 and hardly provide enjoyment of nature. We also object to the building of kayak launches that will increase boating traffic in an IBA for waterfowl.

10 In addition, the Park is chronically underfunded and understaffed, and we see no written commitment to staffing and maintaining a new Education Center, nor to continuing to remove invasive species when they inevitably reappear.

11 Last, but certainly not least, many aspects of these projects will not contribute to storm resilience, and funds for them would much better be used for their intended purpose, which is the improvement of storm resilience on the south shore of Nassau County.

Thank you for considering our comments.

Michael Sperling, President
South Shore Audubon Society

Lisa Curtis, President
Central Westchester Audubon Society

Andrew Mason, Co-President
Delaware–Otsego Audubon Society

Joyann Cirigliano, President
Four Harbors Audubon Society

Michael Bochnik, President
Hudson River Audubon Society

Simone DaRos, Acting President
Huntington-Oyster Bay Audubon Society

Kathryn Heintz, Executive Director
New York City Audubon

Debbie O'Kane, President
North Fork Audubon Society

Maryanne Adams, Conservation Chair
Onondaga Audubon Society

Karen D'Alessandri, President
Rockland Audubon Society

Pat Fitzgerald, Conservation Chair
Southern Adirondack Audubon Society

Living with the Bay
Citizens Advisory Committee

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The CAC stands ready to work with GOSR to resolve these concerns and address the entire LWTB project area. Feel free to contact us with any questions or comments.

On Behalf of the LWTB CAC,

David Stern, Co-Chair
Joe Forgione, Co-Chair

.

FW: Comments on Hempstead Lake State Park Project - Governor's Office of Storm Recovery (GOSR)

Tognan

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Mon 07/17/2017 12:01 PM

To: Accardi, Matt (STORMRECOVERY) <Matt.Accardi@stormrecovery.ny.gov>;

Comments from ER inbox.

From: Nancy Tognan [mailto:nancy.tognan@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, July 17, 2017 11:57 AM
To: nyshcr.sm.nyscdbg.dr.er <nyscdbg_dr_er@nyshcr.org>
Subject: Comments on Hempstead Lake State Park Project - Governor's Office of Storm Recovery (GOSR)

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Sent to NYSCDBG_DR_ER@nyshcr.org on July 17, 2017, 11:55 am.

Comments on proposal discussed the meeting held on July 6, 2017, by the Governor's Office of Storm Recovery (GOSR) at Town of Hempstead Town Hall, 350 Front Street, Hempstead, NY 11550.

> COMBINED NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF A NEPA DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT; EARLY NOTICE OF EARLY PUBLIC REVIEW OF A PROPOSED ACTIVITY IN A WETLAND (EO 11990); NOTICE OF SECTION 106, NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACT REVIEW (54 U.S.C. 306108); and ANNOUNCEMENT OF PUBLIC HEARING
>
> Hempstead Lake State Park
>
> Town of Hempstead, New York

Comments are in reference to the Draft Environmental Assessment.

My name is Nancy Tognan. I am a board member of North Shore Audubon Society, which is based in Port Washington, NY. I am also the vice president of Queens County Bird Club. The opinions I am giving are my own, and are not the official statement of either organization.

I believe the Hempstead Lake State Park Project is an opportunity to renovate the park and turn it into an inviting location to enjoy nature, both for the surrounding community and other New Yorkers.

1 As a bicyclist and birder, I look forward to renovated trails, plus viewing platforms above the lake. I also look forward to improved water quality and floating garbage removal that will provide a better habitat for all wildlife. An environmental center, to be built on a grassy area that is not wildlife habitat, will inspire future stewards of this beautiful site, and will provide a base location for school bus trips to the park. I hope that there will be annual funding to maintain all of the features provided: dams, trails, environmental center, and floatables collectors (they should be cleaned often). Without adequate maintenance and staffing, the park will not stay improved for long.

2 I understand that dam replacement has been deemed necessary for the safety of the region. It is unfortunate that up to 1200 trees need to be removed to ensure the dams' structural integrity, but I cannot offer an alternative solution.

There are two improvements to the plan that I would like to suggest:

3 1. Fish ladders. The Seatuck Environmental Association, based in Suffolk County, is currently spearheading an effort to remove unnecessary dams, and to equip remaining dams with fish ladders to allow menhaden to swim upstream to spawn. Would it be possible to plan for fish ladders, at least to some of the lower lakes, in the event that water quality improves enough for migratory fish to breed in the park lakes? It certainly makes sense to install them while the dams are being re-constructed, rather than in the future when the need arises.

4 2. Multi-use path and Greenway. This is one aspect of the plan that does not seem well-thought-out. There is to be a "greenway" on the western edge of the lake and the northwest edge of the northern ponds. Additionally, there is a "multi-use" path that duplicates most of the route of the greenway path, plus completes a circuit around the lake. I have these concerns.

a. Double fragmentation of habitat. Every wide path fragments the habitat and causes difficulties for wildlife crossing. Every wide path subtracts from wildlife habitat. Why have two wide, mostly parallel trails that serve the same purpose? This will cause double the habitat fragmentation.

b. "Multi-use". It is planned that hikers, bicyclists, and horses share one path. This will make all three groups unhappy. This "multi-use" concept may make sense in remote areas of New York State where a path is lightly used. But in Hempstead, we have an urban park that will have multitudes of users, including a stable of 60 horses.

A bridle path gets covered in horse elimination products – will bicyclists and hikers want to walk around or cycle through these messes? And will the horses be happy to walk among multitudes of bicyclists and pedestrians? Even the equestrian center owner expressed safety concerns about this during the July 6, 2017 meeting.

And as far as bicyclists and pedestrians sharing a path, this is not the best situation either. Many NY municipalities, including New York City, ban bicycles from using sidewalks in order to prevent injuries. Pedestrians tend to stop, turn,

4 look, walk three abreast, and otherwise unknowingly provide hazards to cyclists and roller-bladers, who need to keep moving and pass them. As a cyclist in Bethpage State Park's path, I have sustained injuries in avoiding a group of pedestrians who suddenly decided to change lanes without looking. And as a pedestrian, I am often unaware that a bicycle is approaching quickly and silently when I am absorbed in the scenery or conversation.

I would recommend separate, narrower trails for each of the three groups – pedestrians, bicyclists/roller-bladers, and horses - perhaps in different parts of the park.

Thank you for giving these concerns your consideration.

Nancy Tognan

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