Supervisor Lesko and Councilwoman Kepert Announce "Carmans River Protection Plan"

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Farmingville, NY - Today, Supervisor Mark Lesko and Councilwoman Connie Kepert unveiled a major policy direction for the protection of the Carmans River Watershed at a Town Hall Conference attended by over 100 members of the community. It was announced that the policy will serve as a guide for a comprehensive plan of action to help preserve Carmans River Watershed.

The conference was organized by the Town of Brookhaven and featured a variety of speakers on the topics of habitats and species, groundwater modeling and invasive species. It focused public attention on the river and set forth a new direction for the protection of the watershed.

Supervisor Lesko and Councilwoman Kepert opened the conference with the announcement of four specific goals for the protection of the River. They included:

1. Encouraging land use that meets the needs of the community and the Town while protecting the health and quality of the River
2. Improving and protecting water quality
3. Protecting and restoring biodiversity in and along the River
4. Reducing the territory invaded and held by non-invasive species and encouraging the return to dominance by native ones

"Good water means a healthier community," said Supervisor Lesko. "A well-thought out Carman's River Protection Plan will help us work towards preserving and restoring the beauty and health of the River. This conference was a significant first step to defining the Carmans River and its future."

Councilwoman Connie Kepert added, "I am hopeful that this conference will clarify what measures all levels of government and stakeholders should take to protect the watershed."

Proposed measures to protect the river include:

- Create a "Carmans River Watershed Protection Overlay District" which outlines performance criteria to assure the health of the River
- Direct and secure open space acquisition funding to a priority list of parcels located in the watershed
- Establish a Town Waterways Preservation (Transfer of Development Rights) Credit program to allow the transfer of density out of the watershed
- Create a working group, co-led by the Town of Brookhaven and the Pine Barrens Commission, to complete the study of the watershed and create a clearly defined plan to protect the River

Planning Commissioner Tullio Bertoli, who organized the conference and helped to create the Protection Plan added, "The policy direction set forth at the conference should guide preservation and land use in the Carmans River Watershed for generations to come." It is expected that a completed plan will be presented to the Town Board within 12 months.

Conference attendee and President of the South Yaphank Civic Association Johan McConnell said, "The nearness of the Carmans River and Southaven Park are the reason my husband and I, plus many of the residents in South Yaphank purchased our homes here. Both are very important natural resources, which help to define our community and must be protected so that future generations will be able to enjoy them."