

Supervisor Romaine and Councilman Loguercio Announce Completion of Upper Yaphank Lake Spillway and Fish Passage

posted on 8/7/2017 3:54:00 PM



Farmingville, NY – On August 7, Supervisor Ed Romaine (front row, fourth from left) and Councilman Michael Loguercio (front row, second from left) held a press conference to announce the completion of the new fish passage and the reconstruction of the spillway at Upper Yaphank Lake (also known as Willow Lake). They were joined at the press conference by Senator Ken LaValle (front row, third from left) who was instrumental in securing the funding for the project from New York State, and Anthony Graves, the Town's Chief Environmental Analyst. Also in attendance were Jeremy Campbell of the NYS South Shore Estuary Reserve Office, Michelle Potter, Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Long Island Refuge Complex, Robert and Audrey Kessler of the Coalition to Save the

Lakes, Tom Williams of the Post Morrow Foundation and the Carmans River Partnership, George Costa from Trout Unlimited, Kevin McDonald from The Nature Conservancy and others.

The dam at Upper Yaphank Lake was built in the 1700s, so for the better part of 300 years, fish have been prevented from accessing this part of their ancestral spawning and feeding habitat. The new fish passage restores ecological connectivity within the Carmans River and is designed to pass river herring (alewives and blueback herring) and trout including native brook trout. The old spillway was crumbling and in urgent need of replacement. The new spillway has added capacity to pass floodwaters and enhances the resiliency of the Town's infrastructure to prevent future flooding impacts from intensifying patterns of precipitation.

Supervisor Romaine said, "Upper Yaphank Lake is such an important link in the ecological life chain of the Carmans River and these two new enhancements will be a great benefit to the ecology of the Carmans River watershed while also strengthening our infrastructure. I thank Senator LaValle for his continued support and I commend all those who helped bring these projects to fruition."

Councilman Michael Loguercio said, "The construction of the fish passage and new spillway reflect the Town's commitment to be good stewards of the environment. I stand firm with Supervisor Romaine and Senator LaValle to do everything we can to assure that future generations will benefit from what we do today."

Senator LaValle said, "It has been a pleasure to work with Supervisor Ed Romaine and Councilman Michael Loguercio to put in place an updated and environmentally sustainable technology to improve the ecology of Yaphank Lake and the Carmans River. This furthers our commitment to protecting and preserving our natural resources for this generation and the next."

Carl Lobule, Director of Ocean Programs for The Nature Conservancy in New York said, "The perseverance of all involved in seeing these projects through to completion is only rivaled by the tenacity of the fish that will traverse the sea and at long last reclaim the headwaters of the Carmans River."

Michelle Potter, Refuge Manager of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service said, "We're proud to join with NYSDEC, Town of Brookhaven, Trout Unlimited, TNC and our other partners in restoring our lakes, rivers and river systems to provide improved aquatic connectivity for key fish species and other wildlife that depend on this important watershed. Healthy lakes and rivers are lifelines for the communities on Long Island -- providing recreation, water quality, strong economies and other benefits. By connecting and restoring waterways like the Upper Yaphank Lake, which feeds the Carmans River, we're helping fish and wildlife thrive while creating more resilient communities for people."

George Costa, Region 1 Vice President of Trout Unlimited said, "We unite ourselves here today to celebrate the environmental desire to restore this vital freshwater ecosystem to its once pristine and natural course of flow, a goal that is still attainable within future years. We are about to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the first passage completion at the tidal section of the Carmans River. Migrating anadromous fish have utilized it to overcome the dam's barrier since its opening. This newly completed passage will in coming years open additional waters to these returning travelers and our native brook trout. Preservation of our natural environment is a vital portion of human

existence. We are the stewards of the world that we impact each day. The Art Flick TU Chapter of Trout Unlimited thanks all who were instrumental in accomplishing this project. In coming years, we look forward to combining our voice with theirs and future voices in preserving this island entrusted to us."

John Turner, a Conservation Policy Advocate for the Seatuck Environmental Association said, "With the installation of the fish ladder at Upper Lake in Yaphank, the Town of Brookhaven has completed a critical step in restoring the ecological health of the Carmans River by accessing approximately three miles of the river for American Eel and river herring, most notably Alewives. Once the planned-for ladder is installed at Lower Lake, the entire river will be accessible as spawning habitat for Alewives and developmental habitat for eel. This project is a high priority in Seatuck's island-wide 'Diadromous Fish Restoration Strategy' and we are delighted the Town of Brookhaven has completed this important project."

When a permit application was submitted to the NYSDEC for construction of the Upper Lake fish passage, the NYSDEC's Office of Dam Safety identified the existing spillway as having inadequate capacity. The replacement of the spillway became a condition of the permit to build the fish passage. After the NYSDEC Office of Dam Safety made replacement of the spillway a condition of approval for the construction of the fish passage, the Town was approved for a State contract to pay for a new spillway with the assistance of Senator Ken LaValle.

The Seatuck Environmental Association and the Environmental Defense Fund, together funded the Dennis Puleston Environmental Fellowship that assisted with the development of the Upper Lake fish passage and spillway grant for the Town and for the County's fish passage project for Lower Yaphank Lake (also known as Lily Lake) which is expected to be built in 2018. The State provided a grant to Suffolk County to construct a fish passage at Lily Lake, and an application has been made to the NYSDEC for the construction of that fish passage. When it is constructed in 2018, anadromous fish, such as river herring, will be able to get all the way from Great South Bay to the headwaters of the Carmans River.

Division of Public Information * Office of the Supervisor

One Independence Hill • Farmingville • NY 11738 • Phone 631-451-6595