

Supervisor Lesko and Town Board Adopt Resolution to Allow New York Natural Heritage Program to Conduct Ecological Assessment of Town-owned Wetlands in Mastic Beach

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Farmingville, NY - At the August 2 Town Board meeting, the Town Board voted to adopt a resolution to allow the New York Ecological Heritage Program (NYEHP), a partnership between the Nature Conservancy and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, to conduct an ecological assessment of Town-owned wetlands in Mastic Beach. This program is part of a nationwide effort by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which contracted NYEHP to perform the work locally in Brookhaven Town. The EPA will assess a total of 900 randomly selected wetland sites across the country to record observations about plant species, soil, hydrology, and water chemistry to assess the health of wetlands nationally. The site in Mastic Beach is located between John's Neck Road and Maywood Drive, an area that is within the John's Neck State Tidal Wetlands.

"Our wetlands are extremely important to the delicate ecological system that runs throughout the Town of Brookhaven," said Supervisor Mark Lesko. "I am happy that we have been selected by the EPA to participate in this program and I look forward to seeing the final report."

"I was very happy to sponsor the resolution to allow this joint partnership of the Nature Conservancy and New York State Department of Conservation to utilize the property in my district for environmental sampling," commented Brookhaven Town Councilman Dan Panico. "Although we may work at different levels of government, cooperation is key to benefit our mutual constituency and especially when it comes to the environment."

A minimal amount of water, soil, and vegetation will be collected from the Mastic Beach site to measure:

- The presence and abundance of grassy plants, trees, and shrubs;
- Algae collected from sediments and the surface of plant stems and leaves;
- Soil properties and chemistry;
- Water chemistry (such as dissolved oxygen, nutrients, chlorophyll-a); and
- Condition of the habitat in the area surrounding the wetland.

The data will be collected from a 40 meter radius circle area. A copy of the final report will be provided to the Town upon request. For more information, visit the United States Environmental Protection Agency's website at <http://water.epa.gov/type/wetlands/assessment/survey/index.cfm>.

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