

MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER

When County Executive Spano appointed me Bronx River Reservation Manager last year, one of my primary goals was to open up lines of communication between the county and the residents of the cities, towns and villages that line this historic park. With this goal in mind, our department continues to host "town meetings" at various locations up and down the Reservation. And now, with the launch of the Bronx River Reservation Connection, we feel that we have another effective method of bridging the Bronx River valley communities and letting residents know of plans, projects and progress in the reservation.



The Bronx River Reservation has a new curator, new public programs and a renewed focus on becoming an important habitat for wildlife and haven for diverse native plants. Specifically, we are working on removing aggressive invasive vines from our native trees, and will schedule public volunteer work projects this spring in which you can help in this effort. We want you to feel that you are a partner in preserving this critical and historic park for generations to come while you enjoy it for the beautiful recreational facility it is.

We always appreciate hearing your thoughts about the reservation. Please feel free to contact our new Reservation information line at (914) 328-1542, or e-mail us at jmm0@westchestergov.com. General information about this and all the Westchester County Parks is available on-line at www.westchestergov.com.

See you on the Reservation!

cont'd from pg 1

New Staff, New Events, New Focus

prepare and plant flower beds, demonstrating their interest in stewardship of the reservation. Kids of all ages and their families have fun going after the "big catch" during the annual Bronx River Parkway Reservation Fishing Derby each spring. Last September, local Girl Scouts and their families learned the importance of being careful cyclists during a Bicycle Safety Derby, held in conjunction with Bike, Skate & Scooter Sundays in September. The Bronx River Conservancy joined forces with the county in May to present "The Bronx River Reservation is My Park" day, a volunteer spruce-up event.

Volunteers' participation is welcome in all aspects of the Bronx River Parkway Reservation, on Pitch In day and all year long. For information on ways to become involved with the reservation, call Maryrose Reynolds, Volunteer Coordinator, at (914) 864-7057.



KENCIO DAM PLAZA IS "ADOPTED" BY FUJIFILM IN NEW ADOPT-A-PARK PROGRAM

So you've seen a new entrance garden as you've passed Kensico Dam Plaza recently. Where did it come from? Actually, the plaza was "adopted" in early October by the Elmsford-based Fujifilm, and the garden was first of several projects the corporation is planning to implement at the site. When county and Fujifilm's corporate officials gathered at the plaza this fall to sign the "adoption papers," the county's new Adopt-a-Park initiative was off and running!

Fujifilm showed its enthusiasm for county parks stewardship by donating all of the plants for the new garden and recruiting employees who prepared and planted the beds on an unusually hot, 90 degree October day. Working side-by-side with their own system based on advice from county staff, they got the garden planted in record time and had lots of fun in the process.

This was actually Fujifilm's second major planting project at Kensico. The grove of beautiful cherry trees at the base of the dam is another Fujifilm initiative. The grove was planted on Earth Day 2000 in celebration of the Bronx River Parkway Reservation's 75th anniversary.

The county's new Adopt-a-Park program promotes involvement by the public in maintaining, improving and supporting our vast, 16,000-acre park system. Any corporation, neighborhood association, community group, business or individual interested in taking an active stewardship role is encouraged to adopt a park. Adopters commit to performing a variety of tasks to enhance or maintain the appearance of the park they select. Projects can range from litter removal to the addition of gardens, painting, staining or even erecting new structures, removing graffiti, clearing trails, pruning, preparing and planting flower beds and more.

PRC will erect a sign at the adopted park to acknowledge the group's contribution and commitment to the program. If you know someone who might be interested in adopting a county park, please contact our Adopt-a-Park coordinator at (914) 864-7007.



AS SURE AS SPRINGTIME - BIKE, SKATE AND SCOOTER SUNDAYS WILL DEBUT IN MAY

Sponsors are sought to keep this long-running program rolling.

With spring just around the corner, cyclists, skaters and scooter riders are counting the days until they can hit the pavement when Bike, Skate & Scooter Sundays return to the Bronx River Parkway. This year's first installment of this all-time favorite county recreation program is Sunday, May 4.

For anyone who isn't familiar with this program, which is hard to believe since it has been in existence since 1974, a stretch of the parkway closes to cars and opens to cyclists, in-line skaters, roller skaters and scooter riders from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Sundays of non-holiday weekends in May, June and September.

We are grateful to Hudson Valley Bank for its support of this fine program. Although Bike Sundays appears to be a simple matter of closing the parkway to cars to allow for skaters and cyclists, it is actually a costly undertaking, with salaries for police and other personnel a key component. In these times when the county is forced to do some fiscal belt-tightening, additional sponsorship by a corporate neighbor or a partnership with a group of business neighbors would go far to keep the program rolling into the future. If you are aware of any business who might have an interest in becoming a sponsor, please call the Parks Department at (914) 864-7000 to let us know.

This spring's dates for Bike, Skate & Scooter Sundays are May 4, 11 and 18; and June 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29.

Admission to Bike, Skate & Scooter Sundays is free; parking at the County Center is \$4.

For more information, including rain cancellation updates, call (914) 864-PARK.



GENERAL MAINTENANCE STAFF REPAIRS ANN'S WAY POND SPILLWAY

The Greenacres area of the Scarsdale portion of the reservation is arguably one of the most scenic for motorists as they travel up and down the Bronx River Parkway. As neighbors and reservation-watchers know all too well, the old spillway in the Ann's Way pond section of the Bronx River Parkway Reservation had suffered the ravages of time and the signs of water erosion. Today, the water once again flows freely over a brand new spillway, thanks to a project that employed the skill and efforts of a half-dozen of the Parks Department's General Maintenance staffers who took on the reconstruction project this fall. Thanks also goes to Bronx River Reservation Conservancy president Lowell Tooley, whose efforts were key in making this project possible.

In addition to constructing the new weirs, or spillways, at the north and south end of the pond, the General Maintenance crew reset and re-pointed the stonework at the south end, enhancing the beauty as well as the function of the pond.

Much of the site preparation work for the project was done by a crew of inmates from the Westchester County Correctional facility in Valhalla. The inmates, incarcerated for non-violent crimes, worked under the supervision of a correction officer. Because of their involvement, and the expertise of the Parks

cont. on pg 4

SPOTLIGHT ON THE BRONX RIVER PARKWAY RESERVATION CONSERVANCY

The Bronx River Parkway Reservation Conservancy is a membership organization that provides invaluable support to the Parks Department in all aspects of the operation and management of the reservation, from helping to preserve its historic character and sensitive ecological system to promoting the park as a great place for a variety of recreational pursuits.

The Conservancy's annual meeting and reception will take place Monday, May 19 at the Olde Stone Mill/Tuckahoe, from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. Featuring Christopher Nolan, from the Central Park Conservancy. Tickets are \$78. All are welcome. For more information, or if you are interested in becoming a member of the Conservancy, contact the Reservation office at (914) 328-1542.

cont'd from pg 3

Ann's Way

Department forces, the project was done at no extra cost to taxpayers.

Ann's Way is named in memory of Ann Helen Lund Jacobs, the wife of Raymond A. Jacobs, a former county resident and a great supporter of Westchester County Parks.

Be sure to stop by Ann's Way to see the new spillway, or the "Grand Tooley Dam" as one area resident refers to it, this spring. It's located just south of the County Tennis Club at the base of Greenacres Avenue.

PARKWAY LIGHTING UNDER REVIEW

As you have probably noticed, the street lights are out in quite a few sections of the Bronx River Parkway. Unfortunately, for most of the length of the parkway, repair is not simply a matter of replacing bulbs. The lights operate on a series of electric relays, and repair and upgrade of the existing system is a costly proposition, to the tune of \$8 million to \$9 million. Even a "patchwork" upgrade of the lighting would cost an estimated \$6 million or more. These possible solutions, along with more cost-effective means such as roadside and embedded reflectors, are being examined. The goal is to maximize traffic safety while maintaining the historic character of the parkway reservation. We will keep you posted through this newsletter of any developments regarding the lighting question.

COME PITCH IN FOR THE RESERVATION!



The call is out - the annual Pitch In for Parks, a county-wide volunteer spruce-up effort that has become a rite of spring in Westchester, is coming our way on Sunday, April 27. And what better park to choose for a Pitch In project than the Bronx River Reservation. From North Castle to south Yonkers and

many areas in-between, there's a section of the reservation that could use your special touch, whether you'd like to help clear brush, pull invasive vines, paint a bench or fish debris out of the river bed. There's more than enough to do, and your efforts really go a long way in making the park more beautiful and appealing for residents and visitors alike.

To sign up for a project, call the Parks Department today at (914) 864-7133.

H.A.E.R. REPORT GOES ONLINE THIS SPRING

The most comprehensive written and illustrated history of the Bronx River Parkway Reservation ever undertaken became a reality in 2000 when Westchester County commissioned the U.S. Department of the Interior's Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) report team to document the history and design of the parkway. Now, for the first time, this report, which is part of the permanent collection in the Library of Congress and is on view at the Westchester County Archives in Elmsford, will be available online via www.westchestergov.com.

A research team of architects, landscape designers and historians came from as far away as India, Poland and Hawaii to work on the project. Among their discoveries were a set of 1918 conceptual plans for the Bronx River Parkway, along with many previously overlooked facts that provide new insights into the parkway's development.

The Historic American Engineering Record was established in 1969 to research and document America's engineering and technological heritage. HAER produces detailed measured and interpretive drawings, large-format photographs, and comprehensive histories. These documents are placed in the Library of Congress, where they are accessible to researchers and the general public. Over 36,000 sites and structures have been permanently recorded in this manner by HAER and its companion agency, the Historic American Buildings Survey.

A "VINE" TIME WAS HAD BY ALL



All hands were on deck for three days in late March when the PRC "Blitz Crew" of 50 staff members converged on a section of the Bronx River Reservation between Harney and Leewood roads to remove overgrown, invasive vines from the trees and clear branches. It was an impressive sight, with work taking

place on both sides of the parkway and no fewer than two bucket trucks and two backhoes on duty each day to help speed the effort.

This project took advantage of the first warm days after the harsh winter. The result was reclaiming this area of the Reservation from invasives and opening up view ways to the river.



February, 2003



Dear Friends:

I take great pride in Westchester County's park system, and I especially have fond memories of the Bronx River Parkway Reservation. During the summers when I was a young child, my father would take us for a ride

up the parkway from the city to enjoy a day in the park. That was something I always anticipated.

The Bronx River Parkway Reservation is just as special today, and many people are joining us in our ongoing efforts to preserve and beautify this linear park for the benefit of generations to come. With these citizens in mind we have created the Bronx River Reservation Connection, a newsletter that will keep county residents, especially those who live near the reservation or have an interest in its preservation, informed about what is happening in and around Westchester's first park.

The kickoff of this newsletter is timely, with new emphasis being placed on the improvement of water quality in all of our Westchester waterways, significantly the Bronx River. In addition to monitoring the reservation as a wildlife habitat, our new Bronx River curator will keep close watch on the water that flows through this beautiful and diverse park.

I hope that you will enjoy this newsletter and that you will visit and enjoy the reservation often.

Sincerely, [Signature] Andy Spano



NEW STAFF, NEW EVENTS, NEW FOCUS

The Bronx River Parkway Reservation's recent 75th anniversary has been met with a renewed focus on this unique park as an important natural, cultural and recreational resource in Westchester. Over the past few seasons, the staff has been increased and new recreational and environmental education programs are now taking place there. Today, the reservation has a curator and a volunteer coordinator, and the public has been encouraged to take part in new programs including cleanups, beautification projects, fishing contests and races.

The new Bronx River Parkway Reservation curator, Jeff Main, who has an office at Kensico Dam Plaza, is responsible for conducting nature biodiversity and habitat studies and wildlife inventories. In addition, the new curator's duties include several non-traditional curatorial tasks, most importantly monitoring the quality of the water in the river through careful observation and regulation of outflow pipes and stormwater. The curator will also be responsible for land management on the reservation, taking steps to reduce invasive plantings to encourage the growth and health of native species. The curator and the recreation staff work closely with volunteer groups including the Bronx River Conservancy and the Garth Woods Conservancy, as well as historical societies and community and service agencies.

This renewed focus on the Bronx River Parkway Reservation has made it a very popular site for the Parks Department's annual "Pitch-In for Parks" program, scheduled this year for Sunday, April 27. During Pitch In for Parks, people from communities up and down river work side by side to clear brush, paint benches, remove trash and