

Natural Resources Protective Association

Coalition Against Water Disposal of Contaminated Sediments

Post Office Box 050328 • Staten Island, NY 10305



Established in 1977

In Memory of Edward "Kerry" Sullivan

WINTER 2022

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ARTHUR KILL TO THE NARROWS 2021

By Jim Scarcella

On September 18, NRPA teamed up with Protectors of Pine Oak Woods and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to clean the DEC-owned property on the lower Arthur Kill, Kriecherville.



It was a nice morning, good weather and I set up our table on the sidewalk near 'Country Paving', the property owner that gave us access to the DEC parcel. Soon some of our friends joined us and State Ranger Tim Weiscus to head west through the trail to the Arthur Kill. Miss New York for America Strong, Nicole Doz, with help from Mike P., Jack, Elaine, and a couple of other folks picked up 125 lbs. of trash. Howie Fishbein and I stayed back at the table to clean up and kill some Spotted Lanternflies. We reset the Androvette Street 'End' signage, picked up buried garbage, and saw what we thought was a Green Leopard frog, calling from its watering hole. All in all, it was a great day.

The next day NRPA helped the National Park Service at Ft. Wadsworth, Gateway. Jack Bolembach and I had a great time



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helping Rangers Kathy Garofalo and Larry with a great educational display of marine debris and how it impacts birds, fish, and marine mammals.



Howie, Kathy, and Vincent all lent a hand. There was plenty of garbage, including food wrappers, plastic containers, straws, bags,

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fast food packaging, dog poop, beer and alcohol beverage cans, strapping bands, personal protective equipment (gloves, wipes, and masks), personal hygiene water pics, bottlecaps, traffic barriers, fishing nets, a tire, and dock pieces. Joggers and cyclists stopped by to learn how to protect our marine environment and how to help our beaches and parks. It was a great, green weekend!

Join and renew with NRPA today, thanks!

SUMMER/AUTUMN 2021

By Jim Scarcella

In August, Chuck Perry and I took a bike ride to Cedar Grove Beach after some moderate rain. Much to our surprise, a Goldfinch was attempting to eat berries from a plant near the Parks Dept. service road. In late August, we saw some Menhaden (bunker) finning in Great Kills Harbor, and there was a carcass of a Yellowfin Tuna in the back of the harbor. The head alone looked like it weighed 60 lbs. We lifted a buoy to a crab trap and there was a male and female Blue Claw Crab inside.

There were multiple visits to Fort Wadsworth and Miller Field beach. At Ft. Wadsworth, Battery Weed, the path to the beach was overgrown with vines and invasive species. We had the gas-powered weed-whacker, so I trimmed back the invasive weeds to make safe passage to the beach. Then, a week later, the 'Unprotected Beach, no lifeguards' sign at Miller Field was being obscured by a thorny shrub and I used the shears to trim back the wooded branches. The water temperature, before Labor Day was about 74° Fahrenheit.

A truly maddening event happened on September 1. In the evening, our region received about 8 inches of rain in about 5 hours from Tropical Storm Ida, it caused sewage overflows, flooding, severe damage and loss of life in our area. The sediment flows to the bay clogged the gills of fish and thousands of bunkers died in Raritan Bay. We saw at least two bunkers 'spinning', meaning they had nerve damage and were swimming erratically. I grabbed one at Annadale Beach,

and I showed it to my Mom, Anna, her aide Lia, and my Aunt Amelia, before letting it go. Another bunker was hand caught at Miller Field beach, a Herring Gull had poked its eyes out, but I did show the live fish to a family enjoying the beach, then threw it back in. Also, I found a Hermit Crab in a Moon Snail shell, and many times while swimming I saw the vertical trajectory of the calico (lady) crab moving quickly to get away from my feet.

On September 6 at Ft. Wadsworth, the trail from the park to South Beach still had a partial blockage from a downed tree, I saw a Goldfinch, there was a swarm of dragonflies and the beach 'encampment' had a three-gallon cooking pot filled with warm bottles of Coke. The water was refreshing and 'clean and clear' for the NY Bight. Later that day, the Double-Crested Cormorants were drying their wings on the piling field off Miller Field beach.

On September 8, we launched the Hobie Pedal Sail from the ramp at Gateway NRA Great Kills. There was a stench from the dead Menhaden that cleared your nostrils. We did much better away from the boat ramp. We saw a few schools of young of year (y o y) peanut bunker (Menhaden) some of which were under attack by young Bluefish (snappers). Some good gusts of wind had us looking between the moorings and boats. John Scarcella Jr. and I were soaked with salt spray. There were Herring Gulls, Cormorants, and terns waiting for the snappers to scare up the peanut bunker and Silversides. We beached the boat at the north part of Great Kills Harbor, near Bulkhead Road. Freshwater was still pouring through the stirrups of the sheeting of the bulkhead. The marsh mud felt similar to quicksand and Junior almost went

in up to his knees. I found a plastic garbage pail in good condition and threw it up over the bulkhead for NPS to utilize to keep the park litter-free. We also found a Tsunami surf fishing lure and a 2-foot stainless steel rail post from a wrecked sailing vessel.



The Spotted Lanternfly had invaded the park. We saw and killed four of this invasive species.

RIVER NORTH APPROVAL

By Jack Bolembach

Editor's Note – New York City created Special Purpose Zoning Districts in the 1960's, to recognize and preserve the unique character of certain neighborhoods. In 1987, the Special Hillside Preservation District was created to preserve an area along the North Shore of Staten Island. The objectives included reducing erosion and storm water runoff by conserving natural vegetation.

However, zoning regulations in any part of NYC, including Special Purpose Districts, can be modified if the property owner requests a variance. The property owner must demonstrate that they face practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships in meeting the zoning regulations. The procedure for granting the variance includes public meetings, local Community Board input, votes by the Board of Standards and Appeals (which is composed of five commissioners appointed by the Mayor) and the New York City Council.

A variance was recently approved for River North, a 700-unit high rise complex. The land that it will be built on will be removed from the guidelines required in the Special Hillside Preservation District.

The vote by the City Council was what I expected.





An artistic rendering shows what the planned River North project in St. George would look like.

(Rendering: FXCollaborative)

Every big developer shoots for the moon with their projects. They make sure that their wealth and political connections will achieve some level of success, despite opposition. In this situation the developers knew that there would be community opposition from St. George residents, Community Board 1 and some elected representatives.

But developers always have a compromise plan, which benefits them, but not the community. It looks like they are taking a hit, but they know that even if they don't get the entire enchilada, they will still make big bucks. There are people who will do all that they can to allow developers to make as much profit as possible, further destroying a community already afflicted with high density housing and the traffic problems resulting from close proximity to the Verrazano Bridge.

The battle to protect the remaining unprotected natural landscape on Staten Island is bleak because the real estate industry has the influence, power and money to chip away at Zoning Laws by using variances. In the case of the River North project, they were successful in creating a massive apartment building complex within the Hillside Preservation District. I can't emphasize how horrendous this decision is for the quality of life of the community and for overall preservation of the character of the neighborhood.

This is not the end of these plans, but only the beginning. Another developer will soon purchase land or perhaps already has, maybe in Rosebank, and they plan to reveal a huge building complex. The River North project in St. George set a

precedent that will make it easier for more to follow. If the River North Project by Madison Reality Capital was able to get approval in November 2021 for a massive building project within the Hillside Preservation District, and out of character with the neighborhood, then why can't other developers get variances and create unique zoning changes to get their projects built?

Note: The Serpentine Bedrock at Saint George contains asbestos. I would demand that an independent qualified asbestos inspector provide air monitoring equipment 24/7 on site when excavation of the bedrock begins and for the duration of the construction. If any asbestos is detected, the excavation must be stopped immediately to prevent local area residents from being exposed to the lethal asbestos fibers which will be entrapped inside their lungs. Children are especially vulnerable since cancer from asbestos exposure usually occurs 20 to 50 years after initial exposure. There are schools and playgrounds in the neighborhood

Little by little, these greedy developers chip away at the community and the few remaining natural areas that we have. After just 20 years, not much is left and the neighborhoods have drastically changed. The majority of those who battle these changes are older and either retire and move off the island or pass away.

But there have been a few success stories. The community strongly opposed the Savo Brothers' plans to build high density townhouses at Mount Manresa. The Board of Standard Appeals (BSA) listened carefully to what concerned citizens said at the public hearings and unanimously voted against the Savo project.

The Savo Brothers live in New Jersey but yield power on Staten Island. They and the majority of these builders live in very wealthy neighborhoods that are not on Staten Island. The average citizens who live here have very little input in what happens in their communities, despite support from the Community Boards.

James Oddo was the most pro-environment Borough President we ever had. A special thanks to Mr. Oddo, Councilman Steve Matteo and the other elected representatives who opposed this project. Councilman Borelli will make sure that nothing like this happens on the South Shore. Mr. Oddo opposed the Savo Brothers, but now we have a new Borough President, Vito Fossella. Will Mr. Fossella now abandon Oddo's position and support the Savo Brothers plans for Mount Manresa?

Make no mistake about it, James Oddo gave us a warning for a bleak future. Highrise apartments will be the future for Staten Island, especially along Bay Street, from Fort Wadsworth to Saint George.

On your next trip to Home Depot on Forest Ave. you will notice that the Graniteville Wetlands Forest is now gone. The ponds and woodlands were destroyed for a Big Box Store that may not even be successful.

What is the purpose of having a Special Hillside Preservation District, which was primarily designed and submitted for legislation by former City Council Member Jay O Donovan? Jay died a few years ago and he was a Marine Combat Veteran who served in Vietnam. Jay grew up and resided on Staten Island. The big, wealthy, over-developers do not live on Staten Island. They earn great profits and destroy the quality of life for residents. Neighborhood character is altered for the worse.

MT. LORETTO/LEMON CREEK 2021

By Jim Scarcella

In late August, Clay Halvorsen and I decided to visit Mt. Loretto State Park and Lemon Creek Park at Sharrott Avenue. We grabbed some cold refreshments and headed south from the Lemon Creek-Sharrott fishing pier towards Mt. Loretto. It was a warm day, there was a slight breeze, and the tide was just coming in. The salt marsh pond at north Mt. Loretto sometimes has a connecting creek from the beach to the pond, but we noticed the creek bed was dry and up closer to the pond, the creek was blocked by a large

wooden pier piece.

Next up we came across Red Bank Light, named for the reddish clay bluffs that form behind the light signal for the Raritan Reach shipping channel. An Osprey family was living at the light tower, at elevation 50. We saw mother Osprey grab a snapper Bluefish in her talons, but the fish slipped out.

We set up camp at the end of the rip rap boulders brought in by NY State about 20 years ago, to prevent further erosion of the clay bluffs. The swimming here was refreshing, the water temperature was about 75 degrees Fahrenheit. We could see calico 'lady' crabs and Blue Claw Crabs swimming, and attempting to hide in the green Sea Lettuce. Water clarity was pretty good, our feet were visible to a fathom of water. The incoming tide attempted to push us out of the cove and send us towards the Page Avenue Living Breakwaters project.

I found a partially torn black plastic garbage bag, tied a knot in the bottom, and began to pick up some trash from the beach. Cellophane food wrappers, bait containers, a knife, pliers, an aquarium fish net (intact), monofilament line, braided fishing line, a rusted fish hook, aluminum, glass, and plastic refreshment containers were gathered, a total of 5 lbs. of trash was picked up. We saw and heard a couple of Killdeers on the beach, and some sandpipers too.



We worked our way back to Sharrott Fishing Pier and walked north towards Camp St. Edward and Captains Quarters condominiums.

After about 200 feet we noticed that there was a series of sculpted rock gatherings called 'cairns' that have been curated by a team of people under the leadership of Doug Schwartz. Cairns are intrinsically part of the seascape and shoreline, they are interactive and geometrically proportioned. You feel as if you might have been transported to Atlantis, and it's humbling to realize how much work goes into these sculptures.



There was an additional bonus, there were several schools of young of the year (y o y) peanut bunker (Menhaden) in Princes Bay. Several times we witnessed the snapper Bluefish encircling the peanut bunker and leaping from the water with their mouths open and teeth ready to bite, rip, and tear them up. Herring Gulls started to hone in on the action, also.

AN ENCOUNTER WITH A PRAYING MANTIS

By Ida Sanoff

A bad tropical storm was headed to NYC and I rushed out onto my high-rise balcony to move my flowerpots. I wasn't in the mood to have to deal with knocked over pots, potting soil all over the floor and broken stems. I moved the small round pots to their safe zone in the corners of the

balcony, then I started to remove the flower boxes from their brackets on the railing. If I lined them up on the floor against the little plastic cabinet where I stored the beach chairs, they would be fine. I removed the first one and when I went to get the next one, it looked like a brownish pigeon feather had somehow gotten stuck on the side of the planter.

But when I got closer, I realized that it wasn't a feather but a gigantic Praying Mantis. Now this wasn't the four inch long, bright green thing with which I was familiar. This was one really big bug, perhaps six inches long and with an almost an inch wide head. Even though I know that they don't bite humans, I didn't want it creeping up my arm. So, I ran to get one of my favorite all around tools, a disposable wooden chopstick. I nudged it off the side of the planter and it landed on the floor with a clatter.

Then it just sat there. I thought that perhaps it couldn't figure out how to get of the balcony, so I used my chopstick to nudge it towards the opening in the balcony wall, figuring it would fly away.

But it didn't.

I moved all of my flower boxes and pots to their safe zones and went back inside my apartment.

I kept looking out of my terrace door. After about fifteen minutes, the monster bug walked slowly and





Cleaning Up The Waterfront: Meet Staten Island 'Litter Heroes'

Here are some Staten Island "Litter Heroes" who recently helped clean up the waterfront at Bentley Street and Arthur Kill Road in Tottenville.

Members of the Natural Resources Protective Association collected bags of trash and removed large items from the waterfront. We want to thank the NRPA for their consistent efforts to clean up Staten Island. We hope you inspire others to do so as well.

Local groups who are interested in hosting a cleanup and need a site to clean or need support with supplies -- including masks, garbage bags, and/or gloves -- should email [Irene Maiello](#) or [Lisa Thompson](#). Groups are asked to organize themselves and take necessary safety precautions.

Those who participate are encouraged to post before and after photos on social media with the hashtag **#SILitterHero** to be re-posted by both office's social media accounts.

purposely towards the flower boxes that were side by side on the floor. It carefully climbed up the side of one of the boxes, climbed in and settled into my geraniums. I went outside to take a closer look and it turned its large, triangular head and looked right back at me. Then it snuggled a little deeper into the flowers. It seemed like it had sensed that a storm was coming.

As the storm roared in, I went to the window from time to time and watched as the mantis shifted from planter to planter, always finding a dry spot to shelter from the wind and rain. By the next morning, the rain



had almost stopped, but it was still there in my geraniums. I checked again a short time later and it had vanished.

Mantises are famous for devouring their mates but there are reports in the literature that this does not occur if the females have other food sources. They are voracious predators of other bugs and you can purchase their egg cases to introduce them to your garden and eliminate the use of pesticides.

Given its large size and brownish back, the insect in my flowers was most likely a female Chinese Mantis. The gigantic Chinese Mantises are sometimes sold as a pet. While other mantises can be a welcome sight, you may want to get rid of Chinese Mantises. They are regarded as invasive and devour beneficial pollinators such as bees. They can also consume small reptiles, amphibians and even hummingbirds. They are one of the few creatures that will eat the caterpillars of Monarch butterflies. Monarchs

consume Milkweed plants and the toxic; foul tasting sap of the plant makes their bodies unpalatable to birds. But the Chinese Mantis has somehow developed the ability to avoid and discard the noxious gut of the caterpillar and consume the rest of it.

I am always amazed at the opportunities we have to keep learning. All we have to do is keep our eyes and ears open. A chance encounter with a bug taught me some really interesting things!

WHERE HAVE ALL THE OSPREYS GONE?

By Dale Isip

The Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) population has been growing in New York state in recent decades and has made inroads in areas such as Long Island (Jamaica Bay and Plum Island in particular) and more locally off Staten Island's North Shore, Fresh Kills, and Great Kills Park areas.



The population expansion – a result of a statewide and then nationwide ban of the pesticide DDT in the early 1970s – has brought back the "fish hawk" from a record low: Once a near-scarce estimated 150 nests between New York and Boston in 1969.

Now, the estimated Osprey nest count is at 230 on Long Island alone and Staten Island's nest count includes 10 at Fresh Kills Park, with others at Mount Loretto, Great Kills Park, and one just off the Tompkinsville shore.

That said, you might be hard pressed to find the brown-and-white, nearly two-foot-long osprey along shore areas this winter – with its 4 to

6-foot wingspan an exciting sight for city shore-goers from April to September.

But why is this the case? Are city winters too cold for the Osprey? If so, where have all the Ospreys gone? Well, it turns out that in the fall and winter months, some New York area Ospreys migrate south, starting down the Eastern Seaboard (or in some cases, over the open Atlantic) to either Florida or the Bahamas first.

The next leg of Osprey migration is either Cuba and/or the island of Hispaniola. Ospreys will either fly directly south from Hispaniola to Venezuela, or island-hop to South America, from Puerto Rico through Aves Island in the central Caribbean Sea.

The final leg of the Osprey's winter journey is to inland Venezuela, Colombia, Guyana, and northeastern coastal Brazil. The Osprey by this time has traveled 2,000 to 3,000 miles (or more) one way – not venturing far from areas with water, as this raptor feeds primarily on fish.

The Osprey makes the migration trip on its own, with experienced mothers leaving the nests first, followed by the father and then the fledgling offspring. The offspring make the entire trip based on instinct and they will stay in the Caribbean/South American region for two or three years before returning to nest.

Ospreys return to North America in the spring. Starting in April, female Ospreys will lay three to four eggs in high nests, sometimes on top of man-made bases, constructed from large sticks and dried grass.

The nests are reused annually, with



An osprey nest off of the Tompkinsville shore (near Murray Hulbert Avenue/ Hannah Street and Miller's Launch)

more materials added each season. The mother will care for the eggs, which hatch after about a month and she and her male mate will hunt and provide food – Atlantic Menhaden is a favorite – for the hatched young. After two months, the young Ospreys are ready to fly, starting the migration again by September.

So though there are a few exceptions and differences in locales, the short answer to “Where have all the ospreys gone?” this winter is “south” – but they will be back by spring.

TRAVEL TO ‘BLUE SPACE’

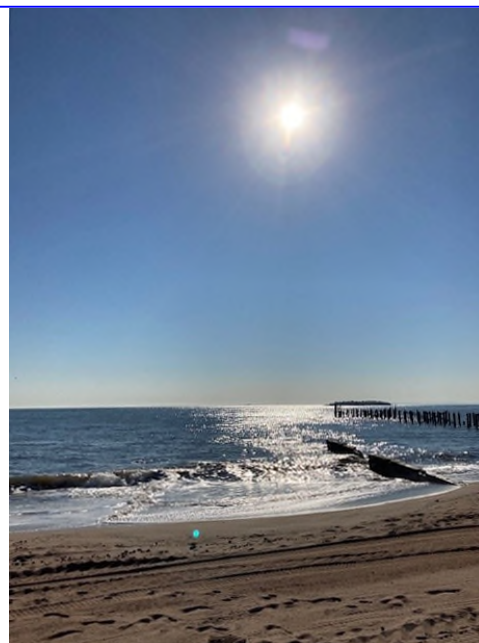
By Jim Scarcella

Over the last decade it has been shown that travels to “blue spaces” (oceans, bays, rivers, lakes) has a beneficial effect on our minds and bodies. We all know that we feel better by the shoreline and there is new evidence to support this.



A team called Blue Health funded by European Commission Horizon 2020, investigated health and well-being as it related to water with surprising results. Apparently, frequent visits of 20 minutes or more boosts long term health by resetting our cognitive clocks. We have multiple stressors each day, so a break to create a new alignment is super-welcome, even if it happens subconsciously. The gurgling of a stream, the wave crest crashing on the beach, perhaps the calls of the Herring Gulls, they all relax our minds. It also enables us to be more physically active, perhaps by beachcombing, or walking our parks, or fishing.

There are other benefits too. Blue spaces cool off our cities during heat waves. We are found to be more social when outside experiences are



shared. The water is our emotional, spiritual, and physical healer.

According to the book *Blue Mind: The Surprising Science that shows how being near, in, on or under water can make you Happier, Healthier, more connected and better at what you do* by Wallace Nichol, the best advice for ailments may be, “take two waves, a beach walk, a glowing river and call me in the morning.” Two hours a week in nature appears to be the threshold for improved health and well-being.

On Staten Island, an informal group has formed, called Swimmers of Anarchy and they have banded together, celebrate together, and safely swim together. Most of them have wetsuits and a waist floatation band, with a tethered 10-inch diameter orange or yellow float attached. They are great people and a lot of fun. Swimmers of Anarchy meet many mornings at Fort Wadsworth beach. We are not saying all should be winter wave jumpers, but if possible, get out to our beaches, parks and shorelines for your health and well-being. Our cleanups and events are a great place to start. Thank you!

BENTLEY BEACH, TOTTENVILLE

By Jim Scarcella

Hi everyone!

On Halloween, NRPA teamed up with some concerned citizens of



Tottenville and the Intermediate School 7 "Green Team" to clean Bentley Street beach, just south of the S.I.R. station. When I arrived, there were perhaps two dozen people milling around. About half were taking a shoreline walk and the other folks were there for the cleanup. Ron and Joey Abenante were rallying the neighbors and we were soon joined by John Kilcullen, Pat, Trisha, Maria, Karen Lund, William, Howie Fishbein, Vin Rocconova, and some great young people.

The garbage on the beach was intense, no one had cleaned here in 40 years. Teams set out with trash bags and gloves, but we needed shovels, knives (to shear and cut plastic sheathing) and just pure grit to remove the embedded junk.

We trimmed back the invasive species along the guardrail and bulkhead, semi perpendicular to the Arthur Kill River. Joey and John worked on getting the truck tires, and it was a mucky-muck mess. The detritus was smelly, with a high sulfur content. The bulkhead fence rail was busted and had snared a lobster pot, two shopping carts, dock rope, a crab trap, tire tube and ripped tarpaulins.

We staked the rusted, buried shopping carts onto the wall and lifted them over the guardrail. Ron borrowed a Sawzall to cut up the



three-sided dock timbers which had steel corner angles. The worst and heaviest offender was the 28-inch flat screen TV from 1988, fully loaded with mud, steel and broken glass screen. It was very heavy and bulky, but we got it out of the intertidal zone, up to the street and over the guardrail.

What a great effort! We are so proud of the kids and adults who transformed the Bentley Beach garbage dump into a beautiful beach.

THANK YOU, JIMMY ODDO

By Tony Rose

We would like to take a moment to recognize a significant period in Staten Island history; the remarkable record of service of Borough President Jim Oddo.



The Natural Resources Protective Association is an environmental not-for-profit founded over forty years ago to thwart attempts by the Army Corps of Engineers and the Port Authority to deposit contaminated, dredged mud on the harbor bottom here in New York. An all-volunteer organization, we have always acknowledged the need to dredge harbor channels to support the shipping industry; an economic engine that contributes billions to the local economy. How to smartly manage dredged spoils has been our issue. While still fighting that battle, we have expanded our scope to include education, monitoring overdevelopment, pollution and loss of natural spaces; particularly our precious, protective wetlands.

An all-volunteer operation, we have worked with numerous congresspersons, local and city-wide officials as well as administrative

staff from operations such as Sanitation and Parks and Recreation. These interactions have been overwhelmingly positive. Our relationship with Jimmy Oddo has been exceptional.

From his days as a City Councilman, Mr. Oddo's style of governance has been marked by his personal involvement. His approach to issues has never involved, "Is this a Republican issue?" "Is it Democratic?" He asks, "is this good for Staten Island, for the city, for the planet?"

While we haven't always agreed with him, there is no doubt; his actions reflect his concern for the welfare of all his constituents.

As a Councilman, he was an avid supporter of our efforts to protect the harbor as well as to clean parks and shorefronts. He facilitated interactions with city agencies. Type 'Staten Island Student Summit' into your computer browser to see how his support has helped us educate the youth of Staten Island and recruit the next generation stewards of the planet. His effort to restrict the rapacious development of the Mount Manresa site is legendary. While Islanders love our malls, he recognized that the attempt to place one near the Arthur Kill would place undue stress on the environment and the surrounding community and looked to prevent its placement. Oddo has facilitated rescuing the Goodhue Woods and Pouch Camp. The Bluebelt system is being viewed nationally as a template for both resilience and preserving natural areas.

He has been ably assisted by his second, Deputy Borough President Ed Burke, a modern-day Zelig, whose ubiquitous presence constantly demonstrates Borough Hall's commitment at every school event, park opening, clean-up or SI Zoo program.

Jim is a lover of baseball and history. Believing aluminum alloy bats are an affront to tradition, Mr. Oddo also realized the lethal technology posed a threat to the welfare of youngsters who played the game. His actions led to the determination that the PSAL should



James Oddo and Jim Scarcella at the NRPA 40 Years of Blue dinner

frowned upon in some circles, his rant demonstrated the emotion he has always brought to his engagement with issues.

While we look forward to working with BP-elect Vito Fossella to fashion a shared vision for the future of Staten Island, we know that the likes of Jimmy Oddo shall not pass this way again. The Board and the members of the Natural Resources Protective Association could not let the achievements of Jimmy Oddo and Ed Burke, as well as their dedicated staff, pass without voicing our admiration and appreciation.

OYSTERS AND NYC

By Ida Sanoff



rocky shoreline was filled in and covered with piers and bulkheads. The final nail in the oyster's coffin was the dumping of raw sewage into local waterways. In Jamaica Bay alone, over 80 million oysters a year were harvested. But by 1921, NYC banned the harvesting of oysters there, because they were spreading typhoid fever. Raritan Bay had the last remaining oyster beds in the New York area and they were closed to harvesting in 1927.

No one in NYC thought about local oysters for a long, long time. But in 2012, the Billion Oyster Project was formed to restore them in New York Harbor. These oysters will not be suitable for food, because raw sewage still flows into our waterways after every heavy rain. But they will benefit us in other ways. A single adult oyster can filter as much as 50 gallons of water a day and they also remove nitrogen in this process. Nitrogen is excreted in urine in the form of urea and it is a fertilizer. When high nitrogen levels accumulate in waterways, algae and other aquatic plants overgrow and deplete the water of oxygen, killing fish and crustaceans.

There is also evidence that oyster reefs can function as offshore breakwaters and minimize flooding. In Staten Island, you may have heard about the Living Breakwaters project. It will use partially submerged mounds of rubble mixed

be a wood-bat league.

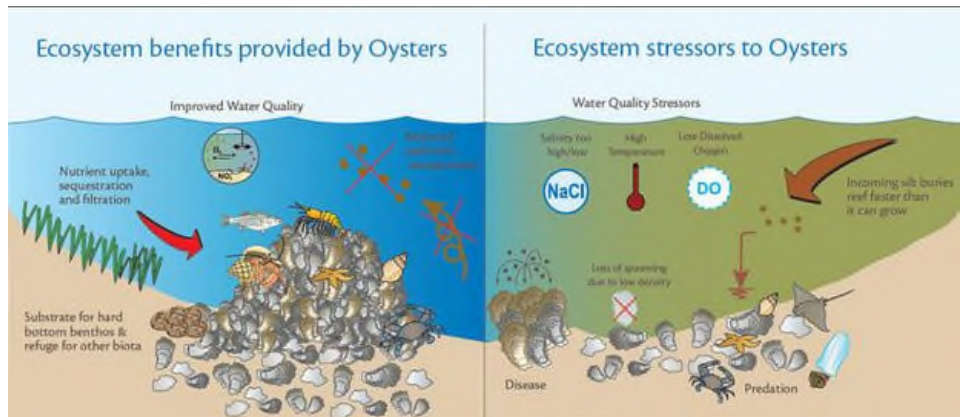
Getting fifteen minutes of a Councilman's busy day is a significant achievement, so imagine spending half a day crawling around the floor with the Minority Leader and his staff investigating the intricacies of Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation and the idiosyncrasies of various Automated External Defibrillators. He was early to the game in recognizing that for the first 40 years of its existence, CPR didn't really work. Ventricular Fibrillation, an electrical event, was the most common cause of Sudden Cardiac Arrest and the 'Pump-and-Blow' that composed the ABC's of CPR (airway-breathing-circulation) was inadequate to reverse that situation. When ABC became ABCD, successful resuscitation suddenly became commonplace.

Over two years, like a pit bull on a bone, across two sessions of Council activity, Jimmy Oddo raised the consciousness of an entire city and got passed a Public Access Defibrillation bill that has saved lives throughout the city. Numerous New Yorkers, including a number of Staten Islanders, have attended their niece's wedding, their granddaughter's graduation instead of being a moment of remembrance. This is, perhaps, his greatest achievement.

Before social media became a thing, Jim Oddo gained national recognition throwing an imposter group of media troublemakers out of his office. While his expletives were

Today we think of oysters as a delicacy. Afficionados will tell you that there are nuances between different varieties harvested from different waterways and that East coast oysters taste different than West coast oysters. But oysters have been a part of New York for a very long time. Over two thousand years ago, Native Americans harvested and ate oysters and left enormous piles of discarded shells called middens up and down the East Coast. It has been said that when Henry Hudson came to what is now New York Harbor in the early 1600's, there were well over 200,000 acres of oysters on the harbor bed. Oysters as big as dinner plates grew in what is now the Gowanus Canal and in Jamaica Bay. They became a popular street food and were sold from carts on street corners, the way hot dogs are sold today.

But oysters became a victim of their own popularity. By 1820 the oyster beds around Staten Island had been depleted. Oyster habitat was destroyed when New York's shallow,



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with oyster shells that have been seeded with larvae. Since new oysters grow on top of old shells, it is hoped that as the oysters reproduce, the reefs will get larger and reduce wave intensity. The goal is to reduce shoreline erosion. But there are some doubts. There will be a lot of rock and not that many oysters. And we still don't know if the oysters will survive.

We don't know yet if these efforts will spread oysters throughout the Harbor or whether newly built oyster reefs will reduce shoreline erosion. It will be interesting to see what happens in the coming years.

KEEPING AN EYE ON NATIONAL GRID

By JK Canepa, Sane Energy Project
(jkcanepa@saneenergy.org)

It's been illegal to transport liquefied natural gas (LNG) through our city ever since 1973 when an LNG storage tank exploded as it was being cleaned. The residual gas in the tank ignited and blew the roof off, throwing massive amounts of concrete and metal onto the men below and killing 40. This tragedy is still remembered to this day and the loss of life actually changed New York City law.

Nonetheless, a few years ago the monopoly gas and electric utility, National Grid, based in England but operating in New England and New York, began construction of stations at the site of their Greenpoint, Brooklyn LNG facility that could be used to load and unload trucks containing the liquefied fracked gas, and proposed bringing the gas to the Greenpoint plant through the streets of The Bronx and Queens. The company filed a request with the FDNY for a "transport variance"



exempting them from the ban; so far they haven't received it, and fortunately, Judge Karen Rothenberg of the Brooklyn Supreme Court slapped a restraint on any further construction of the project pending the outcome of that request. For the full article, please see <https://www.thecity.nyc/environment/2021/8/5/22612076/brooklyn-pipeline-national-grid-liquid-natural-gas-trucking>

National Grid then tried to formally withdraw the application for the variance but stated that it might need to reapply "in an emergency." What that means isn't clear, but the company could argue that an extremely cold day qualifies as such, or some other argument. However, through the passage of the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act of 2019 (CLCPA), the State has mandated that we move off fossil fuels and transition to 70% renewable energy by 2030, among other benchmarks. Opponents to the utility's energy plan argue that by constructing more gas infrastructure, designed to last 40-50 years, National Grid is stymying the transition and locking us into more and more greenhouse gas emissions and an even more precarious future.

The real answers to our energy dilemma lie in ground-source heat pumps, renewables, battery storage, beneficial electrification, better insulation, and more energy and fuel efficiency.




Some background: the Greenpoint LNG facility on the edge of superfund site Newtown Creek is the "head of the black snake", as North Brooklynites call it, and the rest of the snake is known by locals as the "North Brooklyn Pipeline" or, more formally, the Metropolitan Reliability Infrastructure. The nomenclature is telling; in early 2020, executives from the company stated at a Community



Board 1 meeting in Greenpoint that it wasn't a pipeline!

The North Brooklyn Pipeline has to a large degree already been built, including phases 1-4, reaching from Brownsville to Williamsburg, with phase 5, now on hold, as the last stretch from Williamsburg to Greenpoint and the LNG depot. Unfortunately for all of us, this August the New York State Public Service Commission approved a rate hike requiring all National Grid customers in the City to pay for the pipeline. Our bills are going to go up, although the NoNBK Pipeline Coalition has declared a [rate strike](#), with several hundred ratepayers withholding \$66 from their bill in protest. An encouraging development is that both the Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Transportation are investigating whether the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and the PSC violated federal environmental and civil rights laws by approving the North Brooklyn Pipeline, running through the poorest and most vulnerable communities in that borough, and passing the rate increase.

 **No North Brooklyn Pipeline**
@nonbkpipeline
Breaking: Community members create large 'Water Is Life' street mural in front of National Grid's Greenpoint fracked gas storage facility as part of decentralized global day of action to #EndLNG and #c02lonialism



In the meantime, we are keeping an eye on that trucking idea.

Here's what you can do to support this work: please sign our petition at nonbkpipeline.org/petition; we'd really appreciate our Staten Island friends joining this campaign, and we're all in this together.

Schedule of Events:

NRPA Calendar All events, including face to face monthly meetings are **TENATIVE** due to **COVID-19**, please call to confirm Jim Scarcella to confirm - 718-873-4291

Saturday, December 11, 2021, from 9:00 AM to 11:30 AM, **Cedar Grove Beach cleanup**. Meet at the parking lot at Cedar Grove Avenue and Ebbits Street. Gloves, bags, refreshments provided, community service certified. Info: Jim Scarcella, 718-873-4291

Saturday, January 1, 2022, from 12 PM to 2 PM, **32nd Annual New Year's Day Beach walk** at Great Kills Park, Gateway NRA. Meet at Buffalo Street entrance to the park. Join NRPA and Protectors for a fresh start to 2022 with a half-mile walk to Crookes Point. Help us explore the beach in winter. Info: Cliff Hagen PPOW 718-313-8591, or Jim Scarcella 718-873-4291.

Tuesday, January 4, 2022, 7:30 PM, **NRPA Monthly meeting** at Regina McGuinn Center Seaview Avenue, SIUH North, **OR** Covid 19 protocol, by Zoom, info Jim, 718-873-4291.

Tuesday, February 1, 2022, 7:30 PM, **NRPA Monthly meeting** at Regina McGuinn Center Seaview Avenue, SIUH North, **OR** Covid 19 protocol, by Zoom, info Jim, 718-873-4291.

Tuesday, March 1, 2022, 7:30 PM, **NRPA Monthly meeting** at Regina McGuinn Center Seaview Avenue, SIUH North, **OR** Covid 19 protocol, by Zoom, info Jim, 718-873-4291.

Saturday, March 19, 2022, 9:00 AM to 11:30 AM, **Oakwood Beach at Tarlton Street cleanup**, gloves, bags, refreshments provided, community service certified. Info Jim: 718-873-4291.

Tuesday, April 5, 2022, 7:30 PM, **NRPA Monthly meeting** at Regina McGuinn Center Seaview Avenue, SIUH North, **OR** Covid 19 protocol, by Zoom, info Jim, 718-873-4291.

Saturday, April 16, 2022, 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM, **Lemon Creek Park beach cleanup** at Seguine Avenue, gloves, bags, refreshments provided, community service certified, Info Jim: 718-873-4291.

Tuesday, May 3, 2022, 7:30 PM, **NRPA Monthly meeting** at Regina McGuinn Center Seaview Avenue, SIUH North, **OR** Covid 19 protocol, by Zoom, info Jim, 718-873-4291.

Sunday, May 8, 2022, 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM, **Fort Wadsworth Beach cleanup** with National Park Service, meet at Hudson Loop Campground off of USS North Carolina Road. Gloves, bags, refreshments provided, Community service certified, info Jim: 718-873-4291.

Dedicated to preserving the marine environment, the Natural Resources Protective Association is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. All contributions are tax deductible.

All memberships expire on December 31, so please renew NOW!

(All **NEW** memberships paid after October 1 will also receive credit for the upcoming year)

Are You A Member? Have You Renewed? Please Join Us NOW!

- \$15.00 Individual**
- \$25.00 Organization**
- \$500.00 Lifetime Member**

- \$20.00 Family**
- \$100.00 Sponsor** (after 5 payments you become a Lifetime member)

YES! I/We want to join the fight!

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Mail to: Natural Resources Protective Association
C/O Richard Chan, Treasurer
Post Office Box 050328
Staten Island, NY 10305

Join NRPA today