

## **Overview of Unprotected Woodlands Taskforce and the Meadowbrook Parkway Corridor “MPC”**

What is the Meadowbrook Parkway Corridor and why does it need to be protected?

The MPC was part of the former New York City watershed and is now part of the State Parkway system. Parts of the corridor are under the jurisdiction of the New York State Office of Parks recreation and Historic Preservation, Nassau County Parks, the Town of Hempstead and the Village of Freeport. It consists of spring fed streams, ponds and forest. The Parkway buffer is wide enough to contain hiking trails and ponds large enough to fish. Unfortunately, it has also attracted activities that are detrimental to the environment. The buffer and streams are some of the last vestiges of the way Long Island was before development. We now know that protection and restoration of these small ecosystems is vital. The Unprotected Woodlands Taskforce came together not only to bring awareness to the importance of preserving this corridor, but to put a team together where all member could bring ideas together in a coordinated effort.

### **I. Introduction**

The Unprotected Woodlands Taskforce for the Meadowbrook Parkway Corridor (“MPC”) is an inter-municipality and civic and environmental groups formed to create and implement a plan to protect the woodlands in the MPC.

In 2002, the taskforce was formed by Nassau County Legislators Norma Gonsalves and Dave Denenberg in response to illegal activities and environmental abuses at the MPC. The taskforce includes representatives of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation and Nassau County Department of Parks, Recreations & Museums, Nassau County Planning Commission, Nassau County Department of Public Works, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, New York State Department of Transportation, local community and environmental organizations, Town of Hempstead, New York State Senate and Assembly members, New York State Park Police and the Nassau County Police Department.

### **II. Goals and Objectives**

- A.** To designate the MPC as part of the state’s nature trail system to encourage passive recreational enjoyment and discourage illegal activity. To accomplish this goal, the taskforce seeks to foster a partnership among the state, county, town and local villages who share jurisdiction over parts of the MPC as well as community and environmental organizations.

- B.** To coordinate governmental resources in a cooperative effort, with volunteer group assistance, to maintain, restore police and protect the MPC. To promote this cooperation and coordination, interim objectives included preparing a Management Plan and a Memorandum of Understanding (“MOU”) for the municipalities to execute and implement.

### **III. Accomplishments**

- A.** The taskforce, through the efforts of its member volunteer organizations and local press, and under state supervision, heightened awareness of the misuse and neglect of the MPC and promoted numerous clean-ups of the MPC. See **Exhibit 1**, which includes news articles regarding the MPC.
- B.** Through the efforts of the Nassau County Department of Parks, Recreation & Museums and volunteer groups, the Roosevelt Preserve portion of the MPC, which is owned by Nassau County, was significantly rehabilitated. See **Exhibit 2**.
- C.** A Management Plan was drafted through the coordinated efforts of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the Nassau County Planning Commission and the Nassau County Department of Public Works. See **Exhibit 3**.
- D.** An MOU was drafted which provides the inter-municipality agreement for coordinated resources to manage, restore, police and protect the MPC. See **Exhibit 4**.

### **IV. Status**

The MOU and Management Plan require implementation. This awaits execution of the MOU by the municipalities involved. At this time, New York State approval has not been forthcoming.