

Leg. Browning Spearheads Two Projects To Restore the Health of Yaphank Lakes

Suffolk County Third District Legislator Kate Browning has spearheaded two projects that aim to restore the ecological health and recreational opportunities for fishing and boating that constituents have enjoyed for generations on Upper and Lower Yaphank Lake. These activities have been threatened by the catastrophic spread of invasive species in those waters.

In recent years recreational opportunities on the lakes have been severely impacted by the explosive growth of the invasive aquatic weeds watermilfoil and cabomba. The infestation by these non-native species severely limited the swimming, fishing and boating that residents have always enjoyed on these waterways. The health of the lakes and everything that lives in them is also threatened.

Under legislation sponsored by Legislator Browning, the county is about to advertise for a contractor to do a feasibility study, at a cost of \$200,000, and then a pilot project, at a cost of \$50,000, on how to eliminate or control the invasive species and restore the health of the lakes. The consultant should be hired by the end of the year.

The second important project initiated by Legislator Browning to improve water quality in these lakes and on the Carmans River is a major storm water remediation initiative on CR-21. This project will play a major role in alleviating the pollution going into the lakes, which is widely seen as a contributing factor to the spread of invasive species. Funding for the project comes from the county's Water Quality Reserve Fund.

The Division of Water Quality Improvement and the Coalition to Save the Yaphank Lakes have identified four direct discharges to the lakes from the county roadway. The Division of Water Quality Improvement approved this project on September 25 and will utilize County monies to fund it. A resolution to appropriate these monies was introduced by Leg. Browning and is expected to be approved before the end of 2008.



Bob & Peggy Judd and Audrey & Bob Kessler join Legislator Kate Browning (center) in front of a storm drain on CR-21 which is part of the stormwater remediation program.