

Concerned Citizens for Open Space, Inc.



CCOS SPRING 2010 NEWSLETTER

LIBERTY PARK

Liberty Park, still closed due to contaminated water, has become an embarrassment for the City of White Plains. As previously reported in the Spring 2008 Newsletter, in the summer of 2005, a terrible smell developed at the Liberty Park property. As a matter of record the problem has been ignored and the park has fallen into disrepair and become completely unusable. This waste of pristine recreational open space is as important an issue as the cleaning of the Greenway, protection of our wetlands, and saving Orchard Street from development.

The city spent \$600,000 to create a park, promising to spend an additional \$300,000 to complete the work. It is replete with an extensive trail system with an amazingly beautiful area with hills, bridges, rivers, lakes and views on the northern boundary of the City.

The problem, not dismissing the problem with the Canadian Geese, is the stagnant water contains “fairly high levels of bacteria” and therefore the park be closed. Upon investigation we learned that the town of Harrison turned to the county for help; the county then reminded White Plains that their agreement with the county is that the city is responsible for maintaining the lake. The belief is that the problem is caused by blue-green algae bloom.

The good news is there is a solution to this problem. Proper lake aeration is a critical component of maintaining a healthy and clean lake. The oxygenation and water circulation benefits of lake aerators allow for faster decomposition of waste, reduction of algae growth, necessary oxygen and gas transfer, cleaner water and stimulation of beneficial pond bacteria.

One environmentally safe method of controlling algae is to aerate ponds and lakes by introducing air and oxygen at their deepest level. Getting oxygen to this oxygen-depleted area can be critical in the fight against algae. Oxygen works via a chemical reaction to sequester nutrients at the bottom of the lake, where they can't be used as food by algae. Many of the most common nutrients found in ponds and lakes become insoluble in oxygen-rich water. Being insoluble makes them heavy, and they sink to the bottom. Algae like to stay near the surface, where sunlight is readily available, and can't follow the nutrients down.

Windmill pond and lake aerators are ideal for lakes with no electrical access. These windmill aerators are high efficiency and need as little as 3-5 mph wind speed to generate oxygen for the lake. These units utilize compressors to push oxygen to the bottom of the pond that is released through diffusers (air stones) causing the water to bubble up and float to the surface. This action enables the low-oxygen bottom water to mix with the oxygenated water higher in the water column thus de-stratifying the pond. Bottom-based diffuser aerators are the most efficient systems for depths greater than 8ft and also do not require electricity.

THE PROPOSED ORCHARD STREET SUBDIVISION

There is still a proposal before the Planning Board to build three homes and roads between Orchard Street and Chadwick Road on property directly adjacent to City of White Plains watershed land that buffers our two reservoirs as well as being uphill from five of our drinking

wells. Photographs were taken on this property by a director of CCOS on June 15, 2009 of an Eastern Box Turtle laying her eggs, an animal that is listed on the Westchester County Endangered Species List under Threatened Reptiles.

This past January, one of those photos won 3rd Place in the Westchester Land Trust Photo Show. The Land Trust helps municipalities negotiate and secure funding for the preservation of environmentally important parcels of land. Former Mayor Delfino's administration had gone to The Trust for Public Land, a national organization, to explore securing the Orchard Street parcel. Nothing was accomplished. The Westchester Land Trust has worked with our current Mayor Bradley, when he was a member of the NY State Assembly. White Plains may have more success in preserving key parcels if it was to work with the more local Westchester Land Trust.



The Journal News reported this past January that before Mayor Delfino left office, he shredded all the documents in his files, thus leaving the new administration without information on contracts and other business. In regards to the Orchard Street proposed subdivision, this means that correspondence sent over the past five years to former Mayor Delfino asking that he work to preserve this property has now been destroyed and lost forever. There were many letters written both by citizens as well as organizations such as the Lower Hudson Group of the Sierra Club, the Central Westchester Audubon Group as well as CCOS.

Walter O. Michael

In memory of our former treasurer, board member, dear friend and insightful advisor, Walter Michael, the CCOS board authorized a donation of \$300.00 to the White Plains library. We asked that the money be used to purchase books that were relevant to the environmental issues that Walter held so dear. To our great surprise and delight, the library was able to purchase twenty-three books on a wide variety of environmental issues. The books ranged from a Guide To Trees by Sibley, Our Choice: A Plan to solve the Climate Crisis, a book by Al Gore, the arm chair birder by John Yow and many others. This diversity also reflects Walter's many interests, spanning his love for children as well as Open Space.

As an indication of both the timeliness and relevance of the books purchased with this donation, the Librarian indicated that many of the books had been checked out even though the

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P.O. Box 345, White Plains, New York 10605 * (914) 686-0065 * Fax (914) 422-1588

purchase was quite recent. The gift will be acknowledged in the White Plains Library Foundation publications as well as by the placing of a Book Plate in the front of each of the books purchased with the donation. The Plate will state that the book was purchased in memory of Walter Michael. We hope that this donation will leave an enduring memory of our dear friend, Walter Michael.

CCOS SCHOLARSHIP AWARD PROGRAM 2010

-Planting the Seeds of Future Careers

Each year since 2004, C.C.O.S. has presented a check to a White Plains High School student in recognition of his or her concern for the environment and in concert with their academic achievements. In 2009, the scholarship was renamed in memory of Marc Pollitzer, a former member of the Board of Directors of C.C.O.S. and an activist in the community. This year an additional scholarship in memory of our Chairman, Barbara Benjamin, one of the original group of founders of C.C.O.S., will be given by a member of the Board on Senior Awards Night in June at White Plains High School.

The scholarship winners to date are Jason Indelicato, Josh Daskin, Lauren Minisci, Emily Boshi, Sara Gassman, and Max Chapnick. Their high level of achievement is emphasized by the facts that, for example, Max Chapnick has also qualified for the Advanced Placement Scholar with Distinction Award, and Josh Daskin, a recent graduate of Brandeis University, is a Fulbright Scholar. In February 2010, he left for Australia to do research on two species of frogs. Daskin, who addressed White Plains High School students during a presentation in December 2009, said his background at the school helped him to prepare for his career in the sciences. "You get a great head start," he remarked.

That head start is all the more valuable in today's economy, given the increasing cost of a college education and the struggle for jobs. C.C.O.S. looks on the scholarships as a way to reward merit and concern for the environment while enabling students to continue their education and their care for the natural world.

Contributions to the scholarships may be sent to the C.C.O.S.'s treasurer, Mr. Lynn Huber, P.O. Box 345, White Plains, NY 10605.

UPCOMING IMPORTANT EVENTS

On Monday, April 12, CCOS is hosting Jane and Walt Daniels, authors of the popular book "Walkable Westchester," at Memorial United Methodist Church, 250 Bryant Avenue, at 7:30PM. The Daniels will discuss interesting Westchester walking/hiking trails including The WP Greenway and Silver Lake/Liberty Park. This is open to the public and we hope to see you there.

On Saturday, April 17, Bice Wilson is planning a hiking excursion at Silver Lake, possibly to the headwaters of the Mamaroneck River, meeting at Liberty Park at 10:30AM and getting back between 3-4PM. Bring your own lunch. Please let Bice know if you are interested by calling him at 212-226-0180 or 917-319-3512.

April 22, 2010 marks the 40th anniversary of Earth Day.

On Saturday, April 24, from 9AM to noon, a cleanup of the White Plains Greenway, Gillie Field Park, Gardella Park, and the Ridgeway Nature Trails is planned. Please wear work gloves if you have them, but some will be available for those who need them. Remember to wear light colored socks and long slacks to guard against possible ticks.

Mayor Bradley has convened a Sustainability Committee and has appointed 3 of the CCOS directors to join the committee. The first meeting was scheduled as this newsletter was going to press.

For more information, contact Fran Croughan at the White Plains Recreation Department, 422-1345, or CCOS President Frances Jones at 686-0065, or just show up that morning at the Gedney Way entrance to The Greenway.

CCOS Board of Directors:

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Contact Information:

Telephone: 914-686-0065 Fax: 914-422-1588
E-mail: l.huber@wpccos.org www.wpccos.org

Please use this tear-off coupon to make sure we register your tax-deductible contribution. Your generous gift will help us continue to protect the quality of life in White Plains.

Concerned Citizens for Open Space

Tax-Deductible Contribution:

\$35 \$50 \$75
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Name: _____ Tel: _____

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Please MAKE CHECKS OUT TO OSI/CCOS and mail your contribution to Lynn Edward Huber, CCOS Treasurer, P.O. Box 345, White Plains 10605. Thank you!

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