



RIVERDALE NATURE PRESERVANCY

February 22, 2012

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Venetia Lannon
Regional Director, Region 2
Department of Environmental Conservation
1 Hunter's Point Plaza, 47-40 21st Street
Long Island City, NY 11101-5407.

Dear Ms. Lannon,

We are writing as members of the board of directors of the Riverdale Nature Preservancy to support the wetland application for Indian Pond.

As you know, Indian Pond is a water body within the Fieldston area of Riverdale, The Bronx, for which the Fieldston Property Owners Association is applying for the designation of protected wetland under the New York State Freshwater Wetlands Act.

Given its size, the pond provides a remarkably important habitat for many species of wildlife, including fish, turtles, amphibians, ducks, egrets, night herons, blue herons, swans and a large number of migrating species. This is largely because of the scarcity of open freshwater ponds in our area, making it a critical habitat for many species who would otherwise not survive here.

The pond is also visited by many residents of the Fieldston Property Owners Association each day, where it is used for recreation, bird watching and photography. Finally, it is open to and heavily utilized by student groups from local institutions, ranging from preschool to secondary school levels.

While the value of the pond to the local communities, both animal and human, cannot be underestimated, its greater importance as a wetland from the Preservancy's perspective lies in its natural features, which include the significant rock outcroppings, top soil, mature trees and vegetation that are a source of flood control, erosion control, nutrients for local food cycles and storm water management.

These features lie within Riverdale's Special Nature Area District (SNAD), a protective zoning designation which the Preservancy was instrumental in establishing in 1974. The designation of protected wetland would add substantial reinforcement to the SNAD designation and help ensure that

**c/o Riverdale Neighborhood House
5521 Mosholu Avenue, Bronx, NY 10471
718-884-5903
www.RiverdaleNature.org**

the environmental benefits of the pond and surrounding natural features are not threatened by development.

We believe current proposals for development adjacent to the pond may damage these natural structures, which maintain soil and plant benefits, and threaten the wetland area around the pond with sewage overflow, excess sedimentation, and contaminants toxic to local life. The designation of wetland, therefore, is of imminent importance.

Yours truly,

Elizabeth Haase, MD
For the Board of Directors, Riverdale Nature Preservancy