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hardwood” certified by the Forest Stewardship Council, an international program that endorses products and companies utilizing sustainable harvesting and milling techniques. The program is supported by major environmental organizations including Audubon New York.

The use of certified wood instead of non-certified wood in projects such as this will eventually help increase the market for forest products that provide a sustainable alternative to clear-cutting and other destructive practices. To limit the overall use of wood in the CMACS project, considerable amounts of steel were also utilized. A helical pier system anchors the structure without displacing the

marsh’s sensitive wetland soils.

During the ceremony, Commissioner Castro designated the sanctuary as a Bird Conservation Area because of its diverse bird population. The marsh provides refuge for both breeding and migrant birds and is an irreplaceable habitat for the fish and other aquatic animals and plants in the estuary. It hosts breeding populations of Least Bitterns, Virginia Rails, Marsh Wrens and Swamp Sparrows, and is an important waterfowl migratory stopover site, hosting an average fall concentration of 1500 individuals. It is particularly important as an American Black Duck wintering area. A number of threatened and endangered species use the site during migration and in the winter, including Pied-

billed Grebes, Ospreys, Bald Eagles, Northern Harriers and Peregrine Falcons. Additionally fall swallow concentrations typically number about 20,000 individuals.

For nearly 20 years Constitution Marsh has provided visitors —at whatever age, alone or with a group, expert or novice—with the ability to closely observe nature and new insights into the beloved Hudson River. “Jim’s Walk” will help us continue this most important vocation.



A reflectful Dee Rod and onlookers enjoy the Jim Rod Boardwalk dedication ceremony at Constitution Marsh Audubon Center and Sanctuary on May 18.

ALBERT NORTON

# DANIELS

## Interview

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issues, for example, brownfield redevelopment, especially in urban areas, has been very important. Reclaiming and revitalizing our waterfront is very important. New York, historically, was a state that was built around shipping and trade. It used its waterfront as its back door as opposed to its front door. As a result, we were significantly behind the rest of the country on issues of waterfront access, recreation and waterfront redevelopment.

**MR. MILLER:** Terms such as Smart Growth; and now in New York, Quality Communities, have emerged over the past five or ten years. Give us your sense of those terms, those movements, definitions of those efforts.

**SECRETARY DANIELS:** First of all, it’s a very good name for the movement because it is an intelligent way to plan and develop. The name also implies a planned approach...and one that embraces partnerships in government with the private sector and with communities. When we look at some of the challenges facing different regions of our state, specifically our small and mid-size cities that have experienced some economic decline, and in some cases, decline of population, we have to be very intelligent about how we stimulate economic growth in those communities, and at the same time, preserve all the good work we’ve done in protecting the environment.

So we have to think about clean industries to go into these areas. We have to think about new technologies. We have to think about preservation of open space and revitalization of central business districts, and redevelopment and reuse of existing housing stock rather than continuing to deplete new resources to build that which we already have. The Quality Communities Initiative that Governor Pataki and Lieutenant Governor Donahue launched before I became Secretary of State tackles one of the most important issues to be confronted in government in many, many years because it does something that government historically

has not done, coordinated resources toward a specific problem.

And so a more intelligent and informed use of government resources that allows for local input and allows for local visioning of what the solution should be is a new type of partnership that has not been the tradition in New York nor other states.

The Quality Communities approach, its comprehensive view, its determination to make local governments an equal player at the table is a fundamental shift from the way things have been done in America in the last 50 years.

**MR. MILLER:** The Quality Communities report calls for a task force to help start this process. Is that task force up and running, and what are some of the next steps that you see?

**SECRETARY DANIELS:** The task force is definitely up and running. Twenty-four agencies are part of that task force now, and there’s a level of coordination and discussion that, in my experience in government, I’ve never witnessed before. We’ve broken ourselves up into key committees that deal with technology, open space issues, and revitalizing downtowns. The Department of State provides the staffing for it, and we are a lead player in it.

**MR. MILLER:** The Coastal Zone Management Program is a vital part of any quality community strategy across the state. Where do you see the Coastal Zone Management Program going in the future, where some of its priorities are, and the importance of it?

**SECRETARY DANIELS:** The program is now about 20 years old, and it’s focused us on the importance of preserving our coastlines and rallied communities to conserve and intelligently develop coastal reserves. The establishment of both the Long Island South Shore Estuary Reserve Council and the Long Island Sound Coastal Commission are examples of gigantic steps in the process of preservation, with money committed to develop and implement master plans for restoration and preservation of those areas, in concert with local governments and the private sector. We have to find ways to maximize economic use of the Sound

as well as recreational opportunities while preserving it ecologically. The Coastal Zone Management Program is the key steward in that process.

When we talked about enhancing public access to our waterways, talked about revitalization of waterfronts, and we talked about extending and expanding recreational use of our waterways, we do this with the implicit understanding that there will be no compromise on protection of these waterways. We have to have a balance and a common sense approach to doing it. This program does that.

**MR. MILLER:** What do you see as some of the conservation challenges New York State faces, whether it’s in coastal areas or other areas that we’ve talked about today?

**SECRETARY DANIELS:** I think it’s across the board, and I think the great challenge that we face is to teach people just how important the environment really is. There’s this notion somehow that preservation of the environment is only for, you know, wealthy suburbanites or upstate people who have vast estates, or maybe it’s for chic eastsiders of Manhattan, or maybe it’s for upper westside Liberals. The environment has an impact on everybody. Every kid in school should be taught it is his responsibility or her responsibility to protect the environment. This should be taught in school. This should be one of our central values in this state and in this country because we don’t realize what we have.

The important thing is to make it part of our culture, we all have a role in this; that this is not the preserve of experts, that preservation of the environment should be a core value of citizenship of this country. And if we can do that over the next generation, I think that will probably be the greatest contribution that we could make to future generations of this state because it tells everyone we have a collective responsibility. We don’t just leave it to people who are passionate and dedicated, we leave it to all of us. If we do that, I think we can make a very, very significant contribution beyond the legislation, beyond the money, beyond the fact that we have a very committed governor who lives and breathes preservation and protection of the environment.

**MR. MILLER:** Audubon has a vision of creating Audubon Centers across the state and country and teaching children and adults alike the importance of the environment. We want to reach out not only to rural and suburban areas, but also to urban and under-served communities. How important is this goal and are there ways to partner with New York State?

**SECRETARY DANIELS:** It’s very important because for too many kids, especially in urban areas, and specifically poor and inner-city neighborhoods, they’re actually cut off from the environment. For many of them, it’s difficult for them to understand the relationship between the food they have on the table and the environment...where the food came from. When people are informed, they’re armed in a way that helps them not only safeguard their freedom, but also safeguard and improve their quality of life. They become the stewards of the neighborhoods.

When you educate people about the environment, it changes people’s character, and it changes their behavior. It can truly change one’s values. If we could get Audubon and other environmental groups to become very active in the educational process in the schools with their infrastructure in place to distribute environmental knowledge and values that have been honed over many, many years of work by a lot of people, than that that would be the way to go, and the state will always be a partner in this important effort.

**MR. MILLER:** In closing, do you bird or would you like to do a little birding with us at one of our Audubon Centers, Prospect Park or Constitution Marsh.

**SECRETARY DANIELS:** I would get great pleasure in joining the knowledgeable people of Audubon to be taken out birding. I would enjoy that very much.

My knowledge of birds is limited except for common species. I know our official bird is the Blue Bird. I’m kind of partial to Cardinals, species of sparrows and hawks. I would be pleased to go birding with Audubon.

**MR. MILLER:** We’ll arrange that then and thank you.