

CREATING A CULTURE OF CONVERSATION

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IN FEBRUARY, the long-awaited Quality Communities Task Force Report was presented to Governor George Pataki. The report's development was shepherded by the Lieutenant Governor Mary Donohue with the involvement of the administration's commissioners and a diverse stakeholder advisory group. The report itself provided a solid foundation for developing New York's comprehensive approach to smart growth issues.

In the pages of this *Audubon Advocate*, you will read more about the report's recommendations, pending policy actions and the presentations at Audubon's third Annual Smart Growth Conference. You will also read of related smart growth programs, whether protecting open space in my town of Clifton Park or groups coming together to promote the concept of a Long Island Sound Reserve Program. And you will read that Audubon is expanding its efforts to create more Audubon Centers with an emphasis on urban environments like Prospect Park, another quality community approach.

Just over two years ago, the term 'smart growth' was being discussed for the first time in New York State and Audubon dared to host a conference at the Empire State Plaza. The topic struck a chord. It linked not only the hopes of new initiatives for intelligent planning and growth, but also became an umbrella for many of the major conservation organizations as well as other constituency groups in the state.

All of these initiatives and news items point to the compelling nature of a smart growth agenda whether on a statewide, regional or local

basis. It is a bi-partisan issue with the governor's leadership as well as the efforts of State Senator MaryLou Rath and Assemblyman Sam Hoyt. Assemblyman Hoyt, in particular, has been a leader from the beginning, travelling to states like Maryland to seek ideas on what programs can work best for New York. His determination to this issue was the determining factor in his receiving Audubon's 2001 William Hoyt Environmental Award, named in memoriam after his father.

Whether it is more parkland, walk able streets, reusable brownfields, revitalized Main Streets, farmland preservation or an Audubon Center for your children, what is not to like about a smart growth agenda? Its secret, more than anything, is the common sense nature of its approach. Smart growth, quality communities or just good planning calls for all the right things we want for the community we call home.

We cannot forget that this agenda will determine whether our quality of life will improve or degrade over the next several decades. It will determine the type of community our children will raise their families in. The challenge will be to keep all the stakeholders—the conservationists, the home-builders, the farmers, the local officials and the planners, to name a few—at the table while New York state finds the correct balance of incentives and restrictions to ensure a lasting smart growth program.

Audubon pledges to stay the course and at the table, whether on a local, regional or statewide basis. We urge you to support us and play a role in your community to do the same. For in the end, it really is up to all of us.

National Art Festival in Jamestown New York

August 11 and 12. Right: Carver Kenny Vermillion patiently explains how he paints carved feathers to an observant, young Festival visitor.

Below: Audubon Birdathons occurring throughout May.



David J. Miller

David J. Miller
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Events You Don't want to miss...

May 2001

16th Audubon New York will hold its annual birdathon. For more information or to find out how you can help please contact Shirley Hartman at (518) 869-9731.

18th The Jim Rod boardwalk at Constitution Marsh Audubon Sanctuary will be dedicated. For more information please call (914) 265-2601.

18th David Allen Sibley will appear at his book signing at the Little Book House. For more information call Shirley Hartman at (518) 869-9731.

19th As part of National Audubon Society's Birdathon month, the Beaverkill birdathon team will trek from Beaverkill to Bashakill. For more information call (518) 869-9731.

21st Audubon's annual Environmental Leadership Award gala will occur at 6:30 PM at Pier Sixty, Chelsea Piers, New York City. For more information please call Kevin Smith at (212) 979-3164.

August 2001

11th & 12th The third annual Nature Art Festival will occur in Jamestown New York. Experience nature and art combined during two fun-filled days. For more info contact the Jamestown Audubon Society at (716) 569-2345.

September 2001

7th Look for more information on the Sound Guardian event in the next issue of the *Audubon Advocate*.

