

# AUDUBON ADVOCATE

## Proposed Executive Budget boosts EPF to \$150 million

### Staff Report

The State Executive Budget for the next fiscal year, FY 2001-02, would boost the Environmental Protection Fund to a permanent level of \$150 million, up \$25 million from this year. Of this, \$55 million would go to land acquisition and open space protection, up from \$31.5 million this year.

The Executive Budget would also allocate \$219.6 million from the \$1.75 billion Clean Water/Clean Air Bond Act to restore brownfields, clean up air and water pollution, provide funds to safe drinking water projects and support local solid waste programs. Of this, \$87.6 million will go to clean water projects, including \$50 million to help clean up Long Island Sound. The governor would also allocate the remaining \$3.5 million available from the bond act for land acquisition and open space projects.

Two programs of immediate interest to Audubon are the DEC's bird conservation program, in which funding is proposed at \$250,000, and the Biodiversity Stewardship program, with funding proposed at \$750,000. Also funded: \$6 million for the Hudson River Estuary Management Plan and \$1.3 million for assessing natural resource damage to the Hudson River; and \$500,000 for the development of the Henry Hudson Rivers Institute.

The budget proposal also includes a financing plan to clean up state superfund sites, allocating \$138 million for three cleanup programs with an equal contribution from private industry.

Also included is \$157 million to support 162 state parks and 35 historic sites, with funds from tax revenues and from user fees. To encourage farmers to stay in busi-



Tim Holstrom/The Trust for Public Land

*The Chandler Estate in Mount Sinai Harbor is one site identified in the Long Island Sound Reserve hearings (see page 7 for article) and acquired for preservation by Suffolk County shortly after the Listen to the Sound 2000 public meetings. With an expanded Environmental Protection Fund sites identified for the Long Island Sound Reserve System will be eligible for state acquisition or other conservation measures.*

ness, the budget would include a series of property tax cuts, including tax credits for farmland restoration, and extension of the school property tax relief program to include all farmers. From the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF), \$12 million would go for farmland protection, to purchase development rights.

Altogether, the executive budget would spend \$1.3 billion on all environmental programs. This includes \$113.9 million to support State DEC programs, up \$6.7 million from this year, and \$629.6 million for all capital projects, up \$92.4 million from this year.

The proposed budget includes

several fee increases – for hunting and fishing licenses, boosting the Conservation Fund to \$42.9 million; for pesticide application fees; and for snowmobiles and boat registrations. The Conservation Fund is supported by the leadership of sportsmen organizations across the state and Audubon has pledged to help our conservation partners with this effort. “This budget is good news for the environment and builds on the governor’s consent legacy,” said David J. Miller, executive director of Audubon New York. Miller concluded that Audubon New York will be working with the New York State Assembly and Senate to support and expand upon these proposals.

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— DAVID J. MILLER, EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR OF AUDUBON NEW YORK

THE NATIONAL AUDUBON  
SOCIETY MISSION:

“TO CONSERVE AND  
RESTORE NATURAL  
ECOSYSTEMS,  
FOCUSING ON BIRDS,  
OTHER WILDLIFE AND  
THEIR HABITATS FOR  
THE BENEFIT OF  
HUMANITY AND THE  
EARTH’S BIOLOGICAL  
DIVERSITY.”



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Winter 2001



The Audubon Advocate is printed on recycled paper.

NONPROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
ALBANY, NY  
PERMIT NO. 497