

threatened species of birds congregate, and has Brooklyn's only freshwater lake and its last remaining woods. Now it also has the country's first urban Audubon Center, which will serve a portion of six million park visitors per year. The Audubon Center is located in the Boathouse, a land-marked, classic terra cotta, beaux arts building constructed in 1905.

Toyota Motor North America, Inc. helped make the Prospect Park Audubon Center a reality with a

generous \$1 million contribution to the Toyota Endowment Fund for Environmental Education at the Audubon Center. "We are pleased to partner with Audubon to create enduring projects that inform and inspire communities," said Veronica Pollard, Toyota's Group Vice President for Corporate Communications. "The Prospect Park Audubon Center is an investment in the Brooklyn community, and Toyota is proud to support it."

The center contains a variety of innovative and fun exhibits and activity stations, designed to inspire visitors and help them to discover the secrets of nature. Families and children can explore a human-sized oriole's nest, search for life-like birds

hidden in the building, spy on wildlife through remote TV cameras or see a virtual reality video of what a cardinal sees while flying through the park. The center will offer students and families a foundation for science-based environmental education programs that take place on park nature trails.

"All of the programs and exhibits have been designed with the help of local teachers so that many of the activities can easily be integrated into the school curriculum. Of course, all these activities were designed with fun in mind as well," said Glenn Phillips, Prospect Park Audubon Center's education director.

Tupper Thomas, President of Prospect Park Alliance said, "We owe our great success to strategic partnerships with organizations like Audubon New York and local community groups. Through this effort, we set an example for the kind of stewardship that's

required to preserve natural spaces."

Activities on opening weekend at the Boathouse included introduction to bird watching tours, nature crafts, hands-on discovery at mobile science stations, environmental theater, electric boat tours of the park's lake, bird crafts and a "Birdie Gras."

"The Prospect Park Audubon Center marks the culmination of a two-year process to launch a new breed of urban environmental education centers," said David J. Miller, executive director of Audubon New York. "I want to thank Cheryl Bartholow—the new center's director—for her leadership as well as the other staff and volunteers at the Prospect Park Audubon Center, Audubon New York's education staff, the staff of the Prospect Park Alliance, our supporters in government and the private sector for making April 26th a truly historic day for Audubon."



KIMBERLY LEVY

(Left to right) PS 22's Landal Whitfield (9 yrs), Rolanda Hymes (9 yrs), and Bleixen Mulligan (9 yrs) enjoy a light moment while playing with a Prospect Park exhibit.

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accomplishments, like the "Neighbor Notification Law" where there is prior notice of pesticide applications, as well as the bill we passed to ban MTBE as a gasoline additive.

Also related to land acquisition, I was proud to sponsor the "Community Preservation Fund" for the east end towns on Long Island which is a way to come up with a mechanism to raise additional money to purchase environmentally sensitive land. These would probably stand out among my most important legislative accomplishments in the environmental area.

MR. MILLER: Talk about your philosophy in bringing together different interests to enact legislation and how you go about that.

MR. DiNAPOLI: I always feel the best legislation is that which is the end result of an inclusive process where you get a lot of different points of view. That's hard to do, and sometimes the way it all plays out for us, we don't make enough time for that process to work. Particularly on environmental issues, I think the first thing to do is to not make them partisan issues. So what I am certainly looking forward to doing with this committee is having a good working relationship with both our colleagues in the Senate and with the Governor's Office. And, where differences of opinion exist, I want to work with the different constituent groups, try to come up with what we think is a good solution in terms of what we want to achieve to protect the environment, but one that is also a solution that's workable, achievable and politically feasible. I think just keeping environmental issues in the forefront and keeping them as non-partisan as possible, is the best way to create the right kind of climate where you can come up with a solution.

MR. MILLER: On Long Island Sound, you've been involved from the get go, both on Audubon's first Listen to the Sound in 1990, and the second in 2000. What can the Legislature do to help speed up or move forward the clean-up programs on Long Island Sound, and also to protect critical open space areas like the Key Span Property in Jamesport?

MR. DiNAPOLI: A lot of this relates to funding and coming up with the resources. Certainly for this year, we want to do all that we can to have the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) fully funded to make up for not having any funds allocated last year. My colleagues and I are fighting hard in the budget process for a full \$250 million in funding for the EPF. We also have a long term concern that the fund needs to be grown beyond the \$250 million. We have concern about the Governor's proposed sweep from the fund and I am trying to determine if there might not be a different way to handle that. For Long Island Sound initiatives, there are specific projects to be funded. The best way to achieve that is to have a fully funded Environmental Protection Fund.

MR. MILLER: As you look at those funding issues and you potentially increase the EPF, what are your thoughts about the need for another bond act down the line in addition to expanding the EPF?

MR. DiNAPOLI: Well, I think that the history of the State has shown that the public has been very responsive to environmental bond acts. You know, we are currently suffering from the last bond act running out of money, and we did a proposal last evening to refinance Superfund. It was interesting because one of our ways of replacing the bond act money for Superfund was to issue bonds through the Environmental Facilities Corporation (EFC). We think this is appropriate because the EFC already has bonding authority for environmental purposes. A

concern from the other side was that this is not voter approved. I said, "Well, if you'd like to propose another environmental bond act, that might be something we can work on together."

The climate is tough right now in terms of finances because of the consequences of 9/11 and we are in a difficult economic time, but I think that it certainly is worth our efforts to start to look at whether or not we could do another bond act, if not this year, perhaps, in the next year or two. I think capital environmental protection and remediation programs have widespread public support, like land acquisition, and the right way to approach that is through a bond or some kind of bonding authority. If you're not going to do it through the existing authorities that we have, then a bond act makes perfect sense. The prices for development, and the cost of land, just keep going up and up so we lose precious years if we don't have the capital to invest and purchase the land now. Certainly, a bond act is something that should be very seriously considered in future years. And I think the Governor would be open to that as well as some point, not this year, but maybe in the near future.

MR. MILLER: Audubon Centers are expanding across New York State. We have a 2020 vision, with 1,000 centers across the country by 2020. In New York, Audubon has an extensive Centers network that is already expanding. With environmental education so critical to our future, can the State play a role in helping fund capital needs of Centers? Could they be a future bond act category?

MR. DiNAPOLI: I think they're wonderful initiatives. I certainly commend Audubon for promoting it. It's an important way for the communities to understand the role of the environment and ecology in our lives. It's very important for our younger citizens. It's an easy entry for them to gain a better understanding about the environment, and I think there's a real hunger and desire for more learning in that area. So the State certainly has a role to play. I think this administration has been helpful in terms of promoting State resources and also in working together with the private sector to invest in these initiatives. In terms of future funding, if it is not done through the general fund, a bond act is an appropriate way for us to fund these kind of initiatives. I hope you'll reach your 2020 goal.

MR. MILLER: The State Bird Conservation Area program is something we're very proud of, which is based on our own Important Bird Area program. What are your thoughts on expanding the law to all state-owned lands and your thoughts on the program overall?

MR. DiNAPOLI: Well, I support the program, and I support expanding it. We are working with Steve Englebright's office, and it is one of the first things he raised. I know there's a lot of interest in doing this in the Senate as well. I certainly want to expand the initiative and look forward to working with him to achieve that.

MR. MILLER: And lastly, lead sinkers. Audubon, as you know, is leading a coalition effort to ban the sale of lead sinkers. Tell us about the progress of this bill.

MR. DiNAPOLI: Just last night on our Earth Day agenda, we passed the Englebright Bill, which was agreed upon with the Senate. So I'm very happy, and commend Audubon and Steve Englebright. Through your collective efforts, this issue was brought to a successful conclusion.

MR. MILLER: Well, thank you again for your efforts and leadership in conservation.

MR. DiNAPOLI: Thank you, David.