

Dynamic Duo Tackle Legislative Agenda

By Al Caccese

THE STARS are aligned and the news is very good for the citizens of New York State. We often hear the complaint about those in government who seem to be paralyzed due to partisan political concerns. Needed reforms fail for fear that credit may not be fairly shared, or worse, misrepresented so that a deserving participant is totally excluded from the accolades.

Not so in the New York State Legislature as it relates to conservation and environmental protection.

The good news for New Yorkers is that there is no such chicanery in the Environmental Conservation Committees of the New York State Senate and Assembly. Senator Carl Marcellino, and Assemblyman Thomas DiNapoli, the Chairs of their respective committees, have put aside politics as usual and have set an example for how representative government should conduct itself. In non-partisan fashion, they have decided that doing the right thing is not only good government, it's good politics. Issue after issue is being addressed on its merits. After years of bickering, we have a consensus Brownfields Act that is reputed to be the best in the country. We have attention being paid to invasive species, which have been degrading our water quality and fisheries, reducing agricultural output and eliminating habitat for native plants and animal species.

Senator Marcellino recently said, "As we have seen for far too long in Albany, nothing happens without a strong bipartisan effort and a sincere desire to accom-

plish a goal. Luckily for me, when working with Tom DiNapoli these two traits are a given. Time and time again, we have come together to find solutions that meet the needs of both our Long Island constituencies and the environmental welfare of New York State. I look forward to our continued partnership and friendship."

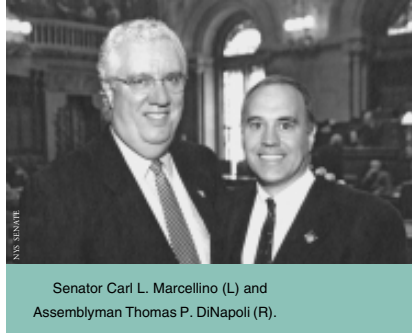
And the admiration is mutual, Assemblyman DiNapoli recently stated. "Carl Marcellino is a great leader for the environment. He understands the effectiveness of bipartisan efforts in the environmental arena and has the ability to forge a consensus on difficult issues."

Obviously, this is more than just a cordial, professional relationship. This is a partnership, built on respect, friendship and a burning desire to improve the quality of life for the citizens of New York State.

It is clearly not a coincidence that each of these fine public officials were awarded the William B. Hoyt Environmental Award for outstanding conservation leadership by Audubon New York and the Audubon Council of New York State, which

represents 30 local Audubon chapters around the state, with a membership approaching 50,000. Senator Marcellino received his Hoyt award in 1998 and Assemblyman DiNapoli in 2003.

Next time you see either of these special leaders, make sure you let him know how much his efforts are appreciated.



Senator Carl L. Marcellino (L) and Assemblyman Thomas P. DiNapoli (R).

Invasive Species Task Force Created

By Al Caccese

THANKS TO the excellent work of Senator Carl L. Marcellino and Assemblyman Thomas DiNapoli, Chairs of their respective Environmental Conservation Committees, and also to the continued strong conservation support of Governor George E. Pataki, New York has a 17-member Invasive Species Task Force that will greatly benefit New York's environmental and natural heritage.

Non-native invasive species are quickly becoming one of the largest threats to biodiversity in terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems in New York State, and are changing the historic biological

makeup of New York's land and seascapes. The loss of habitat is requiring significant expenditures by the State and municipalities to remedy the problem. Invasive species are responsible for the majority of bird extinctions since 1800, and threaten at least 66 species on the Audubon WatchList, a nationally recognized bird conservation tool.

The Task Force, to be comprised of well-qualified public and private experts, will be charged with the responsibility to identify the best practices for the management of invasive species and pave the way for

administrative and/or legislative initiatives. A comprehensive report will be published, detailing threats and identifying actions to remedy or prevent further environmental damage.

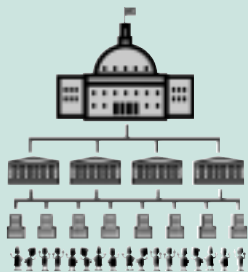
Audubon's Important Bird Areas Program and the State's Bird Conservation Areas Program face mounting challenges associated with invasive species. Specifically in New York, there are two areas of concern that are being threatened by the spread of invasive species: the Shawangunk Grasslands National Wildlife Refuge, which is one of the most important grassland bird breeding and wintering

areas in the State, and the Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge, where American Black Ducks are threatened by Phragmites. Each of these sites are important habitats for many endangered and threatened species. The National Audubon Society has recently recognized the Wertheim Refuge as one of the top ten hot spots in the nation in need of protection from invasive species.

For more information about the National Audubon Society's invasive species campaign, visit www.stopinvasives.com.

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