



NASNY/Ray

From left to right are Betty Hamilton and Lynn Rollins of New York City Audubon, NASNY Bird Conservation Director Michael Burger, Ph.D., Commissioner Nathan Rudgers and Tony Wagner of Buffalo Audubon.

Comm. Rudgers describes Farmland Protection Program

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Most successful farmers are more interested in building up their farming operations that they have carefully managed over decades than in developing the land. However, farmers are not the whole story where open space is concerned. Farmers own only three-quarters of the land they manage; the rest — almost two million acres — is rented from someone else, usually a non-farmer. Sampling surveys indicate that there may be another two million acres of crop and pasture land which are not being used by any farmer. These are lands owned by non-farmers who either have no interest in renting the land to a farmer or can't find a farmer interested in managing their land. That four million open acres — 13 percent of the land area of the state — that is not owned by a farmer is highly vulnerable to conversion to other uses.

I have encountered a growing public awareness of the importance of agriculture to maintaining a diverse and healthy rural economy and environment. The farming community finds it encouraging that many environmental organizations are starting to focus on the need to maintain a viable agricultural industry in order to maintain open landscapes.

For their part, our farmers are rapidly adapting their land management practices to a heightened scientific understanding of the issues of nutrient management and water quality. They share the general public's concern about the risk of mishandled or over-applied pesticides and herbicides. Through our Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) program, my department is working with individual farmers statewide to develop enterprise plans to assure that their operations do not place the state's water quality and wildlife at risk. We consider pro-

grams like AEM to be a great success, but also realize that there is more work to be done. I look forward to working with the various stakeholders with open space interests in New York to address the issue of farmland preservation, especially as it relates to rented land that will come under increasing development pressure in the future.

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NASNY hires its first-ever communications director

Staff Report

The National Audubon Society of New York State welcomes Kimberley L. Ray as its first director of communications. Ray who has served as the associate director for public relations at Special Olympics New York, marketing and communications coordinator for Upper Hudson Planned Parenthood and managing editor of the *New York Sojourner-Herald*, a community news publication welcomes the position.

“The opportunity to establish a new communications effort at NASNY appeals to me. I am excited about the possibilities,” says Ray. Having started the position in September 2000, Ray has completed and presented a communications overview to NASNY's council and board of directors. Ray continues to work on various projects in addition to the full communications plan, which



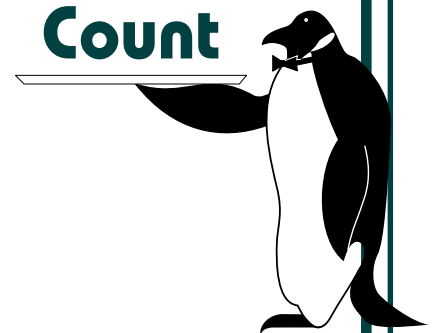
Kimberley L. Ray

should be produced early next year.

“Kimberley has already proven to be an asset to the staff. She brings a wealth of experience from the areas of marketing, public relations and communications. We are very happy to have her on board,” said Executive Director David J. Miller.

More than 45,000 people participate each year in a census of early winter bird populations. Participants survey designated 15-mile areas on a given count day. Call your local chapter for details.

Christmas Bird Count



Dec. 14 to Jan. 15

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