



MEMORANDUM

TO: Michael Kaplowitz, Chair, Board of Legislators

FROM: Catherine F. Parker, Legislator – 7th District

DATE: November 21, 2017

RE: Communications Add on Email Correspondences to Budget & Appropriations Committee

Please add the following email communications to the November 27th agenda for referral to the Budget & Appropriations Committee on behalf of Legislator Parker.

From: Joy Gaylinn Reidenberg [mailto:joy.reidenberg@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, November 20, 2017 11:57 AM
To: Parker, Catherine
Subject: Save our curators in the County Budget

Dear Westchester County Legislator Catherine Parker:

I'm writing to oppose the elimination of the curator positions in the proposed County Budget. I'm sure you've already heard about all of the good and essential things curators do for our parks. Perhaps what you have not considered is what will happen if the curator positions are eliminated, or replaced with less experienced new hires. Without curators, our parks will be subjected to NEGLECT:

- 1) Invasive plants will overgrow the habitat. These artificially or accidentally introduced plants (e.g., mile-a-minute weed, phragmites, porcelain berry, knotweed, etc.) will out-compete the native species and have a serious negative impact on the biodiversity of our natural parks.
 - 2) Unchecked invasive animals (e.g., feral cats) will be attracted to kill native species (e.g., songbirds).
 - 3) Food-based garbage will accumulate and attract rats. Debris (often blown over from Playland) will make the park unattractive at best (e.g., litter dropped by careless visitors).
 - 4) Hazardous debris can harm marine life as well as visitors. Storm tides wash in a variety of unusual, but often dangerous, objects (e.g., planks with protruding nails, fishing gear, sharp metallic objects, toxic materials, and plastic). Some materials pose an injury risk to people walking the shoreline, and other debris can become accidentally ingested or cause entanglements for marine life.
 - 5) Trail maintenance will come to a halt. This will not only allow the overgrowth of undesirable plants (e.g., poison ivy), but can make the trails unpassable. Visitors might get injured trying to access these unmaintained trails.
 - 6) Post-storm reparations will cease. Dangerously toppled trees or precariously dangling broken boughs pose a risk to life for any visitors that innocently walk trails that pass underneath them. Serious erosion can make trails unstable, creating a hazardous condition with significant risk of a visitor getting injured from stumbling or falling.
 - 7) Unmonitored areas encourage illicit activities. When a park is unmonitored, it provides a secluded space for a range of undesirable activities including underage alcohol consumption and illegal drug sales/use. The lack of supervision will convert these formerly family-friendly parks into places to avoid, lest one be at risk for rape, mugging, and other violence that can happen away from watchful eyes. Homeless people may feel free to inhabit the pristine interiors of the parks. A continuous human presence will displace shy local wildlife that normally seeks refuge in those protected areas.
 - 8) Loss of educational programming. Who will educate our children (and adults!) about the animals and plants around us? Who will teach us to appreciate nature and encourage sustainable activities? Who will supervise the beach clean-ups, guide scout troops, provide an outing for the veterans, oversee nature festivals, arrange artists to teach crafting projects? Many visitors only come to a park to experience interactive programs led by, or organized and supervised by, a curator.
- Please consider the many serious negative impacts that removal of the park curator positions will cause. I urge you to reverse this cut and restore funding for the park curators. It is such an insignificantly small part of the budget. If you were to cut out food catering at a few events, I'm sure you could recoup this money easily!

Sincerely,
Joy Reidenberg, Ph.D.
Resident of Westchester County (Rye, NY),
Former President of the Friends of Read Wildlife Sanctuary, and
TV scientist and educator about animals (e.g., documentary series aired on NatGeoWild, Discovery, and PBS, including: Inside Nature's Giants, Sex in the Wild, Brave New World with Stephen Hawking, Big Blue Live, Wild Alaska Live, etc.)

<http://www.friendsofreadwildlifesanctuary.org>
Friends of Read Wildlife Sanctuary, Inc.
P.O. Box 548, Rye, NY 10580

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Joy S. Reidenberg, Ph.D.
joy.reidenberg@gmail.com
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From: Stacia Hachem [mailto:sjhachem@researchagencyinc.com]
Sent: Sunday, November 19, 2017 7:23 PM
To: Parker, Catherine
Cc: Alexandre Zyngier
Subject: Withdrawal of Funding for Curator Positions at Marshlands and Edith Read

Dear Ms. Parker,

My husband and I wish to voice our strong disapproval of the proposed 2018 budget's cuts to one of our communities' most important resources; the already bare bones staff at Edith Read and Marshlands.

Our children have grown up at the Marshlands and have attended camp there for more than 10 years. Last year our eldest son was on staff. Scott Williamson is one of the most dedicated individuals I have ever met. His passion for the Marshlands translates into a transformative experience for all children who encounter him. He has taught scores of young people how to value nature in a respectful and fun-loving manner.

We live in Mamaroneck and daily see the birds that are provided sanctuary at Edith Read. We participate in their programs as much as possible and have watched the transformation of the shore.

Without the staff at both Edith Read and the Marshlands, the 2 areas will turn into a haven for teenage delinquency and the habitats will be permanently damaged by all of us walking our dogs within the parks.

I would be grateful if you would register our deep discontent with this line item.

Yours truly,

Stacia Hachem
Alex Zyngier
936 Soundview Drive
Mamaroneck, NY 10543