



Box 472
Oakdale, NY 11769

MIDYEAR UPDATE AND APPEAL

July 18, 2011

Dear Friends of Connetquot Member and Supporter:

I hope this letter finds you well and enjoying the warm weather. It has been an eventful spring for the Friends of Connetquot; we have made great headway on a variety of projects all aimed at reaching out to the community and making Connetquot River State Park Preserve a more enjoyable experience for visitors. These activities have been made possible by the generous donations of our members, so I'd like to start by thanking you for your past support. It inspires us to work harder in our mission to assist Connetquot Preserve in serving you. **Frankly, nothing would be possible without your contributions.**

Also, I'd like to give you a brief update on what your organization has recently accomplished and our plans for the next year:

- **I'm glad to report that our numbers are growing!** So far, this year we have increased our membership by 11% for a total of 617. This significant increase is bolstered by an improved rate of membership renewals and reverses a negative trend we had experienced in the past four years. Our efforts to reach the community seem to be bearing fruit. You may have seen us and our beautiful display engaging the public at Heckscher State Park's Earth Day Festival in April or at our presentations in June and early July at the Sachem Public Library in Holbrook and the Connetquot Public Library in Bohemia, where a team of three volunteer presenters, including me, recounted the history of Connetquot River State Park Preserve, the joys of trout fishing there, and displayed its splendorous beauty in all seasons through photographs. We plan on presenting at other libraries throughout the Island, so look for our next presentation as it may be at a library near you.
- **Soon you will be able to use your cell phone to discover interesting features of the Preserve.** A committee of diligent volunteers is putting together a wonderful audio tour that is funded by the Snapper Inn Restaurant and will be available to all park visitors. Look for announcements in our newsletter and website or for the OnCell Tour signs at the park.
- **The restoration of the Nicoll Grist Mill is pending the conclusion of the scope-of-work** funded by the Knapp-Swezey Foundation and being performed by Jan Pokorny Architects. There are indications that the powder post beetle damage is more extensive than expected and that several supporting beams will need to be replaced to make the structure sufficiently sound for making the Mill operational.
- **The general economy and budgetary crunch of NY State has put on hold the plans for a state-of-the-art, bio-secure hatchery.** Nevertheless, our organization is working with NY State Parks on a bio-secure plan to reopen the existing historic hatch house as an educational facility. We have raised over \$250,000 toward this purpose, with other funding proposals pending, and hope to proceed with the plans and scope-of-work before long.
- **We will soon release a video,** with support from Astoria Federal Savings Bank, featuring a second interview with Connetquot Preserve Manager Gil Bergen and former South Side Sportsmen's Club Guide Craig Kessler. They both hold vast historical knowledge of the Preserve that is closely tied to their respective personal history.
- **Throughout the winter and spring, the Friends have been developing a strategic plan** for the next three years. The plan, funded by Museumwise's Get Ready! Get Set! Go! Program, is helping guide the Friends activities for the next three years, including new programming, the Mill Museum, and more public outreach.

Although the Friends continue to seek corporate and institutional funding whenever possible, we still need the help of our members to make our programs a reality. Projects that would greatly benefit from the continued generosity of members like you include:

- **The South Side Sportsmen's Club archive needs to be assessed** as a preliminary step to seeking institutional funding to have the documents catalogued and prepared for proper safe storage. Estimated cost of assessment is \$2,000.
- **Director and historian Bob Giffen is working on a manuscript for publication** about the historic fabric of the property on which the Connetquot Preserve lies. Its threads connect to people, places, and events of local and national significance. Once published, his interesting and informative booklet will be made available for sale and will serve to raise people's awareness of the importance of the Preserve as a cultural treasure. Estimated publishing cost is \$3,000.

Please continue to be a part of the exciting plans that allow Connetquot Preserve to remain the wonderful place that we all enjoy. We ask you to please consider making a gift to the Friends during this midyear appeal. Many thanks again for your continued generosity.

Sincerely,



Robert Labuski
President

P.S. Please don't let Connetquot Preserve languish in the present economic crunch. The Friends are working hard to keep Connetquot Preserve an interesting and beautiful place for you and your family. Help us by sending your gift today. And remember, every cent of any amount you send is entirely for the benefit of the Preserve, so please, be as generous as you can.

Friends of Connetquot is a volunteer-run 501(3) (C) non-profit corporation (Tax ID 11-3364427)

2011 MIDYEAR APPEAL CONTRIBUTION

YES! I want to support the Connetquot Preserve. Enclosed is my check made payable to **Friends of Connetquot, Inc.** in the amount checked below.

OTHER \$ _____ SPONSOR-\$100 SUPPORTING-\$50 FRIEND-\$25

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

(We've enclosed a reply envelope for your convenience.)