

November 5, 2008

Commissioner Pete Grannis
New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
625 Broadway
Albany, New York 12233-1010

Re: Connetquot River State Park Preserve - Fish Hatchery

Dear Commissioner Grannis:

I represent the Great South Bay Audubon Society, a chapter of National Audubon. Our chapter of approximately 1,000 citizens covers the area that encompasses the Connetquot River State Park Preserve. We have been advised that the DEC is moving to close the preserve's historic fish hatchery within the park because of the possibility of Infectious Pancreatic Necrosis, and we wish to ask you to reconsider this momentous decision in light of several important facts.

First, the hatchery is the main reason that literally hundreds of thousands of people visit the park annually. They come themselves, or with their friends and children to see the fish in the hatchery, and closing this wonderful attraction will undoubtedly severely reduce the park's visitation numbers.

Second, the people who visit pay an admission fee, and it is hard to understand at this time when New York State is in a fiscal crisis that there would be a move to reduce this substantial revenue stream.

Third, few if any anglers are going to pay to fish the famous streams in Connetquot if the hatchery is closed rendering the streams unproductive. Even though I understand there is a plan to stock the waters with trout from other hatcheries, Connetquot is historically known as a place where the trout grow vigorous and large. These trout have successfully bred for many years and they are genetically unique to survive and flourish at Connetquot.

I am sure that you and the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation can develop a reasoned approach to saving this historic treasure. I would greatly appreciate it if you would contact me to indicate what course of action you are going to undertake to keep the hatchery open. I can be reached at my email address hawkauk7@optonline.net or by telephone at 631-669-6473. Thank you for your patience and attention to this very important matter.

Yours Truly,

Lawrence A. Merryman
Conservation Chairman
Great South Bay Audubon Society