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Tuesday, October 18, 2016

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Environmental Advocates Fear Storm Water Outfall Will Harm Marine Wildlife

By Shannan Ferry
Sunday, October 16, 2016 at 08:31 PM EDT



Some environmental advocates say a plan to reduce flooding will destroy wetlands at a park in Northern Queens. NY1's Shannan Ferry filed the following report from College Point.

Dr. James Cervino said he's worked to preserve a cove in MacNeil Park for about a decade.

The marine biologist said he's watched oysters, sea grass and other species grow in the area but, he fears a plan to install a storm water outfall pipe nearby will destroy wildlife.

"The street effluent contains oil from cars, fertilizers, and most importantly during the winter they're going to be using a lot of de-icing and salt compound," he said.

Cervino and his wife Kathryn run a non-profit called the 'Coastal Preservation Network.'

They say pollutants from the outfall would kill the marine life they've worked so hard to revive.

On Saturday, they held a protest with State Senator Tony Avella.

"This is a cove so it just naturally traps trash, so we're already combating a real uphill battle for the past ten years," said Kathryn Cervino.

The Cervinos said they have alternative solutions. They think using a different location or installing a filtration system would work better but city officials said their plan will reduce flooding and actually improve the environment.

They said it will allow them to get rid of three sewer outfalls, which discharge untreated sewage and storm water combined into Flushing Bay and the Upper East River.

"But our concern is, that even though it's not going to contain sewage, it will contain chemical contaminants," said Dr. Cervino.

NY1 reached out to the Department of Environmental Protection for comment.

Spokesman Edward Timbers said in a statement "DEP is investing more than \$130 million to permanently end the annual discharge of nearly 50 million gallons of pollution into the waters surrounding College Point. Contrary to the claims, it is quite clear that this work will significantly improve water quality and the health of nearby wetlands and oysters."

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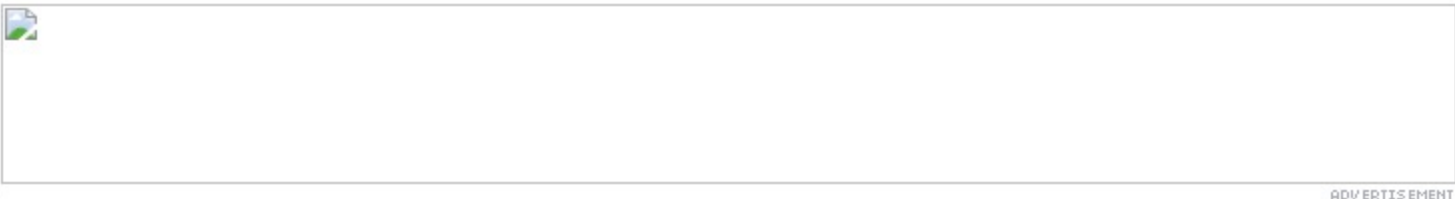
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