



**NEW YORK STATE
ORNITHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION, INC.**

for the birds and birders of New York State since 1948

Carol Ash, Commissioner
NY State Office of Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation
Albany, NY

June 22, 2010

Dear Commissioner Ash:

I am writing on behalf of our organization regarding the ongoing problem of feral cat colonies in NY's State Parks. We have been involved in this issue since 2003, due to concerns over the impact of cats on bird populations and particularly on endangered, threatened and otherwise at risk species for which the state parks are important—even critical—habitat. We participated in a collaborative effort with the Parks Office that sought to engage all interested parties, with the goal of zero feral cats in state parks. I have enclosed a copy of our 2004 letter to Tom Lyons supporting the draft guidelines that resulted.

At the time, this appeared to be a significant step forward in addressing the feral cat issue, and we were optimistic that progress would be made in removing the established colonies and feeding stations that were in the parks—at times supported and assisted by park personnel. However, according to reports from our members and member organizations that are familiar with the cat colonies, especially on Long Island, little has changed. The feeding stations remain, and the parks are doing little if anything to discourage them, or to reach the goal of zero cats.

It is unfortunate that the work put into this collaborative approach to resolve this serious problem has apparently been for naught. Allowing and supporting feral cat colonies in the state parks is contrary to the claim of responsible stewardship of natural resources from your agency. We urge you to revisit this difficult issue and to give it your most serious consideration. Our organization remains ready to assist in any way we can.

Sincerely,

Andrew Mason, Conservation Chair

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cc: Tom Alworth, Deputy Commissioner