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Family Donates Sensitive Land to Help Expand a South Shore Bluebelt and Protect Staten Island's Natural Habitat

2.5 Acres of Land Located Adjacent to the Interchange of the Korean War Veterans Memorial Parkway and the West Shore Expressway Will Help to Protect the Mill Creek Bluebelt

Photos Can be Viewed on [DEP's Flickr Page](#)

New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) officials and the Goldhirsch family on Tuesday unveiled a plaque to commemorate the family's donation to the City of 2.5 acres of sensitive land adjacent to the Mill Creek Bluebelt. The land was owned jointly by the late Henry and Fred Goldhirsch, and their surviving sister Gertrude. The generous donation will provide an important wooded buffer of land adjacent to Mill Creek, which will help to protect the quality of the water which eventually drains into the Arthur Kill. The donated land and the plaque, which is set in stone, are located adjacent to the interchange of the Korean War Veterans Memorial Parkway and the West Shore Expressway. Representing the Goldhirsch family at the dedication were Gertrude and her daughter Amy Schwartz, as well as Henry's wife Marjorie Goldhirsch and daughter Jessica Goldhirsch.

"We are very grateful to the Goldhirsch family for this generous donation that will help to protect the Mill Creek Bluebelt and New York City's natural environment," said DEP Commissioner Emily Lloyd. "Bluebelts help to reduce flooding, beautify communities and raise property values."

"This piece of land helps to consolidate part of the Bluebelt environmental protection project," said Judy Weiss, of the Goldhirsch family. "It is a perfect gift from our family because the City was, and still is, our family's consolidating

More Information

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center. We hope the land will serve as a refuge for local wildlife as the City was a refuge for us during the storms of World War II, and long after."

"The Goldhirsch Family has again proven their generosity to the entire Staten Island community and we are thankful for this gift," said Borough President James Oddo. "Donating this land to the Bluebelt is not only selfless, but important for the environment and for our water drainage system. As an Island, we have many vulnerabilities and the Bluebelt helps to relieve some of that burden."

"It is fitting that a family with a great legacy of generosity and community service has provided this gift, which will help preserve our precious natural resources and alleviate flooding for generations of Islanders to come," said City Council Minority Leader Vincent Ignizio.

The Goldhirsch family emigrated from Europe in 1939 and established strong ties with New York City. Fred, Henry and Gertrude went to school, started businesses and raised their families in the city and they have always been grateful for the many opportunities it provided for them. The Goldhirsch's also have a strong sense of environmental conservation and in the past have donated land on Staten Island to the New York City Parks Department.

DEP acquired the first wetland property for the Mill Creek Bluebelt in 1998 and for the last 15 years capital construction projects have built storm sewers in the surrounding neighborhoods and man-made wetlands to filter the stormwater before it drains to the Arthur Kill. Prior to the land donation, the Mill Creek Bluebelt measured 52 acres in size and it receives stormwater from a roughly 1,114 acre watershed.

The award winning Bluebelt program preserves natural drainage corridors such as streams and ponds, and optimizes them to help control and filter stormwater from local streets. Over the last ten years DEP has built Bluebelts for approximately one third of Staten Island's land area. In the South Richmond and mid-Island areas, the City has purchased approximately 400 acres of wetland property for Bluebelts that provide drainage for 19 watersheds, covering about 14,000 acres. The Bluebelts also provide important open spaces and serve as a habitat for diverse wildlife. Expanding the use of Bluebelts to reduce flooding and improve the water quality of New York Harbor is one of the operational goals outlined in Strategy 2011-2014, a far-reaching strategic plan that lays out 100 distinct initiatives to make DEP the safest, most efficient, cost-effective, and transparent water utility in the nation.

DEP manages New York City's water supply, providing more than one billion gallons of water each day to more than nine million residents, including eight million in New York City. The water is delivered from a watershed that extends more than 125 miles from the city, comprising 19 reservoirs and three controlled lakes. Approximately 7,000 miles of water mains, tunnels and aqueducts bring water to homes and businesses throughout the five boroughs, and 7,500 miles of sewer lines and 96 pump stations take wastewater to 14 in-city treatment plants. DEP has nearly 6,000 employees, including almost 1,000 in the upstate watershed. In addition, DEP has a robust capital program, with nearly \$14 billion in investments planned over the next 10 years that will create up to 3,000 construction-related jobs per year. This capital program is responsible for critical projects like City Water Tunnel No. 3; the Staten Island Bluebelt program, an ecologically sound and cost-effective stormwater management system; the city's Watershed Protection Program, which protects sensitive lands upstate near the city's reservoirs in order to maintain their high water quality; and the installation of more than 820,000 Automated Meter Reading devices, which will allow customers to track their daily water use, more easily manage their accounts and be alerted to potential leaks on their properties. For more information, visit nyc.gov/dep, like us on Facebook at [facebook.com/nycwater](https://www.facebook.com/nycwater), or follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/nycwater.

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