



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Steven D. Rhoads

## Senator Rhoads Partners with New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) on Water Chestnut Pull at Mill Pond in Wantagh

STEVEN D. RHOADS July 10, 2023

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On Wednesday, July 5th, Senator Rhoads and his staff joined the DEC as well as other volunteers at Mill Pond in Wantagh to help remove Water Chestnuts from the pond. This is an annual event that Senator Rhoads participated in for 6 years as a County Legislator and has now continued as a State Senator. Water Chestnuts are grass-like plants that are typically found in Southeast Asia, Africa, and Australia. However, there has been a multitude of water chestnuts found in Mill Pond. The chestnuts are not native to this area and are an invasive species that cause immense harm to the ecosystem of the pond due to the tremendous amounts of dissolved

oxygen—oxygen that is necessary for the many marine animals that call Mill Pond their home. As a result, the many vibrant marine animals that once resided in the pond are declining due to the lack of oxygen available to them. This problem is not limited to Mill Pond, many ponds across Long Island deal with the invasive water chestnuts. In order to actively combat this issue and protect our environment, Senator Rhoads, a Wantagh native, went in the water himself to be an active participant in the cleanup. Everyone rolled up their sleeves and kayaked into the pond to remove 800 pounds of water chestnut plants.

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*Senator Rhoads is extremely proud of the work that he participated in on Wednesday as he said, "Protecting Long Island's fragile ecosystem and our local environment is a top priority. Helping to make Mill Pond Preserve healthier and more vibrant for us all to use and enjoy in a hands-on way is a rewarding experience. Thank you to the DEC and our volunteers for their hard work."*