



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrew J. Lanza

## Senator Lanza and Governor Cuomo Announce Approval of Conservation Plan for William H. Pouch Scout Camp

ANDREW J LANZA December 5, 2013

### ***Vote by Greater New York Council of the Boy Scouts of America Enables State-Negotiated Conservation Plan to Protect Natural Environment on Staten Island***

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and Senator Andrew J. Lanza today announced the approval of a conservation plan for the William H. Pouch Scout Camp on Staten Island. New York State is providing \$6 million through the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) for phases 2 and 3 of the conservation plan. These phases were approved this week by the Board of Directors of the Greater New York Councils (GNYC) of the Boy Scouts of America, which owns the property.

Senator Andrew Lanza said, “Staten Island’s Pouch camp is one of the most beautiful natural areas in all of New York City. Ten years ago, when the threat of its sale for development first arose, I vowed to do whatever it took to save it. Working with Assemblyman Cusick and Borough President Molinaro, together with Staten Island’s elected officials; I am pleased to say that thanks to Governor Cuomo, this beautiful natural area will be there for my children as it was for me growing up on Staten Island. This could not have happened without Governor Cuomo.”

“Staten Island’s Pouch Camp has given generations of Boy Scouts access to the great outdoors, and we must do everything we can to keep this iconic Camp going,” Governor Cuomo said. “This week’s vote was another key step in that direction, allowing us to conserve the Camp as open space, ensuring that Boy Scouts and the public will be able to use it for years to come. I commend the Greater New York Councils for signing onto this collaborative effort to safeguard Staten Island’s natural environment for all.”

Assembly Member Michael Cusick said, “This is a great day for Staten Island! Pouch Camp has always been an essential and notable community landmark for Staten Islanders. The great news that the site for Pouch Camp will be protected is one that cannot be applauded enough. This vote by the Greater New York Council of Boy Scouts allows the State to conserve the property as open space. The dedication of my Staten Island colleagues particularly Senator Andrew Lanza and Borough President Jim Molinaro

reinforced by Governor Andrew Cuomo's commitment to preserve valuable open recreational space has made this journey to save Pouch Camp a reality."

GNYC President Alair Townsend said, "I am extremely proud of the volunteers and staff who have worked so hard for all these years to make this day a reality. This agreement represents a great future for Staten Island and all of NYC Scouting and Exploring."

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner Joseph Martens said, "This project is another example of Governor Cuomo's commitment to preserving green space and promoting outdoor recreation, and with the support of groups like the Trust for Public Land and our state and local partners, we will also be preserving a valuable recreational camp that has been enjoyed by thousands of children. I am pleased that the property will continue to provide urban youth and other visitors with an outstanding outdoor experience for years to come."

In July 2011, an agreement was announced between the Trust for Public Land and the GNYC of the Boy Scouts of America in order to preserve Pouch Camp for future generations. Phase 1 of the plan was completed in 2012 and protected 44 acres of the property through a conservation easement being held by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). Phases 2 and 3 were approved earlier this week in a vote by the GNYC Board of Directors, and when finalized, will protect an additional 50 acres of open space from development. Originally expected to cost a total of \$10 million, these final phases are now appraised to require only \$6 million. The GNYC Board of Director's vote also includes the conservation of an additional 3 acres currently housing the Camp-O-Ree field utilized by the Boy Scouts of America.

DEC will pay \$6 million for these phases of the conservation easement using funds from the State Environmental Protection Fund (EPF). This is in addition to a \$5 million payment the Port Authority and New York City Council members from Staten Island made last year to the Boy Scouts to secure 43 acres of Pouch Camp as an easement as well.

DEC led negotiations on the conservation easement plans along with the Trust for Public Land. The easement prevents future development of the site while providing public access to the grounds. The deal requires approval from the State Comptroller and Attorney General.

Marc Matsil, New York Director for the Trust for Public Land, said, "The Trust for Public Land has conserved more than 130,000 acres in New York State, and we applaud Governor Cuomo, state and local officials, the Boy Scouts, and the entire community for protecting this regional gem. Pouch Camp has long been a community priority for protection,

and its 115 acres lie in the heart of the 3,000 acres protected in the Greenbelt. With its diverse ecology, Orbach Lake, forest lands, and freshwater wetlands, it is a great host to more than 25,000 Boy Scouts and youth each year, including, many from undeserved households in the region.”

The Boy Scouts of America has utilized Pouch Camp for more than 60 years as a site for outdoor recreation and education. Pouch Camp also serves as a haven for local wildlife and the natural environment. The purpose of the conservation easement is to preserve and guarantee that the property will remain undeveloped for anything other than a recreational camp in the future. The Boy Scouts will continue to own and maintain the property, while the public will be given certain recreational rights on the property throughout the year, including hiking and fishing, as well as a permanent trail along the eastern side of the property that connects two sections of the Greenbelt.

State Island Borough President James Molinaro said, “Pouch Camp is a magnificent part of what makes Staten Island ‘The Borough of Parks’,” said Borough President James P. Molinaro. “I would like to thank Governor Cuomo for his continued outstanding leadership in protecting Staten Island’s quality of life. I applaud the Boy Scouts for working with the State, my office, our team of elected officials, and the community to come up with a way to preserve the property rather than simply selling it to developers. Thanks to Governor Cuomo’s support, Pouch Camp will be enjoyed in its current natural state by generations of children for years to come.”

State Island Borough President-Elect James Oddo said, “We want to give the same opportunity to enjoy Pouch Camp to the kids of the future as was enjoyed by generations of Staten Islanders in the past. Saving Pouch Camp is an example of what can happen when an entity with a large piece of property on Staten Island is willing to work with its elected officials to preserve and protect it.”

New York City Council Member Vincent Ignizio said, “For more than 60 years, the Boy Scouts of America have learned about the great outdoors at Pouch Camp. Now, we are moving forward with a plan to preserve and protect the Camp for not only future generations of Scouts, but the general public as well. I am grateful for the hard work of all the involved parties, including Governor Cuomo, Senator Lanza, Assemblyman Cusick, the Trust for Public Land and the Boy Scouts of America to make sure that this historic Camp remains green.”

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