

Pelham Bay Park May Expand Acreage

by Bill Stuttig

Pelham Bay Park, the city's largest park, may expand by approximately ten more acres in the coming months if the Parks Department gets its way.

Bronx Parks Commissioner Bill Castro said last week that the Parks Department (DOT) is currently negotiating with the New York State Department of Transportation and the City's Department of Administrative Services for 12 lots just south of the New England Thruway and east of the Hutchinson River Parkway.

Castro said that the undeveloped land will be added to the Thomas Pell Wildlife Refuge in the northernmost reaches of Pelham Bay Park, if and when negotiations are completed.

"This will then place the land under the protection of the wildlife refuge and keep it free from any future development," Castro said.

None of the land has ever been used for any official purpose. Much of it is described as wild and overgrown.

Castro said that two of the undeveloped lots, controlled by the city's Administrative Services, could become part of the park in another six to eight weeks. Final arrangements with the DOT are expected to take longer, Castro said.

Negotiations are being conducted through

the offices of NYC Parks Commissioner Henry Stern with the encouragement of the Bronx Council for Environmental Quality.

The addition of ten acres will bring the total size of Pelham Bay Park to nearly 2,900 acres, by far the largest park in the city.