



**Post Office Box 265  
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[www.bceq.org](http://www.bceq.org)**

June 1, 2015

**Re: Letter of Support for the Friends of Van Cortlandt Park: 2015 Hudson River Estuary Grant for Local Stewardship Planning for their “Tibbetts Watershed Stewardship Planning” project in Van Cortlandt Park, Bronx, NY.**

To Whom It May Concern:

As an ongoing partner and collaborator with the Friends of Van Cortlandt Park, the Bronx Council for Environmental Quality (BCEQ) is pleased to express our enthusiastic support of their grant application.

Formed in 1971, BCEQ has sought to establish — as an Inherent Human Right — a sound, forward-looking environmental policy regarding an aesthetic, unpolluted, environment protecting a natural and historic heritage. Since 2001, we focused on developing connections to and along the Harlem River and created on-water access and activities in an effort to improve water quality. We formed the Harlem River Working Group and received technical assistance from National Park Service Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program. In 2011, the Urban Waters Federal Partnership (UWFP) announced efforts on seven pilot locations -- the Bronx & Harlem River Watersheds (New York) were chosen because both “locations had a strong restoration effort underway, spearheaded by local governments and community organizations.”

Recently, we have collaborated with the Friends of Van Cortlandt Park on projects, including the Wilderness Inquiry Canoe Mobile in the Van Cortlandt Lake, and the BCEQ Harlem River NYS Brownfields Opportunity Area community consensus building internship project. We are proud to recommend them as diligent, effective partners in advancing the social and environmental agendas of creating healthier communities and more productive and sustainable environments.

*The Tibbetts Watershed Stewardship Planning* project will develop a plan for mitigating sewage water through treatment trains creating an enhanced wetland prior to its flow into the Tibbetts Wetland into Van Cortlandt Lake, a 52 acre Freshwater Wetland. These activities will benefit the Tibbetts Wetland and therefore the Harlem River and East River watersheds. It is an important component of the Van Cortlandt Park Master Plan. Specifically this project will create a plan to change a problem body of water into a working wetland that will capture and naturally improve water quality. In addition, the creation of an improved trailhead for the John Kieran Trail by this newly created wetland which will help to make the trail more inviting, therefore increasing the number of people who visit this beautiful section of the Park.

Thank you for considering funding this project. It will help our communities and will provide valuable environmental, social and ecological improvements along with critical flood protection. If you have any questions, we can be reached at 646-529-1990 (Karen) or 917-805-9566 (Dart).

Sincerely,

*Karen Argenti*

Karen Argenti

Co-Chairs, Water Committee, BCEQ

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