



# Audubon NEW YORK

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June 30, 2009

Supervisor Ryan Courtien  
126 Duncan Hill Road  
Dover Plains, NY 12522

Dear Mr. Courtien,

Audubon New York, the 50,000-member state program of the National Audubon Society, is writing to you regarding the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Dover Knolls development and we thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Audubon New York is most concerned about the potential impacts this development may have on the water quality and water levels of the creek and associated wetland habitats of the Great Swamp.

In 1997, the Great Swamp was identified by Audubon New York as an Important Bird Area. This site contains a large, high quality wetland that supports an exceptional representative bird community. The site is also important for migrating shorebirds, including the Greater Yellowlegs, Solitary Sandpiper, Spotted Sandpiper, Wilson's Snipe, and American Woodcock. At-risk species supported at the site include the Common Loon (migrant), Pied-billed Grebe (fairly common during migration and winter if the water do not freeze), American Bittern (present in two locations during the breeding season), Least Bittern (has bred, but known nesting sites have been flooded by beaver activity), Osprey (migrant), Bald Eagle (seen in winter), Northern Harrier (migrant and winter), Sharp-shinned Hawk (common during migration and winter), Cooper's Hawk (estimated four pairs), Northern Goshawk (breeds in uplands), Red-shouldered Hawk (breeder and migrant), American Woodcock (regular breeder and migrant), Common Nighthawk (migrant, 10-50 individuals), Whip-poor-will (breeds in surrounding areas), Willow Flycatcher (migrant and regular breeder), Horned Lark (migrant and winter), Wood Thrush (migrant and regular breeder), Blue-winged Warbler (migrant and regular breeder), Prairie Warbler (migrant and regular breeder in watershed), Bay breasted Warbler (migrant), Cerulean Warbler (migrant and breeder), Worm-eating Warbler (migrant and breeder), Canada Warbler (migrant and small number breed), Yellow breasted Chat (migrant, possible breeder), Vesper Sparrow (migrant), and Rusty Blackbird (regularly flocks during migration). This area is a well-known destination for birders. Reductions in water quality and/or changes to the hydrological flow into the Great Swamp are threats to the

Reductions in water quality and/or changes to the hydrological flow into the Great Swamp are threats to the valuable wildlife habitat it provides.

In addition to the species listed above, the report by Hudsonia and Dr. Michael Klemen identified 18 rare or threatened species on the site. We strongly encourage the town to consider the recommendations of that report, including buffers larger than 100 feet, minimizing roads, and clustering the development to help ensure that the Great Swamp, Swamp River, associated wetlands, and rare or threatened species are protected. We also ask that the town use the strictest guidelines to managing water withdrawals and storm water runoff.

As you consider the DEIS and make decisions on future growth in this area, please continue to protect the Great Swamp and associated wetlands. This project has the potential to serve as a model across the state for balancing growth and the environment.

Thank your for your consideration of this critical matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jillian Liner".

Jillian Liner  
Director of Bird Conservation  
Audubon New York

CC: Dave Wylock