

# LEHMAN

L I G H T N I N G

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*inside...*



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## LEHMAN COLLEGE

The City University of New York  
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Bronx, New York 10468  
www.lehman.cuny.edu



*The women's varsity swimming team dives into action at The APEX pool. More about the swimming program at Lehman College on page 6...*



Gail Wittwer

*View of the south basin of the Jerome Park Reservoir, proposed site for the Croton water filtration plant.*

## Lehman College Community United in Opposition to DEP Filtration Plant in Jerome Park Reservoir

A proposal by the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) would put the Croton Water Treatment Plant in the south basin of the Jerome Park Reservoir, across from Lehman College. The proposed facility would take up a third of the reservoir, a portion of the faculty and staff parking lot, Lehman's Reservoir Building, and the entire student parking lot. The plant would run along Goulden Avenue from West 205th Street to Gillet Hall.

In addition to Lehman College, seven schools are located around the reservoir: Bronx High School of Science, DeWitt Clinton High School, Walton High School, P.S. 86, P.S. 95, P.S. 143, and Our Lady of Angels. Nearly 25,000 students attend these schools and another 50,000 residents live within a half-mile of the reservoir (*see centerfold*).

"Community residents have been very strong in opposition to the proposal to build a filtration plant in the Jerome Park Reservoir," said President Ricardo R. Fernández. "Perhaps that is why the DEP has moved its proposed site from the north basin to the south basin where fewer people live. But the schools are an important part of this community, the borough, and New York City. We are very concerned about the impact of building a huge

industrial facility—in terms of the air pollution, noise pollution, economic losses, and long-term disruption of the educational process for everyone who studies or works at these schools."

A team of Lehman College faculty members headed by Professor John Chute (Geology and Geography) is providing expertise in all of the areas of concern cited by Dr. Fernández.

"We're looking very closely at the environmental justice angle," said Professor William Bosworth (Political Science), one of the nation's leading demographers and head of the Bronx Data Center at Lehman College. "If you look at our maps you will see that the move from the north to the south basin is a move from a higher-income to a lower-income area, from a mostly-white to a mostly-Hispanic neighborhood. And because of all the schools, there is a much more intense flow of people into and out of the south basin area daily, and the vast majority of those people are black, Hispanic, and Asian-American students."

A total of seven sites are under consideration for the Croton Water Treatment Plant: four in Westchester County and three in the Bronx. Another proposed site in the Bronx is the Shandler

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## Jerome Park Reservoir...

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Recreation Area, an isolated 50-acre triangular section of Van Cortlandt Park bordered by Woodlawn Cemetery, the Major Deegan Expressway, and a golf driving range. In addition to the water treatment plant, the DEP is also proposing to build a treated water reservoir and a pumping station in one of three sites: Jerome Park, the Shandler Recreation Area, and Harris Field, across from The APEX, Lehman's four-year-old \$57 million sports and recreation center.

"The DEP keeps trying to put a square peg into a round hole," said Anne Marie Garti, president of the Jerome Park Conservancy, in response to the DEP's latest proposal. "There's just no way to make it work at Jerome Park Reservoir."

Virtually every organization in the reservoir community has come out against this proposal. The Building and Construction Trades Council and the New York City Central Labor Council—which includes the United Federation of Teachers—are among the advocates of building the

filtration plant in the Shandler area and turning Jerome Park Reservoir into a 125-acre park. Maurice Paprin and Jack Sheinkman, co-chairmen of the Business, Labor and Community Coalition, have also recommended Shandler as "a more appropriate site." Lehman alumnus Stalin Acosta is heading a new group called Concerned Alumni of Lehman College that is devoted to persuading elected officials that the Jerome Park Reservoir is the worst possible site for a filtration plant.

In order to build the plant in the Shandler Recreation Area, the New York City Council may have to pass a Home Rule bill and request that the park land be "alienated" by the New York State Legislature and Governor George Pataki. The DEP, however, has said it can build the plant underground at Shandler and avoid this legal procedure.

The DEP has estimated that construction at Jerome Park Reservoir would take 5-7 years, but community residents point to the North River treatment plant in the Hudson River—about one third larger—that took more than 20 years to complete. *For more information about the filtration plant controversy, visit the Lehman College web site.*

## Here's How You Can Help Lehman College

- ❖ **Write to the Mayor.** Let him know what this community means to you. Say that you understand the importance of clean water, but that a historic and important community like Jerome Park is the wrong place to put a huge filtration plant. Tell him we need his leadership and his help. Write: Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, City Hall, New York, NY 10007.
- ❖ **Write Your City Council representative** if you live in New York City. You can find out the name of your representative from the City Council Press Office at (212) 788-7116.
- ❖ **Spread the word.** Send copies of your letters to Governor Pataki, Senators D'Amato and

Moynihan, and members of Congress.

- ❖ **Provide your expertise** in areas of health, education, zoning, demographics, economic impacts, public policy, community organization, and environmental justice.
- ❖ **Join Concerned Alumni of Lehman College**, a new group headed by Stalin Acosta '97. For more information, call 718-933-5266, email [sacosta@panix.com](mailto:sacosta@panix.com), or write Acosta at 2917 Grand Concourse, Apt. S3B, Bronx, NY 10468. To contribute to the group's Legal Defense Fund, make checks payable to the Lehman College Foundation—*attention Defense Fund*—318 Shuster Hall, Bronx, NY 10468.

## What About the Watershed Protection Approach?

Many community residents are of the opinion that a filtration plant should *not* be built—at Jerome Park, at the Shandler Recreation Area, at Croton Woods, or at any of the four sites proposed for Westchester County.

"The alternative is to examine natural filtration processes that are in existence or may need to be enhanced in the Croton system," said Karen Argenti, Lehman '72, a local resident and member of the Croton Watershed Clean Water Coalition, the Jerome Park Conservancy, and Friends of Jerome Park. *Visit her web site at <http://members.aol.com/jeromepark/index.htm>.*

"If a filtration plant could be avoided and the Croton watershed could be protected, that would be great," said Frank Schonfeld, a Lehman alumnus and senior-citizen student. "But the reality we are facing is that it looks very much like this plant will be built in the Bronx. The DEP planned a long time ago to filter the Croton water

at Jerome Park. They built the retaining wall across the reservoir to prepare for it, and they hired the joint venture to design it. We're kidding ourselves if we think this couldn't happen here."

New York City is mandated by the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency and the State Health Department to filter the Croton water (which supplies about 10 percent of the City's drinking water) and to pick a site—by no later than December—in which to build the filtration plant. As part of its Catskill-Delaware watershed protection agreement, New York City agreed to filter the Croton water. Bronx elected officials have advocated no filtration or have said the filtering plant should be built in Westchester Country, nearer to the source of the problem. However, opposition to the DEP-proposed sites in Westchester is also very strong—with Yorktown and Yonkers now in court to prevent such a possibility.

## A Conflict of Interest for the Joint Venture?

*The private consulting firm of Metcalf and Eddy of New York, Inc. and Hazen and Sawyer, P.C., a joint venture, signed a \$44 million contract in 1992 with the New York City Department of Environmental Protection for engineering design and other services for the construction of the Croton Water Treatment plant at the Jerome Park Reservoir.*

*The joint venture is currently evaluating—and will recommend to the DEP—one of the seven sites in which to locate the filtration plant.*

*Community resident Frank Schonfeld has expressed concern about the joint venture's possible "predisposition to sites in Jerome Park and Harris Field" and has asked the U. S. Eastern District Court to remedy what he sees as a "contract violation based on conflict of interest" in the siting process.*

*Maurice Paprin and Jack Sheinkman, co-chairmen of the Business, Labor and Community Coalition of New York, have urged Mayor Rudolph Giuliani to assign the siting review process to "an impartial source, such as the Office of Management and Budget." For a complete text of their statement, visit the College web site at [www.lehman.cuny.edu](http://www.lehman.cuny.edu).*



The Jerome Park Reservoir is located in a historic, picturesque neighborhood in the northwest Bronx. As the aerial photograph by Bronx photographer H. L. Delgado suggests, the area is a densely-populated residential and educational community—with more than 25,000 students and 50,000 residents. A partial list of people and places that would be directly affected if the proposed Croton water filtration project were built on this site follows.

\* Indicates regional facilities

**Located next to or across the street from the reservoir**

Amalgamated Housing (1,500 families. The oldest government-sponsored, limited equity housing cooperative in the United States. Opened in 1927, sponsored by the Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union)

DeWitt Clinton High School (4,106 students, 350 staff. One of the oldest public high schools in New York City with the largest alumni association in the world) \*

Bronx High School of Science (2,745 students. One of most prestigious public schools in the nation) \*

Herbert H. Lehman College, The City University of New York (9,400 students, 1,400 faculty and staff—the only public senior college in the Borough of the Bronx) \*

The APEX (Lehman College's new \$57 million sports and recreation center) \*

Lehman Center (2,300-seat concert hall on the campus of Lehman College) \*

The Monroe and Rose D. Lovinger Theatre (500-seat theatre on the campus of Lehman College) \*

The Lehman College Art Gallery \*

Lehman College Child Care Center

Walton High School (2,504 students, 325 staff) \*

P.S. 95 (1,701 students, 100 staff)

Workmen's Circle Nursery School

St. Patrick's Home and Convent (264 beds) \*

Mutual Housing (120 families)

Fort Independence Park

Van Cortlandt Public Library

Van Cortlandt Jewish Center

Van Cortlandt Senior Center

Sholom Aleichem Houses (271 families)

Van Cortlandt Village Shopping Area

Private homes

Privately owned rental apartments

Harris Field and Annex \*

Stevenson Avenue Youth Program

**Located within one block of the reservoir**

Park Reservoir Housing (300 families. Opened in 1957, the first Mitchell Lama cooperative in New York State)

Scott Towers (351 families. New York City Mitchell Lama cooperative, opened in 1967)

Tracey Towers (900 families. Opened in 1971, New York City Mitchell Lama rental housing)

Cannon Heights (250 families. A Mitchell Lama cooperative, opened in 1965).

Fort Independence NYCHA Project (342 families)

Kingsbridge Heights Nursing Home and Manor (400 beds) \*







Private cooperatives along Sedgwick Avenue, Giles Place, and West 238 Street  
 Private homes  
 Privately owned rental apartments  
 Amalgamated Tire Park  
 Ostroff Plaza Park  
 Mosholu Parkway and Parks

***Surrounding the south basin of the reservoir***

P.S. 86 (2,100 students, 200 staff)  
 P.S. 143 (1,347 students, 100 staff)  
 Our Lady of Angels Grammar School  
 Our Lady of Angels Church & Rectory  
 Kingsbridge Heights Community Center  
 Kingsbridge Heights Head Start

Fort Four Park of Revolutionary fame  
 Private homes  
 Privately owned rental apartments  
 Private co-ops

***Near the reservoir***

P.S. 280 (465 students, 40 staff)  
 J.H.S. 80 (1,261 students)  
 Bronx New School (229 students, 12 staff)

Glad Tidings Church and School  
 Mosholu-Jerome Shopping Center (awaiting BID designation)  
 Mosholu Montefiore Community Center  
 Montefiore Hospital and Medical Center (745 beds) \*  
 North Central Bronx Hospital (387 beds) \*  
 Kingsbridge Armory (Awaiting sports complex)  
 Private homes  
 Privately owned rental apartments

***Opposed to construction of Croton filtration plant in Jerome Park Reservoir (partial list)***

A. H. Consumers Society  
 Amalgamated Housing  
 Bedford Mosholu Community Association  
 Bronx High School of Science Parents Association  
 Bronx Community Board 7  
 Bronx Community Board 8  
 Building and Construction Trades Council  
 Cannon Heights Housing  
 Coalition of Business, Labor and Community Organizations of New York  
 Community School Board 10  
 Concerned Alumni of Lehman College  
 Coordinating Council of Cooperatives  
 DeWitt Clinton Alumni Association  
 Fort Independence Park Neighborhood Association  
 Friends of Jerome Park Reservoir  
 Herbert H. Lehman College, CUNY  
 Mutual Housing  
 New York City Central Labor Council  
 Orloff Towers Housing  
 Our Lady of Angels Grammar School  
 Park Reservoir  
 Park Reservoir Housing Corporation  
 P.S. 95 Parents Association  
 Professional Staff Congress, CUNY  
 Saxon Avenue Homeowners Association  
 Scott Towers Housing  
 Tracey Towers Tenants Association  
 United Associations of Bedford Park  
 United Federation of Teachers  
 Van Cortlandt Jewish Center