

Thank you Borough President Helen Marshall who supports the Queens Civic Congress and Queens Coalition for Parks and Green Spaces [position](#). See also [2008-05-29](#).

<http://www.observer.com/2008/ridgewood-reservoir-hearing/>



THE NEW YORK OBSERVER

Thompson, Marshall Push to Keep Queens Reservoir Wild

by Bharat Ayyar June 19, 2008

The [campaign to preserve the wildness of Ridgewood Reservoir](#) in Queens--to stop the city from building athletic fields and a public park--continued today at a hearing before the City Council's Committee on Parks and Recreation.

The committee heard testimony from Adrian Benepe, commissioner of the Department of Parks and Recreation, Queens Borough President Helen Marshall, and a written statement from Bill Thompson, who has led the charge against developing the area around the reservoir, which was abandoned in 1989.

The proposal to develop the area into a park has been met by opposition from local community groups, who fear that development would endanger the wildlife (including, apparently, eight rare species of migratory birds).

During her testimony Marshall said the reservoir is now "a great place to enjoy the wonderful fruits Mother Nature has to offer." No one on the Parks and Recreations Committee expressed any strong opinions against the proposed park, but mostly asked that the D.P.R. exercise caution.

Marshall and several other attendees were glad to hear that the \$50 million in funding allotted to the project had not yet been committed to a specific purpose. Benepe, who is in favor of developing the area, characterized the funding as a "blank slate," and emphasized the importance of the D.P.R. reaching out to the community for ideas on how to best preserve wildlife, while potentially introducing recreational areas.

Bill Thompson, a likely mayoral candidate, echoed the [Times op-ed he wrote with Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.](#), calling the preservation of the wilderness "a critically important issue" and criticizing Michael Bloomberg for funding development.

"The plan also flies in the face of Mayor Michael Bloomberg's widely hailed environmental blueprint, which bemoans the loss of the city's natural areas," his written testimony reads.

Meanwhile, on YouTube, this serene and text-laden "[Save the Ridgewood Reservoir](#)" video has somehow garnered 1,816 views.