

Letter to the Editor

My husband and I toured the Outer Harbor on November 29th, visiting Times Beach and the Bell Slip. We wanted to see how these naturalized areas survived the October and November storms. We saw trees downed at Times Beach and the access trails blocked. The line of debris at the Bell Slip extended well into the parking lot and flotsam littered the shoreline trail. Yet there was no evident debris littering the NYS Park section. This recent experience with the severe weather at the lake tells us that the whole of the Outer Harbor would be best served by becoming a world-class park under the management of the state parks system.

LWVBN believes parkland is the best use of the Outer Harbor. We insist that there be no permanent residential or commercial development at the Outer Harbor, which exacerbates urban sprawl. Such sprawl takes resources away from existing city neighborhoods while incurring huge costs for repairs and maintenance to be borne by the city. Instead, we must accept responsibility for being careful stewards of this precious place.

Recently, the Outer Harbor and Niagara River area was named a “Ramsar Wetland of International Importance.” This prestigious designation rates the importance of the Outer Harbor-Niagara River area on a par with other designated areas across the country, including the Everglades, Chesapeake Bay Estuary, and San Francisco Bay. We saw evidence of this natural treasure on our visit— thrilled by the large flocks of migrating ducks near the Bell Slip. Clearly, the whole of the Outer Harbor served to mediate the effects of these recent severe weather events on the city.

The LWVBN urges New York State to adopt the whole of the Outer Harbor as part of the state park system.

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