

The Meadowlark



FRIENDS of HEMPSTEAD PLAINS

at NASSAU COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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After 18 years dedicated to the Hempstead Plains Betsy Gulotta is passing the torch to new Executive Director Amanda Furcall



Open Hours

Come visit us; stroll the rolling plains and explore our sustainable education center.

August

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday &
Saturday from 10:00 am – 2:00 pm

September—November

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and
Saturday from 10:00 am – 2:00 pm

Upcoming Events

Prairie Harvest Day

Saturday September 29th

Pollinator Walk

Saturday November 3rd

Honey Bee Festival

Sunday November 4th
at The Cradle of Aviation

Welcome Amanda Furcall, Executive Director of Friends of Hempstead Plains

By Betsy Gulotta

Much like prairie restoration and creating a fresh healthy habitat, we are creating a fresh new component at Friends of Hempstead Plains at Nassau Community College. I am excited to introduce Amanda Furcall, the new Executive Director of the organization.

I have had a wonderful and challenging run during the past two decades working with Friends of Hempstead Plains at Nassau Community College. From the creation of the Friends back in 2001 through my 18 years of service, the days were filled with dreams and expectations, hard work, sense of accomplishment, sometimes uncertainty, many challenges, always hope and optimism, gratitude at the generosity of so many people, gratefulness for the wonderful support of the Board of Directors, the College and the County and thanks to the many dedicated volunteers. There are so many people who helped us along the way, whom I would like to thank. It would take a book to list them all.

Searching for and finding a new director was not an easy task. Many well qualified people applied for the position. But we were extremely lucky when Amanda applied for the job; the Board of Directors knew immediately during her interview that she was the right person for the position. Amanda has a strong sense of running a nonprofit organization, a respected knowledge of habitat restoration, creative educational skills, a growing knowledge of social media, and a passion for the prairie, all of which are important for the organization to succeed in today's world.

I hope people will stop by our Education and Research Center to meet and welcome Amanda and visit the Hempstead Plains. Come and learn how you can support our habitat restoration and educational programs. I look forward to helping in any way that I can to further the mission of the organization.

Executive Director Letter to Members

By Amanda Furcall

I am both thrilled and humbled to serve as the next Executive Director of Friends of Hempstead Plains. Betsy Gulotta, who is one of the organization's founders, has dedicated 18 years to The Plains and has created a growing legacy. Not only has she protected and managed this rare habitat but she and the board have engaged the community, College, and County to care for The Plains. I am eager to continue restoring this landscape.

I have aspired to run an environmental nonprofit since I was eight-years-old selling cookies on the sidewalk to benefit my favorite endangered species. Pursuing that dream led me to study conservation biology with other enthusiastic students at SUNY Environmental Science and Forestry and earn a degree in Public Administration from CUNY Baruch. From those years I learned the value of protecting ecosystems and of engaging the community in that effort.

Though I grew up on Long Island, it wasn't until returning from college that I got to know its distinctive character and the vibrant community which protects its open space. I've had the privilege over the last three years at North Shore Land Alliance of stewarding hundreds of acres, spanning a variety of habitats. Improving our local ecosystems and sharing these places with the community is the core of conservation and I was proud to advance that mission. It has become my life's work to restore natural places and cultivate public appreciation for them. With all that I've learned I'm eager to do this at The Plains.

Hempstead Plains is unique. The few dozen acres that remain of this once 38,000-acre prairie represent a rare habitat, rich in history, species and beauty. It is an oasis in our developed area. It is an opportunity to celebrate rare natural beauty where people live.

This is a particularly exciting time for Friends of Hempstead Plains; a dozen rare plants have been found and we are beginning to manage more remnant habitat. I look forward to leading the organization in its next chapter and working with all of you to protect and restore this natural gem.

Mission

The mission of Hempstead Plains at Nassau Community College is to preserve, restore and manage the Hempstead Plains prairie habitat on the campus of Nassau Community College and to foster good stewardship of the land through education and research.

Upcoming Events

Prairie Harvest Day

Come join us on Saturday September 29th to celebrate this next chapter for Friends of Hempstead Plains as founding Director Betsy Gulotta retires and Amanda Furcall takes over as Executive Director.

10:00 — Botanical walk

11:00 — Seed harvest

12:00 — Crafts & games — Historical tour

1:00 — Refreshments and toasts

Betsy will talk about where the organization has been and all that has been accomplished in the last 18 years and Amanda will lay out a vision for the future.



Hempstead Plains Beekeeper Dan Vi-

Pollinator Walk

See The Plains through the eyes of a pollinator. On Saturday November 3rd at noon, take a special tour of the prairie to learn about our own honeybee hives and the role bees and butterflies play in this ecosystem.

Honey Festival

Celebrate the honeybee on Sunday November 4th at the Cradle of Aviation. Stop by our table, learn about bees, enjoy tastings and sales of local honeys, gourmet foods and craft beverages.



Prairie Benefit

The 13th annual Prairie Benefit was held on April 27th at the Hofstra University club. 85 people came to support the preservation of this unique habitat. Thanks to their generosity and our dedicated committee members we were able to raise over \$14,000. Prizes were raffled off including boating trips, wine and dinner baskets, flowers, nature photography and more. We ate hors d'oeuvres and toasted to the many successes of the year and as is our tradition, honored some of our most enthusiastic advocates and volunteers.

Caring for this habitat has truly been a community effort. In thanks for their support we honored:

Steve Boerner

President of Cedar Swamp Historical Society

Honorable Laura Curran

Nassau County Executive

Chief Joseph Lennon

East Meadow Fire Department

Diane Worden: Volunteer of the Year



Chief Joseph Lennon & Betsy Gulotta



Andrew Goldstien, Diane Worden & Betsy Gulotta



Linda Reesman, Steve Boerner & Carole Ryder



Laura Curran & Nina Shah-Giannaris



Hofstra University

Prairie Benefit Committee Members

Friends of Hempstead Plains
Board of Directors
Ms. Joanne Delprete
Dr. Rosann Gonzalez
Prof. Betsy Gulotta
Ms. Carol Kelly
Mr. Tom McCloskey
Ms. Nancy Youngfert

Our Major Sponsors

Flushing Bank

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Hofstra University

Betsy & Tom Gulotta

Richard & Denise Davis

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Harriet & Vincent Carotenuto

Dr. & Mrs. Sean Fanelli

Dr. Catherine Kelly

Carol Kelly

Richard & Carole Ryder



Flushing Bank

Most heartening of all was to see the room abuzz with long-time friends sharing their enthusiasm for the Plains. It seems the natural prairie community has formed around it an equally unique human community. Thank you to everyone who came and celebrated with us, your dedication to this cause is what sustains the Plains.

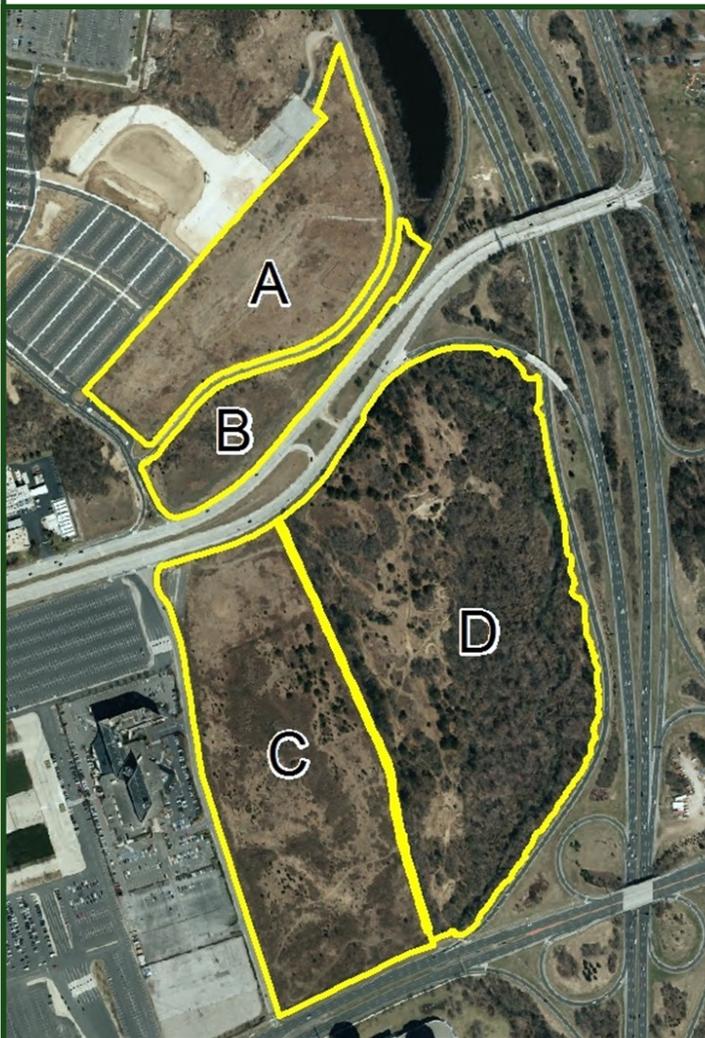
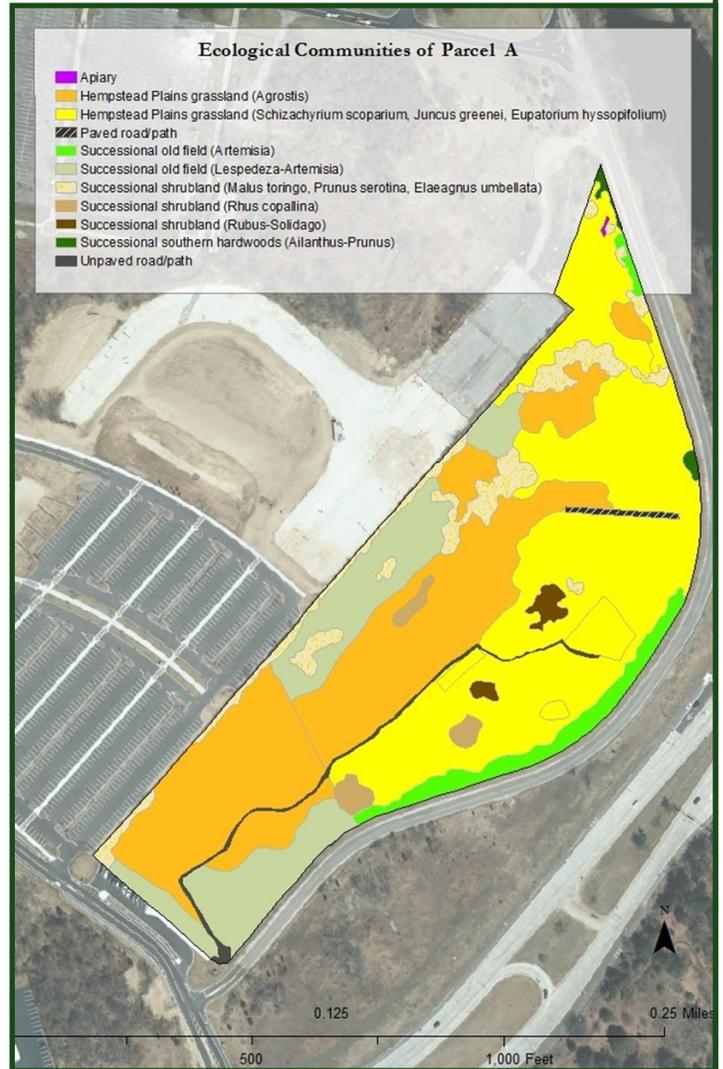
Botanical Survey Complete

Throughout last year's growing season a comprehensive ecological community and rare plant survey was conducted by the New York Natural Heritage Program thanks to a generous grant from the Band Foundation. Botanists Gregory J. Edinger and Stephen M. Young studied parcels of plains and the former plains habitat.

They surveyed five of these remnant parcels. Section A is the currently managed land at Nassau Community College ('college parcel'). Section B is also part of Nassau Community College but is not managed and typical prairie plants were not found. Also surveyed was the Nassau County owned Purcell Preserve (Sections C & D). Though mowed in the 80's the Purcell Preserve has since grown in with shrubs and trees. Lastly, a small section of the northernmost end of Eisenhower Park was surveyed (section not shown).

Using their experience from mapping over 100,000 acres of vegetation for National Park Service, the NY

Natural Heritage Program mapped the ecological communities here and produced high quality maps. The plant communities they found ranged from true Hempstead Plains grassland, to old field communities, to areas transitioning into scrubland and woodland.



Between the parcels there are 24 acres of this rare habitat left, half of that is in the college parcel. With management of those acres and restoration of good quality areas this study estimates that we could bring that up to 40 acres.

This finding has been very exciting for the organization; it validates the hard work that has been done these last 18 years and shows a clear path forward in our conservation and restoration efforts.

The second part of the study was a survey for rare plants. NY Natural Heritage Program has the most complete database of rare plants in New York. They have done rare plant surveys at Hempstead Plains since 1983. The following year a globally endangered Sandplain Gerardia, (now Sandplain Agalinis) was first found. Though that pink-flowered annual is the most notable it is just one of a dozen rare plants that were found.



Rare Plants of the Hempstead Plains Grassland Study Area

Scientific Name	Common Name	Protected Rank
<i>Agalinis decemloba</i>	Sandplain agalinis	Globally rare, State critically imperiled
<i>Aletris farinosa</i>	Stargrass	State imperiled
<i>Carex mesochorea</i>	Midland sedge	Global concern, State imperiled
<i>Crocanthemum dumosum</i>	Bushy frostweed	Globally rare, State imperiled
<i>Crocanthemum propinquum</i>	Low frostweed	Global concern, State imperiled
<i>Cuscuta pentagona</i>	Five-angled dodder	Global concern, State rare
<i>Desmodium ciliare</i>	Hairy Small-leaved tick-trefoil	State imperiled
<i>Lespedeza angustifolia</i>	Narrow-leaved bush clover	State imperiled
<i>Polygala nuttallii</i>	Nuttall's milkwort	State imperiled
<i>Scleria pauciflora</i>	Few-flowered nut sedge	State critically imperiled
<i>Sericocarpus linifolius</i>	Narrow-leaved white-topped aster	State imperiled
<i>Viola pedata</i>	Birds-foot violet	State rare

This list underscores how special these few remnant acres are. Divided by highways and pressed by development this place is a tribute to the kind of ecologically spectacular places we can maintain here on Long Island when the community cares for it.

Concluding the survey Edinger and Young prioritized areas for restoration and made management recommendations. They proposed continuing efforts on the college parcel and expanding the Sandplain Agalinis area where three other rare plants were also found. For restoration they recommended starting by clearing trees and shrubs from Purcell Preserve Section C. That restoration work has already begun (See next page).

We are eager to use this survey to inform our management efforts and continue restoring the beautiful Hempstead Plains. Thank you to the New York Natural Heritage Program, the Band Foundation, and Nassau County for making this instrumental survey possible.

You can read the report in its entirety on our website library: www.friendsofhp.org



BAND Foundation Supports Expanding Conservation

We are expanding. After an extensive botanical survey of remnant Hempstead Plains habitat (see previous page), we are hoping to replicate the success we've had on the college parcel in the surrounding area.

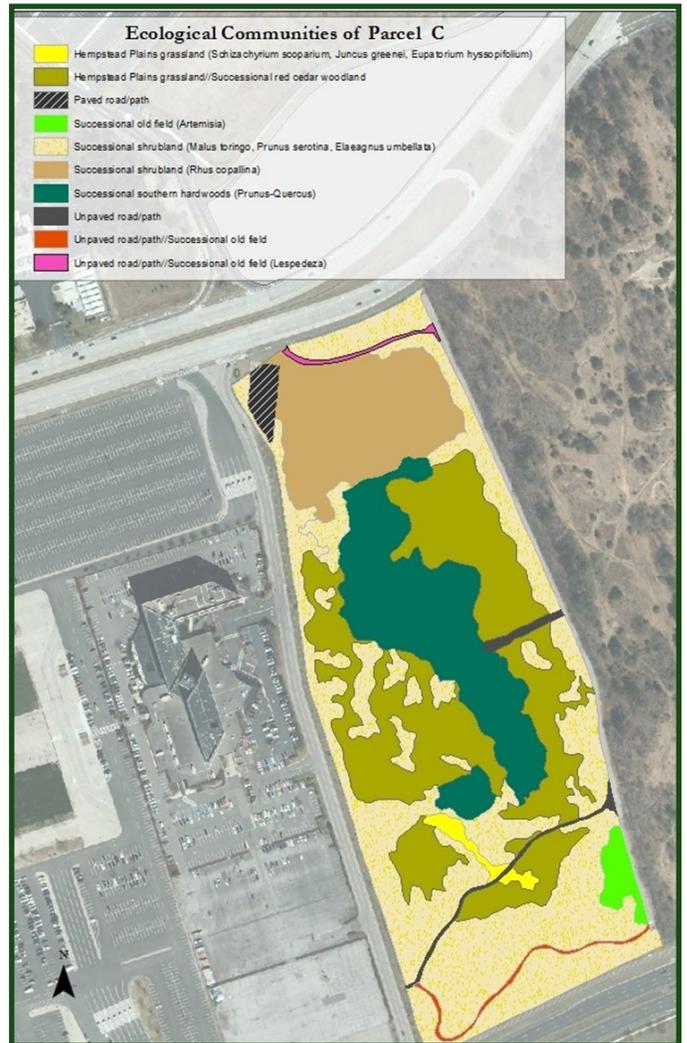
Our top priority is the Francis T. Purcell Preserve. Nassau County protected the land in 1988 and it was partially mowed for many years. However, management stopped in 2007 and since then its prairie species have been disappearing. Work began in June and July with mowing and clearing unwanted trees and shrubs. Already, we are seeing classic prairie grasses and wildflowers spring from the seemingly bare soil.



Butterfly weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*)

Managing the Purcell Preserve on top of the college parcel is a big undertaking which is only possible because of extremely generous support from the BAND Foundation. The foundation has a long standing interest in conservation and has granted us \$150,000 over three years to expand and extend our efforts in management of this precious natural resource. This project furthers the BAND Foundation's commitment to combating ecosystem destruction and biodiversity loss which they have called "the world's most urgent and unprecedented crisis".

The BAND Foundation's grant for restoring habitat in our 19-acre college parcel and the Purcell Preserve comes with the condition that the land be maintained



after the grant. Management will require annual mowing in both parcels. The Friends also envision establishing walking trails, an attractive entrance and interpretive signage at the Purcell Preserve. We have already secured a generous donation from the William C. and Joyce C. O'Neil Charitable Trust to begin this process.

We look forward to working with the BAND Foundation in the coming years and watching as the college parcel improves and the Purcell Preserve is transformed back into the tallgrass prairie that it once was.

You can be part of the restoration by making a donation, just visit our website:

friendsofhp.org and click **Join**

New Butterfly Garden at the Research and Education Center Thanks to a Community Partnership

The South Shore Chapter of the National Audubon Society (SSAS) has long partnered with the Friends of the Hempstead Plains to protect the Plains and to encourage environmental conservation and environmental education in general. This year SSAS was awarded a \$1,000 grant from the National Audubon Society's Coleman and Susan Burke Center for Native Plants to reach out to the local community to advocate for choosing to plant native species in homes and gardens in Nassau County.



We do tend to select plants that we are familiar with—but there are so many benefits of choosing native species! First of all, native species are adapted to local environments, so they tend to do very well with a minimum of active maintenance (extra watering, weeding, etc.) Having grown in our area for thousands of years, they have also developed natural resistance to insect damage. But, in addition, some species have co-evolved with native local butterflies and birds, forming close mutually beneficial relationships. The butterflies and birds visit specific plants for their nectar, but in so doing, they carry the same species' pollen from one plant to another. So our native milkweeds are essential to monarch butterflies; our ruby-throated hummingbird loves jewelweed, and so forth. We also know that the timing and locations of modern bird migrations coincide with where and when specific native plant species flower.

Last, but certainly not least, some of our native plants are spectacularly beautiful. Purple cone flowers; red cardinal flowers; goldenrods and blue vervain; milkweed; and the list goes on. When our native species are planted together they form a most beautiful display and they attract butterflies and birds to the garden through the warmer weather.

Some of the funds from the Burke grant were used to provide a public conference on local native species. The Conference, “Choosing Native Plants for Long Island Homes and Communities”, was held at the Hempstead Plains Education and Research Center on April 21, 2018. The two speakers were Jennifer Cappello-Ruggiero, from the Nassau County Cornell Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Program, who spoke on “Native Plants: the Making of an Ecological Landscape”, and Carl Flatow, who spoke on “Bees in the Garden”. Immediately after the conference, attendees had an opportunity to tour the Plains.

In addition to the Conference, grant funds assisted in creating a butterfly garden near the Research and Education Center. The Garden turned out to be a wonderful community effort. It was spearheaded by Scott Hennenberger, who took this on as part of his Eagle Scout Project. Scott enlisted friends and family to come and help with the job and he made the butterfly boxes that were installed. On July 21, 2017, non-native plants were cleared from several areas in front of the Center by the many volunteers who came to help. In addition to the Scouts, students in a Nassau Community College Physical Science class taught by Professor Elizabeth Farrell, as well as members of SSAS and the Board of the Friends of Hempstead Plains helped with the weeding and planting. SSAS Burke Grant funds paid for the plantings and signage for the garden. We were gratified to see butterflies hovering around the newly planted garden even as we were working on it!

Finally, grant funds were used to create packets containing seeds from native prairie plants. One hundred seed packets were assembled by volunteers from Nassau County BOCES Center for Community Adjustment with seeds that they and other volunteers collected from native prairie grasses and forbs at Hempstead Plains.

If you would like to see what native plants are most suitable for your specific home's environment, visit audubon.org/native-plants for a recommended list.

We wish to thank National Audubon Society's Coleman and Susan Burke Center for Native Plants for funding this initiative and the many volunteers who helped provide the Conference and create the new butterfly garden. Special thanks to Betsy Gulotta, who helped with all aspects of the conference, the garden and the seed packets; to Amanda Furcall, the Friends of Hempstead Plains' new Director, who helped coordinate the work on the garden; and to Marilyn Hametz of SSAS, who helped throughout.

Essays on the Human and Natural History of the Hempstead Plains

The Cedar Swamp Historical Society has made a generous grant to Friends of Hempstead Plains for the purpose of promoting the rich history of the Hempstead Plains. In order to carry out the intent of this grant, Friends of Hempstead Plains will publish a book of essays and articles dealing with the human, natural, and cultural history of The Plains. This book will highlight the important and unique role of the Plains in American History.

Topics may include:

Flora and fauna, descriptions of the Plains in history, ecology of the Plains, sustainability of the Plains, immigration, local history of communities on the Plains, history of Garden City, aviation, wartime activities, significant persons, events, institutions, geology of the Plains, geological origin and glaciers, or other relevant topics.

Dr. John Staudt, Department of History, Hofstra University and Dr. Paul van Wie, Department of History and Political Science, Molloy College, will serve as Editors.



Submissions

You are invited to submit essays and research for this new publication. Deadline for submissions is August 30th.

Articles may be previously published or unpublished works. In the case of previously published works, the holder of the copyright must give written permission for inclusion in the book. The Board of Friends of Hempstead Plains shall decide the content of the book, and submission of articles does not guarantee their inclusion.

The Board of the Friends reserves the right to act as judge in this matter. All scholars, historians, scientists, writers, students, and members of the public are invited to participate.

Submit a Word Document to Dr. van Wie at: pvanwie@molloy.edu. References within articles should appear as endnotes or discipline-appropriate references within the text. Bibliographies are encouraged. The length of articles may vary, however a limit of 10,000 words is suggested. Articles may include photographs if permission has been obtained for their use.

The completed book will be available for sale, with all proceeds going to Friends of Hempstead Plains.



Thank You Volunteers!

We owe so much to our dedicated volunteers. Community members and groups have had fun restoring the Hempstead Plains. Students from Nassau County BOCES Center for Community Adjustment came once a week throughout the school year. Many boy scouts have completed Eagle Scout projects. Corporate volunteers have taken days out of the office for team building and community engagement. All have been instrumental in restoring the Hempstead Plains; we couldn't do it without you.

Want to get your hands dirty too? E-mail us or visit during our open hours to get started



Summer Intern

Brian Spikerman, a student at Molloy College is interning with Friends of Hempstead Plains this summer. As a special project he plans to create a historical tour for the Plains as a counterpart to the existing ecological tour.



Friends of Hempstead Plains Education and Research Center



Friends of Hempstead Plains
At Nassau Community College, Inc.
Department of Biology
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