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## Estuaries Day celebrated at Norrie Point

By Matthew Renda , Staff Reporter

**In recognition of National Estuaries Day, local, state, and federal officials met with area environmentalists at the Norrie Point Environmental Center (NPEC).**

The NPEC, located within Margaret Lewis Norrie State Park in Staatsburg, also celebrated its grand re-opening, as it had been closed due to ongoing renovations to the building and facilities in recent months.

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The recent improvements to the center mean the building can now serve as headquarters for the Hudson River National Estuarine Research Reserve. With contributions from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), the National Oceanic Atmospheric Association (NOAA) and the state Office Of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, the center will now include conference and classroom space, public exhibits, a weather station, and a research laboratory.

Rep. Maurice Hinchey (D-N.Y.), the keynote speaker at the commemoration ceremony, praised the re-opening of the facility as a significant step in increasing environmental study in the area.

"The world is growing increasingly smaller, and we are beginning to realize that we all live downstream of someone else," said Hinchey. "One person's smokestack is someone else's acid rain. With the re-opening of the Norrie Point Environmental Center, we are highlighting the importance of scientific research to help cope with the challenges that we face in conserving environmentally vital areas and systems.

"We need to continue to be good stewards to our natural resources," concluded Hinchey.

As part of the day's festivities, DEC Commissioner Pete Grannis officially designated Tivoli Bays Wildlife Management Area - the state's largest freshwater tidal marsh complex - as the state's first Natural Heritage Area. This will ensure increased protection by requiring that all future site management will be in concert with protection of the area's natural resources.

"Designating Tivoli Bays WMA as our first National Heritage Area is an important step in making the continued protection and restoration of rare plants, fauna and natural habitats a priority for this site," said Grannis. "As climate change and other factors impact the Hudson Valley, the Tivoli Bays will continue to provide the ecological diversity that our current generation enjoys and future generations are entitled to experience."

Tivoli Bays is located off of 9G, north of Rhinebeck's downtown district, and is surrounded by undeveloped uplands, undulating hills shrouded in forests, and an elaborate system of wetlands and marshes which filter out into the Hudson River. The area is a critical habitat for a variety of native animals, fish, and birds. It also serves as a recreation area, offering canoeing, kayaking, hiking trails, wildlife viewing sites, and a range of hunting, fishing, and trapping opportunities.

State Sen. Steve Saland (R,I-Poughkeepsie), also in attendance, echoed the sentiments of the DEC commissioner, praising the ongoing conservation efforts.

"The Hudson Valley is home to an amazing array of fish, wildlife, plants and native habitats, a precious resource which must be preserved," said Saland. "The new protections afforded to the Tivoli Bays Wildlife Management Area and the re-opening of the Norrie Point Environmental Center will serve to further existing conservation efforts and protect these invaluable resources for future generations."