

Federal grant will help turn an old Broad Channel marina into a Sunset Cove

BY Lisa L.
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Christie M Farriella/for New York Daily News Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell (Left) helps PS 47 students 14-year-old Steven Kenny and 13-year-old Michael Reardon place a oyster trap in Jamaica Bay. Jewell travelled to Queens on Monday to announce grants that will help make areas more storm-proof. Sunset Cove in Broad Channel received a \$4.8 million grant.

Sunset Cove will be among 54 sites along the Atlantic Coast to receive a cut of \$102.7 million in federal matching grants to help battle future storms, U.S. Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell said Monday in Broad Channel.

Once littered with trash and broken boats, the former dumping ground will be transformed into a natural preserve with one of the best sunset views in the city, Jewell said.

“There were several aspects of the contest, engaging youth and veterans and the local community..and demonstrating resilience,” Jewell said. “This is a really good example of all those things coming together.”

The grant will pay for new sea grass plantings at the cove to keep stormwater at bay. Future plans include a hiking path and raising walking platform above the wetlands. “Jamaica Bay is amazing,” said Jewell, as she helped plant marsh grass with young volunteers at the site, which will receive \$4.8 million in funding for storm protection. “This is a treasure set aside in the 1930s as a natural area.”

Six of the approved projects came from the city, including \$4.4 million to restore the Bronx River shoreline and remove contaminated soil at Starlight Park and \$990,000 to install 14 green streets in Coney Island to mitigate flooding and filter over 2 million gallons of stormwater.

Beside Sunset Cove, an additional \$4.2 million will be earmarked for 11 acres of salt marsh in Spring Creek Park to reduce flooding, capture run-off and create park space in Queens. And \$1 million will be put toward developing an oyster population in Jamaica Bay, officials said.



Christie M Farriella/for New York Daily News Dan Mundy of the Jamaica Bay Ecowatchers Dan Mundy gives instructions on planting marsh grass at Sunset Cove on Jamaica Bay in Broad Channel.

Jewell said restoring marshes lost over the years to pollution and development along Jamaica Bay will help the ecosystem and provide a natural barrier against storms.

“Green infrastructure, in many ways, is far more effective than gray infrastructure,” Jewell said, referring to bulkheads, seawalls and other man-made barriers. “Once the water gets over and inside the gray infrastructure, it then can’t get out. We saw that in the city itself.”

The agency selected projects that showed deep community interest, engaged youth and civic leaders and demonstrated resilience against future storms, Jewell said. Many already had plans in place created by the city Parks Department.

The Sunset Cove project will cost \$7 million. Additional funding will come from community reconstruction program New York Rising and Gov. Cuomo, who committed \$400,000 through the state Department of Environmental Conservation.

The Jamaica Bay Eco-Watchers and American Littoral Society have already undertaken smaller projects to restore wetlands and clean up the bay.

Christie M Farriella/for New York Daily News Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell carries a flat of marsh grass to plant in the Sunset Cove area at Jamaica Bay. Jewell came to Broad Channel on Monday and announced that Sunset Cove is one of 54 projects along the Atlantic Coast that received a cut of \$102.7 million in federal matching grants to help battle future storms.

“We’ve been working on it and talking about it for years,” said Dan Mundy of the Jamaica Bay Eco-Watchers. “Today we got the downpayment.”

The cove area is a former marina and illegal fill in site that was in litigation for years before the Parks Department received the property in 2009.

Jewell, who dug up a shoe and a fishing net while planting the grasses along the shore, was heartened to find horseshoe crab eggs among the detritious.

“Those horseshoe crabs found a way to lay their eggs,” she said.

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