

# Corson's Brook Woods talks set

By MARY ENGELS

Parks officials and local city planners will meet with representatives of the Staten Island Developmental Center today in an effort to ward off the city's involvement in a suit brought against the center by a local environmental group—the Protectors of Pine Oak Woods.

The Protectors obtained a show cause order last week to stop site clearance on a part of Corson's Brook Woods on the Developmental Center's property in Willowbrook.

Dick Buegler, president of the Protectors, said the land in question had been designated in the city Planning Department's Greenbelt Report for inclusion in the Greenbelt protected area.

**BUT NOW HE** contends the Parks Department has formally requested of the Staten Island Task Force that this woodland be transferred to the city for park use.

What triggered the court action was the discovery by the Protectors that "numerous trees, some as large as two feet in diameter, had been cut and removed from the site as well as several shrubs that had been cleared away in the area."

Controversy over the site began in March when the Protectors learned that the center planned to build group homes there for the

developmentally disabled.

**JAMES WALSH**, director of the Developmental Center, a state agency, said the site was chosen because it was the only area of the huge complex which adjoined a residential neighborhood.

"It has become increasingly difficult for us to find a site for our clients in one group home in the community, much less a cluster of buildings."

Walsh also said the area chosen off Forest Hill Road is near the Institute for Basic Research for Mental Retardation, another important factor for those in the group homes.

**"THEY WILL** need the 24-hour-a-day supervision," he said.

Walsh also said that the land in question "is not the surplus land under discussion by the Staten Island Task Force but state land that has been set aside for the purpose of building the four group homes.

"We have been very sensitive to the issue and gone through the local community board, the land use committee, the health and hospital committee, the full board, and they have been very supportive of us."

Walsh said that the center "has even redesigned the layout of the new buildings so that there would be a minimum of trees cut down.

**"WE WILL** only be build-



JIM HUGHES DAILY NEWS

**Staten Island Parks Commissioner Joseph Curran looks over some of the large trees cut down in Corson's Brook Woods area on property of Developmental Center in Willowbrook.**

ing on about seven-tenths of an acre of the nine acres set aside. The rest will be open space. We are not destroying the watershed and, in fact, we are actually protecting it by building the complex around the perimeter," he said.

The Protectors went to court Thursday with Parks

officials, but the judge postponed the action until tomorrow when it will come up again in Supreme Court in front of Justice Royal Radin.

Walsh, noting that "time is of the essence," will meet with the parties involved and show them the area in question today.