

Paulo to ask \$1 million for Greenbelt study

By JIM BUELL
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Protection of Corson's Brook Woods is of vital importance to the future of the Staten Island Greenbelt, the Greenbelt's administrator told the Island's leading conservation group last night.

"This is not just a skirmish in the woods," said Thomas Paulo, speaking for the first time about the state's attempt to raze part of the woods, located on the grounds of Staten Island Developmental Center in Willowbrook, in order to construct four group homes for the retarded. "It deals with damage to an area that's part of a much larger area we've been trying to protect for

years."

The future of the 40-acre woodland was a prime topic at last night's annual meeting and natural areas symposium of the Protectors of Pine Oak Woods, held on the eve of a state-sponsored hearing on future uses for the Staten Island Developmental Center's property. The meeting took place in the Staten Island Museum, St. George.

The environmental group has been to court several times to halt work at Corson's Brook since November, when contractors destroyed about 40 trees in preparation for building the group homes on four of the 40 acres. Attorney Terence Benbow, counsel for the Protec-

tors, also discussed the status of those efforts at the meeting.

While lauding the legal work, which has resulted in the granting of a temporary injunction against the project, Paulo commented wryly, "We're not out of the woods yet."

"This is in fact the first assault on the Staten Island Greenbelt we've had in a number of years," he said, noting that the woods were singled out for protection as part of a 2,000-acre Greenbelt as early as 1982, in a study he authored for the Island Office of the City Planning Department. Paulo now supports creating an expanded Greenbelt

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