

Corson's group homes: Study details site logic

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A newly released state-funded report contradicts local environmentalists who claim the proposed construction of four group homes in Corson's Brook Woods will irreparably damage valued woodlands.

Although the project will "alter the natural character" of the woodlands, the potential impact is not enough to justify relocation of the project, according to an environmental impact study by the Manhattan consulting firm McKeown & Franz Inc. The study's conclusion was reported

Saturday in the Advance, although the study itself was not made available to the press until this week.

The report analyzes two other sites in addition to Corson's Woods and concludes that Corson's Woods is the most suitable for the project.

The environmental impact statement was commissioned by the state Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OMRDD), which wants to build the four group homes to house 72 multi-handicapped Staten Islanders leaving Staten Island Developmental

Center (SIDC) when the institution shuts down in 1987.

While the study acknowledges the environmental significance of the woodlands, it says damage caused by construction will be minimal. "Project development will result in reduction of the native plant species found in Corson's Brook Woods, including species rare or uncommon to Staten Island," the report says.

"(But) mitigation measures include minimal tree clearing, protection of trees on site which will remain after construction and replanting once construction (See REPORT, Page A 4)

Page 1 of 3 Pages