

# A day after hearing, Corson's tests spark ire

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Soil testings conducted in Corson's Brook Woods yesterday, only a day after a public hearing in which environmentalists strongly stated their objections to any construction in the woods, have sparked angry protests.

The testings indicate that the state plans to proceed with the proposed construction of four group homes in Corson's Woods, one environmentalist said, and illustrates the futility of Monday's hearing.

"I'm in a total state of shock," said Ellen Pratt, a member of

several Island environmental groups. "The day after the hearing, when there's another 15 days that they are accepting comment, out they go" to conduct soil tests.

The environmentalists, led by members of the Protectors of Pine Oak Woods, are trying to convince the state to relocate the group home project. The agency that wants to build the homes, the Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OMRDD), sponsored the public hearing to allow the opposition to air its concerns. OMRDD said it would consider the comments before proceeding with construc-

tion.

But yesterday's work in the woods may indicate that OMRDD does not plan to give serious consideration to the environmentalists' objections, said Richard Buegler, president of the Protectors. "It (the soil tests) is an indication that they are going ahead" with construction.

OMRDD wants to build the group homes to house 72 severely retarded people who are to leave Staten Island Developmental Center. The agency claims that Corson's Woods, located in the southeast corner of the SIDC campus along Forest Hill Road, is the only site at SIDC suitable for construction which fronts a residential area.

The project would involve a nine-acre parcel of the woods, which cover 40 acres. Environmentalists claim the tract is one of Staten Island's best natural woodlands, and want the woodlands preserved for inclusion in the Greenbelt.