

# State drops Corson's housing plan

By DAN JANISON  
and DENISE RINALDO  
ADVANCE STAFF WRITERS

ALBANY — The state has agreed to drop its controversial plan to build housing for the mentally retarded in Corson's Brook Woods in Willowbrook.

State officials announced the move yesterday, capping a two-year civic battle that put conservationists and advocates for the retarded on opposing sides

and led Gov. Mario M. Cuomo to become directly involved.

The state Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OMRDD) abandoned the stalled construction as part of what it called a "comprehensive plan" for its services in the borough.

That plan calls for a special residence, at a site on the Island yet to be named, where the state would place 24 people whom

judges in criminal cases order into the custody of OMRDD.

Lou Ganim, spokesman for OMRDD chief Arthur Webb, said this new "secure unit" would be like one already operating in Rochester. The state runs two other secure facilities as well, in Westchester and Brooklyn.

In addition, Cuomo operations director Henrik Dullea said the plan calls for 117 bed spaces in state-operated community resi-

dences by a year from now, an increase of 30 beds.

Twenty-four bed spaces would have gone in the disputed area, which is adjacent to the SIDC and, conservationists argued, part of the Greenbelt. The developmental center is slated to close in a year.

Early reaction to the overall plan was mixed. Privately, some officials expect close questioning of state officials as to how the secure facility would work.

On the woodland issue, reaction was predictable, with the Protectors of the Pine Oak Woods and city Parks Commissioner Henry Stern cheering and their opponents more somber.

In a statement, OMRDD said it also plans to establish:

- Residential units with 48 new beds on Executive Way of the SIDC property. As reflected previous budget documents, this would involve building three

small housing units at the site.

- A 72-bed unit at the South Beach Psychiatric Center for individuals with multiple disabilities, such as emotional and mental disorders. Cuomo requested money for the unit in budget amendments last month.

- "A multipurpose community treatment center to provide a range of day and recreational pro-

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