

ESSEX COUNTY TURTLE BACK ZOO

Spending millions of your tax dollars to destroy the Reservation

What's at stake?

Essex County plans to spend \$8.6 million, clear cutting over 100 mature trees in the South Mountain Reservation to build a 500 seat outdoor amphitheater at Turtle Back Zoo. Animals will be exhibited with bright lights and a sound system 5 times per day.

What's the downside of this project?

In addition to irreplaceable habitat destruction, this will result in more congestion (increasing attendance to 1.2 million), flooding, noise and light pollution and add to climate change. No environmental impact statement has been produced.

Is this amphitheater necessary?

No. The zoo already has an appropriately-sized amphitheater. Millions were recently spent on an indoor Education Center. Professionals say children learn best in smaller settings.

How much land has been taken by the zoo?

Since 2003, the county has destroyed 25 acres, carving an amusement park out of the reservation building a zip line, a mini golf course, McLoone's restaurant and multiple parking lots, all at taxpayer's expense. Now the county will seize 1.5 acres for this project and another 10 acres in the future. There is no end in sight.

Isn't this Reservation historic?

Yes. It was designed by Fredrick Law Olmsted (of Central Park fame) and should be preserved as open space for future generations. Once destroyed, forever lost. Exploring the forest is an endless source of knowledge and entertainment. And it's free.

Won't they replace the trees removed by a 4:1 ratio?

Saplings take 25 years to reach maturity. A mature tree absorbs 11,000 gallons of water and 48 pounds of carbon a year. Our planet can't wait. We are in the midst of a global climate crisis.

Isn't a state "grant" paying for this?

While the State of NJ has committed \$4 million towards the \$8.6 million price tag, these funds all come from our taxpayer dollars.

Are there any other problems we should know about?

The zoo's ongoing expansion hurts animals. Exotic species don't belong here. One giraffe died after surgery for a tooth infection. Giraffes are locked in a barn 7 months of the year because of our cold temperatures. A lion died this summer.

What is the current status?

Despite opposition and 11,500+ petition signatures, the county has posted bids for construction and marked trees for removal.

WE NEED CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION, NOT DESTRUCTION.

JOIN US TO STOP THIS!

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