

RESOLUTION 43-07

At this regular meeting of the Town of Argyle, held on December 12, 2007, the following Resolution was adopted by the Town Board of the Town of Argyle.

WHEREAS, there has recently been a proposal from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to protect, preserve, and enhance an Important Bird Area, known as the Washington County Grasslands, in the Towns of Argyle, Fort Edward, and Kingsbury through a series of purchases in fee and Conservation Easements; and

WHEREAS, the agricultural lands of Washington County have been identified in New York State Open Space Conservation Plan as a critical and valuable component of the state's efforts to conserve open space, provide agricultural products, scenic open space, and vital wildlife habitat, and;

WHEREAS, there are a number of threatened, endangered, and special concern species of birds that depend on these grasslands for their survival, including but not limited to the short-eared owl, northern harrier, upland sandpiper, Henslow's sparrow, grasshopper sparrow, bobolink, and eastern meadowlark; and

WHEREAS, DEC has developed a special grassland bird habitat protection plan to help conserve farmland in the Washington County Grasslands important bird area; and

WHEREAS, all acquisitions and transactions to establish this area will be entirely and only with the willing consent of existing landowners; and

WHEREAS, it is anticipated that the Environmental Protection Fund will be the source of state revenue used for the project and those funds can only be spent on a land acquisition project that is without objection from the affected town, thus making community support and landowner willingness essential to any implementation of this unique grassland bird habitat protection plan, and;

WHEREAS, the proposed enhancements will serve to attract birders and other recreationists to the Argyle area, with a resultant increase in local trade and commerce, and;

WHEREAS, the establishment of this area will not diminish or change the local tax base and may enhance the value of neighboring properties; and

WHEREAS, this provides a mechanism to enhance and support local farmers and Argyle's traditional and important agricultural base as well as supporting the town's interest in preserving its rural character and important farmland areas;

Now, therefore, be it:

RESOLVED, that the Town Board of the Town of Argyle supports the proposed grassland conservation program under the conditions stated above and will work with the Department of Environmental Conservation to provide the opportunity for the citizens of the Town of Argyle to participate in and profit from this project.