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Park advocates: Moses wouldn't object to mowing cuts

BY BILL BLEYER

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In his 1974 biography of Robert Moses, "The Power Broker," Robert A. Caro wrote that the longtime state parks chief "wanted the parkways to be broader and more beautiful than any roads the world had ever seen, landscaped as private parks are landscaped so that they would be in themselves parks."

Even so, park advocates don't think Moses would oppose the state's reduced roadside mowing - given Albany's financial woes - and they don't object, either.

"In cases where there are gorgeous views, I guess it could be a problem," said Robin Dropkin, executive director of Parks & Trails New York. "But in general it's a good idea. The more fields that are left to regenerate into wild grasses, plants and flowers the better. A lot of the birds that nest in that kind of habitat and butterflies and insects are being decimated by a loss of habitat."

Herbert Balin, chairman of the Long Island State Park, Recreation and Historic Preservation Commission, which advises the state, said "we all have to make sacrifices" in a tight economy. "Moses had as much money as he needed; we don't."

Richard Schary, a North Bellmore Park advocate and environmentalist, said letting the vegetation grow will thicken the buffer between traffic and nearby homes.

The only negative of the new policy, advocates say, could be if higher grass traps trash that is not picked up.

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