



Board passes resolutions to protect fossil forest

Cairo to pursue grant funding for preservation of 387-million-year-old prehistoric site

*By Andrea Macko
Porcupine Soup*

CAIRO—The Cairo Town Board passed two resolutions Wednesday night aimed at protecting the prehistoric forest located behind the highway garage. The fossil forest dates back some 387 million years and according to scientific findings is the oldest in the world.

The first resolution gave the town authority to move forward with a feasibility study to pursue grants for the forest's future conservancy. The second resolution gives the go-ahead for the town to establish a non-profit organization charged with preserving and protecting the now world-renowned site.

Town Supervisor John Coyne explained that more grants and funding opportunities are available for not-for-profit organizations than are for municipalities.

Both resolutions came following meetings that included representatives from the town, New York State Museum and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Columbia and Greene Counties.

Researchers uncovered the extensive root system of



*Photo contributed
Aerial view showing the root system in Cairo's fossil forest.*

387-million-year-old trees in 2019 while sifting through fossil soils in a quarry behind the Cairo Highway Department. The team, led by scientists at Binghamton University, New York State Museum and Cardiff University, have mapped more than 3,000 square meters of the forest.

The world's oldest fossil forest was once thought to be in Gilboa, but the Cairo site is estimated to be 2-3 million years older.

Their investigations showed that the Cairo forest was once home to at least two types of trees: cladoxylopsids, primitive tree-fern-like plants, which lacked flat green leaves, and which also grew in vast numbers at Gilboa; and Archaeopteris, which had a conifer-like woody trunk and frond-like branches which had green flattened leaves.

It is believed the extensive network of trees would have spread from New York all the way into Pennsylvania and beyond.

Researchers also theorize that the forest was eventually wiped out by a flood due to the presence of fish fossils that were also visible on the surface of the quarry.

Your ad could be here

Find out how »



Northeast
HOME MEDICAL SUPPLIES



15 North Lincoln Dr • Cairo

Full Line of Durable Medical Equipment

Open Mon-Fri 9-5, Closed Sat-Sun
Medical Equipment Emergency 24-7

1-800-446-4668 or 518-622-8108

FULL SERVICE HEATING



**INSTALLATION
& REPAIR**

Residential & Commercial

**Furnaces • Boilers • Heat Pumps • Gas & Oil Burners
Radiant Heat Systems**

Free Estimates • Fully Licensed & Insured

Phone Answered 24/7 - Emergency Service Available
Locally Owned & Operated More than 28 Years

518-610-4486

www.LeghornPlumbingandHeating.com