



Robert P. Astorino, Westchester County Executive

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **RABIES ALERT: RABID SKUNK ON BRIARCLIFF MANOR AND OSSINING BORDER**

The Westchester County Department of Health is issuing a rabies alert to residents who may have had contact with a rabid skunk in or near Reservoir Park in Ossining village on Friday, Sept. 16 or earlier. The skunk was found sick and lying on its back in Reservoir Park, on the Briarcliff Manor side of a fence on the Ossining village border. A dog that licked the skunk's mouth was given a rabies booster shot. The owner of the dog identified the skunk to police officers and the skunk was shot by Briarcliff Manor police on Friday. No people are known to have had direct contact with the skunk which was confirmed rabid today.

The health department used robo-calls to notify residents who live within a quarter-mile of the park.

"The good news is that no one that we know of was bitten or scratched by this rabid animal," said Westchester County Acting Commissioner of Health, Dr. Cheryl Archbald.

Anyone who believes that they or a pet may have had contact with this rabid skunk should contact the Westchester County Department of Health immediately at (914) 813-5000 to assess the need for rabies treatment. Unusual behavior may be the first sign of rabies in an animal. A rabid animal may become either abnormally aggressive or unusually tame. It may lose fear of people and become excited and irritable, or, conversely appear particularly passive and lethargic. Staggering and frothing at the mouth are sometimes noted.

Direct contact with wild or stray animals, even baby animals, is inadvisable. Parents should teach children not to touch unfamiliar animals and to immediately tell an adult if they have been bitten or scratched by an animal. Any physical contact with a wild or unfamiliar animal should be reported to a health care provider. All animal bites or contacts with animals suspected of having rabies must be reported to the Westchester County Department of Health at (914) 813-5000, 24 hours a day.

Keeping pet rabies vaccinations up to date is also important for protection against rabies. New York State law requires dogs, cats and ferrets to be vaccinated against rabies and receive regular booster shots.

A wealth of information about rabies and its prevention can be found on the Health Department's website at [www.westchestergov.com/health](http://www.westchestergov.com/health). Residents can also call the RABIES INFOLINE at (914) 813-5010 to listen to a taped message.