



# NEWS RELEASE

From New York State Inspector General  
**Catherine Leahy Scott**

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## **NEW YORK STATE INSPECTOR GENERAL ANNOUNCES ARREST OF FORMER STATE OFFICIAL CHARGED WITH STEALING NEARLY \$11,000**

New York State Inspector General Catherine Leahy Scott announced the arrest of the former Chief Financial Officer of the New York State Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) on charges he stole nearly \$11,000 from his agency by issuing bogus state checks to himself and augmenting his salary without authorization.

Michael Caccese, 39, was charged with Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, a Class D Felony, Grand Larceny in the Fourth Degree, a Class E Felony, Falsifying Business Records in the First Degree, a Class E Felony, and Official Misconduct, a Class A Misdemeanor.

“The defendant was responsible for safeguarding public resources at the Natural Heritage Trust,” Inspector General Scott said, “He is alleged to have abused his position as chief financial officer and accessed these funds to enrich himself. As a result of my investigation, he is now facing criminal charges for his abuse of his authority.”

Between October 2013 and February 2014, Caccese allegedly wrote agency checks to himself in the amount of \$9,527.73, deposited the money into his personal bank account, and attempted to cover up this crime by altering the internal records of NHT. Additionally, in October 2013, Caccese allegedly wrongfully calculated his salary increase to augment his salary in the amount of \$1,325.92. These actions bring the total amount of the alleged theft to \$10,853.65.

Caccese admitted to the Inspector General that he committed the thefts and manipulated records to hide them. Caccese was terminated from state service in March 2014. His salary was \$83,000.

Caccese was arraigned today before the Hon. Gary F. Stiglmeier of Albany City Court, and is scheduled to return to court February 9.

Inspector General Scott thanked Albany County District Attorney David Soares for prosecuting this matter, and the New York State Police for the arrest. The Defendant is innocent unless and until proven guilty in a court of law.

The NHT is a charitable organization which receives and administers gifts, grants and contributions to further cultural, parks, recreation, land and water conservation, and historic preservation public programs in the State of New York. It accomplishes its mission in partnership with the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP), Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and the Department of State (DOS).

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