

SOME TOWNS MAKE THE GRADE IN EARTH DAY REPORT CARDS **Towns Evaluated on Preservation and Drinking Water Protection**

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The Long Island Pine Barrens Society has issued its fourth in a series of "Report Cards," grading government efforts to protect drinking water and preserve open space and farmland. Six Eastern Long Island towns received an Earth Day 2003 report card, which measures their environmental performance since Earth Day 2002. These report cards are part of a coalition campaign to curtail over-development, called "Enough is Enough!"

Once again, Shelter Island demonstrated its commitment to the environment, finishing at the top of the class for the fourth consecutive grading period. "Shelter Island is exceptionally environmentally-conscious," said Long Island Pine Barrens Society Executive Director Richard Amper. "The town finished with an A in every category, completing the school year with a solid A — for the second Earth Day in a row."

Not far behind Shelter Island was the town of Southampton. Improvements in the areas of drinking water protection, a solid land preservation program, and improved administration and execution brought the town up from an overall grade of "C" to a "B" this year. "Southampton has done an excellent job preserving open space and farmland," Amper commented. "Focus on drinking water protection, land use planning and regulation, and acquiring priority parcels could surely earn the town an 'A' next grading period."

The Town of Southold earned another "B-" this Earth Day. "Southold continues to preserve land at a good rate, but its not using all the preservation tools at its disposal, including upzoning," Amper said.

The town of East Hampton went from an overall grade of "C-" to a "C" this grading period. Although the town dropped a letter grade to a "D" for farmland preservation, its grade for administration and execution was raised from a "B" to an "A-" and East Hampton's drinking water protection grade was raised from an "F" to a "D." Amper commented that "East Hampton must implement a water protection plan if it is to make the grade."

The most-improved report card this Earth Day is in the Town of Riverhead. Riverhead finished at the bottom of the class on the last three report cards, but a surge in farmland preservation resulting in an "A" as well as improvement in all the other "subjects" resulted in an overall grade of "C+." Amper said of the town, "Their focus on farmland preservation is certainly commendable, but if the town really wants to get an overall 'A', there needs to be more focus on open space preservation and drinking water protection."

The Town of Brookhaven also greatly improved this time. Brookhaven went from being "suspended" with a "D+" to earning an overall "C-." Although the town dropped a letter grade on farmland preservation, marks for drinking water protection, land use planning and regulation, and administration and execution each improved at least one letter grade. "Brookhaven's \$20 million open space bond act paves the way for some serious land preservation in Long Island's largest town," Amper said.

The quarterly report cards are part of a five-phase initiative announced by a coalition of Long Island environmental and civic organizations concerned about the dwindling supply of open space on Long Island and the effects of over-development on the Island's economy, environment, and quality-of-life.