



LONG ISLAND
PINE BARRENS
SOCIETY

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A copy of the last annual report filed with the New York State Department of Law may be obtained by writing to NYS Attorney General's Charities Bureau, Attn: FOIL Officer, 120 Broadway, New York, NY, 10271 or may be obtained directly from the Long Island Pine Barrens Society, 547 East Main Street, Riverhead, NY 11901

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Credit: Stock Photo



WE WON: After a six year legal battle, Suffolk County will now be forced to return \$29-million that had been illegally-raided from the Drinking Water Protection Program. See story on Page 3.

Pine Barrens TV

The Pine Barrens Society's television program airs on Cablevision Channel 20. The air times below are effective October 1, 2018 – September 30, 2019.

The program can also be viewed on the Society's YouTube page at www.youtube.com/lipinebarrenssociety.

Towns of Babylon, Brookhaven, Huntington, Islip, Riverhead, Smithtown, Southampton & Southold:

Tuesdays at 7:30 PM
Wednesdays at 9:00 PM
Thursdays at 8:00 PM

Town of East Hampton:

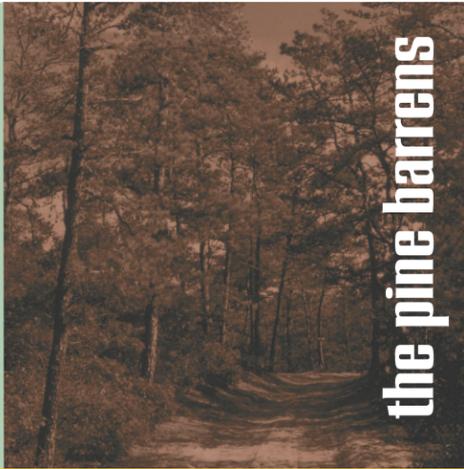
Wednesdays at 6:30 PM
Thursdays at 9:00 PM
Fridays at 3:30 PM

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LONG ISLAND
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today

Commission Will Review “The Hills”

Credit: LIPBS



DECISION MAKERS: Members of the New York State Pine Barrens Commission listen to public testimony at a March 20th Rally at Southampton Town Hall.



RECORD CROWD: Environmental and civic leaders produce the largest attendance in the 25-year history of the Commission

The New York State Pine Barrens Commission will review the Lewis Road Planned Residential Development (formerly “The Hills at Southampton”) - the mega golf resort proposed for the Southampton Pine Barrens - after more than four years. A March 20th rally at Southampton Town Hall calling for the project’s review led to a May 15th decision by the Commission to review the project. Four of the five members of the Commission voted in favor of reviewing the project, which consists of the last large unprotected portion of the Pine Barrens.

The Lewis Road Planned Residential Development (PRD), proposed by Arizona-based Discovery Land Company, is an 118-unit mansion complex and massive golf resort located in the Pine Barrens, a state-designated Special Groundwater Protection Area and Critical Resource Area. The original proposal for the project was defeated by the Southampton Town Board in 2017, but the developer resubmitted the proposal under a different zoning statute and thus rebranded it as the Lewis Road PRD. Environmentalists have brought suit to block the proposed re-zoning.

This Pine Barrens Commission previously asked for information on which to base a review, sending eleven letters to the developer and town, without success. Southampton Town has repeatedly sought to avoid Commission review of the Discovery Land project, both in the form of “The Hills” and now the nearly identical “Lewis Road PRD.” In fact, this is the first time a project of this magnitude has eluded Commission review. It seems clear that

the applicant has doubts that the project will meet the strict standards of the Pine Barrens Act’s Comprehensive Land Use Plan. Otherwise, there would be no reason to consistently evade Commission review.

“The Hills/Lewis Road PRD” project concurrently has been supported by Southampton Town Supervisor Jay Schneiderman and his staff. This fact was irrelevant when it came down to the time for a decision by the Commission because the authority of the State body exceeds that of the Pine Barrens towns. The Pine Barrens Commission was created in 1993 to prevent the towns of Brookhaven, Riverhead and Southampton from locally approving development harmful to the Pine Barrens which sit atop Long Island’s purest water supply and boast the greatest diversity of plants and animals anywhere in New York State.

Government has permanently preserved more than 56,000 acres, while strictly controlling development in another 50,000 acres. There are only 1,000 acres still to be protected – the land proposed for the Lewis Road PRD project accounts for a large part of this. “The state legislature passed the Pine Barrens Act for the explicit purpose of preserving the Pine Barrens whether local government wanted it protected or not,” said Society Executive Director Richard Amper. “If the proposed development meets the Pine Barrens Act’s standards and guidelines it may still be built, but it cannot evade review by the Commission whether the Supervisor likes it or not,” he added.

Robin Amper, Steadying Force Behind Drive to Conserve LI Pine Barrens, Dies at 72

By David Schwartz, Newsday
April 26, 2019

Credit: LIPBS

Robin Hopkins Amper, a Lake Panamoka resident who was the steadying force in battles to protect the Long Island Pine Barrens and their environment, alongside her husband, died at home Friday.

She was 72 and died after a four-year battle with metastatic breast cancer.

“She was genuinely interested and cared about people. It wasn’t superficial, or a public stance,” said her husband, Richard Amper, executive director of the Long Island Pine Barrens Society. “She was an amazing person.”

MaryAnn Johnston, president of the Affiliated Brookhaven Civic Organizations, said Robin Amper had the ability to calm tense situations and balance her husband, known as a hard-charging environmental advocate.



SOFT SPOKEN ENVIRONMENTALIST:
Robin Hopkins Amper

“She was always pleasant, always professional,” Johnston said. “She had a great rapport with every person who worked with the Pine Barrens Society... Dick would give you the seed, but she would water it.”

Richard Amper said, “It helped to have somebody nice on the team. I certainly wasn’t. She made a lot of friends for us, I’ll tell you that.”

Jennifer Garvey, a former Pine Barrens Society employee, said, “She was quietly behind the scenes. But she was a force, and she was the force that allowed him to execute on his vision... They were a team and I think together their contributions to Long Island are immeasurable.”

Born in Buffalo, Robin Hopkins graduated from the Buffalo Seminary private high school in 1965 and from

the thicket

The Voice of the Moon Bird

By John Turner

Mr. Turner is a co-founder and past president of the Pine Barrens Society.

Come the full moon in June or July and you're thinking about something to do, why not head off in early evening to the Dwarf Pine Plains of Westhampton to seek out the moon bird? At about 8:45 pm, just when the diminishing sunlight has faded to the proper level, the moon bird will start to call. At first the calls might be tentative. But soon they become regular and rhythmic and as the light of the past day fades entirely the calls become incessant (a patient listener once counted 1,088 "whip-poor-will" calls without a pause).

What is this moon bird, what's its relationship to the moon, and why is it calling from this dwarf pine forest? It's the Eastern Whip-poor-will, whose regular and rhythmic calling, from

Credit: Tom Murray Flickr CC



Whip-poor-will

forests throughout eastern North America is such as part of life in rural landscapes east of the Mississippi River. And it calls from the woodlands of Long Island too, most especially in the Pine Barrens where the forested stretch of tens of thousands of acres, protected forever by state law, provides ample nesting habitat for the bird. Within the Pine Barrens, whip-poor-wills seem to be particularly common in the region's Dwarf Pine Plains. Here, it is occasionally joined by its larger cousin the Chuck-will's-widow, whose similar sounding but distinctive call also rings out over the tops of the dwarf pines. Both species have onomatopoeic names, derived from the sound of their calls. Birders generally refer to them as "whips" and "chucks".

How is the Whip-poor-will tied to the moon? It has to do with its diet which consists of large insects – big beetles and moths usually - and these same food items are what they feed their young. Whip-poor-wills hunt at night using the ambient moonlight to visually detect their prey so they can obviously see better on nights with a full moon than a night with a crescent moon. To maximize optimal hunting conditions, Whip-poor-wills synchronize their egg laying so the young hatch during the moon's waxing cycle, i.e. as the moon is gathering strength and the amount of light available each night is increasing, creating better hunting conditions.

Both Whip-poor-wills and Chuck-will's-widows (and Common Nighthawks too) are "Goatsuckers" being members of the family Caprimulgidae – from the Latin "Capri" meaning goat and "mulgare" meaning to milk. They got this label from the mistaken belief that the birds sucked on the teats of goats.

One look at their large, pink-lined mouths and the fact some species associate with livestock and you can understand why someone might draw the connection. In reality the birds are drawn to the aerial insects these farm animals kick up, rather than their milk.

All goatsuckers are cryptically colored, blending in exceedingly well with the leaves on the floor of the forest, where they can be next to impossible to spot. This is a good thing since they are ground nesters and use their camouflage to avoid detection. Their two speckled eggs sit on the ground in what is hard to call a nest since the adult birds do little to nothing to make it. If all goes well, the eggs will hatch in about three weeks and the parents, with the brightening light of the waxing moon, will search for the large insects that sustain both them and their young.

Whip-poor-wills face new challenges as there are less insects today than in years past and this species and other insect-eating birds like nighthawks, swifts, and swallows, are reflecting this reality. Different studies all document a downward trend in the number of aerial insectivores (the group of birds whip-poor-wills are part of), believed to be primarily driven by a lack of food. Whip-poor-wills have declined precipitously, by more than 50% in the past half century. What's causing the diminishing insect populations? Probably a combination of factors but certainly widespread pesticide use has been implicated.

Still, if you drive out to the Plains on a moonlit night this summer, get out of your car and walk in a way on any of the many sandy trails that crisscross the forest, there's a good chance you'll hear the call of the whip-poor-will; if you're lucky maybe you'll hear its cousin Chuck.

forests throughout eastern North America is such as part of life in rural landscapes east of the Mississippi River.

And it calls from the woodlands of Long Island too, most especially in the Pine Barrens where the forested stretch of tens of thousands of acres, protected forever by state law, provides ample nesting habitat for the bird. Within the Pine Barrens, whip-poor-wills seem

Credit: Sandy Richard



The Dwarf Pine Plains

ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS NOTES

Middle School Kids Go To College Student Clean Water Projects Presented at Stony Brook

Credit: LIPBS



ATTENTIVE AUDIENCE: Middle School Students listen to a water quality presentation by Stony Brook professor Christopher Gobler after demonstrating their projects.

On May 13th, 70 Middle School students, who had been competing in a contest to develop projects aimed at reducing water contamination on Long Island, went to college to have their projects judged and hear lectures from Stony Brook scientist Dr. Christopher Gobler and fellow staff members of the School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences.

The students, aged 11-14, developed clever and colorful table-top projects under the supervision of their teachers at the Patchogue-Medford School District. At Stony Brook University, the students demonstrated how their projects could inform Long Islanders about declining water quality on Long Island and what can be done to reverse the trend.

Long Island's water comes from underground aquifers, so human activity on the surface introduces contaminants to both drinking water and surface water. The chief culprit is nitrogen from wastewater and fertilizer. The pollution has led to fish and turtle kills and closed beaches and shellfish beds.

Students demonstrated a wide variety of water quality topics, including limiting pesticide use, land and transportation use, better sewage treatment, returning toxic chemicals to local STOP centers and disposing of unused pharmaceuticals to collection points in Nassau and Suffolk counties.

The program is produced by the Pine Barrens Society. It is funded by a grant from the National Grid Foundation.

"The next generation has a lot to teach its parents about preventing water contamination and protecting Long Island's underground drinking water sources," said Pine Barrens Society Executive Director, Richard Amper. "After all, our young people have inherited this mess and it's up to all of us to reverse the growing threat," he added.

Patchogue-Medford Librarian, Susan Sclafani, who had students presenting projects, said, "Working with the Pine Barrens Society on their Middle School Goes to College program has been empowering for my students. Not only are they learning about the dangers that face Long Island's aquifers but they are educating others on how to solve these problems. They understand that bringing awareness to these issues can have immediate changes to their world."

20 winners were chosen from the May competition and will go on to present their projects to members of the State Legislature and receive awards at the Society's 42nd Annual Awards Gala.

Gala 42 set for October 23, 2019

Credit: Scott Ross



ANOTHER OPENING; ANOTHER SHOW: Pine Barrens Society Executive Director Richard Amper and Co-host Kathleen Nasta kick-off the Society's 41st Anniversary Environmental Awards Gala honoring Peter Iwanowicz, Executive Director of Environmental Advocates of New York and Former New York Park's Commissioner Rose Harvey. The Society's 42nd anniversary is set for Wednesday, October 23rd at Oheka Castle in Huntington.

Robin Amper, Dies at 72

By David Schwartz, Newsday*
April 26, 2019

Continued from Page 1

Stephens College in Columbia, Missouri, in 1967.

Richard Amper said he first met Robin in Missouri in 1966, and he persisted in courting her.

"It became a campaign of mine to convince her I should be someone to marry. And I did," Amper said Sunday. "It was probably the first campaign I ran."

In a 2000 Newsday profile of Richard Amper, Robin described his courtship of her as: "He just kind of came in and took over."

Robin Hopkins spent her early career after college at Robert P. Gersin Associates in Manhattan, a design firm, where she managed design and corporate identity projects for major U.S. and international corporations.

The couple had lived in Forest Hills and Melville, before moving to Lake Panamoka in 1972.

Katie Muether Brown, deputy director of the Riverhead-based Long Island Pine Barrens Society, said, "the society ran so smoothly because of her hard work throughout the years."

Robin was the administrative manager for several years, and "was really Dick's right-hand woman throughout the pine barrens preservation initiative in the 1980s and 1990s," Brown said.

The campaign ended up preserving about 50,000 core acres of pine barrens, which sit above the sole-source aquifer for drinking water on Long Island.



ROBIN & HER BELOVED DACHSHUND OSCAR

Credit: LIPBS

Richard Amper said that in the late 1980s, when few people thought the pine barrens could be preserved from development, she believed in it.

"She genuinely believed it could be and would be. She could not have been more supportive," Richard Amper said, and she allowed their home to become a "war room" for strategy sessions for about five years.

During the campaign, the Pine Barrens Society attracted criticism.

"She was putting up with a lot of ugliness on the part of the business community. That was nasty stuff. She was annoyed at people who were being nasty or critical, but didn't return it with anger. She just said, 'This is the price of the campaign, and we need to do it,'" Richard Amper said.

Kevin McDonald, policy director with The Nature Conservancy's Long Island chapter, said, "Robin was a delightfully stable, unflappable, pleasant person, even in circumstances where no rational person would be. She was always a calming force."

Besides her husband of 51 years, she is survived by her brother, Nick Hopkins, and his wife, Bonnie, 75, of Jackson Hole, Wyoming; her sister Jane Carey and husband, John, 61, of Jackson Hole; brother-in-law Tom Amper, 71, of Queens; sister-in-law Emily Murphy, 70; nine nieces and nephews and 14 grandnieces and grandnephews, and her beloved dachshund, Oscar.

*Reproduced with permission from Newsday.

Court Rules Suffolk County Must Return \$29-Million To Drinking Water Protection Program

After a six year legal battle, Suffolk County will now be forced to return \$29-million that had been illegally-raided from the Drinking Water Protection Program.

In 2011, the Suffolk County Legislature, under the leadership of discredited Suffolk County Executive Steve Levy, re-directed funds from the Drinking Water Protection Program into the county's general fund. The program, approved by a majority of voters in 1987, uses a ¼ percent in sales tax to fund water quality improvement projects and land preservation across the county. Following the raid, the Society sued to protect the integrity of the program and the public's trust. The Society's attorneys, Jennifer Juengst and Paul

Sabatino II, argued that any program created by the public via referendum, can only be altered by a subsequent referendum.

In November of 2014, the New York State Appellate Division ruled in the Society's favor, declaring the raid "illegal, null and void" because the program had been altered without a required referendum. Both the Society and the County were then required to submit a judgment to the Suffolk County Supreme Court. The Steve Bellone Administration submitted a judgment agreeing that the raid was a mistake, but argued that they were not required to return the money. Supreme Court Justice Joseph Farneti agreed with the County

and signed their judgment, forcing the Society to appeal that decision.

On June 26, 2019, the Appellate Division once again ruled in the Society's favor, ordering Justice Farneti's judgment to be reversed and a new judgment to be issued, requiring Suffolk County government to return \$29-million to the people of Suffolk.

"Once again, an Appeals Court has determined that Suffolk County government improperly took funds in violation of a public referendum and the \$29-million must be returned," said Pine Barrens Society Executive Director, Richard Amper. "Suffolk didn't make a mistake, it broke the law and hurt the public," he added.

Quarter Century Of Pine Barrens Preservation

Twenty-five years after passage of the Pine Barrens Protection Act, government has succeeded in meeting 97% of the original goal of protecting 52,500 acres of the Core Preservation Area – the most critical part the Central Pine Barrens. This leaves only 1,000 acres of the original Pine Barrens boundaries still to be preserved. In addition, some 14,000 acres of the less sensitive Compatible Growth Area (CGA) have been publicly acquired for permanent preservation. The CGA covers 48,656 acres – an area which can be developed in compliance with the Pine Barrens Act and Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

Data compiled by the New York State Pine Barrens Commission show 24,449 acres of Core Preservation Area was publicly acquired in Brookhaven, 3,728 acres of Core in Riverhead and 16,896 acres in Southampton. An area of 10,778 acres includes parcels partially in the Core and partially in the Compatible Growth Area.



Credit: Central Pine Barrens Commission

A REMARKABLE ACHIEVEMENT ALMOST COMPLETE: The dark green areas represent the Core Preservation Area where development is prohibited; the lighter green areas represent the Compatible Growth Area where development is permitted consistent with standards and guidelines of the Pine Barrens Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

All-in-all, 57,676 acres in the Core Preservation Area have been protected. Environmentalists seek to preserve the remaining 1,000 additional acres of the original Core boundaries because of their extreme sensitivity. Federal, state, county and town government are responsible for the protection of most of the Pine Barrens land. Most of the money used to fund these acquisitions has been approved by the public at referenda.

"The Pine Barrens Preservation Initiative has been a wildly successful effort that enjoys tremendous public support," said Pine Barrens Society Executive Director, Richard Amper. The Pine Barrens sit atop the largest quantity of the purest water anywhere on Long Island and boast the greatest diversity of plants and animals anywhere in New York State.