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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, 2042 North Country Rd, Ste 103 Wading River, NY 11792

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GIVING TUESDAY

GIVING TUESDAY: You may participate in Black Friday and Cyber Monday, but don't forget about Giving Tuesday – a global day dedicated to giving back. Celebrate on Tuesday 11/30/21 by making a tax-deductible contribution to the Pine Barrens Society at www.pinebarrens.org/contribute.

Pine Barrens TV

The Pine Barrens Society's television program airs on Cablevision/Altice Public Access. October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022.

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 Channel 20:

Sundays at 11:00 AM
Mondays at 7:00 PM
Thursdays at 9:00 AM

Town of East Hampton:

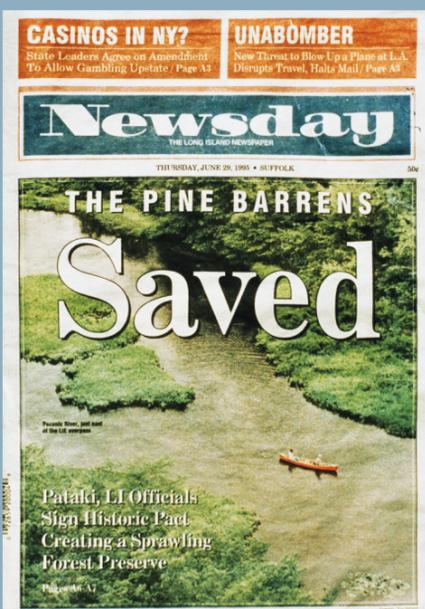
Wednesdays at 6:30 PM
Thursdays at 9:00 PM
Fridays at 3:30 PM

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today

PINE BARRENS SOCIETY MAINTAINS PUBLIC SUPPORT Donors Continue Encouragement by Mail



AERIAL VIEW OF NEWSDAY COVER

For the second consecutive year, supporters of the Long Island Pine Barrens Society have backed the organization's preservation efforts through our virtual gala. Once again, Society supporters pledged to make personal and business firm contributions. Donations amounted to more than \$65,000, similar to last year.

Due to the continuing COVID-19 pandemic, the Society made the call to hold their annual Environmental Gala virtually again this year. In previous years, the event had been held at Oheka Castle. This year's theme, "Moving with the Times," honored the Society's history but also touched upon the Society's latest work, including an increased focus on environmental education and recreational access. The theme also acknowledged that the Society was still moving on with their important work, despite the pandemic. Founded in 1977, the Society celebrated its 44th Anniversary this year.

Society leaders identified corporate and nonprofit firms to sponsor the event, including The Rauch Foundation, Traditional Links, Caithness, PSEG Long Island, Orsted/Eversource, Rose Breslin Associates, Sebonack, Brookhaven National Lab, Cameron Engineering and Mr. Robert Catell.

The highlight of the Gala was the premiere of the celebration video. The gala video featured Pine Barrens staff, comedians, and salutes to honorable supporters including award-winning newscaster Patti Ann Browne. The Society also selected photo features for the event, which included aerial forests, a Pine Barrens river, Pine Barrens Society founders John Turner, Bob McGrath and John Cryan, along with former Governor George Pataki. Also highlighted was the signing of the Pine Barrens Protection Act by former Governor Mario Cuomo and sponsored by then Senator Kenneth LaValle and Assemblyman Tom DiNapoli.



PINE BARRENS FOUNDERS WITH GOVERNOR PATAKI



THE CARMANS RIVER



GOVERNOR CUOMO WITH PINE BARRENS SPONSORS



BROOKHAVEN POND



WCBS-TV SUNDAY NEWS CONFERENCE



the thicket

A Walk Through The Pine Barrens

By Tom Casey

Mr. Casey is a member of the Board of Directors of the Long Island Pine Barrens Society.

The worst of our current pandemic, when so much of society was shut down, saw one rare upside: a surge in Long Islanders discovering, or rediscovering, our parks and trails, including those in the Pine Barrens. One of our favorite places to walk is the Pine Trail Preserve, which sits on land once slated for a never-built extension of County Route 111 from Manorville to Port Jefferson. Connecting Rocky Point State Forest with Robert Cushman Murphy County Park, it is a vital link in the long-distance Paumanok Path hiking trail. The Pine Trail is a gentle walk that offers a glimpse of the diversity of the Pine Barrens — and of some of its problems.

Let's take a round trip of about 5-1/2 miles. Start at the Pine Trail Preserve parking lot on the south side of NY 25 in Ridge, 0.6 mile east of William Floyd Parkway. From there, the trail, marked with white paint blazes, extends southeast toward Manorville and beyond. The first mile or so runs through pine and oak woods to the south of a residential area. Developments adjacent to

Credit: Katie Brown



EVIDENCE OF FIRE: One can expect to see charred tree trunks along Pine Trail, evidence of a 2012 wildfire.



OVER THE RIVER AND THROUGH THE WOODS: A small footbridge allows hikers to cross over a branch of the Peconic River

the Pine Barrens are always at risk from brush fires. The Central Pine Barrens Commission provides information to these neighborhoods about Firewise, a program that educated homeowners on how to make their home exteriors more fire resistant. The trail crosses several dirt "paper streets" once intended for more development. After the first two or three, you may notice charred tree trunks, a more open canopy and a denser understory of blueberry and huckleberry. This was the ignition point of the 2012 Crescent Bow wildfire, so named for the adjacent street. It spread to the southeast in an ever-widening path all the way to Manorville. Since then, the fire-adapted Pine Barrens vegetation has flourished. To the south lies Brookhaven National Laboratory.

The path descends slightly and crosses the last paper street onto a wider, often muddy section that overlies an ancient arm of the Peconic River. The soils here are siltier and trap surface water. Sadly, you'll also find evidence of illegal ATV traffic, an ongoing scourge on our protected lands. Beyond, cross a power line right-of-way and enter a stretch of woods that saw a fairly hot fire in the mid-1980s that destroyed much of the canopy. After the blaze, dense scrub oak dominated, but as taller oaks asserted themselves, they gradually shaded out all but a few remnants of the scrub oak. You may notice the majority of the trees here are of the same caliper, proof that they all sprouted at relatively the same time after the fire.

About 1.5 miles from the start, the trail reaches a junction with the yellow-blazed Brookhaven Trail, which runs north 5-1/4 miles to Shoreham-Wading River High School on NY 25A. Save that one for another day! Next, as you wind your way through the barrens, you'll encounter some major-league anthills, some two feet tall. These may be hundreds of years old and are the tips of vast underground networks. Ants are the principal pollinators in the Pine Barrens, where the coarse soils do not support earthworms.

The next cross path runs from NY 25 to North Street in Manorville and marks the eastern boundary of Brookhaven Lab. From here the trail descends to a wetland thick with inkberry, swamp azalea and marsh grasses, then crosses a small footbridge over a stream. You've just crossed a branch of the mighty Peconic River. Look for arrowhead, or duck potato, in the water. The path beyond is lined with sweet pepperbush before emerging at a clearing. Take a short detour to the left to Sandy Pond, one of the kettlehole ponds that dot the area and harbor the largest concentration of endangered species in New York State. The pond is a surface expression of the water table and goes through wet and dry cycles over the years.

Regain the trail on the far side of the clearing, shortly reaching a mowed clearing with a view of Grassy Pond, another kettlehole. Continuing, you'll reach more evidence of the 2012 wildfire at what was the hottest spot of the entire conflagration. Nearly ten years later, the change wrought by the fire is clearly visible. Notice we said "change," not "damage." Fire is a necessary factor in preserving healthy Pine Barrens. This spot will be fascinating in years to come as we observe the natural forces at work slowly reversing the effects of the fire.

Turn around here. More enjoyment awaits, as a trail always looks different heading in the opposite direction. Or, if you have the time and energy, keep heading east on the trail as long as you wish. You won't run out of miles!

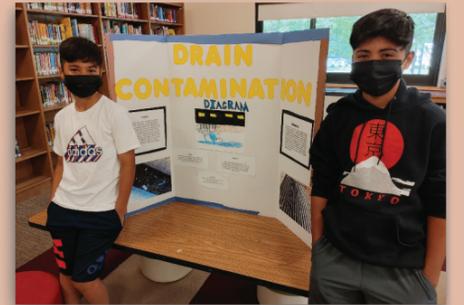
ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS NOTES

Future Stewards Of The Environment

Nineteen middle school students from the Patchogue-Medford School District were awarded for their research on Long Island's water quality and their creative solutions to improve it. The students were honored by the Pine Barrens Society, the National Grid Foundation and local elected officials on July 14th in a virtual awards ceremony.

The 19 winners were chosen out of nearly 100 students who entered the Long Island Pine Barrens Society's annual "Middle School Kids Go To College" competition. Each year, the Society works with middle school teachers to advance lessons about Long Island's water quality in their classrooms. Students then independently research Long Island's waters and create solutions to address the many issues plaguing Long Island's waters. The National Grid Foundation has supported this program for ten years and has supported the Society in general for more than twenty.

Credit: Oregon Middle School



DRAINS TO THE BAY: Daniel Ramos and Jeremy Galvez-Ramos from Oregon Middle School won an award from their project on preventing storm drain contamination.

During a normal year, all of the students meet at Stony Brook University to hear from scientists and professors and demonstrate their knowledge in-person to their fellow classmates and Society staff. However, due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the students instead met with Dr. Christopher Gobler of Stony Brook University via Zoom in May. Dr. Gobler, a world-renowned scientist, explained the many serious water quality threats that Long Island faces, including nitrogen pollution and climate change.

The winning project topics included: how improper disposal of masks and gloves is damaging our environment; storm drain contamination; the impacts of golf courses on our environment; microplastic pollution; how climate change impacts water quality; and nitrogen pollution.

Pine Barrens Society Deputy Director Katie Muether Brown said, "Long Island's waters are in trouble, but these students make us all hopeful that our environment is in good hands."

Environmental Scholarship For Long Island Student

The Board of Directors of the Long Island Pine Barrens Society has awarded Ms. Viktoria F. Skobodzinski of Riverhead the second environmental scholarship in memory of the late Robin Hopkins Amper. Long Island students entering college this fall were eligible to apply for the \$5,000 scholarship, regardless of where they attend college. The applicants were required to pursue education in environmental studies, sciences, ecology, sustainability, public policy or land and water protection.

All of this year's applicants were outstanding students who indicated a strong interest in the environment. Ms. Skobodzinski developed her

Credit: LIPBS



SECOND ENVIRONMENTAL SCHOLARSHIP: Awarded to Ms. Viktoria Skobodzinski of Riverhead.

interest in Long Island's environment partly as a result of beach clean-up activities during her middle school years. She is presently attending Stony Brook University.

Pine Barrens Society President Alan Singer said, "We continue to look for smart and idealistic students who are committed to the environment on

Long Island much the way Robin was, and whose education may depend on available funding." Robin was a quiet but active champion of Pine Barrens preservation for the past 25 years. She died of metastatic breast cancer in 2019.

The scholarship is the result of a Matching Funds Challenge provided by Nancy Rauch Douzinas of the Rauch Foundation, Nick Gabriel of the Greentree Foundation and others who have pledged to match donations by the public.

The Long Island Community Foundation has assisted the Pine Barrens Society in establishing the scholarship. "This scholarship program is a beacon of hope for Long Island's environmental future," says David M. Okorn, Executive Director of the Foundation. "We are honored to be working with the Pine Barrens Society on this investment and continue the legacy of Robin's commitment to the environment."



PRIVATE INTERESTS OVER THE PUBLIC TRUST

Suffolk County Leases Public Parkland to Exclusive Sports Club

By John Turner

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

Imagine the following scenario: You're interested in taking your family to Smith Point County Park to spend a fun day in the sun. But as you pull up to the booth you learn that in order to plant your umbrella in the sand, you'll need to obtain permission from a private beach club which has been given operational control over the park. The club gets to decide whether you can visit the park, depending on what their plans are for the day.

While this fictional account might seem far-fetched, this scenario is currently playing out at another county park property. How? Through Suffolk County's recent extension of a lease of 260 acres of county parkland to a private party, the Peconic River Sportsman's Club. This public parkland, which stretches across and includes a more than one-mile stretch of the Peconic River in the heart of the Pine Barrens, has been off-limits to Suffolk County residents for the past 57 years. By the end of this new 25-year lease extension, Suffolk County residents will have been prohibited from freely accessing publicly-owned parkland for 86 years!

There are profound concerns over Suffolk County's approval of this exclusive lease and in response to this concern, and to the credit of the Bellone Administration and a few Suffolk County Legislators, the Suffolk County Parks Department has included a provision in the lease that could, potentially, allow for some public use. However, the public access allowed by this provision requires the explicit approval of the Sportsman's Club. It is clear that even with this effort to make "lemonade from a lemon," the public's interest in their public land takes a backseat to the private interests of the club. You — a Suffolk County resident and member of the public — need the explicit approval of a private party to access county parkland that you, and not they, own. This is upside down and backwards. And wrong.

This lease likely violates the protection of parkland enshrined in the Public Trust Doctrine — a legal tenet which guides parkland use and disposal. There are few things more sacred than public parks and the Public Trust Doctrine has long protected the public's right to access and benefit from property that has been established as parkland. There is a formal process for such "alienation" that requires permission from the public, through our representatives in the New York State Legislature. This requirement of expressed approval at the State level ensures transparency and accountability relating to the use and dispo-

Credit: Katie Brown



ENTRY BY INVITATION OR ESCORT: Suffolk County residents are prohibited from freely accessing publicly-owned parkland in the Pine Barrens.

sition of parkland. It is a measure to safeguard parks from the whims of municipalities and the pressures of favoritism, politics and public finances.

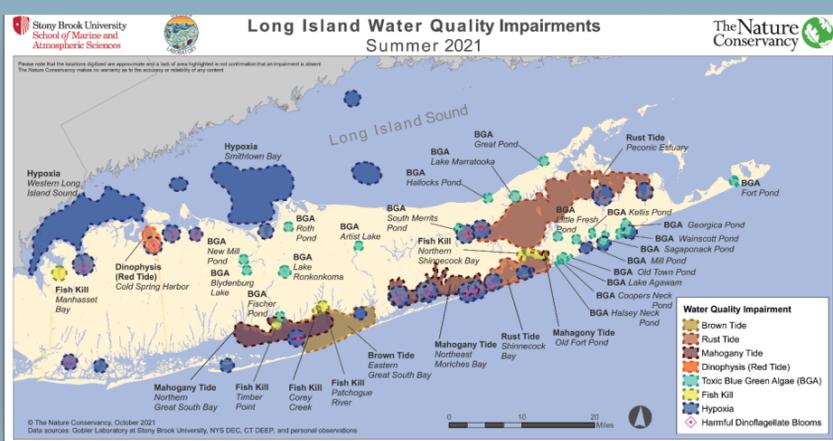
It has been reported that the Club needs to control access to the county land as a buffer to their shooting activities. This rationale is belied, however by aerial photographs which show that participants shoot away from and not toward county parkland. And if buffer is so important, why does Suffolk County operate a shooting range within Southaven County Park with little to no surrounding buffer?

Lease proponents have argued that the Sportsman's Club is no different than public golf courses that are operated by private vendors. But privately-run public golf courses are unconditionally open to any member of the public who wants to schedule a tee time, pay the greens fee, visit the pro shop, or eat lunch in the clubhouse.

The county says the lease "has been vetted six ways to Sunday." If so much vetting took place, then why didn't a single public servant make certain the public's interest was protected by ensuring public access in the first place? New York State Attorney General Letitia James, State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli, and State Parks Commissioner Erik Kulleseid must investigate to determine if the County has, through the approval of this lease, violated the Public Trust Doctrine and, in doing so, illegally alienated precious public parkland.

2021 WATER QUALITY SURVEY: MORE BAD NEWS

Credit: Gobler Lab & TNC



SUMMER OF DISCONTENT IN LONG ISLAND'S COASTAL WATERS: New Water Quality Map shows water quality impairments across Long Island.

Once again, scientists at Stony Brook University spent the summer assessing bodies of water surrounding Long Island for measures of water quality. Unfortunately, every major bay, inlet and estuary was negatively affected by toxic algae blooms and "dead zones," those areas with not enough dissolved oxygen to support marine life. As in the past, nitrogen from wastewater was cited as the likely culprit.

"It began with a harmful rust tide that spread across eastern Long Island," said Dr. Christopher Gobler, Professor of Stony Brook University. "In between, a record-setting two dozen low oxygen, dead zones were identified from Great Neck to East Hampton, over 20 lakes and ponds were afflicted with toxic blue-green algae blooms, and fish kills across another half dozen sites. This has become the new normal as Long Island reconns with a dual assault of climate change and excessive nitrogen loading."

With almost double the average summer rainfall (over 20 inches in 2021 as compared to an average of 12 inches in 2020, as per the National Weather Service), Long Island was also battered by several potent storms, including Henri and Ida.

Meteorologists think this trend may continue due to climate change. With excessive rainfall, nitrogen loading becomes a bigger problem. This excessive rainfall brings more nitrogen loading from land to sea, fueling harmful algal blooms and dead zones. For example, following tropical storms Henri and Ida, a mild rust tide expanded and intensified all across the east end of Long Island and the dead zones expanded across Long Island Sound and elsewhere.

Nitrogen from household sewage enters poorly-performing home septic systems and then seeps into groundwater and ultimately, into Long Island's bays, harbors, and estuaries or, in some cases, is directly discharged into surface waters. This nitrogen loading is a root cause of algae blooms and dead zones that are exacerbated when a tropical storm delivers more precipitation than supersaturated ground conditions can handle.

Both Nassau and Suffolk counties environmental studies have identified wastewater as the largest source of nitrogen that contaminates surface waters. Since nitrogen stimulates toxic algae blooms that can, in turn, remove oxygen from bottom waters as they decay, new septic systems that mitigate nitrogen loading are, our best defense.

"It has gotten to the point that we have to watch News 12 each week to see where it is safe to go swimming or fishing" said Carl LoBue, Senior Scientist for the Nature Conservancy. "The research findings are conclusive: we know how to fix this and it's time to act. The longer we wait to fix our water quality problems, the longer it will take and the more expensive it will be."

The report on the summer of 2021 was compiled by Dr. Christopher Gobler, Professor of Stony Brook University, whose lab group has been monitoring and sampling Long Island's waters on a weekly basis every summer since 2014. Data was also generated by the Long Island Sound Study which is funded by US Environmental Protection Agency and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. The data was reported weekly on News 12 and Newsday as part of their weekly Water Quality Index.

The Gobler Laboratory map shows precisely where on Long Island various algal blooms and low oxygen zones developed during the summer of 2021. The map also depicts hypoxic or low oxygen zones which are dangerous to marine life.