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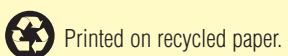
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A copy of the last annual report filed with the New York State Department of Law may be obtained by writing to NYS Attorney General's Charities Bureau, Attn: FOIL Officer, 120 Broadway, New York, NY, 10271 or may be obtained directly from the Long Island Pine Barrens Society, 2042 North Country Rd, Ste 103 Wading River, NY 11792



Credit: Wayne Cook



A NATURAL TREASURE: The Pine Barrens Society expands its preservation efforts.

Pine Barrens TV

The Pine Barrens Society's television program airs on Cablevision/Altice Public Access. October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024.

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



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Towns of Babylon, Brookhaven, Huntington, Islip, Riverhead, Smithtown, Southampton & Southold Channel 20:

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**LONG ISLAND
PINE BARRENS
SOCIETY**

Protecting Land & Water



today

Job #1 for Suffolk Legislature: Stop Blocking Clean Water Program

While hundreds of thousands of aging cesspools leak wastewater into Long Island's drinking water... onto its beaches... and into its bays, the Suffolk County Legislature has blocked a program that would address the problem. They need to change course, right quick.

That's why the Pine Barrens Society has joined with some two-dozen environmental groups, businesses, labor organizations, and others calling on the legislature to move quickly to allow a public vote on the program.

"This is a grave problem – a deadly problem," said Pine Barrens Society president, Alan Singer. "And it is getting worse. It's not something that can wait until the politicians get around to it."

Credit: LIPBS



UNSUPPORTIVE GOVERNMENT: Government should get out of the way.

"This was the worst year for harmful algal blooms on Long Island, ever."

—Dr. Christopher Gobler,
Chair of Coastal Ecology and Conservation,
Stony Brook University

Credit: Katie Muether Brown



WHAT A MESS: One of many algal blooms in our lakes and ponds.

Source of the danger.

As Long Island has developed over the decades, wastewater infrastructure has not kept up. Today, three out of four Suffolk homes are unsewered, and an estimated 360,000 aging septic systems are leaking nitrogen-contaminated wastewater.

- The contamination infiltrates groundwater, polluting Suffolk's sole source of drinking water.
- It triggers algal blooms in bays, estuaries, ponds, and harbors.
- Some of the algae are toxic in themselves, endangering human health and making shellfish inedible.
- Also, the algae deplete oxygen in the water, creating "dead zones," unable to sustain aquatic life.
- The contamination is a primary contributor to the collapse of Long Island's shellfishing industry.

The danger has become critical.

Some twenty years ago, nitrogen pollution in Long Island Sound was already so high, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency called for a 60% reduction. Since then, the problem has only grown worse. In the past eight years, dead zones in the Sound have doubled in size.

This year, pollution is the worst ever. According to a report prepared by Stony Brook University's School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences, "Water quality in Long Island's bays, harbors, and estuaries reached an all-time low, with water bodies awash in fish kills, dead zones, toxic algal blooms, and fecal bacteria."

We have the solution.

A new plan was prepared in 2020, which attacks the problem at its source. It would provide funding to connect homes and businesses to sewers and, in areas without sewers, install new advanced septic systems.

- It would be funded by a 1/8-penny sales tax.
- It would tap into billions of dollars in matching funds available from federal and state sources.

Suffolk legislators block vote.

Earlier this year, the State passed legislation enabling Suffolk County to establish the water fund. The decision was to go to voters in a referendum.

Suffolk's legislators were not tasked to establish the program – or even support it – merely to allow the public to vote on it.

Incredibly, outrageously, they refused.

It is a refusal doubly outrageous – a crime against both the environment and the rights of voters.

"Our drinking water and our beaches, bays, lakes and ponds, belong to Long Islanders – not to a huddle of politicians in Hauppauge," Mr. Singer said.

Suffolk legislators must stop playing games and put the referendum on the ballot. And they need to do it now.

For count on it: Facing an existential threat from water pollution, Long Islanders will not sit by and let ten politicians keep us from solving the problem.

The Long View

By Tom Casey

Mr. Casey is a Long Island Pine Barrens Society Board Member.

Welcome to the Anthropocene Epoch? Perhaps.

We've been living in what geologists call the Holocene (Greek for "whole new"), that period from the retreat of the glaciers about 11,700 years ago until now, taking in the rapid growth of human population, all our written history, technological advancements and the rise of what we refer to as "civilizations," however civilized and responsible they may or may not be.

The Holocene brought many changes to our planet, from agriculture to urbanization to industrialization to the Atomic Age and right up to the present at an increasingly accelerating pace. It certainly has been a "whole new" ballgame.

Credit: Katie Muether Brown



INVADING OUR PINE BARRENS: Japanese knotweed, the Asian Longhorned Beetle and phragmites are common invasive species.

lost more than 35,000 pines here. Cutting dead and diseased trees severely taxes the time and budgets of park agencies and, other than removing "hazard trees" that threaten trails, roads and buildings, may not be economically sustainable.

So what happens to the Pine Barrens? Things may look ugly for a time, but a thinned or missing canopy will foster the growth of scrub oak, berry bushes and other heath plants, and tree oaks will be healthier. Pitch pine seedlings and saplings will grow in abundance, and some will surely survive to maturity. We can hope that, once the initial onslaught passes and the forest thins, the beetle battle will somewhat abate.

Keep in mind that the Pine Barrens are only a few thousand years old, the blink of an eye geologically. Change has been constant, from the Ice Age on down, and will continue. Sooner or later, and it looks like sooner, we will see new flora, new fauna and new pests. We may then lose some species, both endangered and common, that make the Barrens what they are in our eyes.

So, the current character of the Pine Barrens may change, but in the big picture that's just surface appearance. What doesn't change is the vital importance of our underlying, sole source aquifer. We must preserve the land and preserve our drinking water, no matter the stresses potentially imposed by worldwide disruptions of our way of life.

Some of the stresses on the Pine Barrens will originate far away. Polar ice sheets melting at an accelerated pace are dumping more freshwater into the ocean, causing the Gulf Stream to move more slowly than it has in thousands of years. By the year 2100, it may reach a tipping point where it collapses entirely, bringing hotter weather to the south, colder to the north, more violent storms, and a sea level rise of up to six feet. By 2050, Jones Beach could start to disappear, and Orient and Montauk might be islands. Parts of New York City will be inundated.

What that portends is a massive rebuilding of infrastructure. Roads, bridges, sewage plants, utilities and businesses will need to be relocated, to the tune of \$75 to \$100 billion just on Long Island, by some estimates. The economic pressures will tempt some to relax preservation laws, and we can't let that happen.

We rarely take the long, long view, governmentally. We have been warned of climate change for at least 60 years, but we have not taken time to plan for it adequately because we are frightened by the cost. Yet we still build in places we shouldn't, and head-in-the-sand skeptics have delayed us.

We need to start thinking about the Long Island we will leave our descendants. Our open spaces will be ever more important, and we will need to make hard decisions about how much building we can sustain, lest we end up like Shelley's King Ozymandias, whose shattered statue symbolized his shattered realm:

*Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that Colossal Wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.*

ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS NOTES

By Andrew Wong, Program Coordinator

THIS YEAR'S ENVIRONMENTAL GALA

This year, the Long Island Pine Barrens Society celebrated its anniversary with the 46th Environmental Gala. We recounted our summer celebration of the Pine Barrens Protection Act's 30th anniversary with a video of the show, and also highlighted this year's incredible Middle School Kids Go To College winners!



While the Gala was good fun all around, the theme addressed a current crisis. "Splash: Clean Water Now" was a call to action, not just for our supporters, but for our elected representatives, many of whom denied Long Island residents the chance to vote on water protections this last Election Day.

Credit: Wayne Cook



ALL IN ATTENDANCE: Pine Barrens Protection Act 30th Anniversary Celebration

loud enough. It takes all of us to convince our elected officials to do the right thing.

Holding these elected officials responsible at the polls is one of the most significant things we can do, but pushing them every other time of the year is just as crucial. Your vote is important, but recent events, especially, have shown that our voices will be heard if they're

2023 SCHOLARSHIP AWARDED

Credit: LIPBS



SCHOLARSHIP NAMESAKE: The late, great Robin Amper.

The Long Island Pine Barrens Society is proud to announce the recipient of this year's Robin Amper Environmental Scholarship. Namit Kapoor, a Herricks High School graduate, is now a freshman at Duke University studying public policy. Namit is already familiar with a college campus after a three-year science internship at Columbia University. We're extremely excited and can't wait to see what Namit does in the future!

EPCAL SAFE, FOR NOW...

In October, Riverhead Town's deal with the CAT (Calverton Aviation and Technology) to develop a portion of the EPCAL property was cancelled. The property includes acres deemed important for preservation as part of "The Best of the Rest." Both the Riverhead Industrial Development Agency and the Town Board recognized that the developer's finances were weak and the project was only vaguely outlined. Also, there was little community support for the project.

Credit: LIPBS



DICK AMPER AND TEAM: In 2008, Opposing development of EPCAL properties.

Currently the developers are seeking to take the issue to court with a lawsuit against the Town of Riverhead, in a vain attempt to force them back into the disastrous deal. At the time of writing no legal action had commenced. However, EPCAL's future is very much up in the air.



By John Turner

Mr. Turner is one of the founders of the Long Island Pine Barrens Society.

Misty Watercolor Memories

It is very difficult to select memories to reminisce about after 45 years with the Long Island Pine Barrens Society, all to secure the permanent protection of the Long Island Pine Barrens. Literally hundreds of memories live on from hikes and field trips, speaking engagements (scores of slide lectures about the Pine Barrens to diverse audiences), public hearings, court testimony, lobbying activities in the halls of Hauppauge and Albany, and, of course, quarterly board meetings of the Society at which we strategized to set policy and direction.

The following are but a few.

I remember well several hikes, a few of which were in the Dwarf Pine Plains. Early in the Society's existence we led many hikes to promote public awareness of the Pine Barrens. One of the more successful hikes involved co-founder John Cryan leading a walk to see buck moths during their annual autumn mating flight. Prior to the start of the hike John found several female buck moths. He put them in a fine wire cage where, hanging from the top, they began to do what female buck moths do: release pheromones to lure males to create the next generation of moths. And lure they did, for quickly a dozen or so males, adorned in their beautiful white, black, and orange coloration converged on the cage trying to get inside to mate! The more than 50 participants were excited to see up close one of the iconic species of the Pine Barrens.

The Dwarf Pine Plains have been the site of several other memorable encounters. Leading a hike of a dozen people on a full moon night to listen for "goatsuckers", such as whip-poor-wills and chuck-will's-widows about a decade ago, we walked through the Dwarf Pine Plains listening for their distinctive calls. By the end of the hike, we had heard a dozen "whips" and three "chucks." I've two special memories from hiking the Plains in which I came across two rare Long Island mammals - striped skunk and grey fox. Both were foraging for food and because they were so focused on their search, I was able to get a wonderful close up view of each species.

Another hike that I led with co-founder Bob McGrath took place further west in a large expanse of Pine Barrens, Manorville Hills, the largest block of contiguous open space found on Long Island. Approximately 25 participants were treated to a stunning display of an eastern hognose snake going into its famous "death feign act" whereby the disturbed snake, coiled alongside a sandy trail, went into spasms and convulsions, turning over on its back, with its tongue hanging out of its mouth, "dies." Another "herp" I have a special memory of was seeing a congregation of tiger salamanders in a pond in Manorville. Male and female salamanders were entwined in a ball in the water in a breeding frenzy; this activity results in male salamanders laying sperm packets or spermatophores on the pond bottom, which a female salamander will straddle and bring it into her body.

Then there was the time Bob and I traveled to the World Trade Center for a meeting with the Army Corps of Engineers. The hearing was focused on the filling of freshwater wetlands just south of Swan Pond to construct a golf course. We made the mistake, being young, enthusiastic and foolish, of running up 45 flights of stairs. We were winded

quickly and the hearing didn't go much better as the Corps, mind-bogglingly, issued the permit to allow for the destruction of the wetlands. To this day, the golf course remains an ecological travesty – a use of the land that destroyed wetlands and forest, and which continually inputs fertilizer into a naturally nutrient poor ecosystem.

The Society has conducted a fair amount of advocacy in advancing the protection of the Pine Barrens and two events stand out. Mike Deering, who was Society president for a while, and I were at the Suffolk County Legislature in Hauppauge to express support for an amendment to the Suffolk County Drinking Water Protection Program; at that time the land acquisitions were "pay-as-you-go", meaning the funding used for land purchases was made available on an annual basis. Since land values were escalating rapidly, we argued the County should bond for the money as this would result in more properties ultimately preserved, even though the County's overall amount of money would be reduced because of necessary interest payments on the bonds. We pigeonholed then county legislator Steve Levy, a very fiscally conservative lawmaker, in the hallway next to the auditorium to argue our point that although the County would be required to pay interest, more acreage would be preserved – the very purpose of the land acquisition program. While Levy still voted against it, the measure, thankfully, was amended and the County bought lots of Pine Barrens properties.

Yet another significant memory was the first time I communicated with Dick Amper, the long-serving executive director of the Society. It was through a phone call on a Sunday night. Dick called to learn more about the Pine Barrens as he and other neighbors were fighting to stop a development from being constructed on the eastern side of Lake Panamoka. I could tell he was quite interested and intense and a very quick learner. One thing led to another, and the development was stopped, the property preserved, and the Board of the Society

realized that Dick was a very talented person – a many-decades-long relationship was born. Combining Dick's public relations and media acumen with the other talents of Society board members proved to be an unbeatable combination!

Perhaps the memory that is foremost in my mind occurred on a spring night in Albany in 1993. After many months of negotiating between the LI Pine Barrens Society and the towns and developers, the Long Island Pine Barrens Protection Act was passed by the New York State Legislature. The same night the state legislation creating the Environmental Protection Fund passed, providing funding to purchase lands in the Core Preservation Area of the Pine Barrens. It was a great night and fun to be sitting in the gallery of the NY State Assembly when the final vote was tallied. A close second was the press event at Southaven County Park, several weeks later, at which Governor Mario Cuomo signed the measure into law.

These memories depict "The Way We Were." With the Society's advancement of "The Best of the Rest" initiative, I'm hoping we'll develop many more vivid watercolor memories to add to the collection.

Credits: Top-John Cryan, Bottom-Bob McGrath



AMAZING PINE BARRENS SPECIES: A buck moth in all its glory and a "threatening" hognose snake.

The Best of the Rest Update

New York State, Suffolk County, and the Towns of Brookhaven, Riverhead, and Southampton have, over the past 50 years, acquired tens of thousands of acres of open space in the Long Island Pine Barrens. Today, Long Islanders are the beneficiaries of this sustained effort. More than 50,000 largely contiguous acres of the Central Pine Barrens have been acquired, creating Long Island's "Central Park." This "park" represents the full breadth of the ecosystem's diversity: river and stream systems, former cranberry bogs, Atlantic White Cedar and Red Maple swamps, vernal pools, coastal plain ponds, pine-dominated forests, oak woodlands, scrub oak savannas, and grasslands.

Yet, the Pine Barrens have not reached their full ecological, hydrological, or recreational potential. There are still thousands of acres of undeveloped properties in and adjacent to both the Core Preservation and Compatible Growth Areas whose protection would safeguard our drinking water resources along with benefiting the species and natural communities contained therein. Preservation will also enhance landscapes of the larger Pine Barrens ecosystem and the public's enjoyment of this natural resource.

Thanks to funding from the Long Island Community Foundation and support

from our sponsors, donors and friends, we have advocated for the preservation of "The Best of the Rest" throughout the year. This campaign to acquire and permanently preserve these 3,800 acres has been well-received by all levels of government.

Credits: Dylan Eiden



THE BEST OF THE REST: John Turner describing the significance of the parcels to be preserved at our June 17th celebration.

As featured at our June 17th celebration of the Pine Barrens Act, several of the speakers addressed the importance of securing "The Best of the Rest."

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), the Suffolk County Department of Economic Development and Planning and the Towns of Brookhaven and Southampton have been especially active in working with us to do just that. They have solicited landowners' interest in selling for preservation, and appraised those properties where there is interest (a rather complicated process when government is the purchaser). The next step is to negotiate the purchase, another lengthy and complicated process.

We have made significant progress toward our goal, with approximately 900 acres acquired or on the path to acquisition as outlined above. Most of these properties are in the Town of Brookhaven. One parcel of note that has been acquired is 156 acres of Rose-Breslin property near William Floyd Parkway. We expect to see positive action on the remaining 650 acres in the first half of 2024.