

GROUP ACTION

THE NEWSLETTER OF GROUP FOR THE EAST END

Clean Water: Turning Ideas into Action

- Protecting Bridgehampton's Drinking Water from Poison and Industrial Waste
- Keeping Plum Island off the Chopping Block
- 25 Years of Kids Exploring Land and Water
- Expanding the Community Preservation Fund to Invest in Clean Water



A Day in the Life of the Peconic Estuary
Photo: Beth Young





Radioactivity, Poisonous Pesticides and Heavy Metals Confirmed at “Sand Land”

Group Pushes to Deny Expansion of Bridgehampton Sand Mine

The test results are in. According to the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and the Suffolk County Department of Health, the surface waters at the Bridgehampton sand mine owned by Wainscott Sand & Gravel, are contaminated.

to expand its operations. With your support, the Group has been fighting since 2013 to stop the owner from digging forty feet closer to the water table and excavating almost five additional forested acres—that’s about two million tons of new sand.

After more than 50 years in existence, there’s not much sand left in the pit and the operation has grown to include a

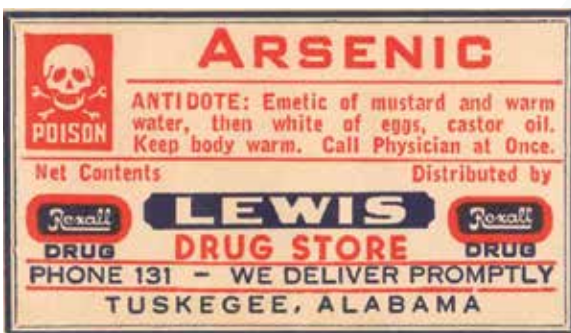
vegetative waste processing facility. Neighbors are subject to a constant parade of dump trucks, a sickening stench, and spontaneous fires erupting. The Group will continue to fight against the possible issuance of a permit that would allow 25 more years of mining and the potential for even more pollution.



In 2013, a study by the DEC revealed toxins, heavy metals and radioactivity from a similar vegetative waste composting facility, Long Island Compost, were responsible for contaminating nearby

residential wells. The Group has been calling for the testing of the groundwater immediately below the Sand Land mine to see if the drinking water supply—which serves a substantial part of Southampton and East Hampton towns—is being contaminated.

We have been working for decades to protect our water supply on the East End, and it is unacceptable to have Sand Land threaten the highest quality, most vulnerable source of drinking water in the area.



Some of the contaminants include high levels of arsenic, manganese, and Chlordane, a carcinogenic insecticide that was banned in the United States in 1988 because of the risk it poses to human health. Despite the findings, the owner has appealed a decision by the DEC to reject Sand Land’s proposal

“After learning there is more waste processing than mining taking place at Sand Land, people want and deserve to know how its operations are affecting the public drinking water supply.” —Bob DeLuca, President, Group for the East End

Thank you for your continued support!

The Group relies on your generosity to protect the environment on the East End.





Group President Bob DeLuca, third from left, provides testimony at a public hearing on preserving Plum Island.

Progress in Preserving Plum Island

Group for the East End has been fighting for the preservation of Plum Island since 2008. That year, Congress passed a law mandating the sale of Plum Island to offset the cost of building a new National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility, which is already under construction in Manhattan, Kansas.

The Group and its “Preserve Plum Island” partners are strongly opposed to the federal government selling the island to a private interest.

In September, Group President Bob DeLuca provided testimony at a public hearing on preserving Plum Island before the New York State Assembly Standing Committee on Environmental Conservation. He emphasized these points:

- Hundreds of acres of undeveloped shoreline, wetlands, and higher-level areas should be permanently preserved.
- Plum Island should be managed responsibly as a refuge to protect its wildlife and its cultural and natural resources.
- New York State should make constructive use of the existing laboratory and infrastructure as an academic or research facility.
- Since 9/11, tens of millions of taxpayer dollars have been spent to improve the safety and security of the lab, and

substantial improvements—including a \$30 million upgrade to the wastewater treatment plant—are currently under way.

Thanks to your support and the dedicated work of the Preserve Plum Island Coalition, leaders from levels of government are making a commitment to preserve Plum Island.

This is great progress, but now we need to keep pressure on those elected officials to take action and pass legislation that will preserve Plum Island and forever protect its diverse wildlife, natural resources and cultural significance.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

1. Tell your federal representatives you support the preservation of Plum Island. Check your email for our Plum Island Action Alerts. If you're not on our email list, sign up today at **GroupfortheEastEnd.org**.
2. Go to **PreservePlumIsland.org** and sign up for their email alerts.
3. Follow Group for the East End and the Preserve Plum Island Coalition on Facebook.



Summer Field Ecology Program Reaches Milestone

25 Years of Inspiring Future Conservationists

Thanks to your support, the Group has offered the best summer nature program for children on the East End for 25 years. Led by our extraordinary team of experienced educators, kids have been exploring tidal marshes, getting up close with plants and animals, learning about natural resources—and having fun doing it.

Many children start at the age of eight, return year after year, and become junior counselors—a testament to the success of the program. Then there are the brothers and sisters who follow in the footsteps of their older siblings, eager to hold a chickadee in their hand, discover the natural wonders of the Walking Dunes, or catch a hermit crab for the fiercely competitive and popular hermit crab races!

Usually sold out, the summer sessions take place on the North or South fork and consist of four action-packed days outside. We explore a different location each day, so there's always something new to spark a child's interest.

By inspiring children to love and appreciate nature, the Group is helping to create the next generation of conservationists. They are our future, and it will be up to them to continue protecting and restoring the environment on the East End.

It's a
**Family
Affair!**

Meet Max, Teo & Ava Michael

“Max, Teo and Ava love Group for the East End’s Summer Field Ecology Program, which instills a genuine appreciation for nature and wildlife, and puts them on a path to caring about their environment.” — Carolina Buzzetti



- 1 Teo digs for soft shell clams on the shores of Shinnecock Bay.
- 2 & 3 At Morton National Wildlife Refuge in Noyac, Max searches carefully for osprey while her younger sister Ava waits patiently to feed a chickadee.

➤ AND Devin, Ryan,
Meghan & Kiki Yadav!



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- 4 Devin checks out a horseshoe crab on Dayton Island.
- 5 Ryan catches dragonflies in the Long Pond Greenbelt.
- 6 Meghan studies estuary creatures in Three Mile Harbor.
- 7 Kiki (center) and friends collect magnetite on the Walking Dunes.

2016 Summer Field Ecology Program

Contact **Steve Biasseti**,
Director of Environmental Education, at
sbiasseti@eastendenvironment.org or
(631) 765 6450 x205, or visit
groupfortheeastend.org/what-we-do/education



Can Our Polluted Waters Really Be Cleaned Up?

Success of Community Preservation Fund Tells Us YES 10,000 Acres Preserved, \$1 Billion Raised

If you're of a certain age you may remember the 1980s, when developers started gobbling up large parcels of land on the East End.

Thanks to supporters like you, Group for the East End (then Group for the South Fork) was able to assemble an army of conservationists, civic groups and forward-thinking government leaders to prevent the East End from becoming a wasteland of strip malls and big box stores. After more than a decade of cutting through red tape and battling special interests, the Peconic Bay Region Community Preservation Fund (CPF) became law in 1999 by voter referendum.

Since then, the CPF has preserved ten thousand acres on the East End, and in 2015 its revenues surpassed the one billion dollar mark! Financed by a 2% real estate transfer tax, the Towns of Southold, East Hampton, Southampton, Shelter Island, and Riverhead

use their portions of the CPF to purchase development rights and protect open space and farmland in their communities.



The CPF will keep protecting land until 2030, and thanks to a forward-looking, new proposal (championed by New York State Assemblyman Fred Thiele and State Senator Ken Lavalle, who authored the original CPF

legislation) the fund could run through 2050. In addition, it may provide a newly dedicated funding category that could raise tens of millions of dollars for regional water quality protection and restoration.

Approval of this new clean water funding initiative will require approval by East End voters, and the Group will lend its full support to ensure this initiative passes as a ballot proposition next year. With your help, together with our partners, we will implement sustainable, cost-effective

strategies to safeguard our precious coastal waters—just as the CPF has succeeded in protecting the beautiful landscapes of the East End.



Searching for Salamanders



Oliver Horner gears up for a scavenger hunt at Downs Farm Preserve in Cutchogue, where the Group runs a busy nature center. He was one of many children ages 5-7 who enrolled in the Group's new summer program, Young Naturalists. They searched

for chipmunks, built bird feeders and skillfully used nets to catch and release flying insects. If you have a child who enjoys the outdoors, check out the Young Naturalist and Summer Field Ecology programs at GroupfortheEastEnd.org

Will You Leave A Legacy?

Help preserve the East End by naming the Group as a beneficiary in your estate plans. Whether it's through your will, a trust, a retirement plan or an insurance policy, you can plan for the future, pass on your values, and make a lasting difference for the environment on eastern Long Island.

Recent Bequests

- Estate of George Balasses
- Estate of Joy Cordery
- Estate of Lynne Crowe
- Estate of Carol Morrison
- Estate of Cyrelle Pinar
- Estate of Reed Roberts

For more information:

Please contact Vice President Aaron Virgin at 631-765-6450 x218.

All calls are confidential.



Guest of a Guest Photography

WHERE *the* WILD THINGS...

Over 250 people braved the rain on June 27 to make the Group's annual benefit a big success! Thank you to everyone who gave their support to protect the environment on the East End, where the wildlife live and breed. Pictured are three of the event's co-chairs Katherine Leahy Birch and Clark & Kristen Briner.

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A Day in the Life...

The Group's Steve Biasetti shared his knowledge of all things aquatic with students from Mattituck High School for the innovative program, A Day in the Life of the Peconic Estuary, on October 23. Together with other schools across the East End, hundreds of students simultaneously collected scientific information about the estuary, which they will analyze and then share with each other to portray the status of the ecosystems in this critically important water body. Pretty cool! Check out their findings at <http://portaltodiscovery.org/aday/>.



Our Mission: Group for the East End protects and restores the environment of eastern Long Island through education and professional advocacy, and by inspiring people to embrace a conservation ethic and take action. The Group is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization.

 Through Earth Share of New York's workplace giving program, part of each paycheck can be automatically deducted to support the Group. Sign up at EarthShareNY.org.

Learn more about our work at GroupfortheEastEnd.org  

Black Friday. Cyber Monday.
#GIVINGTUESDAY
December 1, 2015