



Group FOR THE East End
50th Anniversary

2021-22
WINTER NEWSLETTER

Protecting the nature
of the place you love
for 50 years



INSIDE

- 50 Years of Eternal Vigilance
- WOW! A Whole New Look
- Native American Nest of Life
- Blue-green Algae in Ponds
- Adventures with the Group
- Back to School and Loving it!
- Memorial Tributes:
Bill McChesney, Nancy Nagle Kelley

Eternal Vigilance

DEAR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS,



On the cusp of the Group's 50th year of service in defense of the East End environment, I want to thank you for your generosity.

With your support, we have made an enormous difference in protecting our land, water, and wildlife, and in educating children to become our future conservation leaders.

Our decades-long **commitment to preserve farmland and forests** has resulted in thousands of acres of open space and beautiful woodland trails where we can enjoy nature's bounty.

The Group's advocacy efforts to **create low-cost programs that replace homeowners' outdated septic systems** are now in demand. After a steady, 30-year decline in water quality due to nitrogen pollution, this is extremely welcome news for our bays and harbors.

Our **dedication to saving the osprey population** from the brink of local extinction has also paid off. Today, approximately 600 of these iconic fish hawks return to the East End annually to breed and raise their chicks, much to our delight.

Over 75,000 children from diverse backgrounds have benefited from the Group's **top-notch environmental education and outreach programs**, both inside and outside the classroom.

Indeed, I am proud of and thankful for the Group's achievements, but our work is never done! Today, our local environment faces the most unrelenting pressure I have ever seen, and it is incumbent for all of us to keep fighting to save the very things that drew people here in the first place. We must:

Confront some of the largest development projects in a generation at a time when the appetite to clear more land and build is insatiable.

Keep up the fight against massive sand mines that pollute our groundwater every day with nitrates and heavy metals, blatantly ignoring high-court rulings telling them to stop.

Protect and restore the natural habitats that box turtles, shorebirds, and countless other species need to thrive, and not just survive, here. Too many are disappearing at an alarming rate.

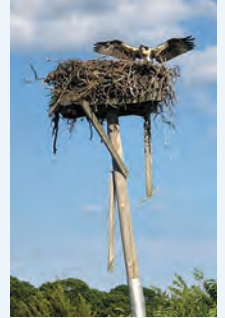
Educate and inspire our children to appreciate the outdoors and lead by example.

The Group's investment in young people is a sound one, both locally and globally.

Every environmental victory requires eternal vigilance, and your support makes that possible. Now and over the next 50 years, we will protect the nature of the place you love—together.

Sincerely,

Bob DeLuca
President, Group for the East End





New Look, Same Group!

| TURNING THE BIG 5-0 IN 2022!

Plans are underway to celebrate the Group's 50th anniversary! We're starting with a new look that reflects our work to protect the East End's land, water, and wildlife. Graphic designer and environmental advocate, Diane Hewett of DCH Graphics, brought that vision to life, including a bird's eye keeping watch over the East End. Thank you, Diane!

Keep **your** eyes open for extra special nature outings, childrens programs, and our Swing into Summer Benefit!

Celebrating Native American History & Culture

| "NEST OF LIFE" ART INSTALLATION IN CUTCHOGUE



Tony Valderrama, environmental educator and artist, and Shane Weeks, artist and Shinnecock Nation's cultural ambassador, partnered with the Group for a fun and interesting afternoon of Native American history, art, and songs, with an emphasis on respecting nature.

The program at Downs Farm Preserve included participants building a "Nest of Life," an ongoing series of nature sculptures celebrating the return of our eagles, ospreys, and other feathered friends. The branches and leaves we used to build the giant nest are the same materials birds use to construct their own nests, and the large white stones made for excellent eggs! Valderrama states, "The nest is meant to be a gift given back to nature." Downs Farm Preserve, also known as Fort Corchaug, is a 51-acre National Historic Landmark and site of a palisaded fort used by the Indigenous Corchaug tribe.



Tony Valderrama, the Group's outreach director Taralynn Reynolds, and Shane Weeks (left to right).

Blue-green Algae, Potentially Toxic, Threatens Freshwater Ponds



Photo: The East Hampton Star

“Excess nitrogen from outdated septic systems and fertilizer are making our freshwater ponds dangerous for people, pets, and wildlife.”

– Bob DeLuca, President Group for the East End

GROUP ADVOCATES FOR MORE SEPTIC FUNDING AND LESS FERTILIZER

Should you be concerned when your favorite local pond looks like this? The answer is YES!

This summer, the Kenney’s-McCabe Beach Civic Association notified the Group about a potential blue-green algae bloom in Great Pond in Southold. Knowing the potential harm of this type of algae to people, pets, and wildlife, we volunteered to take water samples and bring them to Stony Brook Southampton’s lab. Test results showed that blue-green algae were indeed present in the 33-acre pond.

In fact, according to Christopher J. Gobler, Ph.D., director of the New York State Center for Clean Water Technology at Stony Brook University, there are 24 freshwater ponds across Suffolk County, many of them on the East End, where blue-green algae, or Cyanobacteria, have been detected. In fresh water,

the algae can produce toxins that make swimming, kayaking and paddle boarding unsafe. Over the last decade, the Group’s pond-based ecology lessons have been cancelled, wildlife have fallen ill or died, and even a beloved dog succumbed after drinking the water from Georgica Pond.

What causes blue-green algae?

Excessive amounts of nitrogen—mostly from old, leaky septic systems and lawn fertilizer—flow directly into our beautiful ponds and lakes and create algae blooms. Add in rising water temperatures—a result of global warming—and you have perfect conditions for blue-green algae to flourish in fresh water and create serious public health threats.



During one of our Great Pond visits to collect water samples for blue-green algae testing, this tiny bullfrog appeared—a reminder of all the wildlife that depend on the health of freshwater ponds to survive.

What is the Group doing?

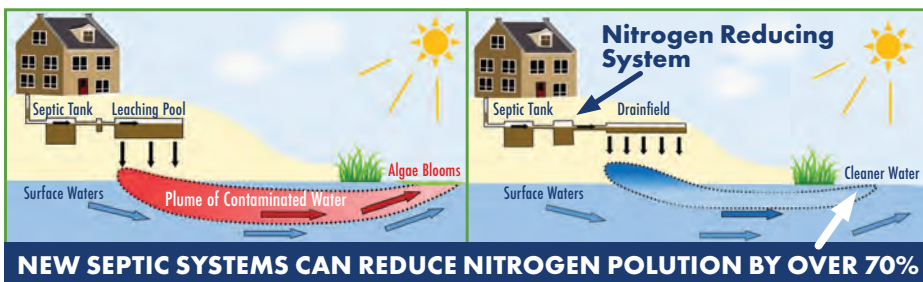
Thanks to your support, we have been educating residents and relentlessly advocating for more state and local funding to replace out-of-date septic systems for homeowners. We are also looking into how water quality can be monitored more regularly in our freshwater ponds and lakes and how test results are communicated to the public.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

▶ **Replace your septic system with a new, advanced, nitrogen-reducing system at little to no cost.** Thanks to the Group's efforts, generous grants are readily available from New York State and Suffolk County. And if you live in the towns of East Hampton, Southampton, or Shelter Island, additional grants or rebates are available. (We are committed to getting the towns of Southold and Riverhead to also participate.)

▶ **Stop using traditional fertilizer on your lawn.** Fertilizer's excess nutrients invariably find their way into our ponds, bays, and harbors and cause algae blooms. Use green alternatives instead.

▶ **Stay engaged!** If you suspect a blue-green algae bloom, contact us and we'll connect you with the appropriate agency. We must all work together as a community to protect our children, pets, and wildlife.



Apply for septic grants and rebates at CleanWaterCash.org

Looking for an Outdoor Adventure?

OR AN INDOOR ADVENTURE ABOUT THE OUTDOORS?

- Want to schedule a beach cleanup or a guided walk for your group?
- Need a speaker for your garden club?

The Group works with libraries, scouts, and other community groups to bring people closer to nature.

If you are interested in scheduling a program, please contact Taralynn Reynolds, outreach director, at treynolds@eastendenvironment.org.



Back to School and Loving it!

GROUP RESUMES ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS



▲ PROJECT MOST

The Group's long-standing partnership with Project MOST in East Hampton keeps kids engaged through enriching nature programs.

◀ FOREST DETECTIVES

Springs School students act as nature detectives, investigating layers of the forest!



▲ BEACH BONANZA

An East Quogue sixth grader examines a large spider crab during our Ocean Beach Bonanza lesson at Ponquogue Bridge.

Our educators are thrilled to lead classroom and field trip lessons again after more than a year. Students from public and private schools, after-school programs, and home-schooled programs explore the outdoors with our highly experienced team and learn about forests, estuaries, beach erosion, and lots more. Indoor lessons about ecosystems and natural history complement school curricula.

Group educators conducted 52 field and classroom lessons in six schools in Amagansett, East Hampton, East Quogue, and Montauk. **While programming hasn't quite reached pre-pandemic levels, since September, 939 students have participated. That's 5X as many as last year!**

In Memoriam



WITH HEAVY HEARTS, WE REMEMBER TWO FORMER LEADERS OF GROUP FOR THE EAST END WHO RECENTLY PASSED AWAY

William S. McChesney, Jr.

Bill served on the Group's board of directors from 2000-2015, 11 of those years as our gentle but intrepid chairman. He led the Group through challenging times with his impeccable honor, integrity, and a heartfelt passion to protect the East End environment.



Bill's sense of duty and earnest commitment to do what was right made him an exceptional leader and an inspiration to those fortunate enough to know him. We are more enriched, and the Group is a stronger organization, thanks to Bill's enthusiasm, support, and resolve.

It was a privilege to know and work with Bill McChesney. We miss him already and send our deepest sympathies to his devoted wife Deni and their family.

Nancy Nagle Kelley

Nancy worked at the Group for 11 years starting in the 1980's, during which time she served as both executive director and president. She was a distinguished and passionate leader who presided over some of the most dynamic and hard-fought environmental victories ever



achieved by the Group. She also set the organization on a path toward full-time professionalism and significantly raised the stature of the organization to one of regional leader in conservation advocacy and education, which remains to this day.

Nancy also served as the director of the Long Island chapter of The Nature Conservancy for 22 years.

We send our deepest condolences to Nancy's husband Chris and their family.

Photo: Anthony Graziano

Local Artist Shows Some Love for Horseshoe Crabs

After North Fork artist Brianna Sander joined Group volunteers to monitor horseshoe crabs in the middle of the night, **she was inspired to create these limited-edition tees.** Using the design Brianna carved on linoleum blocks, the Group's environmental associates Madison Hrysko (*left*) and Marina DeLuca (*right*) hand-pressed each shirt. The blue, long-sleeve tees are 100% cotton, very comfy, and definitely conversation pieces!

GET THE SHIRT! Make a donation of \$60/shirt. Donate at GroupfortheEastEnd.org or send a check in the enclosed envelope. Enter "Horseshoe Crab", quantity/sizes, and your mailing address in the comments field or on your check. (Shipping via US Postal Service is included.) For more information, please contact Marina at mdeluca@eastendenvironment.org.



Thank you, Brianna!
Find Brianna's work on Instagram @bri.sandr



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A Gift to the Group is a Wise Investment in the Protection of Our:

- LAND, WATER, AND WILDLIFE
- CHILDREN'S FUTURE
- PUBLIC HEALTH
- LOCAL ECONOMY
- QUALITY OF LIFE



So much depends on the East End environment! Please make your donation today.

For information on gifts of securities and estate planning, please contact: Kristina Lange at klange@eastendenvironment.org. All calls and emails are confidential. Group for the East End does not offer financial or tax advice.

Donate online at GroupfortheEastEnd.org. THANK YOU!



OUR MISSION:

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

Group for the East End

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Learn more about our work at GroupfortheEastEnd.org

