



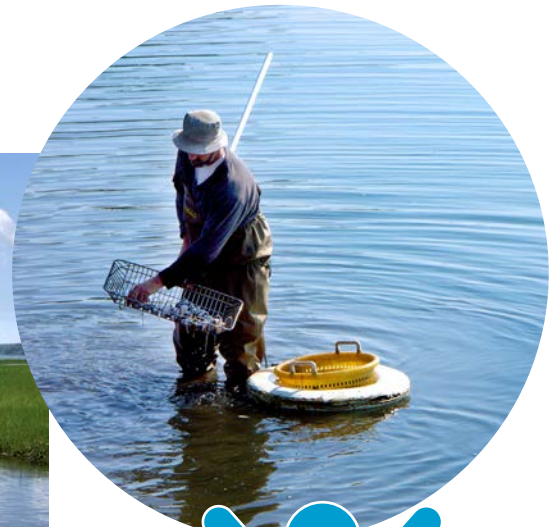
Group FOR THE East End®

Protecting the nature
of the place you love



Suffolk Legislative Majority Denies Residents Vote on Comprehensive Clean Water Investment Fund

THE GROUP ACTIVELY EXPLORES ALL
OPTIONS TO PROTECT EAST END WATERS



**OUR WATER
OUR VOTE**

Over the last 50 years, research has told us repeatedly that the most significant and widespread issue negatively impacting the quality of Suffolk County's bays, harbors, and freshwater bodies is the inadequate treatment of human waste.

But there's good news. Today's high-tech septic systems can significantly reduce the overabundance of nitrogen that flows into East End waters every day.

For the past ten years, the Group, working with a broad coalition of clean water advocates, has been pressing Suffolk County to address its biggest and most challenging environmental problem.

We have pushed relentlessly for a comprehensive wastewater strategy, proper updates and reforms to wastewater regulations, the advancement of new technology, and a stable and recurring revenue source to appropriately fund the program over time.

Thanks to your support, there's more good news. The Group's longstanding efforts have largely paid off. Over the last decade, Suffolk County has developed a sound, fact-based, science-driven plan to tackle the issue.

But how do we pay for a wastewater improvement program of this magnitude? Eventually, approximately 380,000 individual septic systems must be replaced and many sewage treatment facilities in more heavily developed areas must be expanded. It will take years.

Fortunately, the **Suffolk County Water Quality Restoration Act**, written by the East End's New York State (NYS) Assemblyman, Fred Thiele, was carefully structured to provide long-term funding for wastewater improvement. Key aspects of the plan include financial accountability, transparency, and protection against the redirection of funds to other programs. This important legislation was part of the

governor's 2023 budget bill and approved by the NYS Senate and Assembly.

Once adopted, the bill granted the Suffolk County Legislature the authority to let voters decide if they want a stable and recurring revenue source dedicated exclusively to water quality infrastructure. The proposed funding mechanism calls for a 1/8-of-one-cent increase in the county sales tax





until 2060. That minuscule amount, \$1.25 for every \$1,000 spent by consumers, is expected to generate over \$3 billion over the 35-year life of the program.

If approved, more grants would be available for East End homeowners to offset the cost of replacing their septic systems—for decades.

Overwhelming support to include the measure on the November ballot was clearly demonstrated through public hearings and a diverse coalition of community, civic, environmental, business, construction, and contracting advocates.

Unbelievably, the Suffolk County Legislature decided to suspend consideration of the measure indefinitely. By failing to act, the legislative majority blocked the public from voting on this once-in-a-generation opportunity to invest in clean water infrastructure. Then, after the Group and

“We know what to do, how to do it, and that the public demands action... now. We will not rest until Suffolk County residents are given the right to vote on the most important investment in clean water infrastructure in 50 years.”

– Bob DeLuca, *President*

other stakeholders pushed for a special election in December, the legislature failed to even bring the matter to a vote.

Throughout the public hearings, several legislators from central and western Suffolk argued that they needed more money for sewers—despite being fully aware that the proposed overall legislative package included a substantial increase in sewer funding. That increase would make it on par with the funding allocated to individual septic systems. Moreover, the monies for sewer programs can be heavily leveraged to attract additional state and federal funding.

So, these arguments simply don't hold up, and the apparent reason is politics.

As *Newsday* pointed out, all 18 seats in the county legislature are up for a vote this fall, and Republican party leaders appear to be afraid that a referendum on water quality will bring out more Democrats and harm Republicans' chances for re-election in swing districts and in open seat elections.

However, history tells us their fears are unfounded. In fact, when Suffolk County residents—Democrats, Republicans, and Independents—are given the opportunity to vote on environmental issues that affect their health, quality of life, and local economy, most measures are passed by a significant margin. (Just look at the results of the Community Preservation Fund, numerous environmental bond proposals, and the Suffolk County Drinking Water Protection Program.)

As this newsletter goes to press, the Group is working with its conservation partners to evaluate all strategic options on how to proceed. **Given the undeniable importance of protecting our local waters for present and future generations, we are fully committed to letting Suffolk County voters decide this critical funding issue.** With your generous support, we will succeed!



Photos: Diane Hewett

Group Testifies Against Massive Yacht Storage Facility Proposed For Mattituck Inlet

PROJECT WOULD IMPACT ENVIRONMENT, TRAFFIC, COMMUNITY CHARACTER

“This project is an easy rejection – it is too big, too disruptive, and too environmentally detrimental. The parcel is a perfect candidate for preservation.”

– Stephen Boscola, Save Mattituck Inlet Co-Chair



Photo: Russ Bales

The Group has joined supporters from the grassroots group, Save Mattituck Inlet (SMI), to oppose the development proposal for Strong’s Yacht Center. The plan calls for the construction of two enormous heated boat storage buildings to house over 80 yachts. Each structure is the size of approximately one acre.

Damage to the environment would be mostly irreversible and the neighborhood’s community character and quality of life would be negatively impacted. The project requires:

- Cutting down over 630 mature trees on approximately four wooded acres full

of wildlife and plant species, including several that are designated as Federally and New York State endangered or species of special concern.

- Demolishing a bluff in between residential homes—this natural geological treasure that sits 50 feet above mean sea level and helps



Photo: Steve Barghardt



Area of construction proposal (approximate)

Photo: Steve Borghardt

combat climate change, would be excavated down to 10 feet, despite rising sea levels.

- Hauling out more than 134,000 cubic yards of sand—the equivalent of approximately 4,500 tractor-trailer truckloads—through residential neighborhoods, truck by truck, to an offsite location over a six-month period for a total of 9,000 truck trips. That’s one truck-load every seven minutes, 10 hours a day, 5 days a week, on narrow roads where people walk their dogs and children ride bikes.

In addition to these devastating impacts, the Group shares these critical concerns with SMI:

- Increased pollution in Mattituck Inlet
- Newly built sanitary wastewater systems would be too close to groundwater
- Negative effect on Mill Road Preserve, a 27-acre public land adjacent to the site
- Disruption of the bucolic nature of the creek by two huge industrial-style heated warehouses
- Substantial noise and light pollution during and after construction

“This proposal represents the complete destruction of a natural geologic feature that provides ecological benefits, that once removed, cannot be mitigated.”

– Jenn Hartnagel, Senior Environmental Advocate

In May and June, the Group was among dozens of concerned citizens who provided testimony at public hearings on the draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) before the Southold Town Planning Board. The Group emphasized that the proposal is inconsistent with Southold Town’s comprehensive plan. That plan, which was just recently adopted by the town, strongly advocates for the protection of lasting environmental resources such as natural geologic features, woodlands,

habitat, and the preservation of community character. Also, the development proposal offers nothing substantial to mitigate or offset the harm the project would cause.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Go to SaveMattituckInlet.com today.

There you can learn more, sign a petition, let your voice be heard, read the DEIS, and more. You can also make a donation to support the fight against this ill-conceived project.

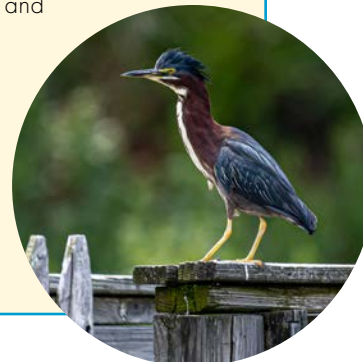


Photo: Steve Borghardt



Highest NYS Court Supports Group's Case Against Sand Land

ALL PERMITS ANNULLED, BUT MINING OPERATIONS CONTINUE

“The DEC has consistently failed to protect South Fork residents’ drinking water from a polluting sand mine, but the Group is 100% committed to ensuring that the court’s decision is enforced.”

– Bob DeLuca, President

According to the Suffolk County Health Department’s groundwater samples collected in 2018, the aquifer had been contaminated by Sand Land’s activities at the mine.

This year, the New York State Court of Appeals unanimously rejected a claim by the sand mine owner that on Long Island, local jurisdictions cannot use provisions of NYS mining laws to stop the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) from renewing mining permits, including those that allow mining operations to expand.

This most recent ruling comes after nearly a decade of litigation by the Group, the Noyac Civic Council, Citizens Campaign for the Environment, Southampton Town, and nearby neighbors.

Following the court’s directive, the **Town of Southampton notified the DEC that further mining was prohibited.** Despite the clarity of the decision, mining at Sand Land continues today.

The Group anticipates continued legal wrangling, but with your support, we will ensure that the decision is enforced, the mine is shut down, and the South Fork’s **drinking water is protected.**



This sand mining operation is located in a Special Groundwater Protection Area, designated by the New York State Legislature in 1987 and sits above the South Fork’s deepest groundwater reserves.



Group Testifies Against Wainscott Commercial Center Proposal



COMMUNITY OPPOSITION PUTS THE BRAKES ON THE REVIEW PROCESS

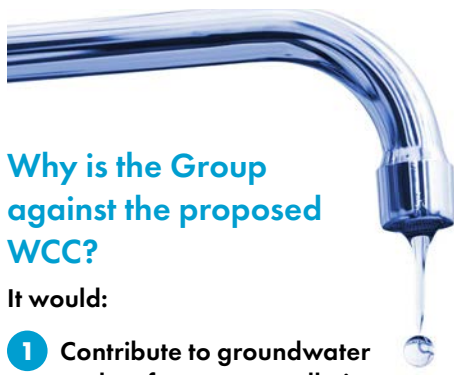
After testifying before the East Hampton Town Planning Board earlier this year, the Group is waiting for the town's review of the draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) on the 50-lot industrial project proposed for a 70-acre site in the heart of Wainscott.

The applicant for the Wainscott Commercial Center (WCC) has not yet responded to comments that the town initially provided or the 50 comments provided by the public.



Photo: Friends of Georgica Pond Foundation

Rendering of the Wainscott Commercial Center proposed for Montauk Highway, just a few hundred feet from Georgica Pond.



Why is the Group against the proposed WCC?

It would:

- 1 Contribute to groundwater and surface water pollution.**
The 50 proposed individual septic systems, projected to generate at least 15,700 gallons of wastewater per day, will likely have a negative impact on Georgica Pond, which is already plagued by nitrogen pollution.
- 2 Create even more congestion** on a portion of Montauk Highway that is already the most highly trafficked stretch in the entire Town of East Hampton.
- 3 Be wholly inconsistent with Wainscott's adopted Hamlet Study** from 2019 that calls for reduced density and more preserved land.



TO LEARN MORE

Go to StopWainscottCommercialCenter.org

Coalition to STOP the Wainscott Commercial Center
P.O. Box 1512 • East Hampton, NY 11937

Your support makes our work possible. Please donate at GroupfortheEastEnd.org. THANK YOU!

2022-2023 School Year

GROUP EDUCATES OVER 2,500 STUDENTS, PRE-K TO 8TH GRADE



◀ Who sings Happy Birthday to mud snails while exploring an estuary? Kindergartners from Southampton Elementary School do! During a field trip to Scallop Pond, the Group's assistant director of environmental education, Anita Wright, asked the students to sing to the snails. Just another trick to capture the attention of young children and help them learn about their natural environment!



◀ During a forest investigation field trip at Morton Wildlife Refuge, a downy woodpecker swoops in for sunflower seeds to the delight of second graders from Sag Harbor Elementary School.

▼ Steve Biasetti, the Group's director of environmental education, shows 5th grade students from the Springs School an eastern painted turtle at Chatfield's Hole during a freshwater pond discovery field trip.





152 | Classes
75 | Field Trips
47 | Classroom Lessons
30 | Years of Programming
15 | Schools/Youth Groups

▶ The Group has longstanding partnerships with the following schools:

- Amagansett 6th grade
- East Hampton Middle 6th grade
- East Quogue Elementary 6th grade
- John Marshall Elementary 5th grade
- Montauk 5th grade
- Sag Harbor 1st, 2nd, and 5th grades
- Southampton Intermediate 5th grade
- Southampton Elementary Kindergarten
- Springs School 5th grade

If you know a teacher or school that would be interested in environmental education programming, please let us know! Contact: **Steve Biasetti, Director of Environmental Education** sbiasetti@eastendenvironment.org

Group Partners with CAST at New HQ – High Five!

CHILDREN LEARN HANDS-ON ABOUT EAST END ECOLOGY

Since 1965 CAST (Center for Advocacy, Support, Transformation) has been serving low-income individuals and families on the North Fork of Long Island. CAST helps struggling community

members meet their basic needs in the areas of nutrition, clothing, energy, employment, and education. Learn more at CASTNorthFork.org.



◀ Assistant director of environmental education Anita Wright holds the lower jawbone of a deer while the children examine the teeth.

▶ Outreach director Taralynn Reynolds shows children how to extract magnetite from trays of beach sand using a magnet. Cool!



Your support makes our work possible.
Please donate at GroupfortheEastEnd.org THANK YOU!

Be a Good Egg Program

GROUP EDUCATES BEACHGOERS ON SHOREBIRD CONSERVATION FOR 7TH YEAR



Group staff educated North Fork beachgoers this summer on protecting nesting shorebirds. **We were successful in getting hundreds of people to sign the Be A Good Egg pledge:**

- 1 **Respect fenced-off areas where shorebirds are nesting**
- 2 **Carry out your trash or throw it in a receptacle**
- 3 **Keep dogs off the beaches where birds are nesting**

Just by following these three simple guidelines, you're giving shorebirds—such as piping plovers and least terns—enough space to rest, nest, and raise their chicks.

The Group's work on the Be A Good Egg program is made possible through a grant from New York Audubon.



Group Removes Invasive Species on North Fork

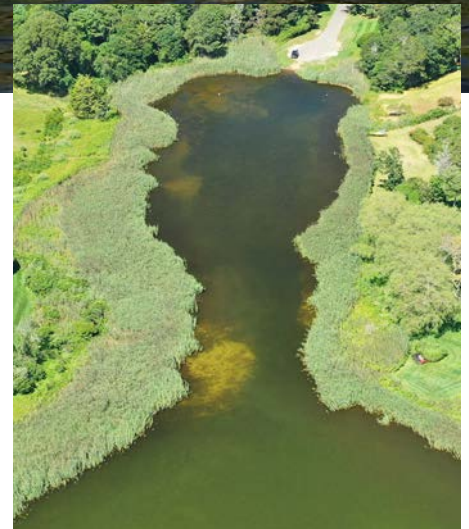
CUTTING DOWN PHRAGMITES IS PHRIGGIN' HARD!

This summer, as part of the Group's partnership with the Town of Southold, staff and volunteers removed swaths of Phragmites, also known as common reed, from Downs Farm Preserve and Skipper Horton Park.

The tall aggressive grass is an invasive species that can be found across the East End. It prevents native plants from growing, displaces native wildlife, and wreaks havoc on saltwater and freshwater wetlands.

◀ Volunteer Chris Owen (left) joins the Group's Rob DeLuca, Kristen Bashen, and Anita Wright to clear away Phragmites at the footbridge at Downs Farm Preserve in Cutchogue.

▶ Volunteer Scott Hnetinka rakes up Phragmites at Skipper Horton Park in Greenport.



Photos: Friends of Georgica Pond Foundation

Phragmites quickly take over shorelines, choking the natural flow of water and wildlife, causing algal blooms and stagnant waterways.

Work conducted on the Bay to Sound Trails Phase 5 project is being funded by the New York State Department of State under Title 11 of the Environmental Protection Fund.



◀ Bees, monarch caterpillars and butterflies thrive on native swamp milkweed.

Group Co-Founds North Fork Pollinator Pathway

PROVIDES CRITICAL HABITAT FOR POLLINATING BIRDS AND INSECTS

This year, the Group partnered with environmental advocates to create the North Fork Pollinator Pathway. Outreach director Taralynn Reynolds joined fellow master gardeners Nancy DePas Reinersten and Debra Kimmelman to co-chair this local initiative. **The goal is to inspire and educate communities to restore and connect habitats so that pollinators can thrive on the North Fork.**



Group outreach director and master gardener Taralynn Reynolds left, joins fellow master gardeners Debra Kimmelman, center, and Nancy DePas Reinersten, right, for a conversation with WLIW Heart of the East End host Gianna Volpe to discuss the importance of native plants, pollinators, and the new North Fork Pollinator Pathway.

To celebrate this important effort, the public was invited to an inaugural garden tour showcasing 13 private and public garden spaces, including Downs Farm Preserve, with native and pollinator-friendly plants.

What are pollinator pathways?
They're pesticide-free corridors of native plants (and beneficial non-native plants) that provide essential habitat and nutrition for pollinating birds and insects, such as bees and butterflies. Even the smallest green spaces—think flower boxes and curb strips—can be part of the pathway. **These public and private spaces have become an important conservation movement across the United States.**

Why are pollinators important?
Without them, the human race would not survive! Environmentally speaking, flowering plants nourished by pollinators:

- produce breathable oxygen
- help purify water
- help prevent erosion

Pollinators come in all shapes and sizes:

- birds
- bees
- butterflies and other insects
- bats and other mammals

They move pollen from one plant to another, enabling cross-fertilization and allowing the reproduction and the growth of new plants. **35% of our food grows as a result of the work of pollinators.**

SIMPLE STEPS TO START

- Rethink your lawn and create a pollinator-friendly space
- Plant native species
- Remove invasive species
- Avoid chemical fertilizers and pesticides
- Learn more about the North Fork Pollinator Pathway at **GroupfortheEastEnd.org/initiatives**

This project is made possible with funding provided by the New York State Department of State under Title 11 of the Environmental Protection Fund.

Ruby-throated hummingbird photo: Jay Rand

Grants for Gardeners

INSTALL A NATIVE PLANT GARDEN,
RAIN GARDEN, OR RAIN BARREL AND
RECEIVE A FINANCIAL REWARD

The Long Island Garden Rewards Program provides financial rewards for Long Islanders who add green alternatives to their properties that benefit the environment. **Rain barrels, rain gardens, and native plant gardens help to reduce stormwater runoff in your yard, which means less nitrogen flowing into our local waters.**

The program, offered through the Long Island Regional Planning Council, allows homeowners to be reimbursed up to \$500 for installing green infrastructure on their properties. Learn more at LIRPC.org



Cultivated varieties of native blue violets, *Viola walteri*, and coral bells, *Heuchera*.

Native plants are a great addition to any yard because they:

- absorb and filter stormwater runoff, helping to keep our waterways healthy
- provide habitat and food for wildlife, including many essential pollinators
- reduce soil erosion with their deep roots
- require less water, fertilizer, and overall maintenance
- are naturally beautiful!



When the Group's media manager Rachel Bosworth heard about grants for residents who install native plants in their yards, she was a bit skeptical—until she received a check in the mail!



▲ Big bluestem



▲ Bayberry



▲ Partridge pea

Check out Long Island Invasive Species Management's list of native, non-native, and invasive species at liisma.org/species.



▲ Butterfly weed

Volunteer Spotlight: Chris Owen

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE TREES

Chris Owen developed a fascination for trees at a young age. Their beauty, the respite they offer, and their importance for a healthy planet—Chris continues to find inspiration in trees and the outdoors. “Nature is that place where you can just be yourself,” he says.

“The Group has given me a phenomenal opportunity to get hands-on experience in re-wilding the East End.”

— Chris Owen, Volunteer

As a rising sophomore at Cornell University, Chris searched online for volunteer opportunities this summer, where he could share his passion for conservation work and deepen his understanding of local ecology. Lucky for us, he found the Group!

Chris braved several sizzling hot days to remove invasive plant species at Downs Farm Preserve and Skipper Horton Park as part of the Group’s ongoing partnership with the Town of Southold.

“We’re creating a suitable habitat that attracts pollinators and helps them grow their populations,” Chris explains. “I wish more people understood how important bees and butterflies are to our existence. The work we’re doing at the Group is for the long-term sustainability of pollinators, and I find it very gratifying. When we humans are not here at the site, that’s when the pollinators come, and the benefits of our work come to fruition.”

The intense hot spell made the physical work more difficult and led to conversations about climate change. “So many people are just adapting instead of addressing the cause,” Chris says. “They’re moving north to flee the heat instead of modifying their behavior.”

The Group’s advocacy, conservation, and education programs, including these critical habitat restoration projects, play an important local role in the worldwide effort to reverse global warming, and we’re grateful to Chris for his help.

“Chris and other young volunteers bring great energy and enthusiasm to the Group’s work and offer new perspectives on our ever-changing environment.”

— Taralynn Reynolds, Outreach Director

We wish Chris all the best as he pursues a degree in environment and sustainability in the School of Agriculture and Life Science!

Interested in volunteering with the Group? Contact outreach director Taralynn Reynolds at: treynolds@eastendenvironment.org.



Volunteer Chris Owen removes invasive species at Skipper Horton Park with outreach director Taralynn Reynolds and environmental associate Kristen Bashen.



Work conducted on the Bay to Sound Trails Phase 5 Project is being funded by the NYS Department of State under Title XI of the Environmental Protection Fund.

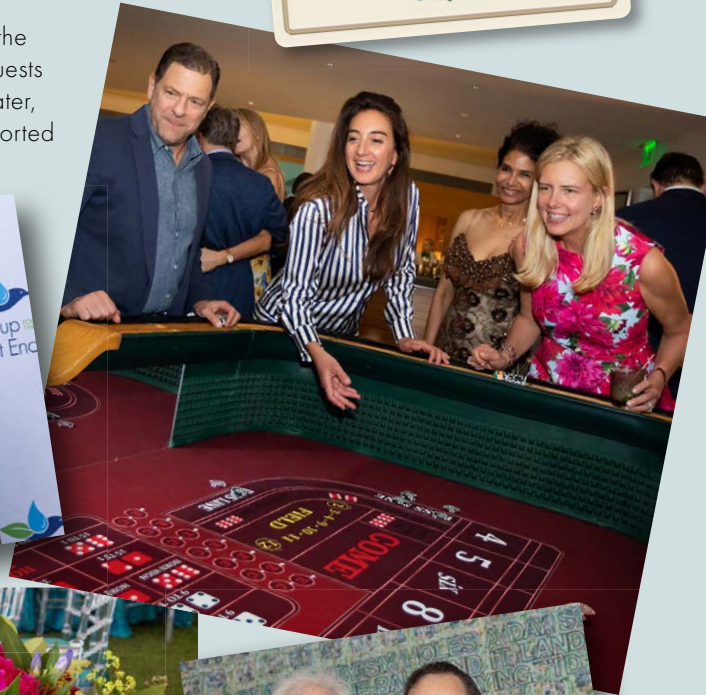
Your support makes our work possible. Please donate at GroupfortheEastEnd.org THANK YOU!

Monte Carlo Night Benefit



CELEBRATING AND SUPPORTING THE GROUP'S WORK

We are extremely grateful to Robert M. Rubin and Stéphane Samuel for hosting the Group's Monte Carlo Night benefit at The Bridge on June 17. More than 200 guests celebrated our work that evening and raised critical funds to protect our land, water, and wildlife on the East End. Thank you to our co-chairs and everyone who supported the event. We hope you can join us next year on June 8, 2024!





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STAFF

President
Robert S. DeLuca, ext. 213
bdeluca@eastendenvironment.org

Director of Environmental Education
Steve Biasetti, ext. 205
sbiasetti@eastendenvironment.org

Assistant Director of Environmental Education
Anita C. Wright, ext. 206
awright@eastendenvironment.org

Senior Environmental Advocate
Jennifer Hartnagel
jhartnagel@eastendenvironment.org

Director of Membership
Kristina Lange, ext. 216
klange@eastendenvironment.org

Outreach Director
Taralynn Reynolds, ext. 219
treynolds@eastendenvironment.org

Environmental Associates
Marina DeLuca
mdeluca@eastendenvironment.org
Kristen Bashen
kbashen@eastendenvironment.org

Media Relations Manager
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media@eastendenvironment.org

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



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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 advocacy, education, and conservation. We fight for the protection of our land, water, and wildlife, we inspire children to become stewards of the environment, and we engage the community to embrace a conservation ethic and take action. The Group is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization.

Group for the East End

P.O. Box 1792
Southold, NY 11971
631.765.6450

Learn more about our work at GroupfortheEastEnd.org

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