

GROUP ACTION

THE NEWSLETTER OF GROUP FOR THE EAST END

Too Polluted to Paddle? Not If We Can Help It

- Children and Pets at Risk in Freshwater Ponds
- Group Presses DEC to Deny Sand Land's Mine Expansion
- Downs Farm Preserve Is Bustling
- One Ton of Medications Kept Out of Bays



Photo: Kristina Lange



Algae Blooms in Fresh Water Ponds Put People and Pets at Risk

Fertilizer and old septic systems are culprits

In September, a water sample taken from Sagg Pond by Dr. Christopher Gobler's laboratory team at Stony Brook University was loaded with blue green algae. It had more than four times the threshold used by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation to close a beach to bathers.

For all of us at the Group, this alarming news hit home. Sagg Pond has been the site of our perpetually sold-out Full Moon Paddle and Barbecue every summer for the past two decades. We knew the water quality had declined, but not to this level. The lab results to determine if the algae is toxic are pending.

Thanks to your generous support, the Group has been leading the charge to protect and improve the water quality of our bays, harbors and freshwater ponds, which have the same overarching issue—an overabundance of nitrogen and phosphorous. Yes, it's a mess, but we are committed to cleaning it up and know you are behind us.

“These fresh water ponds and lakes are surrounded by some of the most valuable real estate in the world, but some are now toxic. The overuse of fertilizer and waste from poorly functioning septic systems are mostly to blame.”

– Bob DeLuca, President, Group for the East End

On your behalf, and as a founding member of the Long Island Clean Water Partnership, the Group has embarked on its largest regional campaign for clean water action in our history. We will press on until we secure a comprehensive action plan for our region, including:

- *new water quality standards to reduce pollution;*
- *a specific government entity responsible for accomplishing measurable clean water outcomes;*
- *and a sustainable long-term funding source to support clean water investment across the East End.*

With your help, in time, we will clean up and protect our local waters. Our quality of life, the health of our economy, and so much more depend on it.

“Toxins from high levels (blooms) of blue green algae can be a threat to humans and animals if ingested. People should be careful with their children and pets.”

 *– Dr. Christopher Gobler, Stony Brook University*

Freshwater ponds with toxic algae include Georgica Pond in East Hampton, Town Pond in Southampton, and Marratooka Lake in Mattituck. In 2012, a dog died after drinking the water from Georgica Pond.



Sign up today for clean water action alerts at LongIslandCleanWaterPartnership.org.

You are a big part of the solution. Thank you.





If the NYS DEC approves Sand Land's application for expansion, its pollutants will be 40 feet closer to the water table.

With Your Support, the Group Presses DEC to Deny Sand Mine Expansion

Sand Land proposal puts drinking water at risk

“Aquifer Protection Overlay District.” “Special Groundwater Protection Area.” “Critical Environmental Area.”

If you worked for the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and reviewed an application for a 50-acre project that could negatively impact water quality, would the above designations mean anything to you?

Astonishingly, the DEC is actually considering the expansion of an aging, non-conforming sand mine in Bridgehampton, known as Sand Land, which indeed is located in an Aquifer Protection Overlay District, Special Groundwater Protection Area and Critical Environmental Area. If the application is approved, the floor of Sand Land's industrial operations would drop another 40 feet deeper, to 190 feet below ground, where pollutants can move directly into our drinking water. Even more disturbing, Sand Land runs a massive vegetative waste

processing facility, which would also move 40 feet closer to our water table.

“The DEC recently conducted its own review of several vegetative waste processing facilities on Long Island, just like Sand Land's, and found substantial groundwater contamination.” - Bob DeLuca, President, Group for the East End

The groundwater beneath the hilly woodlands, where the mine is located, has been documented by New York State, Suffolk County and the Town of Southampton as the last best source of clean drinking water in the eastern part of Southampton.

As part of its review, the DEC received dozens of letters, including ones from the Town of Southampton and the Suffolk County Health Commissioner, all asking for a draft

environmental impact statement to assure a long-term groundwater monitoring and protection plan for the site.

Ignoring this input and its own data, the DEC recklessly decided that no further environmental review was necessary and stands poised to approve the sand mine expansion.

Despite this position, the Group has organized with neighbors, stakeholders, environmental organizations and government officials to fight this irresponsible decision, and has called upon the DEC to require a full environmental impact statement, or to deny the project outright if the State will not act to protect our drinking water.

Your continued support lets the Group keep up the fight for clean water. Thank you.

Bob DeLuca tells the media the negative impact Sand Land's expansion could have on the drinking water supply in the Town of Southampton.



Protect Your Drinking Water. Contact the NYS DEC Today! < ⋯

Ask that the proposed Sand Land mine expansion in Southampton be subject to a full environmental impact statement and water quality monitoring assessment.

NYS DEC Commissioner Joseph Martens
 (518) 402-8545 | joe.martens@dec.ny.gov



Future Conservation Stewards

Woohoo! Over 100 young naturalists explored the East End through our popular Summer Field Ecology Program, and had fun doing it!

Your Generosity Makes a Difference In Their Lives! <



1. Hannah Hartsough carefully examines a Northern Gray Treefrog at Cedar Point County Park in East Hampton.
2. Aidan Sulimirski discovers a Knobbed Whelk at Indian Island County Park in Riverhead.

In Memoriam: Howard Meinke

Howard Meinke, a longtime champion for the environment on the North Fork and resident of Laurel, will be sorely missed. An ardent fisherman and sailor, he worked tirelessly to protect our waterways and to preserve open space. "He was extremely effective because he was clear, concise, consistent, and he was passionate about the issues he believed in, but practical about the way he approached them," said Group president Bob DeLuca, who knew Mr. Meinke for 30 years, and had seen him recently at a Suffolk County Legislature hearing on the drinking water protection program. "Howard never, ever gave up. They don't make people like that anymore." He died September 18 after being hit by a car. Mr. Meinke was 86.



Photo: Diane Hewett DCH Graphics



Farewell to Dominique

A partner in protecting your quality of life on the East End

For the last five years, Dominique Mendez has been a powerful voice for conservation in Riverhead. She recently stepped down as president of the Riverhead Neighborhood Protection Committee (RNPC) and shared her thoughts on partnering with the Group.

“ We started building a relationship with Group for the East End shortly after our inception and it has been invaluable to the RNPC’s accomplishments to date.

In an environment where almost everyone is a volunteer, having a professional organization dedicate resources to issues of mutual concern has been a game changer. The Group’s Jenn Hartnagel helped research issues and develop and execute action plans, and regularly teamed with RNPC to publicly advocate to local government. I learned so much from working with Jenn and Bob over the years and cannot imagine being nearly as effective without their consistent help and support.

They were instrumental in getting Riverhead to agree to public hearings for commercial site plans and to pursuing our Save Wading River campaign, which achieved favorable zoning changes and raised substantial funds to help support these and other efforts.

The Group is a natural and essential partner in a growing coalition of individuals and organizations that recognize how important it is to keep Riverhead rural. Although I may no longer be president of the RNPC, I anticipate that the working relationship we’ve built over these first five years will last well into the future. ”



Co-founder and former Riverhead Neighborhood Protection Committee president Dominique Mendez reviews a site plan proposal with co-founder and acting president Phil Barbato.

Your support enables the Group to build strong coalitions with community organizations that protect and preserve the East End’s natural resources. Thank you.

What’s Up at Downs Farm Preserve?

Visit us and find out!

There are full moon hikes, talks about turtles, family scavenger hunts and lessons on green house cleaning. If you have young children, you will enjoy nature-themed Storytime, whether you’re in the rustic, one-room schoolhouse in the winter, or sitting on a blanket outside in the summer. If you want to know how to compost, learn about invasive species, participate in a bird feeder watch study, or bring the kids to meet animals from a local wildlife refuge, you can do it at Downs Farm Preserve in Cutchogue.

Thanks to a unique collaboration between the Group and the Town of Southold, we have been able to offer more than 60 educational programs at the nature center. The Town acquired the 51-acre

property in 1997 due to its valuable historical and ecological resources. A National Historic Landmark, Downs Farm Preserve includes a Native American Fort site, scenic woodlands and tidal wetlands. It also serves as a valuable bird and wildlife habitat.

Thanks to your generosity, the Group can offer programs at Downs Farm Preserve at little or no charge. That means more people get to experience nature-related activities and learn about protecting our local environment. Thank You!



“Just this year we’ve collaborated with over 20 different local organizations and attracted over 800 adults and children, from Orient to New York City, to take part in the Group’s environmental education programs. I’m thrilled!”

—Missy Weiss, Program Manager at Downs Farm Preserve

Downs Farm Preserve
23800 Main Road, Cutchogue
Program Schedule:
GroupfortheEastEnd.org

For more information:
Contact Missy Weiss at
mweiss@eastendenvironment.org



Photo: Jessica Guadagno
Missy Weiss





2,000 Pounds of Meds Kept Out of Our Waters

Pill by pill, ton by ton, dollar by dollar, your support counts

It's been a year since the Group launched the East End Medication Disposal Program, and drop boxes at participating police stations across the region have filled up—fast. We started the program with Suffolk County when we learned that the presence of pharmaceuticals in our drinking water was identified as an emerging threat to water quality. Thank you for not flushing!

For more information:

GroupfortheEastEnd.org/meds
or contact Jennifer Hartnagel at jhartnagel@eastendenvironment.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.

For more information:

Please contact Vice President Aaron Virgin at 631-765-6450 x218. All calls are confidential.



Katherine Leahy Birch, the Group's executive vice president, laughs as Bill McChesney, president, reads the limerick he composed, praising her leadership in chairing the **Here Comes the Sun** benefit. Over 300 people celebrated the summer solstice on a perfect evening in June at Wölffer Estate Vineyard. Thank you to everyone who supported the event.


Iconic Big Duck Gets Green Makeover

Native garden transforms grounds, serves as model to help stop polluted water from running into our bays

The garden is being used as a model for the Peconic Estuary Rewards Program, which provides up to \$500 if homeowners reduce their lawn size by adding native plant areas and/or rain barrels to their property. It's an excellent way to improve your yard and reduce the amount of pollution—via storm water runoff—that enters our bays, harbors and streams. Only homeowners in the Hashamomuck Pond and Reeve's Bay watershed areas are eligible for the program, but the Group encourages everyone to install them! Visit your local nursery to see what native plants are available. Many thanks to the Friends of the Big Duck, Southampton Youth Bureau, Town of Southampton, and the Peconic Estuary Program.



The Group is proud to be the official outreach coordinator for the Peconic Estuary Program. The PEP is an innovative partnership of local, state, and federal governments, citizen and environmental groups, businesses, and academic institutions charged by the National Estuary Program to develop and implement a watershed-based, comprehensive management plan.

For more information: 
Contact Jenn Hartnagel at jhartnagel@eastendenvironment.org
or go to peconicestuary.org



Our Mission: Group for the East End is a 501 (c)(3) not-for-profit organization that protects and restores the environment of eastern Long Island through education, citizen action and advocacy. We inspire people to embrace a conservation ethic. All contributions are tax deductible.



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.

DONATE ONLINE
GroupfortheEastEnd.org



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Photo: LC Lambrecht & Sebonack Golf Club

Sebonack Golf Outing

Tuesday, October 21

to benefit Group for the East End

9am-4pm in Southampton

Sebonack Golf Club was built with the goal of creating an eco-friendly course that could be used as a model for the East End and across the country. Host of the 2013 U.S. Women's Open and designed by Jack Nicklaus and Tom Doak, Sebonack has:

- Solar powered golf carts
- Advanced water quality monitoring systems
- Custom built green-liners to control water runoff
- An on-site composting facility
- 94% permeable surfaces throughout
- 280 acres of open space and a 54-acre research and education parcel

Register at GroupfortheEastEnd.org

For details contact Aaron Virgin at (631) 765-6450 x218 or acvirgin@eastendenvironment.org.

Check out more events at GroupfortheEastEnd.org

