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## **BAD NEWS FOR EARTH DAY!**

### **Report Says Land Preservation Goals Cannot Be Met Calls for Study on Environmental & Economic Consequences**

**For Release: April 21, 2010 Contact: Richard Amper (631)369-3300  
Presentation: Wednesday, April 21, 11:00 a.m.,  
Connetquot River State Park, north side Sunrise Highway, Oakdale, New York.**

On the eve of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Earth Day, a new study says that Long Island's land preservation goals are not expected to be met and that leaders must evaluate the resulting impacts on the Island's environment and economy and "plan for the worst."

The Long Island Pine Barrens Society's fourth annual White Paper says purchases of open space and farmland on Long Island have reached an unprecedented low when they needed to dramatically increase if the goal of saving 35,000 additional acres by 2020 was to remain viable. The report, "Preservation Crashes: Considering the Consequences," says state, county, and town land purchases are likely to reach only one-third of the preservation goal agreed to by environmental and business groups and government leaders in 2006.

While the White Paper urged Long Islanders to press for increased land preservation, it called on regional planners to assess the cumulative environmental and economic impacts of the failing preservation effort on water quality, tourism, farming and taxes for new government services caused by development of land not saved.

"Just four years after the commitment to protect 35,000 acres of open space and farms, land conservation has collapsed to the point where it is unreasonable to expect Long Island ever to reach its goal," the report concluded. "Despite continued strong public support for land conservation, unabated by the recession, Long Island's current crop of politicians has fallen down on the job. In 2009, every level of government failed to achieve the land purchase rate necessary to reach the preservation goal – a majority of them posting record lows," the report said flatly, "This, despite an increase in the number of willing sellers, a decline in the price of real estate and the availability of dedicated, public-approved funding for land protection."

The report showed that in 2009 New York State saved but 63 acres; Nassau, just 91; Suffolk hit a record low of 352 acres, down from a skimpy 618 in 2008, and Long Island towns collectively saved only 264 acres, down from 770 the year before. The Society's last White Paper, "Buying Time," released in early 2009, indicated that government would need to preserve 2,718 acres per year to reach the 35,000 acre goal. But the preservation numbers indicate merely one- third – just 771 acres- was saved last year. Pine Barrens Society Executive Director Richard Amper said, "The unlikely attainment of the preservation goals puts the future health of the Island's environment and economy very much in doubt. Thus, a Cumulative Impact Assessment of known and reasonably anticipated development, especially in Brookhaven and the East End, where most of the remaining unprotected open land remains, must be conducted. Land not preserved will be developed with highly adverse consequences."

The report concluded, "The dream of Long Island's leaders which commenced in the 1960s and continued into the 1990s has seen a steady decline since then and an unprecedented crash since more than 100 environmental and civic groups, business and government leaders embraced the 2006 "Long Island's Last Stand" goal of saving 35,000 acres (25,000 acres of open space and 10,000 acres of farmland) before all of the remaining 70,000 acres of open space and farmland are either preserved or developed, expected by 2020."