



THE PINE LINE



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Newsletter of the Long Island Pine Barrens Society

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Dedicated to the Preservation and Understanding of Long Island's Pitch Pine / Scrub Oak Woodlands

EXPEDITED CLEAN-UP OF BROOKHAVEN LAB APPROVED

\$41.3 Million Will Shorten Remediation by Two Years

The U.S. Department of Energy has committed \$41.3 million in new funding to expedite clean-up of soil and groundwater contamination at the 5000-acre Brookhaven National Laboratory in the Central Pine Barrens. Energy Secretary Bill Richardson appeared with U.S. Senator Charles Schumer, November 9 to make the announcement. The funds will accelerate the remediation effort by two years, completing the project in 2004 instead of 2006.

The announcement comes after a year of advocacy by a special subcommittee of the BNL Citizens Advisory Council, chaired by Pine Barrens Society Executive

Director Richard Amper. "We're thrilled," he exclaimed, "the sooner we see an end to a legacy of environmental irresponsibility, the

sooner we can focus on the world class science that's being done at the facility."

Schumer promised to take the lead on the accelerated clean-up campaign in May, bringing Secretary Richardson to the Lab in August. Committee members visited officials in Washington and led a media and mail campaign to win the needed funding. The earlier completion date will actually result in a savings on the clean-up of some \$16 million.

Under the former plan, BNL would have re-

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CLEAN-UP SITE: Aerial View of Brookhaven National Laboratory in the Central Pine Barrens. \$41 Million will accelerate clean-up by two years.

Photo courtesy Brookhaven National Laboratory

South Fork Water Plan Battle Grinds On

The battle to obtain a regional Water Protection Plan for the South Fork ground on into fall as the Town of East Hampton sat poised to implement a plan for that town, while petitioners, ignored by both towns sued Southampton for failure to let voters decide the matter.

In addition, the Long Island Pine Barrens Society and the South Fork Groundwater Task Force took Southampton to court for failure to purchase any land in the groundwater recharge area under the Community Preservation Fund. The action was added to earlier litigation against both towns for failure to consider the cumulative effects of some 82 projects on drinking water and habitat in the South Fork Pine Barrens and state-designated Special

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Poll Shows Broad Support For Water Protection

By a wide margin, South Fork voters support the rights of voters to decide by referendum a drinking water and surface water protection plan, even though the towns refused to put it on the ballot, believe their towns aren't doing enough to protect the resource and would have approved a Water protection Plan by 81-9 percent.

The August poll revealed that 87 percent of voters think development is moving to quickly and must be controlled and 86 percent feel that the East Hampton and Southampton Town Boards "need to do more to protect drinking water and surface water."

Dr. James Kitchens, head of the polling organization said, "The results of this survey indicate a very clear community con-

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South Fork Water Battle Grinds On *(continued from page 1)*

Groundwater Protection Area.

The Save South Fork Water Now Coalition declined to sue the two towns for ignoring some 3800 signatures, (more than twice the number required) gathered on petitions by an army of volunteers in July and August. The petitions called on the two towns to allow voters to decide on enacting a local law that would create a Water Protection Plan in a 4500-acre area of Pine Barrens straddling the Southampton-East Hampton Town line, take a temporary "time-out" from development in the area and expedite preservation of the watershed. The towns argued that they were not required to put the issue on the ballot.

Assemblyman Fred Thiele who was spearheading the Water Protection Plan effort said he thought that "the best strategy is to work cooperatively with all members of both Town Boards." The petitioners' lawsuit was filed by citizens who carried and signed the petitions. Their attorney, Regina Seltzer, who also represents the Society which is not involved in this action, said, "I'm encouraged by East Hampton's progress but am unconvinced that Southampton will do the right thing."

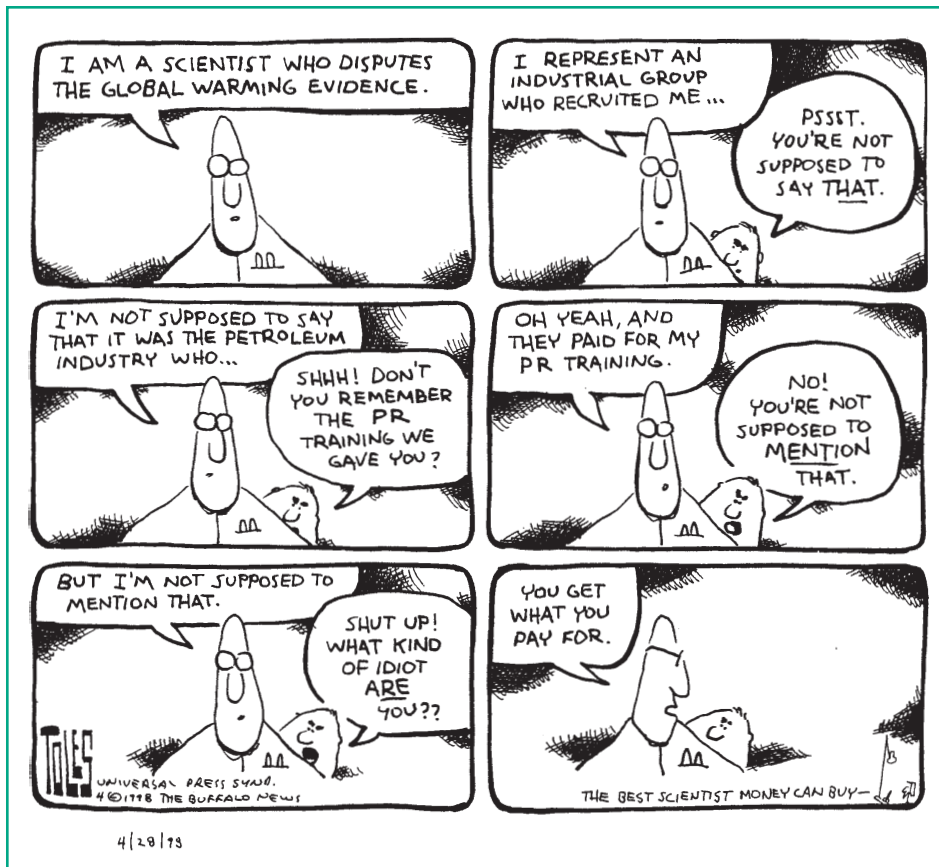


LAUNCH LEGAL CAMPAIGN: Representatives of the Long Island Pine Barrens Society and South Fork Groundwater Task Force announce lawsuit against Southampton for failure to purchase land in the town's drinking water recharge area under the Community Preservation Fund. Photo by Donna Giancontieri/Southampton Press

The effort to produce a regional water protection plan was launched after Southampton opted out of a proposal to extend the Pine Barrens Protection Act to

eastern Southampton and East Hampton. Pine Barrens and drinking water in the western portion of Southampton, Riverhead and Brookhaven are protected by the landmark legislation which preserves key watershed undeveloped, while directing development to the least sensitive areas.

The two towns staged a "Water Summit" in September to announce all they had done to protect water but Coalition leaders boycotted the meeting, instead gathering with petition carriers and pressing for a Water Protection Plan.



Broad Support For Water Protection

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sensus on several issues." He cited overwhelming support for projects to protect drinking water and water quality in the bays and harbors, extreme concern about the pace of development on the South Fork and a willingness to curtail it and near unanimous support for allowing voters to decide on a Water Protection Plan for East Hampton and Southampton.



THE THICKET

A Natural Gift

by John L. Turner

Mr. Turner is co-founder and a member of the Board of Directors of the Long Island Pine Barrens Society.

It's a beautiful day in late spring and I'm strolling down a sandy trail which threads through a sun-dappled forest in the eastern edge of the Long Island Pine Barrens. Suddenly, a greeting cascades down from the canopy of a large pitch pine as a lemon yellow pine warbler, foraging about for food among the bristly needles, ushers forth a welcoming trill. Rolling my tongue, I heartily return the greeting.

Walking ahead a dark bird flits across the trail into a dense copse of scrub oak. White tail spots and distinctive wheet! wheet! calls give away its identity as a rufous-sided towhee. The trail leads to an opening ringed with aromatic sweet fern. I can't resist the temptation to scuff the sun-warmed blanket of pine needles covering the path to reveal the ashen gray, nutrient-leached soil layer beneath. Within seconds the earthy aroma of the quartzite sand mixes with the spice of pine and sweet fern to create a distinctive and appealing scent. I inhale deeply.

And as I do, I feel myself slipping into a familiar mood as a certain decompression occurs, as the pettiness and complexities of everyday life quickly peel away like the layers of an onion. It is a feeling that has come over me countless times over the many years that I've relished the out-of-doors but a feeling that I struggle to define. Perhaps it's best described as a state of relaxed invigoration or maybe, just the opposite, of heightened relaxation. Whatever its nature, its onset is as reliable as a good friend and as comfortable as an old shoe.

As I continue to mellow my senses, oddly enough, sharpen their focus. The natural world I've become immersed in – the plants and animals that give it composition – are a cornucopia of scents, colors, patterns, and texture. In this mood I am moved by the smallest and subtlest things: the design of pitch pine bark or a dragonfly wing, the outline of an oak leaf. Or it might be bird song or the motion of a bird in flight. Scents become clear – the delicate



WETLANDS: Several dozen small "perched" wetlands are scattered throughout the Pine Barrens. Referred to as vernal ponds, because they are usually most filled in the spring, these isolated ponds, are detached from nearby water sources. They are usually devoid of predatory fish and are thus important breeding habitat for a variety of amphibians including the state-endangered Tiger Salamander.

perfume of a flowering plant or the stolid earthiness of a mushroom. I've come to realize that the mood is addicting – a down-to-earth legal addiction!

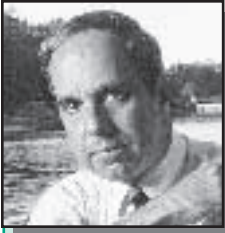
And I've come to realize that such a strong interest in and appreciation of the natural world that surrounds me is a profound gift. The enjoyment, indeed entertainment, can happen anywhere and everywhere, any time of day, and its free (or no more expensive than a park entrance fee). An added dimension gained by a love for nature is that one gains a sense of intimacy – feeling closely connected with the natural world is to be connected to something profoundly special and much larger than oneself.

Half an hour of walking through the pine forest finds me at the intended destination – a commanding post on the top of a morainal hill. By walking a half-circle around the hilltop I enjoy a panoramic view over much of the special landscapes of Long Island's famous East End. To the northeast I can make out the mirrored waters of Peconic Bay – of bay scallop fame – its silver blue sliver nestled between the green tapestries of the North and South Forks. To the east and west I gain a longside view of the gentle row of hills which continue east to form the spine of the South Fork. Along the southern horizon I can discern the sun-reflected waters of the Atlantic Ocean and the pencil thin barrier beach that serves to buffer the mainland from the ocean's wrath. In between, but out of sight, lies the eastern reaches of the Great South Bay. About 30,000 acres of the Pine Barrens stretches away in the viewshed before me.

This panoramic view of publicly owned open space forever dispels the common misimpression shared by so many off-Islanders, that Long Island is little more than a 100 mile long macadamized extension of New York City. Walking back down the hill I am flooded with a thought: there are two gifts at work here - the gift of nearly 100 square miles of preserved pine barrens landscape - the Long Island Pine Barrens Preserve - and the gift of wanting to spend a lifetime discovering its wonders and treasures.



WOODLANDS: The Pine Barrens are dominated by porous, sandy and nutrient poor soils which sustain the Pine Barrens principle plants, the Pitch Pine and Scrub Oak.



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RICHARD AMPER

The Controversial Profile

I was against it from the start. The old adage “any publicity is good publicity” is not one any serious communications professional accepts. Newsday staff writer Tom Frank told me in mid-September that he had been assigned a feature-length piece on me and I wanted no part of it. I appealed to an editor, but to no avail.

I knew from the outset that this would be no “puff piece.” The wiry, young reporter with a sort of Seattle grunge look launched immediately into a series of tough, hard-edged questions about my motive, style, purpose, and on and on. Program Manager Jill Lewis who was in earshot said, “It sounded less like an interview than an inquest or a first visit with a psychotherapist.” In fairness, I found him to be a thorough, intelligent journalist even though he seemed myopically focussed on my reputation for confronting politicians when necessary.

He spent more than two weeks talking to professional colleagues, family members, developers, politicians – it was positively embarrassing. Newsday sent photographers seemingly everywhere. One disrupted a meeting of the Long Island Drinking Water Coalition for thirty minutes. I had to apologize to everyone.

When it landed on my driveway Sunday, October 22, I was a bit nervous. I spend a great deal of time thinking about the Pine Barrens Society’s reputation when I speak on its behalf (whether some people believe it or not) and I didn’t want a personal profile to undo any of our organization’s credibility.

I was appalled. It described what might have been a deranged postal worker basically opening up on every elected officials known to man with an automatic weapon (my mouth) with-

out trying to reason or demonstrate even basic civil behavior. This, after I had painstakingly explained how we have never blind-sided a politician. We always ask for preservation nicely first, return and explain our displeasure if what we’re seeking isn’t done and only then do we take them to court or expose them in the court of public opinion.

The article quoted friends saying unflattering things and enemies giving me begrudging respect – a transparent literary device. Still others, who contradicted the “abrasive but effective” theme were omitted. The article used phrases such as “ready to rumble,” and “take no prisoners,” as well as comparisons to Machiavelli, Pavlov and even Howard Stern.

To be fair, the article acknowledged my long hours and “tenacity” and credited the Society and me for historic suc-

cess in preservation. For weeks, I was overwhelmed with calls of “congratulations.” I was astonished as were those closest to me who felt that the article showed only one-side of me and not a very flattering one.

Two weeks after the profile, Newsday ran what they called a “representative sample,” of letters to the editor which they termed “an unusually strong response.” I was positively touched. Writer after writer praised our environmental advocacy, quarreled with detractors and best of all, complimented the Pine Barrens Society. It was most gratifying because it is people like those letter writers that we toil for at the Pine Barrens Society – people I’m proud to call neighbors who care about the environment and fight alongside us to preserve and protect it.

I want to thank all of you who have supported our important work and who put up with a very uncomfortable experience for me.

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LONG ISLAND PINE BARRENS SOCIETY



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- Richard Luppi, President
- Alan Singer, Vice-President
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- Robert McGrath
- John Turner

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- Richard Amper

“We mean business about the environment”

A copy of the last annual report filed with the Department of Law may be obtained by writing the Department at Office Tower, Empire State Plaza, Albany, NY 12242 or may be obtained directly from the Long Island Pine Barrens Society, Box 429, Manorville, New York 11949-9801.



PINE BARRENS SOCIETY PRESIDENT RICHARD LUPPI

The South Fork Drinking Water Protection Plan

In July of this year, business, environmental and civic leaders joined in a coalition under the banner of “South Fork Water Now.” Born out of frustration with the apparent intentional delay by the Southampton and East Hampton Town officials in protecting ground water and watershed lands, the coalition sought to place a South Fork Drinking Water Protection Act on this November’s ballot. The act would have given power to the voters and forced the Town Boards of both East Hampton and Southampton to get off their duffs and call a “time out” from development in 4,500 acres – the same 4,500 acres already targeted by these towns for preservation earlier in the year.

If approved, the act would also have placed this land in a “watershed protection zone” and mandated the towns to create comprehensive management plans within six months to protect surface waters that feed the bays and harbors as well as replenish drinking water supplies. In addition, the act would have directed officials to speed up the acquisition of properties already identified for purchase using existing funds from the 2-percent land transfer tax, known as the Community Preservation Fund, that voters overwhelmingly approved in 1998. No new taxes would have been involved.

The supporters of the act included the Long Island Pine Barrens Society, the Group for the South Fork, State Assemblyman Fred W. Thiele, the East Hampton and Southampton Baymen’s Associations, the South Fork Ground water Task Force and the New York League of Conservation Voters. With the aid of volunteers deeply concerned about preserving the quality of our water resources, the coalition gathered 3,849 signatures (2,432 from Southampton and 1472 from East Hampton) supporting the referendum. Only 1,292 were required (891 from Southampton and 401 from East Hampton). Polls also showed that a majority of voters in both towns approved placing the referendum on the ballot and would have voted for it.

So, what did town officials of both towns then do? Defying the democratic process and logic, they dug in their heels to prevent the referendum from reaching the ballot. Sadly, they prevailed.

But all was not lost and the effort was not in vain. It appears that the heat put on town officials by the coalition, at least in East Hampton, has brought them to their senses. At this printing of the Pine Line, discussions are underway between

coalition members and East Hampton officials that could lead to the accomplishment of the coalition’s original goals for that town. Good going East Hampton.

Southampton, my home town, is another story. Town officials here continue to drag their feet. To prompt them to pick up the pace and move forward, Regina (Reggie) Seltzer, a longtime friend of the Society, an environmental attorney and a recent candidate for Congress has launched an article 78 law suit representing the petitioners against Southampton for not responding to the petition and “ignoring its constituents on a matter as important as water protection.” Let’s hope that her effort leads to the same result that has been achieved, thus far, in East Hampton.

The bottom line is the protection of our drinking water and our bays for us, for our children, and for our grandchildren. In the end, how we get there is less important than getting there. The fight for the good of Long Island’s citizens goes on with the Society in the thick of it.

*“The fight for the good
of Long Island’s citizens
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DEMOCRACY IN ACTION: Pine Barrens Society attorney Regina Seltzer collected signatures on petitions seeking a referendum on drinking water protection on the South Fork. Later, when East Hampton and Southampton refused to put the issue on the ballot, she sued Southampton on behalf of petitioners - not the Society. She declined to sue East Hampton based on evidence of progress toward production of a water protection plan there.

Society Holds 23rd Anniversary Award Gala

Reporter John Rather and PBS's Jill Lewis Honored

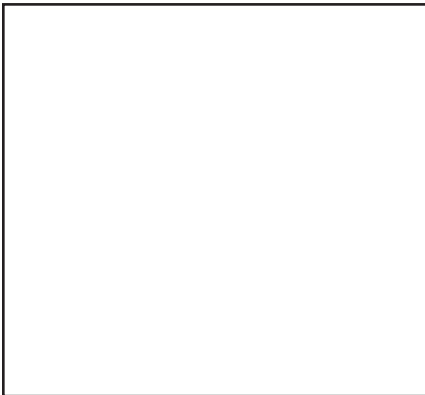
The Long Island Pine Barrens Society celebrated its twenty-third birthday and honored New York Times Long Island Correspondent John Rather and Society Program Manager Jill Lewis, October 27 at East Hampton Point Restaurant.

Rather received the Society's award for "Outstanding Contribution to Long Island's Environment," for the body of his writing on environmental subjects in the New York Times. "His thoughtful, insightful writing has made Long Islanders more knowledgeable and appreciative of the natural world around us – and better citizens too, said Society Executive Director Richard Amper. "Long Islanders are now among the most environmentally enlightened populations in the country and we're making our government representatives more responsible to the environmental needs of this

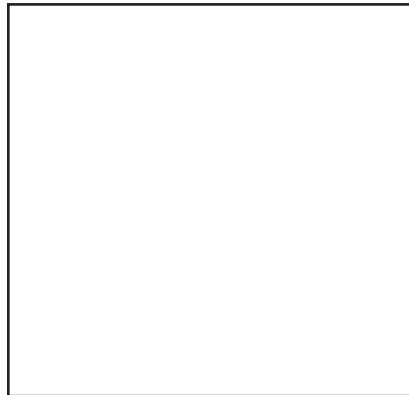
place," he added. The award was presented by Pine Barrens Society President Richard Luppi.

Winner of the Society's "Environmental Achievement Award" was Senior Program Manager Jill Lewis. She was honored for her work in support of the Society's programs on the North and South Forks and for her representation at the State Pine Barrens Commission. "Jill Lewis is very smart, very hard working, very caring and very dedicated. She has that rarest combination of qualities – a cool head and a warm heart. She is an indispensable colleague and a good friend," Amper said.

The award was presented by Pine Barrens Society co-founder and current Board Member John Turner.



DICK & JOHN: Pine Barrens Society, Richard Luppi presents Society's award for "Outstanding Contribution to Long Island's Environment" to New York Times Regional Correspondent, John Rather.



JILL & JOHN: Pine Barrens Society Sr. Program Manager, Jill Lewis is presented the organization's "Environmental Achievement Award" by PBS co-founder and board member, John Turner.



PARTNERS IN PRESERVATION: PBS Executive Director, Richard Amper is flanked by Eve Kaplan of North Fork Environmental Council and Alpa Pandya of The Nature Conservancy and by Jeffrey Fullmer and Adrienne Esposito of Citizens Campaign for the Environment.

NEW SUPPORTERS: Brian McCaffrey, Vice President, Environmental Engineering and Joanne Cardinali, Community Development Director of the KeySpan Energy Foundation present \$5,000 grant check to the Society's Executive Director, Richard Amper. The funds will be used to disseminate a Curriculum and Resource Guide to Long Island schools.



ORGANIZERS: Pine Barrens Society Program Manager, Kathleen Whitley joins gala producer, Selena Pasca and husband, Peter at the October 27 event.



NASSAU GUESTS: Ellen Doremus and Donald Pupke of the Society to Preserve Underhill attended the 23rd anniversary awards gala at East Hampton Point.