



LONG ISLAND  
PINE BARRENS  
SOCIETY

547 East Main Street  
Riverhead, NY 11901

Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Riverhead, NY 11901  
Permit #35



LONG ISLAND  
PINE BARRENS  
SOCIETY

OFFICERS

Alan Singer, *President*  
Robert McGrath, *Vice President*  
Nina Leonhardt, *Secretary*  
Vincent Scandole, *Treasurer*

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Thomas Casey  
Adriana Niazi  
Regina Seltzer, Esq.  
Samara Swanston, Esq.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Richard Amper

MANAGING EDITOR

Jennifer Garvey

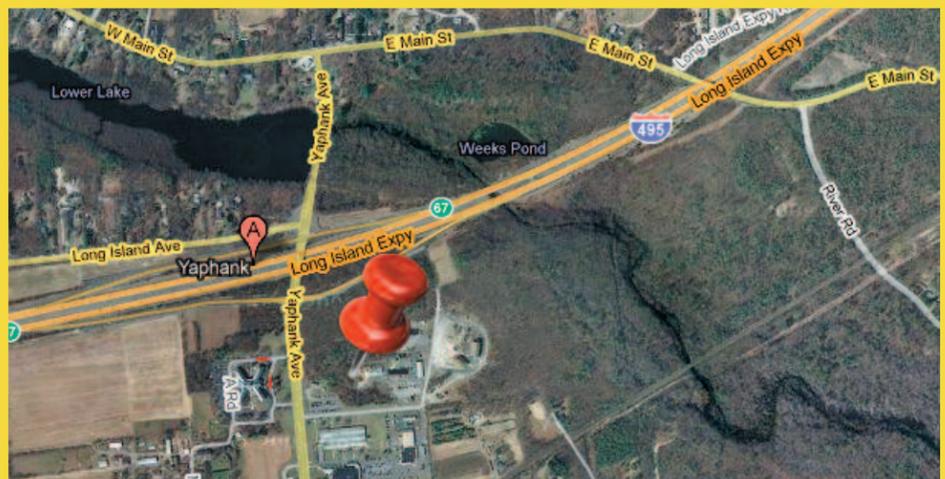
ART DIRECTOR

Julie Clark

A copy of the last annual report filed with the New York State Department of Law may be obtained by writing to NYS Attorney General's Charities Bureau, Attn: FOIL Officer, 120 Broadway, New York, NY, 10271 or may be obtained directly from the Long Island Pine Barrens Society, 547 East Main Street, Riverhead, NY 11901

Printed on recycled paper.

Credit: Google Maps



**PANTS ON FIRE: Suffolk County Executive Steve Levy says his proposed "Levy Town" megadevelopment is not in the Carmans River watershed. So, what's that blue thing running from north to south next to the site of the Levy proposal?**

The Pine Barrens Society's television program airs on Cablevision Channel 20 in the following areas. If your region is not listed here, please call our office at 631-369-3300 to find out how you can help us get it aired on your local Cablevision network. The program can also be viewed on the Society's web site, [www.pinebarrens.org](http://www.pinebarrens.org) by selecting TV Show on the home page. Please note that airtimes may change after April 1, 2010. Go to Our Work then TV Show on our web site for updated times.

Town of East Hampton  
Wednesdays 6:00 pm  
Thursdays 9:00 pm  
Fridays 3:30 pm

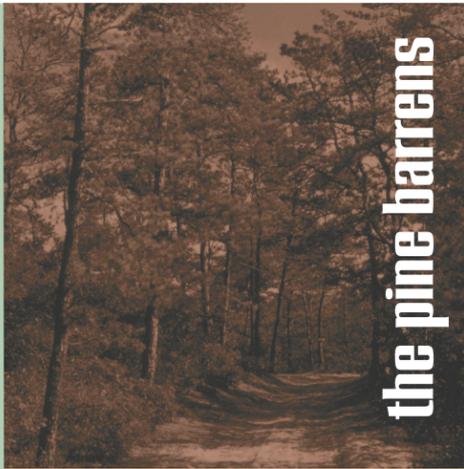
Town of Riverhead, Town of Southold  
and Town of Southampton  
Sundays 10:00 am  
Wednesdays 7:00 pm

Town of Brookhaven, Town of Smithtown  
and portions of Town of Islip  
Tuesdays 5:30 pm  
Saturdays 10:30 am  
Saturdays 4:00 am

Town of Babylon, Town of Huntington,  
portions of Town of Islip, and  
all of Nassau County  
Tuesdays 8:00 pm (Channel 115)  
Thursdays 6:00 pm (Channel 115)  
Thursdays 7:00 pm



LONG ISLAND  
PINE BARRENS  
SOCIETY



the pine barrens

# today

PRESERVATION: NOW OR NEVER

## Society's Campaign Effective

# LAND FUNDING RAID BLOCKED

## Open Space Dollars Will Not Be Re-Directed

Environmentalists have blocked three proposals in the Suffolk County Legislature that would have re-directed millions of dollars in voter-approved funding for drinking water protection and open space preservation to the county's general fund. The Pine Barrens Society organized a massive campaign to mobilize elected officials at every level, business and community leaders and everyday citizens to pressure county lawmakers to abandon the proposals. All were withdrawn or defeated before the last meeting of the County Legislature in August at which the propositions could have been put on the November ballot.

"We dodged another bullet," said Pine Barrens society President Alan Singer. "I hope we will not be put on the defensive again anytime soon, so that we can accelerate land purchase programs, rather than to merely save them," he added.

Bills proposed by Suffolk County Executive Steve Levy, William Lindsay, the Presiding Officer of the Suffolk County Legislature, and by term-limited County Legislator Cameron Alden were all abandoned in the face of massive opposition. Each would have reduced the amount of money available to buy open space and farmland in Suffolk, despite voter approval of dedicated funding for these programs in ballot referenda. "Eight of ten voters say they want to maintain or even expand these programs despite the recession," said Pine Barrens Society Executive Director, Richard Amper, "so these efforts by county legislators to transfer these dollars to other purposes were clearly contra-indicated."

The Society toiled for many weeks to kill the fund raids, through everything from television appearances, newspaper articles, letters and personal visits with county lawmakers. "Suffolk officials should not be trying to fund county

Credit: LIPBS



**NO WAY:** Pine Barrens Society Executive Director Richard Amper is joined by Jennifer Garvey of Pine Barrens Society; Bellport attorney Regina Seltzer; Peter Striga of the Environmental Voters Forum; Jane Fasullo and Bill Stegeman of the Sierra Club; and MaryAnn Johnston of the Affiliated Brookhaven Civic Organization to prevent the proposed raid of Suffolk County's Drinking Water Protection Program.

government using funds dedicated exclusively for drinking water protection and land preservation by voters at the polls," Amper said. "In the end, virtually every member of the Suffolk Legislature came to understand this and responsibly abandoned the idea," he added.

## Governor Paterson & NYPA's Richard Kessel to be Honored at PBS Gala 2009

Governor David A. Paterson may have faced many challenges recently, but his aggressive efforts to improve state energy policy and create green jobs will be rewarded with the Society's "Outstanding Contribution to Long Island's Environment Award," on October 22 at Oheka Castle in Huntington.



David A. Paterson, Governor  
State of New York

Richard Kessel, President and CEO of the New York Power Authority, will receive the organization's "Dennis Puleston Environmental Achievement Award," renamed in honor of

the famed Long Island Naturalist. Kessel is being recognized for his and NYPA's leadership in the areas of energy efficiency, sustainable alternative energy and green jobs.

The honors will be bestowed at the Pine Barrens Society's 32nd Anniversary Environmental Awards Gala, chaired by Ross Ain, President of Caithness Long Island, LLC and Executive Vice President of Caithness Energy, LLC, as well as Gary Melius, owner of Oheka Castle. Oheka is the second largest private residence in the United States and is currently undergoing one of the most ambitious restoration projects in the country. Sponsors include the Rauch Foundation, WLNY-TV 10/55 and a dozen other businesses and institutions on and off Long Island.

Governor Paterson established the State Energy Planning Board, responsible for

creating a comprehensive State Energy Plan. This program identifies strategies to make energy more reliable, secure and affordable for New Yorkers, while addressing the threat of climate change and providing a cleaner environment. His "45 by 15" initiative is intended to meet 45 percent of the state's energy needs through improved energy efficiency and clean renewable energy by 2015. As Lieutenant Governor, Paterson managed the New York State Renewable Energy Task Force. He has been hailed by Long



Richard Kessel, President & CEO  
New York Power Authority

(continued on page 3)

# the thicket

## Bringing Nature Back: The Future Of Gardening

by Suzanne Ruggles

*Suzanne Ruggles is a naturalist and native gardener based out of Westhampton, NY. The name of her business, and the name by which she is known, is The Barefoot Gardener.*

In the garden nature intended, grass grows in all shapes, sizes and colors, and it bustles with life and beauty in many different forms — unaided by fertilizers, pesticides and irrigation. But this naturally beautiful setting is actually very unlike the gardens most people keep.

A garden dominated by a closely-cropped grass lawn is a style derived from the grounds of European estates at a time when the wealthiest people had the most livestock so their vegetation was always eaten low. As a result, short grass became associated with wealth, a look that was gradually emulated by people of all income levels. And unlike the wigs and corsets of the time, the short lawn never went out of style. By the 1950s, many Americans shifted from urban to suburban homes and lawns were once again a display of wealth and status. As people acquired more appliances to assist with housework, the average family found that they had more free time than ever before. And so they turned to their gardens and lawns as a way to pass time — and to show off to their neighbors.

Today, you can still have a beautiful yard that will be the envy of your neighborhood and that won't require full time care. In fact, nature left largely to its own devices will produce the loveliest gardens. In my own yard, I have welcomed the return of Pine Barrens plants and animals after years of clearing, pulling and spraying of these native flora and fauna by the property's previous owners. And today, native Pines, Oaks and Cherries (*Prunus Serotina*, my favorite tree) Cedar, Sumac, Viburnum, Pokeweed, *Rosa Virginiana*, Raspberries, Blueberries, *Carex Pensylvanica*, *Arctostaphylos*, Aster, Bird's Foot Violet and the endangered Indian Peace Pipe, all thrive together in my yard while creating a beautiful arrangement of color, texture, shape and size. I routinely purchase new plants to add as well, but they are northeast native species like *Asclepias*, Phlox, *Monarda* and Elderberry that have evolved in the seasonal climate of the area; thrived in its porous, sandy soil and developed an innate resistance to the naturally occurring fungi and pests. By simply choosing plants that are well-suited to the area, I can avoid much of the pampering that was once required by gardens of old; gardens comprised of plants that were beautiful, but unsuited to the landscape. Native plants are so well-adjusted they require little or no irrigation, pesticides or fertilizers.

What is most alarming, though, is the damage we can do by sticking to our old ways. Cutting and clearing is not only expensive and time consuming, it's downright harmful. People are shocked to know that operating a typical gas powered lawn mower for one hour produces the same amount of smog-forming hydrocarbons as driving an average car almost 200 miles. Additionally, more than 600 million gallons of gasoline are used in the U.S. to power lawn equipment; and 17 million gallons of fuel, mostly gasoline, are spilled each year while refueling lawn equipment — that's more than was spilled by the Exxon Valdez in the Gulf of Alaska. Three million tons of fertilizers are used on American lawns every year, and 60 percent of the Nitrogen in these fertilizers ends up in our groundwater, severely impacting drinking water and our aquatic life. Over 70 million pounds of pesticides are applied to lawns every year in the U.S., and the EPA reports that up to 50 percent of water use in urban areas is devoted to lawn care. Nationwide, there are over 50 million acres of lawn, the cumulative environmental impacts of which are staggering.

On Long Island, keeping our drinking water supply free of pesticides and fertilizers is of utmost concern. The Pine Barrens sits atop the nation's first Sole Source Aquifer and provides drinking water to all of the island's residents. And each time we tear away native plants and trees to install a lawn, we carve away at the ecostructure which protects our greatest natural resource. The Pine Barrens, which boasts the largest diversity of plant and animal life in all of New York State, once covered 25 percent of Long Island. Today, it covers only 10 percent. That means more than half of the Pine Barrens has been replaced with lawns and urban landscaping, parking lots and other man-made construction.

We've undertaken all of this lawn and garden care under the misguided notion that we are actually caring for nature. But in many instances we've actually been doing the opposite. The lawn as we've come to know it is a monoculture — an environment where only one species is allowed to survive at the expense of all others. A "weed" is simply a plant growing in a place where you don't want it. Some native plants have become considered weeds because they intrude in otherwise immaculate green lawns. But nature's intelligence is in its biodiversity.

Natural gardens are not only the easiest to maintain, they are the most fulfilling to enjoy because of the abundant wildlife they attract. In the garden nature intended, dragonflies weave around the sun's rays, the light reflecting off their delicate, lacy wings and multi-colored bodies. And song birds sing sweetly all around you and eat the seeds and berries from the shrubs and trees. Without a need for food or shelter provided by humans, these creatures happily take care of themselves.

Today in my own garden I watched as a Cat Bird ate the luscious berries of the Poke Weed, and a Mockingbird picked at Cedar berries. I harvested seeds from the Native *Achillea*, Primrose, Aster, *Vernonia*, *Eupatorium*, *Solidago*, and four kinds of native butterfly weed that I will share with clients and friends. And in the coming years, the flowers that are borne on the plants that come from these seeds will nourish bees and butterflies in gardens across Long Island. With less work comes more pleasure, and this could be your garden too.

Credit: Suzanne Ruggles



AT HOME: Monarch on a butterfly bush.

## ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS NOTES

### At Last! The Bigger Better Bottle Bill!

After the New York State Legislature finally agreed to expand the quarter-century old Bottle Deposit Bill, Governor Paterson pressed for it and signed it into law. The measure survived a spirited, industry-led court challenge and the Bigger Better Bottle Bill is now law.

The expansion will require a deposit on all water bottles sold in New York. According to the Container Recycling Institute, more than 3.2 billion water bottles were sold in New York State alone - nearly a quarter of the state's total beverage sales. Bottled water represents 70 percent of the total non-carbonated beverage sales in New York which previous versions of the bill sought to capture. Water bottles are one of the most common items found in litter cleanups in New York. Without a deposit, most of these containers end up in the trash or polluting our communities. Oregon and Connecticut have also recently expanded their deposit laws to include bottled water.

The law requires beverage companies to return 80 percent of the unclaimed deposits to the state General Fund, raising an estimated \$115 million next year. Since 1982, beer and soda companies have retained more than \$2 billion in unclaimed deposits. This legislation brings New York into line with other states, such as Massachusetts, Maine, Michigan, Hawaii, and most recently Connecticut, which already redeem unclaimed beverage container deposits.

The law also includes a number of measures that will improve opportunities for New Yorkers to return their empty bottles and cans, including incentives for small business and nonprofit redemption centers and requirements for large stores to maintain dedicated areas for bottle and can returns. These provisions, plus the expansion and an increased handling fee, will lead to the creation of thousands of new jobs across the state.



### First Round to the Good Guys!

A State Supreme Court Judge has granted the Society a Temporary Restraining Order against the Town of Brookhaven, preventing its Planning Board from reviewing the site plan for the proposed "Sandy Hills" density giveaway in the Pine Barrens of Middle Island. The Society brought suit in May, challenging Brookhaven's change of zone effort that would permit a 38-acre parcel to be developed not with 34 homes as permitted under current zoning, but instead with 136-139 units of housing as well as business and retail.

The proposed project lies in a state-designated Special Groundwater Protection Area near the headwaters of the Carmans River where a huge preservation effort is under-way. It is one of a series of high-density development projects proposed for the Middle Island corridor that conflicts with a recent Middle Island Hamlet Study that recommended limiting development in the environmentally-sensitive area.

The New York State Pine Barrens Commission expressed concerns about these developments at its September meeting. The matter remains in State Supreme Court in Riverhead.



# The President's Point of View

By Alan Singer

## Levy Must Get Real About Open Space Preservation

It's time to put an end to Suffolk County Executive Steve Levy's lies about his record on open space and farmland. If we don't, we're never going to improve Suffolk's sputtering land preservation programs and we're never going to reach the goal of saving 30,000 additional acres of open space and farmland.

The truth is, Mr. Levy has saved fewer acres of land than either of his predecessors in the 22-year history of the Drinking Water Protection Program. Pat Halpin saved 8,832 acres over four years, for an average of 2,208 acres-per-year. Bob Gaffney saved 11,078 acres over 12 years, for an average of 923 acres-per-year. And Steve Levy has saved 3,570 acres over five years, for an average of 714 acres-per-year, the worst record of all.

In 2006, Levy joined more than 100 government, business and community leaders committing to save 35,000 acres of open space and farmland by 2015. With only 5,000 acres saved in the first three years, at this point, we are preserving only half of that goal.

However, the recession may give us until 2020 to reach the objective. We have ten years to preserve 30,000 acres, or 3,000 acres-a-year. The county's share used to be 90% of all land saved. If it were only 50%, Levy would still have to protect 1,500 acres per year. But his average is less than half of that.

What does he say in response to criticism from environmental and civic leaders, farmers and those concerned about both the environmental impact of

failure and the economic consequences as well? He says he's spent a lot of money and has saved much more land than Central Park. Huh?

Only a politician would boast that he's spent more money than his predecessors.

**“We have ten years to preserve 30,000 acres, or 3,000 acres-a-year. The county's share used to be 90% of all land saved. If it were only 50%, Levy would still have to protect 1,500 acres per year. But his average is less than half of that.”**

Land is more expensive today than it was two decades ago and maybe he has overpaid for some property. But that doesn't change the fact that he's purchased only a tiny fraction of what County Executives Pat Halpin and Bob Gaffney did. And what does Central Park have to do with anything?

It is taking approximately 50 percent longer to complete real estate transactions under the Levy Administration – as

much as three years. The current real estate staff is only half as large as it was when he came to office and it appears to be functioning worse than ever before. But there's no evidence that any of this is the fault of the County Legislature or of the staff charged with making land purchases. It seems to be strictly the personal policy of the County Executive that is slowing things down.

The public clearly wants drinking water, open space and farmland protected and Suffolk is authorized to borrow up to \$320 million to buy the land now, while it's less expensive and still available. Yet the Levy Administration has borrowed just \$115 million. He's got to get going.

Levy must stop distorting his record on land preservation or Long Island will never reach the preservation goals everyone – including Levy – agreed to and we all still want to achieve. Protecting open space and farms helps maintain tourism, Long Island's number one industry. If we lose much more farmland to development, the state's largest dollar producing agriculture county won't be viable any more. Fishing and the lucrative second-home industry will be undercut and air quality, water quality and our overall quality-of-life will be undermined.

The math is simple. We've got ten years to save 30,000 acres. Even with state and local land preservation efforts, we're on course for failure. It's high time for Steve Levy to honor his commitment, right now.

*(continued from page 1)*

Credit: LIPBS

## Governor Paterson & NYPA's Richard Kessel Honored at PBS Gala 2009

Islanders for disapproving the Broadwater Liquefied Natural Gas Factory, proposed for Long Island Sound.

Richard Kessel is in his second year as head of the New York Power Authority. He has helped cut energy costs at local, county and state facilities, public schools and state universities, saving New York taxpayers some \$100 million a year. These projects have also reduced energy demand by more than 190,000 kilowatts, reducing greenhouse gas emissions at the same time. NYPA's programs offer reduced-rate electricity, mostly from hydro-electric power, in exchange for the creation of new, "green" jobs under NYPA's "Power for Jobs" initiative. Ads in the Gala Souvenir Journal are available for purchase until November 1 by calling (631) 369-3300 or by e-mailing [garvey@pinebarrens.org](mailto:garvey@pinebarrens.org).



THE LIVING END: An aerial view of the Montauk Lighthouse.