



LONG ISLAND
PINE BARRENS
SOCIETY

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Riverhead, NY 11901

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LONG ISLAND
PINE BARRENS
SOCIETY

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WHEN SAVING OPEN SPACE WAS A BLACK & WHITE ISSUE: This year marks the 20th anniversary of the New York State Legislature's unanimous approval of the Pine Barrens Protection Act. Today, preserving open space on Long Island is like pulling teeth, but we were all smiles, then.

New Air Times as of April 1st!

The 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.

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

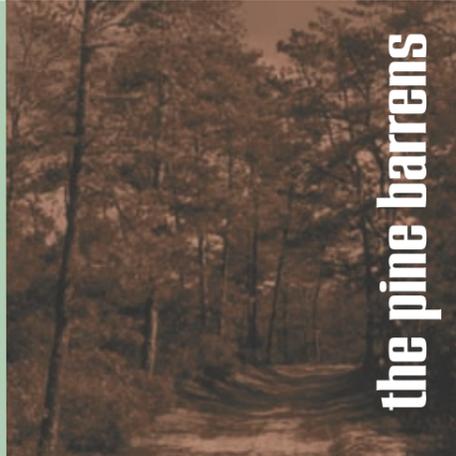
Towns of Riverhead, Southold and Southampton
Mondays 8:00 pm
Tuesdays 6:00 pm
Sundays 11:00 am

Towns of Brookhaven, Smithtown
and portions of Islip
Mondays 8:00 pm
Tuesdays 7:00 pm
Saturdays 10:30 am

Towns of Babylon, Huntington,
portions of Islip, and all of Nassau County
Mondays 9:00 pm
Tuesdays 7:00 pm (Ch 115)
Wednesdays 8:00 pm



LONG ISLAND
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today

PRESERVATION: NOW OR NEVER

“SANDY” CARS IN THE BARRENS Government Fails to Protect Prized Ecosystem

Credit: LIPBS



AUTO DUMP: Tens of thousands of “Sandy” wrecked cars cover the Riverhead Town’s Enterprise Park at Calverton in the Central Pine Barrens and state-designated Special Groundwater Protection Area. Many are still there.

They came by the thousands from across the Metropolitan Area. Wrecked Mercedes, Toyotas, Fords, Chryslers and BMWs. They became known as the “Sandy Cars.” And where did they come? To the Long Island Pine Barrens.

They were the detritus of Superstorm Sandy and they arrived by the truck load at the Enterprise Park at Calverton — the former U.S. Navy Grumman property, now owned mostly by the Town of Riverhead. And there’s the rub. Auto salvagers and insurance companies needed places to store some 250,000 vehicles that had been declared “total losses” but were still worth millions in parts and even whole cars. Cash-strapped Riverhead Town had dollar signs in their eyes and preservation far from their minds.

Tens of thousands of wrecked cars could be worth upwards of two million dollars. The warnings of environmentalists of destroyed grasslands and cars leaking gasoline, oil, antifreeze, lubricants and runoff from salt-corroded parts sitting for as much as a year atop New York State’s largest Special Groundwater Protection Area meant nothing to the town nor to private Pine Barrens property owners such as developer Engel Burman.

Credit: LIPBS



TRASHED: Former grasslands, which the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation was supposed to protect, were destroyed by car salvage operations on property owned by developer Engel Burman.

Nor to the environmental enforcement agencies of government, charged with protecting Long Island’s premier ecosystem.

The threat represented by the “Sandy Cars” was ignored by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, the Suffolk County Health Department and town government as well. The threat was virtually ignored, even by the New York State Pine Barrens Commission. As the cars were gradually removed (thousands are still in place) the predicted damage was evident. “Protected grasslands” were utterly destroyed and evidence of automotive chemicals was everywhere.

Only incessant coverage by the news media helped at all. The cars were removed at a faster rate than planned, but government, unwilling to challenge a fellow unit of government, stood by and allowed the Pine Barrens at Calverton to be sacrificed to the economic interests of the salvage and insurance industries — with the help of greedy beneficiaries. “We’ll press for fines, inspections and remediation,” said Pine Barrens Society Executive Director, Richard Amper. “Then, we’ll seek regulatory intervention that will prevent this from ever happening again. This was a governmental and environmental disgrace.”

Earth Day Conference: “Water We Going To Do?”

Long Island environmental leaders launched a campaign to reverse declining water quality on the Island and protect the underground aquifer for the future, at a public policy conference, as a run-up to Earth Day 2013, at the Wind Watch Golf & Country Club in Hauppauge.

The event followed by a year, the first “Water We Going To Do?” conference at which scientists and environmental advocates documented a precipitous decline in drinking water and surface water quality — the result of nitrogen from sewage as well as pesticides, volatile organic compounds, household chemicals and pharmaceuticals.



Credit: LIPBS

ALL SET: Environmentalists on the set of the Pine Barrens Society Television Show, ready to discuss the “Water We Going To Do?” conference. (At Left) Kevin McDonald of The Nature Conservancy and Robert Sweeney, Chairman of the New York State Assembly’s Environmental Conservation Committee. (Standing) Adrienne Esposito of Citizens Campaign for the Environment and Robert DeLuca of Group for the East End. (At right), the Society’s Richard Amper, host of the award-winning program and co-host, Kathleen Nasta.

“Water We Going To Do: Two?” reported progress, narrowed the challenges, advanced proposed new legislation and regulations, and advised citizens what they can do to safeguard the Island’s underground water supply upon which nearly three million Long Islanders depend for pure, fresh drinking water and clean rivers, streams and bays.

“We understand the problem, know how to solve it and have a plan to do so that involves every Long Islander,” said Richard Amper, Executive Director of the Long Island Pine Barrens Society, a co-sponsor of the event. Other co-sponsors include Citizens Campaign for the Environment, Group for the East End and The Nature Conservancy.

Carmans River Protection: How It Evolved and Why We Need It!

by Martin Van Lith

Martin Van Lith lives in Brookhaven Hamlet. He is a respected Brookhaven historian and avid naturalist.

The preservation of Carmans River began in earnest during the middle of the 20th century, when, in 1947, Maurice Wertheim donated three miles of the tidal portion of the river, along with 1,700 acres of upland straddling it, to the U.S. Department of Interior. Over the many years since then, the Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge acquired additional adjacent lands, which included two major tributaries, Little Neck Run and Yaphank Creek. Entering the 21st century, the refuge covered 2,550 acres. In July of 1998, Wertheim Refuge was added to the Core Preservation Area



Credit: Mark Forman

VIEW FROM ABOVE: The 102,500-acre Central Pine Barrens Preserve stands out like a “green” thumb amidst sprawling development.

of the Central Pine Barrens. In 1962, NYS condemned and jointly purchased with Suffolk County more than 1,300 acres of the Hard Estate, today’s South Haven Park. Additionally, Ken Hard donated to the Town of Brookhaven the entire northern five miles of Carmans River, including both the Lower and Upper Yaphank Lakes.

In 1972, a group of students from Bellport High School formed the group Students for Environmental Quality, or SEQ, with Art Cooley as their mentor. Art Cooley was also a founding member of the Environmental Defense Fund, today the nation’s largest environmental group.

SEQ studied the biology and history of Carmans River and published a booklet titled *The Carmans River Story*. In 1974, they successfully lobbied Albany to have Carmans River become the first river in New York State to be protected under the new Wild Scenic and Recreational Rivers Act.

Because of the guidance offered to the students by EDF’s Art Cooley and EDF President Dennis Puleston, the Carmans was EDF’s founding river, so to speak. Later, Dennis Puleston’s in-laws, the Wellingtons, donated 160 acres on the west side of the mouth of the river to the refuge. In 1998, a diverse group of people came together and incorporated as Friends of Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge, and I became their first president. Immediately after FOW’s founding, Home Depot announced its intention to build an outlet center on a 20-acre parcel along the tidal portion of Carmans River. Some 20 environmental and civic organizations formed the Carmans River Coalition and successfully fought to have this land preserved.

The Home Depot debacle raised concern that the river was not entirely protected, perhaps the least protected of the four major rivers on Long Island, and that more needed to be done. To that end, in 2000, EDF’s Jim Tripp, Art Cooley, Tom Williams and several other members of the former Carmans River Coalition formed a new group, the Carmans River Partnership.

The Carmans River Partnership includes officials and heads of agencies from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, New York State, Suffolk County and Brookhaven Town, as well as non-governmental civic and environmental organizations. Meeting regularly for the past 12 years, the Partnership has been a major player in the acquisition and preservation of dozens of parcels totaling over 1,000 acres in the river’s watershed. The largest, nearly 700 acres, was Warbler Woods, a.k.a. Suffolk County’s Dennis Puleston Nature Preserve. Other large parcels were the Novac, Camp Olympia, Girl Scout Camp, Robinson Duck Farm, Cathedral Pines, and Connecticut River Estates.

Despite these efforts to preserve the nearly pristine water quality of the river, tests indicated water quality was declining. In 2010, at the Partnership’s urging, then Brookhaven Town Supervisor Mark Lesko formed a Carmans River study group to make recommendations for legislation to create a Carmans River Protection Plan. Several members of the Carmans River Partnership, all prominent environmentalists, were on the Planning Committee, which also included three members of the Long Island Builders Institute. The group had three months to develop a plan and submit recommendations to the Town Board. During that time, a moratorium was placed on building in the watershed.

The committee’s recommendations were completed on time, but during the public hearing process, some in the civic community raised objections, particularly to proposals regarding transferring development to other communities and expanding the Pine Barrens Core. The Town Board did not even accept the proposal for consideration.

Two years have now passed since the process began and more than a dozen major development projects for the Carmans watershed are in the pipeline. The Town Board must take action on a plan right away. They must evaluate all they have seen and heard, then produce an amended plan that includes the best ideas advanced to date. Carmans River is the crown jewel of Long Island rivers, supplying 46,000,000 gallons of clean pine barrens water each day into the Great South Bay. Don’t let it become another Forge River, seriously impaired and struggling to survive.

ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS NOTES

Pine Barrens Fires One Year Later

Credit: Chief Timothy Shea

Credit: NY Wildfire & Incident Mgmt. Academy



OUT OF CONTROL: The Pine Barrens requires periodic burning to re-generate the ecosystem. Wildfires are the most dangerous way to accomplish this.



FIRE WHEN YOU ARE READY: Systematic prescribed and controlled burning can prevent uncontrollable wildfires in the Pine Barrens, yet permit re-generation.

A year after two simultaneous Pine Barrens wildfires blackened 1,180 acres of pine barrens in Calverton, Manorville, Ridge and Upton, the ecosystem is recovering and so are those responsible for fire management.

After action reports say that the forest fires sprang up on property owned by Brookhaven National Laboratory and that they were deliberately set. The perpetrators have not been apprehended. Several structures, including homes were destroyed and several injuries, including those to firefighter, were reported.

Fire fighting was faulted, with experts recommending improvements to methodology. Among the advice given was the establishment of central and diversified command and control. Many units set out to attack the fire themselves and lacked the benefit of a more coordinated management approach.

As with the 1995 fires which covered more than 5,000 acres — the largest forest fire in N.Y. state history — coordinated radio communication was not fully established and fire fighting equipment was parked so as to block the movement of other fire fighting apparatus, further undermining the operation.

Since the fire, well sites, distant from water supplies have been identified and well drilling is being commenced. Perhaps most important of all, fire management personnel are increasing their use of “prescribed burning” in which this fire-dependent ecosystem is systematically subjected to intentional burning under strictly controlled conditions of wind, humidity and soil moisture.

PBS Executive Director Richard Amper said, “It is far preferable to allow the Pine Barrens to regenerate through small, planned and controlled fires than by unplanned and uncontrollable conflagrations that threaten human safety and property.”

Ten Years of Pine Barrens TV

The Long Island Pine Barrens Society’s award-winning television program, seen Island-wide on Cablevision, has marked its tenth anniversary. The program was begun in an effort to inform Long Islanders from Great Neck to Montauk on the widest possible range of environmental topics, with a particular focus on water protection and open space preservation — the Pine Barrens Society’s principle issues.

Credit: LIPBS

From the outset, the program has been produced at the studios of Black Sheep Television — at the beginning, in Westhampton and presently in Hampton Bays. The program features in-studio interviews, including exterior video to show Long Islanders, Long Island.

There have been programs on air, land, water, energy, science, hiking, environmental law, parks, legislation, litigation and on and on. We’ve introduced our viewers to dozens of environmental and civic groups that are working to protect Long Island’s natural treasures and interviewed everyone from local community leaders to the Governor of New York.

Occasionally, we leave the studio for a look at what’s going on around the Island. We’ve covered Environmental Public Hearings, toured the Pine Barrens with experts like Assemblyman Steve Englebright, watched fire fighting training in the Pine Barrens and viewed the Carmans River by helicopter and canoe. Every October, the show takes viewers to the Society’s Annual Environment Awards Gala which honors folks who’ve made a difference in protecting Long Island’s environment.

Each program is aired a dozen times a week, for a month. The program appears on Cablevision Channel 20 all across the Island and streams on the Society’s website — www.pinebarrens.org.



ON LOCATION: Co-hosts Dick Amper and Kathleen Nasta “Where the Barrens Meet the Bay” at Hubbard County Park



The President's Point of View

Major Milestone: The Pine Barrens Act Celebrates 20 Years!

By Alan Singer

Even as our Pine Barrens Society is working overtime to reverse the precipitous decline in drinking water and surface water quality in areas outside the Pine Barrens, we should find time to appreciate and learn from a huge accomplishment from two decades ago.

Of course, I mean the hard fought battle to obtain landmark legislation to protect drinking water and preserve critical habitat in Long Island's premier ecosystem — the Long Island Pine Barrens.

Oh, it wasn't easy. The Pine Barrens Preservation Initiative was a monumental, three-year, seven-days-a-week marathon to educate and win the support of Long Islanders and, eventually their public officials.

Less than three percent of Long Islanders knew anything about the Pine Barrens when the campaign was commenced in 1989. Through ceaseless advocacy in print, on radio and television and at meeting-after-meeting, the Society and a growing number of environmental and civic groups won the hearts and minds of Long Island and with that — their money. In the years since the Society began its initiative, Long Islanders have committed at referenda, more

money than the residents of 45 of the 50 states — more than a billion dollars — to preserve tens of thousands of acres that sit atop the Island's purest water supply.

“In the years since the Society began its initiative, Long Islanders have committed at referenda, more money than the residents of 45 of the 50 states — more than a billion dollars — to preserve tens of thousands of acres that sit atop the Island's purest water supply.”

Through litigation, the Society brought the largest environmental lawsuit in New York State history, blocking some 234 proposed development projects valued at six billion dollars. Ultimately, through legislation, unanimously approved by the New York State Legislature in a single session, the Society saved the woodlands and wetlands that its founders and members love.

Admittedly, the preservation effort is never done. Eternal diligence is required. We've amended the Pine Barrens Act several times to make it function better on the basis of experience. Some of the members of the New York State Pine Barrens Commission, which the Pine Barrens Act created, lack institutional memory of this great preservation achievement, so the Society monitors the Commission's work, never having missed a single monthly meeting of the Commission over two decades.

I say all of this not in search of commendation or recognition, but because the success of the Pine Barrens Preservation Initiative, 20 years ago, portends great hope for the even greater challenge represented by today's effort to restore and protect Long Island's groundwater, outside the Pine Barrens Preserve.

As we toil to reverse the decline in the quality of water across Long Island, let us never forget that the odds were heavily against us when we pledged to save the Pine Barrens. As then, our motto must be “Long Island Must: Long Island Will.” Failure is not an option.

35th Gala Honors Long Island Press & East End's DeLuca

The Pine Barrens Society celebrated its 35th birthday at Oheka Castle in Huntington, by honoring the Long Island Press for its coverage of the environment and health and Robert DeLuca, President of Group for the East End, for his accomplishments in environmental education and advocacy.

Alec Baldwin served as Honorary Chairman and Ross Ain of Caithness and Gary Melius of Oheka Castle served as Gala Co-Chairs. The gala theme “Water, Water Everywhere” called attention to the Society's focus on

restoring and protecting the Island's drinking water and surface waters. Music was supplied by the popular Denice Given Band and water photography was provided by The Photo Click. More than 200 attended.

The Pine Barrens Society was founded in 1997 by John Cryan, Bob McGrath and John Turner who are still working to this day on advancing environmental education and protection.

Credit: Scott Ross, Scott Ross Photography



ACCEPTING: Bob DeLuca of Group for the East End accepts the Dennis Puleston Environmental Achievement Award from TV hosts Kathleen Nasta and Dick Amper.



SOCIALIZING: Dick Amper is flanked by New York State Assemblyman Robert Sweeney on the left and Regional Conservation Director Peter Scully on the right.



SPEAKING: Long Island Press publisher Jed Morey thanks the Society for its award for “Outstanding Contribution to Long Island's Environment” for green coverage.



PARTYING: Pine Barrens Society Board Member Tom Casey and his wife Sherri enjoy the lavish cocktail hour at Oheka Castle at the Society's 35th birthday party.



SMILING: Jennifer Juengst of the Long Island Environmental Voters Forum is with Brookhaven Town Councilwoman Jane Bonner at the 2012 Annual Awards Gala.



REMEMBERING: Pine Barrens Society Co-founder Bob McGrath and his wife Denise look back with fondness at the creation of the Pine Barrens Society in 1977.



MEETING: Pine Barrens Society President Alan Singer chats up Long Island Press publisher Jed Morey, honored for his paper's coverage of environment and health.



WORKING: Dick Amper pauses to thank volunteers Laura Palermo and Nadia Brako. More than a dozen supporters of the Society's work help out at the annual event.



RELAXING: With another successful gala under their belts, Dick Amper and wife Robin, prepare to retire with event producers to the library to relax and celebrate.