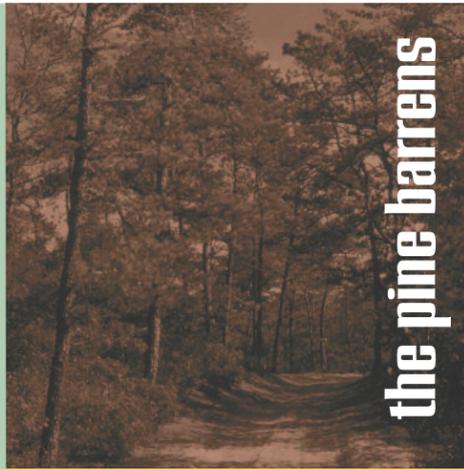




LONG ISLAND  
PINE BARRENS  
SOCIETY



# today

PROTECTING LAND & WATER

## Water Quality Plan Launched

# Nitrogen Reduction Strategy Underway

Credit: LIPBS

A program aimed at reversing the decline in water quality Island-wide, by targeting nitrogen from wastewater and fertilizers, is underway. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the Long Island Regional Planning Council have commenced a three-part program, supported by Suffolk and Nassau Counties and several Long Island towns.

Funded by New York State at \$5 million for the first year, the program calls for identifying each of the Island's individual watersheds, measuring the current nitrogen loading, then producing a custom, science-based Nitrogen Reduction Plan for each watershed. A second \$5 million is being sought in the 2016 state budget.

Launched in October, the Long Island Nitrogen Action Plan is aimed at reducing nitrogen discharge from sewage treatment plants, individual septic systems and cesspools and fertilizers associated with agricul-



**PARTNERS IN WATER PROTECTION:** John Cameron, Chairman of the Long Island Regional Planning Council and James Tierney, Assistant Commissioner for Water at the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation are spearheading a Nitrogen Action Plan to clean-up Long Island's water.

ture and landscaping. The nitrogen seeps into groundwater and flows into our surface waters, degrading drinking water and triggering harmful algae blooms that kill marine life and aquatic plants, closing beaches and shellfisheries.

declining water quality on Long Island," said Pine Barrens Society Executive Director, Richard Amper, "now, we've begun the process of cleaning up the mess."

At the same time, Suffolk County has launched a spate of initiatives, including testing new wastewater management systems in individual homes in an effort to replace some 350,000 home cesspools and septic systems over the next decade. These antiquated systems, discharge human waste directly into groundwater causing significant nitrogen contamination. Results of the testing are expected by summer and the approval of these advanced systems for widespread use is expected later in 2016.

Future water improvement efforts will include the reduction of pesticides and herbicides, clean-up of toxic waste sites and elimination of pharmaceutical drugs from groundwater through improper disposal.

## Environmentalists Attack Over-Development High Density Re-zoning Comes Under Fire

Responding to a series of new, high-density development proposals requiring re-zoning, the Pine Barrens Society and other environmental and civic groups have begun an ambitious project to defeat currently proposed projects and prevent future ones.

Launched as a campaign to defeat the construction of a mega golf resort in the Pine Barrens of western Southampton Town, the project involves community organization, paid and free advertising and leadership from political and celebrity leaders.

Arizona-based Discovery Land Company seeks to build "The Hills at Southampton," on some 500 acres of land that is a part of the Pine Barrens, mostly preserved land that is critical to Long Island's hydrology and ecology. In fact, the area looking to be developed is the largest remaining tract of Pine Barrens land that is still in private hands.

The Planned Development District or "PDD" would include 118 residential units, a 98.13 acre private golf course, a 155,760 square foot clubhouse

Credit: LIPBS



**INFLUENTIAL ENVIRONMENTALIST:** Award-winning actor and environmental advocate Alec Baldwin appears in television Public Service Announcement opposing "The Hills" proposed development in the Pine Barrens and Southampton's Planned Development District ordinance which is leading to over-development in the town.

built on 4.24 acres and a 4.68 acre pond.

The proposed project requires re-zoning from the as of right, which permits only one house per five acres, intended to protect the underground aquifer in the Pine Barrens of East Quogue. The re-zoning mechanism is termed a "Planned Development District," and "The Hills" is but one of several high-density development projects which Southampton has approved or is considering.

A full-page ad in the Southampton Press (see page three) was signed by more than two dozen community leaders including New York State Assemblyman Fred Thiele, and was then followed by a television Public Service Announcement, featuring actor Alec Baldwin. The public education effort aims to "Kill the Hills

and Repeal PDDs." More than 1000 Southampton residents have written town officials supporting the campaign.

# the thicket

## What's Old is New Again

by Carl LoBue

Senior Marine Scientist, The Nature Conservancy on Long Island

Credit: Rich Giannotti & Charlie Flagg



**NEW INLET:** Fire Island inlet, created during Superstorm Sandy, has improved water quality in Great South Bay.

It had been almost two centuries since water freely flowed in and out of Great South Bay through Old Inlet, an undeveloped stretch of Fire Island's barrier beach southeast of Bellport Village. But that all changed the night of October 29th 2012, and since then the area is more commonly called "New Inlet." After 3 years, the fear and uncertainty that initially pushed some people to call for its manual closure has faded, and now these same people can be heard saying that the New Inlet is the best thing to have happened to Great South Bay in their lifetimes.

Almost immediately after Superstorm Sandy carved the inlet through the Otis Pike High Dunes Fire Island Wilderness Area, the water in eastern Great South Bay (aka Bellport Bay) became clearer and saltier. Seals, river herring, and a variety of sportfish quickly became abundant; hard clams were (and still are) growing faster. On the first anniversary of Sandy, National Geographic Society called the new inlet "Sandy's Silver Lining."

On sunny days, the waters around the sand shoals and new islands ringing the inlet appear a turquoise that is more reminiscent of the Caribbean than Long Island. Families, paddle boarders, sailors, and fishermen flock to its clear, flowing waters.

This type of recovery has precedent: similar observations were made during and after the previous formation of other inlets along Long Island's South Shore bays. Perhaps the most famous was the well-studied resurgence of shellfisheries and the disappearance of duck farm nitrogen pollution fueled harmful algae blooms after Moriches Inlet was re-opened in 1953.

The decision to (so far) forgo spending up to \$20M on dredges and bulldozers and instead allow for the kind of natural sand and water flow that has shaped and maintained Long Island's barrier beaches for thousands of years was not made lightly. The state/federal interim decision hinged on data from a network of water monitors that were in place before, during and after Sandy which invalidated unsubstantiated predictions that a new inlet was an imminent threat to life and property on the mainland. Stony Brook University's Dr. Charlie Flagg and his team were quick to action in the days after Sandy checking sensors, calculating flows, taking aerial photos, and presenting results while many of us were still bailing out our homes and waiting in long lines for gasoline.

But the presence of a massive sand mining dredge off Ocean Beach Fire Island this fall is a poignant reminder that a final determination on manual closure of the new inlet has yet to be made. To that end, the Department of Interior is currently conducting an Environmental Impact Study (EIS) that should inform agency decision makers on the proper course of action before the end of 2016.

So far, against the odds, facts and data have been more influential than fear and speculation, and for this we can give thanks not only to the scientists and citizens who have been very active, but also to some calm and thoughtful agency leaders at New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and Department of Interior. However barrier island management remains controversial and the fate of New Inlet is still uncertain.

In the wake of Superstorm Sandy, Governor Cuomo's 2100 Commission report pledged that the state would take a more enlightened approach towards managing for resilience and sustainability. How things pan out in this next decision making process will indicate if we have truly embraced the 2100 Commission's findings, or if the public's agencies will fall back to the same old pre-Sandy paradigm.

Credit: Rich Giannotti & Charlie Flagg



**AERIAL VIEW:** Brown Tide being flushed out of Great South Bay through the new Wilderness Inlet, July 2015.

## ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS NOTES

### The Beetle Battle

Credit: NYSDEC



**BEETLE VICTIM:** Infested by Southern Pine Beetles, this Pitch Pine in Henry's Hollow is one of the many trees felled by DEC Regional Natural Resources Supervisor Rob Marsh to limit the spread of the pine-ravaging insect.

The second winter of discontent is underway in the battle against the Southern Pine Beetle. The rice grain-size insects have attacked thousands of trees in the Pine Barrens and across Long Island. While the beetles cannot be eradicated, they are managed by cutting down infested trees – especially in the winter months.

To date, more than 7,000 trees (on approximately 100 acres) have been cut to treat for the Southern Pine Beetle. Treated areas include Henry's Hollow State Forest, Munn's Pond County Park, Hubbard County Park, and private and County land east of Bellows Pond road.

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation estimates the annual cost of beetle management at \$3.5 million. Pine Barrens Society Executive Director, Richard Amper, said, "The people of Long Island have invested nearly a billion dollars in land preservation – \$3.5 million a year seems like a small price to pay for the protection of our water and forest resources."

One plan advanced by the DEC calls for allowing commercial foresters to cut oak wood in exchange for cutting beetle-ravaged pitch pines. The Society does not support this approach.

The New York State Central Pine Barrens Commission's funding for beetle management is insufficient to manage the infestation. The Pine Barrens Society is actively seeking support from state legislative leaders including Assembly Environmental Conservation Committee Chairman Steve Englebright, New York State Senator Ken LaValle, Assemblyman Fred Thiele and Governor Andrew Cuomo. Stay tuned.

## Solar Eclipse

Credit: BNL



**WRONG:** Renewable energy including solar arrays are good for the environment but clearing forests, in this case in the Pine Barrens, is not.

Environmental sensitivity and just plain common sense was eclipsed by Suffolk County's recent proposal to clear woodlands in the Carmans River corridor for a solar array.

Although the Society supports the increased use of solar power and other renewable energy, we believe that the clearing of forests for this type of installation is in conflict with the protection of a natural resource.

This project violates the Suffolk County Planning Commission's solar code, which states that trees should not be cleared for solar arrays and that solar projects should be sited on previously developed land or rooftops. The public has invested over one billion dollars to preserve open space and that investment should be respected and protected.

Forests provide many additional ecosystem services besides purifying the air through carbon sequestration; Preserved land helps protect our aquifer and surface waters from further contamination, protect biodiversity by providing essential habitat to wildlife, and provides recreational opportunities. As Long Island's population grows and development increases, our forests become more fragmented – making these remaining stands even more important to protect.

The benefits of solar energy are also important, but they should not be pitted against the benefits of preserved land. This is a false choice – both are necessary for protecting Long Island's environment.



# The President's Point of View

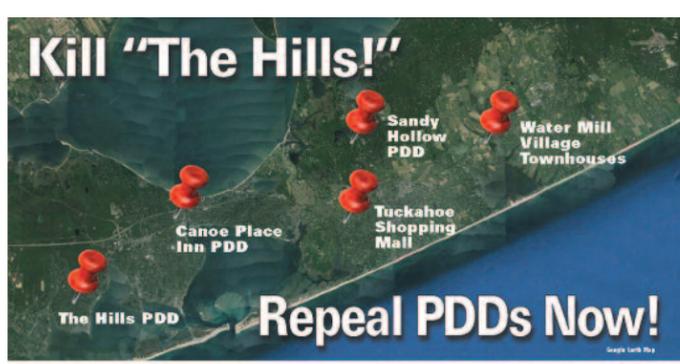
## Revolting Development

by Alan Singer

"The Hills at Southampton," (see story on page one) is one of the worst development projects ever proposed in the Pine Barrens. It has become a lightning rod for opposition to over-development in the Town of Southampton. The Long Island Pine Barrens act as a natural filter, protecting Long Island's aquifer, our main source of drinking water, from pollutants such as nitrogen. The property on which the project is proposed is also designated a Special Groundwater Protection Area by the state, as well as a designated Critical Environmental Area by Suffolk County. In addition, "The Hills" is part of a group of lands which The Nature Conservancy has given top priority for permanent preservation.

Development on this land will add to the total load of pollutants that are discharged into the groundwater and surrounding surface waters, which are already displaying signs of nitrogen pollution. The nearly 500-acre property would be located near Weesuck Creek and Shinnecock Bay which are currently exhibiting considerable evidence of pollution, including brown tide, red tide and rust tide.

Toxic algae blooms have closed beaches and shellfish beds that once flourished with clams and oysters. In May of 2015, shellfish in Weesuck Creek and Western Shinnecock Bay tested positive for saxitoxin, a marine biotoxin that causes paralytic shellfish poisoning, found to poison over a hundred Diamondback terrapin turtles on Long Island. Saxitoxin can also poison humans causing weakness, paralysis, or even death to those who consume high levels of this compound, by eating contaminated clams from Weesuck Creek for example. In June 2015, extensive brown tides appeared in Shinnecock Bay among other bodies of water surrounding



Dear Supervisor Throne-Holst and the Southampton Town Board:

A plague of high-density development threatens to suburbanize Southampton. Recent development proposals have been promoted that would undermine water quality, zoning, and community character through massive density giveaways to builders with big bucks. The public is justifiably outraged!

Zoning is intended to protect town residents and our natural resources. Zoning establishes what can be built on a particular parcel of land, and what can't. But what good is zoning, if the Town Board simply grants applications for high-density zone changes including the euphemistic "Planned Development District?"

Let's face it, PDDs and other changes-of-zone constitute "Let's Make A Deal Zoning" and represent government of, by and for developers. Responsible elected officials, environmentalists, civic leaders and residents who care about preventing in Southampton, the over-development that has urbanized so much Up-Island, are calling for immediate rejection of "The Hills" and repeal of Southampton's PDD ordinance, right now! Any replacement PDD ordinance must permit only Town initiated PDDs that are the result of a comprehensive planning study first, not PDDs advanced by private interests.

Take "The Hills at Southampton" for example. First, the Discovery Land proposal involves an 18-hole, private golf course with 118

residences and a 155,760 square foot clubhouse/catering facility. Scientists have identified this site as essential to the protection of drinking and surface waters in an area that is already seriously jeopardized by groundwater contamination, producing harmful algae blooms that threaten Weesuck Creek and Shinnecock Bay. In addition to nitrogen pollution from sewage, the project involves the use of large quantities of herbicides, pesticides and fungicides.

### ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!

"The Hills" a 594-acre site is part of a 900-acre assemblage of land that represents Long Island's Number One target for preservation. "The Hills" parcel lies in a town Aquifer Protection Overlay District, county Critical Environmental Area and state Special Groundwater Protection Area. It is the largest Pine Barrens parcel, still in private ownership in the Pine Barrens Preserve. The town recognized this essential fact by re-zoning the property to one home per five acres.

This proposal is just the latest in Southampton's inexplicable love affair with "Planned Development Districts," which seem to work better for developers than for the rest of us.

Other examples of high-density development proposed for Southampton include the Canoe Place Inn, Sandy Hollow, Tuckahoe Mega Mall among others. Whatever your position on specific development proposals, it's widely agreed that PDDs haven't worked for Southampton — only for the development-of-any-cost crowd.

Sincerely,

- Al Algieri**  
East Quogue Civic Assoc.
- Richard Amper**  
Long Island Pine Barrens Society
- Noelle Bailly**  
Friends of Sandy Hollow Assoc.
- Hank Beck**  
CAC-West (Westhampton, Ramenburg, Speonk, Eastport)
- Glorian Berk**  
Community Leader
- Scott Carlin**  
Professor
- Priscilla Ciccarello**  
Community Leader
- Robert Cohen**  
Save Sag Harbor Newsletter
- Steve DeLuca**  
Group for the East End
- Adrienne Esposito**  
Citizens Campaign for the Environment

- Ronald Fisher**  
Bay View Pines Civic & Taxpayers Association
- Christopher Gobler**  
Stony Brook University
- April Gornik**  
Artist
- Dan Gulizio**  
Peconic Baykeeper
- Frederick Havemeyer**  
Former Southampton Town Trustee
- Joan Hughes**  
East Quogue CAC
- Jennifer Juengst**  
Shinnecock Neighbors
- Ron Kass**  
CLEAN
- William Kearns**  
Spinney Road Resident
- Maud Kramer**  
Community Leader

- Janice Landis**  
Hampton Bays Civic Assoc. Board of Directors
- Robert Malafronte**  
Sag Harbor CAC
- Susan Mead**  
Attorney
- Ron Nappi**  
Spinney Road Resident
- Dave Reisfield**  
Long Island Environmental Voters Forum
- Board of Directors**  
Save Sag Harbor
- Marietta Seaman**  
Former Town Clerk
- Chuck Seaman**  
Businessman
- Jaime Siegel**  
HUSH Quiet Skies
- Andrea Spilka**  
Southampton Town Civic Coalition
- Fred W. Thiele, Jr.**  
New York State Assemblyman

**AD CAMPAIGN:** Environmental and civic leaders are campaigning against development in the Southampton Pine Barrens and a re-zoning scheme that is over-developing that town.

case, water quality improvement) is the rationale for more protective measures. Moreover, once the prospect of a mega golf course disappears, the sale of land for preservation becomes more attractive. The Southampton Town Board is free to reject the proposed PDD at any time. It's time.

## The Society Celebrates its 38th Birthday!

Credits: Scott Ross



**HONOREE:** Suffolk County Water Authority Chairman James Gaughran accepts award on behalf of the Authority for Outstanding Contribution to Long Island's Environment from PBS Executive Director Richard Amper and event co-host Kathleen Nasta.



**HONOREES:** The Society's pro bono attorneys, Paul Sabatino II, Regina Seltzer and Jennifer Juengst share the Dennis Puleston Environmental Achievement Award at the Society's 38th Anniversary Environmental Awards Gala.

The Long Island Pine Barrens Society enjoyed "Jazz at the Castle" to celebrate its 38th Anniversary at its annual Environmental Awards Gala, held October 21 at Oheka Castle in Huntington. The

Suffolk County Water Authority received the Society's award for Outstanding Contribution to Long Island's Environment and pro bono lawyers Jennifer Juengst, Paul Sabatino II and Regina Seltzer shared the

coveted Dennis Puleston Environmental Achievement Award. Some 200 guests enjoyed a gourmet dinner, danced to the music of the Trevor Davison Band and congratulated the honorees.



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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: LIPBS



**A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME:** CBS Newsman and Anchor of the public affairs program, "Exit 10/55," Richard Rose discussed water quality improvement efforts on Long Island with Pine Barrens Executive Director, Richard Amper.

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. The air times below are effective through September 30, 2016.

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

Towns of Brookhaven, Smithtown  
and portions of Islip  
Tuesdays at 6:30 pm  
Fridays at 10:30 pm  
Saturdays at 11:00 am

Towns of Riverhead, Southold and  
Southampton  
Mondays at 6:00 pm  
Mondays at 8:00 pm  
Tuesdays at 7:00 pm

Towns of Babylon, Huntington,  
portions of Islip, and all of Nassau County  
Mondays at 8:00 pm  
Mondays at 9:00 pm  
Thursdays at 7:00 pm (Channel 115)

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