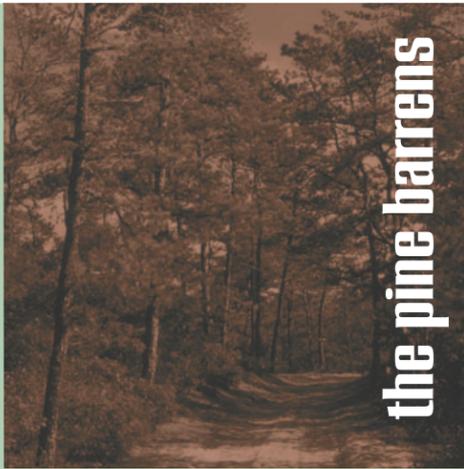




LONG ISLAND  
PINE BARRENS  
SOCIETY



the pine barrens

# today

PRESERVATION: NOW OR NEVER



Credit: Jennifer Clement

**ATTENTION GETTER:** The Carmans River in the Central Pine Barrens is the target of a major preservation effort.

Once a year, environmentalists, public officials and local residents gather for a meeting of the Carmans River Partnership — a sort of state-of-the-river assessment. Held on November 14, dozens of concerned Long Islanders attended. They learned about nascent efforts to address problems with invasive species and stormwater runoff in the river's north ponds. They worried about water quality problems in

## New Year's Resolution SAVING THE CARMANS RIVER

tributaries such as Beaver Dam Creek. And they called for increased land acquisition in the river corridor and limitations on new development to reduce future threats to this pristine Pine Barrens river.

Pointing to the many preservation failures which have rendered the nearby Forge River, officially "impaired," one government official protested, "Can't we have at least one river on Long Island that isn't #&%\* polluted?" Some called for a moratorium on new development; others for a cumulative environmental impact statement.

Instead, the Pine Barrens Society called for something new — a comprehensive Carmans River Protection

Plan. A month later, at its quarterly meeting in December, the Society's Board of Directors made producing a plan a top priority for 2009. Working with dozens of organizations and individuals, PBS will try to consolidate information on the current health of the river, catalogue all of the efforts currently underway to mitigate problems in the corridor, encourage needed studies and help develop an unprecedented plan

aimed not just at limiting contamination threats, but proactively establishing protections that will assure the future health of the Carmans. The Protection Plan will continue the current focus on surface water impacts, and it will also place further emphasis on managing groundwater flow to the river. This will include expediting groundwater studies to map out the river's contributing areas and putting additional pressure on all levels of government to increase land acquisition and curb development that contributes to groundwater contamination.

"There's a lot of interest and a lot of good work being done to protect the Carmans River," said Pine Barrens Society Executive Director, Richard Amper, "but what the Partnership now recognizes is that we lack a complete, organized plan to protect the river and ensure its future health."

First efforts to survey existing preservation activities began in January. New efforts by environmental groups, the Town of Brookhaven, Suffolk County, New York State and others are already underway. "The plight of the Forge River demonstrates how hard it is to restore a river once it's been badly compromised," Amper concluded, "Let's make sure this doesn't happen to the Carmans River."

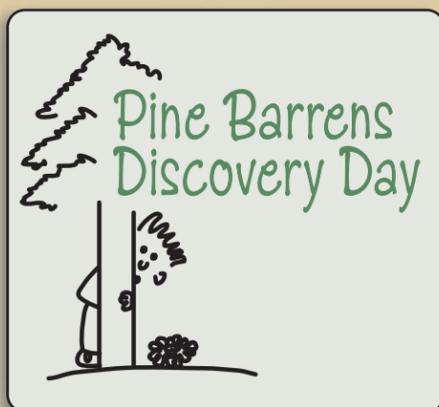
## Fun & Learning at the Same Time. Pine Barrens Discovery Day!

What if you and your family could learn about the Pine Barrens through fun hikes, exhibits and presentations right in the Pine Barrens? Well you can. It's Pine Barrens Discovery Day and it's set for June 13 at the Eastern Campus of Suffolk Community College in Riverhead.

Environmental groups and government agencies are joining for a day of family learning about Long Island's premier ecosystem. The Pine Barrens sit atop the largest quantities of the purest drinking water on Long Island and boast the greatest diversity of plants and animals anywhere in New York State.

In half or full-day programs Long Islanders will be introduced to the "Central Park of Long Island," 100,000 sprawling acres of forests, lakes, rivers and grasslands teeming with wildlife most Long Islanders have never seen.

"Pine Barrens Discovery Day is just that," said Pine Barrens Society Executive Director Richard Amper. "The whole family can find out all about Long Island's own wilderness and can see and even touch many of the critters that live in our Pine Barrens," he added.



There will be indoor educational displays, hands-on activities and walking tours of nearby Pine Barrens woods and ponds. There will be presentations by dozens of environmental groups as well as state, county and town

government agencies involved in protecting the barrens. Sponsors include: The Pine Barrens Society, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Town of Brookhaven, Town of Southampton, The Nature Conservancy, Suffolk Community College and Quogue Wildlife Refuge. Individuals and families can register by emailing [mgriffiths@pb.state.ny.us](mailto:mgriffiths@pb.state.ny.us) or by calling Melissa Griffiths at 631-218-1177. A minimal fee of \$5 per adult, and kids under 10 free or \$10 for the whole family makes Pine Barrens Discovery Day accessible to every Long Islander.

"Spring is the perfect time to visit Long Island's Pine Barrens," said Melissa Griffiths, Education Director of the

New York State Pine Barrens Commission who is co-chair of Discovery Day with PBS's Richard Amper. "Why read about it or talk about it when you can see it first-hand — then tell your friends about your experience with nature on Long Island," she said.

# the thicket

## Of Time and the River

by Martin Van Lith

*Marty Van Lith lives in Brookhaven Hamlet, where he chairs the Fire Place History Club and serves as Brookhaven Village Association Historian. The Brookhaven National Laboratory retiree is also Secretary of The Open Space Council.*

In 1655, a group of English settlers created Brookhaven Town's first settlement in Setauket, and two years later, their next purchase was a 256-acre salt marsh parcel along the lower Carmans River called Narcomac Meadows. Before long, these settlers purchased the whole river as well as all the wetlands along the bay. Then, as now, but for different reasons, this was the most valuable and productive land that nature had to offer.

For the next 300 years, the Carmans River was considered the best and most abundant piece of nature money could buy, and almost the entire river was owned by only a few of the wealthiest people. One, Maurice Wertheim, eventually left 1,700 acres to "the people of America." This became the Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge in 1947, which, over time and through the efforts of Dennis Puleston and others, has expanded to 2,600 acres, protecting almost the entire lower river watershed. Wertheim has also been made part of the state Pine Barrens preserve.

In more recent years, history saw continued efforts to protect the treasured Carmans River at the county and state lev-

els. In 1964, Suffolk County government saw the need to set aside this "best of nature" for posterity, so it purchased from the Hard family three miles of the Carmans River and the 1,000 acres straddling it just north of the Wertheim Refuge, creating today's South Haven Park. Ten years later, armed with the scientific knowledge of ecosystems and the web of life, students from Bellport High School rode their bicycles to Albany with bottles of water from the Carmans River to urge our lawmakers to protect the river under the Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers Act.

In the 1980's and 1990's, Suffolk County's suburban sprawl began taking its toll on the surrounding estuaries as well as drinking water, open space and wildlife. Taxpayers approved programs through which millions of dollars were spent to acquire the most environmentally important land, resulting in hundreds more acres of Carmans River watershed being protected.

The land conserved along the Carmans River includes the 90-acre Robinson Farm, purchased in 1991, the 128-acre Southaven Properties (1998), and the Fox Lair/Timber Ridge/Greenbelt acquisitions that together became the 700-acre Dennis Puleston Warbler Woods Preserve in 2006. Other parcels along the Carmans River include the former Camp Olympia, the Novak Property, and many smaller parcels.

In the thirty years since the students' successful ride to Albany, conservation efforts in this area have resulted in the Carmans River being the most pristine and important tributary on all of Long Island. For the past 350 years, we've done the right thing for the right reasons, and our reward is that the Carmans River is alive and well, providing the Great South Bay estuary with an average of 46,500,000 gallons a day of clean pine barrens water. One need only look to the east of the Carmans to see what the alternative would have been—an essentially dead river.

So it seems inconceivable now that there is a government-based effort underway to undermine all of the efforts to protect the Carmans River by proposing new intensive development along its banks. But County Executive Steve Levy appears to have a vision to urbanize Suffolk County, and his dreams include a new "subway stop" at LIE exit 67 for his proposed 80-acre industrial park and mini-city, "The Villages at Carmans River." Realization of this vision also entails giving away 250 acres of our public watershed land for an affordable housing project.

The propaganda Levy uses to sell this death sentence for the Carmans River is "smart growth." In the Queens mentality of Steve Levy "smart growth" is taking a currently non-destination place, like Yaphank, and making it a target for thousands of cars a day. For the past two years, the County Executive and his development aides have been using this misleading term and the elusive promise of "affordable housing" to justify a new housing and transportation "hub" on the Carmans River.

An ill-conceived proposal and the largest since Garden City-based developer Wilbur Breslin's Mall and associated mini-city, dubbed "Willy World," this project is so mind-boggling and out of touch with the desires of the people of Suffolk County that it will be challenged—and if sanity prevails, defeated—either through public outcry or court order.

The residents of Suffolk County have invested millions in the protection of the Carmans River and its surrounding watershed, but Levy's development ideas threaten to undo all that has been done.

The time is now for the people of Long Island to save the Carmans River.



Credit: Martin Van Lith

## ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS NOTES

### There They Go, Again!

Credit: Suffolk County

In October, legislation was introduced in the Suffolk County Legislature that would overturn provisions of two public referenda designed to preserve open space and promote affordable housing. Co-



GOOD GOVERNMENT? The Suffolk County Legislature

sponsored by Legislators William Lindsay, Kate Browning and DuWayne Gregory, the proposed resolution aims to re-direct valuable development rights from affordable housing to "spur smart growth, community growth and job creation," whatever that means.

In fact, the \$75 million 2004 Save Open Space Bond Act, one of the two referenda in question, was in danger of being rejected by voters because of the TDR provision. But after lengthy negotiations with environmentalists, Suffolk County Executive Steve Levy and the county legislature agreed to limit the TDR provision to affordable housing only.

Now, the county legislature seeks to alter on its own the TDR-limiting provisions even though the ballot proposition said changes could only be made through a new referendum. The Society warned that no law created by voter referendum may be changed without voter approval and that legal action would be taken if the legislature approves the proposal.

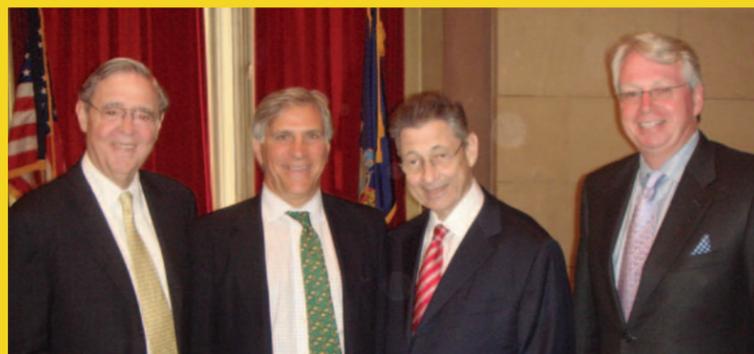
## Appealing Decision

The Society has appealed a court decision that prohibited the New York State Pine Barrens Commission from reviewing proposed development at Riverhead Town's Enterprise Park at Calverton (EPCAL). The court opinion by State Supreme Court Justice Paul Baisley, Jr. also cleared the way for development in other parts of the Pine Barrens. Two major projects are proposed for EPCAL, involving more than 1,000 acres of land in the Pine Barrens and state-designated Special Groundwater Protection Area. One of the projects, Riverhead Resorts, calls for construction of eight resort complexes, a 90-acre man-made lake, 2,000 hotel rooms, 3,500 time-share units, a 100,000-square foot convention center and a 350 foot indoor ski mountain.

New York State Attorney General Andrew Cuomo's office is representing the Pine Barrens Commission in the appeal to the Appellate Division's Second Department.

## Open Space Funding at Risk

Credit: LIPBS



LOBBYING FOR LAND: James Large, Wildlife Conservation Society Board Member; Luis Rinaldini, Vice Chairman of the North Shore Land Alliance; New York State Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver; and Paul Brennan, Hamptons Regional Director of Prudential Douglas Elliman Real Estate together in Albany.

PBS is working to restore funding to New York State's Environmental Protection Fund to assure the state's role in protecting open space and farmland on Long Island. In high-level meetings in Albany, environmentalists are pointing out the adverse environmental and economic impacts a reduction in state funding would have in this region.

"Some things can be put off during a recession, but once Long Island land is lost it cannot later be retrieved for tourism, farming, fishing, the second-home industry and environmental priorities such as drinking water protection and habitat preservation," the Society's Executive Director, Richard Amper, explained.

The Society is also pressing the Brookhaven Town Board to replace land preservation funding lost when the Community Preservation Fund was defeated in Long Island's largest town in 2007. The town's "Blue Ribbon Panel," recommended including \$10 million per year for land preservation in the town's capital budget, increasing assessment by one dollar per \$100 of assessed valuation and providing a one-time appropriation of \$25 million to pay for land acquisitions currently in the preservation pipeline.



# The President's Point of View

By Alan Singer

## Cross-the-Board Budget Cuts Could Doom Long Island's Economy and Environment

The natural disposition of politicians to respond to an economic crisis with “across the board cuts” poses grave problems for regions and issues with disproportionate funding needs. There are many examples where more selective budget decisions in tough times would significantly improve long term outcomes, but there are few examples more compelling than the proposed New York State budget regarding state funding for the preservation of open space and farmland on Long Island.

Continued land preservation is critical to Long Island's need to maintain its top industries and control taxes caused by residential development. At \$4.7 billion annually, tourism is Long Island's number one industry. And tourists don't flock to Queens. Suffolk is the most lucrative agricultural county in New York State. If the amount of farmland falls below 25,000 acres, farming will no longer be viable because there will not be enough customers for tractors, seed, etc. Can Long Island afford to lose farming forever? Add to this fishing and the East Ends' second-home industry and its plain to see: Long Island's economic future is at enormous risk if land preservation is delayed or halted.

Just three years ago, Long Islanders of every stripe agreed that the Island needs to protect 25,000 acres of open space and 10,000 acres of farmland before it reaches final build-out, projected for 2015. Environmentalists, business leaders and elected officials acknowledged that failure to obtain these goals would not only threat-

en underground drinking water supplies, critical habitat and quality-of-life, it would also undermine the Island's biggest economic engines.

Last year (2008), Long Island leaders wrote to state officials asking for an increase in state support for land preservation on Long Island because of the urgent need to accomplish the goal before lands critical to our environment and economy are lost forever to development. We met in Albany and almost everyone seemed to understand.

Now, the deepening economic crisis and the urge to “spread the pain,” are causing our state officials to abandon considerations of long-term

**“New York State's budget must be cut with a scalpel, not a machete”**

need. Instead, they must determine where needed cuts will have the least effect and where they will have irreversible consequences.

What's needed in an emergency is triage. In medicine, it's the direction of resources in the order of greatest criticality. Doctors consider whether they're dealing with a sprained ankle or a coronary. In this financial emergency, cutbacks are inevitable, but they must be selective.

Nevertheless, Albany lawmakers are treating the entire future of Long Island's economy as though it were no different from any other.

The state budget proposes slashing the Environmental Protection Fund which finances land preservation at the state level, “sweeping” any funds not immediately spent for such purposes and ignoring additional resources for preservation, including an expanded bottle redemption program and a state environmental bond act.

The obvious danger is that short-term cuts to preservation programs on Long Island—the only region whose economy is threatened if land is not preserved immediately—may make it impossible for us to recover when the recession has passed. We can delay some government activities, admittedly with some pain. But if the open space and farmland necessary for Long Island's long-term economic survival are lost, the land cannot later be reclaimed for its essential environmental and economic functions. The rest of New York State may recover while Long Island's environment and economy may be ruined forever.

So New York State's budget must be cut with a scalpel, not a machete. It may even be necessary to increase funding for some needs even if it means more drastic cuts elsewhere. At a time when Washington is looking for sensible ways to put money back into the economy, so must New York State. And the opportunity to purchase Long Island's open space and farmland at a reduced rate from previously unwilling sellers is an ideal way to do so. Budget cutting must be strategic. When it comes to funding for land preservation on Long Island, our future will depend upon it.

## PINE BARRENS SOCIETY CELEBRATES 31<sup>ST</sup> ANNIVERSARY

Credit: Nancy Epstein



**AWARD WINNER:** Retiring Stony Brook University President Shirley Strum Kenny receives award for Outstanding Contribution to Long Island's Environment from Pine Barrens Society President Alan Singer and Executive Director Richard Amper.



**HOSTESS WITH THE MOSTEST:** Chairwoman of the Society's 31st Anniversary Environmental Awards Gala, Nancy Rauch Douzinas, President of the Rauch Foundation greets hundreds of guests at Oheka Castle on October 7.



**MAKING A FEDERAL CASE:** Singer and Amper present PBS Environmental Achievement Award to United States Congressman Tim Bishop who represents eastern Long Island, which has been designated one of the Last Great Places.



**WELCOME GUESTS:** Robert Keller and Vincent Frigeria of National Grid, a sponsor of Gala '08, flank Newsday Community Relations Director Paul Fleischman during the lavish cocktail reception which preceded the awards presentations.



**MAJOR SUPPORTERS:** Jerry Diorio, Vice President of Operations and David Feinblatt, President of WLNY-TV10/55 chat during the gala. The station was among the top contributors to the event which supports PBS's environmental efforts.



**LONG ISLAND LEADERS:** Michael Faltischek of Ruskin Moscow Faltischek shares drinks with Ross Ain, Senior Vice President of Caithness Corporation — a major sponsor of the gala and Michael Garber, also of Caithness.



**MUSICAL SENSATION:** Members of the Denice Given Band were back again for the Society's 31st birthday bash. A trio performed during the 90-minute cocktail reception and the full eight-piece band supplied music for dancing all evening.



**KING OF THE CASTLE:** Gala Co-chair Gary Melius, owner of Oheka Castle talks with PBS's Alan Singer before the event. Melius is engaged in the largest restoration project in the nation for a privately-owned, historic landmark residence.



**SOCIETY FRIENDS:** Dianne and Robert Castaldi join PBS Treasurer Vincent Scandole and guest Michele Schor as they talk with Master of Ceremonies Dick Amper about the dinner, dancing, awards, music and video that await them.



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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: Julie Clark



**GOODBYE CALVERTON! HELLO ORLANDO!** That's the message in this composite photo which contemplates the mega-development Riverhead Resorts, proposed for the Pine Barrens in Riverhead.

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. Go to Our Work then TV Show on our web site for updated times.

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

Town of Brookhaven, Town of Smithtown  
and portions of Town of Islip  
Wednesdays 8pm  
Saturdays 11am

Town of Riverhead, Town of Southold  
and Town of Southampton  
Mondays 8pm  
Tuesdays 8pm

Town of Babylon, Town of Huntington,  
portions of Town of Islip, and  
all of Nassau County  
Mondays 5:30am  
Tuesdays 4:30pm