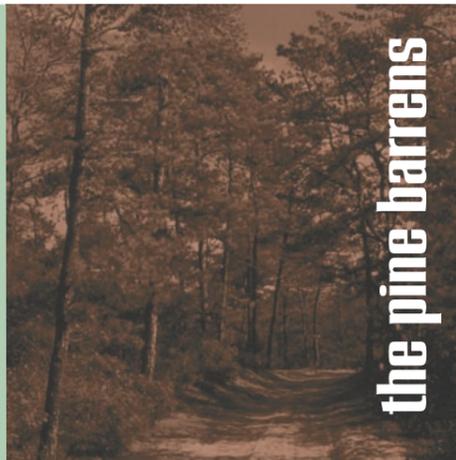




LONG ISLAND
PINE BARRENS
SOCIETY



today

PRESERVATION: NOW OR NEVER

CARMANS RIVER PLAN GAINS Brookhaven & New York State Must Act

Credit: Alida Thorpe, www.alidathorpe.com

Credit: Town of Brookhaven



CELEBRATED: The Carmans River in the Brookhaven Pine Barrens may soon get additional protection.



CELEBRATION: Government officials and stakeholders announce completion of a plan to protect the Carmans River.

The proposed Carmans River Watershed Protection & Management Plan has been presented to the Brookhaven Town Board for adoption or modification. If approved, an amendment to the Pine Barrens Protection Act would be required to implement the landmark proposal.

The product of years of concern and hope and the work of two committees, the plan was advanced by the Town of Brookhaven and the New York State Pine Barrens Commission, enlisting the services of hydrogeologists, environmentalists and developers, who worked non-stop for three months to produce the recommendations.

The plan calls for acquiring a thousand acres of land in the watershed, re-zoning two thousand more and re-directing development to areas away from the river and away from residential communities. In combination with past land preservation in the watershed, some 9,100 acres would be protected. The plan also calls for a dramatic reduction

in contaminants entering the river, improved management of sewerage and regular water quality monitoring to ensure that protection goals are met.

The 230-page report was presented to the Brookhaven Town Board, February 10 with a public hearing on the proposal March 29. The "Study Group" was chaired by Dr. Lee Koppelman, a long-time Long Island planner. Advocated for years by the Society and the Carmans River Partnership, the protection plan came to life at the urging of Pine Barrens Commission Chairman Peter Scully and Brookhaven Town Supervisor Mark Lesko.

"If approved, the Carmans River plan would bring unprecedented protection for this Pine Barrens waterway," said PBS President Alan Singer. "At the same time, development, including truly affordable housing, would be directed where such development actually belongs," he added, "We're very pleased with the outcome, to date."

EARTH DAY IS EVERY DAY

Third and fourth grade students from Canaan Elementary School in Patchogue have a big reason to celebrate. They are the winners of the Long Island Pine Barrens Society's "Eco-Challenge 2010," an Island-wide student competition, sponsored by the Society and the National Grid Foundation, aimed at inspiring civic responsibility and teaching young people to become proactive about local environmental issues. Students were asked to plan a campaign that would teach peers, family and friends how to protect Long Island's drinking water.

The contest was inspired by Bridge to the Barrens — an interactive student web portal featuring video lessons, projects, lesson plans, photo galleries and games — a project made possible by a grant from the National Grid Foundation. The site teaches young people about the ecological history of Long Island, the importance of the Pine Barrens and the incredible story of how the critical ecosystem was preserved.

"Bridge to the Barrens is an educational initiative that inspires action and excitement about Long Island's ecosystem and the need to preserve our natural resources for future generations," said National Grid Foundation

President Bob Keller. "It is through local solutions that we truly can make the greatest global impact," he added.

Canaan Elementary teachers Thomas Whaley's and Christine Bruno's students proposed a dual initiative campaign plan: Distribute hand-crafted informational brochures during a neighborhood door-to-door campaign and during an "Eco-Night" event at their school where they will discuss with parents and the community what they have recently learned about drinking water contamination and what can be done to avoid future pollution.

"This has been a fun and educational project intended to enhance environmental awareness among children of all ages," said Pine Barrens Society Executive Director, Richard Amper.

Bridge to the Barrens is available to the public and for use in the classroom. It is best suited for students in grades 4-8. To access the site, simply visit www.bridgetothebarrens.org.

For questions about how to make Bridge to the Barrens a part of classroom curriculum, contact the Pine Barrens Society at 631-369-3300 or by email at info@pinebarrens.org.



Credit: LIPBS

THEY GET IT: Teachers Thomas Whaley and Christine Bruno with their environmentally aware student winners of Eco-Challenge 2010. Team Green!



the thicket

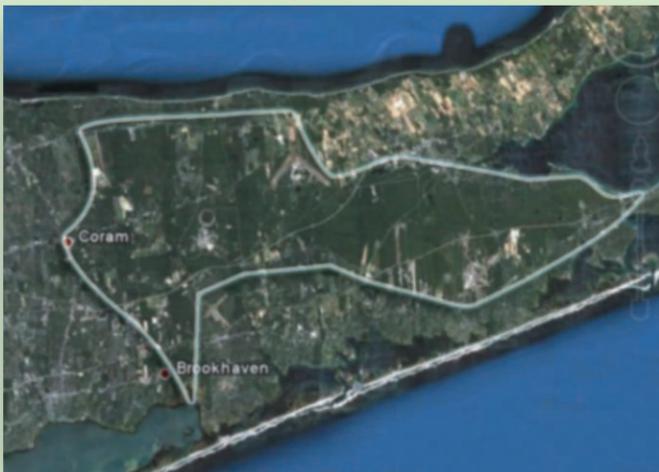
The Pine Barrens – Long Island’s Central Park

by John Turner

Mr. Turner is a co-founder of the Pine Barrens Society and works as an environmental consultant. A revised second edition of his book, “Exploring the Other Island” was just released.

In the center of Manhattan, surrounded by dozens of blocks of high-rise development, lies a verdant park of forests, rolling hills, streams and ponds, a “Great Lawn”, ball fields, and a network of carriage and walking trails. This park, known simply as Central Park, is aptly named because it lies in the center of the borough that is the heart of one of the world’s most bustling metropolitan areas. It adds immeasurably to the quality of life of New York City residents and visitors. This is reflected everyday as thousands of visitors and city residents alike enjoy the park by tossing a frisbee, watching colorful spring migrant songbirds, or simply by walking,

Credit: Google Earth



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

hiking, or strolling with their baby or their friend. Or maybe they’re listening to a concert, hitting home runs in a softball game, sitting quietly on a bench to read a newspaper, or as I once saw — a young and spry teenager practicing tai chi at the top of a 400 million year old boulder.

Shift your position about 60 miles to the east of the Big Apple, out to the middle of Suffolk County. Here you’ll encounter another landscape surrounded by extensive development, one that possesses significant recreational and environmental value, a place where people can stroll, play, and watch birds. This landscape is the nearly 55,000 acre Core of the Central Pine Barrens Preserve and given its central location in the County and the potential the region has in underpinning Long Islanders’ quality of life, it’s no stretch to consider the Pine Barrens Long Island’s own “Central Park.”

I realize the comparison has its limitations as there are basic differences between the two places. For example, Manhattan’s Central Park tops out at about 840 acres while the Core Preservation Area of the Pine Barrens is about 60 times that size. Central Park is much more of a cultural landscape while the Pine Barrens is a natural one (although there are cultural remnants like the cranberry bogs in Riverhead and Manorville). Also, I think it is safe to say that New Yorkers are more aware of the existence of Central Park than Long Islanders are the Pine Barrens.

But as the years go by and more Long Islanders discover the Pine Barrens by a canoe trip here, a picnic there, and hikes in any number of places, this third difference will diminish. And if the students in the third grade class my sister teaches are any indication, awareness of the Pine Barrens is on the rise. I was recently invited to read an environmental book but before doing so I talked with the students to gain their perceptions about nature and the environment. Soon one student began talking about the Pine Barrens and how he likes to go camping and hiking there with his dad. Another chimed in about the importance of the Pine Barrens “because of its water.” Following their cue, before I began the book reading, we chatted for several minutes more about what they knew and thought of the Pine Barrens. I was heartened and pleasantly surprised by the discussion — who knew a classroom of eight and nine year olds from a school located in Huntington Station were so well informed about the importance of Long Island’s largest preserve and the opportunities provided there?

Two weeks later I had another heartening experience that tells me that word is “getting out” about the barrens. I was sitting on a wooden railing at the parking lot kiosk at the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation’s David Sarnoff Preserve off Route 104, enjoying some fruit after having just finished a hike through the preserve. A car pulled up and a mom (at least I think she was) and a boy about 10 years old and a girl I guessed was 6 spilled out. After pleasantries were exchanged small talk became meaningful to me when the mom said “I have wanted to hike in the Pine Barrens for so long but didn’t really know where to go. I was driving by here recently and saw the sign and checked it out.” Smiling she said, “I dragged these two to join me to get some fresh air.” The boy spoke excitedly as he pointed out the bird photos displayed in the kiosk. A minute later they were gone, enthusiastically heading into the preserve to walk its scenic, sandy trails. There was little doubt but that for at least one day the Pine Barrens enhanced that family’s quality of life, and with the portfolio of Pine Barrens preserves to pick from the promise of many more quality days to come.

In 1993, when then Governor Cuomo signed the Pine Barrens Protection Act into law we had but a glimpse of the promise the Pine Barrens might hold for enriching the lives of Long Islanders and making Long Island a better, more desirable place to call home. Eighteen years later — during which time tens of thousands of acres have been preserved through the expenditure of hundreds of millions of dollars of public funding — that “promise of the pines” is much more than a vision. It has taken shape and become a reality. The vision has taken shape in the form of the public parklands that collectively comprise our Central Pine Barrens Preserve — Long Island’s very own Central Park.

ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS NOTES

Environmental Champion Lost

Credit: LIPBS



HAPPIER TIMES: Dan Morris with Marilyn England in 2001 when they were honored by the Society along with United States Senator Charles Schumer.

Dan Morris, a thoughtful and dedicated environmental leader and co-founder of the Open Space Council has died of non-Hodgkins lymphoma. He was 63 years old. Morris was involved in a host of environmental initiatives, including the successful effort to derail the “Willy World” mini city proposed for the intersection of William Floyd Parkway and the Long Island Expressway.

He and his wife Marilyn England, also an avid naturalist, received the Pine Barrens Society’s “Environmental Achievement Award” in 2001 at the 24th Annual Environmental Awards Gala in Patchogue.

There They Go, Again

The Pine Barrens Society has filed suit in New York State Supreme Court against the New York State Pine Barrens Commission for granting a second “hardship waiver” to allow a 15,000 square foot addition to a building in the Core Preservation Area of the Pine Barrens, where development is largely prohibited.

The Society said the waiver, given to the American Physical Society, on William Floyd Parkway in Ridge, violates the Pine Barrens Protection Act and the Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

State Supreme Court Justice Peter Fox Cohalan said the Society had a strong case but he recused himself due to his past roles in government. The case has been reassigned to Justice Paul J. Baisley, Jr.

Go Directly to Yale

The Pine Barrens Preservation Initiative, the campaign that led to passage of the landmark Pine Barrens Protection Act of 1993 was the topic of a lecture at the Graduate School of Environment and Forestry at Yale University in February. The campaign has been ranked as one of the top ten environmental campaigns of all time by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, a private family foundation. The lecture has been presented annually for the past ten years by PBS Executive Director, Richard Amper.

As Bad as it Gets

Governor Cuomo’s proposed budget calls for maintaining last year’s Environmental Protection Fund budget at the same level — \$134 million. Last year, the EPF was slashed by an unparalleled 33%, killing many environmental programs and nearly halting land purchases by the state.

Credit: We Love NY Coalition



The bad news is that the new budget will be no better than last year’s. The good news is that the Governor recognized that the environment could not sustain a further hit. Stay tuned.

TO ALBANY WE GO: The Society joined the NYS animals in the capitol on March 14th to lobby with the We Love NY coalition.



The Executive Director's Point of View

End the Myth of “Affordable Housing”

by Richard Amper

The President's Point of View will appear again in the next edition.

Long Island is never going to obtain the “affordable housing” which everybody agrees we need, unless we agree upon what it is and why it’s not being built. Open space advocates are often mistakenly blamed for the dearth of “affordable housing.”

Right now, “affordable housing,” like “smart growth,” is a term without meaning. Developers and the media slap the “affordable housing” label on every high-density development project proposed. Then, when community leaders shoot the project down, the developers are surprised and term opponents NIMBYs.

“Affordable housing” is defined by the federal government as housing that is within the reach of people earning 80% or less of the Area Median Income. That’s \$80,647 in Nassau and \$70,281 in Suffolk, according to the Long Island Index. According to Fannie Mae, “a home is considered affordable if the purchase price is no more than 2.5 times the buyer’s annual household income.” So, an affordable house shouldn’t cost more than \$200,000 with taxes and utilities. Just last month, the Center for Housing Policy’s report showed that one of three area households use 50% or more of their income for housing. Even if families spend 30% of their income on housing, which a majority of Long Islanders do, they can’t afford a house that costs more than \$225,000 – \$250,000.

Yet, developers and the media consistently call “affordable,” “workforce,” or “next generation,” housing that sells for as much as 130% of the regional AMI – as much as \$400,000. That’s 60% more than the average Long Islander can afford, let alone our young people and seniors. Only eight percent of the recently defeated, 490-unit Avalon Bay project in

Huntington met the true definition of “affordable,” and the media consistently call the LevyTown proposal for Yaphank, “affordable,” even though 75% of the houses in the surrounding community are selling for less. How does that make Levy Town affordable?

Developers argue that state and county governments permit housing that costs 120% of

“The reason Long Island doesn’t have much affordable housing is because developers make more money building unaffordable housing.”

AMI to be counted as affordable, but that isn’t keeping 25–35 year olds from leaving the region in droves. So, let’s drop the euphemisms when we talk about “affordable housing” and replace it with the facts. Instead of calling everything “affordable,” let’s be precise (and truthful). A project should be described as “Ten percent of the homes will cost \$225,000–\$250,000” or “90% of the homes will cost between \$400,000 – \$450,000.” Then the reader can decide whether that’s affordable.

Once we’ve agreed what “affordable housing” means, let’s agree why it hasn’t been built. It’s not because there’s no market for it: It’s desperately needed. It’s not because young people don’t want to live in downtowns, near shopping, entertainment and public transit: They’re clamoring for it. And, it’s not because

government won’t let developers build it: Government gives developers darn near anything they ask for.

The reason Long Island doesn’t have much affordable housing is because developers make more money building unaffordable housing. Having sprawled across the landscape, increasing taxes, traffic and visual clutter, developers are finally retreating to our downtowns, where the housing Long Island really needs, belongs.

It is true that affordability requires higher-density allowances and that, in-turn, requires functional sewer systems. The problem is that developers have sought density give-aways without public benefits, such as open space, community amenities and affordable housing. Community leaders are on to this. That’s why they’re opposing high-density, mega-projects.

Local government on Long Island must require truly affordable housing (\$225,000–\$250,000 for 1,200–1,500 square feet) and other public benefits before they grant any greater density than as-of-right entitlement. One of the few silver linings in the current recession is that affordably-priced houses are virtually the only ones selling right now. Government should require that high-density projects (perhaps nine units per acre, not the 20 Avalon Bay sought), have a 20 percent \$225,000–\$250,000 component in every project approved for greater density than current zoning permits.

As for the term “affordable housing,” drop it. Developers and the media must tell Long Islanders the actual cost of the housing we’re exchanging for permitting high-density, downtown development. And government must insist that the houses sell for what our children and seniors can actually afford.

Honors & Fun at 33rd Anniversary Environmental Awards Gala

Credit: Daniel Goodrich



MASTER OF CEREMONY: Pine Barrens Society Executive Director Richard Amper introduces award winners at the Society’s annual Awards Gala, held October 13 at Oheka Castle.



VIPs: Rob Moore of Environmental Advocates, Jennifer Juengst of Long Island Environmental Voters Forum, Brookhaven Councilwoman Jane Bonner, State Assemblyman Steve Englebright, Southampton Councilwoman Bridget Fleming (rear) LIA President Kevin Law, EPA Administrator Judith Enck and Huntington Supervisor Frank Petrone.



SOCIETY LEADERS: PBS Board Member Thomas Casey and wife Sherri with PBS President Alan Singer and wife Jeannie are not talking shop. They’re just having a good time.



TV HOSTS: Pine Barrens Society TV Show co-hosts Kathleen Nasta and Dick Amper have a laugh during taping of coverage of the awards gala, seen Island-wide on Cablevision.



HONOREES & FRIENDS: Dick Amper and Adrienne Esposito of Citizens Campaign for the Environment join honorees Kevin Law and Judith Enck along with Peter Scully of the Pine Barrens Commission.



MEDIA TYPES: Paul Fleishman of Newsday and David Feinblatt of WLNY TV 10/55, join Elliot Simmons and Jerry Diorio from the station. More than 250 guests attended the event, chaired by Robert Catell and Gary Melius.



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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: Bill McBride, www.billmcbridephotography.com

BECAUSE THEY DON'T KNOW THE WORDS: Hummingbirds are favorites at backyard feeders on Long Island in the summer. The Ruby-throated hummingbird, the most common kind spotted on Long Island, can travel at speeds up to 34 miles per hour and makes its annual migration to Central America by crossing the Gulf of Mexico in one non-stop flight that takes all day. You can observe them at the



Baiting Hollow Hummingbird Sanctuary on select days in August only. To learn more, visit lihummer.org. Only visitors who abide by the Sanctuary's policies and opening hours will be admitted.

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 by selecting TV Show on the home page. The air times below are effective from April 1st through September 30th.

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

Town of Riverhead, Town of Southold
and Town of Southampton
Sundays 9pm

Town of Brookhaven, Town of Smithtown
and portions of Town of Islip
Mondays 7:30pm
Wednesdays 9pm
Saturdays 11am

Town of Babylon, Town of Huntington,
portions of Town of Islip, and
all of Nassau County
Mondays 9pm
Fridays 12:30pm
Saturdays 12:30pm