

GROUP ACTION

THE NEWSLETTER OF GROUP FOR THE EAST END

The Race to Save our Bays: Vote for Clean Water November 8

- Taking “The Feds” to Court - Group Sues to Save Plum Island
- Alec Baldwin Joins Fight to Protect East Quogue’s Pine Barrens
- Group Advocates for Threatened Wildlife
- Good Eggs: Kids Create to Protect Endangered Species
- Putting Muscle and Art to Work for Cleaner Beaches



The Single Most Effective Thing You Can Do in 2016 for Clean Water:

Vote YES to expand and extend the Community Preservation Fund

On Election Day, November 8, 2016, the five East End towns will have a referendum on the ballot, which, if passed, will:

- 1. Extend the Peconic Bay Region Community Preservation Fund (CPF) term from 2030 to 2050.**
- 2. Allow up to 20% of the CPF's annual revenue—approximately \$25 million—to be used for water quality restoration projects** (as defined by each of the Town Boards in the five towns). The ability to use these funds would be applied retroactively, so that existing monies could be made available for current water quality programs.



NOTE: These proposed changes will not increase the CPF tax in anyway. They will only extend the life of the fund and include an allocation for clean water.

About the CPF

- Together with New York State Assemblyman Fred Thiele and State Senator Ken Lavalle, the Group played a leading role in the original CPF legislation enacted in 1998, and led the way to extend its term twice through voter referendum—most recently in 2006—from 2020 to 2030.
- To date, over \$1 billion has been raised through the CPF and over 10,000 acres of land have been protected.
- The money in the CPF is generated by a real estate transfer tax of 2%, which the buyer pays at the close of the sale of land or developed property.
- The tax is collected by Suffolk County, and redistributed to the town in which the property is located.
- The funds are placed in each town's CPF, and are restricted to uses as defined by each town's plan for land conservation and preservation, and stewardship of those properties.

“Expanding the CPF to address water quality is an absolute necessity. The Fund has proven to be the most effective long-term tool we have to prevent overdevelopment and protect the beautiful natural environment that defines the East End and fuels our economy. We can have the best plans in the world, but as with land protection, it takes funding to turn good ideas into positive results.”

— Fred Thiele, New York State Assemblyman

JOIN THE GROUP'S CAMPAIGN TO EXPAND & EXTEND THE CPF

1. Send a gift or donate online.

Please indicate “CPF” in the note section. Your donation will help us educate and inspire summer and year-round residents to vote YES on November 8.

2. Spread the word. Tell your family, friends and Colleagues to vote YES!

For volunteer opportunities, please contact Aaron Virgin at 631.765.6450 ext. 218 or acvirgin@eastendenvironment.org.

3. Register to vote where you own property on the East End and vote there!

Voter Registration Deadline: October 12, 2016

For details, please enter CPF in SEARCH field at GroupfortheEastEnd.org.

➤ Thank you for your continued support!

The Group relies on your generosity to protect the environment on the East End.





With your generosity, we can prevail and see Plum Island forever preserved as a National Wildlife Refuge.

Group Sues to Preserve Plum Island

Federal government ignores legal obligations to protect endangered species

If you have been to Plum Island or even seen it from a boat, you have an idea of its raw natural beauty. This unique, 840-acre island owned by the federal government, is remarkably close to the mainland but still insulated from the negative impacts of development and home to many vulnerable species. It is not unlike our own local Galápagos island.

To prevent this magnificent treasure trove of ecological, cultural and historical significance from being sold off to the highest bidder, the Group has joined with more than 60 organizations from Connecticut, New York and across the country to work on a multi-layered preservation plan. But, after repeated attempts to collaborate with the Department of Homeland Security and General Services Administration (GSA), it has become clear they have no interest in doing so. This, combined with their continued efforts to sell Plum Island, required us to take legal action.

Ironically, the substance of our case mirrors requests made by two other federal agencies—the Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. They asked the GSA to conduct a more thorough environmental assessment of the impacts of selling the island, and to consider alternatives that would better protect its undeveloped areas. These requests simply have not been addressed.

As this article goes to print, we await the government's reply and continue to work on other legislative efforts with our Congressional delegation to prevent the sale of Plum Island.



The Group is proud to join with the Connecticut Fund for the Environment and several other members of the Preserve Plum Island Coalition to defend Plum Island's vast array of natural and cultural resources.

“We refuse to sit by and let this publicly owned island on the East End be auctioned off by federal agencies to the highest bidder. Plum Island is one of the last undeveloped havens for our most imperiled wildlife species.”

— Bob DeLuca, President, Group for the East End





Actor and environmentalist Alec Baldwin addresses an enthusiastic crowd and signs a petition to urge the New York State Pine Barrens Commission to stop The Hills development project in East Quogue.

Alec Baldwin Attracts Large Crowd for “Kill the Hills” Protest Rally

Developer rejects Southampton Town’s \$35 million offer to buy 592 acres



Alec Baldwin was greeted by a packed house of over 150 people at the Dark Horse Restaurant in Riverhead for a “Kill the Hills” rally – an effort to stop the development of an 18-hole private golf course, 118 luxury homes, and a 155,000 square-foot clubhouse

and catering facility in the Pine Barrens of East Quogue.

The Group has been fighting for years against the development of this last large parcel of land, which would destroy hundreds of acres of pine forest and seriously jeopardize the area’s drinking water and bays.

The Hills project was proposed by developer Discovery Land Corporation as a planned development district, or PDD, which allows a land parcel in the Town of Southampton to have greater density than the existing zoning—but only in exchange for often vague “community benefits.”

Questioning how the East End community would benefit from another private golf course and clubhouse in the middle of the Pine Barrens, Mr. Baldwin referred to the Hills and other planned development district proposals as “Let’s make a deal zoning.”

Group President Bob DeLuca called for an immediate review of the proposal by the New York State Pine Barrens Commission, which was created by the State Legislature to ensure a thorough evaluation of any major development plans in the Central Pine Barrens.

After years of contentious negotiation over the property and a week before the rally, Southampton Town offered to buy the 592-acre site with Community Preservation Fund monies but the offer was rejected by Discovery Land, saying the company was not interested in selling the property.

As Discovery Land waits for an official answer from the Southampton Town Board on its PDD proposal, the Group will continue, with your support, the fight to preserve land and have clean water in and around East Quogue.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Call Southampton Town Supervisor Jay Schneiderman and tell him to KILL THE HILLS APPLICATION now!
(631) 283-6055





Young sea turtles swim innocently into plastic wrappers that choke their organs and eventually kill them.



Plastic Plastic Everywhere

Group cleans up beaches, creates marine debris art, and raises awareness about the effects of water pollution on marine life

As part of a grant program for a Long Island Sound study, the Group recruited armies of Girl Scouts, ROTC Cadets, and elementary school students to clean up beaches across the North Fork.

Together with the East End Arts Council, volunteers are creating marine debris sculptures that will be on display as part of a regional awareness campaign on the harmful impacts of water pollution on birds, sea turtles, seals and other wildlife.

This coastal cleanup program was made possible through

the generosity of supporters like you, and funding from the Environmental Protection Agency and the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation.



“Priscilla,” a marine debris sculpture made by the Washed Ashore Project in Oregon, was on display this summer at the Smithsonian.

Photo: WashedAshore.org.



Plastic marine debris is killing marine life. What can you do?

1. Bring your own reusable bags to the grocery store
2. Recycle
3. Reduce your consumption of plastic packaging
4. Reuse/Repurpose the plastic you already have
5. Join us September 17 for International Coastal Cleanup Day!

Learn more about our fall coastal cleanup series at GroupfortheEastEnd.org or contact Jessica Kennelly: jkennelly@eastendenvironment.org or (631) 765-6450 ext. 215



The conversion of farmland to housing developments has eliminated old barns, water towers and dead trees—prime nesting places for barn owls—and has taken away countless feeding areas.



Taking a Stand for Wildlife

Group advocates for imperiled East End species

It's heartbreaking, but it's true. Today many of Long Island's wildlife species are in danger of local extinction if swift action isn't taken to restore native habitats, reduce development, address climate change and clean up our local waters. What's worse is that there are virtually no public funds available to help address this growing environmental problem.

Those are the findings of a recently released New York State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) that studied the status of nearly 600 wildlife species statewide, and found more than 60% were in significant need of conservation action.

The SWAP serves as an important assessment tool for evaluating the health of New York's wildlife, and making critical decisions and recommendations about

how the state's scarce wildlife conservation dollars should be allocated. It also offers a wide range of nongovernmental or public/private partnership recommendations, which must be part of the long-term strategy to protect the state's most vulnerable species.

On Long Island, 166 species are likely to reach critically low population levels within ten years, unless a concerted effort is made to save them. What is most startling is that many of these species were once common here, and even more—such as oysters, hard clams, scallops, black fish and winter flounder—have played a major role in the East End economy for hundreds of years.

In response to these sobering findings, the Group moved quickly to develop



Slow moving box turtles are no match for bulldozers that ravage their forest habitats, and steadily increasing automobile traffic kills thousands of these helpless creatures each year.

a public awareness campaign, engage people and organizations that care about wildlife, and implement a long-term conservation strategy in line with the state's recommendations.

A key component of our campaign is a soon-to-be-launched web site and action plan that will educate, inspire and





Shorebirds like this black skimmer find less and less breeding habitat along developed shorelines.

Tiger salamanders suffer from habitat fragmentation, which eliminates access to breeding ponds.

empower people to join us in restoring wildlife on the East End. We cannot do it without citizen scientists—like you—who can make a meaningful difference in your own backyard!

Saving wildlife may be daunting, but through your support we have had great success in restoring the East End's osprey population, and will do it again with other species. Together we will use what we learned in saving the osprey and our other wildlife restoration projects, to develop effective conservation strategies. We know that even the smallest actions today can have a positive impact on the future of a species.

Protecting local wildlife has many values, but from our perspective, the health and diversity of wildlife in a particular area is a key indicator of that human population's wellbeing. On the East End, there is a direct link between our local economy and the wildlife that make their homes here. If we want a thriving economy, it is in our best interest to act now and save as many species as we can.



Photo: Chris Paparo @fishguyphotos

Thank you to the Long Island Community Foundation, who provided the financial support to develop the wildlife action plan and web site, which will be launched this fall.

Since 1980, scallop harvests have declined by more than 90%, due to poor water quality conditions and the loss of eelgrass beds.

DONATE ONLINE
GroupfortheEastEnd.org



Thanks to years of conservation efforts, the tragic decline of piping plovers has slowed somewhat, but this endangered species has a long way to go before its coastal populations can recover.



Protecting Critical Nesting Habitats for Shorebirds

Group encourages kids to “Be a Good Egg”

As part of our shorebird-monitoring program in the Town of Southold, this spring, the Group partnered with Audubon New York to bring the “Be a Good Egg” program to the North Fork. The program’s goal is to help people understand more about the birds that nest and rest on New York beaches every spring and summer, and encourage the protection of these vulnerable species including least terns, piping plovers and American oystercatchers.

Over 150 girl scouts and elementary school students learned about shorebird biology, why and how we protect our local shorebird colonies, the many threats they face, and how kids can help these species survive on the East End coastline. They took the pledge to “Be a Good Egg” and designed their own creative signs to alert people to avoid areas on local beaches where birds are known to nest. After a thorough and difficult review, 14 final designs were chosen to be transformed into permanent signs, and can now be seen hanging at Causeway Beach Park District in Cutchogue and Breakwater Beach Park District in Mattituck.

So the next time you visit a North Fork beach, keep your eye out for camouflaged birds, their eggs, and those creative inspirational signs! And don't forget to do your part to “Be a Good Egg” and avoid shorebird nesting areas.

**TO OUR
SUPPORTERS AND
VOLUNTEERS:
THANK YOU FOR
BEING GOOD
EGGS!**



**With your help, the
Group will educate
friends and neighbors,
and protect the East
End’s beach-nesting birds
and their young.**



“Be a Good Egg” Pledge

I pledge to:

1. Keep away from marked or fenced areas where birds are nesting
2. Keep the beach clean by using proper receptacles or carrying out my trash
3. Keep my dog off bird nesting beaches

1. Bryan Henry of Southold Elementary School has a clear, clever message: “Tern” Into A Bird Lover!
2. Peconic Community School students put their creative ideas to paper to help shorebirds.
3. Beachgoers take the pledge.



What's UP at Downs Farm Preserve?

Turtles, Owls and Really, Really Big Bugs



Mateo and Eloise check out “Houdini,” an eastern box turtle, during our weeklong Young Naturalist Program this summer. “My two boys loved the camp,” wrote one happy mother. “I hope you guys offer it again next year!” (That’s our plan!)



This great horned owl, perched on the arm of our good friend Toni Valderrama from the Quogue Wildlife Refuge, is a crowd pleaser at the Group’s Earth Day celebration. A Malaysian jungle nymph from the Long Island Aquarium is also a big hit!



Photo: Stephanie Sforza



Citizen Science: Hanging with Horseshoe Crabs at 2am

Could these prehistoric creatures disappear from the East End? Not with dedicated volunteers like this!



Believe it or not, there was no shortage of volunteers this summer who rolled out of bed at all hours to monitor horseshoe crabs.

Together with our friends at Cornell Cooperative Extension, these hearty volunteers and Group staff members reported to South

Harbor in Southold around the full and new moons to tag the horseshoe crabs and collect data on spawning, size and sex. That information will be used by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to assess the status of horseshoe crabs in the area and assist with regional management and conservation of the species.



Meet our Summer Interns!

Left: George, Middle: Michaela, Right: Stephanie



Michaela Cooke created a separate web site (to be launched this fall) for the Group dedicated exclusively to the plight of wildlife on the East End. She conducted research and masterfully set up a database of species in danger of becoming extinct from the area unless dedicated conservation efforts are made. We encourage East Enders to check out this important resource and learn how they can help save once common species like the eastern box turtle and American black duck. Michaela also helped out with our Young Naturalist Program for children ages 4-7 and other programs at Downs Farm Preserve. She is entering her second year at Dartmouth College.

Stephanie Sforza was charged with taking hundreds (perhaps thousands) of photos to document the Group's advocacy and education programs, and incorporating them into a catalog she established for our staff members. In addition to using her keen eye for photography, Steph did a great job educating kids in our Summer Field Ecology and Young Naturalist programs. An ardent fan of Pokémon Go, she entertained Group employees at Monday morning staff meetings with her comical anecdotes about catching virtual Pokémon over the weekend! Going into her sophomore year at Stony Brook University, Steph is majoring in environmental studies.

George McLanahan was a tremendous asset assisting with our various stewardship programs this summer. From monitoring breeding osprey on the South Fork to observing water levels at piping plover and least tern sites on the North Fork, George criss-crossed the East End in an effort to research and document our threatened wildlife. George is entering his senior year at Episcopal High School in Virginia.

Want to be a volunteer?

Want to help the Group? Join us! You can volunteer in the field, from home, or in our office.

Contact Aaron Virgin at 631-765-6450, ext. 218, or acvirgin@eastendenvironment.org.

Many thanks to the talented Kenny Heidtmann, who built the beautiful wooden kiosk in front of our Southold office. We greatly appreciate this and all the other things you do for the Group!





Photo: Stephanie Sforza

Swing into Summer at The Bridge – June 18, 2016

Thank you to our hosts Robert M. Rubin and Stéphane Samuel and to everyone who supported Swing Into Summer! Join us again June 17, 2017 at The Bridge!

Event proceeds go directly to protecting our bays, harbors and drinking water.

1. Kurt Wolfgruber & Kim White
 2. Katherine Leahy Birch, Chairman
 3. Kerry Heffernan & Grace Koo
 4. Jennifer Ruys, Marsha Stern, Kathleen Tait, Eric Tait
 5. Roman Roth
 6. Graciela & Munir Dauhajre and friends
 7. Susan Abdalla, Carey Reidy
 8. Under the lights and stars
 9. Delaney Harter
 10. Richard Kind, Robert M. Rubin, Katherine Leahy Birch, Bob DeLuca
- Photos: ManhattanSociety.com except where indicated



CHAIRMAN
Katherine Leahy Birch

VICE CHAIRMEN
Robbianne Mackin
William Ryall

BOARD MEMBERS
Harris A. Barer, Louis Bevilacqua,
W. Marco Birch, Kristen Briner,
Andrew Goldstein, Stuart Goode,
Gregory Hoogkamp, Jennifer James,
William J. McChesney, Jr., Sandra Meyer,
Peter Schellbach, John Shea,
John C. Waddell, Mary Walker,
Donna Anne Winston,
Kurt Wolfruber

PROFESSIONAL STAFF
PRESIDENT
Bob DeLuca, ext. 213
bdeluca@eastendenvironment.org

VICE PRESIDENT
Aaron Virgin, ext. 218
acvirgin@eastendenvironment.org

ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCATE
Jenn Hartnagel, ext. 211
jhartnagel@eastendenvironment.org

DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION
Steve Biassetti, ext. 205
sbiassetti@eastendenvironment.org

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION
Anita C. Wright, ext. 206
acwright@eastendenvironment.org

DIRECTOR OF MEMBERSHIP
Kristina Lange, ext. 216
klange@eastendenvironment.org

OUTREACH COORDINATOR
Jessica Kennelly, ext. 215
jkennelly@eastendenvironment.org

STEWARDSHIP COORDINATOR
Christine Tylee, ext. 208
ctylee@eastendenvironment.org

GROUP ACTION
Editor, Kristina Lange
Design Concept, blumenfeld+fleming
Design & Production, Searles Graphics

This newsletter was printed on Rolland Enviro™100 Print.

- Contains FSC certified 100% post-consumer fiber
- Certified EcoLogo, Processed Chlorine Free & FSC Recycled
- Manufactured using biogas energy



Group for the East End
Post Office Box 1792 631.765.6450
Southold, NY 11971 631.537.1400

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit #20
Southampton, NY
11968

Make a lasting impact on the East End environment

Remember the Group in your financial planning

- **Charitable Contribution from an IRA**

Great news for Group supporters over the age of 70! In late 2015, Congress voted to make permanent the exclusion from income of up to \$100,000 per person, per year, for Individual Retirement Account (IRA) distributions given to charities.

- **Gift of Securities**

You can reduce or even eliminate capital gains tax. Any publicly traded stock that has increased in value that you have owned for more than a year can provide greater tax benefits than giving cash.

- **Bequest**

Please consider naming Group for the East End as a beneficiary in your estate plans. Whether through your will, a trust or insurance policy, you can plan for the future, pass on your values, and make a lasting impact on the East End's environment.



For more information:

Aaron Virgin, Vice President 631-765-6450 x218 or acvirgin@eastendenvironment.org
All calls and emails are confidential. Group for the East End does not offer financial or tax advice.

Our Mission: Group for the East End protects and restores the environment of eastern Long Island through education and professional advocacy, and by inspiring people to embrace a conservation ethic and take action. The Group is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization.



Through Earth Share of New York's workplace giving program, part of each paycheck can be automatically deducted to support the Group. Sign up at EarthShareNY.org.

Learn more about our work at GroupfortheEastEnd.org

