

# SAVING LAND

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NORTH SHORE LAND ALLIANCE





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Sagamore Hill National Historic Site, Oyster Bay  
Home of Theodore Roosevelt, 26th President of the United States



## "Hands Off" Our Parks and Public Lands

Dear Friends in Conservation,

Wallace Stegner, often called the dean of Western writers, said "National parks are the best idea we ever had. Absolutely American, absolutely democratic, they reflect us at our best rather than our worst."

Yet today, as I write this letter, the President's draft budget is calling for \$1 billion in cuts to the National Park Service. If enacted, the consequences of these cuts will be devastating. According to the National Parks Conservation Association, three-quarters of the National Park System or 350 parks could close - parks that provide clean water and air, healthy soil, carbon sequestration and opportunities for us all to enjoy nature. Our 84 million acres of parks preserve ecosystems and protect the environmental and health benefits that cannot be found or replaced anywhere else.

We all need parks and public lands, now more than ever, and it is critically important that we continue to prioritize their protection. Individually, there is not much we can do to help other than send an email to an elected official or participate in an occasional act of civil disobedience. Professionally, I am incredibly grateful that the Land Alliance is not funded by the federal government. In fact, we receive over 90% of our support from you, our generous community! Yet, I am still worried about our future. How did we, as a nation, become so disconnected from the land?

In these uncertain times, we have an opportunity to bring people together around nature. In fact, there is a growing body of evidence that one of the most important things that any of us can do for ourselves, for those we love, for people throughout the world and for the living systems that support us all is to connect with nature. That connection can start in the simplest of ways, beginning in childhood and renewing through all the stages of life. It can take many forms and occur in many ways. It requires places and spaces for people to experience nature's richness and complexity, from backyards to wildflower meadows, from street trees to woodland paths, from community gardens to farmlands and from vernal pools to coastal wetlands.

Connecting with nature helps to bring us all peace and good health. It provides the foundation for resilient, healthy ecosystems, communities and economies to thrive and continue to do so for generations and generations to come. This year, we at the Land Alliance are prioritizing programs and initiatives that bring our community together through the richness of our shared lands. In the pages that follow, we will chronicle some of those efforts. They range from responses to the plight of the Monarch butterfly and the state of birds in America to expanding children's nature programming to documenting carbon sequestration in local preserves. We strive to foster connectedness to one another and to nature.

We hope you will join us!

*Lisa W. Ott*

Lisa W. Ott  
President & CEO



*North Shore Land Alliance Staff*



# The State of the Birds in the USA



*Eastern Towhee*

As spring migration nears its peak, we remain concerned about much of the data identified in this year's State of the Birds report. It was generated by the North American Birds Conservation Initiative. The report confirmed that 1/3 of U.S. bird species need conservation action. 1/3!! Many of these are described as tipping point species: those species that have lost more than half their populations in the last 50 years.

Habitat loss is the number one threat to birds (and other wildlife). Because many species are dependent on a single habitat for survival and are therefore indicators of habitat health, the study evaluates bird populations into the following categories:

- Shorebirds
- Grassland birds
- Aridland birds
- Western forest birds
- Eastern forest birds
- Waterfowl and waterbirds
- Seabirds
- Hawaiian birds

Of these, Shorebirds have the most (19) tipping point species of any

group in North America – particularly at migratory staging areas. The areas are along the Atlantic coast from North Carolina to Nova Scotia, and also on the Gulf Coast. The report urged strengthening of the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Area Network and Important Bird Area (IBA) program (including the Oyster Bay Area IBA) to protect critical shorebird sites. Funding and protection should be increased further in areas where shorebirds are hunted on wintering grounds.



*Great egret*

The news is not all doom and gloom and there are success stories. One of these is tied to the American Oystercatcher, familiar in these parts with its black and white coloring and distinctive long, orange bill. 15 years ago oystercatcher populations were in decline along the Atlantic coast. Recognizing that the species was in trouble, a combination of state, federal and private partners launched the American Oystercatcher Recovery Initiative in 2009. It

featured collaborating on funding and management strategies across 16 states from Maine to Texas. The shift from isolated conservation projects to joint efforts led to a 43% increase in the regional breeding population!

At this time, with attacks on federal programs like the Endangered Species Act, the future of birds is unclear.

## What you can do:

As mentioned earlier, habitat loss is the number one threat to birds (and other wildlife). Supporting the protection of our land and water resources and letting your elected officials know how valuable they are have never been more critical.

Other factors contributing to bird population decline include predation by cats, window collisions and bright lights encountered during migration. You can make a huge difference to birds' success by keeping your cats indoors, adopting bird-friendly window practices and turning off outdoor lights (or using dark sky approved lighting products).



*American Oystercatcher*



## Important Sands Point Conservation Easement Closes at Year-end



The Land Alliance is pleased to announce our newest conservation easement in Sands Point. We applaud Joanna and Will Morgan on their successful effort to protect the natural habitat and sustainability of this part of their community. The conservation values of this nearly 4 acre easement are abundant!

The protected area lies on East Creek, a tributary to Hempstead Harbor. East Creek's extensive tidal wetlands support a large diversity of wildlife. The State has designated much of the Sands Point area of Hempstead Harbor a Significant Coastal Fish and Wildlife Habitat (SCFWH). SCFWH areas are indispensable to a diversity of wildlife, including many species that are economically valuable such as oysters and clams.

Wetlands act as natural water purifiers, filtering sediment and absorbing many pollutants in surface waters. In some wetland systems, this cleansing function also enhances the quality of groundwater supplies. The enhanced protection of local wetlands already has led to a major increase in water quality in Hempstead Harbor. Oyster harvesting reopened in 2011 after being closed for 40 years! In 2024, 731,042 oysters were seeded and 76,000 are being raised in the Coalition to Save Hempstead Harbor's oyster-gardening program.

Protection of the Morgan property is a wonderful example of how important easements are as a conservation tool. When landowners utilize conservation easements, they share in the collective impact of preserving

the quality of land and water in their community.

The Land Alliance would like to share the story of your commitment to conservation. Contact us at (516) 922-1028 to learn more about conservation easements!



*Joanna and Will Morgan with  
Land Alliance President Lisa Ott*





## North Shore Land Alliance Re-accredited by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission

We are proud to announce that the Land Alliance has been awarded renewed accreditation by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission! Board Chair Hoyle Jones explained that “the multi-year process was rigorous and thorough in reviewing all project transactions, policies and financials since the first accreditation approval in 2015.”

Accreditation is awarded to land trusts meeting the highest national standards for excellence and conservation permanence. The accreditation seal is a mark of distinction in land conservation. Each accredited land trust completes a rigorous review process and joins a network of organizations united by strong ethical practices. Each member of this trusted network of land trusts has demonstrated fiscal accountability, strong organizational leadership, sound transactions and lasting stewardship of the lands they conserve.

Nonprofit organizations, including land trusts, are increasingly called on to demonstrate their accountability to the public. Accredited land trusts have voluntarily submitted their organizations to an external, independent review of their practices. As a result, accreditation provides the public with the assurance that the land trust displaying the accreditation seal meets established standards for organizational quality and permanent land conservation.

Land trusts help conserve land that is essential to our

health and well-being. When land trusts agree to protect land for the benefit of the public, in most cases they do so by promising that the protection is forever. The accreditation program verifies that the land trust has the policies and programs in place to keep this promise, either by caring for the land itself or transferring the land to an entity that can.

As of April 2025, there are 479 accredited land trusts in 46 U.S. states and territories. Accredited land trusts protect 84% of land and easements held by all land trusts which total over 51 million acres of land.

When asked about the process, Lisa Ott, President and CEO, said “Accreditation is about assuring our work can live up to the important goals of conservation in perpetuity. We find it easier to grasp the meaning of perpetuity when we see the excitement of a child visiting our preserves or the pride exhibited by our stewardship team and volunteers when native habitats have been restored. Thinking about the impacts these places will have on their lives, that these places will be protected for generations to come, we can’t help but be inspired to strive to do more and do it well.”

It is estimated that the Land Alliance team spent more than 700 hours completing the process. With many thanks to them and our pro-bono legal counsel (Lisa’s husband, Gil Ott).





## Campaign to Grow Red Cote Preserve

On June 8th neighbors and friends gathered in the garden at the Pulling Property in Oyster Bay Cove to launch a community effort to acquire nearly five acres of very important land adjacent to the Red Cote Preserve.

Land Alliance President Lisa Ott welcomed guests and noted, "We have been presented with a rare opportunity to conserve a historic open space, protect our water supply in the Village of Oyster Bay Cove and ensure that this beautiful corner of our world will be protected in perpetuity, for the benefit of our community today and for generations to come."

The Land Alliance has moved quickly to work with the Pulling family, which has lovingly cared for this land for 100 years! In February, we signed a one-year option agreement with the family. The agreement gives the Land Alliance

time to gather the community support needed to purchase this special parcel. To date, with the support of foundations and the Land Alliance Board, we have raised \$600,000.

### Why is the protection of this land so important?

- Its undeveloped natural areas ensure continued groundwater recharge at a time when the state of our underground aquifers is challenged by saltwater intrusion.
- Its meadows and forest provide important habitat for plants and animals amid a worldwide biodiversity crisis. These areas also sequester large amounts of carbon, preventing harmful emissions from entering the atmosphere and worsening the impacts of climate change.

- Its trails expand recreational opportunities for our community and allow people important access to nature.
- Its historic character strengthens our community's connection to the past and the successful protection of this land will instill a sense of pride in the future.

The Land Alliance is grateful to the Pulling family for its commitment to preserving the local places and their stories that define the special character of our North Shore community. Now we are turning to you, the members of our community, to help us protect this vital place. Please support the Campaign to Grow the Red Cote Preserve.

To learn more, contact Deb Wiener at [deb@northshorelandalliance.org](mailto:deb@northshorelandalliance.org).



# Protecting Land Through Good Local Ordinances



Environmental laws exist at every level of government, but some of the most important and impactful are our local town and village ordinances. These regulations can be far more specific and nuanced than state or federal laws, often differing from village to village. More often than not, they help uphold important environmental practices.

In Mill Neck, for example, local ordinances regulate lighting, ensuring it isn't excessive and that it is directed downward. While this regulation was initially enacted with human quality of life in mind, it also has incredible secondary benefits for wildlife. Properly regulated lighting reduces the impact on nocturnal animals such as birds, bats, and insects, which are far less affected by downward facing light than by broad, scattered

illumination. Mill Neck also prohibits feeding waterfowl, which, while seemingly harmless, can lead to poor nutrition, pollution, delayed migration and the spread of disease as the town code explains.

Over in Old Brookville, there are also numerous pro-environment ordinances in place. Extensive wetland protections go above and beyond the regulations set by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. The village also tackles invasive species issues, to the extent that property owners may be charged with trespass if an invasive species migrates from their property to a neighboring one.

Good town and village ordinances can have a positive impact on the environment. However, these

laws are not set in stone and can be subject to change. A prime example is the Town of Huntington's regulations regarding steep slope development. In 2005, the town enacted critical codes designed to protect both the environment and the community from the adverse effects of development on steep slopes. At that time, a steep slope was defined as any slope of 10% or more across a 25-foot stretch. Now, there is a push to redefine what qualifies as a "steep slope." Depending on the proposed changes, this could have drastic implications for the environment.

The environmental importance of steep slope regulations cannot be overstated. Steep slopes are highly vulnerable to erosion, and development only exacerbates this issue. Vegetation removal and soil disturbance during construction make it much harder to prevent natural erosion from stripping away valuable topsoil. With increasingly intense storms, the impact on slopes becomes even more pronounced. When heavy rain washes away topsoil, it can take decades to regenerate. The loss of topsoil also leads to the loss of fertile land and microorganisms, which are essential for growing healthy vegetation and maintaining natural habitats. Furthermore, removing plants and trees that are critical for stabilizing the soil with their root systems leaves these areas even more vulnerable to landslides and further erosion.

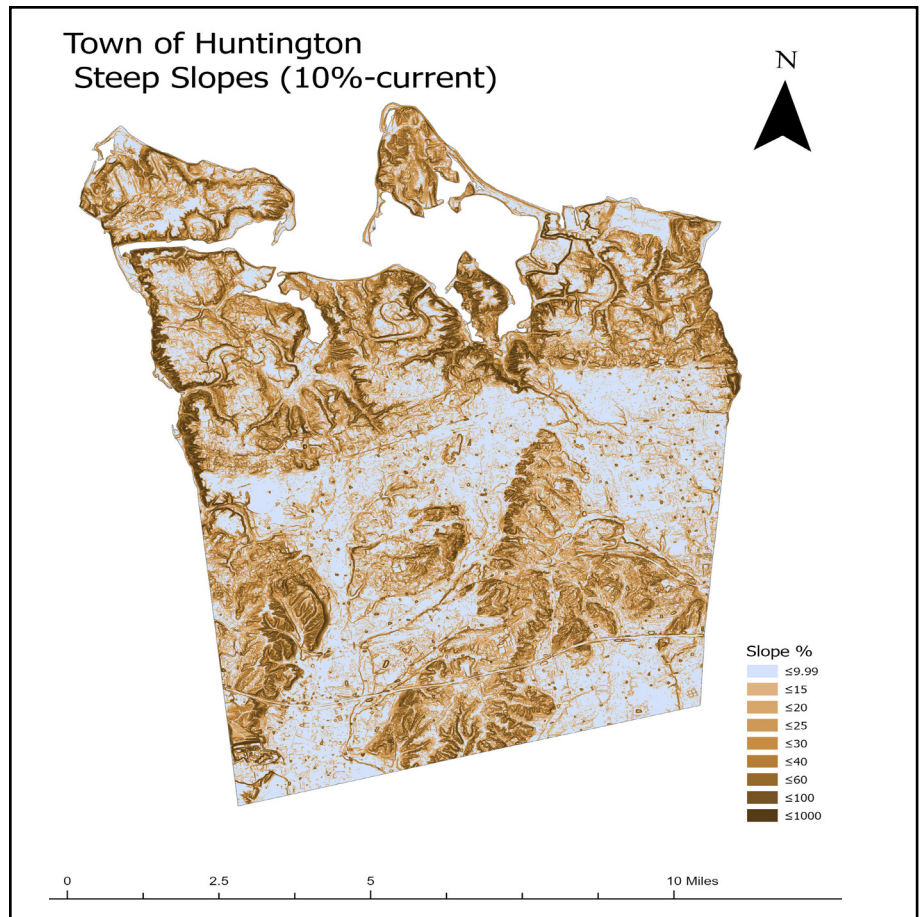
The ecological consequences extend beyond the immediate site.



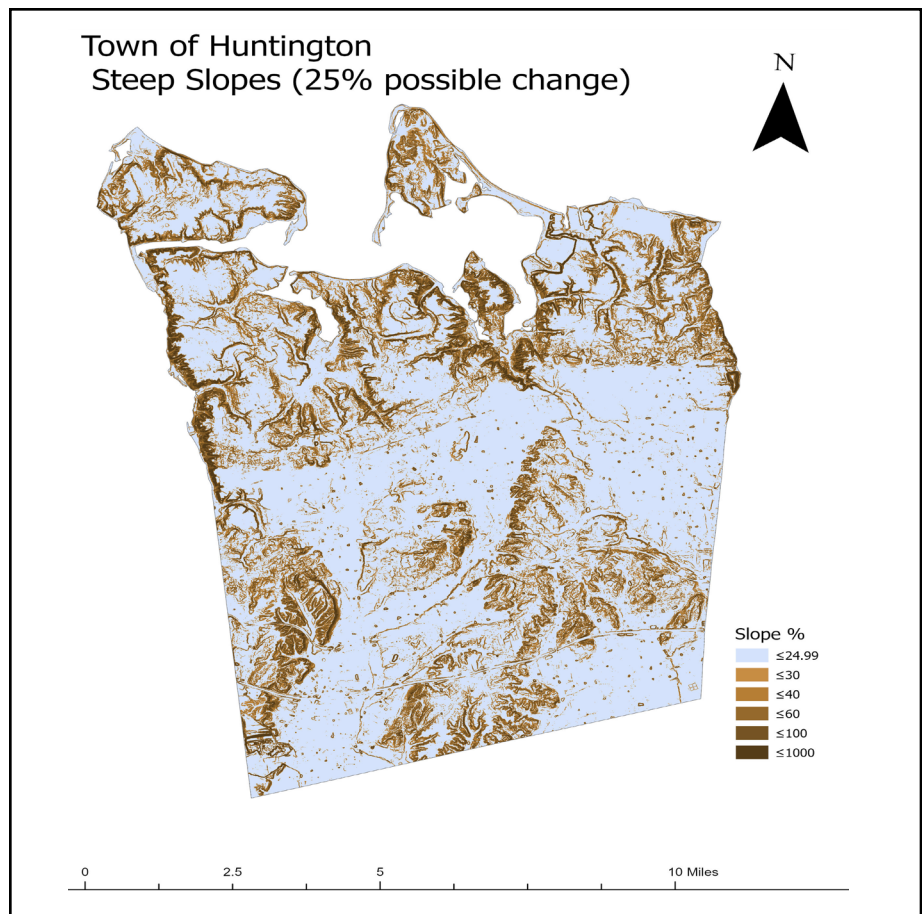
Erosion from steep slopes can pollute nearby water sources and disrupt local ecosystems. Steep slopes often also represent ecotones, where distinct ecosystems or elevations meet. These areas are vital for biodiversity and serve as transition zones for migration. By allowing development in these sensitive regions, we risk fragmenting populations and disrupting the natural flow of ecosystems.

If the definition of steep slopes is reduced in the Town of Huntington, it could open up a significant portion of the town to development. Under the current definition, nearly 60% (37,000 acres) of the Town is classified as steep slopes. If the definition changes from 10% to 15% or, even worse 25%, an additional 8,000 to 18,500 acres could be open to development. Please see Figures 1-3 with the steep slopes shaded in brown. The environmental impact of this much development alone would be severe. It would be even more so when the potential erosion and ecological damage that could result from building on these specific sensitive areas is considered.

The good news is that these laws don't change without public input. They require the support of the community. Together, we can raise our voices to protect these vital areas. Ways to get involved include attending town council meetings, organizing letter writing campaigns and commenting at public hearings. Even engaging with and educating your neighbors can have a lasting impact. When we stand united, we can emphasize the importance of protecting our environment through strong, sustainable ordinances.



Figures 1-2



Figures 1-3



# Adopt-A-Preserve

**Support our efforts to maintain trails, enhance wildlife habitats, manage invasive species and ensure recreational opportunities for our communities.**

Over the past two decades, the North Shore Land Alliance has played a vital role in conserving over 1,400 acres of local land, including 16 preserves open to the public from sunup to sundown. These preserves provide significant environmental and recreational benefits, offering us clean air and water, healthy food, habitats for wildlife and spaces for reflection and recreation.

This year, we have launched a new program allowing businesses and community members to Adopt-a-Preserve. Your support will help the Land Alliance maintain the trails, enhance wildlife habitats, manage invasive species, and ensure recreational opportunities for our communities.

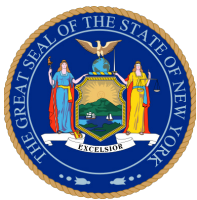
- Humes Preserve, Mill Neck - Located in the heart of a protected wildlife corridor with nearly five miles of walking trails.
- Red Cote Preserve, Oyster Bay Cove - Open meadows teeming with wildlife.
- Wawapek Preserve, Cold Spring Harbor - Remnants of a historic estate surrounded by majestic forests.
- Fox Hollow Preserve, Oyster Bay/Syosset - 26 acres of mature, mixed oak forest
- Hope Goddard Iselin Preserve, Upper Brookville - Enchanting woodlands and a meadow filled with people and plants.
- Roosevelt Community Garden, Roosevelt - A thriving community garden that provides fresh, healthy produce to the local residents.

For your sponsorship, we offer prominent on-site signage, unique programming, ongoing publicity, tailored volunteer opportunities, and the satisfaction of giving back to our community in a meaningful way.

To learn more, contact Deb Wiener at 516-922-1028 or [deb@northshorelandalliance.org](mailto:deb@northshorelandalliance.org).



## GOVERNMENT UPDATE



### NEW YORK STATE We Have a State Budget

This year more than 100 organizations, led by The Nature Conservancy, banded together in the New Yorkers for Clean Water and Jobs coalition to advocate for environmental funding. This united effort included representatives from small land trusts like ours as well as national and regional conservation organizations, local governments, labor, business and other allies. The goal was to make a compelling case for support from policymakers given the turbulent political atmosphere and uncertainty around federal funding and its impact on the state budget. This was not an easy year to advocate for additional environmental funding. We are pleased to report that thanks to these efforts, the next state budget includes funding for critical environmental programs that advance all our work and New York's environment.

The budget was signed on May 8th and includes the following highlights:

- Record funding of **\$425 million for the Environmental Protection Fund**. This is a new, historic funding level! This program—which touches down in every county of New York State and every borough of New York City—supports land conservation, urban forestry, water quality improvement, stewardship and invasive species and pollution prevention.
- Another **\$500 million for the Clean Water Infrastructure Act**, growing total funding for this program that protects water quality to \$6 billion (since 2016). In addition to paying for upgrades to wastewater and drinking water infrastructure, a portion of these funds

support both land conservation projects that prevent pollution from contaminating drinking water and clean water septic systems that prevent nitrogen pollution.

- **\$290 million for capital projects** that will improve access to nature in New York State parks and lands and facilities managed by the Department of Environmental Conservation. These funds will expand public recreation and protect natural resources.
- **\$1 billion for climate mitigation and adaptation projects** through a new Sustainable Future Program. These are expected to be implemented over the next five years.

This year, with land conservation partners, we also advocated for policy changes that would improve and modernize New York State's land acquisition program. It recently has been bogged down in delays. While several reforms were not included in the final budget agreement, two improvements to the land conservation program were made:

- An exemption for conservation land transactions from the Mansion Tax, a real estate transaction tax that increases the cost of land deals.
- \$500,000 included within the EPF land conservation funding to reimburse land trusts for property cleanup costs prior to sale to the state.

Based on current news and discussions with policymakers, Coalition leaders think it likely that legislators and the Governor will be discussing budget matters again soon, as federal funding changes may cause state budget gaps.

*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." — Margaret Mead*



## What Draws Carbon Out of the Air, Costs Very Little and Builds Itself?



All life on Earth has one thing in common: it's carbon-based. Every living organism is made of carbon atoms and relies on this essential element to survive. But unfortunately, carbon, specifically carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), is also one of the main threats to our planet's future.

CO<sub>2</sub> is a greenhouse gas. It's absorbed by plants during photosynthesis and released into the atmosphere through industrial processes, fossil fuel combustion and other human activities. As you've likely heard, excess CO<sub>2</sub> traps heat in the atmosphere, driving global warming and climate change.

The good news? Nature has already developed the most effective carbon-capture technology available: Plants!

Trees and other vegetation absorb and store carbon in their roots, trunks, branches and leaves. They lock it away and keep it out of the atmosphere for years or even

centuries. Different ecosystems store carbon at different rates. Wetlands, for instance, are champions of carbon storage due to their slow decomposition rates. Grasslands store vast amounts of carbon underground in their roots. Forests vary by region: boreal forests store much of their carbon below ground in soil and permafrost. Tropical forests hold large amounts above ground but lose carbon quickly due to rapid decomposition. Temperate forests, such as those on Long Island, store substantial carbon above and below ground. Generally, wetter and colder environments are better at long-term carbon storage, while younger forests tend to sequester carbon more rapidly. Each year global forests sequester three times more CO<sub>2</sub> than is emitted by the United States, but a little over half of that is released back into the atmosphere through wildfire, logging, development and other disturbances.

Land Alliance preserves have a diverse mosaic of



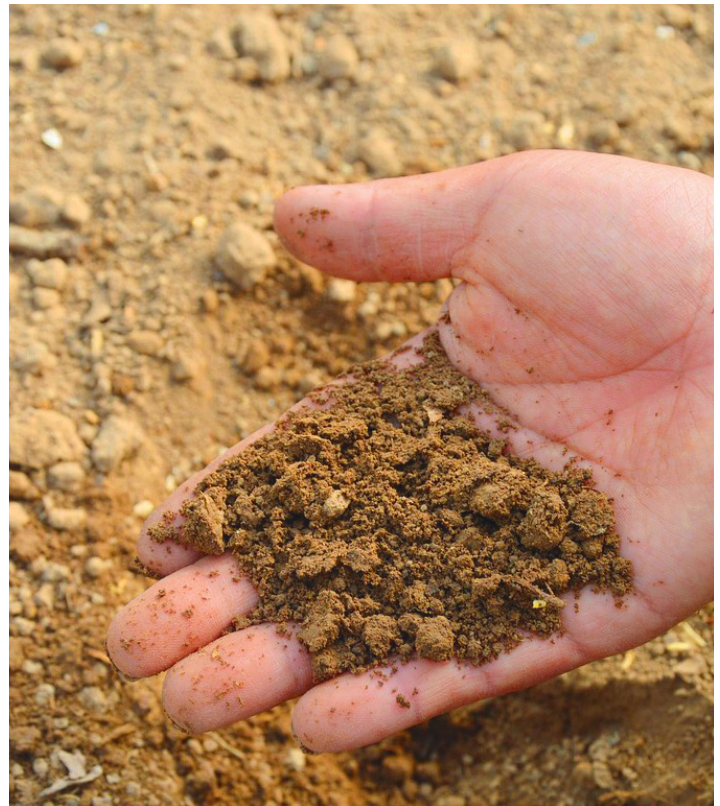
ecosystem types. This diversity not only enhances local biodiversity and resilience but also results in a wide variety of carbon storage strategies that work together to combat climate change.

Using a carbon estimation tool developed by The Nature Conservancy, we calculated the carbon currently stored in the lands we manage. Our lands hold over 40,000 metric tons of carbon!

You may be asking yourself: “where do we keep it all?” Surprisingly, more than half of it is underground in the roots of trees and meadow grasses and in the soil. The rest is stored as living vegetation and woody debris. This fact highlights the importance of soil health, a critical but often overlooked factor in climate solutions. Leaving the leaves on the ground after they fall, preventing erosion and planting deep-rooted species are all ways to sequester carbon in the soil.

The tool also projects future carbon sequestration. By 2070, our protected lands are expected to store an additional 10,000 metric tons of carbon. This is the equivalent of not driving over 1.8 million miles by car... every year!

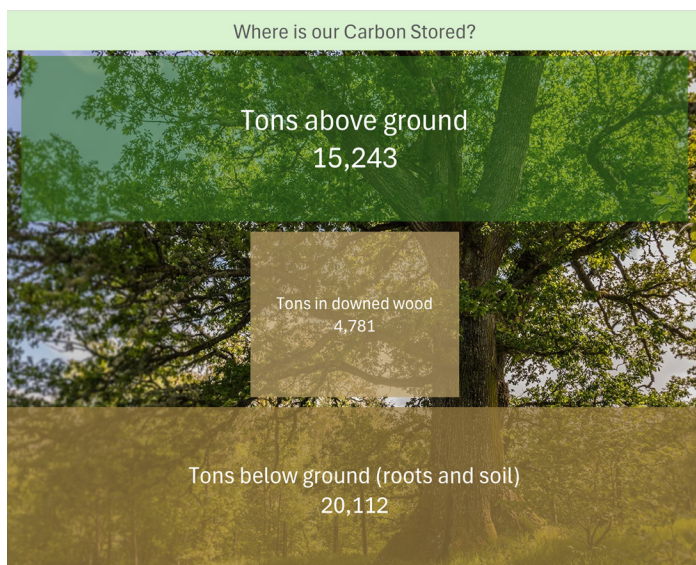
These numbers are more than just statistics; they represent real economic value. The federal government calculates what is called the “social cost of carbon”. This is the projected cost of damages that one additional ton of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere would cause. The federal number



for this cost is \$51 per ton, while many independent researchers argue for a higher value of \$185 per ton. Based on these dollar amounts, Land Alliance protected lands will have sequestered from \$8 million to \$30 million worth of carbon by 2070.

In addition to storing carbon, trees filter the air and water, mitigate floods and other disasters and cool their surroundings. These factors are called ecosystem services, and they directly benefit us and reduce costs elsewhere in the economy. Houses surrounded by forests need less heating. Areas with riparian forests naturally filtering water spend less on treatment. Forests and other natural lands reduce stress, clean the air, and get people outside, lowering healthcare costs. By using a tool developed by Earth Economics and the Land Trust Alliance, we can calculate the cost of these services. Over a timeframe of 50 years, these services add up to \$39 million, bringing the total economic benefits of our lands up to about \$70 million.

The best part? These services are free! In a time of rising costs and economic uncertainty, nature continues to quietly and steadily give back... without a price tag.





## Colonizing Coyote



Photo credit: Irene Astorga

For over a century, Long Island has been without a large mammalian predator... until now. Long ago, the wolves, cougars, and wolverines that made their home on Long Island were all eradicated. The lack of any such predator has had far reaching effects on prey populations and ecological resilience. Along with clearing for farming and development, these changes created an open ecological niche that the coyote (*Canis latrans*) could take advantage of.

Long Island represents one of the last landmasses in the continental United States to be colonized by coyotes. Unlike their western relatives, eastern coyotes possess genetic material from timber wolves (*Canis lycaon*), gray wolves (*Canis lupus*) and domestic dogs (*Canis lupus familiaris*). This hybridization occurred as western coyotes expanded eastward through the Great Lakes region, interbreeding with remnant wolf populations. These hybrid populations expanded five times faster than non-hybrid populations, which eventually allowed them to colonize New York.

Historically, coyotes were confined to the open plains of the American West. Now, with human-altered landscapes creating new migration routes, coyotes have expanded into every state, including ours. Unlike their western counterparts, which primarily hunt in open grasslands, eastern coyotes have adapted to thrive in woodlands and edge habitats, benefiting from their wolf ancestry.

Long Island's first confirmed coyote sighting occurred in 2009, when an individual coyote migrated from New York City. Since then, the population has slowly expanded, likely using railroad tracks as travel corridors. By 2014, coyotes had been observed on eastern Long Island, possibly arriving via Fishers Island to the North Fork. While still rare, coyotes have continued their gradual expansion, and researchers predict that within the next decade, they will be fully integrated into Long Island's ecosystems.

These canines are primarily carnivorous but also will occasionally feed on berries and vegetation. Their diet mainly consists of small mammals, birds, raccoons, carcasses and garbage. But they are also known to go



after deer. In the Adirondacks, studies show that coyotes consume deer, especially young ones, and especially during winter when other food is scarce.

While there have been occasional reports of coyotes preying on domestic pets, such incidents are rare.

Coyotes tend to avoid people, and you are unlikely to see one.

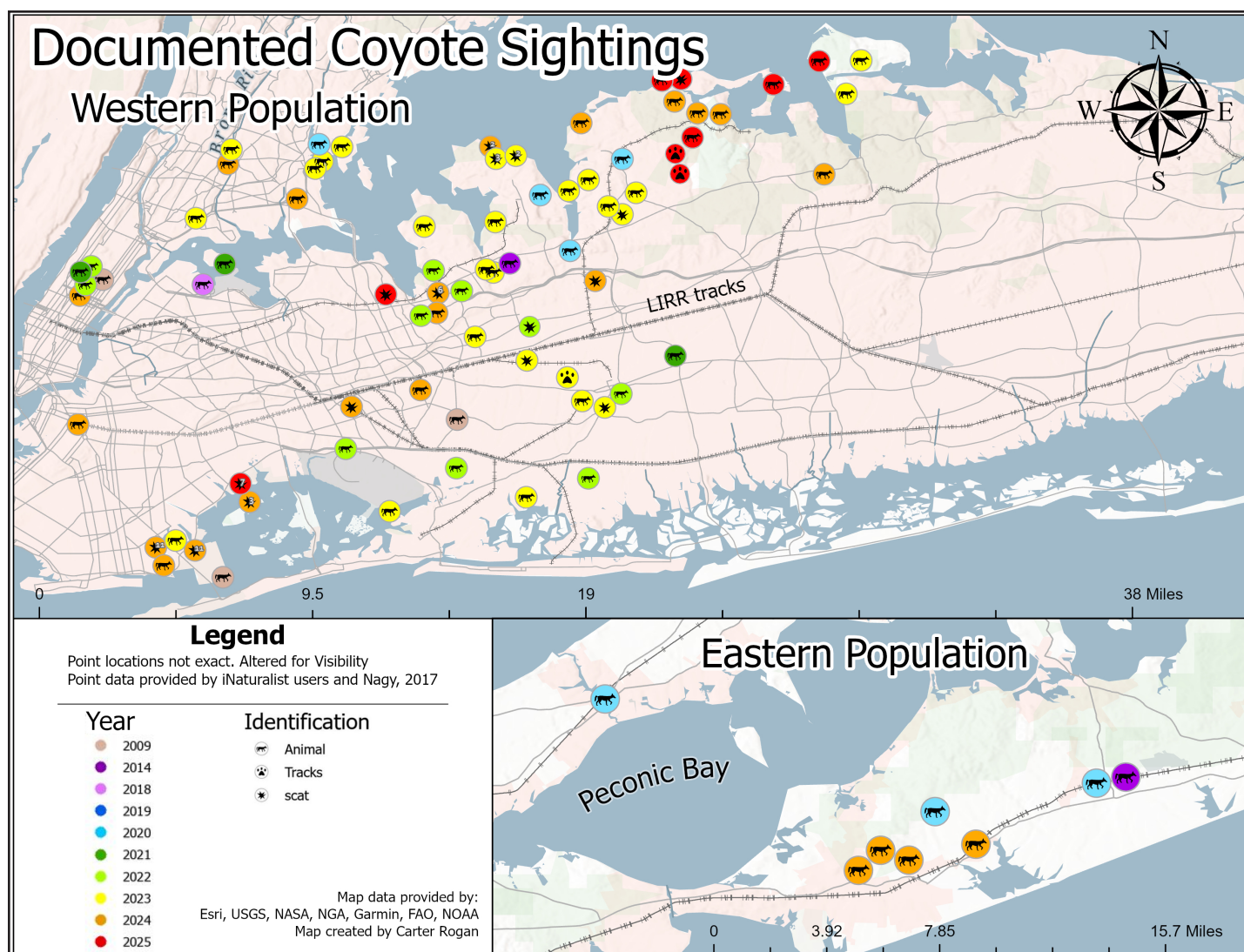
If you do see a coyote, fortunately there are simple precautions you can take to minimize conflicts:

- Keep pets supervised: Always leash your dogs and cats in public. When letting pets outside, monitor them closely, particularly at night.
- Secure food sources: Ensure that garbage, pet food and compost bins are securely stored or put away.

- Scare coyotes if encountered: Make yourself appear large, wave your arms and make loud noises to discourage them from approaching.

Despite their ecological benefits and minimal interactions with humans, some people may still fear the arrival of these new predators. However, coyotes are here to stay. Efforts to control coyote populations have proven largely ineffective. Their complex social structures and pack dynamics enable rapid population rebounds when individuals are removed, leading to increased breeding and migration.

Some suggest that instead of fearing these resilient and adaptive canines, we should embrace their role in our evolving ecosystem. By understanding and respecting their presence, we can safely coexist alongside coyotes.





## Building Environmental Awareness through the Life Cycle of the Monarch Butterfly



Butterflies are some of the most beautiful insects in the world. These enchanting creatures seem to float effortlessly through the air. They undertake a remarkable multi-generational migration, with some traveling up to 3,000 miles from breeding grounds in the northern United States and southern Canada to overwintering sites in central Mexico.

They come in all sizes and colors and show up in the mythology and folklore of many cultures around the world. Butterflies were believed to move between worlds, bringing messages and guidance, representing transformation, rebirth and hope.

Today, over 60 butterfly species are endangered. In 2024, the US Fish and Wildlife Service announced a proposed rule to list the Monarch butterfly as threatened under the Endangered Species Act, accompanied by a critical habitat designation. Further, a recent publication indicates substantial probability for “quasi-extinction” of the Eastern Monarch butterfly migratory population within 20 years if ambitious habitat restoration and conservation goals are not achieved.

To bring awareness of the plight of this flagship species, we are declaring this the summer of the Monarch butterfly. We will mark the

occasion with a series of programs and initiatives chock-full of lessons to be learned from the Monarch.

First, Monarchs are pollinators and need the same habitats (native milkweed and other nectar flowers) as many other pollinators and other wildlife. Monarch butterflies fill the role of the canary in the coal mine, if Monarchs are threatened because of habitat loss many other pollinators and wildlife that share their habitat are in jeopardy as well.

Second, the declining Monarch population parallels other declining pollinator populations. This in turn impacts human food systems, illustrating that Monarchs and other pollinators are part of a food web and ecosystem. Providing enough habitat, like milkweed for Monarchs, is essential in maintaining a balanced food web within the ecosystems that are critical in sustaining us.





Third, Monarchs carry out a unique migration, which inspires interest in the natural world across the entire continent. The fact that these insects, weighing no more than a paperclip, travel for thousands of miles to a destination unknown to them, is a phenomenon that deserves protection for its own sake. Their dramatic migration also serves as an amazing way to teach the next generation about science and caring for the environment. If you've ever seen a monarch caterpillar pupate, or an adult emerge from its chrysalis, you too know how amazing their metamorphosis is, and the excitement it generates in kids and adults alike.

Fourth, the threats to Monarchs presented by habitat loss, global warming, pesticides and predators are real. The availability of safe and quality feeding and breeding habitat is essential for populations but that is becoming increasingly hard to find. Every year approximately 1 billion pounds of pesticide is used across the country. An estimated 70 million pounds of that are used for purely cosmetic purposes on people's lawns. Humans are making it difficult for pollinators to survive.

Yet, thanks to increasing awareness about the plight of this charismatic species, there is hope that by working together we can take the actions necessary to protect the Monarch and, in turn, the future of our planet.



## Stay Tuned for These Upcoming Butterfly Initiatives

- Thanks to a grant from the New York State Conservation Partnership Program, we will **build a butterfly house and garden at Wawapek**. This project will include harvesting native milkweed seeds, growing them in the greenhouse and hosting planting days in the garden. Volunteers welcomed!
- **Summer and Fall Monarch Walks** for Families featuring the life cycle of the Monarch with hands on experiences identifying eggs on milkweed, caterpillars or, if lucky, a pupa hanging by a thread.
- **Butterfly Release at the Land Alliance Family Picnic Day** on Sunday, October 19th at Wawapek Preserve in Cold Spring Harbor.
- **Save the Monarch Campaign** utilizing I-Naturalist for reporting with SWAG giveaways awarded to families who plant milkweed in their gardens.
- **Citizen Science in schools** utilizes student volunteers to make presentations to their peers, encourage volunteerism and activism.



## One Plastic Bag at a Time: Small Actions, Big Impact



Microplastics have dominated headlines for their potential dangers in recent years. A new study in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS) reveals why experts are sounding the alarm.

Drawing on over 157 scientific studies, the researchers used AI to uncover patterns in how microplastics impact plant life. They found that microplastics can reduce photosynthesis in land plants and algae by 7% to 12%, potentially leading to crop yield losses of 4% to 14% in essential staples like rice, wheat and maize. Larger microplastics tend to accumulate in the soil, while much smaller particles can become airborne and be absorbed

directly into plant cells—some so tiny that 10,000 of them could fit inside a single cell.

Microplastics are everywhere in part because they're so hard to recycle—and in 2025 alone, they're expected to contribute around 360 million tons of solid waste.

### The Limits of Recycling in Tackling Waste

The bulk of plastic wastes are currently landfilled, incinerated or allowed to accumulate in the environment. Traditional plastic recycling by mechanical methods is inadequate as a waste management strategy because it can only accept limited types of plastics (mainly bottles of PET and HDPE), which represent less than 12% of post-consumer plastic waste.

In addition, mechanical recycling methods cannot easily process flexible plastics and food packaging, which represent roughly 35% of plastics currently produced. Because large-scale recycling systems are lacking, more waste ends up in landfills or is burned for energy—both of which use up precious land and release greenhouse gases.

## Turning Trash into Treasure: North Country Garden Club Takes on Plastic Upcycling

Upcycling, defined as creatively re-purposing materials into something of higher value or quality, offers an alternative approach to managing plastic waste. Given the challenges of recycling, especially with plastics, and the expectation that plastic waste will reach 360 million tons in 2025 alone, the North Country Garden Club is stepping up. The club aims to collect 1,000 pounds of clean, dry plastic film, including pallet wrap, stretch film, grocery

and bread bags, water bottle over-wrap, dry cleaning bags, newspaper sleeves, produce bags, plastic shipping envelopes and most other thin-film plastics. The collected plastic will be turned into a bench made from 95% recycled materials, giving new purpose to items that would otherwise end up in landfills.

1,000 pounds diverted from landfills—one meaningful stride toward a sustainable future.

If you are interested in learning more, please email North Country Garden Club at [northcountry@ncgc.org](mailto:northcountry@ncgc.org).





## John P. Humes Japanese Stroll Garden 2025 Season Opening



Scores of visitors from across Long Island and New York City ushered in the John P. Humes Japanese Stroll Garden's 2025 season at its opening on May 3rd. Blue skies and sunshine graced the event, generating smiles all around. The Garden, lovingly tended and readied for opening by manager Mary Schmutz and her steadfast crew of volunteers, was aglow with colorful Azalea and Jack-in-the-pulpit blooms. Visitors sampled tasty Japanese snacks as Shakuhachi Grandmaster Daniel Nyoraku Soergel's soothing bamboo flute tones emanated from the spotless Tea House and beyond. In other words, a good time was had by all on this much-loved weekend.



### Thank you to the Friends of the John P. Humes Japanese Stroll Garden

Because of the generous support of our Friends group, more than 4,000 visitors experienced the beauty and tranquility of the Garden last year. Their ongoing commitment is essential to keeping the Garden open and flourishing for the community and future generations. As a token of our appreciation, all programs are offered free of charge to our Friends.

**If you would like to become a Friend of the Stroll Garden, visit [www.northshorelandalliance.org/friends-of-the-humes-japanese-stroll-garden](http://www.northshorelandalliance.org/friends-of-the-humes-japanese-stroll-garden)**



# SUMMER AND FALL PROGRAMS



## Summer Programs

**Butterflies, Birds & Habitats Talk**  
**June 26<sup>th</sup>, 5:30PM**  
**Old Westbury Gardens**  
**Presented by Rick Cech**

Beginning birders are aware of the close link between “target” bird species and habitats. Like birds, butterflies also have key habitat affiliations. The features that define these habitats may vary widely from elements required by individual species, even where they co-exist in the same location. This program will explore these subtleties, with an emphasis on the US East Coast.

**Paddle Cold Spring Harbor**  
**July 8<sup>th</sup>, 5:30PM**  
**Shore Road Sanctuary**  
**Led by Peter Martin and Don Niddrie and Co-listed with the Eagle Dock Beach Club**

Join us for an evening paddle along the historic Cold Spring Harbor and immerse yourself in the charm of this location.

**Bird Identification Walk**  
**July 12<sup>th</sup>, 9AM**  
**Red Cote Preserve**  
**Led by Stephane Perreault, Greentree Foundation**

Learn about bird identification and breeding behaviors as we walk through Red Cote’s fields and woodlands.

**Berry Foraging (Kids Activity)**  
**July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2PM**  
**Wawapek Preserve**  
**Led by the O’Neil Stewards**

Join us for an exploration through Wawapek, discovering native plants and learning about the vibrant ecosystem that thrives here. But that’s not all! Bring along your containers because we’ll also be visiting our very own blueberry enclosure, where you can pick and enjoy delicious homegrown blueberries!

**Bird Watching (Kids Activity)**  
**July 15<sup>th</sup>, 10AM**  
**Wawapek Preserve**  
**Led by the O’Neil Stewards**

Young Explorers will learn the basics of bird watching and how to identify a few common backyard birds.

**Bird Watching (Kids Activity)**  
**July 16<sup>th</sup>, 10AM**  
**Humes Preserve**  
**Led by the O’Neil Stewards**

Young Explorers will learn the basics of bird watching and how to identify a few common backyard birds.

**Tree Identification (Kids Activity)**  
**July 17<sup>th</sup>, 2PM**  
**Wawapek Preserve**

Young Explorers will learn how to identify common trees.

**Tree Identification (Kids Activity)**  
**July 18<sup>th</sup>, 2PM**  
**Humes Preserve**  
**Led by the O’Neil Stewards**

Young Explorers will learn how to identify common trees.



**Twice Is Nice**  
**July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 5:30PM**  
**Humes Preserve**  
**Presented by John Turner**

Using water again for some beneficial purpose before discharge - has the potential to be an important water quality and quantity strategy to help protect Long Island’s vulnerable sole source aquifer. It is a tried-and-true strategy in many other communities in the United States. This discussion will talk about the value of current reuse projects and the potential water reuse has.





**Japanese Tales and Haiku**  
**July 26<sup>th</sup>, 3PM**  
**Humes Japanese Stroll Garden**  
**Led by Karen De Mauro**

Stroll through the Garden, accompanied by captivating Japanese stories, inspiring anecdotes and much more.

**Habitat Restoration Walk**  
**August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 9AM**  
**Williams Ridge Preserve**

Learn about Williams Ridge Preserve and see first-hand how it has evolved since our last walk!

**Bonsai Exhibit**  
**August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 10AM &**  
**August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1PM**  
**Humes Japanese Stroll Garden**  
**Led by Hal Johnson, Long Island**  
**Bonsai Society**

Join us for this bonsai exhibit, featuring a variety of examples on display.

**Return of Woody the Woodpecker**  
**August 15<sup>th</sup>, 10:30AM**  
**Humes Preserve**  
**Presented by John Turner**

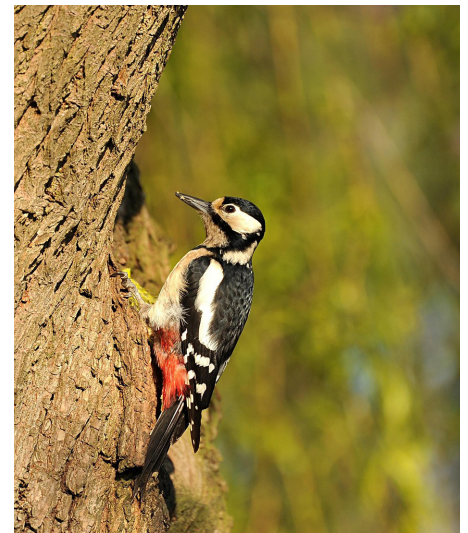
The Pileated Woodpecker, the largest woodpecker in the northeastern United States and the woodpecker of Woody Woodpecker fame, was once common on Long Island but disappeared for about a century due to habitat loss and the logging of older deciduous forests. This lecture will provide an overview of this iconic species and focus on recent sightings on Long Island and what these sightings may mean for the species recovery here.

**Stone Bridge Nighthawk Watch**  
**September 13<sup>th</sup>, 5:30PM**  
**Stone Bridge, Setauket**  
**Led by John Turner**

Join the Land Alliance during the Four Harbors Audubon Annual Stone Bridge Nighthawk Watch.

**Volunteer Beach Cleanup**  
**September 14<sup>th</sup>, 1PM**  
**Shore Road Sanctuary**

Bring your family and join us for a beach cleanup at our Shore Road Sanctuary in Cold Spring Harbor.



**Summer NATURE Activities for Kids!**

From July 14th to 18th, we invite kids ages 8-13 to join us for a week of outdoor fun with the Land Alliance O'Neil Stewards! Each day offers a new outdoor adventure designed to spark curiosity and foster a love for nature. These kid-friendly activities are the perfect way to get your child outdoors, learning and having fun! Advance registration required! [www.northshorelandalliance.org/events](http://www.northshorelandalliance.org/events).







## Fall Programs

### **Gardener's Horticultural Tour September 21<sup>st</sup>, 11AM Humes Japanese Stroll Garden Led by Mary Schmutz**

Learn about the how's and why's of the Stroll Garden's plantings as well as the hardscape of this unique garden.

### **Paddle Oyster Bay Harbor September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2PM Centre Island Beach Led by Peter Martin**

During this fall paddle in Oyster Bay Harbor, explore the marine habitat, serving as a home for over 25 species of waterfowl and a diverse aquatic ecosystem.

### **Wine Auction & Dinner September 27<sup>th</sup>, 6PM Location to be announced**

Save the Date for our annual fall gala to support our conservation efforts.

### **Fall Migratory Bird Walk October 4<sup>th</sup>, 9AM Humes Preserve Led by Jennifer Wilson Pines, North Shore Audubon**

Jennifer will guide us in a search of fall bird arrivals that may include kinglets, some warblers, sparrows, hawks, Rusty Blackbirds, towhees – the list goes on!

### **Japanese Tea Ceremony October 4<sup>th</sup>, 3:30PM Humes Japanese Stroll Garden Led by Omotesenke Domonkai Eastern Region**

Experience the art of traditional Japanese tea preparation and serving as skilled practitioners, dressed in kimono, guide you through a serene and mindful ceremony.



### **Challenges Facing Aquatic Mammals October 16<sup>th</sup>, 4PM Education Annex, Humes Preserve Presented by Steve Abbondandolo New York Marine Rescue Center**

Cold stunning is a condition similar to hypothermia that is brought on when cold-blooded sea turtles are in water temperatures below 50°F. Since cold stunning slows the movements of afflicted turtles, it causes the animals to get washed ashore on New York beaches. Left unnoticed, this condition can become fatal. This is why the New York Marine Rescue Center (NYMRC) needs your help!

### **Annual Family Picnic October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2PM Wawapek Preserve**

Join us for a fun-filled afternoon featuring live music, delicious food and engaging activities for the whole family!

### **Annual Members Meeting November 15<sup>th</sup>, 11AM Tavern House, Humes Preserve**

Members are invited to join us for our annual members meeting and election of Trustees.

### **Fall Nature Walk November 16<sup>th</sup>, 1PM Seminary of the Immaculate Conception Led by Richard Weir**

Richard will guide us through the recently protected 216-acre Seminary property focusing on its mature forest, wetlands and fields.

### **Holiday Decoration Workshop December 5<sup>th</sup>, 3PM Tavern House, Humes Preserve Led by Darcy McDowell**

Get into the holiday spirit and learn how to create your own beautiful wreath from locally sourced fresh-cut greens.

### **Walk the Walking Dunes December 6<sup>th</sup>, 11AM Hither Hills State Park Led by Vicki Bustamante Co-listed with Third House Nature Center, Inc. and the Long Island Botanical Society**

Explore Hither Hills State Park's 80-foot parabolic dunes, rare plants, the Phantom Forest, and hidden bogs.



Advance registration is required. Event dates and times are subject to change.

For more event details or to register, visit our website at [www.northshorelandalliance.org/events](http://www.northshorelandalliance.org/events).



## The 2025 Season Has Begun at Our Community Garden



*Annual Earth Day Event and Season Kick-Off*



*Annual Square Foot Gardening Demonstration & Planting Day*

The 2025 growing season began long before the first signs of spring. In February, residents from throughout Nassau County began registering for raised-garden plots for the upcoming season (April – November). We are thrilled to see that many of last year's garden members have returned, joined by some exciting new participants. We're also proud to announce that all garden plots have been sold, setting the stage for a vibrant and productive season ahead.

On March 28th, under the leadership of Darcy McDowell, Associate Director of Stewardship, and Carter Rogan, Volunteer Coordinator, volunteers and staff gathered at the Wawapek greenhouse to assist with starting seedlings. Crops such as tomatoes, collard greens, peppers and thyme were planted and will be transferred to the Garden during our Annual Planting Day in May.

On April 25th, after rescheduling due to rain, we officially welcomed the season with our annual Earth Day event in the Garden. 30 dedicated volunteers joined us for a successful garden cleanup. From weeding to tidying

up garden beds, the hard work and enthusiasm of the volunteers were instrumental in getting our community garden ready for the growing season. A heartfelt thank you goes out to everyone who contributed their time and energy—your support makes all the difference in the continued success of our garden!

We hosted our Annual Square Foot Gardening demonstration and Annual Planting Day on May 10th. Led by Master Gardener Reese Michaels from Cornell Cooperative Extension of Nassau County, participants learned how to divide their garden space into 1-foot by 1-foot squares, each dedicated to a specific plant. This method is ideal for maximizing space, conserving water and minimizing weeding. After the demonstration, garden members dug in by planting the seedlings started in our greenhouse.

We're looking forward to another bountiful season of food, learning and community, never forgetting the vital connection between protecting land and our food sources.



# New Community Gardens on the Horizon

## Valley Stream Community Garden

In 2019, New York State Assemblywoman Michaelle C. Solages visited the Land Alliance's Roosevelt Community Garden (RCG). She wanted to learn about our programs and processes in hopes of initiating a similar project in her district.

This year, the Village of Valley Stream celebrated the grand opening of the Valley Stream Community Garden (VSCG). The ribbon cutting ceremony marked the culmination of years of thoughtful planning, dedication and hard work.

Located across from 200 E. Hawthorne Avenue in Valley Stream, the VSCG features 20 raised garden plots to grow food, a bioswale designed to help manage stormwater runoff and six additional raised plots to cultivate food for the local LI Cares Food Pantry.



## Succotash Garden (Coming Soon)



In 2024, we had the pleasure of meeting Nailah Garad, a recent graduate of the Yale School of Environmental Management. She shared her vision for establishing an urban food forest on a parcel of land in Roosevelt where her family hosts a food pantry. We provided guidance on

how to create and manage a successful garden. But it was Nailah's passion and deep-rooted commitment to giving back to her community that will make the project work.

Since then, Nailah has been busy organizing volunteers, securing grants and preparing the area for planting. She has participated in Land Alliance workshops to deepen her knowledge of sustainable gardening practices and planted seeds that will be grown in her garden this season.

Succotash Garden will provide a another sustainable source of fresh, organically grown vegetables, herbs and fruits for the food pantry. The inclusion of native trees and shrubs will support wildlife and enrich biodiversity.

The RCG, VSCG and Succotash Gardens are shining examples of the power of community-driven projects to promote sustainability, food security and environmental stewardship. If you are interested in starting a community garden, the Land Alliance is here to help. Contact Andrea Millwood [andrea@northshorelandalliance.org](mailto:andrea@northshorelandalliance.org).



## Volunteers for Open Space Program



We are proud to report that we've welcomed more than 80 new people to the team this year. In just a few short months, our volunteers have contributed over 600 hours of their precious time. From hours of pulling vines and weeding invasives to walking boundaries and surveying wildlife, their help is critical to the success of the many incredible projects we take on.

Whether they started last week or have been with us for twenty years, whether they show up every week or just give an afternoon, we're deeply grateful for their time and energy. We truly couldn't do it without them!

### Volunteer Spotlight: Meet Paul Silchenstedt



Paul has been a dedicated volunteer with the Land Alliance for nearly five years. Armed with his trusty chainsaw and a deep knowledge of arboriculture, Paul is our go-to person whenever a tree

falls across a trail or something needs to be safely taken down. His efforts help keep our forests safe and accessible, ensuring that community members can enjoy the trails without climbing over fallen logs or worrying about unstable trees.

Even while still working, Paul never hesitates to lend a hand when called. He arrives in his well-stocked van, prepared for any situation with ropes, wedges, log hooks, and even an extra chainsaw, just in case. Watching

him work is a joy; he makes cutting through large logs look like slicing through butter.

Paul's immense knowledge and experience with tree work shines through in everything he does. He has become an invaluable part of our volunteer team, and we're incredibly grateful for the passion, skill and reliability he brings to the Land Alliance.

Thank you, Paul, for all that you do for the Land Alliance.





*Racanelli Construction Co. and Cerebral Palsy Association of Nassau County at Roosevelt Preserve*

## Organizations Lend a Hand for Earth Day

Earth Day serves as a reminder to give back to the planet that gives us so much every single day. While we at the Land Alliance celebrate the Earth all year round, April 22nd gives us an opportunity to work with the community and dedicate our time to clean up our planet.

This year the Land Alliance hosted a cleanup event at Roosevelt Preserve. This 60-acre Nassau County owned strip of forest tucked behind Meadowbrook Parkway is a wonderful forest for hiking, birdwatching or walking along the creek. Unfortunately, it is also overrun with trash, litter and invasive species.

To tackle these issues, we partnered with Racanelli Construction Company and the Cerebral Palsy Association of Nassau County (whose facility is located next to the preserve).

Thanks to the generosity and hard work of Racanelli, which provided its tools, resources and team, and the enthusiastic participation of Cerebral Palsy Association members and staff, the Roosevelt Preserve got the care it deserves. Together, in just a few hours, volunteers removed an astounding 120 pounds of trash from the forest and creek. The team pulled out plastic bottles, food wrappers, old clothing, cardboard and even an abandoned foam mattress. Their efforts not only restored the natural beauty of the land but also helped protect wildlife and water quality in the preserve.

While working, nearby wildlife came out to celebrate Earth Day with us. Volunteers were treated to turtles basking on logs, ducks swimming in the creek, and songbirds singing overhead. We at the Land Alliance, and evidently nature itself, are extremely thankful to Racanelli

Construction Company and the Cerebral Palsy Association members and staff for their efforts on this project.

## Volunteers Tackle Invasive Species

Every June, New York participates in Invasive Species Awareness Week (NYIASW). This event runs the first week of June and serves as a time to learn more about and participate in invasive species related activities. At the Land Alliance we are quite familiar with them as invasives are present at every one of our preserves! This year we will be holding public volunteer days during the NYIASW at three of our preserves.

On Tuesday, June 3rd, we removed the aquatic invasive myriophyllum at our Williams Ridge preserve. On June 4th and 6th we removed the invasive mile-a-minute vine at our Humes Preserve and Cushman Woods. This annual vine grows extremely fast and can quickly smother our meadows. On June 14th and 28th, we will host two additional invasive removal days at Humes and Cushman Woods led by our O'Neil stewards.







*Jericho High School Environmental Club at Cushman Woods*



*Wheatley High School Students at Wawapek Greenhouse*

## Local Schools Take Action

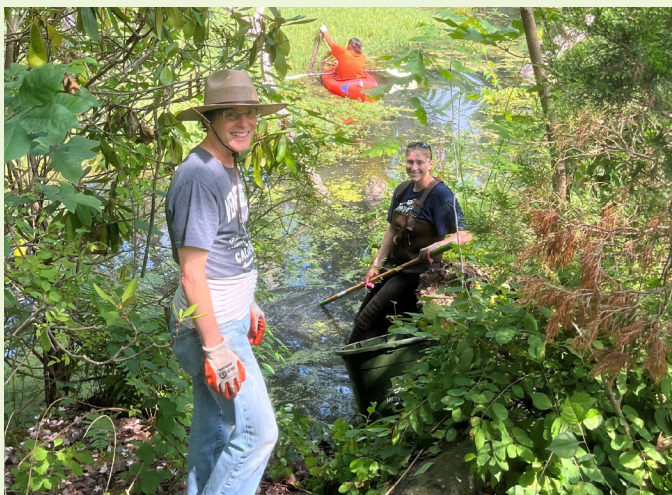
Each year, the Land Alliance is fortunate to work with dedicated student volunteers from a variety of schools and organizations across Long Island. This year, we've been joined by the FIRST Robotics Competition Team 353, The POBots, the Jericho High School Environmental Club, students from The Stony Brook School and Boy Scouts of America Troop 689.

Winter is an ideal time for vine removal before new plant growth begins, and these student groups were eager to help. Invasive vines can severely damage trees by girdling their trunks, trapping moisture that leads to rot and adding weight that may cause trees to fall. Removing them is a

simple, impactful and satisfying task for volunteers of all ages. There's nothing quite like the feeling of pulling a 30-foot vine from a tree and watching the branches bounce back into place.

These efforts are essential to the health of our forests and the safety of our trails. They also give young people a chance to connect with nature and learn how to care for their local environment. Plus, it's a fun way to spend time outdoors with friends while making a real difference.

To all the students who have come out to support our work this year, thank you. We look forward to continuing our efforts together. The trees, and all of us at the Land Alliance, appreciate you.



## Volunteer With Us!

Do you want to work outside, meet some cool people and learn about our natural world? Do you like to help others, help our wildlife and help our planet? Do you need community service hours or want to use your time in a meaningful way? If so, the Land Alliance is always looking for new volunteers.

**To learn more about our volunteer program or to sign up, visit [www.northshorelandalliance.org](http://www.northshorelandalliance.org).**



## Collaboration with Neighboring Schools



*Photo credit: Friends Academy*

This spring, the Land Alliance forged two strong partnerships with Friends Academy in Locust Valley and East Woods School in Oyster Bay to expand students' access to nature both on their campuses and beyond. As Sir David Attenborough once said, "If children don't grow up knowing about nature and appreciating it, they will not understand it, and if they don't understand it, they won't protect it." In our ecological climate, engaging the next generation is essential to repairing our relationship with nature.

At Friends, outdoor education programs for students (up to fourth grade) have long been a part of their curricula, and it shows. When talking with them, it was very clear that the seeds of a meaningful

connection with nature had already been planted.

In 2023, the Land Alliance acquired Saunders Preserve, connected to Friends learning forest through a pre-existing trail network. In March, Associate Steward Carter Rogan led Friends seventh graders on a tour through Saunders Woods. After studying disturbance and adaptation in the classroom and surveying their own campus forest, students used iPads with species identification apps to document the biodiversity at Saunders. Carter introduced them to key species and ecological concepts before letting them observe, record and experience the forest firsthand. As the Academy's Dean of Innovation, Daniel Mendel puts it: "The collaboration between Friends

Academy and the North Shore Land Alliance deeply resonates with our Quaker values of environmental stewardship and community-building. This unique partnership offers students real-world learning experiences exploring biodiversity, engaging in meaningful service, and working alongside conservation professionals, solidifying our shared commitment to protecting the earth. We are particularly excited about the potential for our students to contribute directly to the Alliance's conservation efforts, making tangible impacts on our local environment.

At a higher level, seniors at Friends are required to complete an independent service project (ISP). Three students have signed up to do their service work at Saunders Woods. Over the course of three weeks, they will work on invasive species removal, trail creation and overall preserve management.

In Oyster Bay, a similar initiative is sprouting at East Woods school. Their campus is fortunate to have dozens of acres of forest, but access remains limited. The Land Alliance will soon begin working with students and staff to create trails through their woodland, expanding usability, increasing connectivity to nearby green spaces and providing more outdoor learning opportunities.

The Land Alliance is proud to be part of this journey, ensuring that Long Island's environment is in good hands with the next generation.



## Growing in the Greenhouse

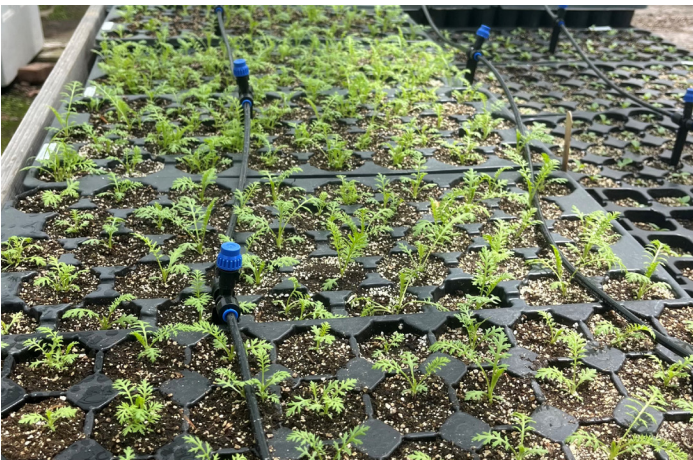


The restoration of the Wawapek greenhouse is finally complete. This is the first spring we're able to grow in the fully refurbished greenhouse. You might remember that last year, despite the ongoing construction, we were able to grow over 2,000 native plants that were used in our preserves and donated to other organizations.

2024 was a great growing year, and this year we plan to grow even more. Last fall the seeds of 25 native wildflower and grass species were sown into trays to cold stratify over the winter. Most of these seeds were selected for specific projects occurring in Land Alliance preserves. For example, we are growing Little Blue Stem and Broomsedge grasses

for the mugwort management sites in the Humes Meadow. We also have three different species of milkweed growing for a new, all milkweed demo garden that will soon be installed at Wawapek in support of our Monarch program. This year we're also growing vegetables for our community garden in Roosevelt including tomatoes, a variety of peppers, collard greens, lettuce, cabbage and herbs.

These growing efforts would not be possible without the help of our amazing volunteers who planted all the vegetable seeds and transplanted the individual seedlings from the seed starting trays into plug trays. It's a delicate job but our volunteers are up to it!





## Land Alliance Newest Trustee



**Pierre Gonthier** Pierre brings over four decades of international business leadership to the Land Alliance, as the Owner and Manager of Dalton Cooper, a globally recognized equipment export management company based in Locust Valley.

Born in Sainte-Croix, Switzerland, Pierre attended engineering school before beginning his professional career in Vienna, Austria. In 1975, he moved to New York City, where he later founded Dalton Cooper. For the past 35 years, Pierre has resided in Old Brookville, where he has been an engaged member of the local community.

Pierre currently serves on the Executive Committee of the North Shore Wildlife Sanctuary where he has been an engaged volunteer for 10+ years. He is also on the Board of the Locust Valley Cemetery and serves as Road Commissioner for the Village of Old Brookville. He and his wife, Paula Valentine Gonthier, have been married for 45 years and are proud parents of three adult children and grandparents to three young grandchildren.

With his extensive global experience, technical acumen and deep commitment to community service, Pierre brings a unique and valuable perspective to the Land Alliance.

## 2025 O'Neil Conservation Stewards

This invaluable program is made possible through the generosity of the William C. and Joyce C. O'Neil Charitable Trust and Trustees Hollis F. Russell and John C. Crabill.



### Elisa Busse

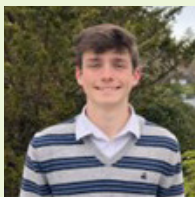
Elisa is an undergraduate student at Hofstra University working towards a degree in biology. She grew up in Glen Head, New York, and has spent much of her life enjoying the parks and nature preserves that Long Island has to offer.



**McAuley Carrol** - McAuley is a recent graduate of the University of South Carolina with a degree in biological sciences. Last summer, he worked as a Shorebird Technician with the NYS Parks Department, where he gained hands-on experience monitoring nesting sites, banding birds and collecting important field data.



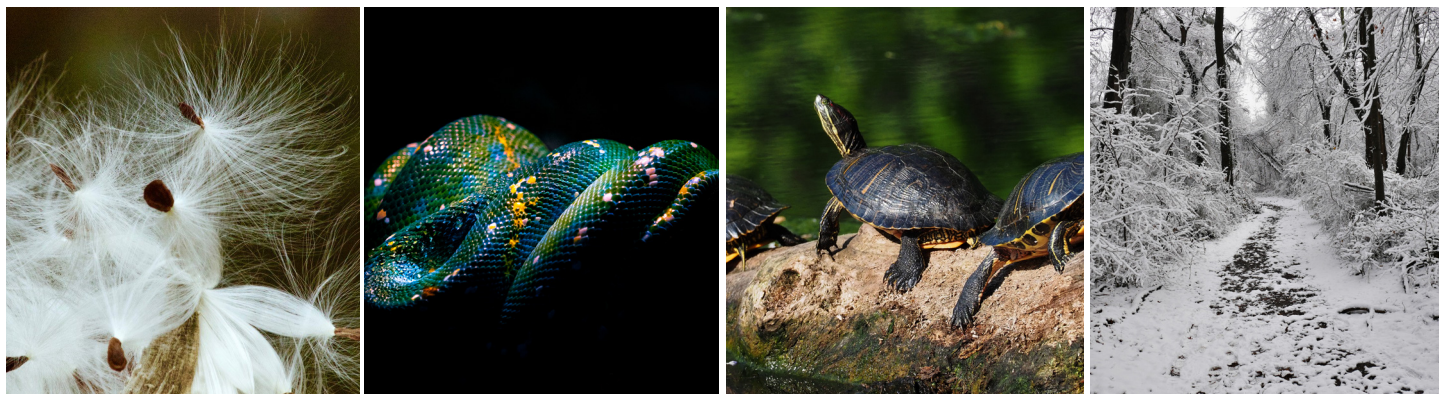
**Eileen McLaughlin** - Eileen is a recent graduate of Villanova University with a degree in Environmental Science. Her prior experience includes working on organic farms in Australia, building oyster farms on Long Island and monitoring heavy metals within streams in the Philadelphia area.



**Aidan Riley** - Aidan is currently a student at Baylor University, working towards a degree in Environmental Science. His volunteer experience includes working at local farms, removing invasive species and laying trails in Maine.



## Photography Exhibit: Discover Nature Through a New Lens



The Humes Preserve invites both companionship and solitude, a place where families gather, or individuals wander in quiet introspection. With its peaceful natural surroundings, this serene setting where art and nature intertwine invites you to see the world through a creative lens.

We're delighted to present our rotating photography exhibit in the Preserve's Welcome Hut. Every six weeks, a new artist captures the essence of the living landscape through their lens. Each artist brings a fresh perspective: some capture the delicate architecture of a single leaf, while others frame landscapes with the bold energy of

a painter's brushstroke. Some find reverence in stillness; others trace the vibrant chaos of color and movement. Together, their work reminds us that nature is never just scenery, it's a living story waiting to be seen in infinite ways.

This season, we will feature works by Jan Guga, Gary Janosick, Don Nedbalsky and Olivia Peng, with more artists to come. Join us in celebrating the power of photography to deepen our bond with the natural world one image at a time. For dates, please visit our website at [www.northshorelandalliance.org](http://www.northshorelandalliance.org).

### About the Artists

**Jan Guga** - A Sea Cliff native, Jan's passion for photography began at age eight. While serving in the U.S. Army, he documented marine life in the South China Sea. After returning home, he spent 25 years capturing the natural beauty of Long Island. His work reflects a quiet patience and deep appreciation for the rhythms of the natural world.

**Gary Janosick** - Born in Albertson and inspired by a lifelong love of art, Gary has been photographing the world around him for over 60 years. A minimalist at heart, he's drawn to the quiet poetry of old estates being reclaimed by nature. Known as Gary Longshadow for his predawn photography, he prefers the stillness of the blue hour—when the world is hushed and bathed in a soft, ethereal light.

**Don Nedbalsky** - A lifelong nature enthusiast and biology graduate of SUNY Geneseo, Don began photographing the outdoors after retiring in 2020 from a career in medical device sales. His volunteer work with North Shore Land Alliance, the LI Greenbelt Conference and Save the Great South Bay keeps him connected to Long Island's landscapes and wildlife. With a keen eye for birds, trees and the wildlife making a comeback like Eagles and River Otter, Don captures nature's quiet resilience through his lens.

**Olivia Peng** - A junior at Friends Academy, Olivia joined the Land Alliance as a volunteer photographer earlier this year. Her photography is a personal way of connecting with nature, capturing the quiet beauty of the preserves and sharing moments of stillness and wonder through her lens.



## Winter Paddle Party: An Evening of Sport, Camaraderie and Community



On a crisp winter Friday in February, the North Shore Land Alliance hosted a Paddle Tournament and Party at the Paddle Hut at Piping Rock Club. Friends gathered for an evening of lively round-robin matches, camaraderie and community, all while enjoying the fresh winter air. Guests savored a chili bar, light bites and craft cocktails around the cozy fire pit. Our silent auction, donated by generous supporters, featured fabulous items, including gourmet cheese boards, a paddle bag from We Are Poolside and native plants cultivated by our Land Alliance stewardship team.

From beginners to seasoned players, everyone was "all in" for friendly competition, with party-only guests

relaxing on plush (and warm) sofas inside the hut. Special thanks to Gussie, Piping's Paddle Pro, for expertly organizing the tournament and pairing players.

Dessert was a fireside s'mores board, enjoyed as guests watched the thrilling final match. Megan Grgas and John McMillin emerged victorious, earning the title of 2025 champions.

It was a memorable evening that connected new members with long-time supporters and reaffirmed that the outdoors nourishes the soul in all seasons. We look forward to hosting this event again next winter and hope you can join us!

With special thanks to our Paddle Event Committee: Nikki Boulukos, Julia and Dan DeRoulet, Carolina and Diego Fuschetto, Megan Grgas, Milena and D.R. Holmes.



Winners: John McMillin and Megan Grgas



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We are deeply grateful to all who contributed to the Land Alliance in 2024. Your support was instrumental in advancing our land conservation efforts and facilitating educational programs.



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# SAVE THE DATE

Annual Wine Auction & Dinner  
Location to Be Announced

**Saturday, September 27, 2025**

For more details, call 516-922-1028 or  
[info@northshorelandalliance.org](mailto:info@northshorelandalliance.org)





# NORTH SHORE LAND ALLIANCE

PO Box 658, Oyster Bay, NY  
347 Oyster Bay Road, Mill Neck, NY 11560  
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[www.northshorelandalliance.org](http://www.northshorelandalliance.org)  
[info@northshorelandalliance.org](mailto:info@northshorelandalliance.org)

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"A true conservationist is one who knows that the world is not given by their ancestors, but borrowed from their children."

- John James Audubon

## New Children's Programs

**Kids and Butterflies**  
**Wawapek Preserve, Cold Spring Harbor**

### **Wednesdays (Times TBD):**

July 30th, September 17th, October 22nd  
November 19th, March 11th and May 6th

Harness the magic of trees, insects, flowers and all that Wawapek has to offer. Be inspired by how awesome nature truly is. Each session will be both fun and educational, connecting children to one another and to the amazing world around them. The varied sessions will include activities that celebrate and explore the monarch butterfly. Session 1 (ages 3 to 5 accompanied by an adult) and Session 2 (ages 8 to 12)

**More information will be posted on our website  
at [www.northshorelandalliance.org](http://www.northshorelandalliance.org).**



Our Mission is to conserve and steward Long Island's natural and historic lands, waters and environmental resources. Through education, outreach and volunteerism, we connect people to nature and inspire a community conservation ethic.

Once you have finished reading our newsletter, please recycle again by passing it along to a friend.