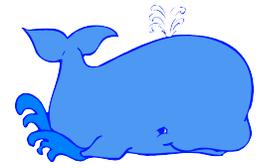


Suffolk Region PTA



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March 2021 Report

Some recent news includes the following:

On February 22, 2021, U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand visited the Farmingdale Fire Department on Long Island to announce the *PFAS Firefighter Protection Act*: a critical piece of legislation to better protect firefighters in New York and across the country from toxic exposure to PFAS chemicals. PFAS are used as an ingredient in special foam used to fight fires, called aqueous film forming foam (AFFF). The use of this foam, particularly at training facilities, exposes firefighters to PFAS. Additionally, runoff from the use of AFFF has been discovered as the source of groundwater and drinking water contamination for communities near the facilities where it is used. PFAS chemicals have been previously linked to cancer and other serious health problems. Specifically, the *PFAS Firefighter Protection Act* would ban the manufacture, importation and sale of all firefighting foam containing PFAS chemicals within two years of enactment. It also sets firm deadlines for airports for prohibiting the use of PFAS firefighting foams. Current law states that the FAA shall not require airports to use firefighting foam that contains PFAS. This legislation would prohibit its use by 2024.

The Long Island Sound Study, New York Sea Grant and Seatuck Environmental Association are running monthly educational webinars supporting local wildlife conservation, called “Community Science LI.” The series is running through July 2021 and you can find out more by clicking on the link below:

<https://seatuck.org/community-science-webinars/>

Join Citizens Campaign for the Environment, Operation SPLASH and The Nature Conservancy for a virtual forum on restoring our Western Bays on April 8th, 2021 from 12pm-1pm. The forum will review the scientific need for diverting sewage from the Western Bays, provide updates on the connection of the South Shore Water Reclamation Facility (Bay Park Sewage Plant) and Long Beach Sewage Treatment Plant to an existing ocean outfall pipe at the Cedar Creek Sewage Treatment Plant, and provide an overview of upgrades that already made to South Shore WRF. Click the link below to register:

<https://www.citizenscampaign.org/whats-new-at-cce>

On March 10, 2021, The Nature Conservancy released a new report that details how to advance clean energy development while safeguarding the places people value the most. This report includes an online mapping tool which is very state of the art. To learn more click below:

<https://www.nature.org/en-us/about-us/where-we-work/united-states/new-york/stories-in-new-york/long-island-solar-roadmap/>

So that is what I have for new news but will be continuing researching. Should you have any environmental news that you would like for me to share or look further into please reach out to me. The following items are ongoing:

School Seedling Program

While researching the NYS DEC website, I located this amazing program where a school can apply for a seedling education program. Please feel free to share this link with your schools,

<https://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/9393.html>

Schools and youth organizations can apply for tree seedlings by March 31, 2021 to obtain free trees or shrubs to be planted. This is a great way to get the kids involved in the environment and I am sure that some teachers at schools would love to be able to offer this to their students. There is still time to apply!

“Save the Great South Bay”

Save The Great South Bay Inc. is a 501(c)3 Non-Profit dedicated to the revitalization of The Great South Bay. The board members are from The South Shore, past and present, baymen, fishermen, boaters, paddleboarders, surfers, sailors, local environmentalists, civic associations, schools, marine scientists, all working together. They have several focused programs that they run including a Creek Defender Program, Habitat Restoration Program, take the “Bay Friendly Yard” pledge and advocacy for the systematic, scientifically driven approach to the bay’s management. A healthy bay means a healthy economy for The South Shore and it means preserving a public good for future generations. You can find their website at:

<https://savethegreatsouthbay.org/>

Litter From Discarded PPE Endangers Beaches & The Environment

In May 2020, it was noted that filthier beaches, clogged roadways and a dirtier environment could be the consequence of litter from used surgical gloves, face masks, sanitizing wipes and other PPE donned and doffed by everyday people to minimize coronavirus transmission. It’s not just the litter that is causing the problems. Some well- intentioned wearers and janitors are improperly discarding PPE into the recycling stream, instead of in the ordinary trash where it belongs, forcing workers at processing plants to hand-sort the potentially contaminated waste on conveyor belts, the industry says. Gloves, wipes and other items are being flushed down the toilet, instead of disposed of in the trash, clogging sewage treatment plants. Improperly discarded PPE also poses a hazard to ocean wildlife such as turtles that might mistake the items for food. Marine organisms may also get tangled in it.

Ted Timbers, a spokesman for the city’s Department of Environmental Protection, said in an email that 97% of street litter is now prevented from reaching the waterways, with a combination of screens, catch basins, brooms and other means. Timbers wrote that, “the design of the City’s drainage system — which collects stormwater — has been upgraded/added to in order to capture any litter or debris that may wash into the system.” On the Island, unlike in New York City, nearly all rainwater collects in pits around Nassau and Suffolk counties to recharge groundwater, so discarded PPE on the streets and in parking lots can clog the drains and flood nearby roads.

Steve Changaris, New York State chapter director for the National Waste & Recycling Association, said that his member plants on Long Island and beyond have seen an increase in the amount of PPE “wish-cycling,” an industry term for putting an item that is non-recyclable in the recycling bin in the hope it will be recycled. He says that it’s not just individual wearers but janitorial staff that might dump an entire container of PPE into the recycling bin incorrectly. While sorting is automated at some plants, at others, he said, human workers must pick through the items moving along on a conveyor belt. Depending on the material, the virus can remain on an item for hours or days, according to the National Institutes of Health.

I have not seen any new information since May 2020 but the pandemic continues!

Shellfish Sanctuary to Help Clean Waters

Restore New York Shellfish is a program the NYS DEC has rolled out since 2017. It is a leading program to maximize local shellfish production on Long Island and New York City, and to establish new restoration sites in strategic embayments. This effort will build upon the existing, robust private and commercial shellfish industry. This ambitious effort will help improve water quality, restore shellfish populations and biodiversity, and create new jobs and educational opportunities for more resilient coastal communities.

The Long Island Shellfish Restoration Project (LISRP) established five shellfish sanctuary sites that are to be stocked with juvenile and adult shellfish. DEC is working in collaboration with Cornell Cooperative Extension, Stony Brook University, municipalities, local businesses, and volunteer organizations to produce, plant, and monitor shellfish and water quality enhancement throughout the project. The restoration project provides a unique opportunity to obtain biological and environmental information on shellfish growth, survival and spawning success, and to monitor the effect on water quality, phytoplankton uptake and filtration and nitrogen cycling and removal. The results of the project will guide and support the success of future restoration efforts on Long Island. Sanctuary sites are located in Bellport Bay, Huntington Harbor, Shinnecock Bay, South Oyster Bay, and Hempstead Bay.

Blue-Green Algae

Harmful blue-green algae blooms (“HAB’s”) are monitored by NYS beginning May annually. Currently, there are no known locations of HAB’s.

Cyanobacteria are a naturally formed group of photosynthetic oxygen-producing bacteria that produce a range of toxins, known as cyan toxins, which are harmful to animals and humans. Health officials warn if contact occurs to rinse with clean water immediately and to seek medical attention if you have symptoms of infection. Those symptoms include: nausea, vomiting, diarrhea; skin, eye or throat irritation; or, allergic reactions and breathing difficulties.

To find the status of all fresh waters in New York State, access the state Department of Environmental Conservation website at

<https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/83310.html>

For more information on algae blooms, go to

<https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/water/drinking/bluegreenalgae/>

NYS Offshore Wind Energy

To help meet New York's nation-leading renewable energy targets, NYSERDA issues competitive solicitations for offshore wind energy and contracts with offshore wind developers to purchase offshore renewable energy certificates (ORECs). NYSERDA has executed contracts with Equinor Wind US LLC for its 816 megawatt Empire Wind Project and Sunrise Wind LLC (a joint venture of Ørsted A/S and Eversource Energy) for its 880 megawatt Sunrise Wind Project to deliver clean, affordable, renewable energy to New Yorkers. Together, these projects represent approximately 1,700 megawatts of offshore wind under contract with NYSERDA. In addition, the Long Island Power Authority (LIPA) is advancing the 130-megawatt South Fork Wind Farm, for a combined, current statewide total of more than 1,800 megawatts. Some quick facts about these projects: Empire Wind and Sunrise Wind will power more than 1 million New York homes. It will bring a combined economic impact of \$3.2 billion to upstate, downstate, and Long Island. It will invest more than \$85 million in long-term port facilities and cutting-edge technologies. It will support more than 1,600 jobs in project development, component manufacturing, installation, and operations and maintenance and directly offer well-paying careers with salaries of approximately \$100,000 per year. For more information, you can go to: <https://www.nysERDA.ny.gov/All-Programs/Programs/Offshore-Wind/Focus-Areas/NY-Offshore-Wind-Projects>

East Hampton Town Sues Over Contamination Linked to Firefighting Foam

I could not locate any updates on this lawsuit, but this is the chemical that Senator Gillibrand addressed in her legislation above. This is the information that is current:

East Hampton Town is suing one of its own villages and fire departments over the use of fire suppression foam containing perfluorinated compounds, chemical linked to reproductive and other health impacts, at its Wainscott airport and the subsequent contamination of nearby drinking wells. The town filed a lawsuit on April 13, 2020 in U.S. Eastern District Court in Central Islip seeking a court action compelling East Hampton Village, which operates East Hampton fire department, to disclose all locations where the foam was stored and used. The town is also seeking unspecified damages related to the cleanup.

In May 2020, the state Department of Environmental Conservation added a portion of the East Hampton Airport property to its Registry of Inactive Hazardous Waste Disposal Sites, a move that requires the town to investigate and remedy the contamination. That cost could total tens of millions of dollars, according to the complaint, and the town is seeking compensation from the village's insurer, American Alternative Insurance Corporation.

Aqueous film-forming foam made through 2001 can contain perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS), which studies have shown can cause reproductive, developmental, liver and other health impacts, according to the Environmental Protection Agency. The East Hampton Fire Department used the foam for training purposes and to fight fires at the airport between one and 10 times from 2007 until 2017, according to a survey filed with the DEC. The DEC in 2018 released a "site characterization report" of East Hampton Airport that found historic use and storage of firefighting foam at the site had impacted groundwater. The chemicals were detected in more than 200 private wells in nearby Wainscott, and the town undertook a multimillion-dollar project to extend water mains, bringing public water access to more than 500 homes.