

# ACCABONAC PROTECTION COMMITTEE



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Editor • Jorie Latham

## GOOD NEWS PREVAILS

by Jorie Latham

While it seems the world is shaken by more woe and worry every week, we are happy to be able to report some glad tidings in the Accabonac corner of it.

The best news to come our way in a while is the strong evidence that nitrogen levels can be reduced with a fairly simple approach that was used in the recent project at Pussy's Pond. There are actually a few things to be pleased about in terms of water quality—not that it's solved, but it is getting the right kind of attention. Look for more in Chris Ganitsch's article on the right.

Another encouraging development for water quality comes from a proposition to modify the Community Preservation Fund program to allow a portion of those monies to be spent for water-quality improvement projects. As I was recently appointed to the CPF Advisory Board (quite an honor—and a great group to work with), you'll find my name on that article.

We do continue to do battle on several fronts, however. DEC closures for shellfishing in areas of Accabonac Creek are of increasing concern, which Cile Downs covers in her piece. Plus, we continue to seek an end to the use of methoprene for mosquito control, while a new (and noisy) neighbor nuisance issue has come to the forefront, a subject Nick Bryan examines thoroughly as we mount a new challenge to limit use of leaf blowers.

Both of these are issues that will be covered in the upcoming PRFCT EARTH DAY on April 23.

About the APC website... I did mention some bugs last year, right? OK, now we're launching an even *NEWER! MORE IMPROVED!* site that will actually be interactive, so when new members want to join or current members want to find out the latest information, they can! And it's so pretty! Check it out at [accabonac.org](http://accabonac.org). And we have a simpler email address too — [accabonacprotection@gmail.com](mailto:accabonacprotection@gmail.com) — send us a note.

As ever, there are lots of new and ongoing stories here for you to explore. Dig in!!

## PRIORITY — HEALTHIER WATERS!

by Chris Ganitsch

There is good news on the water quality front!

In our own backyard, the Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE), in cooperation with the Town, has



completed a nitrogen mitigation project in Pussy's Pond, which drains directly into Accabonac Harbor. The best news? The permeable, reactive test mats, placed at scientifically determined groundwater flow areas, decreased nitrogen by 85%! An expanded but similar project, combined with a vegetative mitigation project, are planned for the pond.

In addition, APC is working to partner with CCE and the Town in developing a similar pilot project in another suitable area of the Harbor.

In East Hampton, the Wastewater Management Plan Advisory Committee made their recommendations to the Town Board in December. The committee recommended acceptance of the Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan for East Hampton prepared by Lombardo Associates, Inc. and submitted in September 2014 (see it at [EHWaterRestore.com](http://EHWaterRestore.com)), but recognizing that additions and refinements to the plan may be necessary prior to formulating and executing future water-quality projects.

The advisory committee's additional recommendations included the establishment of long-term town wide surface water testing and monitoring, the development of detailed individual watershed plans, the support for public/private partnerships coordinated through the town, regulating compliance for the 2005 federal law requiring the removal of large-capacity cesspools and supporting a town-wide drinking-water testing program.

The committee also supported the development of education and outreach programs, the review and refinement of town code regarding sanitary system regulations and the formation of watershed protection improvement districts. It recognized that the singular important issue of upgrading individual residential septs and cesspools will require much discussion moving forward, as denitrifying systems currently in the test phase will hopefully be approved by Suffolk County Department of Health later this year. In recognition of the complexity of the water quality issue, the committee recommended that the Town Board form a Water Quality Advisory Committee moving forward.

The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and the Long Island Regional Planning Committee, in partnership with numerous local governments, environmental groups and other stakeholders, are working to develop a Long Island Nitrogen Action Plan (LINAP). Existing scientific and geographic data will be consolidated and data gaps identified, with the goal to develop near- and long-term strategies to reduce nitrogen pollution in our surface and ground waters. One of many exciting plans of LINAP is to make data and research projects accessible to the public. A central information resource location will be a welcome move forward.

On a regional level, an Eastern Suffolk County LINAP "scoping meeting" was held in Riverhead on February 2. A number of representatives from local and regional organizations (including APC) presented topics that should not be overlooked when formulating nitrogen remediation plans for the East End.

All are focused on the need to take ACTION. Let's work to keep it that way.

## CPF EXTENDED AND EXPANDED

by Jorie Latham

Thanks to our forward-thinking representatives in the state legislature, the Community Preservation Fund now can be extended to 2050 (it's currently set to expire in 2030). Additionally, a portion of the funds collected with this 2% tax on real estate transfers can be used for specific water-quality projects.

Senator Ken LaValle and Assemblyman Fred Thiele have presented Bill Number: S5324, which passed

into law (unanimously!) in December. It adds twenty years to the life of CPF and allows the town boards within the Peconic Bay region (East Hampton, Riverhead, Shelter Island, Southampton and Southold) to utilize a maximum of 20% of the CPF to finance the implementation of water-quality improvement projects, including wastewater treatment, aquatic habitat restoration and pollution prevention. In addition, CPF funds could be used to match any federal, state, county or other funds up to a maximum of 10% of water-quality improvement funding for the operation of the Peconic Bay National Estuary Program (PEP).

Any of the towns that want to make use of the provisions in the bill must implement a local law subject to a mandatory referendum pursuant to municipal home rule law. **WATCH FOR IT AND SUPPORT IT ON THE BALLOT IN NOVEMBER!**

Begun in 1999, the Peconic Bay Community Preservation Fund (CPF) has raised over \$1 billion to protect over 10,000 acres of land on the East End for open space, farmland, historic preservation and recreational purposes. While there is understandable concern about altering this effective tool for environmental well-being, we believe every care will be taken to ensure that the public is informed of any plans to use CPF funds for water quality projects. We wholeheartedly agree with the conclusion of the bill itself:

"The East End, surrounded entirely by water, is a community whose history, economy and character is dependent upon clean water for recreation, tourism and shellfishing. Maintaining the ecological health of local bays is just as crucial to protecting the character of the community as preserving open space has been."

## A PRFCT EARTH DAY!

We hope you'll join us Saturday, April 23, to experience a PRFCT Earth Day. We are co-producing this special event with the Perfect Earth Project. Who is that, you ask? Here's a prfct description (from their website — [perfectearthproject.org](http://perfectearthproject.org)):

*Founded in 2013, The Perfect Earth Project (PEP) is a rapidly expanding non-profit organization promoting*



*toxin-free land management around the world. PEP operates from offices in East Hampton, New York. We raise consciousness about the dangers of synthetic, toxic, lawn and garden chemicals to humans and the environment, and educate homeowners and professionals in nature-based techniques that provide beautiful, safe results.*

*We look to creating a future when it can be taken for granted that land is managed without toxins and is safe for people, pets and the environment. Toxin-free lands support biodiversity and carbon capture and are a critical component in climate change resiliency. Toxin-free land management engages decision makers and practitioners in positive environmental learning experiences and inspires action, right in their own front yards. We see the landscape industry as a potential “army” of environmental land stewards offering career opportunities that are currently undervalued.*

Our PRFCT Earth Day will begin at 9:30 a.m. at the Springs Firehouse, with light refreshments. A fascinating panel of experts will discuss the many ways toxins impact our beloved Accabonac — and what can be done (and is being done) to fix that.

Afterward, we'll regroup at Ashawagh Hall's lawn, where there'll be demonstrations of brewing compost tea, using a moisture meter, a mulching mower demonstration and more! Music, games, merchandise and food booths will be on hand.

By happy coincidence, the art show at Ashawagh that weekend, eARTH DAY Art & Design, will add to the festivities nicely.

Help us make it truly perfect by being there!

## **SHELLFISH CLOSURES PLAGUE ACCABONAC**

*by Cile Downs*

Experts call our Accabonac Creek “impaired” and for good reason: the coliform contamination is increasing. In October\*, areas closed to shellfishing, either seasonally or permanently, became more extensive. The DEC tests for coliform fairly frequently and determines closings based on the data. We wondered if the DNA of the samples was also tested, to indicate whether the source was human (from failing septics) or animal (from runoff of ditches and roads). The health threat is generally higher from human waste as it can carry hepatitis.

According to Kim Shaw, East Hampton's director of Natural Resources, DNA is not the important issue. She explained that the DEC tests are most often done after major storm events, when runoff increases the coliform count—but temporarily. She maintains that closures should not be based on data gathered only after heavy precipitation, because normal counts are not as high. Unlike more-developed areas where a high coliform count is more consistent, it is variable

here—and that should be taken into consideration.

The two areas of the creek now closed year round include the area west of Shipyard Lane, and the southeast portion behind lower Louse Point Road.

*\*The state Department of Environmental Conservation's Shellfisheries Section has downgraded approximately 20 acres of bottomland in Accabonac Harbor in Springs from seasonally uncertified to uncertified year-round, meaning that the harvesting of shellfish is prohibited. The areas were previously uncertified from May 1 through November 30 — from the East Hampton Star*

## **THIRD APC ART SHOW HONORED WORK OF RALPH CARPENTIER**

*by Vay David*

Accabonac Protection Committee's third IMAGES OF ACCABONAC presented a special showing of art by renowned local artist, Ralph Carpentier, sadly lost to us this past February. Ralph's work was displayed in a special section, along with a full show featuring many artists' visions of the beauty of Accabonac Creek and its surroundings. The show was held last October 31 and November 1 at Ashawagh Hall.

The 2015 show was, once again, handsomely curated by artists' representative Pamela Williams — brava, Pamela!



*Gerard Park to Barnes Hole, by Ralph Carpentier*

Exhibiting artists were on hand to welcome guests at an opening reception on Saturday. All artwork was for sale and a portion of the proceeds benefitted APC.

APC thanks all of the artists who participated and encourages any artists interested in taking part in our next IMAGES OF ACCABONAC, planned for 2017, to contact us through our email address: [accabonacprotection@gmail.com](mailto:accabonacprotection@gmail.com), so we can include you in our next invitation to exhibit.

# LEAF BLOWERS...

## Unhealthy for people and plants

by Nicholas Bryan

Are you bothered by noise and pollution from gas-powered leaf blowers? You're not alone. According to The Quiet Communities Hamptons website "... the quality of life in the Hamptons is being degraded by the widespread use of leaf blowers and commercial gas-powered maintenance equipment. There's no escaping the high-pitched, whining drone of leaf blowers; it penetrates walls and windows and disrupts entire neighborhoods. And furthermore, they pollute our air.... Things don't have to be this way. We can preserve our environment, our health, and our quality of life by learning and taking action."

Action is in fact being taken in many communities. Santa Monica, CA has banned leaf blowers based on a report from its Office of Sustainability and Environment, highlighted below.

### • Health Risks

All leaf blowers create unnecessary noise and air pollution, endangering you and the community. Gas-powered leaf blowers pose multiple health threats, including spreading airborne particles, provoking asthma and other respiratory diseases and generating potential pollutants like ozone, carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides and hydrocarbons. Hearing damage and eye injuries from debris propelled by blowers are also cited.

### • Bad Air

Gas blowers blow herbicides, pesticides and fecal contaminants from the ground at a rate of 150 miles per hour, especially troubling asthmatics and allergy sufferers. Plus, a gas blower generates as much tailpipe emissions in an hour as an automobile driving 100 miles, but a car emits all that pollution over a big stretch of road, not in one yard.

### • Too Loud

A gas-powered leaf blower creates up to 70 decibels of nerve-racking noise at 50 feet, disturbing entire neighborhoods. Noise pollution from blowers also scares wildlife, especially birds. But those who operate leaf blowers at close range for many hours each working day are at greatest risk of hearing loss.

For professional landscapers, the health of plants and workers who tend them should make gas blowers a nonstarter. The following article from *DrWeil.com*, was written by Winifred Rosen, guest commentator (and long-time local landscaper/gardener).

*Subjecting everything at ground level to blasts of hot, dry, hurricane-force winds would be ill-advised at any time, since it cannot fail to injure plants and open pathways for pests and disease.... In the summer, though, when the air is hot and the ground is dry and the plants are dehydrated and badly stressed to begin with, subjecting them to tornadic blasts of hot, dry air is, nonsensical, to put it kindly.*



*Leaf blowers literally scour the earth: stripping off topsoil, desiccating roots, and killing vital soil-dwelling organisms, while, at the same time, propelling into the air clouds of dirt, dust and dangerous contaminants: volatile compounds, mold and fungal spores, weed seeds, insect eggs, pollen, molecules of the myriads of toxic chemicals people spray and sprinkle on their gardens, trees and lawns, not to mention bird and rodent feces, and more.*

My neighbor in Springs—a wonderful person—has a lawn contractor who sometimes uses two gas leaf blowers simultaneously. He asks the contractor to do lawn care during the week and is incensed when he hears neighbors' leaf blowers operating on weekends. (I don't own a leaf blower. I mulch some leaves and move others into the small wooded area on my property.) When asked, my neighbor said he would approve a regulation that limits the use of leaf blowers and bans them completely during the summer months when there are really no leaves to blow.

As I researched this article, I found no facts in favor of these machines. None of the cities that have banned blowers (including California's Berkeley, Beverly Hills, Carmel, Los Angeles, Malibu and Palo Alto; Lincoln, MA and Rye, NY) show any evidence of resulting tax increases or financial hardship to landscapers.

In our own backyard, the Sag Harbor village board has proposed limiting hours and days when commercial leaf blowers can be operated. Southampton's noise code includes a ban on the use of leaf blowers from Memorial Day to Labor Day; it is the only town in the Hamptons that has such a ban... so far.

In East Hampton, there was a proposal to deal with leaf blowers back in 2013. The proposal, Councilwoman Sylvia Overby said, was "difficult to understand and implement, so we really do have to go back to the drawing board. The level of noise in our society has gotten worse," she added. "I think it is disturbing people's quiet enjoyment of their property. I would welcome hearing from people and seeing a petition." The Ban the Blowers website includes a link to an online petition, at the website [change.org](http://change.org), to ask the town to ban leaf blowers.

It's time for the citizens of East Hampton to develop solutions that fit our town. Ask the Town Board to address the issue. We'll all be better off when this is accomplished and we'll leave a healthier and quieter community for our children.

# ARTIST AND FRIEND RALPH CARPENTIER 1929-2016

by Arlene Coulter



Ralph Carpentier was a “Man for All Seasons.” We of APC like to claim him as our own because we all loved him; but he was loved — and returned that love — wherever he walked. He was one of APC’s early members but did so much for our town, with so many East Hampton organizations, that we have to share him.

In 1955, Ralph moved to East Hampton; he was a young man back from the Korean War and newly married. He had done undergrad and graduate studies in art at NYU, and when offered a job teaching art at East Hampton High School, he and Horty relocated and fell in love with the world of nature here.

Then he proceeded to design and direct the Marine Museum; be a founding member of the Artists Alliance; function as Executive Director of the Historical Society; teach art; and serve on the Architectural Review Board, APC’s steering committee and as a East Hampton Town Trustee. And paint. And paint.

The thing about Ralph — you never learned from him about all he had done — you simply heard, wherever you went, that “Oh, yes, Ralph did that for us.”

And then, we will always have his paintings, his beautiful testament to our world. APC was proud to feature Ralph’s work at our IMAGES OF ACCABONAC show this past October. Thank you Ralph.

Editor’s Note: *Find wonderful, more extensive stories about Ralph on Dan’s Papers website, the 27East website and others—just Google Ralph Carpentier.*



*Two boats approaching Louse Point*

ACCABONAC PROTECTION COMMITTEE



## 2016 Calendar of Events

### PRFCT EARTH DAY

Cosponsored with Perfect Earth Project

Saturday, April 23

9:30AM • Springs Firehouse • 179 Fort Pond Blvd.

Expert advice on keeping toxins out of your yard  
and out of our water.

Noon - 2PM • Ashawagh Hall Lawn • Springs Fireplace Road

Good Practice Demonstrations • Food • Music

### FISHERMAN'S FAIR

Saturday, August 13 • 10AM-3PM

Come play the APC game!

### ANNUAL PARTY

Sunday, September 11 • 3-5PM

At Cile Downs' house

956 Springs Fireplace Road

### PLEASE HELP IF YOU CAN

While our membership is free, our operations are not. APC does its best to keep expenses to a minimum, and, as an all-volunteer organization, time dictates that we use our energies and resources for other purposes than fund-raising. Please help us continue our special focus on the important issues facing Accabonac by sending along whatever contributions you can to:

Accabonac Protection Committee,

956 Springs Fireplace Road, East Hampton NY 11937.

Thank you in advance for your generosity and support of our efforts!

Monthly meetings are usually held at 9 am the first Monday of each month; you'd be welcome; call us for locations.

**WE'VE CHANGED OUR PHONE NUMBER AND EMAIL ADDRESS:**

**631-903-9598**

**[accabonacprotection@gmail.com](mailto:accabonacprotection@gmail.com)**

Send us an email if you'd like to receive your  
next newsletter by email