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KEEP ON "KEEPING BONAC BEAUTIFUL"

Our annual Springs Spring Cleaning will
convene at the Springs General Store on
Saturday May 16 at 10am for maps, bags
and assignments to various locations in
Springs. This is always a great family,
friends and community event, so bring your
gloves and everyone you can (and yes,
thanks to Kristi, once again there will be a
free lunch!)

ACCABONAC PROTECTION COMMITTEE



956 Springs Fireplace Road
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ACCABONAC PROTECTION COMMITTEE



Newsletter • Volume 19

Spring 2009

Editor • Jorie Latham

LAND PRESERVATION ON ACCABONAC HARBOR

by Nancy Kane

When I first moved to Springs in 1988, I occasionally volunteered at The Nature Conservancy offices which at the time were located upstairs in the building that houses the Springs Library. Views were more open than they are today, and Accabonac Harbor was very visible from those offices. It is not surprising that preservation of the harbor was one of the Conservancy's goals. Among their earliest acquisitions were the Merrill Lake Sanctuary and Kaplan Meadows. The Conservancy is still a friend of Accabonac Harbor.

More recent acquisitions have been mostly funded with money from the East Hampton Community Preservation Fund. Significant purchases have included the Dodge (*see photo*) and Fillipelli properties on the west side of the harbor, bought in partnership with Suffolk County. Smaller lots on Gerard and several parcels to the north of the Pollack Krasner House have also been preserved within the last year or two by the Town alone.

Ever since it was established in 1985, the



Recently acquired Dodge property

Photo by Doug Massa

Accabonac Protection Committee has lobbied for land preservation. We have been fortunate to have the Conservancy and the Peconic Land Trust in our corner, and the Town Board has been very diligent in giving approval for important appropriations.

Recently we have been concerned about development of the Potter property just up the road from the Library, on Springs Fireplace. The proposed house would loom over the harbor and the Pollack Krasner House just to the north. The size of the building seems to be completely inappropriate for the Springs Historic District and also for the harbor, which has recently been designated as a Scenic Area of Statewide Significance. The Town has pledged half the amount needed for preservation, and the owners of the Potter lot have accepted the offer subject to private fundraising of the other half by March 31, 2010. There is less money in the preservation fund than there has been in past years and continued diligence is needed. The APC welcomes your suggestions and support.

REVETMENT . . . OR NOT

by Margo Hardy

Permission for a 260-foot revetment in front of the two properties immediately at the southeast end of Gerard Drive's second causeway was requested by the owners at a December hearing before the ZBA. The proposed revetment would continue the line of rocks and concrete chunks dumped over time by the Highway Department along the Gardiners Bay side in front of an old wood bulkhead to protect the causeway road. APC submitted testimony recommending denial on the basis that to allow an exception to the recently passed town code, based on the LWRP (Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan), would create "a precedent that could unleash a domino effect of other similar requests."

The LWRP recommends designating almost all of the shoreline north of the causeway as eligible for construction or repair of some protective structures, in recognition that most of that area for several

miles is already hardened with wood bulkheads or stone rip-rap or revetments. (Worse, there are more than 20 perpendicular structures: wood, cement, or rock groins and jetties between Kings Point and Gerard Point, blocking the normal littoral flow of sand and cobble.) The un-hardened shoreline south of the causeway is designated as natural, and hardening structures are prohibited, except in emergency situations. While town planners acknowledged that hardening up-littoral, or up-current, has contributed to erosion in front of the properties in question, they also stated that the same effect could be expected to continue, damaging properties to the south as a result of new hardening. They recommended denial.

During the hearing, it was argued that if some sort of revetment* is not built at the end of the causeway the shoreline will continue to retreat to the roadway. There is truth in that contention. However, we question whether this should be dealt with by private landowners rather than the Town. The shore dilemma is a knotty one: do nothing, replenish, or harden; APC continues to advocate natural solutions—replenishment and restoration—measures like the replacement of dredged material up-drift on the open beaches. However, it is hoped that further study of these issues will produce better solutions that will be fair and effective. In the meantime, we need to allow our LWRP to guide such decisions.

Of all the types of shore hardening structures, a properly designed revetment is probably the least damaging. Vertical seawalls and bulkheads reflect wave energy and cause ever-deepening scour in front of them; groins and jetties, which can be wooden or rock and are built perpendicular to the shore, prevent the natural littoral, or along-shore, transport of beach material. A gently sloping, rough-faced revetment absorbs considerable wave energy as the water slides rather than bounces off it.*

***See *Waves and Beaches*, by Willard Bascom and *The Beaches are Moving*, by Wallace Kaufman and Orrin H. Pilkey, Jr.*

THE BAYKEEPER'S REPORT

by Cile Downs

We feel a debt of gratitude to Kevin McAllister, the Peconic Baykeeper. Without his watchful eye on dozens, even hundreds, of sources of data and his reports on the condition of the bays and estuaries, we might now be completely in the dark about some very alarming trends. If you receive *Baywatch*, the Baykeeper's publication, or if you noticed the review of it that recently appeared in *Newsday*, you know that the current L.I. Bay Health Report is pretty bad. Grades are given in ten different categories*; only

three rise so far as a "C", four receive a "D" and three earn a disgraceful "F".

Of particular interest to APC is the report on eelgrass. We knew it had vanished in Accabonac but now, according to studies up until 2006, it has also disappeared from Three Mile Harbor. Of course, there went the scallops. We have heard from expert Chris Pickerell that there has been some success with eelgrass restoration in the Peconic Bays, but also that replanting has not worked in Accabonac. Until conditions allow eelgrass to thrive, it will be useless to hope for a return of the scallop.

In two categories where remediation is urgent, namely Nitrogen levels (which may cause algal blooms) and Bacterial contamination, there has been either no improvement or actual decline. Storm water runoff is considered responsible for the bacterial levels that trigger shellfish bed closings. The APC has persistently lobbied for improvement in Town handling of storm water, to no avail. Unfortunately, the pricey installations we now have, have been miserable failures.

Perhaps the most heartbreaking report of all is the one on the decline of winter flounder, more than 99% since 1988. There is debate about closing the fishery. Under present circumstances, only by giving the stocks a rest can we hope for a recovery. Otherwise we will have to accept that flounder has gone the way of the cod, and no one thinks the cod will ever come back. They were fished to death.

The *Newsday* article lays a great deal of blame upon shore-hardening structures; their destructive potential, not only for down-littoral shorelines but for the whole eco-systems they replace, is well-known. But politicians always fear to anger property-owners. *Newsday* goes out on a limb on this one: they say "the state and towns must work to slow this trend."

**Graded categories: Eelgrass, Shoreline hardening, South shore tributaries, Winter flounder, Peconic Bay finfish, Hard clams, Bay scallops, Bacteria, Harmful algal blooms, and Nitrogen levels*

LEAVE THE LEAVES!

by Arlene Coulter

Are you concerned about the Town's budget and the environment? We can help both. Let's get together to convince the Town that they shouldn't pick up leaves at curbside any longer. They're too valuable for us to give away and the Town is spending too much to take them from us.

Using your leaves by composting is a very simple procedure. The easiest way is to make a rectangular pile of leaves on top of the ground in a secluded and shaded part of your yard. You can

wet them down some to hold them until they compact. If you prefer, and your property is edged by woods, just toss the leaves into the woods, in a fairly even layer—not too deep. Leave them and they'll become leaf mold by the next fall, even without turning. Partially rotted leaves, known as leaf mold, become natural humus: food for our soil. If you want a more organized pile, make an enclosure from inexpensive wire fencing. Encircle your composting leaves to keep them contained. You can also mow the leaves which have fallen on your lawn to shred them and leave a light coating of them on the lawn as nutrient. Not too many if you have a lot of oak leaves, because they're acid. You can find lots more ideas on the internet by googling: composting leaves.

LONG LIVE ACCABONAC!

by Cile Downs

Under this title, APC will soon present a series of informational and, we hope, entertaining video programs in collaboration with LTV, our local access station. The first program, *Invaders In Paradise*, deals with invasive plants, introduced accidentally or intentionally, multiplying out of control and pushing some native species toward extinction. Only time will tell what local growth will permanently succumb; meanwhile, it is well worth doing all we can to resist the attack.

Examples of both “evil alien” and “good native” plants are shown up close and in their usual surroundings to make identification easier. Appropriate eradication techniques are also demonstrated.

We'll keep our members posted about showings on East Hampton LTV. In addition, we'll have copies ready to take the show on the road to other organizations such as garden clubs or environmental groups.

The next program is designed to complement a book: *Salt Marsh, A Natural & Unnatural History*, due out this summer, written by our friend Dr. Judy Weis, a marine zoologist. Our show will feature plants and animals found in our own Accabonac area with commentary by Judy herself.

If all goes well, a third program will focus on the coastlines of the Town, particularly those around Accabonac. It should be undertaken this summer for broadcast in the fall. We invite suggestions for future shows. Anyone interested in helping to underwrite them will be enthusiastically welcomed!

A FAB FORUM

by Jorie Latham

“Accabonac: What Have We Lost? What Can We Save?”, APC's second public forum on the state of the Creek, was held at the Firehouse on April 13. A showing of the beautiful video “Accabonac Harbor” by Alec Hirschfeld, was followed by a panel of experts who covered a range of topics.

Arnold Leo, longtime secretary of the Baymen's Association and current EH Town consultant on commercial fisheries, described the moving of the channel back in the 1950's. **Kevin McAllister**, the Peconic Baykeeper, spoke about runoff and vector control. **Larry Penny**, Director of EH Dept. of Natural Resources, discussed the value of restoring the Barbara Hale Refuge to a meadow. **Mike Bottini**, author and environmental consultant, addressed ground water and public water issues. **Marian Lindberg**, of The Nature Conservancy, explained the process and value of Accabonac being listed as a Scenic Area of Statewide Significance.

It was gratifying to be able to put together such a stellar group of experts, even more that they were so willing to give time and attention to Accabonac, and they gave such impressive presentations! LTV taped and played it frequently so that all East Hampton viewers could see it, see it again, or find out about us for first time.

We were also thrilled at the event to unveil our new poster, by Ralph Carpentier (as reported in Joy Anne Dixon's article).

Very well attended, the forum was further augmented with spectacular surprise refreshments thanks to Bob Davis and Fred Overton of the Springs Fire Department who harvested, opened and chowdered (two ways!) a bounty of delicious Accabonac clams.



BETTY FRANNEY

It was with great sorrow that we gathered in Green River Cemetery on June 27 to say our farewells to Betty Franey, one of the founders of APC, and one of the staunchest, most dedicated of its members. As fond memories were recounted, what stood out was not just what Betty did but how she did it. Words that come to mind are gracious, generous, classy, wise, and devoted. No fuss, no fanfare, no complaints; she just took care of what needed to be done whether it was taking minutes, providing Franey family delicacies for events, or signing in guests. She was a great lady, and a great friend and we miss her.

At our annual party, her children, Jacques, Diane and Claudia accepted the Friend of the Creek Award on her behalf. Thanks to all those who made generous contributions in her memory. We are deeply grateful to her wonderful family (many of whom we are happy to count as neighbors) who chose APC as recipient of these memorial gifts.



RALPH CARPENTIER, APPROACHING RAIN, LOUSE POINT, © 2005, OIL ON LINEN

GARY MAMAY - PHOTO

ACCABONAC PROTECTION COMMITTEE

Ralph Carpentier

OUR NEW POSTER

by Joy Anne Dixon

Ralph Carpentier, long-time member of the steering committee and renowned artist, has contributed the use of his painting “Approaching Rain, Louse Point” as a new poster for APC. The original, in oil on linen, shows fishermen in Accabonac, preparing their boats for a coming storm. The poster reproduction has turned out beautifully and can be purchased through APC for \$20 unsigned or \$30 signed by Ralph. Call 631 324-2435 to purchase one (or more!)



Different Points of View: We hope to persuade the DEC to permit the Town to restore the Barbara Hale Refuge (on right) to a meadow (as seen on left). These photos were taken either side of the same cedar tree along the boundary between a neighboring access which is mowed annually and the refuge which has been allowed to grow up into brush and trees.

Photos by Jorie Latham