

Honoring a Half-Century of Conservation on the North Fork

This year marks our 50th anniversary, and we are proud indeed to celebrate all that North Fork Audubon Society has accomplished in partnership with members, our board, partners, and elected officials. NFAS started in 1971 with a mission of connecting people to nature. Today, we're a trusted leader in conserving places on the North Fork that birds and our communities need.

We've achieved some remarkable things in partnership with our members since 1971. Here are just a few of the them:

- * Honoring Roy Latham by dedicating his name to our nature center at Inlet County Park.
- * Promoting community science through involvement in Audubon's bird counts.
- * Monitoring nesting shorebirds, like Piping Plovers, at Orient Beach State Park.
- * Advancing policy in Albany to protect crucial habitat around Plum Island.
- * Building a half-century of partnerships to achieve our education and conservation goals.
- * Encouraging homeowners to plant native species that benefit birds and other wildlife.



We are excited to celebrate our 50th anniversary and to continue working with members like you to see what the next 50 years bring. Your donations will help us continue to protect and preserve the natural beauty of the North Fork. Please [click here](#) to make a gift today to your local Audubon chapter, North Fork Audubon Society.

Thank you for all that you do to support our organization, and please be healthy and safe.

Peggy Lauber
NFAS President

Annual Pre-Order Native Plant Sale

Pickup at the Roy Latham Nature Center at Inlet Pond County Park

Memorial Day Weekend 2021

Saturday, May 28 & Sunday, May 29

More info to follow!



Programs held at Red House or Inlet Pond Suffolk County Park are co-sponsored by County Executive Steve Bellone and Suffolk County Parks.



President's Message



As we celebrate fifty years as a local chapter of National Audubon, I'd like to pay tribute to our outgoing president who has been with us for more than ten of those years, Debbie O'Kane.

A few years ago, Debbie had the vision to rename our headquarters at Inlet Pond County Park, formerly known as The Red House, to The Roy Latham Nature Center, to honor the beloved naturalist from Orient who contributed greatly to our local natural history. Debbie sought permission from Latham family members, as well as Suffolk County, to make this happen. Beyond naming the building, her goal has been to make this a true and vibrant nature center.

Debbie encouraged one of our new board members, Robin Simmen and her wonderful Master Gardener volunteers to design and plant the beautiful pollinator rain garden which now graces the entrance to our Nature Center.

Her advocacy for plastic bag reduction was a particular passion. Debbie worked diligently along with fellow board member Gwynn Schroeder to educate the community about the need for this. Ultimately New York State banned single-use plastic bags altogether last year. This surely would not have happened without local action and education. In addition, educating the community about sustainable landscaping and lawn care and limiting the need for pesticides have all been important initiatives under Debbie's leadership.

But beyond these exciting accomplishments there were the endless hours of not-so-exciting yet necessary work to keep our chapter going--paperwork, phone calls, emails and meetings, the mundane duties that must be performed by the president of a local Audubon chapter residing in a County-owned property. For all this, we extend our heartfelt thanks to Debbie.

There have been several changes at NFAS this past year. In addition to Debbie moving from Chapter President to Treasurer, Gwynn has resumed her position as Vice-President. An invaluable asset to NFAS, Gwynn has helped us over the years with membership, advocacy and even as temporary Treasurer, when Bernadette Deerkoski needed to step down due to health issues. Thanks go to Bernadette, and to former Board members Bill White and Ann Heller for their service. We welcomed two new Board members in January, Cassie Kanz and Master Gardener Ellen Birenbaum, who are bringing new energy and enthusiasm to our ranks.

In 2020 we said goodbye to Tom Damiani, who holds the record for service at NFAS – 25+ years! He was a Board member for decades, then staff member overseeing the Nature Center and trails at Inlet Pond Park. But Tom is so much more to us, a beloved and respected local birder who led “Tuesdays with Tom” bird walks year-round, and who entertained us at our holiday gatherings with his musical performances and original “Jepbirby” team competitions.



Rick at Dragonfly Day Festival

We also said goodbye to Board member Rick Kedenburg. Rick was generally quiet and thoughtful, but never hesitated to speak his mind when an issue was important to him. He could always be counted on to volunteer wherever needed, but his “specialty” was leading bird walks and writing about nature, both of which he continues to do. Rick is beloved and respected for his knowledge of birds and all creatures, flora and fauna, and a mentor to me personally. Both Rick and Tom will be dearly missed on our Board.

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Let's Celebrate with a Native Songscape

by Robin Simmen, Chair, NFAS Landscape Committee

The natural landscape is transforming right before our eyes. A hundred years ago, open farmland surrounded a red house now known as the Roy Latham Nature Center in Inlet Pond County Park. Over time, locust trees—not native to the North Fork but brought here for their sturdy lumber—spread quickly across its abandoned farm fields. Indigenous cat briars and brambles, which like disturbed soil, found niches beneath the new tree canopy, alongside such non-native invaders as mugwort, oriental bittersweet, privet, honeysuckle, and autumn olive. A few years ago, a new thug appeared: mile-a-minute weed, an annual plant that rapidly overgrows everything and smothers the understory.

Today the invasive species at Inlet Pond County Park dominate the forest that trails down to the beach. Hiking through this recent greenery, we may not notice the loss of native habitat—but the birds, insects, and other wildlife do. Regardless of where they are in the food chain, they depend on the native plants they evolved with for food; without these, many species are experiencing deep declines and may disappear completely. In fact, the juicy caterpillars and insects that birds devour—and are a vital part of diverse, healthy ecosystems—sometimes eat only one or two species of plants native to this area.

Last December, Suffolk County began clearing a quarter-acre slope of woods west of the Nature Center because mile-a-minute weed threatened to overwhelm it. This open space gives North Fork Audubon Society the opportunity to create beautiful, native-plant habitat for birds, turtles, butterflies, moths, rabbits, bees, and other wildlife living in the park. Like the rain garden planted in front of the Nature Center, we envision this as a multi-year landscape project.



Board members Robin Simmen and Ellen Birenbaum survey the project area after it was cleared by Suffolk County Parks

Our goal is transforming this gentle hill into a “Native Songscape” planted with grasses and perennials, and sustained by rainfall, occasional mowing, and selective weeding to keep woody succession at bay. Little bluestem and pink muhly grasses, goldenrods and beebalms are among the many natives we’ll plant to support hummingbirds, orioles, thrushes, cardinals, woodpeckers, nuthatches, waxwings, wood warblers and more species of birds we expect to see there. Because this clearing in the forest is relatively small, we hesitate to call it a meadow, and we’ll be flexible with future plantings there, which could include berrying shrubs and small trees around the perimeter. Eventually, we imagine the Native Songscape as being open for the public to walk along mowed paths, past drifts of native

grasses and blooming wildflowers.

Our first task is to finish clearing the slope of tree stumps and woody debris from invasive plants, which should be done soon. Then later this spring, we’d like to stabilize the soil bed by hand weeding mile-a-minute and other invasive weeds as they emerge. After that we’ll seed the slope with a mix of cover crop and bird-friendly native grasses/perennials to crowd out as much weed resurgence as possible. Regular mowing to a height of 5-6 inches this summer and fall will prevent weeds from flowering and setting seed. And at the top of the slope behind the Nature Center, the plan is to cover the newly cleared ground with a bed of wood chips, then set up stumps and picnic tables for outdoor education programs and seating. Meanwhile, we are developing a landscape design, budget, and maintenance plan for the long process of installing the Native Songscape, which will take at least three years to come into mature bloom.

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Gardening to Save Birds

By Ellen Birenbaum

The 2019 article, “The Decline of the North American Avifauna” published in *Science* by Rosenberg *et al.*, documents the staggering decline of bird populations across North America and Canada. 529 species of birds had a net loss of 2.9 billion birds, a 2.9% decline since 1970. Other research has shown that this steep decline in the North American bird population is due to habitat loss, more toxic pesticide use in breeding and wintering areas, climate change, unregulated harvest, and other forms of human-caused mortality such as cat predation, building and automobile collisions, and electrocutions due to power line collisions.

Preserving and effectively managing large tracts of wild and rural land are critical for protection of birds. This approach has obvious limitations since so much of our land is already subdivided. The estimates are that 54% of the United States is already broken up into cities, suburbs, roads, malls, athletic fields and golf courses, airports, and other land developments. Suburban tracts are 90% lawn, which also contributes to environmental problems due to fertilization, mowing and pesticide use. Homeowners landscape with the narrow gardening goal of creating beauty, using plant species that evolved in Asia, Europe, and South America. Indeed, 80% of the plants in our yards are non-native.



Virginia creeper
(*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*)



Virginia Creeper Berries Feed Eastern Bluebirds

Landscaping our homes using native trees, shrubs and vines has been proposed as an effective way to protect and support out native birds. Stephen W. Kress, in the 1998 Brooklyn Botanic Garden publication Bird Gardens, discusses the ways that native plants have co-evolved with native birds over millions of years and, by definition, are mutually dependent. Birds eat the fruits, buds, and nectar of plants and, in so doing, pollinate plants and disperse their seeds. Plant fruits provide no nutritional benefits to the plants themselves other than attracting birds. Seeds are dispersed by attaching to feathers, by being carried on beaks or claws after feeding, during feeding, and through fecal material. The high nitrogen content in bird excrement can also serve as fertilizer for the seed. In eastern deciduous forests, at least 300 trees, shrubs and vines depend solely on birds to spread their seeds.

Plants have evolved in ways to promote seed dispersal. The small fruit size of most plants and shrubs, no greater than 3/5 of an inch, are perfect for a bird's gape, the interior of the bird's open mouth. Fruits ripen when bird migration reaches its peak. Birds have an acute sense of vision and color discrimination, and plants that depend on birds to disperse their seeds produce brightly colored fruits that attract birds. Some berries and fruits have waxy coatings that reflect UV light. In addition to birds seeing more colors than humans, birds can see parts of the ultraviolet (UV) spectrum, allowing these berries to stand out vibrantly against green foliage. Virginia creeper, wild grape, sassafras, and gray dogwood do not have colorful fall fruits. Rather, their bright stems or brilliant fall leaves attract birds at the same time that their fruits ripen.

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Benefitting from a Clear, Dark Sky

by Debbie O’Kane

Because North Forkers enjoy viewing a night sky full of stars, the North Fork Dark Sky Coalition recently formed to spread the word on the importance of dark sky initiatives. A campaign to engage Southold residents in the benefits of a Dark Sky and why we need to reduce excessive outdoor lighting that leads to light pollution is now in the works. Coalition members recognize that light pollution can pose a multitude of damaging effects--on birds and other wildlife, human health, our changing climate, the beauty of the night sky and also on our pocketbooks. Through an ongoing campaign using social media, a website, newspaper articles, letters to the editor, workshops, mailers, online programming, and special events, our intent is to get as many North Forkers as possible onboard for reducing light pollution in our communities.

Our efforts will be highlighted during the celebration of International Dark Sky Week from April 5-12, 2021. To compliment the Dark Sky campaign, the Southold Town Board approved Resolution 2021-70 which recognizes International Dark Sky Week, bringing greater attention to this natural resource--a clear dark sky.

“**International Dark Sky Week**” helps us explore the night sky and ways to protect it. During Dark Sky Week, consider turning off any unnecessary lights and going outside to observe the night sky with your family. A list of Dark Sky programs and activities, whether online or outdoors (and, probably, after dark) can be found at www.northforkdarksky.org.

The coalition plans to lead into “**Lights Out Week**” beginning with a special **Night Watch** program scheduled for **Orient Beach State Park on April 2**([register here](#)), and at the **Custer Institute in Southold on April 3** ([register here](#)), followed by with a Zoom presentation on the benefits of Dark Skies on **Wednesday, Monday, April** ([register here](#)).

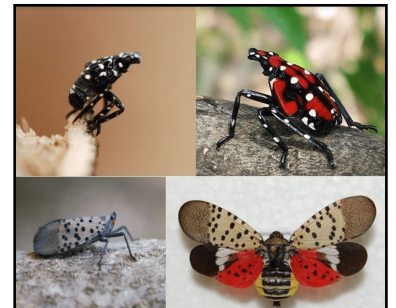
The coalition, comprised of representatives from the North Fork Audubon Society, Custer Institute, Coffee Pot Cellars, Group for The East End, the Mattituck-Laurel Civic Association and the North Fork Environmental Council is also focused on engaging businesses and professionals who work with artificial lighting across the commercial spectrum--wholesale/retail merchandising, landscape/architecture/design, and construction/installation. The goal is to discuss and identify ways to reduce light pollution, conserve electricity, and minimize lighting costs.

Information about upcoming Dark Sky events will be shared via email to all NFAS members and is also posted on our website. You can view our Dark Sky informational video on Channel 22 airing twice each day.

Keep an Eye Out for the Spotted Lanternfly

Lycorma delicatula, or the Spotted Lanternfly, is an invasive species from Asia that Cornell Cooperative Extension calls “the next worse thing.” Found recently upstate NY, Staten Island and Queens, this pest feeds on the sap of woody plants, causing damage to native species, agricultural products and trees.

If you come across what you suspect is a Spotted Lanternfly, an [egg mass](#) or infestation, the NYC DEC recommends taking a picture with something to show scale, such as a coin, note the location (GPS coordinates if possible), and forward the information to spottedlanternfly@agriculture.ny.gov.



For more information, please visit: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/113303.html>

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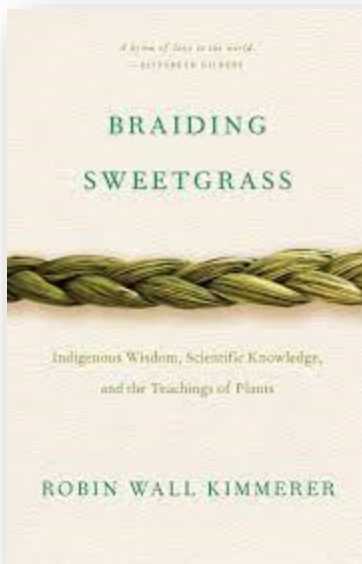
We have so many exciting initiatives underway during our 50th anniversary year and beyond:

- ◆ Native Songscape, a long-term project featuring native, bird-friendly plantings and a children's outdoor education area
- ◆ Invasive species eradication and increased trail maintenance to improve the habitat at Inlet Pond County Park
- ◆ [Children's outdoor nature programs](#) and [summer nature camp](#), under the tutelage of program coordinator Jennifer Murray
- ◆ An exciting roster of in-person as well as Zoom educational programs
- ◆ Bald Eagle Sightings Project
- ◆ Nest box trail construction and monitoring for Eastern Bluebirds, Purple Martins, Osprey, Kestrels and Wood Ducks
- ◆ Teaming up with like-minded local organizations
 - Coyote project (lead by Seatuck)
 - Dark Skies Initiative (together with North Fork Environmental Council)
 - Preserve Plum Island Coalition



How are we going to accomplish all this? With your help of course! There are so many ways you can get involved with our mission, **to connect people with nature**. Please visit our website, www.northforkaudubon.org and click on "volunteer" – or "donate"!

Peggy Lauber
President



Looking for a good read and an opportunity to share?
Join us as we "inaugurate"

The NFAS Book Club!

Beginning Wednesday, April 28, 2021
6:30 pm—via ZOOM

NFAS will bring together "those who love a good read" to discuss literary works with an environmental theme.

In honor of our first Native American Secretary of the Interior, Deb Haaland, we will begin with the memoir, "Braiding Sweetgrass". The author, Robin Wall Kimmerer, uses the lens of her indigenous culture to give us an entirely different perspective on our human interactions with nature and with each other. Elizabeth Gilbert calls the book, "a hymn of love to the world."

To sign up please send an email to info@northforkaudubon.org

We will meet virtually at 6:30 pm on 4/28. Hopefully, we can meet outdoors in the future. Let's begin by discussing our impressions of the first half of the book--through page 201. It is truly joyful reading!

This is an ambitious project for an all-volunteer organization. So we are calling on you, our members, to help in any way you can. To celebrate our chapter's 50th anniversary of supporting bird conservation on the North Fork, please consider earmarking a donation to NFAS to cover the Native Songscape's many costs, including final arborist work, buying seeds and seeding materials, perennial plant plugs, temporary fencing, signage, mowing machinery, and more. Special thanks to Kathleen Becker for being our first community donor to this project—we greatly appreciate your vote of confidence!

While we can't recreate the conditions predating colonial agriculture, NFAS is investing in sustainable landscaping that serves us all—birds, flora, and our community. If you have any questions or ideas about how your experience or energy could help turn the Native Songscape idea into reality, please email me at rsimmen@northforkaudubon.org. We look forward to seeing you in the field.

And if you'd like to roll up your sleeves and learn how to eradicate invasive weeds, welcome aboard! This spring you can be an active witness in the creation of the Native Songscape by weeding its seedbed. Become an official Native Songscape Volunteer by signing up for one of the Volunteer Training Weed Workshops led by Andy Senesac, Weed Specialist for Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County. You'll learn how to identify and remove invasive weeds—like mile-a-minute, oriental bittersweet, and mugwort—when they first emerge in spring, thus preventing monstrous stands from appearing later. Equally important, you'll be taught how to identify native seedlings like goldenrods which should be left alone.

The goal is to transform this gentle hill by replacing invasive weeds with native grasses and perennials, over time becoming an open area naturally sustained by rainfall, mowing, and selective weeding to keep the woods at bay.

Wear clothes you can get dirty and sturdy shoes or boots; bring tough work gloves (something other than cotton) to protect your hands from thorns; and bring a shovel, trowel, and foam kneeler if you have one. Please contact [Robin Simmen](#) for more information about the Native Songscape and to sign up for either workshop date. Space is limited, so you must preregister.

For more information and to sign up, [click here](#).

Native Songscape Volunteer Training Weed Workshops:

Saturday, May 15, 2021
(rain date Sunday, May 16)
9:00 AM – 12:00 PM
Saturday, June 5, 2021
(rain date Sunday, June 6)
9:00 AM – 12:00 PM



Mile-a-minute



Mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*)



Oriental Bittersweet

Fruits of different plants contain different amounts of sugars, fatty acids and other nutrients and ripen in different seasons. Sweet fruits predominant in the spring are the native Amelanchier, also known as shadblow or serviceberry, and wild cherry and mulberry trees. Fall migrants require fruits high in fatty acids; these fruits are found on the spicebush, magnolia, sassafras and flowering dogwoods. Many fall fruits have a lower lipid content but are less prone to turn rancid and rot on the plant. These fruits are therefore available later in the season and include fruits from mountain ash, hawthorn, and cranberry viburnum. Fruits from *Viburnum lentago* (Nannyberry) shrivel on the vine and remain available for wintering robins, bluebirds and flickers. This is important when late snowfalls occur and prevent returning robins, thrashers and sparrows from finding earthworms, insects and other invertebrates under rotting leaves. Persistent fruits such as bayberry are also vital for early spring migrants such as the Yellow-rumped Warbler and Tree Swallow when spring cold limits the flying insects on which they typically feed.

Birds depend on the fat content of fall berries for fuel reserves for migration or for overwintering. However, berries differ in their nutritional value. Berries from introduced Eurasian plants such as autumn olive, glassy buckthorn, Japanese honeysuckle and multiflora rose are high in sugar but contain < 1% fat. Berries from natives such as Virginia creeper, wax myrtle, arrowwood viburnum, spicebush and poison ivy are often 50% fat by weight. Of note is that nearly all invasive shrubs produce their berries in the fall, depriving birds of energy reserves if they are the only berries available.

Douglas W. Tallamy's 2019 book [Nature's Best Hope: A New Approach to Conservation That Starts in Your Yard](#) outlines his vision for homeowners and their neighbors to turn their yards into conservation corridors that provide wildlife habitats. He argues that these corridors, which he names Homegrown National Parks, can be turned into productive landscapes that contribute to local ecosystem function using those native plants which are best at hosting edible insects.

The most important edible insect is the caterpillar, which is the mainstay of most bird diets in North America. Caterpillars are the larval stage of members of the order Lepidoptera, which is the insect order comprising butterflies and moths. Caterpillars are exposed on vegetation and their bodies are soft. They are more nutritious than most other insects, due to the high amount of proteins, fat and carotenoids. Carotenoids are an essential component of bird diets, improving color vision and reproduction. They are a major component of colorful feather pigments. Ninety-six percent of North American terrestrial birds rear their young on caterpillars and adult moths rather than seeds and berries. Field research has documented that nestlings eat full meals 30 to 40 times daily, so a habitat that does not contain enough caterpillars will not be suitable for breeding.



Monarch Butterfly Caterpillar

Plants differ by orders of magnitude in their ability to host caterpillars, which runs counter to the assumption that if a plant is native it contributes to the landscape food web. Estimates are that only 5% of local plants host 70-75% of local Lepidoptera species. These hyper-productive plants have been labeled 'keystone plants' by Dr. Tallamy. *Quercus* (oaks), *Prunus* (cherry) and *Salix* (willow) are the best examples of keystone species in the mid-Atlantic region. Oaks support 557 species of caterpillar. In comparison, sycamores support 45, black gum 26 and sweet gum 35. The genus *Solidago*, goldenrods, is also highly ranked for its ability to host ecologically valuable caterpillars. Goldenrods produce seed that feeds wintering birds. One hundred nine species of caterpillars have been recorded on asters.

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The egg and larval stages of the caterpillar are completed on the host plant. More than 90% of caterpillars drop to the ground before molting to the pupal stage. Lawns, compacted soil, and lack of leaf litter surrounding trees make it difficult for the caterpillars to spin their cocoons by burrowing into the soil or leaf litter. Providing safe pupation sites by replacing or reducing lawns with annuals or perennial beds is vital.

Using research by Dr. Tallamy and his assistant Kimberley Shropshire, the National Wildlife Foundation, U.S. Forest Service, and the University of Delaware have created a postal code-specific website Native Plant Finder (<https://www.nwf.org/NativePlantFinder>) which ranks plants in their ability to host caterpillars. Audubon has a similar website, Plants for Birds (<https://www.audubon.org/plantsforbirds>).

Doug Tallamy's approach to the problem of habitat loss empowers homeowners to take individual action to support and sustain birds and other wildlife. He urges us to broaden our narrow aesthetic gardening goals and to focus instead on well-chosen native plants that support other species rather than introduced plants that do not.

Girls Scouts and Bluebirds

by Martin Faint

Cast your eyes into the field on the corner of Mill Lane and Middle Road in Peconic next time you pass by and you'll see that the Eastern Bluebirds that fly low among the cedars have new homes — just in time for spring.

The old bird boxes in the field--owned by the Peconic Land Trust-- had seen better days, so with the kind permission of the Trust, North Fork Audubon Society commissioned new ones.

As ever, a love of nature brings a community together. The seasoned hands of Bob Aviano and Rob McGinness constructed and assembled the boxes, while placing them was completed by Southold Girl Scouts Troop 2125, under the guidance of the Audubon Society's Jen Murray and Peggy Lauber.

The boxes, which face south-east, are a standard design that has been found to aid bluebirds. The boxes are mounted on a smooth metal pole that should prevent raccoons from feasting on the birds, or their eggs. They were placed about 100 feet apart, to allow the birds space to flourish.

The Girl Scouts learned that bird boxes have been an important part of the partial recovery of the Eastern Bluebird, after it had seen its population plummet due to habitat loss. Now, under the guidance of the NFAS, the girls will monitor the boxes through the spring and summer.

"It's important to protect the local wildlife," said Girl Scout Phoebe Faint, age 11, student at the North Fork Audubon's Society's Nature School, and my daughter. "It's especially important to help animals like bluebirds whose habitats have been destroyed. It feels good to help animals like this."

If you have a fairly open backyard, you too can add a similar box.

Build your own bluebird box: <https://www.audubon.org/news/how-build-bluebird-nest-box>



NFAS Speaks Out Against Battery Storage Facility

NFAS has called on the Southold Zoning Board of Appeals to deny to the application of Suffolk County Energy Storage II, LLC, for a special exception to site an 80-megawatt lithium-ion battery storage facility adjacent to 325 acres of environmentally-sensitive lands surrounding Pipe's Cove in Greenport.

Both the Town of Southold and Suffolk County have contributed millions of dollars to preserve this special place, which is identified by New York's Department of State as being, along with nearby Moore's Drain, "one of the largest saltwater/freshwater wetland complexes on Long Island; rare in the coastal lowlands ecological subregion." To read the entire document, please click [here](#).

From our president's correspondence: "The two-acre proposed site is located directly adjacent to a section of the Bay to Sound trails system, part of a larger surrounding body of both tidal and freshwater wetlands and forests where many species of birds, including Wood Ducks, Wood Thrush and many warblers live seasonally and breed. There are also River Otters who are nomadic but feed, spend time and possibly breed in these wetlands. They rely on the wetlands to travel to and from nearby ponds (Sills Pond, the ponds at Arshamomaque Preserve and near Sage Blvd.) where they fish."

The NFAS board of directors supports the development of battery storage facilities in general, and in conjunction with renewable energy projects, or for lessening the use of peaker plants, but only if the proposed sites are appropriate. In our opinion, a site next to such critically-important and unique habitat is not appropriate.

The New York State Energy Research & Development Agency (NYSERDA) created a model law and [guide book](#), and recommended that municipalities develop a battery storage law, and before doing so, create a Battery Energy Storage Task Force that "represents all interested stakeholders, including residents, businesses, interested non-profit organizations, the battery energy storage industry, utilities, and relevant municipal officials and staff to prepare an action plan, adopt or amend a comprehensive plan to include battery energy storage system planning goals and actions, and develop local laws and/or other regulations to ensure the orderly development of battery energy storage system projects."



The project area contains NYS DEC Mapped Wetlands
[Click here](#) to view the entire conceptual plan

In addition to environmental concerns, there are safety issues to consider because, while not common, fires have occurred at lithium-ion battery storage facilities. In the Arizona Public Service's [analysis](#) of a fire event, known as the McMicken Thermal Runaway and Explosion Event, multiple factors contributed to the fire, including design flaws, an insufficient fire suppression system, and insufficient training for first responders.

Regrettably, despite numerous comments from the public and environmental groups, the ZBA determined that this project will have not negative effects on the environment, a major hurdle the developer had to pass to see the project move forward.

We do not believe Southold Town has done its due diligence, gone through a process as recommended by NYSERDA, or developed a local law for guidance. It is imprudent and premature for Southold to consider

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these types of applications without having done broader planning, and without environmental standards or safety policies in place.

Our president's letter concluded: *"Savion, an out of State company with no connection to the local community, chose the site because it is within close proximity to a gas energy facility, built decades ago, which in itself was poorly sited and sits in the middle of environmentally-critical lands. I appeal to you to not compound a bad decision made years ago with another one, particularly in an age when we know the effects habitat destruction and encroachment have had on dwindling wildlife and species populations, including birds."*

North Fork Audubon Board of Directors

Peggy Lauber
President

Gwynn Schroeder
Vice President

Debbie O'Kane
Treasurer

Cassie Kanz
Secretary

Ellen Birenbaum

Kelly Knutson

Robin Simmen

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Take a Hike!

As many of our members know, North Fork Audubon Society is the steward organization for the Roy Latham Nature Center and Inlet Pond County Park. We encourage you to visit us and explore this magnificent place! (Please take tick precautions.) To download and print the park map, click [here](#).

If you would like to volunteer with trail maintenance, or other stewardship programs, please click [here](#).



THANK YOU!

To all our members, volunteers and board members, both past and present, we thank you. Although we don't have photographs of everyone, you have made a lasting contribution to North Fork Audubon Society's 50-year legacy of Connecting People with Nature.

