

MATTITUCK-LAUREL CIVIC ASSOCIATION

INFORM ♦ ENHANCE ♦ PRESERVE

Newsletter

Issue No 11
Spring 2021



Mattituck Traffic Safety Study Report
Piping Plovers and Park Updates
North Fork Dark Sky Coalition
Mattituck Public Garden Opens

From the Desk of MLCA President Anne Smith



Dear MLCA Members,

The Spring of 2021 has been beautiful so far! I hope you are enjoying outdoor time with a feeling of community and connection. Inform, Enhance, Preserve continues to be our framework as a Civic Association. Special thanks go out to Past President Charlie Gueli and volunteers for plantings in and around the Dean Parking Lot. Watch for June dates for road clean-up events! Our Zoom meetings continue for now. The MLCA Board is planning an in-person meet and greet for potential committee and board members on June 8th at 6:30 PM and for our regular Annual Member Meeting on June 28, 2021. Stay tuned!

The MLCA Board has been busy reviewing member survey input, studying the traffic study impact, updating our By-Laws for a vote, and learning about happenings in our community. We continue to participate in public hearings at the various town board meetings, listening and learning, and asking questions with the Comprehensive Plan as a framework. As a result, we learned about a potential conservation project for the property on Deep Hole Creek and learned about the process of Environmental Impact Studies (see updates).

If you missed our last regular member meeting, we covered a program and expansion project at the Mattituck Laurel Library (mattitucklaurellibrary.org/about-mll/parking-lot-construction-project), CAST's big news regarding their new building project, and the Mattituck Fire Department and Mattituck Park District each shared their projects and goals. This newsletter provides resources on all of these projects and we hope you stay engaged with your community.

MLCA collaboration with the North Fork Dark Sky Coalition has engaged us in learning about our environment as we partnered with Group for the East End and the North Fork Environmental Council (northforkdarksky.org). There are so many small things we can do to make a big difference. Check out our bulletin board on Love Lane to learn more!

MLCA partnered with the North Shore Land Alliance, Nature Conservancy and Suffolk County to provide an educational webinar on Clean Water Septic systems, the new laws requiring installation and how to apply for a grant. We helped host a forum on Affordable/Workforce Housing (see the *Suffolk Times* article [by clicking here](#), and we are working together researching and proposing ideas for a new zoning code to control house size for a forum which was hosted by Southold Town on May 25th ([a recording of it is here](#)). The Southold Town Civics continue to collaborate with each other.

The June meetings of the MLCA will focus on the future. We need your participation and new members to join our efforts. This is an exciting time as we work with partners and Southold Town to imagine a future with connected streets, place to gather, and protected open space.



Town Releases Draft Traffic Safety Study

Following the release last month of the Town's draft traffic safety study for Mattituck Hamlet – and especially the intersection of Main Road, Love Lane, and Old Sound Avenue – Town Engineer Michael Collins is working with the NYS Department of Transportation to resolve the one question that will determine whether planning for a roundabout continues or stops: Will DOT allow a 100-foot diameter roundabout in that key intersection?

DOT has told the Town it prefers a 120-foot diameter roundabout for the intersection, but the Town – and the MLCA – have responded that the proposal for the larger diameter should be discarded because it is too large and too disruptive. Not only would the larger size require taking property from five or more landowners, it would also bring westbound Main Road traffic much deeper into Love Lane and Old Sound Avenue than it currently goes. The number of parking spaces on both streets would be reduced, as well, to make room for the larger roundabout. The 100-foot diameter roundabout proposal would take only a portion of a sidewalk on the property of the Mattituck Presbyterian Church.

Should the DOT mandate the expansion of the already too-large intersection, thereby driving traffic deeper into Love Lane and Old Sound Avenue, the Town has said it will end its pursuit of a roundabout at the location. What would happen then is unknown.



Meanwhile, the Town has indicated that it will hold public meetings for the community to weigh-in on its traffic safety study regardless of whether the DOT accepts the smaller roundabout size. The Town traffic safety study also outlines a range of improvements for traffic and

North Fork Dark Sky Coalition

The Town Board passed Resolution 2021-70 to recognize International Dark Sky Week, which was April 5 through 12. The North Fork Dark Sky Coalition (NFDSC) has sponsored a range of entertaining and enlightening community events highlighting our often-overlooked natural resource, the dark night sky. The Coalition's achievements build on the Town's Resolution, which itself builds on the Town's existing commitment to minimize artificial light pollution. That began with the Board's passage of §72 of Town Code in 2010. By supporting dark sky awareness, education, and experience, Southold demonstrates its commitment to protecting our dark sky.

Supported by Channel 22 and local media coverage, including topical columns by Coalition members, NFDSC brought together hundreds of dark sky-loving people virtually and a few dozen in person (outside and COVID-safe!). Under a clear dark sky at Orient Beach State Park, members gathered to see planets, stars, and galaxies through the telescope of The Custer Institute. In Zoom events, North Fork experts in environment, agriculture, and quality-of-life shared how the natural world (and all of us in it) responds to exposure to more light than it has evolved to manage.

Key to the success of the Coalition's celebration of Resolution 2021-70 has been the NFDSC website at northforkdarksky.org. You are encouraged to go there and Take the Pledge to turn off lights, learn more, and take steps toward protecting our night sky.

The NFDSC launched at a well-attended MLCA when founding president, Mary Eisenstien brought a team of experts together to make this vision a reality. The Coalition includes MLCA, North Fork Environmental Council, North Fork Audubon Society, Group for The East End, Custer Institute & Observatory, and Coffee Pot Cellars/Blossom Meadow Farm.

Thanks to Our Departing Treasurer, George Maul

Normally, this box contains a message from our Treasurer, George Maul. This time we are writing a message to George. George will not be running for reelection this June and we would like to take this opportunity to offer a heartfelt thanks to him for all of his hard work as treasurer, balancing family, work, and also the Civic.

Since our inception, the MLCA has awarded a \$1,000 scholarship to a deserving, civic-minded high school graduate each year. Student applications are now in and as we approach the countdown to the end of the school year, we wish to thank each of you who have contributed to the scholarship fund. If you haven't made a contribution this year, please consider helping us reach our goal of contributing to the future of one of our homegrown graduates.

– **MLCA Board**

From the Mattituck Park District

The Mattituck Park District Office is now open daily, from 9:30 to 4:00; Thursdays from 10:00 to 6:00. The Community Room, Picnic Area, and Lodge are all available for special events, meetings, and gatherings. The office phone is 631-298-4870 and email info@mattituckparkdistrict.org. MPD Beach Permits are now required at all District parking lots, which include Veterans Beach and Peconic Bay Beach (AKA Mattituck Yacht Club) on Peconic Bay Boulevard and also at Breakwater Beach. This is Year 2 of two-year permits, so if your vehicle has a permit from last year, you do not require a new one. If you need a permit, they are \$10, cash or check.

Due to capacity limitations, there is a limit of 2 permits per household. At present, guest passes are not being sold.

Please remember that a Southold Town Parking Permit is needed to park at the end of Bailie Beach Road, adjacent to the MPD's Scout Lodge. For the first time, a section of the beach in front of the lodge has been designated as a piping plover site. This starts approximately 100 yards from the road end, going west along the beach towards the eastern jetty; the area hugs the dunes. Please respect the nesting birds and their young.

The Park District recently met with Christopher Pickerell, Marine Program Director from the Cornell Cooperative Extension in Southold. Chris gave advice on dune restoration and preservation for Bailie's Beach. District staff has erected snow fences on the first dune and volunteers from the North Fork Audubon will be planting beach grass in between the fences. Please help the District by not walking or climbing on the fragile dunes.



In Our Hamlets

Piping Plovers at Breakwater Beach

They definitely don't prance. And you couldn't say they lope. Nor do they strut, stride or swagger. No, Piping Plovers don't do any of those things. In fact, their short legs and small plump bodies aren't capable of such movements. But they sure can scamper (and scurry, for that matter). These are the words that come to mind when watching a Piping Plover scoot along the beach.

Of course, it is difficult to describe the movements of something you cannot see. Sure, a Piping Plover's legs and basal half of its bill are orange; you would think that those details might catch your eye. But from anywhere farther than a few feet away, such features on a seven-inch-long shorebird are hardly noticeable. Instead, the bird's

pale-gray back blends perfectly into its sandy surroundings, so that an adult sitting still on a nest above the high-tide line or at the edge of a dune is virtually invisible.

...Which partially explains why Piping Plovers are Federally Threatened along the entire Atlantic Coast and are designated an Endangered Species in New York State. A small, motionless, sand-colored bird that nests where a significant percentage of the U.S. population swim, surf, sunbathe, fish, and drive will inevitably struggle to survive. With the aid of intensive Federal and State Endangered Species programs, though, Piping Plovers have a fighting chance.

Group for the East End has been proud to play a part in the species' protection, monitoring plovers in Southold Town since 2012. Among our tasks each year, we: set up string-fencing on beaches with suitable nesting habitat wherever possible; post signage informing the community about Piping Plovers and ways to protect them; regularly visit likely sites in search of nests; monitor the nests we find; and erect protective exclosures around nests when necessary. These monitoring tactics are vital to conservation of the species, as it takes nearly four weeks for Piping Plover eggs to hatch and another four weeks for hatchlings to gain the ability to fly (i.e., fledge).

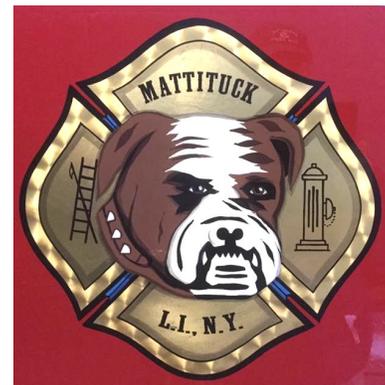
Over the past five years Breakwater Beach has been – by far – the most productive Piping Plover nesting site in Southold Town. In each year during that time period three to seven nests have been observed, producing six to eleven fledglings annually. *[There are now protected areas on Baillie's Beach, going west from the town road end to the jetty. -MLCA]*

So, from April through August, tread carefully on the beach. The responsibility is ours to ensure that future generations of Long Islanders may hear the clear “peep-lo” of the Piping Plover.



Important Message from the Mattituck Fire Department

Mattituck Fire Department is continuously recruiting new firefighters and EMTs to volunteer and help protect our community. Ordinary men and women are training to do extraordinary things when they join the volunteer fire service, with all training paid for by the Mattituck Fire District. We also offer the MFD auxiliary, which helps support the department and members in time of need. With our ever-growing town, the need for additional volunteers is crucial. If you have any questions about this great opportunity to serve our community, please contact Chief Ed Rittberg at 631-298-8833.



Landcraft Gardens: The First and Only Public Garden on the North Fork

Much has happened since the Gardens inception in 1992, when founders Dennis Schrader and Bill Smith purchased 17 acres of land surrounding an 1840's-era farmhouse built by Judge Reeve. Little did they know their initial goals of creating an exuberant and rich garden would evolve into the mission of a lifetime - the creation of the Landcraft Garden Foundation – a natural classroom dedicated to inspiring, educating and promoting gardening, horticulture and the preservation of the natural world.

The Gardens today are a unique resource which exhibit extensive plant collections celebrating the diversity of horticulture and design. Included are ten acres of native plant habitat which prove an intimate laboratory to explore human connection with the natural world. It is an endeavor that seems more urgent than ever before, and one that will only strengthen and evolve over time.

Landcraft Gardens is a natural classroom dedicated to inspiring, educating and promoting gardening, horticulture and the preservation of the natural



world. To learn more, go to the Landcraft Garden Foundation website: landcraftgardenfoundation.org. There you will find details and the latest information about workshops to be offered at the Garden and how to sign up for garden tours throughout the seasons.

The official Landcraft Gardens opening is on July 10, 2021, but earlier visitations are encouraged during “soft opening” months which began early May. Reservations are required and can be made through the Eventbrite link available on the Foundation’s website, where you can also sign up to become a member of the Foundation and receive monthly email newsletters.

Brief Notes About the Town...

Southold Town Hall has reopened to the public. This is Year 2 of the two-year permits for the landfill and also for parking permits. Vehicles parked on Town road-ends must have parking permits. The Town is not selling beach day passes for guests and is asking for proof of residency for beach walk-ons... There have been several beach cleanups by local Boy and Girl Scouts.

Save Mattituck Inlet Update

On April 6th, in response to a complaint by Strong's about the nature of the Final Scope of the Draft Environmental Statement adopted on February 9th, the Southold Town Planning Board found "nothing irrelevant in the [Final] Scope as adopted." In response to the complaint, several areas of the Final Scope became more specific and detailed such as the four season traffic study and the requirements to provide official documentation related to the Strong's plans to sand mine their property. The Strong's will still be required to conduct a four-season study of the impacts of the significant soil excavation proposed as well as the other requirements for determining environmental impacts in the original Final Draft.

To receive regular updates about this, please send your email to: savemattituckinlet@gmail.com

[Please note that this is is not a MLCA group. However, it does provide a good example of how community engagement in various processes impacts the type and depth of environmental impact studies required by the Town of Southold. It is critical to be informed and engaged. For example, MLCA provided a forum for the community to ask questions of Strong's at a Winter MLCA meeting on Zoom. - MLCA]

WE NEED YOU!

We need your thoughts, suggestions, and encouragement to carry on the work we've been doing for our members and the community at large.

Growing our membership strengthens our voice with Town officials. Membership dues allow us to continue to promote the well-being of Mattituck and Laurel.

We know you recognize the value of the MLCA – won't you encourage a friend or neighbor to join us? (Don't forget to mention that member discounts from local businesses can return their dues in no time at all!) As always, you can contact any Board member via email at mlca.matt.lrl@gmail.com . Our website <https://www.mattitucklaurelcivic.org/> is the archive of our past and present activities. Follow us on Facebook and Instagram for breaking news.

Please stay tuned for emails about our upcoming meetings, our Meet & Greet on June 8 at 6.30 PM at the Community Room at Veterans Beach, 11280 Peconic Bay Boulevard, Mattituck. Here is the link [to signup for the event on EventBrite](#) (signup is suggested, but not mandatory).

Community Supporting Community

The MLCA would like to recognize and thank Beds & Borders in Laurel for donating plants for the recent raffle prizes. Margarito Gonzalez of Gonzalez Landscaping donated mulch and planted the shrubs at Mattituck RR Station and the Dean Parking Lot. Please remember them and all of our sponsors when you shop locally.



"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

