

**ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING & AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE**

**OF THE**

**SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE**

**MINUTES**

A meeting of the Environment, Planning & Agriculture Committee of the Suffolk County Legislature was held in the Evans K. Griffing County Center, in the Maxine Postal Legislative Auditorium, 300 Center Drive, Riverhead, New York on May 2, 2016.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Leg. Kara Hahn, Chairperson  
Leg. Al Krupski, Vice Chair  
Leg. Sarah S. Anker  
Leg. Thomas Muratore (excused absence)  
Leg. Robert Trotta  
Leg. Bridget Fleming

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:**

George M. Nolan, Counsel to the Legislature  
Jason Richberg, Clerk of the Legislature  
Amy Ellis, Chief Deputy Clerk/Legislature  
Robert Lipp, Director/Budget Review Office  
Katie Horst, County Executive's Office  
Frank P. Castelli, Economic Development & Planning  
Michael Pitcher, Director of Communications/PO  
Robert Fonti, Aide to PO  
Alyssa Turano, Aide to Leg. Hahn  
Catherine Stark, Aide to Leg. Krupski  
Robyn Fellrath, Aide to Leg. Anker  
Robert Martinez, Aide to Leg. Muratore  
Elizabeth Sutton, Aide to Leg. Fleming  
Robert Braun, Deputy Bureau Chief/County Attorney's Office  
Dave Schwartz, Newsday  
Gwynn Schroeder, Aide to Leg. Krupski  
John Stype, Aide to Leg. Krupski  
Hazel Kahan, North Fork Deer Management Alliance  
Amy Dries, North Fork Deer Management Alliance  
Nora Catlin, Cornell Cooperative Extension  
Sharon Frost  
Douglas Corwin  
Linda Testagrose  
Rachel Verno  
Pauline Sandmann  
Reginald Farr  
Robert Carpenter  
Andrea Spilka  
Linda Nemeth  
Sid Bail  
And all other interested parties

**MINUTES TAKEN BY:**

Diana Flesher, Court Stenographer

**THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 10:07 AM**

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

Okay, welcome everyone to the Legislature's Environment, Planning and Agriculture Committee. If we could all rise to the Pledge led by Legislator Anker.

**SALUTATION**

**PUBLIC PORTION**

Thank you. Okay. We are going to move onto the Public Portion. Oh, yes, we should say a few words about our first Committee meeting here in Riverhead. Thank you to -- I love coming here. I can shop at the outlets. (Laughter) My contribution to sales tax improvement. We are -- we are thrilled to be here in Riverhead for these committee meetings to give access to residents on the East End who may find it hard to make their way to Hauppauge when we meet. We're pleased to have you here. Thank you for being here. Thank you to Legislator Fleming, Legislator Krupski and to all of my colleagues who agreed to do this trial of having some committees out here. I know you didn't agree -- oh, right in front of us, clicker (laughter).

Okay. The way this works for those who haven't been here, each speaker will have three minutes. There is a clock on the wall up here that will count down. And I'm going to -- the first speaker is Sharon Frost; and then the speaker on deck who can kind of get themselves ready to come up when she's done is Douglas Corwin. So, Sharon, if you'd like to come on up to the podium and then just make sure that the light is on on the microphone. And you can adjust the microphone. It's always better if it's right near your mouth.

**MS. FROST:**

Good? Okay. Hi, I'm Sharon Frost from the Suffolk County Soil and Water Conservation District. And I want to thank you for having this committee meeting out here today. It was a lot easier getting from the Cooperative Extension building in Riverhead rather than having to go all the way to Hauppauge.

I'm here to speak on behalf of the Corwin grant through the Quarter Percent Sales Tax Grant. I'm the author of the CNMP, the Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan for the Corwin Duck Farm, which was written last year. One of the recommendations in this plan is for the ag waste storage facility, which is what this grant proposal is for. It's for partially funding the installation of that facility. And anyone of you that would like to come to my office and read this, you're welcome to. I'm not going to leave it here with you today, but you are welcome to come to the office and read some of the other suggestions besides the waste storage facility.

The Corwin Duck Farm produces about a million ducks a year. And the manure right now is moved by trucks and/or stored on the bare ground. This facility will provide a storage area on concrete and covered area where there will be zero leaching of nitrogen and pathogens into the groundwater and/or surface water. The facility itself costs between 600 and \$700,000 to install and -- so this will significantly help the duck farm to reduce that cost -- the cost of that installation.

Right now -- just to give you an idea, according to the plan, it was estimated that the million ducks produce approximately 21,900 pounds of nitrogen per year so -- of solids -- through the solids. And this facility will 100% reduce that from being -- going into the groundwater and the surface waters. Right now the manure is transported by truck off the farm or composted on the farm. And this facility, it will be composted in the facility and then trucked (timer sounded) when it's a better time for it to be spread on the -- on the farm and absorbed through vegetation. Okay, I guess my time is up. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

I'm sorry. We have -- do have a question for you. So, Legislator Fleming.

**MS. FROST:**

Sorry.

**LEG. FLEMING:**

Good morning, Sharon. Thank you for coming. I just -- I don't know if you have -- I think you might have gotten -- the bell cut you off a little bit so -- but I don't know if you have any information or -- for us on the history of duck farming on the East End. I mean, I think the Corwin Duck Farm is now the only duck farm, working duck farm on the East End of Long Island. And we were once -- Long Island duck once was a very, very famous international dish, not to mention an important part of our agricultural economy. And I'm interested to hear that a 100% of the nitrogen impacts are going to be eliminated with what you're talking about. Do you have any thoughts, not only on the history of duck farming, but what it might mean for duck farming in the future?

**MS. FROST:**

Well, I know that Doug is going to speak after me. And he has the history of his farm, but I do know that at one point there was 68 duck farms on Long Island. And because of the increased regulations by the DEC, that they've all gone out of business. I've been working for the district for 15 years. And since I have been there, three duck farms -- when I started, there were four duck farms and three of them have gone out of business because they couldn't meet the standards that were set forth by the DEC.

I want to just say that this facility will handle the solid waste. What happens is the waste is separated, liquid and solid. This will handle the solid waste coming from the ducks. I don't know if -- I just wanted to make sure I made that clear when I was -- when I was speaking. I may have been cut off. Does that answer your question?

**LEG. FLEMING:**

Yes, thank you.

**MS. FROST:**

Okay. Doug will talk more about the history of his farm.

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

Excellent. Any other questions?

**LEG. FLEMING:**

Madam Chair, could I just make one note for my colleagues --

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

Sure.

**LEG. FLEMING:**

-- since we're out here on the East End. There is a lovely little duck farming -- the history of duck farming exhibition in a restored Victorian barn right on the Big Duck Farm on Flanders Road. So it's a really short little exhibit. It has videos and it has a lot of the data that's so interesting about that important part of our history, but I'd invite anybody if you need to take a tour, let me know because it's a lovely exhibit.

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

Excellent. Doug Corwin followed by Linda Testagrose.

**MR. CORWIN:**

Good morning. My name is Doug Corwin and I'd like to thank you for coming out here to Riverhead so we don't have to venture the other way. My great grandfather started Crescent back in 1908 on land just east of here in Aquebogue that's been in our family since the 1640s when we came over to Southold Town. We breed, hatch, grow, process about 4% of the country's ducks on a 142-acre farm. We also have a feed milling business in Eastport.

We're fortunate to have most of the better restaurant trade in the northeast. We sell to distributors across the US along with Puerto Rico and Bahamas, Sipan, the Dominican Republic, etcetera, etcetera. We also sell about four containers of feathers here to China.

I'm blessed to have a wonderful family that helps work our farm. The older generation is still pitching in. I've got siblings; I've got sons 30 and 32 that want to push forward and keep this thing going on to another generation. Overall I employ about 82 people on a year-round basis.

Back to the history, when I got out of Cornell back in 1980 there were 35 duck farms on the Island. It was a big industry back then and now we're the only one; many economic reasons for this but the major one has been a huge need to treat duck waste to stay in environmental compliance. My family's had a proud history of being proactive in this regard. Back in the '30s we were the first ones to actually physically separate manure from the water stream. Back in the '60s we put in eight acres of aerated lagoons. In the '90s with the engineering help of the soil and water group and the Peconic Estuary plan, we put in a six-acre artificial wetland system to act as tertiary treatment.

Starting about 12 years ago, we constructed a brand new and much more advanced waste treatment plant highlighted by a half million gallon anaerobic digest during two half million gallon sequential batch reactors. This plant took us three years to build and cost three-and-a-half million dollars. It works well, but still needs one major costly upgrade. And we're working with two engineering firms to find out the best approach to do this. But today I'm here to ask for another major upgrade to lower our nitrogen footprint. We would like to proactively build a fully-concreted and covered manure solid waste storage. Our nutrient management plan that Sharon talked about required the DEC specifies that some sort of facility be constructed. And what we're proposing is a 65 by 400 foot structure that'll allow us to handle waste prior to exporting it to farms and nurseries. It'll cost between 6 and \$700,000, improve water quality and will be NRCS approved. My family views this is something that'll last well into the next generation. However, we doubt without some help that we can build the storage as we still have a major upgrade we need to do on our waste water plant.

And I thank you very much for the time and the consideration and I ask you to support my family in helping preserve the Long Island duck industry. Twenty-three seconds. I have -- I have almost final plans on a solid structure. It's a huge structure and a building. Hopefully within a week I'm going to be able to submit that NRCS. Questions? Sir.

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

Legislator Trotta.

**LEG. TROTТА:**

How many ducks do you produce a year?

**MR. CORWIN:**

We produce about a million ducks a year for -- oh, I don't know when I got out of Cornell it was about 700,000. We've been at this million level for about 15 years now.

**LEG. TROTТА:**

So you're asking for, I guess, it's a grant from us is --

**MR. CORWIN:**

That's correct, sir.

**LEG. TROTТА:**

And that'll be the entire cost?

**MR. CORWIN:**

No, no. This thing's going to cost a family somewhere between 6 and \$700,000.

**LEG. TROTТА:**

And how much are you asking for?

**MR. CORWIN:**

We're asking for a quarter million.

**LEG. TROTТА:**

Have we ever done -- through co -- have we done this before?

**LEG. KRUPSKI:**

477. This went through the Water Quality. We've used it --

**LEG. TROTТА:**

Private companies before?

**LEG. KRUPSKI:**

That I don't know. This went through the Water Quality Review Committee last year.

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

When we -- when we get to the bill, discussion of the bill, we can ask, you know.

**LEG. TROTТА:**

Well, I'm not against it. I just --

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

Yeah. No, I'm just saying that -- you don't have to, you know --

**LEG. TROTТА:**

All right.

**MR. CORWIN:**

Any other questions?

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

Thank you. Oh, I'm sorry, Legislator Krupski also has a question.

**LEG. KRUPSKI:**

So you said hire over 80 people and you support a number of families. Do you have -- and you said that your -- for the past 15 years you're producing about a million ducks a year. Are there any -- but, you know, with the -- you said the new generation coming up, do you see any changes in the future to your operation either type of duck or the way you -- the way you process it and sell it or --

**MR. CORWIN:**

Well, you know, I'm 57-years-old. And change is -- change is inevitable anywhere. And if you don't change and adapt and grow and look for new markets and whatnot, you don't survive. And I think it's one of the reasons why we have survived. Do I foresee -- I mean, nitrogen, I mean, if you read the papers and you guys know very well is the issue here. And my brother spends almost all of his time, one of my boys spends all of his time doing nitrate, nitrite testing. It's -- it's a huge endeavor on our part and it's a big deal that we have to make sure that we're compatible in our community or else we're going to go by the wayside like the rest of those farms did.

Do I foresee changing, growing, expanding? Not -- at this point in time, I want to get this taken care of. I want to get this to be a good member of the community and then I'll think about things from there. Are we going to grow phenomenally? I can't foresee that in the short term. I'd like to hold where we are. We have a beautiful, beautiful market place and I want to keep pushing forward with it.

**LEG. KRUPSKI:**

Thank you.

**MR. CORWIN:**

Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

Thank you. Linda Testagrose and -- followed by Rachel Vernin -- Verno.

**MS. TESTAGROSE:**

I'd just like to thank you all for having these meetings here. I'm a local resident of Riverside and this is one of the few opportunities I actually get to see my government at work. Thank you. I hope you do more of this for the rest of the year.

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

We'll be here until Thursday this week.

**MS. TESTAGROSE:**

Yes, I know.

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

Okay. And in August again.

**MS. TESTAGROSE:**

Okay.

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

Okay, Rachel Verno followed by Pauline Sandmann.

**MS. VERNO:**

Hi. I'm a resident of Watermill. And I also chair a citizens advisory committee in Watermill. I, too, thank you for holding a meeting in this area so that more of us from the East End can attend.

The County has just proposed a very bold and innovative plan for a surcharge on water use, an idea that I certainly would support. And understandably ag use would be exempt from this surcharge. But my question is how do you distinguish someone who owns and farms land as their primary source of income from someone who has obtained ag lands so they can simply have a bigger backyard or plant a tree farm so they have more privacy around their house?

I live adjacent to a polo farm, something considered an ag use. The owner has managed to piece together over a hundred acres of prime farmland, sometimes even outbidding a town-owned property they were planning to acquire for farming opportunities. The owner has approvals to install a motor on a private well pump that will pump a thousand gallons of water per minute in order to irrigate heavily, fertilized polo fields, which happened to be located in an aquifer overlay district and clearly impacts the groundwater that we're all working so hard to protect. If I understand correctly, given the current ag laws, this property owner would be exempt from the proposed surcharge. This is just one example of what's happening in my part of the East End where an acre of farmland has become so ridiculously expensive and the exploitation of the current ag laws has really reached a tipping point.

In terms of this proposed surcharge, is the County going to be able to make a distinction between a person who actually farms land for a living and needs to irrigate their crops and should clearly have an exemption from someone who wants their polo fields or backyards to look really nice? Thanks.

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

Thank you. Reginald Farr.

**MR. FARR:**

Reginald Farr, organic farmer. I just wanted to thank you all for holding meetings out here. Obviously on the East End agriculture is not only important to me but I think also to the new residents. A quick suggestion. Since we have this problem with our water, have we ever thought about maybe looking at in costs for gardens and farms and then so on? And trees and -- like you might treat a prescription drug? I don't know. I just thought, in other words you can go into your local Agway and only be allowed to buy five pounds of Roundup rather than 50 pounds or however many you want. I don't know. Just a suggestion.

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

Thank you. Thank you. Okay, that was the final card this morning but we do make an opportunity if there's someone who did get a chance to fill out a card or if the card didn't make it to me -- oh, boy, you all filled out cards?

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:**

I filled out a card.

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

Is there any card --

**LEG. FLEMING:**

That's Pauline --

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

Oh, I'm sorry, Pauline, I thought you came up. Sorry about that, Pauline. And then anyone else who filled out a -- thank you.

**MS. SANDMANN:**

Okay, my name is Pauline Sandmann. I live in Riverwoods Mobile Home Park right up the road here in Riverside, not Riverhead. First I want to thank you all for coming here and I want to thank Legislator Krupski and Fleming and previously Schneiderman, you know, I'm sure to push you all to come out here.

I was going to speak first about -- I don't know if any of you read today's Newsday. There's an article about residents trying to save a couple's home in the Lakewood Mobile Home Park in

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Calverton at exit 71 of the Expressway. They were in a very bad accident on Route 58 March 30th. He walked -- Sal {Alaka} walked out but he has dementia and is now in a nursing home. Rose -- by the way, the car flipped over and she was in a coma until maybe last week, she's slowly coming out of it. But what I want to state is, it's a very sad affair for all our mobile homeowners. We are at the mercy of the corporations who own our mobile home parks. They're back -- they have not paid their April rent. So today they're supposed -- the owners are supposed to be putting out an eviction notice for this couple who can't sign checks. Anyway, this -- the article in Newsday, which, I believe, is very important and hope you all read it and think about how you could save the residents in your district. Because besides Legislator Krupski and Fleming, some of you do have mobile home parks in your district. And everybody says it's a private -- private property. That's bonkers.

Call Jodi {Giglio} in Riverhead or Christine {Scalera} in Southampton. There are many laws that can protect us in our mobile home parks. One we're trying to fight now is the rent, which is outrageous. As of May 1st I'm going to pay over \$800 without taxes. I have to pay for everything on the outside. And I'm not alone on this.

Second, I do want to mention that Legislator Krupski and Fleming were at a mobile home meeting that we have at Riverhead Town Hall. We're trying to get other politicians to come and it's very hard. Some of them I don't think are interested at all, some of the supervisors who have parks in their district. But the Legislators came to our meeting. They're looking to put waste treatment plants in five mobile home parks. And this would help with the nitrogen in the Peconic estuary. And it really sounds good. And hope all this goes forward. Thank you. (Timer sounded)

### **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

Perfect timing.

### **LEG. KRUPSKI:**

Thank you.

### **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

Okay, we found the other cards. Rob Carpenter followed by Andrea Spilka.

### **MR. CARPENTER:**

I thank you very much for having us and for coming out here. It's good to see a number of people in the crowd that are willing to testify. I'm here to lend support from Long Island Farm Bureau for the Crescent Duck facilities application to the Agriculture Non-point Source Abatement and Control Program that the Suffolk County Soil and Water District is hoping to write. Doug was very modest in his comments. I can tell you having visited Crescent Duck Farm that they've invested hundreds of thousands of dollars in their waste treatment facility. And it's something that they've been doing for the last, at least, 40 years. And they've made great progress in working to make sure that their input into the bays has been mitigated.

The Water Quality of Meetinghouse Creek, which is a tributary to the Peconic Bay, is recognized as impaired due to dissolved oxygen, pathogens and nutrients. To mitigate these resources the installation of a waste storage facility designed and installed to USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service standards and specifications is advised within the Corwin's Certified Nutrient Management Plan. This plan was developed by the Suffolk County Soil and Water Conservation District and is certified through NRCS standards.

This waste storage facility is recommended as an added component to Crescent's permitted existing waste storage water quality treatment system and the facility will help close the waste management and handling loop by containing the nutrients and pathogens on an impermeable and covered surface during stocking and piling, which will help prevent it from getting into the groundwater.

Unfortunately the construction of the waste storage facility requires high capital investment. Long Island Farm Bureau strongly supports the cost share of funding of this Corwin's Waste Management Facility to help offset the cost of this expensive but critically-necessary improvement.

So I urge you very much to support the Corwins. They are a pillar of the agriculture community out here. And it's vital that we keep them in business as a component of the agricultural industry. Thank you very much.

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

Thank you. Any questions? Okay. Andrea followed by Linda Nemeth.

**MS. SPILKA:**

Hi, good morning. And I'm adding my thank you. We truly appreciate it and I think if you have more meetings, you'll see that we're a very energized community out here that really wants to participate. So thank you again for coming.

I'm president of the Southampton Town Civic Coalition and I'm speaking for them today. The coalition is an umbrella for most of the civics in Westhampton, Southampton Town. I'm talking about the -- I'm talking in support of the County Executive's plan for a water surcharge although I do have a few caveats. I'm pleased that all levels of government are now focused on both drinking and surface water. For our folks no issue is probably more important for my civics from both a health and an economic standpoint than water quality. Long term funding is really needed as you can start to hear from today's conversations and we know from what's been going. Sadly one of the terms I've been using is that we always find money for recovery. But what we really need to do is find money for prevention. And I think that's something to remember as we go forward.

For my folks on the East End denitrification systems are what we're looking for rather than sewers, but the implementation is really essential. And here are my items on the wish list: One, I think, Bridget, you mentioned the lockbox. We need to ensure that the money is used as intended and never used for the General Fund.

In addition selfishly I want that money returned that was borrowed from the Water Protection Fund. I know we allowed some borrowing, but I worked very hard to get the petition signed. And I think it's really important that as a show of good faith, that this money be used immediately.

In addition, I want there to be more staff for the Department of Health Services, Environmental Division. They never have enough people to monitor what's going on or to approve what needs to happen as quickly as possible. And in addition I want to ensure that the benefits of these sewage treatment systems aren't exchanged for more density. One of the concerns that I have is that right now with a lot of the town legislation, they turn around and say, "oh, if you're using a sewage treatment system, then we can give you extra density." We're negating the benefits of what we want to do if we continue to do that. So that as the systems are approved, there should be a prohibition against adding density just because you can, you know, treat more sewage while -- which in a sense becomes a net zero for moving us -- moving the needle in the right direction, which is to protect water quality.

And so lastly on behalf of my civics and all of their members, I do want to thank you. And I hope that you'll act quickly. We really appreciate your help. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

Thank you, Andrea. Linda Nemeth followed by Sid Bail.

**MS. NEMETH:**

Good morning. Thank you so much for coming. It's greatly appreciated that you're out in this end of the woods, or this neck of the woods. I'm a member of the Calverton Civic as well as the Riverhead Neighborhood Preservation Coalition, which has tried its hardest and is always working to try to preserve what we have left of our farmland and the agricultural land. It is the reason that the East End of the Island is so wonderful. And the respect I have for the farmers who do work day and night, year-round, even though you don't see it, is just incredible.

I came from farming country which has disappeared. So we keep finding places to squeeze these farms and squeeze the farmers. And pretty soon we'll be going overseas for all of our food if we're not careful and caring about what we have. Because once we lose it, that's it, it's gone. And the reason for people coming out here, for tourists and people just coming to enjoy the beauty of the land, let alone just buying during seasonal is so important to us and to the way of life out here. And I would appreciate your looking at and doing what you can as a county legislature toward the town's responsibility in terms of maintaining the zoning that exists rather than constantly making exceptions to zoning and then exceptions to those exceptions.

So, for instance, changing an agricultural piece of land to an RC. And I do live in an RC community. But then changing that RC with exceptions so that you can double the amount that even exists in an RC situation. So I'd appreciate any help you can give us in maintaining the farmland and the agricultural land that remains. And, again, thank you for very much for coming.

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

Thank you. Sid Bail followed by Phil Barbato.

**MR. BAIL:**

Good morning. Sid Bail, President of the Wading River Civic Association. I'd like to thank Legislator Krupski and Legislator Fleming for -- and all the rest of you for being out here in the lovely East End. And although I don't really have anything specific to say, in August when you come back here, we're going to try to arrange some sunshine for you. And although I can't guarantee it, you know, it's something to look forward to. Thank you very much.

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

Thank you, Sid. Phil?

**MR. BARBATO:**

Good morning. Phil Barbato.

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

Good morning, Phil.

**MR. BARBATO:**

I'm President of the Riverhead Neighborhood Preservation --

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

Pull it up just -- right up to you, yeah. You're tall.

**MR. BARBATO:**

Phil Barbato. I live in Jamesport. I'm an organic farmer. I'm also President of the Riverhead Neighborhood Preservation Coalition. I want to thank Legislator Krupski and Legislator Fleming for helping to push this towards our location. And I thank the rest of you for being here this morning. We really appreciate this kind of attention and ability to come a lot more easily to attend your meetings. Obviously we have pressing issues. This is like a window of opportunity. The game will

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be won and lost in the next few years really if we don't preserve our farming and our open space soon. It's going to be gone just like every other place.

I grew up on a farm in Smithtown. You can't find it now. It's gone. It's underneath houses and roads and you name it. So I have some personal reasons for really getting involved. My farm was preserved by the County way back in 1970. It's a little 14-acre piece of paradise and it's in the middle of lots of other preserved farmland, either county or town or both. We need farms. We need farmers. And I hope you will encourage the preservation of both, especially younger farmers. The average age of the farmer in the United States, I think, is approaching 60. We need to encourage younger farmers to get involved. And the way to do that is to make farmland preserved and affordable so that those young folks can come out and work on it.

So I appreciate your support and thank you very much for doing this.

### **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

Thank you, Phil. Phil was the last -- really the last one to fill out a card. Is there anyone else in the audience who did not fill out a card and would still like to speak? Okay, seeing none, we will close the Public Portion. We'll move onto the presentation portion of our agenda.

### **PRESENTATION**

First presentation on the agenda is the North Fork Deer Management Alliance. They will be giving a presentation entitled "The Over-population of White-tailed Deer: Effects on Human Health, the Environment and the Economy." The audience -- we will be looking at this very large screen in the middle of the isle, but the two television screens -- thank you -- I couldn't come up with that word -- are there for you to look at. Hopefully they work. We can't see it from here so raise your hand if something doesn't appear on the screen. Just bear with us while we pull up the presentation.

### **MS. KAHAN:**

Thank you very much. Good morning. Thank you very much to the Committee and to Legislator Krupski for inviting us. We're very honored to be here and we share everybody else's views about how much more convenient this is than Hauppauge.

We -- Amy -- this -- my name is Hazel Kahan and my colleague is Amy Dries. We are members of the North Fork Deer Management -- I'm sorry -- of the North Fork Deer Management Alliance. We're all on the north fork. And at the moment we -- it's a group that's been around for about four years, but it's become extremely -- it's gathered a lot of momentum in the last year or so. And we are now planning to have a lot more members because we got a lot of work to do.

What I'm going to do -- what we're going to do is I'm going to have Amy introduce herself because she has a very impressive resume. And then we will take you through this slide presentation. And I'd just like to point out that we're doing two things here. We're telling you -- introducing ourselves to you so you'll know who we are and what we do. And then at the same time, kind of the medium is the message, we will be showing one of the things we're doing -- we're doing is doing this presentation as outreach to everybody in Southold, if we can.

I also want to say that at the end we have a brochure and a card to give to each of you, but we'll wait 'til the end for that. So -- so I'm now going to hand it over to Amy.

### **MS. DRIES:**

Hi. My name is Amy Dries. I'm a lifelong resident of Laurel and a graduate from SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry with a Bachelor of Science in Conservation Biology. I'm also a lab technician for an environmental consulting company and have worked for the North Fork

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Environmental Council and Group for the East End, two environmental groups on the north fork.

### **MS. KAHAN:**

And she's now going to be doing less volunteer work for our group because she's got too many jobs. Okay, we're going to start.

### **SLIDE SHOW PRESENTATION**

So this is the first slide, is our Mission Statement. And it's very clear what we want to do. We know that the -- we have too many deer. And our mission is to somehow through many different ways reduce the current population of deer to levels compatible with a truly functioning ecosystem so that we will restore to its former health, human health, the environment and the economy. And through the presentation we'll show you what we mean by those -- by those. So we have too many deer. We have -- and because we have too many deer, we have too many diseases; we have too many auto accidents; we have too much destruction to our forests and maybe that was the most important thing we should have started with since this is an environmental group we're talking to; too much contamination of our waters; and too much economic devastation to farmers as well as to regular householders and other businesses.

So I'll just very quickly go through the projects and I'll end with the one that says social media because that's what Amy does. So basically one of the things we're doing is this brochure that we'll be handing out to you, we're trying to raise money to get that brochure into the house of -- into the hands of every single household in Southold. So we've applied to the Long Island Community Foundation for a grant, which we hope will -- we'll know in July.

We've also done a series of six editorials in the Suffolk Times written by scientists and other people. One of them is actually Al Krupski. He wrote an article about the impact on his farm of too many deer. We're also working with the town for a deer management, a wildlife manager position. It's a little bit unclear exactly what we do and what they do, I mean, in terms of the town. As I said we're applying for a grant from the Long Island Community Foundation. And then we try to work with our legislators, with our congress people and so on. And we've met with them and, you know, we keep up with them.

So, Amy, just talk about what you're doing.

### **MS. DRIES:**

So we're starting to get a social media presence. I have business cards later that we'll give out with our Facebook link. A big part of what we're trying to do is education. A lot of it is starting a discussion with the community about the issues we have because a lot of people, they realize we have a lot of deer but they don't realize the impacts and the severity of our issue. So we'll be doing more with social media and more with community education development to get that word across.

So the first big issue that deer present for us is with ticks. Everyone hates them. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, I know of at least 14 tickborne diseases. Eight of those 14 can be found on Long Island. And it was -- just recently we had an article published -- the East End actually has more reported cases of tickborne diseases than any other area in Suffolk County. Many of these diseases are chronic or deadly. People know of Babesiosis, Lyme's, Rocky Mountain. But an important thing with deer and a misconception is that deer are the only reproductive hosts that we have. Some people say that, you know, mice or other small mammals can affect our tick population, but they're not large enough to provide a blood supply. And they also do grooming. So ticks on those small mammals cannot reach their reproductive stage. Deer are the only ones that can do that.

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Auto accidents is another big issue in our town. Twenty-five percent of all accidents in Southold Town involve hitting a deer. And the chance of hitting a deer is 3.5 times the national average out here.

So the NFDMA we put together a graph using statistics from the Southold Town Police Department and from State Farm Insurance. We wanted to just see if the auto accidents are increasing over a range, and they are. The blue on the screen is going to show the reported accidents. And the red is the estimated unreported. The ones that go -- sometimes when you have a scene, there is no carcass. The deer runs off injured. People don't report it to the police. So we included those in our estimates over a percentage each year. And we also have the insurance premiums. So the cost is going up for Southold Town because of the increased auto accidents of deer. And we're hoping to eventually see this decrease if we can lower our deer population.

**MS. KAHAN:**

This doesn't include the town insurance, right? For the --

**MS. DRIES:**

No. This is -- yeah, this is the State Farm statistics. So we actually have this graph later and a paper handout so you can look at it more closely.

And this is just a map. It's very hard to see the -- I can't zoom in right now, but in East Hampton they're actually working on mapping the deer carcasses retrieved from the Town of East Hampton. So all those tiny dots that fill up the area, the green ones, they're very small, account for at least one; where those bigger red dots are nine to ten. We're hoping to get similar mapping reported on the north fork and follow in the steps of East Hampton. We have -- and this just graphs, there was 1,966 road kills between 2008 to 2014.

**MS. KAHAN:**

In East Hampton.

**MS. DRIES:**

U-hum.

**MS. KAHAN:**

So one of the things that -- what we've been trying to do with this presentation is talk about the various deer impacts. And we've talked about the accidents and we've talked about -- what is the other thing? Ticks, ticks? So this -- this to me is the least maybe poorly -- the most poorly understood of the impacts, and that is the destruction to the forest, to the understory of the forest. People just don't seem to quite understand how severe it is. Because it's not just a matter -- as you see on the healthy forest, it's not just a matter of it's a nicer, beautiful green, but the barren -- the slide on the -- on the right, it's decimated. I mean nothing is growing there. And what it means is that the habitat -- this is a kind of habitat loss. And we have more devastating pictures to show. We don't bring good news when we come. So that the decimation means that it's basically dead. It's dead. The birds -- it's tremendous stretch to all the existing species because birds leave because they can't find worms and they can't feed their babies. And the insects aren't there and the pollinators aren't there, the whole thing is just very severely compromised. And new saplings, you know, the trees that fall down in the storms and so on, they're not going to regenerate because the acorns and whatever it is, the deer eat them. And even if they didn't eat them, they would just -- there's not enough for them to hold onto to regenerate. So these are John Rasweiler's photographs. And it's pretty much the same thing except -- Amy, can you just read what it says there?

**MS. DRIES:**

So this is -- what we're showing in here is there's actually a line where the deer can eat up to. It's

the line that they can reach. So you can see across -- this is Ruth Oliva Preserve in East Marion in the top left. Bottom left is Grace Estate in East Hampton. And then there's -- they did an experiment actually on Shelter Island in the top right photo where they put up a fenced enclosure where deer had no access to it. And the difference is really substantial to show that it is the deer causing these issues to our environment. On the left-hand of the fence you have absolutely no understory. And the right-hand where the deer can't access it, you have a beautiful understory that was able to grow.

**MS. KAHAN:**

And it's just, you know, it's just getting worse. That's the point. And the more deer there are, the worst it gets. This is -- these are two pictures of Plum Island where there are no deer; or at least if there are any deer, they're dispensed with very quickly by the -- whoever it is that does that on Shelter Island. So it's very clear -- I mean on Plum Island. So it's just very clear that the relationship between too many deer and forest destruction, it really can't be argued.

And this is a picture (referring) of a -- of a deer, because it's not just humans that get Lyme disease or tick diseases, tickborne diseases, this is a fawn who's got -- he's going blind in his eye because of ticks that have invaded his ocular region.

Now we've heard a few things, mentions of water, water purity, water protection. With the deer, it's not that they -- well, I guess they swim as well, but the presence of the deer in the forest, first of all, creates soil erosion. Secondly, by the way they are in the forest, it also creates water run-off. And that's even if they didn't do anything else. But there have been many instances documented by the Southold Oyster Shellfish Report of fecal -- wildlife fecal material in the water. So clearly this is something that hasn't become a huge problem yet but it's certainly on the way and we've got to really be very keen to prevent it getting any worst.

And this is something probably every household, I'm sure, Al Krupski, your heart bleeds when you see this picture I'm sure, and this is what happens (referring) I mean, they just come and they eat the -- they do this. This is -- there's not much more to say, but here this quote from Karen Rivera is -- mentions something, we don't often hear about and that is the price of the agricultural land in our region is also higher than it is in many other places. So the damage is, therefore, more serious.

**MS. DRIES:**

So there are some impractical, unaffordable or undesirable solutions that have been going around. The first is yard spraying. Yard spraying may be great for small properties but it's bad for other beneficial organisms such as bees or butterflies. You're adding a chemical into the environment. And it's temporary. It has to keep being reapplied and can only cover small areas. We can't cover all of Southold Town with it. And it wouldn't do anything for our deer problem. The only thing is it would temporarily solve the tick issue, but if you have more deer, they're just going to keep coming back and the ticks are going to keep reproducing.

The next is four poster de-ticking stations. Experimental sites have been set up on Shelter Island with no proven results that it's been successful for a couple of reasons. What a four poster de-ticking station, in case you didn't know, it's -- what's seen in the picture, it's a barrel that stores corn and the corn is released into bins. And then on each corner there's like a paint roller. And it's rolled in permethrin, a chemical that will rub against the deer and get rid of the ticks.

There are New York State regulations on these four poster de-ticking stations. They can't be within 300 feet of roads or areas where there's children. And they're unaffordable. Shelter Island spends \$3,200 a year for 38 stations. And -- yeah. And then Southold's price tag would be round \$2 million a year because there's a recommended density that you have one device for every 40 to 50 acres. Southold Town has 32,000 acres. So even for that to be successful, it's not probable. You

also have issues with this because you're driving other animals, not just deer to a food source. You're going to have raccoons and rats and other issues. And when you congregate wildlife, you're going to have an increased spread of disease. And it's also said that you have to have 90% of the deer population to rub against these in order for there to be some success. That's improbable because in a natural instinct, some deer are going to become dominant over feeding sources than others. So it's impractical.

**MS. KAHAN:**

It's also expensive because you have to stock it with bait.

**MS. DRIES:**

Yes.

**MS. KAHAN:**

And the other thing is with all of this traffic around these -- these -- oh, all the traffic, wildlife traffic around these four posters, there's -- again, there's destruction to the land, to the forest, or to whatever the particular environment is there.

**MS. DRIES:**

And the final solution that just doesn't work is fertility control. A lot of people say this is the better option. But in order for fertility control even to take place, it has to be certified as a research project. Both Cornell Campus and Fire Island have tried this method and it's failed in both of those cases. It's \$500 to capture and vaccinate and over \$1,000 to sterilize each deer. So that's a \$1,500 price tag per deer. And in order for this to be effective, over 90% of the herd needs to be sterilized within a three-year period --

**MS. KAHAN:**

Re-sterilized.

**MS. DRIES:**

Yes. And every single year you need to re-sterilize. So that sterilization is -- or, I'm sorry, the contraceptive vaccine for it is only good for one year. So then you'd have to do the recapture again and the re-sterilization. And it just adds up to something that's completely unaffordable and has been known to fail.

**MS. KAHAN:**

And you still got the ticks on the ones that remain.

**MS. DRIES:**

So we're going to be passing out brochures later because our main goal is to educate the public. I'm not going to go through each of these but you can read more about the seven biggest myths about deer. They're outlined within that brochure and some things that we've already discussed right in this presentation.

**MS. KAHAN:**

These are -- these are the objections we get whenever we encounter somebody who disagrees with us. They say one of these things; or one or more of these things. So we thought we'd put them altogether with our -- with our counter objections, yeah.

**MS. DRIES:**

So our solution, what we're hoping to do, we really want the public to support recreational hunting. Everyone on the NFDMA, we're all animal lovers. I could personally never hunt a deer, but I know that there are people that can. And it's very controversial, but it's the only known method if we need to reduce the population. We want to promote safe hunting practices and we want to spread

the word about venison donations. Southold Town has a venison donation program set up where a hunter can actually go to the Peconic Lane Rec Center and drop off the venison. And it's donated to local food pantries and they get a tax deductible write-off from that. Thirty thousand pounds to date have been donated in Southold Town.

And another issue is, most of the north fork is private lands. So we're asking people of the public, we have a phone number later on to give them access to hunters. You can call Southold Town, and even if you have a small property, if it meets the right qualifications, can be hunted on. You can work with your town and with these hunters to allow them access to your land.

**MS. KAHAN:**

Because at the moment most -- the public lands have been hunted and hunted and hunted. They're not being very productive anymore so we really need to get to the private lands. And to do that, we need to get permission from householders. This is a good place for me to stop. This is really -- this is a quote as if it's from me, but it's really in this case -- these words represent our group. As Amy said, we are animal lovers. We're not doing this because we enjoy -- well, we don't hunt ourselves, but we're not advocating culling or hunting or any of those things because we think it's fun. We really truly care about the ecosystem that we live in. And we truly believe that there is no other way of protecting us, the whole ecosystem which includes the deer and the humans and the unseen creatures. And we want to, you know, restoring the balance is a very, very difficult thing. It's not clear that it can be done. It's not clear that it can be done in the next ten years. So it's just -- it's just a very critical thing and that is partly what -- that is very much of what we want to communicate to our neighbors.

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

Thank you. So do we have any questions from members of the Committee? Legislator Krupski, did you have -- oh, I'm sorry. Legislator Trotta.

**LEG. TROTТА:**

What about the West End? I live by Sunken Meadow Park and they culled that a couple weeks ago and shot at last count about 75; and in Huntington they shot a hundred. Are there any plans to educate the people over there?

**MS. DRIES:**

Well, as far as putting numbers on everything, I'm not sure exactly the success of that, there's been numbers thrown out, like, you need 90%. And we have a lot more than a couple hundred out here. But with management, we don't want to put a number on it. We want to see the impacts of the deer decrease. So whether that takes 50% of the population or whether that takes 80, we're unsure. But we are -- we're looking at each of the different factors and trying -- rather than increasing ticks, increasing auto -- auto accidents to find the right level where they can be on a decline. But it's very difficult to put numbers onto how many it's going to take to reach those goals.

**MS. KAHAN:**

One of them is how many carcasses are there; how many have hunters culled -- harvested and how many are dead on the road because of car accidents. Those are two very objective measures, but all we know is whether they're going up or down. We don't know what the right number is.

**LEG. TROTТА:**

I mean, I personally would like to see more hunting, because, you know, it stimulates the economy. They're buying bow and arrows, they're buying clothing, they're buying a lot of other stuff. And I would like to see more hunting on public lands.

**MS. DRIES:**

The problem now is recreational hunting isn't enough. It's not enough to get us -- the numbers that we're seeing from recreational hunting are not enough to make the deer population decrease.

**MS. KAHAN:**

The average recreational hunter, I think it's one or two deer a year, is what they can produce --

**LEG. TROTTA:**

Increase the number of hunters.

**MS. KAHAN:**

But then they have to be managed. What's very important in this whole thing about hunters, it's not enough just to give people licenses or whatever, or to put them on the roster of Southold Town. There's this whole idea of integrated management. It's a strategic thing that people -- there's dispute about this, frankly, that the hunters need to be trained. They don't think they do need to be trained. It's not a matter of training how to hold the bow. It's a matter of how do you -- where do they go, do they go in groups, how often do they go, all that sort of thing and how do they -- how do they bait? These are things that can be trained. So, you know, it's very much a very lively discussion and it's not -- it's not resolved yet. But this is the number. If you would call this number and --

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

Legislator Anker.

**LEG. ANKER:**

I have a question regarding -- right here -- you know, car accidents and, you know, human health. Again, you mentioned some of the concerns with Lyme's disease and some of the tick diseases. But as far as traffic, have there been people killed, people injured? I'll assume so. And if so, how many?

**MS. KAHAN:**

I don't think we know that. We just have from the police department the number of accidents, of collisions. And then we have the -- you know, the State Farm Insurance numbers about the cost. But it's definitely, it's a health cost. Two ways in which health costs are -- health is -- our health is being impacted: One is by the accidents and the other is by the -- by the disease. And those two, you know, then you can add the cost of lost hours of work and medical insurance and all those things.

**LEG. ANKER:**

Right. And as far -- as far as our County responsibility, our highest priority is public safety and health. And the deers are presenting an issue with this. And we do appreciate your advocacy. You know, again, I love animals. You know, my kids raised funds to save animals. But the problem is we need to deal with, again, the public safety and the health issue. Is there a possibility of relocating? You know, you mentioned the 2000 road kill that has happened from 2008 to 2014. Is there a way to bring them to a different location? You know, pull them in by baiting, I'm assuming, and move them Upstate; move them somewhere where they're not a health and safety hazard.

**MS. KAHAN:**

I don't know who would want them.

**MS. DRIES:**

Upstate is also having issues with deer populations as well. It's not just Long Island but also the costs associated with that just for the capture and the relocation and for the numbers that we have,

it's really not plausible to do that. And also when you introduce them, you're kind of just moving the problem. There's not many areas that have a lack of deer right now.

**LEG. ANKER:**

Right. And I sit on the Brookhaven National Lab's Legislative Advisory Board and also I was part of the Community Advisory Committee. And I remember that, you know, they've been dealing with this problem for a number of years and they're using the four poster system at this point.

**MS. KAHAN:**

In Brookhaven?

**LEG. ANKER:**

At Brookhaven National Lab. And they -- you think, you have a group of physicists and people that think beyond, you know, what most people can do. And they still can't come up and resolve this issue with the over-population of deer.

**MS. KAHAN:**

I thought they had a cull last year some time.

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

Could you talk into the microphone.

**MS. KAHAN:**

They had a cull last year at Brookhaven. And I seem to remember that the story was 300 deer killed with 301 bullets. That was sort of a, you know, a call out for sharpshooters.

**LEG. ANKER:**

Right. That's a recent. That was last year.

**MS. KAHAN:**

Yeah, yeah.

**LEG. ANKER:**

But this -- the issue has been going on for, you know, at least a decade, you know, since I was on the board. And, you know, unfortunately, yes they had to do the deer culling, you know, to the extent where, you know, you don't want to kill a living creature for no reason. But if that situation is going to involve someone, some person getting killed, then you have to do something more and take those measures.

**MS. KAHAN:**

And it's really bad for the deer. You know, the reason they're eating everything is because they're hungry and because they are -- you know, the ratio of number of deer to acreage is off, it's wrong.

**LEG. ANKER:**

I think the key word is humane. We have to be humane with the animals that are around us. And unfortunately this is a very, you know, a very challenging situation. But thank you.

**MS. KAHAN:**

It is. It's very difficult. It's very difficult. And the thing is not to become sort of blase about it or to just let it roll off your back, you know, I mean, we are killing animals, so.

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

Okay, any other questions. Legislator Krupski.

**LEG. KRUPSKI:**

I'd just like to thank you both so much for coming. And this has been an evolving issue certainly in Southold. And I remember going out to Robins Island before Louis Bacon bought it and it was like the pictures that you showed, all the understory's gone. The deer -- there were hundreds of deer there and they were starving because you're on an Island and the food source was completely gone. And once they controlled the population there, the vegetation did come back. It was like the picture you showed on Mashomack, that was with the deer exclusion fence, you know, mother nature will rebound. But this is just a population that's really -- completely out of control. And you're doing great work. And I like Legislator Trotta's question about getting this information to his Town because as the problem moves further west, you know, people react differently, *well, let's try this and let's try that*. But you shouldn't really have to reinvent the wheel when it comes to all these different problems and solutions.

**MS. KAHAN:**

We are committed to taking this presentation wherever we're invited.

**LEG. KRUPSKI:**

Thank you.

**MS. KAHAN:**

And I just -- sorry, I was just going to say something, I forget. Oh, I just wanted to say that -- and this is a bit further down the road, but we also recognize that it's not just a deer problem. It's a wildlife problem. Because, you know, there -- there are so many other, you know, geese are just one of them. I mean, you all know what the other ones are. And it's going to become increasingly a wildlife problem. So, I think, it's very useful for us to always remind people that it's not just the deer and it's not just the East End, you know. It's the whole northeast -- it's huge, it's much bigger than everybody -- most people realize. So we're very dedicated to continuing doing this. Because we live here, you know. It's our -- it's our forest. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

All right. Thank you so very much.

**MS. KAHAN:**

We just want to give everybody a copy of this brochure.

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

Yes, they did. Thank you.

**MS. KAHAN:**

Oh, you did already. Okay.

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

Thank you very much. We appreciate your time.

**MS. KAHAN:**

Yeah, it's unfinished, you know.

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

Yes, we noticed. But thank you for sharing this -- what you have thus far. Okay. We do have --

**MS. KAHAN:**

Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

Thank you. Thank you for all your hard work.

We do have another presentation this morning. Cornell Cooperative Extension will offer a presentation about the Countywide agricultural issues.

**PRESENTATION**

**MS. CATLIN:**

All right. Can everybody hear me? Little closer, got it. All right, well, thank you so much. I'd like to echo everyone else's comments.

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

Hold that up.

**MS. CATLIN:**

Oops, sorry.

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

If you don't mind, just pull the -- pull the microphone closer to you. It just works better that way.

**MS. CATLIN:**

Okay, let me know if I drift too far away. Anyway I would like to echo everyone else's comments and thank you all for coming out to Riverhead. I work right here in town and it's a lot more convenient for me to be able to make this presentation.

So I'm with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County. I am the floriculture specialist so I work with all the commercial greenhouse growers. And what I'm going to do today is just review a little bit about Cornell Cooperative Extension and some of the issues that we're working with and helping growers with.

I hope that you all know that agriculture here in Suffolk County is important. We are certainly one of the leading counties in the state for wholesale value of crops. In fact, as far as horticultural crops, we are the leading county so we are -- it is a significant endeavor out here in Suffolk County as you've already heard this morning. I know in some areas on Long Island it's hard to believe that there's not a lot of agriculture, but certainly on the East End and tucked away around the County as well there's plenty of agriculture going so.

There's three sort of main components within the agriculture program at Cornell Cooperative Extension. And, of course, one of our largest components is dealing with commercial agriculture and horticulture. We also work a lot with community environmental horticulture and that's homeowners and home gardeners and work with educating those groups of people as well. And we also have a group that work with Suffolk County properties with the pesticide phase-out law and managing the properties, parks and golf courses that are Suffolk County-owned.

For our commercial agriculture and horticulture we basically cover all the major crop commodities that are grown out here in Long Island. We have an individual covering vegetable crops, someone covering nursery crops and landscape -- commercial landscape producers, floriculture greenhouse, that's me, viticulture specialist. And we have cross commodity folks handling weed management and entomology, an agricultural stewardship program. And then we have general agriculture which is just the catchall of everything else.

So, again, this is something you've already heard about this morning is one of our biggest issues

and concerns on Long Island is groundwater protection. And really a lot of what we do is both in education and research that's going to help growers adapt to new practices, do some research to figure out what those practices might be, anything that can help reduce nitrogen, leaching or pesticide leaching, whether it be from use or better practices. So a lot of what we do is based on protecting our groundwater.

One of the main ways we do this is certainly education and outreach. We do a lot of publications, weekly, monthly, yearly that are written and published on line or in print. There's various e-news letters, we have websites with a lot of information. We will produce topical fact sheets as issues arise. And, of course, we always do one on one assistance. Of course there's a component of educational programs. A lot of this is classroom style but we do a lot of tours. We'll have meetings on topical issues that come up in addition to our regular yearly meetings. We try to incorporate as much hands-on learning as possible, whether it be holding a program at a greenhouse grower or a farm instead of, say, in a conference center. In some cases, like in this lower left corner is our weed science specialist Andy Senesac. He'll bring the education program to you. He's got a wagon with weeds that'll help people learn and identify invasive plants and he can bring that to people and travel wherever it needs to go.

What I want to do for research, talk about research and demonstration, I really just want to highlight a little bit of the work that we've been doing at Cornell working with the growers. A lot of our work is done right here in Riverhead at the Long Island Horticultural Research and Extension Center. If any of haven't been there and would like to go, we certainly invite you to come and visit us. We'd be happy to give you a tour. In addition to doing this on -- this conducted research at the Cornell facility, we do a lot of on-farm research and demonstration and that's going onto a grower's property, and either helping them try out a new practice or hold their hand with something new; or maybe try it on a bigger scale than we were able to do at the research farm. So we do a lot of that.

So just going through some of the highlights of what we do, we do a lot of general crop culture and management research. We do a lot of pest and disease management whether it's conventional or alternative. And I'll talk about some of those. In general integrated pest management where we look at all the possible things that you can do to manage a pest.

One of the things we do and this is kind of just across the board, a lot of different -- myself and my coworkers will do variety trials. And it's really important if you're going to put in some acres of potatoes to know that you're going to get maybe the best yielding one that's going to do the best on Long Island. It doesn't really help you to know if this variety performs well in Idaho. We need to know how it does here on Long Island. And that's true also for flower crops, other vegetable crops and vineyard crops as well. They do a variety trial at the research vineyard where they'll try out new varieties to make sure that they're appropriate for our region.

One recent issue that I was involved in, there was a disease on garden impatiens. Garden impatiens had been the most produced bedding plants in definitely the northeast, if not the nation. And in the early 2010s a disease called downy mildew affected the plants, which really changed what is grown in greenhouses for crops. So there is a big educational push about educating the growers about what the disease is, how to manage it, if it could be managed, educating the landscapers and homeowners as well. So this was a demonstration to demonstrate some of the other shade annuals that people could use in place of garden impatiens while they were seeking to replace that crop as one of their primary crops.

We have a variety of scattling programs. And what scattling programs do is they really give growers an idea of exactly where and when a pest is occurring. So when you know when that happens, you can best target your management strategies, making sure you're managing the right pest and at the right time when it's there. Also these programs are helping us to monitor and track some of these

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new invasive pests like brown marmorated stink bug and the spotted wing drosophila that are affecting our crops now. They've been new in the past five years.

One of the more novel ways that folks have been working with over the past few years is what's called pheromone disruption or mating disruption. And what pheromones are, it's a chemical signal between insects that allow the male and females to find each other. And if you can kind of permeate the area with this pheromone, they look like these little lures up in the upper right-hand corner, the males and females can't find each other and then, thus, you'll get population control. So this is a non-pesticidal way of managing these pests. And it's been fairly successful and we've had quite a number of growers adopt this. And this is another program with a different insect where they were doing the same thing. This kind of red looks like a zip tie around the branch. That's what the management is. And it's turned out to be fairly effective.

Just some other examples of some of the things that they've been -- my coworkers have been working on, there's disease suppressive cover crop trials. If you've driven around the north fork the past couple of years, you see this kind of beautiful bright yellow field, that's a mustard crop and it's used to help suppress root rot and -- fruit rot disease that's pretty difficult to manage. And that's going to be, I think, moving forward a very important component of that management, of that disease.

I've been mostly discussing a lot of pesticide related trials but there's a lot of work with controlled-released fertilizer. By using controlled-release nitrogen fertilizer, you can reduce nitrate leaching into the groundwater. And we've had a large number of growers adopt, particularly in sweet corn and some other crops, but there's been work in sweet corn, nursery crops, some vegetable crops as well, looking to have more efficient use of fertilizer. I don't want to leave out organic growers. We do have an organic block at the research center that they are looking at organic practices. So these are looked at as well.

Just a few more examples: There's an invasive weed which is quite problematic. It spreads very readily, it's called mile a minute. Our weed science specialist who's looking at a weevil, which feeds on the mile a minute weed. It may not be the answer to it, but it's definitely helping in some situations. So that's been one other aspect that we've been looking at.

And other biological control, I've worked some with greenhouse growers and some at the research center, working with biological control of greenhouse pests. And these are using either beneficial insects, whether they're predators or parasites of the pests that are in greenhouses, we look to use those to manage crops and green -- I'm sorry, manage pests in greenhouses.

I just wanted to highlight briefly our community environmental horticulturists. As I mentioned before these are our homeowners that we support. We do have diagnostic class where homeowners can come with their samples and have their issues identified, whether it's a lawn pest or something wrong with their garden plants. There's also soil testings that homeowners can bring their soil in and get soil tests to know if they needed fertilizer or lyme or whatnot. We have two locations in Riverhead and also at Bayard Cutting. And they also will answer questions via e-mail or phone. And they have a web -- websites and a blog which posts a lot of pertinent and valuable information.

This program also trains our Master Gardeners. And if you're not familiar with them, about 30 to 50 are trained every year. We have about 200 active gardeners and they volunteer an estimated of 15,000 volunteer hours each year. And there's garden outreach projects throughout Suffolk County at various parks, schools. It's really wide. And on our website you can see where some of these projects are located. They do a spring gardening school every year. This year it was in Patchogue Medford High School and it tends to move around each year so we can address different areas of the County. And they had, I think, over 350 people registered for that this year.

And lastly I just wanted to touch on the integrated pest management. So this is our staff that address the pest issues at Suffolk County properties, golf courses, parks, any grounds, any structural or nuisance pest as well. So they, as the rest of us, they do a lot of education outreach. They'll do pest ID and management. Just these are by no means a comprehensive list but we do partner with a lot of different organizations in our work be it, you know, DEC, NRCS, Soil and Water, a lot of the professional grower associations as well. And that was really just the highlight of Cornell and what we're doing for groundwater. Do you guys have any questions for me?

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

Yes. Legislator Fleming.

**LEG. FLEMING:**

Thank you so much for coming in and presenting this and for all the good work that you do. I know you're, like so many people in the County, understaffed and underfunded and yet you do really important work so thank you very much.

I just wanted to ask you, there was a question earlier -- a couple questions earlier with regard to what's been called the Bellone's Clean Water Initiative or the County Executive's proposed fee on water use. And there's some concerns with regard to agriculture. But I wanted to ask you, if I could, there seemed to be some misunderstandings out in the community with regard to the amount of nitrogen loading in our bays and in the estuary system that can be attributed to agricultural activity. You know, we can talk about legacy and, you know, the 1970s or '80s, or what have you, but I wonder if today -- my -- what I've been told and what I've relied on from the Nature Conservancy is that in terms of, for instance, the Peconic Estuary, septic systems and cesspools are responsible for 43% of the nitrogen loading; whereas agriculture, they say, is responsible for 16.7% and lawns and golf courses and other close to 10%. That's just for the Peconic Estuary. I wonder if Cornell has numbers on that or if you could enlighten us a little bit in terms of what really is happening with regard to nitrogen loading and agriculture activity.

**MS. CATLIN:**

Yeah, that is a good question. I am familiar with the Nature Conservancy study. And that's -- as far as hard numbers, that's probably what I would refer to myself. I'll say bluntly, I don't know exactly, we haven't done as much -- we've worked more directly with farmers to address, you know, their needs, what they need to do to protect the groundwater and stay in business.

The other component is fertilizers are expensive. So things like that would affect farmers. So I don't think I'll have definite numbers because that's not the specific corner of work that we've done. I could look into other areas. I would guess that it would track similar to the work that the Nature Conservancy did with the Peconic Estuary in other areas, but that's sort of not my corner of the world so I don't want to make a statement that I don't have definite facts to back up. I'd be happy to look more into that for you, though.

**LEG. FLEMING:**

I appreciate that. Does that seem out of whack to you those -- that kind of distribution? And can you talk a little bit, just if you could, about best management practices, you talked about using efficient use of fertilizer, the cost of fertilizer. But is -- is my information correct that, you know, nutrient loading from agricultural sources has been reduced significantly over the years and steadily continues to do so including, I think, your agricultural stewardship plan?

**MS. CATLIN:**

Oh, yes. I feel definitely the use and the loading has decreased over -- over the many years. Part

of it is knowledge; part of it is cost. But putting on your fertilizers a few times a year using controlled-released fertilizer, using better rates -- better targeted rates will all help. You know, certainly you look at the research from Nature Conservancy and, you know, the loading of agriculture isn't hugely significant, but it doesn't mean that we don't want to address and do our part to manage whatever groundwater issues that we have control over to do our part with that.

**LEG. FLEMING:**

Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

Legislator Anker.

**LEG. ANKER:**

Yeah, I also want to thank you for the work that you're doing, you know, creating advocacy for our -- for our County and how important farms and, you know, promoting gardening. I'm a big gardener.

**MS. CATLIN:**

Okay.

**LEG. ANKER:**

Yeah, I started gardening when I was probably, I don't know, five or six in the Florida sand. And I had rattlesnakes all around me and they said, you know, "Sarah, you shouldn't be out there (laughter)." But I've learned a lot since then. And I do appreciate your educational programs.

And so my question is, you know, I notice you have your map of the outreach and education locations. And it looks pretty balanced in Suffolk County. You know, there is a misperception of our Legislators that, you know, Cornell focuses on the East End, but that doesn't seem to be the fact with education because you have -- it looks like most of the school districts, if not all the school districts, participating in your programs.

**MS. CATLIN:**

Yeah, I mean we do -- it does -- we do get that perception a lot, you know, especially with my program works with farmers, most but not all farmers tend to be on the East End. But that doesn't mean we're only working with farmers. We're working with consumers and homeowners. And there are some farms in central and western Suffolk. And I work with greenhouses and there are certainly greenhouses.

And the one thing I didn't address too much is the support that we lend to the commercial horticulture audience, the commercial landscapers as well in addition to homeowners. And so they are, as you know, scattered entirely around the County and we support that audience as well.

**LEG. ANKER:**

Yeah. How are those impatiens doing? Are they back?

**MS. CATLIN:**

That's always the question. What I tell people is I wouldn't recommend them in a very large mass planting. I'm drifting away from the mike. I wouldn't recommend them in a mass planting. Or if you want to, you know -- it's just you know that there's a risk. If you want to plant them, plant them. And if we get some rainy weather in the spring, it might be conducive for the disease and they may not make it. But I wouldn't say don't put a plant here, a plant there. It was in particular the commercial landscapers who had those giant beds that needed to be pulled out and replanted. So

the breeders are working hard, I can assure you on that.

**LEG. ANKER:**

Okay. And I appreciate Cornell. Cornell provides a -- again, the educational component is so valuable and it provides a balance. Because anything in excess, as we've heard, you know with the deer management issue, creates problems. And, you know, as we grow, evolve, you know, with development and our population, we need to have that education to -- you know, especially pertaining to global warning -- of global warming. Because, you know, as our climate changes, so do our crops and understanding of what we can plant and when and how to -- how to maintain it. But, again, I do appreciate your service and your advocacy and look forward to working with you, especially with my -- my pollinator bill that's hopefully supporting those native pollinators because from what I've heard is that we're losing our bee population, we're losing our pollinators. What's your brief understanding of where we are with our farms and not having enough pollinators?

**MS. CATLIN:**

I'm not sure -- I'm probably not the one to speak to that. It's certainly a concern across the board. And I know that there's been some changes in pesticide labels recently to make sure that they're used appropriately and at the appropriate time so the pollinators aren't affected. I haven't heard of crises yet, but it's something that, I think, we all need to be aware of and make our changes before it becomes a crises.

**LEG. ANKER:**

All right. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

Okay. Legislator Trotta, you -- your question was answered. Legislator Krupski.

**LEG. KRUPSKI:**

How many pesticide credits do we get for today?

**MS. CATLIN:**

I don't know. I didn't file my paperwork.

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

There are a few in the audience, too, that really appreciated that. Okay. Seeing no other questions, thank you so very much for all that you do. I know I took a couple of the farm tours and I'm always impressed by what Cornell is doing. The pesticide piece with the pheromones was especially interesting. I found it fascinating all the work that you're doing and it's really good work and important for both the East End and the rest of our County. So thank you.

**MS. CATLIN:**

Thank you very much for your attention.

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

Thank you.

Okay. Oh, I forgot to mention earlier, Legislator Muratore has an excused absence. Seeing that we are -- was there anyone else in the audience who'd like to present today? No, I'm just kidding. Okay.

**TABLED RESOLUTIONS**

We now are moving onto Tabled Resolutions. **Introductory Resolution 1262, Appropriating funds in connection with the new Enhanced Suffolk County 1/4% Drinking Water**

**Protection Program - 2014 Referendum - land purchases (CP 8732.210). (Co. Exec.)** Oh, wait, do we have the County -- do we have the staff here from County Exec or the Planning Department today? This is 1309, correct? Oh, no, 1262, sorry.

**LEG. KRUPSKI:**

We should -- but this is something that -- this is the 2014 money. I was going to ask where the 2015 money is also.

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

I'm just pulling up my notes. So I know that I'm going to make a motion to table. Are we still -- the bond counsel, we're still waiting for those suggestions?

**MS. HORST:**

Yes, we're hoping to move this next cycle.

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

Next cycle. Legislator Krupski, you had a question?

**LEG. KRUPSKI:**

I'll wait 'til next cycle. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

Okay, so we have motion to table and a second. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **1262 is tabled. (VOTE: 5-0-0-1. LEG. MURATORE NOT PRESENT)**

**Introductory Resolution 1309, Adopting Local Law No. -2016, A Local Law to limit nitrogen content in lawn fertilizers. (Lindsay).**

**LEG. FLEMING:**

Move to table for a public hearing.

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

Correct.

**LEG. KRUPSKI:**

Second.

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

Motion to table, second -- motion to table by Legislator Fleming; second by Legislator Krupski. There will be a public -- public hearing at our May 10th meeting here in this auditorium on that bill. So it's motion to table and a second. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **1309 is tabled. (VOTE: 5-0-0-1. LEG. MURATORE NOT PRESENT)**

#### **INTRODUCTORY RESOLUTIONS**

Moving onto **Introductory Resolutions, 1339, Making a SEQRA determination in connection with the Proposed Replacement In-Kind of Portions of Yaphank County Center Sewers' Conveyance System**, oh, that's a handful -- mouthful -- **(CP 8158), Town of Brookhaven. (Pres. Off.)** Motion by Legislator Anker; second by Legislator Krupski. All those in favor? On the motion, Legislator Krupski.

**LEG. KRUPSKI:**

Yeah, can we get some -- normally these sewer projects come in through Public Works. Why is this

on the EPA agenda?

**MR. NOLAN:**

Because it's a SEQRA determination. All the SEQRA determinations come before this Committee.

**LEG. KRUPSKI:**

Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

Okay. We have a motion and a second. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **1339 is approved. (VOTE: 5-0-0-1. LEG. MURATORE NOT PRESENT)**

**Introductory Resolution, 1340, again, Making a SEQRA determination in connection with the Proposed Suffolk County Sewer District No. 3 Southwest Rehabilitation - Awixa Creek and Pilgrim Psychiatric Center Pumping Stations, (CP 8170) (Town of Islip). (Pres. Off.)**

I'll make a -- motion by Legislator Anker; seconded by Legislator Krupski. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **1340 is approved. (VOTE: 5-0-0-1. LEG. MURATORE NOT PRESENT)**

**Introductory Resolution 1365, Amending Resolution No. 1019-2015, extending authorization for the Town of Southampton Stormwater Abatement Project in the Reeves Bay Watershed and authorizing Water Quality Review Committee approved changes (CP 8240.325). (Co. Exec.).** Motion by Legislator Fleming.

**LEG. KRUPSKI:**

Second.

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

Second by Legislator Krupski.

**LEG. KRUPSKI:**

On the motion.

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

On the motion. Do we have --

**LEG. KRUPSKI:**

Could we get some clarification on what the approved changes were?

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

Frank. Frank Castelli is here.

**MR. CASTELLI:**

Yes, hi. The --

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

Still morning here. Thank you. (Laughter) Good morning.

**MR. CASTELLI:**

The original resolution for this -- actually the resolution that's being amended was 1019-2015. And when we were drafting the intermunicipal agreement with the Town of Southampton, the County Attorney's Office wanted some clarifications; basically two clarifications. The first one was that the original resolution said that the project would be initiated within one year of the adoption of the

resolution. And we wanted to change that to "the project must be initiated within three months of the execution of the IMA." That's the first change.

And the second change was merely in the Second Resolve. The resolution had stated that the Capital Projects' funding was extended through December 31st, 2016. And we knew at the time that that was not sufficient time for this project. This project is going to take about three years for the Town to do. But we were told by the Budget Office at the time that as long as you initiate the project in 2016, you wouldn't have a problem with retaining the capital funding. But the County Attorney's Office wanted us to clarify that so that this -- the amendment that's before you now states that the Capital Project is hereby extended through December 31st, 2019. And those are the only two changes. We really need to get this intermunicipal agreement executed. We've been waiting a long time for this. And this is a -- it's an interesting -- it's a great project and we need to move forward.

**LEG. KRUPSKI:**

Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

Legislator Fleming.

**LEG. FLEMING:**

I would be more than happy to answer any questions. This actually was initiated when I was on the Town Board in Southampton and it is a great project. It's a coastal resiliency project. There are 12 properties at the moment that are going to be turned over from the state to the Town of Southampton to be returned to their natural vegetated state in order to -- in order to supply coastal resiliency in the baby Pines area of Flanders. So I would appreciate support from this Committee. It's really moving us in a very good direction.

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

Excellent. So we have a motion and a second; correct?

**MS. ELLIS:**

Yes.

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

Yes, okay. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **1365 is approved. (VOTE: 5-0-0-1.**

**LEG. MURATORE NOT PRESENT)**

**Introductory Resolution 1380, Amending the Adopted 2016 Operating Budget to transfer funds from Fund 477 Water Quality Protection, amending the 2016 Capital Budget and Program, and appropriating funds in connection with the Town of Brookhaven's Shellfish Population Enhancement Project (CP 8710.332). (Co. Exec.)** I'll make a motion; seconded by Legislator Anker. Frank, just remind us of some of the details. I know this went through the Water Quality Review Committee.

**MR. CASTELLI:**

Right. This is a project that was recommended by the Water Quality Review Committee at our October 8, 2015 meeting. It's for \$82,623 of the Fund 477 money. It's fully matched by the Town of Brookhaven. And the funding will be for improvements to Brookhaven Town's shellfish facilities.

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

And is that facility in Mount Sinai Harbor?

**MR. CASTELLI:**

Yes, this is Mount Sinai Harbor. And the facility's being upgraded so that they will be able to produce three million oysters per year and one million hard clams.

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

Thank you. Okay, we have a motion and a second. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **1380 is approved. (VOTE: 5-0-0-1. LEG. MURATORE NOT PRESENT)**

**Introductory Resolution 1381, Amending the Adopted 2016 Operating Budget to transfer funds from Fund 477 Water Quality Protection, amending the 2016 Capital Budget and Program, and appropriating funds in connection with the H. F. Corwin and Son's Agricultural Waste Storage Facility System (CP 8240.337). (Co. Exec.)** Motion by Legislator Krupski.

**LEG. KRUPSKI:**

So moved.

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

Second by Legislator Fleming. On motion. I know that we had some speakers here on this earlier in the day, but, Frank, if you just want to give us what you normally do to summarize the project and the support of the Water Quality Review Committee.

**MR. CASTELLI:**

Yeah, again, this is another project that was recommended at the October 8, 2015 meeting of the Water Quality Review Committee. This is for \$250,000 of 477 funding. The total project has been estimated to cost 604,000; \$354,000 of that is coming from the Corwin Farm. The County is proposing to fund 41% of the total cost of this facility. The Water Quality Committee -- and also the County Attorney's Office has advised us that in order to fund this project, that we have to enter -- the County must enter into a contract with the Soil and Water Conservation District. The County's not going to enter into a contract with the private Corwin Duck Farm Facility. The money will be going to the Soil and Water Conservation District. And the District will have to enter into an agreement with the duck farm. That's what's been determined.

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

And the Soil and Water Conservation District had determined that this was, you know, a priority in terms of public benefit, a source that really needed to be mitigated; am I correct?

**MR. CASTELLI:**

Yeah, there's a clear public benefit to this. The Peconic Estuary Program's Comprehensive Management Program recommends that this type of activity be, you know, a high priority. Also the new -- the County's new Agricultural Stewardship Plan also states that this type of upgrade is very important. The upgrade of this waste management facility will clearly reduce the amount of nitrogen that gets into the Peconic Estuary system.

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

Did you -- any other questions? Okay. We have a motion and a second. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **1381 is approved. (VOTE: 5-0-0-1. LEG. MURATORE NOT PRESENT)**

**MR. CASTELLI:**

Thank you.

5/2/2016 EPA Committee

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

And seeing that there is no further business before our Committee, we are adjourned.

**THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 11:48 AM  
{ } DENOTES SPELLED PHONETICALLY**