



**East Hampton
Environmental Coalition**

2017 Environmental Survey of East Hampton Town Board and Supervisor Candidates

2017 Green Guide Participating Members

CONTRIBUTORS

Accabonac Protection Committee

Amagansett Springs Aquifer
Protection

Concerned Citizens of Montauk

International Dark Sky Association
– New York Chapter

Long Island, Businesses for
Responsible Energy (LIBFRE)

NYLCV Education Fund

Northwest Alliance

Renewable Energy Long Island

Quiet Skies Coalition

SUPPORTERS

Defend H₂O

Ditch Plains Association

Friends of Georgica Pond
Foundation

Group for the East End

Peconic Baykeeper

Perfect Earth Project

Surfrider Foundation: Eastern Long
Island Chapter

Third House Nature Center

OVERVIEW

As non-profit, nonpartisan environmental organizations concerned about the future of the East End, we have decided to once again become active in the upcoming election by raising awareness of the importance of these issues and will be collectively engaging the public in various ways.

The purpose of this activity is not to implicitly or explicitly support or oppose any candidate or political party, but to educate voters on local environmental issues and encourage them to be civically-active environmental advocates.

GUIDELINES

This questionnaire is designed to elicit your commitment to and ideas on addressing the important sustainability issues facing East Hampton.

Responses should be considered public. Complete, unedited responses will be reproduced and distributed publicly.

If you choose to refer us to a position paper or website, please indicate exactly what text you would like us to cite.

For candidates choosing not to respond to the questionnaire, we will note as much in our public materials.

TIMELINE

Questionnaires are due by October 11, 2017

Completed questionnaires must be submitted via e-mail as Microsoft Word file or PDF to: Joshua Klainberg, NYLCVEF - jklainberg@nylcv.org

Questions or extension requests may be directed to: Laura Tooman, CCOM - LTooman@PreserveMontauk.org

CONTACT INFORMATION

Please provide us with the following information:

Candidate Name: Paul A. Giardina

Position Sought: East Hampton Town Board - Councilperson

EXPERIENCE, PHILOSOPHY AND RELATIONSHIPS

- 1) Please share with us accomplishments or experiences that would indicate your commitment to advancing an environmental agenda for East Hampton. These may be professional or personal.

I have spent 45 years in the field of environmental protection, the last 40 with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). These were leadership positions ranging from program management dealing with the Clean Water Act, The Clean Air Act, and all of the other myriad Federal statutes. The reason I am running is because I want to take this experience base and apply it in my home town to improve water quality and rebalance our ecological imbalances. I have attached a bio to this questionnaire which tries to summarize 45 years of accomplishments. Here is a sampling of accomplishments your readers might find the most relevant. I successfully spearheaded the effort to save Long Island's drinking water when the Brookhaven reactors leaked. I was the incident commander for the Chemical Control toxic waste site explosion. I pioneered EPA's indoor air efforts to reduce the risk of indoor pollutants that cause childhood asthma attacks. I regulated the U.S. Department of Energy's air emissions successfully. I cleaned up left over weapons waste. Please see my bio and more important go to the website, paul4ehtb.com and go to the section entitled "My Story."

- 2) What do you believe is the role of town government regulation and enforcement in maintaining a natural, sustainable environment? What, if any, changes are the most important?

East Hampton Town government has many statutorily delegated tools to help in upgrading as well as maintaining a natural, sustainable environment. We need to understand that many of the tools are not being used. As an example I have pointed out that the Town Code provides for inspections of septic waste systems on a three year basis but the Town hasn't implemented this. Can you imagine how different things might be if this was done? I will start to have this rule enforced. The Town has an 11 year old Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan (LWRP) and a committee that is supposed to be involved with that plan. The committee has apparently met once and the plan hasn't even been synchronized with the State through an application process. I would audit the Town's Planning Department effort and make our LWRP work. In so many other cases we have water quality plans and other mechanisms developed over 4 years ago which the Town Board has whiffed on. It is only now, in an election year, that we see some movement, sparse as it is. I would also add that there needs to be some additions to the "tool box". A scheduled 5-year review of our lighting policy, a real effort at a Part 161 application for noise relief, and a realistic look at what actions we need to take to make our 2020 renewable energy goal are some of the tools needed and which I address in later questions more fully.

3) What resources, experts or opinions will you consult when making decisions that affect East Hampton Town's environmental resources?

There are two bodies of knowledge needed to adequately make decisions concerning our Town's environmental resources. First, and as I have stated from the outset, we need to add to the Town's workforce a New York State certified Professional Engineer with experience and proficiency in waste water and water quality. The Town does not have this and it is essential if we are to successfully master our septic waste problems and our overall water quality because this requires hard engineering solutions. This would be in addition to the staff of the Natural Resources Department which is obviously another strong body of knowledge as a Town resource. Further, as all 3 of the Republican candidates have stated repeatedly there is a tremendous body of expertise in the various NGOs that cherish our Town's environment. Whether it is a watershed specific organization or one that supports renewable energy all have expertise that needs to be tapped and consulted. Finally, as I have

often stated, the stress on our environment is caused by each one of us. It is up to each one of us to come up with solutions. Sometimes the expertise needed for a solution doesn't have a PE or isn't involved in an NGO. Expertise comes in all forms and John Q. Public is another important source. I will consult with and listen to all with a sensible opinion.

ISSUE QUESTIONS

The 2017 East Hampton Green Guide details opportunities and approaches to persistent environmental sustainability challenges facing the town. The following subjects come straight from the agenda where action items of critical importance to the environmental community can be found.

- 4) On Long Island, our economic prosperity, public health and safety, and quality of life rely upon a clean and sustainable supply of drinking water. Similarly, as an island blessed with bays, harbors, and beaches on every shore, the quality of our surface waters defines our outdoor experience. The consequences of over-development on a small ecosystem have been devastating to not only our groundwater but also our surface waters.

What actions will you take to protect groundwater and surface water?

A land protection program will serve to protect 1.3 million gallons of water per acre per year. The best tool we currently have is the CPF which should be used exclusively for land acquisition for groundwater protection as well as habitat protection. This is a tool we have now and can use with better efficiency.

The 3 Republican candidates have proposed a watershed septic upgrade plan last fall. This plan would use the existing East Hampton Code authority to inspect septic waste systems and would use that to identify those that are failures. It would start by looking at those before 1995 because subsequent to that date the Suffolk County Health Department had to issue an approval for systems. This does not mean that post-1995 systems are okay, but it establishes a priority for what should be the worst offenders closest to the despoiled watershed. From there our plan would utilize the \$2.2 billion EPA/State Revolving Fund to upgrade systems to low nitrogen state-of-the-art septic systems. Unlike the Town's plan which involves perhaps \$5 million per year, this would allow for many more systems to be upgraded creating better results. Understand that our plan unlike the Town's is not voluntary and uses existing enforcement tools. To date the voluntary plan the Town has proposed has 16 possible subscribers. With as many as 12,000 failed systems, the math doesn't work for a plan that doesn't have some regulatory clout. This can all be done at a cost to the homeowner of less than the average cable bill.

I also favor the Montauk business community shared septic waste plan but it must be realized that this is a \$35 million 5 year effort which must use EPA/State funds because it would strip the CPF 20% pot and make that funding unavailable for groundwater saving land acquisitions.

No matter what we do to control development we need to aggressively pursue plans for groundwater and surface preservation and improvement as outlined above.

- 5) Beaches, water-based tourism and the most productive fishing port in New York State anchor

East Hampton's economy. Erosion, sea level rise, and more frequent catastrophic storms are reshaping East Hampton. A sustainable, thriving community requires protecting natural buffers such as beaches, bluffs and wetlands and upgrading and adapting our infrastructure.

What actions will you take to achieve coastal adaptation and resiliency planning?

The issue of Coastal Adaptation and Resiliency Planning (CARP) is complex. Clearly, the current work to study coastal erosion rates is an important underpinning for decision-making. That effort seems to be underfunded. With an understanding of erosion rates coupled with meteorology the next steps would involve the development or improvement of two basic tools: the Town's Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP), and a Town CARP plan. The former has been totally neglected since its inception in 2006 and I have called for an audit of all matters associated with this 11 year disaster. Most important in CARP work is public involvement. As I have often mentioned, the decision as to whether and where to hold the line is for all East Hampton Town residents. All possible solutions such as relocating/retreat, flood-proofing and hardening need to not only be on the table but reviewed periodically. This is the only way we will be able to know if we can measure success. I would opine that a complex coastal environment such as our Town's will need complex solutions involving "all-of-the-above".

- 6) Wetlands, woodlands, grasslands, dunes, fresh water ponds, kettle holes, creeks, bays, and beaches abound in East Hampton, but are becoming increasingly rare nationwide. These ecosystems are not only a major draw for tourism and the area's economy, but are also valuable and vulnerable habitats that provide food, shelter, and breeding grounds for a wide array of creatures. Because of new development, the incursion of invasive species, the use of chemicals for fertilizers, pest and weed control, and increasing stresses of extreme weather and rising water levels, our native flora and fauna are stressed and in decline.

What actions will you take to address habitat stewardship?

To answer this I would use the "2017 East Hampton Green Guide" section on Habitat Protection and Stewardship as a model. I would move to the top of the list "Use CPF funds for the expansion and stewardship of preserved properties to maintain diversity of habitat". This works well with using CPF for groundwater protection. Clearly, a massive education effort to educate our citizens as well as our part-timers on this matter. As I have said on numerous occasions, "we have met the enemy and it is us." Talking about the proper place for pesticides, fertilizers, and fences, as well as a review of what in the Town Code can be used as tools, is imperative. Each Town Board member needs to realize that they have a personal responsibility to understand this field. As an engineer I have realized that I needed to embark on a learning curve to better understanding the ecological imbalance we have created in East Hampton and how we must rebalance it. The

curve is steep and I am still learning. I know I will need help.

- 7) The State of New York has recognized the urgent need for action to mitigate climate change by dramatically reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 40% by 2030 and 80% by 2050. Additionally, the state has directed electric utilities in the state to provide at least 50% of its electricity supply from renewable energy sources. In recognition of these mandates, the Town of East Hampton, in 2014, adopted a goal to meet 100% of community-wide electricity consumption from renewable sources by 2020 and further set a goal to meet the equivalent energy consumption in all sectors (electric, heat, transportation) 100% from renewable sources by the year 2030. At the same time, our grid is vulnerable to the effects of climate change and from time to time the siting decisions for the generation of power and its distribution have been incompatible with the government's mission to protect public health and safety.

What actions will you take to create a 21st century sustainable energy policy and grid?

The goal of meeting our renewable energy goals by 2020 can only be achieved by using the right renewable for our Town which at this time is solar. We have enough available acreage to do so easily and in a timely fashion. Further we need to lobby hard to scrap the New York State edict that no homeowner can produce more than 110% of their usage in solar energy. Why is this? It is because our State government owns power companies and needs to prop them up at the expense of our ratepayers and our environment. The State may have "recognized the urgent need for action to mitigate climate" but its actions show that their own self-interest comes first. Town owned solar is on the right side of the meter. Offshore windmills need study and are less efficient from a cost-benefit and an environmental standpoint, but most importantly, they do not help us meet our 2020 goal. It also must be realized that grid upgrade is much more easily facilitated with a solar solution on Town lands and through our residents than from 30 miles offshore. Isn't this just common sense? While I agree with the concept of an underground utility district I would caution that financial resources are sparse. We may need to ask what is our priority: cleaning and preserving our waters or undergrounding our grid?

- 8) The Town enacted an outdoor lighting ordinance in 1984 in order to preserve the nocturnal environment, community character, and quality of life from the effects of misdirected, excessive, unnecessary and inefficient outdoor lighting. There have been updates to the code but more are needed. Also the code needs to be fully enforced for new and existing installations and the municipality itself needs to conform to the standards set by the code.

What actions will you take to improve outdoor lighting policies to make our skies darker?

Our outdoor lighting policies should begin with a scheduled and periodic review that includes two principles, hand-in-hand: energy efficiency and consumption reduction as well as reduction of unnecessary light pollution. I would suggest that a comprehensive review be done periodically every five years though I am open to a different time frame. The best way to assure lighting policies are attended to is to schedule periodic reviews and have Town staff capable of doing the work. I would suggest upgrading staff on a part time basis with a staffer qualified to run a periodic review.

- 9) In order to ensure the peaceful enjoyment of East End residents' homes and properties; and the reduction or elimination of harmful noise and avgas emissions on protected wildlife and their habitat, further action is needed.

What actions will you take to reduce aircraft noise which will result in quieter skies?

The answer is the same I gave Thomas Twomey 15 years ago when I ran the EPA noise program. The FAA has a way under 14 CFR 161 for town's to get the ability to get noise restrictions without compromising air safety. If that advice had been taken by the Town Board 4 years ago when I advised a Town Board member as such you would not need to have this question. The machinations that have occurred have clouded the fact that there is a process that gives noise relief and still allows us to maximize the financial advantages of an airport and FAA support. This is not about local control versus Federal control. This is about joint common-sense control.