

Community News

# Enviros Present Green Guide

By Kitty Merrill

Standing on the steps of Town Hall Monday morning, the East Hampton Environmental Coalition presented its “Green Guide,” a primer on sustainability policy for candidates running for local offices this fall.

The Town of East Hampton has a long record of sustainability leadership, particularly on the issue of open space, the guide’s authors note. “But there are many steps the town can take to continue to improve its environmental performance – and the town’s elected leaders will play a critical role in this effort,” the authors declare. In collaboration with the New York League of Conservation Voters Education Fund, the coalition offered the guide as a resource for candidates.

It’s a “one stop shop” for policy makers looking for new opportunities and approaches to persistent sustainability challenges. Working with the NYLCVEF, 18 other coalition member organizations developed the guide. Contributors include the Accabonac Protection Committee, Amagansett Springs Aquifer Protection, Concerned Citizens of Montauk, International Dark Sky Association, Long Island Businesses for Responsible Energy, Defend H2O, Perfect Earth Project, Northwest Alliance, Peconic Land Trust, Friends of Georgica Pond, Peconic Baykeeper, Renewable Energy Long Island, and the Quiet Skies Coalition. Together, said Jim Matthews of the Northwest Alliance, the groups represent about 4000 residents.

The guide highlights five distinct facets of environmental quality – groundwater and surface water, coastal adaptation and resiliency, dark skies and quiet skies, energy and greenhouse gas reduction, and habitat protection and stewardship. For each category, action plan recommendations are listed.

To address water issues, the coalition calls for the creation of

a land-protection plan focused on water quality and watershed protection, the reduction of fertilizer loads and requirement of advanced treatment upgrades for septic systems, plus legislation for the disposal of unwanted pharmaceuticals. The group recommends the development of an enforceable and affordable clean-water action plan that could

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*Independent / Kitty Merrill*

**Representatives from a plethora of area environmental groups gathered Monday to encourage candidates to “Nurture Nature.”**

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# Kenny

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Parmisa is a chief. Not only does he espouse education, he has gone and rescued young girls who have been sold to older men, a tradition that is no longer legal.

“But still it happens,” he said. The first time he approached a home where a young girl had been married off, he admitted that it was difficult. “We are taught to respect our elders,” he said. “I needed to convince this man who was the same age as my father to give back his wife. I explained to him that I would lose my job if he didn’t, and that worked. It’s important to understand the psychology,” he said.

He began his school on a piece of land that was part of church property three years ago, with two rescued girls as the only students. Today, there are 350 students; 250 of them are girls. “I explain to the girls that education can lead to a better life for them,” he said. “The school gives them hope. And it gives my whole village hope as well.”

“Nickson actually named Naisula,” said Mann, referring to a portrait of an African woman by Beth

O’Donnell. “We held a traditional naming ceremony and he chose ‘Naisula,’ which means ‘woman of power.’ And I wish for all of the women in Nickson’s community, and all of us really, to be able to become women of power ourselves,” Mann said.

*Naisula* is a free performance on Tuesday, 7:30 PM, at Guild Hall, but reservations are required and can be made through the Guild Hall website at [www.guildhall.org](http://www.guildhall.org) or by calling the box office at 631-324-0806. To donate to Mann and Parmisa’s cause, and for much more information and videos about the Empakasi High School and the Maasai, visit [www.gofundme.com/naisula](http://www.gofundme.com/naisula).

# Enviro

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include a septic system upgrade program and a pesticide use and management strategy.

A sustainable, thriving community requires protecting natural buffers such as beaches, bluffs, and wetlands and upgrading and adapting infrastructure, the guide underscores. To that end, an action plan for coastal resiliency includes an assessment of coastal erosion rates, the development of

a town plan, the upgrading of the town’s existing Local Waterfront Revitalization Program, and the establishment of funding mechanisms for flood-proofing structures, upgrading or relocating infrastructure from flood zones, and the preservation of such natural barriers as dunes, wetlands, and beaches. State grants are available for some of the suggested plans.

The existing town lighting ordinance and airport noise form the basis of the next set of recommendations. The current lighting code, adopted in 1984, needs updating to include new technologies, and town facilities do, too. Best practices lighting seminars are suggested, as is a town-wide streetlight policy.

Regarding the airport, the coalition calls for outreach efforts targeting the importance of financial independence from the FAA, recognition of the regional impact

of noise generated by traffic at the facility, including participation from communities outside East Hampton Town.

In 2014, East Hampton Town adopted the goal of meeting 100 percent of the community-wide electricity consumption from renewable sources by 2020, and all its energy consumption from renewable sources by 2030. The coalition seeks candidate support for the planned offshore wind farm, plus opportunities for large-scale solar arrays as community projects. A local law calling for a referendum on the ballot to create an underground utility improvement district is also among the action points designed to bring about energy and greenhouse gas reduction.

“Our elected representatives must pay serious attention to ensure the continued health and success of our lands, waters, and native creatures,” the guide’s authors put forth in the section headlined “Habitat Protection & Stewardship.” Action plan points for the section include using Community Preservation Funds for the expansion and stewardship of preserved properties to maintain the diversity of habitat. The guide also urges potential candidates to press the town board to create a standing panel of expert advisors. Complex environmental issues often exceed the scientific grasp of elected officials and can occur too quickly to allow the formation of a specialized committee.

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