



WHY LAKE MONTAUK MATTERS

By Jeremy Samuelson, Executive Director

Sewage has indefinitely closed the bathing beach at South Lake Drive where generations of Montauk children learned to swim. What does that do to our tourist economy and property values? Not to mention the clams.

Our future depends on fixing the shortcomings of the past. We have a long way to go in cleaning up Lake Montauk and CCOM is leading the charge.

Those with an eye toward history remind us that this is not the first time Montauk has become *the* place to be. Less than a century ago, Montauk was almost

completely undeveloped. It was not until the roaring '20s that real estate developer Carl Fisher laid his vision over the landscape, placing and naming the roads, and blowing up the small isthmus that separated what we now call Lake Montauk from Block Island Sound. Unlike when nor'easters or hurricanes opened the pond, people were now intent on keeping the channel flowing.

Montauk and Lake Montauk were transformed. Dense meadows of eelgrass took root in the lake, serving as nurseries for saltwater species. Families and businesses came to the shore seeking the opportunities and experience of building a life at the water's edge.

In the booms and busts since the lake was opened almost 90 years ago, a multitude of decisions were made about how to build on the land, where to dredge and fill in wetlands, where to channel

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KEEPING MONTAUK MONTAUK since 1970

A COMMUNITY RESOURCE, VISIT CCOM'S NEW OFFICE

Whether you're looking for help finding that perfect trail or want to explore volunteering opportunities, we hope you'll find some time to stop by our new office at 6 South Elmwood Avenue in downtown Montauk. We are eager for the chance to get to know you and find out which programs our members want to see more of.

While we are still getting settled in, our vision is to have CCOM's new office serve as a true community resource for environmental information and education. We look forward to answering your



This family stopped by CCOM's new office looking for information on kid friendly trails in Montauk.

questions about drinking water protection, sustainable landscaping, our ongoing work to prevent the sale of public park land or other

environmental issues. We'll also have trails maps and, of course, plenty of our award winning gear, bumper stickers and books. We hope you'll become part of our exciting work to preserve Montauk as the natural paradise we came here to enjoy. See you at the office.

And a big thank you to the Montauk Fire Department which has generously opened their meeting space to CCOM for more than a decade. Don't worry though if you miss the Fire House, CCOM will be back in the fall for our annual Meet the Candidates event.

TRAINING TOMORROW'S ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERS

Through a generous grant from the Andrew Sabin Family Foundation, CCOM has launched an environmental internship program that has East Hampton High School students training directly with National Park Service Rangers and naturalists from the South Fork Natural History Museum and Nature Center, CCOM and the East Hampton Trails Preservation Society.

The intensive five-month program brings students out of the classroom and into the field at Camp Hero and Theodore Roosevelt County Park where they focus on developing the tools needed to write trail guides and lead nature walks.

In designing the internship program, CCOM sought a mix of students including some who are bilingual in English and Spanish. The intent is to continue providing excellent English language environmental programming in Montauk while simultaneously opening up our programs to the 20 - 25 percent of our community that recent census data reflects speak Spanish as a first language.

"We have to find ways of inspiring the next generation to understand their role in environmental protection," CCOM's Executive Director Jeremy Samuelson told *The East Hampton Press* in a recent interview. "And that applies to all of us. Whether you speak English, Spanish or French—or any other language—the kids in school have to be inspired and then take the message home."



The interns, sophomores Edisson Cabrera, Miles Todaro, Sarah-Jane Lynn, Shana Devlin, Serrana Mattiauda and junior Melissa Pena, were selected through a competitive application process open to all sophomores and juniors at East Hampton High School.

Sheridan Roberts, Maria Cole and Jessica Gonzalez of the National Park Service, Frank Quevedo, Executive Director of the South Fork Natural History Museum and Nature Center, Jim Zajac, President of East Hampton Trails Preservation Society, CCOM Vice President Ed Porco and Jackie Lowey are serving as student mentors.

Keep an eye out for email updates from CCOM announcing dates for the student hikes in June through early July.

BIG ENERGY BACKS OFF LONG ISLAND WATERS

Next Step: A Clean Ocean Zone

Liberty Natural Gas finally withdrew a mammoth ocean development application in late April after years of persistent opposition from CCOM and our environmental partners along the New York and New Jersey Coast lines. Liberty is the last of the big energy holdouts trying to permanently anchor liquid natural gas (LNG) tankers off the New York and New Jersey coasts. The tankers would have processed natural gas obtained through environmentally destructive hydrofracking to prepare it for export overseas.

This proposed fossil fuel development would have had dramatic impact on the sensitive area known as the New York Bight covering the Atlantic coast from New Jersey's Cape May Inlet to Montauk Point. The area's complex biodiversity makes it one of

the most important on the East Coast, serving as a crossroads for more than 300 species of fish, as well as the migratory route of globally endangered whales and sea turtles.

While Liberty's withdrawal is a huge step in the right direction environmentally, what's needed now is the creation of a Clean Ocean Zone to protect this crucial resource. A Clean Ocean Zone will ensure that only clean and renewable energy will be generated in the Bight and that there will be no BP-type oil spills.

This August, a coalition of 112 organizations, including CCOM, is sponsoring a combination paddle/cycle tour that will cover the entire 248-mile coastline. Starting at the Cape May Lighthouse and ending at the Montauk Lighthouse, the tour will raise awareness with citizens and elected officials in both states.

Stay tuned to CCOM's website and facebook page for event information. If we can create enough buzz, we may just be able to get a Clean Ocean Zone.



A close up of an East Hampton town zoning map reflecting different types of land use around Lake Montauk.

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stormwater, and, critically, how to manage our septic waste. By the mid 1980s, no one could deny the lake was in trouble. Our best practices and regulations had failed us and algal blooms all but finished off the struggling inshore commercial fishery.

Three decades on, some measures give cautious hope while others are downright dire. Water testing by Cornell Cooperative Extension has tied fecal coliform in the south end of Lake Montauk to human waste, most likely from failing septic systems around the lake and in Ditch Plain.

Our future depends on fixing the shortcomings of the past. We have a long way to go in cleaning up Lake Montauk and CCOM is leading the charge. Our staff is working directly with home and business owners to get their support for restoration programs. Through partnerships with elected officials, water quality grants and education programs in our local schools, CCOM is developing solutions and getting out the word. Some fixes are simple. Others are harder but bring lasting,

measurable improvements over time. Both are needed to restore the health of this once thriving estuary.

Today, we are at a critical moment with Lake Montauk. If we are to arrest the catastrophic loss of eelgrass and restore natural shellfish populations, we need the support of people with personal connections to the lake. We need the people who live on and nearest Lake Montauk, who paddle and fish these waters, to be on board. We are past the time when we could assume the problem lay with someone else.

Has your septic system been pumped out and inspected in the last three years? Does your fertilized lawn extend to the edge of the lake? Give us a call to start the conversation about becoming a part of the solution for Lake Montauk.

CCOM believes in protecting nature for nature's sake. But we also work to protect our drinking water, harbors, parks and beaches for our families and our economic well being. If you haven't already, please join us.

MEET JEREMY SAMUELSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



More than 40 years after a group of energetic citizens of Montauk successfully organized to preserve what is now Theodore Roosevelt County Park and founded CCOM, we are hiring our first ever Executive Director, Jeremy Samuelson. This is a big step forward for CCOM and comes at a critical time in our effort to "Keep Montauk Montauk."

CCOM has come to be recognized as one of the most effective environmental groups on the East End by successfully organizing the efforts to preserve more than 70% of Montauk's land. But the challenge today is protecting what we have helped save. Montauk's harbors, ponds, beaches, and lands are faced with new and greater threats and we need more expertise and leadership to stave them off. So we are upping our game.

Jeremy is a recognized environmental expert and has been

a key player on many of the most significant environmental issues on the East End since 2007. He has been working for us as an environmental advocate since 2009, under a unique partnership agreement between CCOM and the Group for the East End (GEE). Prior to his work with GEE, Jeremy covered ecological issues for the New York Times and the East Hampton Star. He has also worked in the East Hampton Town Planning Department, as a spokesman for the Suffolk County Police Department, and as a pound trap fisherman. Before settling full time on the east end, he worked on creating buffer zone management plans with communities living near national parks and protected areas of Kenya, India and Nepal. A graduate of Southampton College, Jeremy earned his degree in Cultural Ecology. He lives in East Hampton Town with his wife and two young children.



A newborn fawn was spotted hiding in the undergrowth while its mother was off foraging for food in Montauk Point State Park in early June.

LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES HEADLINE LAVALLE ROUNDTABLE

Ever wonder if our elected officials are really listening? Earlier this spring, CCOM Board Member Rav Freidel and Executive Director Jeremy Samuelson attended State Senator Kenneth LaValle's environmental roundtable to voice concerns ranging from clean drinking water, to fisheries and habitat protection, to the dangers of hydrofracking, a disastrous gas drilling process that results in waste water proposed for disposal on Long Island.

Among the nearly 100 advocates and environmental leaders in attendance, more than a dozen were elected officials representing state, county and even town governments.

Mr. Freidel pushed representatives to commit to the establishment of a Clean Ocean Zone to protect the offshore areas south of Long Island that are critical to our clean beaches and habitat protection. "Montauk has the largest commercial fishing fleet in the state. We need to protect this

critical area from big energy and see to it that the only energy generated is clean and renewable," he said.

Concerns over drinking water protection and the need to update pesticide restrictions were raised by Mr. Samuelson. "There is no excuse for our regulation of pesticides to be 30 years out of date," Mr. Samuelson said. "State scientists have recommended banning at least three toxic chemicals that are showing up in our drinking water. The time to act is now."

His sentiments were echoed by Peter Scully, Regional Director of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Dick Amper of the Long Island Pine Barrens Society and Adrienne Esposito of the Citizens' Campaign for the Environment. "We need to protect water both for the economy and the environment," Scully said. "We have to take a good look at everything we put on our lawns. We have to do everything in our power to protect the sole source aquifer, or we will all perish."

CCOM would like to thank Senator LaValle for lending his ongoing support to environmental initiatives. We look forward to continuing to work with the Senator and his staff.

WORKING FOR SHARK PROTECTION, YEAR 3



Shark tournament season is upon us and big bucks are at stake. For many people landing “the big one” is as much a part of Montauk’s lore as Theodore Roosevelt’s Rough Riders or George Washington’s lighthouse. It’s certainly part of what makes Montauk unique. Now with \$1,200 in raffle prizes up for grabs, CCOM is hoping that anglers in the hunt for the big one will do their part to ensure the shark population remains viable.

CCOM is working with tournament sponsors and anglers to reduce so-called bycatch, the death of animals that are caught but thrown back because they are the wrong species, not the big one or are illegal to keep. The best way to limit bycatch and improve a hooked shark’s chances of survival upon release, is to use improved gear called circle hooks.

Why Sharks Need Our Help

- As apex predators, sharks play a critical role in maintaining and balancing healthy marine ecosystems
- Each year, 73 million sharks are caught to feed the growing worldwide demand for shark fin soup
- 11 of the largest species of sharks along the east coast of the United States have all but vanished
- Many shark species don’t mature sexually until the age of 7 and some not until their 20s

Sharks need your help. Circle hooks make a difference.

Since each boat is allowed to keep only one shark a day, nearly all sharks caught this season will be released. Unlike traditional gear (J-hooks), circle hooks have been scientifically demonstrated as 96% effective in “mouth-hooking” sharks. Circle hooks help keep the hook in a shark’s mouth instead of the animal’s gut or gills, which kills most animals, even when they are handled properly and released quickly.

Shark populations around the world are collapsing. Pressures on stocks are so great, 11 of the largest shark species on the East Coast face extinction. Without sharks, there is no fishery.

Working together with local artist and environmentalist April Gornik and Montauk Marine Basin and Star Island Yacht Club, CCOM is sponsoring two raffles to encourage anglers to upgrade to circle hooks and to become part of the solution.

“Ninety percent of my hookups on sharks now are hooked in the jaw and released unharmed. The use of circle hooks can only help protect the future of shark fishing.”

– Rick Etzel, President,
Montauk Boatmen and
Captains Association

Up for grabs are two raffle prizes: a \$700 gift certificate good on any marina item — tackle, gas, repairs – at Montauk Marine Basin and a separate \$500 prize offered through the Star Island Yacht Club. To enter, anglers must purchase circle hooks at Montauk Marine Basin or Star Island and fill out a raffle ticket. At the close of shark fishing season, two winners will be drawn from all those who purchased the hooks.

Now in our third year of promoting shark protection, CCOM is working toward new State legislation requiring the use of circle hooks for shark fishing, similar to tournament laws in Florida and South Carolina. Please help keep Montauk a fisherman’s paradise by maintaining regional shark populations. By using circle hooks you’ll catch just as many fish and increase the survival rate of sharks you catch and release.



SPORT A CCOM T-SHIRT THIS SUMMER

Update your summer wardrobe with a new CCOM t-shirt, baseball hat or hoodie. Or take a CCOM tote bag to the beach! You'll look good in our stylish, organic cotton apparel, all while doing your part to help *KEEP MONTAUK MONTAUK*.



To order, call (631) 238-5720 or visit the Shop CCOM section on our website, www.PreserveMontauk.org.

SAVE THE DATE

We look forward to seeing you at these upcoming CCOM events:

■ TUESDAY, JUNE 26: TICK TALK AT THIRD HOUSE, 12 TO 1:30 P.M.

Join Montauk's Dr. Anthony Knott and Jeremy Samuelson of CCOM to discuss ticks, Lyme Disease, and how to protect yourself while still enjoying the outdoors. Please bring a brown bag lunch to eat during the discussion. A short walk will follow. Meet at the covered picnic area. Rain Cancels. FREE.

■ THURSDAY, JULY 12: EARLY EVENING AT AMSTERDAM BEACH, 4:30 TO 6 P.M.

Join Jeremy Samuelson on a walk along Montauk's newest gem of a trail with spectacular views. Rain Cancels. FREE.

Check our website, www.PreserveMontauk.org, for more information about upcoming events.



CCOM AND THIRD HOUSE TEAM UP FOR COMMUNITY NATURE PROGRAMS

CCOM and Third House Nature Center are proud to announce expanded environmental programming designed to introduce members of both organizations to each other while exploring Montauk's incredible array of parks, preserves and natural areas.

As the saying goes, out of chaos comes opportunity. After more than 10 years of outstanding educational programming, Third House Nature Center was left without a home in 2010 when Fort Pond House Park was closed to the public and listed for sale to developers. Gone – at least temporarily - was the chance to host students from the nearby Montauk School as well as adult programming and seminars.

While CCOM and Third House Nature Center remain engaged in litigation to return the park to public use and prevent a sale, both organizations decided the time was right to partner on a lineup of environmental programs. Several of this Spring's events and outings — bird watching at Montauk Point, a Camp Hero rock walk on Earth Day, and a seaweed scavenge along the ocean shore — come directly out of this new collaboration.

"Both CCOM and Third House feel strongly that Montauk is worthy of top-notch environmental programming and that our members deserve nothing less," said Jeremy Samuelson, CCOM's Executive Director. "We want to get people out in to the natural world to provide a real understanding of the forces at work around us. We want to go beyond a simple sense of wonder."

If you have ideas for programs you would like to see as part of this new partnership, have expertise to offer (geologists, biologists, or similar training) or have some time to volunteer with Third House's Nature Club through the Montauk School, email info@ccom-montauk.org or call (631) 238-5720 to discuss getting involved.

EARTH DAY IN MONTAUK



CCOM board members distributed free garbage bags for a community clean up.



Kendall, Kaya and Baye cleaned up a vacuum cleaner on Gin Beach.



Madeleine Hykes spent the day volunteering with CCOM and Montauk Playhouse where she helped children decorate reusable grocery bags.



Mickey's Carting provided a dumpster for the community to dispose of collected trash.

MONTAUK: THE ROCK STAR

What kind of rock is that? How did this huge boulder get here? What, exactly, is a hoodoo? Through a new partnership with the Long Island Mineral and Geology Society (LIMAGS), CCOM brought some geological experts to Camp Hero to explore and share the answers.

Despite a driving rain on Earth Day, CCOM members and LIMAGS "rock stars" Gene Genova and Ron Russ (LIMAGS President and Vice President), worked their way from the top of the bluffs overlooking the Atlantic Ocean down to the cobble beaches. Along the way, participants combed the remarkable assemblage of deposits scoured from far to the north and left in wake of the retreating glaciers at the end of the last ice age roughly 18,000 years ago.

The wet conditions made for better hunting with the color and luster of many of the igneous and metamorphic rocks coming

into full display as if they had been polished to a clear shine. The walk was a trip back in geologic time, as Genova and Russ described the volume of water locked into the glaciers that stood ten stories deep at what is now Montauk's shore and extended all the way to the North Pole. This skirt of ice extended around the northern latitudes, reducing sea levels 300 feet below present day levels, a sobering thought as we contemplate the impact of rapidly melting of polar ice in our own time.

If you missed this first rock walk, don't worry. CCOM is already making plans for a "rock stars" reunion this summer. If you can't wait that long, check out www.limineralandgeology.com to learn more about other LIMAGS walks on Long Island.



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ADDRESS Concerned Citizens of Montauk

P.O. Box 915, Montauk, New York, 11954

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COVER PHOTO Michael Perini

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR keatingceline@gmail.com

PRESERVING MONTAUK THROUGH PLANNED GIVING

Montauk means a lot to you in a special way that can't always be put into words. One way you can show your love for Montauk and make sure it stays preserved is to make CCOM a beneficiary in your will or trust or a designee in your insurance policy or IRA. In many cases, including CCOM in your planned giving can result in tax benefits for you.

Let CCOM honor you and your wishes while giving us the ability to Keep Montauk *Montauk* for decades to come. Please call Laurie Gordon at (631) 283-5720 or email info@ccom-montauk.org to explore giving options that will benefit you and Montauk.

WEIGH IN! TAKE THE CCOM SURVEY

CCOM is now a 42-year old nonprofit organization! As we move ahead into a new era of protecting Montauk, we want to touch base with our membership to assess your goals, interests and skills in order to make our efforts as effective as possible. Recently, we sent you a short survey via email. If you haven't already done so, please take 10 minutes to complete it and share your concerns with CCOM. We are now more than 1,000 members strong. By completing the survey, you'll be helping us help you protect the place we *all* love.



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CCOM MISSION

To preserve and protect the environment and ecology of Montauk through education, advocacy, and grassroots citizen action.

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STAY CONNECTED WITH CCOM

Put your finger on the pulse of what's happening in Montauk by following us on facebook. You'll be clued in daily with information about Montauk's environment and updates on Town hearings and local nature events. We cull through environmental news and post the most interesting, useful information for you. Enter our "My Montauk" photo contest and you may win a CCOM T-shirt! [www.facebook.com/Concerned Citizens of Montauk](http://www.facebook.com/ConcernedCitizensofMontauk)

Our award-winning website is a place you can stay up-to-date with the CCOM's latest news, learn about our upcoming activities, see photos of Montauk locals at CCOM events, buy a CCOM sweatshirt or tote bag, and find out about our latest advocacy efforts and environmental initiatives. Stay in the know! Visit us today at www.PreserveMontauk.org.