

PROTECTOR'S OF PINE OAK WOODS



STATEN ISLAND'S
LAND CONSERVATION
ORGANIZATION

EVENTS SAMPLER

DRAGONFLY WALKS	7/14, 8/11
FOREST RESTORATION WORKSHOPS	7/20, 8/17, 9/21
MOUNT LORETTO FOREST WALK	7/21
SOUTHERN LATOURETTE	8/18
ARDEN HEIGHTS WOODS	9/15

SEE MORE AT [SIPROTECTORS.ORG](https://siproteectors.org)

PROTECTOR'S MISSION

Protectors of Pine Oak Woods is committed to increasing the stewardship of Staten Island's existing parkland, bluebelt corridors and nature preserves and to continuing the effort to preserve Staten Island's natural areas. Protectors advocates for protection and preservation by educating our members, the general public and elected officials at all levels of government through meetings, workshops, walks, articles, newsletters and sponsorship of environmental education.

49 YEARS KEEPING S.I. GREEN!
1975-2024

SUMMER 2024

SEE MORE AT [SIPROTECTORS.ORG](https://siproteectors.org)

Managing and Maintaining our Urban Forests Requires Diligence and Persistence.

FOREST RESTORATION IS AN IMPORTANT ONGOING MISSION

AFTER THE MAY FOREST restoration work session, we decided to spend a little more time in the woods by driving to another park on the Island where in years past beautiful Pink Lady Slipper orchids could be found at this time of year. About eight years ago I found Lady's Slippers there in 18 spots, either in clumps or as solitary plants, but then—despite locals regularly walking their dogs there—deer found the park and its plants. That was bad news for those orchids, since deer relish them, and within 4 years I could find remaining only 1 single plant and 2 or 3 small clumps. The Parks Department eventually erected a deer enclosure around the two clumps of orchids that remained—which protects them still—but would that they had erected more enclosures a few years sooner. Despite this care, the future of these orchids is dim. Their small number suggests that the population will lack genetic diversity to survive, even if they achieve the rare goal of propagation by seed.

Thanks to deer browse you won't see these scattered in this park any more. I had been to the park to check out those orchids about a week and a half earlier, but my timing seemed to be off. All I saw were a few stems bearing what seemed to be brown and white remnants of blossoms. Nevertheless, I thought the park would interest the others because of its numerous large, vase-like ferns and its other *Aralia*, *Aralia nudicaulis*, a plant typically growing in parts of three—3 leaves above, 3 globular flower clusters underneath—which we call Wild Sarsaparilla. When we arrived I pointed out the enclosure, and Kay's sharper eyes immediately spotted blooming Lady's Slippers. The larger clump had 6 stems, each tipped with a large pink slipper (The binomial for Pink Lady's Slipper is *Cypripedium acaule*, which seems a bit weird since *acaule* is botanical Latin for "without a stem," and these flowers obviously seem to have stems. Botanically, however, the Lady's Slipper stem is a short part underground that gives rise to the above-ground leaves and the single flower stalk.) I had not known that the blossoms of Pink Lady's

Slippers start out white, and then turn pink... but now I do.

FIELD NOTES

Two weeks later I found myself on the Blue Trail again, this time in LaTourette between the bike path and the marsh. Most of our volunteers know this area quite well since we've been cutting alien woody twining vines along those trails for several years now, sometimes starting at St. Andrew's Church, and sometimes starting from the Field of Dreams. Parks was celebrating National Trails Day with a trail maintenance workshop with Park Stewards somewhere in the city every Saturday of the month, and June 1st was on Staten Island. I hadn't registered in advance for the event, but since I was bringing a lunch and my own tools I didn't think it would matter. In the morning I checked and saw that registration was closed (attendance was limited), but decided to show up anyway. I don't like to pre-register for things like that when there is a chance I might not be able to attend, and it's been my experience that, for things like work sessions, a lot of those who pre-registered don't show up. And, if they couldn't accommodate an impromptu volunteer, I could always go off by myself and cut more vines—there's always more vines to cut. As it happened, the work session was a trail closure.

One of the Parks Department goals is to eliminate trails that they have decided are dangerous, redundant, or that pass through sensitive areas. In this case the trail that they intended to close paralleled the trail we have been cutting vines on and the crushed stone bike path between the Field of Dreams and St. Andrews. Closure involves chopping at the compacted surface of the trail with hoes to allow plant seeds to more readily lodge and germinate there, and then to clog the trail with branches and logs to discourage further use of the path. Special attention is paid to intersections, especially where the trails begin and end. When the Parks Department first started closures, the results were desultory, but since then they have gotten skillful. I have been somewhat ambivalent about some of the clo-

OFFICERS 2024–2026

President José Ramírez-Garofalo
First Vice President

. Jack Bolembach
Recording Secretary

. Lisa Abbot Pillarella
Membership Secretary

. Madeline Paladino
Corresponding Secretary

. Mark Latour

DIRECTORS

Alan I. Benimoff, Ph.D. •
Andrew Blancero • Linda Cohen •
Elaine Croteau • Dominick Durso •
Kwynn Hogan • Hillel Lofaso* •
Eileen Monreale • Jacqueline Perine •
Ellen O’Flaherty Pratt • Don Recklies •
Herb Smith
*Past President

HONORARY DIRECTORS

Albert F. Appleton, Esq. • Hon. Gordon
J. Davis • Joseph Fernicola • Marian S.
Heiskell • Hon. Ralph J. Lamberti •
Richard Lynch • Lenore Miller • Robert
Miraldi, Ph.D. • Arthur M. Shapiro,
Ph.D. • Norma Siebenheller

Protectors Co-founder and President
. Richard Buegler (1928–2016)

BULLETIN COMMITTEE

Chairman: Hillel Lofaso
Elaine Croteau • Dominick A. Durso •
Jacqueline Perine • Ellen O’Flaherty
Pratt

Editing & Design: Hillel Lofaso,
Printed By: Modern Press, Inc.,
Jersey City, NJ

PROTECTORS BULLETIN is printed on
100% post-consumer recycled paper

Mailing address: P.O. Box 140747,
Staten Island, NY 10314-0747
(929) 319-7900

e-mail: ppow@siprotectors.org

web site: www.siprotectors.org

www.facebook.com/

ProtectorsOfPineOakWoods

Recent 990s are available at Guidestar.org

© 2024

sure, although I do agree that our woods are overly encumbered with too many redundant paths, especially “desire lines.” (Desire lines are shortcuts we make in the woods when trails don’t go precisely where



Photos from top to bottom: Pink Lady’s Slipper blossoms; note how each stalk rises from a pair of glossy leaves. The vase shape of a mature Cinnamon fern; standing in the middle are its reproductive fronds which bear minute sporangia (the structures in which spores are produced; ferns are not seed bearing plants, but like mosses reproduce by means of spores). Our corps of dedicated forest restoration workshop volunteers; a lot of new faces here!

we want to go, and they are very difficult to suppress. We commonly see these where trails intersect in a “T.” After a while short trails forming a “Y” develop on the stem of the T so at that point there are essentially 3 short trails joining the same point and all compacting woodland soil.) The trail we closed was certainly redundant, given that it was parallel and close to the bike trail, but it was a dirt trail, which I prefer to walk on, not paved or crushed stone. Moreover, at the end most distant from the Field of Dreams, the closed trail conveniently led directly to where the Blue Trail departs from the bike path to ascend the ridge and run below the golf course. Well, there will always be some walkers that are disaccommodated by a particular trail closure, but for the good of the forest someone has to make these decisions and control the situation.

After the closure, I returned to the bus by way of the upper Blue Trail where I cut vines and picked a little trash on the way. I am always bemused by stuff I sometimes find in our woods: statues, toilet bowls, forgotten tools, geocaches, graffiti (unfortunately swastikas and nasty comments last week), dead TVs, memorials to buried pets, etc. Today I stopped to retrieve a few plastic bags, and in one of them found a crematorium receipt. I suppose that someone’s or something’s ashes found a final

SUMMER 2024

PROTECTORS OF PINE OAK WOODS



STATEN ISLAND'S LAND CONSERVATION ORGANIZATION

ARE YOU A MEMBER? HAVE YOU RENEWED?

YES, I WANT TO HELP STATEN ISLAND'S FINEST REMAINING NATURAL AREAS AND SEE THE GREENBELT PROTECTED.

Please enroll me as a member in the following category:

- NEW RENEWAL LIFE
- \$ 15.00...Student
- \$ 15.00...Senior Citizen
- \$ 20.00...Individual
- \$ 25.00...Family
- \$ 50.00...Contributor
- \$ 75.00...Donor
- \$100.00...Organization
- \$125.00...Supporter
- \$275.00...Patron
- \$500.00...Life Member

Check here and we will e-mail our newsletter to you as a PDF. (You'll still receive the print copy.)

Please provide your e-mail address below.

Already a member? Please use this form to continue to generously support Protectors' SI Natural Areas Fund, DEC Teen Camp Scholarship or other projects.

Enclosed is an additional donation of \$ _____ for

\$ _____ Protectors' SI Natural Areas Defense Fund

\$ _____ Protectors' DEC Teen Camp Scholarship

\$ _____ In honor of _____

CAN YOUR EMPLOYER OFFER MATCHING GRANTS?

YES, PLEASE CONTACT ME NO

NAME (Mr./Mrs./Ms.) _____

ADDRESS _____ ZIP _____

TELEPHONE () _____ E-mail address _____

Phone me. I want to volunteer my help: _____

ENCLOSED is my tax deductible check for \$ _____ made payable to PROTECTORS OF PINE OAK WOODS, INC.

Mail to: Membership Secretary, P.O. Box 140747, Staten Island, NY 10314-0661

Questions? E-mail membership@siprotectors.org • To join/renew/donate by PayPal, visit siprotectors.org

resting place in the Greenbelt; not entirely unexpected, but I'm sure it violates some city or state law or regulation. I'm sure the debris was left by mistake; littering would have been disrespectful to the departed.

—Don Recklies

Forest Restoration Workshop Committee

RESTORATION WORKSHOP IN HIGH ROCK PARK

Ed. note: Restoration of our forest habitat is a big part of how Protectors demonstrates its commitment to repairing our damaged woodlands and revitalizing biodiversity. Here is an account of a forest restoration workshop reported by Dick Bugler 20 years ago.

MORE THAN TWO DOZEN people, most of whom were Cub Scouts with their families of Pack 1 from St. Christopher's Church, Grant City, joined us in our 94th monthly Forest Restoration Workshop at High Rock Park. More than one hundred native shrubs and trees, including Highbush

Cranberry and Speckled Alder were carried into the woods, planted and watered during the four-hour workshop with shared refreshments.

Two Cub Scouts with their parents, among the first to arrive, planted several dozen shrubs and trees. Some boys lining up for a group photo discovered a large pure white wading bird in the Loosestrife Swamp with a long yellow bill and black feet which they could clearly see when it flew overhead and circled before leaving for another wetland. Most of them had never before seen such a large (three foot),

beautiful native bird. It was an American or Great Egret.

One Cub Scout commented that it was "Great fun planting trees and shrubs," while another suggested it was "pretty hard work digging among the rocks and tree roots" to properly plant the several-year-old potted plants. We all agreed about the hard work

The only other wildlife spotted were several native Chipmunks, a few Robins and overhead Gulls. Several youngsters spotted a Bald-Faced Hornet's nest high in one of the leafless trees.

—Dick Buegler, 2004

TEEN CAMP GETAWAY!

For more than 20 years Protectors of Pine Oak Woods has been sponsoring Staten Island teenagers interested in a week-long environmental education camp experience run by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation in the Adirondacks.

For more information, contact Cliff Hagen at chagen72@gmail.com

PROTECTORS NAMES NEW MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY AND WELCOMES BOARD MEMBERS

PROTECTORS' BOARD HAS NAMED board member Madeline Paladino our new Membership Secretary. Madeline comes to the position from many years as a high school teacher and

PROTECTORS OF PINE OAK WOODS, INC.
P.O. Box 140747 • STATEN ISLAND • NEW YORK 10314-0747

Address Service Requested

**PROTECTORS
OF PINE OAK
WOODS**



**STATEN ISLAND'S
LAND CONSERVATION
ORGANIZATION**

NON PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT 405
S.I., N.Y. 10314

service program coordinator at St. Joseph Hill Academy. Already, after a short time on the board, Madeline has been a valuable member of the Membership Committee and has spearheaded the design and implementation of our attractive car magnet that allow us to expand our brand and strengthen our name recognition as Staten Island's oldest and largest land conservation organization.

Madeline has embraced the mantle of Membership Secretary, and is eager to get to know our wonderful group of longstanding and new members. If you have any questions about whether you are up-to-date on your membership dues, please contact Madeline at membership@siprotectors.org. Please also contact her if you have changes to your address so that we can update your information in our database.

Please welcome also **Andy Blancero** and **Kwynn Hogan** to the board. Kwynn comes to us from her work as Director of Operations at the Jacques Marchais Museum of Tibetan Art and her work on the board of Friends of Mariners Marsh Park. Andy is currently the Development Director for the Freshkills Park Alliance. Andy's focus is on finding nature-based solutions to urban planning.

We look forward to working with these dedicated board members to advance Protectors' causes that are important to you.

HOW TO FOLLOW PROTECTORS' WORK AND POSITIONS

PROTECTORS MAKES USE of many channels to educate our members and the public. First and foremost is this bulletin. However, the bulletin is limited because of space. Our web site siprotectors.org is the most reliable way to get in-depth coverage of the projects we are working on, the positions we hold regarding natural areas conservation and remediation, as well as providing an ongoing blog of musings and up-to-the-minute news relevant to our membership.

Please be a frequent visitor to our web site, as it will keep you informed and apprised of the latest Staten Island environmental news you may not see in the local media.

Of particular note is the development of our top seven local sites for preservation. This is the biggest project we are

working on and it will be enriched with frequent updates and developments as we proceed with working with our elected officials and agencies to complete the preservation of these sites.

We have also archived a page describing the importance of native plant gardening and limiting the use of pesticides and herbicides, with resources that can be accessed to create insect and bird friendly mini habitats that will enhance the biodiversity in our neighborhoods.

If you have any suggestions or comments for the web site, you can contact me at hlofaso@siprotectors.org.

ONLINE SOURCES

Top Seven Sites for Preservation: <https://www.siprotectors.org/natural-areas-we-are-working-to-save>

Gardening for Nature: <https://www.siprotectors.org/spring-native-plant-garden>

Don Recklie's Serpentine Barrens Presentation video: <https://youtu.be/2swjJn6x1nA> or scan the QR code

