

[0](#)
[0](#)
[2](#)
[1](#)

Features

- ◆ Exchange brings students together from a world apart
- ◆ Easter parade in Port Jefferson
- ◆ Forsythe Meadow County Park renamed for Nora Bredes
- ◆ Rachel Hankers belts it out

Recent Elana Glowatz

- Still concerns about high school as Port Jeff board adopts budget
Apr 2012
- Port Jeff Village board unanimously approves budget
Apr 2012
- NY Sea Grant funds local research projects
Apr 2012
- Port Jeff's Pearce prepared for assessment reduction
Apr 2012
- Adopted state budget does not include repowering language
Apr 2012
- More...

Extras

- ✉ e-mail this article link to a friend
- ✉ letter to the editor about this article
- 🖨 print this article
- 📘 facebook
- 🐦 twitter
- 🔍 digg it
- ➦ share
- 🌱 Larger | Smaller

Related Editorial

- News
Still concerns about high school as Port Jeff board adopts budget
Apr 19 2012
- The Port Jefferson Board of Education voted unanimously Tuesday night to adopt the proposed \$38 million ...
- News
Three Village school budget calls for 4.48 percent tax increase

Smithtown teacher using Gulf experience to help Sunken Meadow Park

By Elana Glowatz

[Write The Author](#)

April 18, 2012 | 04:36 PM

One of the lessons Elizabeth Platt is bringing back to her students after her trip to Louisiana is "instilling in people the need to protect what we have rather than having to restore areas."

The Smithtown High School West teacher recently visited the Gulf of Mexico with the New York State Marine Education Association and New York Sea Grant, which has a local office at Stony Brook University, to learn about threats to the environment and help

with restoration efforts. To mitigate plant loss from storms in Louisiana, she spent time learning about wetlands and planting certain plant species: bitter panicum, gulf bluestem, bulrush, oyster grass and Spartina patens.

Larissa Graham, New York Sea Grant's Long Island Sound Study outreach coordinator, said this trip to Louisiana was different from last year in that one of the focuses was "to make more of a connection to what's happening in New York." Graham said many of the problems in the Gulf, such as wetland loss, are more extreme versions of what is happening here.

Participants, a number of them from the Island and New York City, are required to do follow-up local projects, taking in lessons learned down South.

Platt, who lives in Huntington, teaches Advanced Placement environmental science and biology at Smithtown HS West. She wants to get her students, juniors and seniors, involved in projects at Sunken Meadow State Park.

Her goal is for them to have an experience that will give them a sense of responsibility for the area: "If they have some ownership of an area, if they're the ones cleaning and taking care of it ... they'll feel more connected."

One of the ways she may get the kids involved is in helping a small population of chestnut trees at Sunken Meadow, partly by pulling invasive



Smithtown High School West science teacher Elizabeth Platt, with science teachers Coleen Grant, from Centereach High School, and Thomas Armentrout from Seattle, Wash., worked with others to plant approximately 500 trees on a restored ridge recreated from sediments that were excavated during dredging in Port Fourchon, near Grand Isle, La. Photo from Paul C. Focazio/NY Sea Grant

Port Jefferson Country Club at Harbor Hills
2012 Memberships Available Now!

pro shop 631.285.1814
 business office 631.872.1860
 portjeffcc.com • pjcc@portjeff.com

CHARIOT COLLISION CENTER
10% OFF BODY WORK **Click Here!**
LIFETIME GUARANTEE
 91 Gnarled Hollow Rd. • E. Setauket

Long Island
IN BLOOM

March 2 - July 8
 The Long Island Museum
 1200 Rte 25A • Stony Brook, NY 11790
 www.longislandmuseum.org

Boutique on Main

 Gifts & Fine Apparel
 For Children & Teens
 203 Main Street
 East Setauket

Apr 19 2012
The Three Village Board of Education voted unanimously Tuesday to adopt a \$178.6 million budget for ...

News
Three uncontested for Comsewogue school board



Apr 19 2012
Three Comsewogue school board seats are up for election this May and three incumbents — President John ...

News
Northport BOE adopts budget with 1.68% tax hike
Apr 19 2012

After months of planning, line-by-line studies and input from the public, the Northport-East Northport ...

News
Kings Park psych center demolition delayed
Apr 19 2012
Plans to demolish 15 buildings on the former Kings Park Psychiatric Center property have been pushed ...
list all | 5 additional items...



plants away from them.

Ariana Newell, a regional natural resource steward-biologist for the state Parks Department, said chestnut trees were once the most dominant trees in forests in this area. At Sunken Meadow State Park, roughly three out of every four trees were chestnut trees, she said.

In the early 1900s, however, a blight came through and killed many of them. There are few left — Newell estimated only a handful in Sunken Meadow — and "what we do have in state parks, we want to keep."

The state plans to protect these trees by trimming vegetation around them to prevent overcrowding, Newell said, and will possibly put up a fence "to keep people from messing with them."

Platt said she would like to help with the effort to reestablish and help the population.

However, she said budgeting is a factor, as she has already used all her field trips for the year. If Platt can't organize a field trip for her classes this semester, she said, she will work on this project in the fall. She is also an ecology club adviser, so that is another way she can work on this project with Smithtown students.

Another problem at Sunken Meadow State Park is wetlands loss, the root of which dates back to the 1950s. Newell said at that time, the creek channel was diverted using two culverts, which restricted fish passage and the tidal flow to the marshes.

She said it is unclear why the channel was diverted, although some reports suggest it was done to create a larger area waterfowl could use.

Since then, invasive phragmites — large perennial grass found in wetlands — have taken over. Newell said her group is trying to remove the culverts and restore the tidal flow, which would benefit the ecosystem and open up the marsh for fish passage.

This is a project in which Platt said she has interest.

The teacher said she talks a lot with her students about habitat destruction and what people can do to help. After the trip to Louisiana and working on solutions with the other environmentalists and educators, she said she can now bring information to the kids "about exactly what's involved in restoring and kind of how things get messed up in the first place."



FOLLOW TIMES BEACON RECORD NEWSPAPERS



Join us on Facebook!
Add Times Beacon Record Newspapers to your social network



Follow us on Twitter!
Get top TBR News headlines in your feed

Print Email Link Feedback Share

Comments (0)

Post to Facebook

Facebook social plugin

Publication
The Village Beacon Record
The Port Times Record
The Village Times Herald
The Times of Middle Country
The Times of Smithtown Township
The Times of Northport & East Northport
The Times Huntington

Leisure | Arts & Lifestyles
North Shore Homes

Opinion
Columns
Letters
Editorials

Blogs

Sports

Calendar
PDF Calendar
Weekly Calendar
Bulletin Board

Classified
Place My Ad
Classified Listings
Classified Print Edition

Marketplace
The Business Directory
E-Coupon Marketplace

Real Estate
North Shore Homes
Classified Real Estate

About Us
Awards
Contact Us
FAQ
Jobs

Times Beacon Record Media
Advertise
Archives
Subscribe
Send Us News
Write The Editor

Times Beacon Record Media
©2012 All Rights Reserved



powered by
Linear Publishing
copyright 1999 - 2012