



The Pathfinder



Winter 2025

Bald Eagles on the East End

By G. Moore

“I was eating lunch down by Barkers Island Road when I caught sight of it, says Southampton jeweler, Travis Corwin. “At first I thought it was an osprey, but I realized right away that it was much bigger and its white head really stood out. I went and got my scope and sure enough. A bald eagle.”

Though we are all quite accustomed to seeing osprey in their prominent nests along the waterfront of the East End, not as many of us are aware that our national bird is making a comeback here.

After their disappearance over 80 years ago, according to wildlife expert and

Southampton Trails Preservation Society is a nonprofit volunteer organization whose mission is to advocate for and assist in the development of nature and recreational trails, advance the preservation of natural open space and encourage public use in the Town of Southampton.

STPS leads free hikes and kayak trips in the Town of Southampton Saturdays and Sundays all year long.

STPS originated and annually participates in The Great East End Cleanup and organizes community activities on National Trails Day (in June) and South Fork Trails Day weekend (in October).

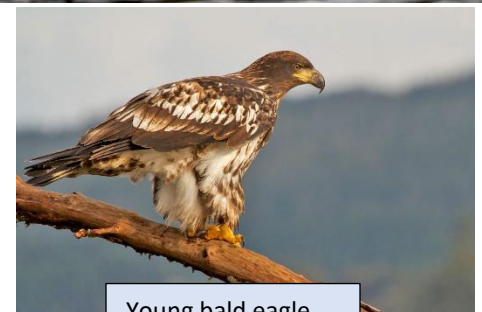
STPS also includes Horses on Trails (HOT) which encourages recreational horseback trail riding.

environmental educator Tonito (Tony) Valderrama, the earliest nesting pair of the repopulation was reported on Shelter Island about 10 years ago. He estimates there are well over 20 pairs all over Long Island today. The most famous being a nesting pair in Centerport that boasts over 20,000 Facebook followers.

This resurgence is likely due in part to a statewide restoration project that was begun in 1976 in the spirit of the bicentennial year of the country’s founding. At the same time there has been a national rebound in wildlife population that saw numbers of the species climb from mere hundreds at that time to hundreds of thousands today. Growth so strong that the bald eagle was removed from the endangered species list in 2007. As fish make up the bulk of the bald eagle’s diet they naturally flourish here.

This makes Mr. Corwin’s sighting far from an isolated event. Others who have seen bald eagles in the same area of Barkers Island Road suspect a nesting pair nearby. Another nest has been reported at the Mulvihill Preserve in Sag Harbor.

As a matter of fact you may have seen a young bald eagle yourself. Mr Valderrama, also founder of The Artist’s Nest, explains that it takes roughly five years for a bald eagle to fully mature and assume its classic piebald brown body and white head. During these early years its variations in coloring and smaller size make it easier to mistake for an osprey or red tailed



Young bald eagle

hawk. The return of the bald eagle offers a great incentive to get out on our trails and spot an eagle amongst the beautiful birds soaring overhead!

Cross Country Skiing on Trails

By Hilary & Eric Woodward

Cross Country skiing is the perennial sport from the Nordic countries, popular anywhere that has snow and good trails. During the cold winter months venturing out on skis and gliding along trails brings a wonderful sense of invigoration and aliveness.

Local outdoor enthusiasts who embrace the fun of cross-country skiing need not drive to New England, on the rare occasions we have an adequate snowfall. Many of the trails throughout our



woodlands are ideal places to glide through. Four inches of powdery snow is deep enough as long as you don't pick trails with too many steep tight turns. Very occasionally an extended storm of wetter snow will accumulate only two inches deep but be thick enough to ski. On the other end of the spectrum an 8 inch accumulation gets to be a tiring slog. One has to be prepared to go as soon as the snow conditions are acceptable.

The Trails Preservation Society maintains many of the trails, making sure they are clear and user friendly. But keep in mind the maintenance is primarily for foot traffic; some trails are too narrow and others have occasional branches in the way. Fairly level trails are good for a vigorous workout, or trails with gentle hills offer an uphill effort followed by a fun downhill glide.

Here are some options;

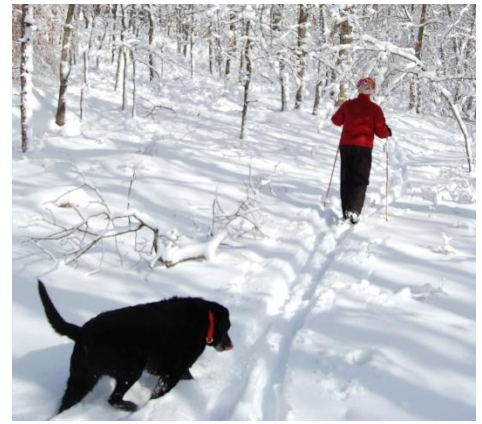
- Long Pond Greenbelt: Probably the most popular cross country spot. Lots of choices, mostly level and somewhat wide. When conditions are good here its likely someone has already made tracks to follow.
- Pine Barrens, Sears Bellows

Park and west of the canal: Areas to the west sometimes have a couple inches more snow than east of the canal. There are lots of choices but some trails may have uncleared fallen pitch pines.

Paumanok Path west from Brick Kiln Rd.:

Reasonably straight trails after a tricky jungle of laurel at the start. The higher elevation here sometimes means a bit deeper snow.

- Ocean Beaches: once in a long while the conditions are just right for a ski on the beach. Unlike the woods, fast skate skiing is possible.



HIKERS, RUNNERS, HORSERIDERS, CYCLISTS & HUNTERS

>>>>RESPECT ALL USERS<<<<

Trail users include a variety of enthusiasts. All combinations of users will enjoy their activities if they display knowledge, respect, and courtesy. Trail etiquette protects users and the land over which they travel.

- Stay on the trail
- Carry out more than you carry in
- Leave no trace
- Report illegal activities such as ATVs and dumping
- Greet other users
- Pass to the right
- Bicyclists yield to hikers and both yield to horses

WISH FOR SNOW!

Southampton Town Geographic Information Division, digital trail map: <https://gis.southamptontownny.gov/infocenter/>



This web address or QR code takes you to the Town of Southampton info center, Click the "trail" drop downs on the side to turn on the trail layers. With some devices you can also press the app's location button to show your current location on the map.

Large paper trail maps are available at the Southampton Town Hall clerk's office.

50 Years at Poxabogue

By **Tim Ferguson**

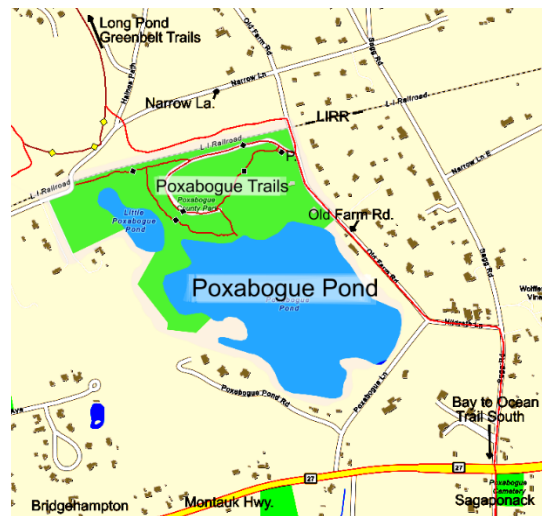
As development spread to the South Fork in the early 1970s, farmland preservation became an official priority, followed soon by concern over water quality, including the area's many ponds.

An important 50-year milestone of that protective push takes place this winter at Poxabogue.

It was then, as 1974 became 1975, that Suffolk County stepped up to check the plans of a Bridgehampton developer hoping to build 22 homes on 26 acres of what is now Poxabogue County Park and its popular hiking trail. The prospect of building on the site was real—the Southampton Town Planning Board approved the Poxabogue Ponds

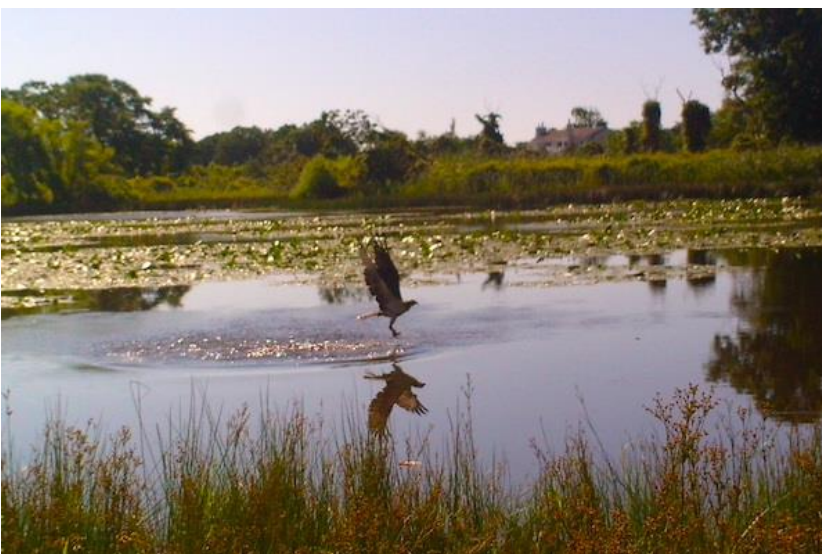
subdivision, with a reduction to 18 homes.

Poxabogue was a linchpin in County Executive John V.N. Klein's efforts for an eleven-hundred-acre Long Pond Greenbelt Park. His vision stretched from Sagg Swamp south of Montauk Highway in Sagaponack to Otter Pond in Sag Harbor. Within a couple of years his grand ambition was abandoned. Instead, the Long Pond Greenbelt has been assembled through decades of preservation acts by various public and non-governmental actions. Suffolk County bought Poxabogue from a developer who had just purchased it from Sagaponack's noted Topping family. One section on the south side of



Poxabogue Pond was subsequently lost to a smaller subdivision.

Later Poxabogue was formally established as a county park—accessible at 191 Old Farm Road, just south of the LIRR tracks in Sagaponack. The early plans for passive recreation on this picturesque open space came during that winter 50 years ago. The legacy endures for us to enjoy today.



*STPS Treasurer Ferguson's blogs on South Fork development and preservation history can be found at

www.timwferguson.com/category/hamptons-land/

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STPS website: www.southamptontrails.org

- Monthly Events Schedule
- Descriptions of favorite hikes
- Online maps of favorite hikes
- Horses on trails
- Hiking Tips & More



The Pathfinder

YES, I/We would like to be a member of the Southampton Trails Preservation Society and want S.T.P.S. to continue to lead hikes; plan monthly hiking schedules; newsletter; cut, blaze and maintain trails; relocate signage and maps; educate the public about recreational accessibility and usage; and work with government officials and other organizations to protect our open space.

Send this form with a **check**.

Or join **online**: www.southamptontrails.org/join/ Pick individual or family

Southampton Trails Preservation Society

P. O. Box 1171, Bridgehampton, NY 11932

Name

Address

City/State/Zip

Phonee-mail..... Date.....

I am interested in: Cutting and Maintaining Trails; Helping with Fundraising; Leading Hikes; Horses on Trails (HOT); Helping with Newsletter; Helping with Mailings; Other

| |
|---|
| Individual: ___ Student \$10 ___ Annual \$20 ___ Three-year \$50 ___ Lifetime \$250 Household/Family: ___ Annual \$35 ___ Three-year \$95 ___ Lifetime \$450 ___ New member, or ___ Renewal |
|---|

Wanted — Trail maintenance volunteers – call Tim at 631-204-7821

Wanted -- Trail hike leaders – call Dai at 631-745-0689

Trails---Peace on earth, right here in Southampton.



Southampton Trails Preservation Society
P. O. Box 1171
Bridgehampton, NY 11932

