

Audubon

ADVOCATE

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KeySpan-Jamesport To Be Our Newest State Park

A Crown Jewel On Long Island Sound

By Carole Nemore

THE PEOPLE OF NEW YORK State had a lot to be thankful for this Thanksgiving, for the state had agreed to purchase Audubon New York's "number one" land protection project in 2002 — KeySpan-Jamesport property. The Pataki Administration and the KeySpan Corporation agreed on an historic land acquisition deal that will preserve 530 acres of diverse natural resources on the north fork of Long Island. With more than one mile of sandy shoreline on the Sound, freshwater wetlands and a pond in the interior, bordered by shrub lands, wooded areas and farm fields, this is indeed, a very special parcel. About 230 acres of the site will become a state park, while the rest will remain in its traditional use — farming. Bernadette Castro, State Parks Commissioner, said "*The North Shore provides New Yorkers with breathtaking natural settings and diverse recreational opportunities and acquiring the KeySpan property will afford lasting protection and public access to Long Island Sound for years ahead. I am grateful to Governor Pataki for helping preserve the region's*



View of KeySpan beach.

environmental resources and forging a tremendous partnership with David Miller and Audubon New York that helped make this historic agreement possible and the many other initiatives we have undertaken jointly. This latest acquisition represents another step forward in strengthening our state park

system to be enjoyed by all." Robert B. Catell, Chairman and CEO of KeySpan said, "We commend the Governor for recognizing and pursuing an agreement to preserve this pristine property. We are proud of the partnership we have created between the leadership of this State, local and national environmental organiza-

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North Fork Audubon Chapter Plays Key Role

By Mary Mulcahy, President,
North Fork Audubon, Inc.

MY FIRST EXPERIENCE driving through the North Fork of Long Island was along what is known as the North Road. Expanses of farmland stretching out from both sides of the road gave the impression that not a soul lived here. That was twelve years ago. Much has changed since then. Vineyards have moved in along with little mini-housing developments. Houses sprouting up like mushrooms after a spring rain. In 1999, when rumors started to fly that KeySpan Energy Corp. was looking to sell the 530 acres

of land they owned on the Sound, North Fork Audubon took notice.

We wondered if we wrote to Bernadette Castro proposing that the State purchase the property, would we get any response. We discussed it at a board meeting and decided to go for it. After all, here was over 500 acres of open space on Long Island Sound. The biggest undeveloped parcel left in either New York or Connecticut. We knew that the parcel fit the guidelines of the Long Island Sound Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan by preserving open vistas and providing recreational access to Long Island

Sound. This, I figured, would be very appealing to the Governor. Maybe we had a shot.

I'm sure that most of you have been involved with a preservation battle at some time. Certainly, our chapter has, many times before. Most of the time, it seems, you win some battles, but not always the war. But we sent our letters, made our phone calls, held nature walks on the site, sent more letters, made more phone calls and continued to remind the community about this fabulous place right here in our own backyard. We received a nice general

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Audubon's 2002 Keesee Award Honors Jack Bierwirth

By Shirley Hartman

ON NOVEMBER 20, 2002, over one hundred guests gathered at the Yale Cub of New York City for the second annual Thomas W. Keesee, Jr. Conservation Award Luncheon and the presentation of the award to John C. Bierwirth.

The Thomas W. Keesee, Jr. Conservation Award is presented each year to an individual who has demonstrated outstanding leadership in advancing the mission of Audubon New York. Last year's recipient was Donal O'Brien, chairman of National Audubon Society. This year Audubon New York was blessed to honor John C. Bierwirth, another leader who met all of the criteria and much more.

Jack Bierwirth has served as a founding member of Audubon New York's Stewardship Committee and Audubon New York's Board of Directors. Since its founding in 1996, Jack has been one of Audubon New York's most ardent supporters. His business expertise, his ability to lead and his commitment to the environment have enabled Audubon New York to increase its outreach and program seven-fold while remaining focused on its mission: to protect birds, other wildlife and their habitats through advocacy, education and sound science.

This year's recipient served alongside Tom Keesee on the National Audubon Society Board and both played leadership roles in the creation of Audubon New York. Jack and Tom enjoyed a friendship over the years and shared similar values. They exemplified fiscal integrity and commitment to Audubon's mission and they enjoyed a similar passion for the outdoors.

Jack's dedication to the protection of wilderness can be seen from Alaska, across our oceans, and to the Adirondacks. Jack led the fight on the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge battle and continues to work to preserve the open spaces of New York State from our northern forests to the pine barrens of Long Island.

The Keesee Luncheon serves as Audubon New York's signature event and raised over \$150,000

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Honoree Jack Bierwirth, Patricia Keesee and David J. Miller take a closer look at this year's award, created by Steuben.