



East Hampton Board Hears Beach-Cleaning Pitch

By Joanne Pilgrim

(April 26, 2009) East Hampton's beaches could benefit this year from the efforts of Coastal Steward, a nonprofit organization that administers adopt-a-beach and sponsor-a-beach programs.

David Johnson, the group's executive director, reviewed the details at an East Hampton Town Board meeting on Tuesday.

Mr. Johnson said that he will line up business or individual sponsors for particular beaches who will underwrite a certain number of cleanups per year.

Coastal Steward organizes the cleanups, using a corps of volunteers, and distributes a portion of the proceeds from the sponsor to the municipality. In exchange, the name of the sponsor will be displayed on a 16-by-20-inch sign, which can be added onto existing signposts at the beach.

For the adopt-a-beach program, a group of individuals or organizations undertakes the beach cleanup themselves, with the help of Coastal Steward volunteers, and covers associated costs.

Mr. Johnson, a licensed boat captain who has a degree in marine biology and is on



Coastal Steward

Beach cleanups in East Hampton could be organized and paid for by corporate sponsors if the town board agrees to a recent proposal from an environmental group.



the board of directors of the Long Island Seaport and Eco Center in Port Jefferson, said that Coastal Steward has so far removed more than 200 tons of garbage from Long Island beaches.

The program is under way in other Suffolk towns, Mr. Johnson said, including Brookhaven, where Coastal Steward has also been involved in a shellfish restoration project. The group also has developed an educational program called "C.S.I.," or Coastal Steward Investigations, for students involved in the beach cleanups. By collecting and analyzing data about what is picked up, the students work to determine the source of the pollution and to correct the problem.

Town board members called Mr. Johnson's proposal a "win-win" situation. According to Councilman Brad Loewen, the town trustees, who have jurisdiction over many of East Hampton's beaches, attended a preliminary meeting with Mr. Johnson and are likely to approve of implementing the program.

The town board agreed to pass a resolution voicing its approval, and asked Mr. Johnson to meet with Bob Rodgers, the town parks and recreation director, to develop a list of problem areas to clean.



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