

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

Atlantic Coastal Pine Barrens: Ecoregion 84

Long Island Portion: Darrell Napton, Roger Auch, Dan Sechrist, and Chris Laingen. August

Out of Block

Port Jefferson, much new housing development, strip of strip malls, farming, Brookhaven National Laboratory.

Block 84-12

Suffolk County, New York. Delorme 28. This block is on the eastern two prongs of Long Island. Each prong had a major east-west road that ended at the sea on the east, and connected to New York City on to the west. These blocks were 20km square.

What we saw

Birch, oak, building materials, cabbage, sand, corn, peppers, gated community for active adults 62+, pine, Italian restaurant, mobile home court, shore line housing including five modest condemned houses that are to be replaced by expensive houses if a wetland permit can be obtained. Older, modest houses away from the shore, new housing under construction, water front rental units, many businesses that provide water oriented goods and services (e.g. boat sales, repair), boat ramp, boat storage, hedges, potato fields, new houses on old potato land, beach houses, grapes, corn co-mixed with mansions.

House and paddocks, old mine (clay?), golf club, National Wildlife Refuge, house under construction, hedges.

Block 84-12 Sliver

Garden center, farmers market, flowers/nursery, corn, peaches, farmers market, another farmers market, wheat stubble, horse paddocks, beach, old farm with rusting potato equipment, cemetery, horse jumping facilities, Peconic Land Trust area, soybeans, squash, private drives, brick and tile plant, sandy moraine with gravel and pebbles, equestrian track, horse farm, polo club.

Out of Block 84-12

Architectural showroom, BMW, Porsche, and Mercedes car dealers with other dealers nearby. Three tree nurseries, boat dealers, golf, clay mine, sod, vineyard, Bed and Breakfast,

Back in Block 84-12

North Side: vineyard, sod, farmers market, nursery, corn, flowers, potatoes, beach house, hedge nursery, soccer field, dense strip housing, vineyard and winery, dairy goats, nursery trees, winery, restaurant, stables, new vineyard, greenhouses, tomatoes, grapes, shrubs, blackberries, corn, grapes, Church of Christ, vineyard/winery, sand mine.

Back out of Block 84-12

Specialty crops with a Chinese owner, sod, house on Orient Harbor, Cross Sound Ferry at Orient Point.

Block Summary for 84-12 and 84-12 sliver

This block had four major land covers: forest, agriculture, urban, and water. The diversity of the ecoregion and the relative balance of land and water covers may make this a unique and uniquely interesting block.

The forest was primarily oaks and pines in sandy soil. Substantial portions of the area are still forested with large lot and estate development in the forest, which will probably cause much of the forested area to remain in trees for the foreseeable future. Other parts of the forest are in reserved land, which will also remain in forest.

The agriculture was incredibly diverse. Agricultural crops on in the area include the following: apples, blueberries, melons, peaches, pears, plums, raspberries, strawberries, asparagus, beans, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, corn, cucumbers, eggplant, lettuce, peas, peppers, potatoes, pumpkins, squash, and tomatoes. There were numerous farmers markets and wineries. Long Island is New York's leading agriculture region in terms of value of product (Long Island's Bounty, Farm Bureau brochure, also see www.lifb.com). Long Island has long been a potato producing region, but a combination of blight and urban encroachment is driving major land use changes. Potato farmers appeared to be in the process of changing by moving from potatoes to horticultural crops or selling to developers. We observed potato fields becoming subdivisions. Vineyards and wineries are a relatively new addition to the agricultural landscape, and from all appearances are thriving.

This block was undergoing rapid urbanization. Older housing along the shore ranged from middle income (~2,000 sq. ft.) on shallow water to substantial and mansions on deep water. Inland, older housing was modest with dense in-town settlement. New houses are large to mansion sized on large lots in low density areas. Long Island houses are often protected from on-lookers by tall, dense hedges, which limited some of our observations. Traffic was heavy on the eastern Long Island two-lane roads, especially in the area of the Hamptons.

Water is an integral part of the settlement pattern in this area. Water has provided a mild climate for the fruit and vegetable farmers, transportation corridors, and a playground for viewing, beaching combing, sailing, fishing, as well as climate moderation for near shore houses.

Soil, climate, interpenetration of land and water, and close proximity to New York City underlie the driving forces and modifiers of these blocks. The desire of urbanites wanting country and/or shore housing has to some extent been balanced by their desire and ability to protect the views, environments, and rural/coastal lifestyles that first attracted them.