

# Save The Great South Bay reflects on 2022

## Organization plans for year ahead

BY NICOLE FUENTES

With the help of Dr. Christopher Gobler, of Stony Brook University's Gobler Laboratory, Save The Great South Bay presented its annual State of the Bay address during their Fall Speaker Series. Based on Gobler's water-quality testing results, they found the following findings in 2022:

"The Great South Bay is the home to a wide variety of marine and aquatic plant life in an extensive range of habitats. A healthy habitat is represented by high oxygen levels and clear water. Poor water quality is characterized by low dissolved oxygen levels, known as hypoxia, and harmful algal blooms (HABs) such as brown tide and red tide."

According to Gobler, since the appearance of the first brown tide in the 1980s, the bay has been "assaulted" with nitrogen pollution from outdated cesspools and fertilizers. The pollution causes algae growth and lack of oxygen, which also greatly affects marine life.

In order to protect the bay and promote better water quality, Save the GSB suggests reducing nitrogen pollution by managing stormwater runoff and upgrading sewage treatment systems.

**What have they done to help save the bay in 2022?**

- They have conducted dozens of river cleanups, including teaming up with the Ocean Conservancy to gather data with

their Clean Swell app. The team also added water-quality testing and even installed a litter trap at the Carl's River.

- Certified dozens of bay-friendly yards since encouraging them through their webinar series.

- Planted and expanded four native gardens. They expanded their gardens along the Carl's River and added gardens in the Town of Brookhaven at Bayview Park and the Village of Amityville at Nautical Park.

- Planted thousands of oysters in the Great South Bay Oyster Project spawner

sanctuary. They are also currently working on a collaboration with Town of Islip, Islip Hatchery, and Cornell Cooperative of Suffolk County.

### How can you take action?

Upgrade your septic system, reduce or eliminate fertilizers, plant native plants, keep litter out of the waterways, use reusable bags, and use your voice by telling local officials you want policies that support clean water. Also, don't forget to support the organization.

### STGSB 2023 GOALS:

- 1) Conducting cleanups along the 50 creeks and rivers to clear the "arteries" that lead into the bay.
- 2) Planting 500,000 oysters in the Great South Bay Oyster sanctuary.
- 3) Restoring dozens of acres of native habitat to help improve stormwater runoff and nitrogen filtration.
- 4) Expanding the Bay Friendly Yard certification program.
- 5) Continuing their education and advocacy programs to promote use of innovative and alternative wastewater treatment systems (I/AOWTS) and expanded use of sewers that recharge the aquifer.

### ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

Save The Great South Bay Inc. is a 501(c)3 nonprofit dedicated to the revitalization of the Great South Bay. The organization, which was founded in 2012 is comprised of people from the South Shore, including past and present, baymen, fishermen, boaters, paddleboarders, surfers, sailors, local environmentalists, civic associations, community leaders, educators, and marine scientists.

The cause began when two Sayville alumni returned home for a class reunion and soon formed a Facebook group, with now over 16,000 members, talking about the bay and actions needing to be taken. Save The Great South Bay was eventually created, and 10 weeks later, Superstorm Sandy hit.

### THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Todd Shaw, president  
Wayne Horsley, director of advocacy  
Rhianna Quinn Roddy, director of development  
Frank Piccininni, director of habitat restoration  
Michael Busch, director of visual arts  
Bill Zeller, director of shellfish restoration  
Karen Marvin, director of special events  
Tom Kain, director of creek defender  
Andy Mirchel, director of Great South Bay Oyster Project



### SAVE THE GSB PROGRAMS

#### The Creek Defender Program

The program supports local stewardship by bringing together local South Shore residents, schools, civic and environmental groups to clean and protect the over 50 creeks in every community, from Massapequa to Mastic.

#### The Great South Bay Oyster Project

This program seeks to reintroduce bivalves strategically to the bay and its estuary. The aim is to have these filter feeders help clean the water, through oysters or ribbed mussels.

#### Bay-Friendly Yards habitat restoration

Through their Bay-Friendly Yards program, the group advocates for bay-friendly, pesticide free, chemical fertilizer-free yards. They also practice habitat restoration.

#### Advocacy

The group advocates a systematic, scientifically driven approach to the bay's management. Science, not politics.

### THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Robyn Silvestri has served as the executive director of Save The Great South Bay since February 2020 and as a volunteer since 2017. She has over 25 years of marketing and sales experience and has worked in varied positions, including at the United Nations/IAEA, American Embassy/Vienna, in the corporate world, and for herself as an independent entrepreneur. She has also served as a trustee for the Village of Babylon.

## Save the Great South Bay Word of the Week

# Eutrophication

/yoʊˈtrəfəˌkəʃ(ə)n/ noun

The process a body of water undergoes when too many nutrients (ie nitrates or phosphates) are added to it, thus triggering algal blooms.

Sources of excess nutrients: chemical-laden lawn fertilizers, outdated cesspools and septic systems, stormwater runoff and atmospheric deposition.

Save The Great South Bay, 501(c)3 is an environmental nonprofit whose mission is to protect and preserve the Great South Bay for stronger Long Island communities now and for future generations to enjoy. We are a grassroots organization made up of South Shore residents, scientists, educators, community leaders,

local policy makers, sailors, clambers, paddleboarders, fishermen, scout troops, and more! We work to bring all of these groups together for a common purpose – to save the Great South Bay from collapse.

Find them on Facebook or on the web at [savethegreatsouthbay.org](http://savethegreatsouthbay.org).

**Save  
the Great  
South Bay**