



JULIE LANE PHOTOS

Volunteers from the Garden Club of Shelter Island and the Group for the East End combined forces last Friday to bring more native plants to Taylor's Island. As the plants take root and spread, they will help to protect the shoreline from erosion.

High winds on Taylor's Island do not deter volunteers

Group for the East End and Garden Club members join forces to plant native vegetation

BY JULIE LANE | STAFF REPORTER

Weather reports for Coecles Harbor showed winds of 18 to 23 mph Friday morning but ask the eight volunteers who showed up on Taylor's Island to plant natural beach grasses and other native plants and they'll tell you it felt like a gale-force blow out there.

"The wind is very spirited; it's very alive out here," said P.A.T. Hunt, a driving force behind the restoration of Taylor's Island, the once privately owned spit of land that belongs to Shelter Island Town. "I love it when nature makes itself really present," she said.

"I thought about it around 6:30 this morning when I awoke," volunteer Pat Lutkins said about the high winds. "But it will be exciting in a couple of months to come and see how the plants have developed."

The native plant restoration project started with phone calls from Ms. Hunt to staffers at Group for the East End and the Garden Club of Shelter Island. It took little prompting for the two groups to come together and agree to tackle the project. They have previously cooperated on other projects on Shelter Island.

Group for the East End spent about \$1,000 to acquire more than 2,000 plugs of beach grass, 30 groundsel bushes, 15 prickly pear cactus plants and 15 seaside goldenrods. Alfred Kilb Jr. contributed some plants to the effort, according to Anita Wright, who

coordinated the project for Group for the East End.

"Just look around and see what's already here and it's easy to determine what's native," Ms. Wright said, explaining how plants were selected. By the end of the summer, the plants planted Friday should not only have taken root but begun to spread along the seawall that protects the Smith-Taylor cabin from the wrath of the sea.

The hardest part of the morning's chores was carting the heavy plants to the Taylor's Island seawall from where the van was parked about a quarter of a mile away.

"This wind is unbelievable," said Paulette Van Vranken, co-chairwoman of the Group for the East End Conservation Committee and a member of the Garden Club. "It's great," she said about the cooperation between the two entities.

Ms. Hunt treated the volunteers to home-baked oatmeal muffins and corn bread, a hearty reward for their hard work.

Taylor's Island will be open to visitors on Saturday, May 5 from 2:30 to 5:30 p.m. during the first "I Love My Park Day," a new statewide event to promote public parks and historic sites. Volunteers are invited to join the Webelos Cub Scouts, helping to remove Japanese knotweed, an invasive species, and preparing the cabin for the restoration.

For information, go to taylorsisland.org or call 749-1603.

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ANITA WRIGHT
GROUP FOR THE EAST END



Garden Club member Tim Purtell and Taylor's Island Committee Chairwoman P.A.T. Hunt (above) carry plants from the van that brought the volunteers to the island. Behind them are volunteers Robin Drake (left) and Pat Lutkins.



Pat Lutkins prepares to plant prickly pear cactus.



Anita Wright, Group for the East End's assistant director of environmental education (center), shows volunteers Phyllis Gillespie (left) and Paulette Van Vranken how to cut beach grass plugs before they're planted.



Phyllis Gillespie plants beach grass plugs by the seawall.