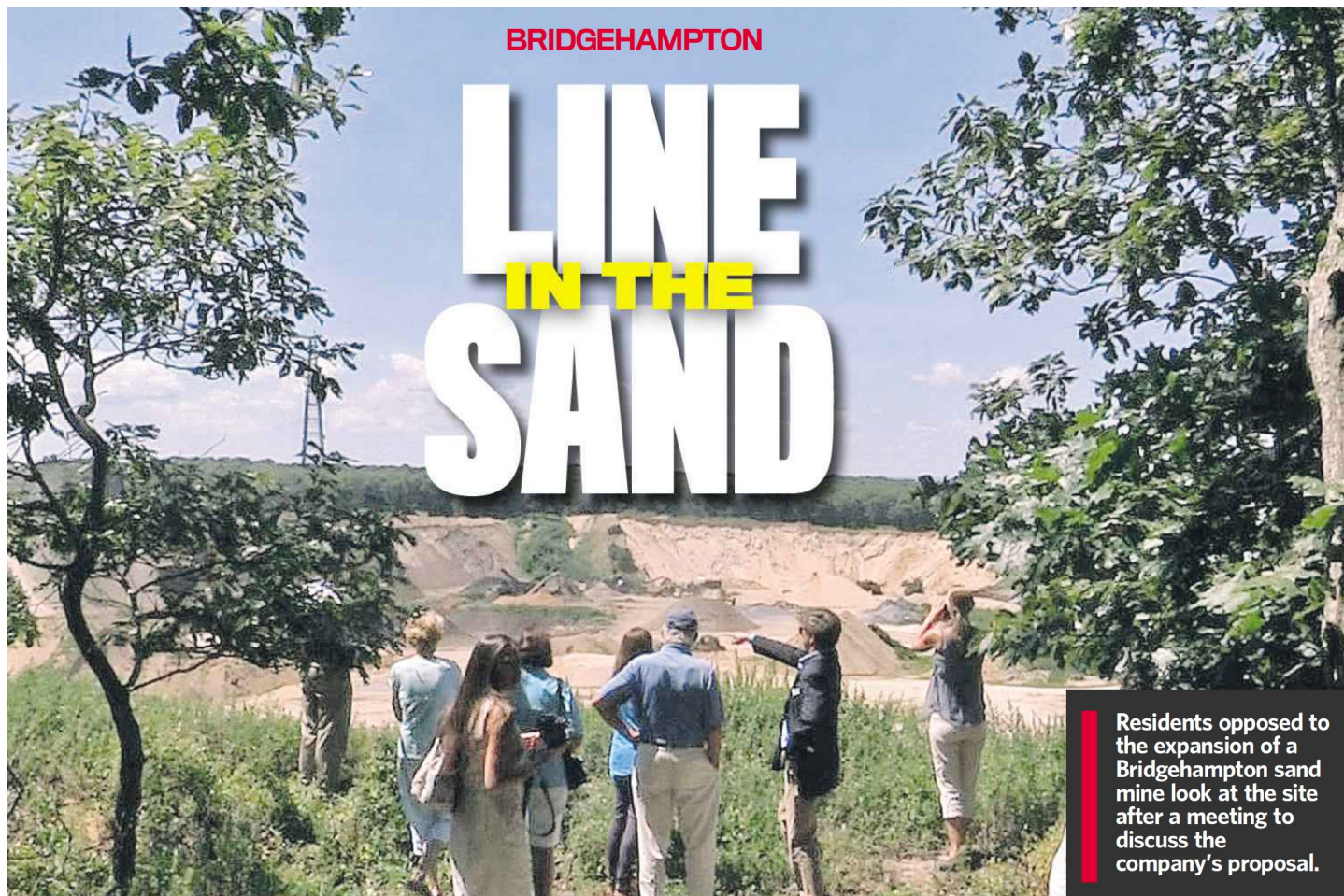


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Plan to expand mine seen as threat to aquifer

BY WILL JAMES
will.james@newsday.com

Long Island environmental activists are criticizing state regulators for their handling of a sand mining company's bid to expand above a sensitive aquifer in Bridgehampton.

The State Department of Environmental Conservation in April ruled that Sand Land Corp.'s proposal to enlarge its 50-acre mine by five acres "will not have a significant adverse impact on the environment" and did not require an extensive review.

But environmentalists — along with elected officials and neighbors — say they're concerned about the mine's on-site side business: processing mulch and construction debris, within one of Long Island's nine state-designated Special Groundwater Protection Areas.

Adrienne Esposito, executive director of Citizens Campaign for the Environment, said the DEC "wants to encourage sand mining as well as managing construction and demolition debris" but "they seem to have pri-



Adrienne Esposito holds a photo of Sand Land Corp.'s mine.

oritized that over protecting the groundwater and natural resources.

"This issue is bigger than just the sand mine," she said. "It's symptomatic of what's occurring across Long Island."

Esposito cited a 2013 DEC study of a Yaphank compost site that found high levels of contaminants, such as the element manganese, in nearby wells.

DEC officials said in a statement last week that the application to expand the mine "is in relation to the mining operation only" and does not pertain to mulch or debris processing.

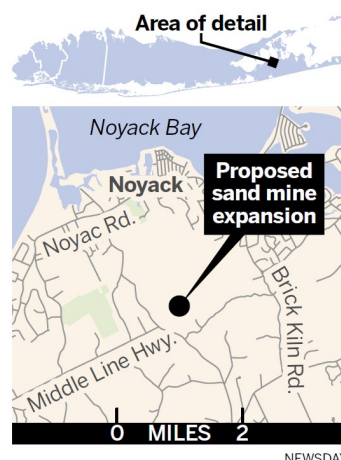
A November public hearing on the expansion drew about 70 residents and environmen-

tal activists to a Bridgehampton community center, with many complaining about the DEC.

"The notion that this application definitely has no environmental impact is too silly to even consider," said Robert Rubin, principal owner of the Bridge Golf Club, next to the mine. "What's the hurry? Let's bring some science to bear on the application."

DEC officials said they are reviewing their decision in light of the comments.

John Tintle, the mine's owner, declined to comment after the hearing. David Eagan, his attorney, said last week that the mine's mulch and debris operation is legal



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and relatively minor.

"They've greatly exaggerated the nature of this," Eagan said. "It's clearly not a compost facility, which has triggered this concern for groundwater up the island, in Yaphank. We don't do anything like that in terms of quantity."

Eagan also alleged that the golf course owners and other neighbors were trying to drive the mine out of business.

Newsday reported last August that the DEC was investigating allegations neighbors that the mine's operators were burying mulch in a pit at the site. A DEC spokesman said the agency "has investigated the alleged activity and has found no environmental infractions."