Chapter 6: The Master Plan

Existing Context

The actions described below present OPRHP's long term vision for the development and operation of public use facilities at Hallock State Park. It will require at least a decade, most likely longer, to complete all of the actions described below. The pace at which these developments will be undertaken will be determined by the availability of funding, which is the function of the size of OPRHP's annual capital budget and the need to balance investments at Hallock State Park with many other competing capital improvement priorities in the Long Island Region and the entire State Park System.

Classification

Hallock State Park will be classified as a Park Preserve.

Designations

Park Preserve

The entire park will be designated as a Park Preserve (PP) given the ecological importance of the park with respect to the overall biodiversity of Long Island. Designating the entire park as a Park Preserve will ensure that the park's existing important natural resources are preserved and will provide direction for restoration of native species in the park. Significant natural resources such as Hallock's Pond will be managed for ecological protection and environmental education.

Natural Heritage Area

A Natural Heritage Area (NHA) will be designated in the park. The NHA will be Hallock's Pond and a 100 foot buffer surrounding the edge of the pond. This area is designated to highlight the ecological importance of Hallock's Pond, a coastal plain pond, as a significant ecological community and for its contribution to the natural landscape of the park. See Figure 10 for the proposed Natural Heritage Area boundary.

Park Name

The park will be renamed Hallock State Park Preserve. After careful consideration, Hallock State Park Preserve was chosen as the preferred name given its significance to the agricultural history of the area and its association with the pond. This name reflects the local history of the area and is more appropriate than the current park name.

Natural Resource Protection

Wildlife Management

Deer management strategies will be developed with DEC and be based on the needs of biodiversity enhancement. Deer population levels should be evaluated to determine if deer are adversely affecting the vegetation at the park through over-browsing. Baseline information will be gathered in the park to determine if there is a need for management. The extent of wildlife management will be established on the basis of the future requirements of the Preserve and be based on maintaining balanced ecological conditions. The management of other types of wildlife is not required at this time and shall be addressed as needed.

Hallock's Pond Management

Native vegetation restoration, invasive species monitoring, water quality testing, and monitoring for rare aquatic plants and wildlife will all be functions of thorough management practices for the pond. Combined, these actions will ensure that the biodiversity and ecological integrity of the pond is maintained. Access to the pond will be controlled by the installation of observation decks to aid in environmental interpretation and education. Trails should be carefully planned in this area and should, in general, be located away from the edge of the pond to avoid trampling sensitive areas and to reduce fragmentation of the wooded areas. Given its ecological importance, fishing and swimming will not be allowed in the pond and hand powered or motorized boats will be prohibited.

Invasive Species Management

A long term goal at the park is to implement a multi-faceted approach to invasive species management. An integrated plan for invasive species control will be developed consistent with the approach used in the Invasive Species Control Plan for Minnewaska State Park Preserve. This plan will provide guidance for long term management. Short term efforts will focus on the following: 1) prevention and eradication of: new infestations through early detection and rapid response actions; 2) removal of invasive species in sensitive habitats; and, 3) control efforts in those areas where there is a reasonable chance of success for eradication. Japanese Knotweed, which is particularly aggressive, already has a presence in the park. Efforts to identify locations and prevent further spread of this plant will benefit the park. In addition, signage or informational handouts should be developed to inform the public of these ongoing efforts. Lastly, invasive animal species (such as feral cats) will be removed from the park in a humane manner.

Maritime Dune Restoration Management

The dunes of the park, most notably Jacob's Hill, offer some of the most spectacular views of the park and will benefit greatly from restoration efforts. Native vegetation restoration will help reverse the damage done by years of ATV and off-road vehicle use in this area. Planting native plants will be done along with invasive species removal. Trails in this area will be designed to keep hikers away from sensitive areas and to prevent erosion and impacts to vegetation. Prohibition of trespassing by ATVs and off-road vehicles will be strictly enforced.

Endangered Species Management

The park currently is home to a pair of nesting piping plovers and least terns. The nesting area has been monitored and protected over the last several years, but additional steps need to be taken to ensure that the habitat for these species is not compromised. The regional biologist and park staff will monitor the nesting area, enclosures and fencing will continue to be installed, and signage will be erected to inform park patrons of the sensitive nature of the nesting area. In addition, an endangered species management plan will be developed to provide more long-term recommendations for the management of the endangered species of the park.

Bluff Management

The bluffs and the hoodoos of the park are ecologically sensitive and geologically unique. In an effort to preserve the bluffs and the hoodoos and to keep park visitors safe, signage will be developed to inform the public about these features. Trails will be routed away from the bluffs to help ensure the safety of park visitors and to facilitate stabilization of the bluffs. In addition, the bluffs and hoodoos will be managed naturally, which will allow for erosion and natural restoration of sand.

Recreation Development/Management

Trails

The Hallock State Park trail system was developed in conjunction with this master plan (Figure 17). The draft trail plan was prepared using information about existing trails, connection to trails outside the park and proposed recreational and environmental education and interpretation uses.

Actions to develop the Proposed Trail System within the park include:

- Designate loop trails in the park
- Designate uses including walking/hiking, equestrian and interpretation for certain trails or areas
- Designate scenic vistas
- Develop interpretive signage for installation along selected trails

Connections to External Trail Systems:

- Connect to the Town of Riverhead bike trails (in development)
- Connect to Hallockville Museum Farm
- Explore connections for the park and trails system to the Long Island Rail Road

Interpretive programs will be developed and implemented. Coordination with volunteer groups and individuals for the maintenance of the trails system will be implemented as well.

The designated trail uses are considered appropriate for this park. All trails in the park will be brought up to use standards before designating and signing them. Trail design guidelines are provided in the Appendices. A long-term maintenance and monitoring plan will be developed to ensure the continued sustainability of the trails system.

Equestrian

Equestrian use of the park will be allowed by permit only during the spring and fall seasons. Given its small size, the park is not large enough to accommodate separate hiking and equestrian trails. Once the park is open and operating, attendance will be monitored to gauge the volume of users at the park and trail conditions will also be monitored. After several operating seasons the attendance data and trail conditions will be analyzed to help determine whether or not the park could accommodate year-round equestrian use. Horses will be allowed on the beach, but OPRHP reserves the right will restrict equestrian access should the agency feel that the ecological resources or endangered species of the park are being compromised.

Swimming and Shoreline Access

The park's ocean shoreline will be managed as a natural beach. No bathing beach facilities or lifesaving devices will be developed or installed. Swimming will be prohibited in Hallock's Pond.

Fishing

Fishing will be allowed in the park on Long Island Sound only. Fishing will not be allowed at Hallock's Pond. A fishing access permit may be required for off-hour parking access. DEC fishing regulations are applicable in these areas.

Scuba Diving

Scuba diving will be allowed by permit at Long Island Sound. Scuba divers will not be allowed to drive to the beach and will not be able to dive in Hallock's Pond.

Biking

Off-road biking will not be allowed on the trails in the park. The soils of the park's trails are sandy and not conducive to biking. Park patrons wishing to bike to the park will be able to ride on park roads and bike racks will be installed near the main parking lot.

Boating/Water-Dependent Activity

Car-top vessels, canoes and kayaks will be permitted in the park at Long Island Sound. Car-top vessels are preferable because they are less intrusive to other park patrons and the shoreline habitat. No inflatable or wind powered watercraft will be permitted and no boating of any kind will be allowed in Hallock's Pond. In addition, park patrons will not be allowed to drive to the beach.

Camping

Camping will not be permitted at the park because of the stated goal of natural resource protection and restoration. The additional paved surfaces and infrastructure that would be needed for formal camping may adversely impact these resources. In addition, camping is not a compatible use for a park preserve and there are no suitable locations to develop camping in the park. Camping facilities are provided at Wildwood State Park, located 12 miles west of the park.

Environmental Education and Interpretation

Significant interpretive programming will be developed to highlight the history and natural resources of the park. Environmental education and interpretive programming, in conjunction with the development of the Nature Center, will provide a new opportunity for environmental education on Long Island that will serve both the guided and self-guided park visitor. The environmental and interpretive programming at the park will work in concert with the Hallockville Museum Farm and other interested organizations to create a cluster of opportunities for environmental education and interpretation in the general vicinity of the park.

Hunting

Given the size of the facility and its proximity to residential areas and agricultural and commercial operations, hunting will be prohibited in the park. Should the need occur, hunting will be revisited from an environmental management standpoint in the future.

Cultural Resource Protection

Archeological Resources

Archeological sites have been found in the park. There are also areas in the park that may contain sites that have yet to be discovered. Any actions that may impact known sites or areas of archeological sensitivity will be evaluated for further study in accordance with the procedures of the State Historic Preservation Office.

Historic Resources

Although there are no historic structures within the park, the park contains some historic sites that reflect prior uses and the general history of the region. A battle from the War of 1812 took place in 1814 in the park. The northwestern section of the park was home to Camp Carey, an overnight camp

for boys from New York City. And Hallock's Pond played a role in the agricultural history of the park and was a scenic location during the Hallock occupation. Any actions that may impact the historic resources of the park will be evaluated by the State Historic Preservation Office.

Facility Development and Operations

Entrance and Exit to the Park and Vehicular Circulation

A one-way road with the entrance on the eastern right-of-way has been identified as the most appropriate and safe entrance to the park. Visitors will exit from the western right-of-way. This option is considered to be the safest because it mitigates the traffic congestion present during the spring, summer and fall on the western ROW. The one-way road brings the park patron into the park at a more scenic location as opposed to the western ROW which exposes the adjacent industrial farming operation which is both noisy and unsightly. Patrons driving to the park will utilize the one-way road for the main parking area and the beach access road. The beach access road will be developed with a pervious surface and will provide accessible parking near the beach and access for emergency vehicles. See Figures 12 and 13 for a rendering of the entrance and exit to the park.

Parking

There will be one primary parking lot in the park located near the Nature Center/Park Office. The parking lot will accommodate approximately 75 cars. Accessible parking and a drop-off will be located in the interior of the park, closer to the shoreline. This lot will utilize pervious pavement and will provide four accessible parking spots. An additional satellite lot will be sited, but not developed at this time and will be considered for the future. Landscape treatments and bio-filtration swales will be used to improve the visual aesthetics of the area and to help to mitigate stormwater runoff from the parking lot. The lot will be sited as far from Hallock's Pond as possible. Please refer to Figure 14 for the location of the main parking area and Figure 15 for a figure of the accessible parking lot near the beach.

Nature Center/Park Office

The Nature Center and Park Office will be located southwest of Hallock's Pond. The Nature Center will include classroom/lab space, office space, exhibit space, meeting space, restrooms, and the contact station for entrance into the park. Consolidating the nature center, park office and contact station into one building creates a central location for park activities and services and improves efficiency for park staff. This location is also near the pond, Long Island Sound and the natural resources of the park. Landscape treatments will be used to ensure the proposed structure is not visually intrusive. See Figure 14 for the proposed location.

Park Manager Residence

The park manager residence will be located in the vicinity of the Nature Center and Maintenance Facility. Keeping these structures in the same general area allows for a concentration of development within the park and also allows for a consolidation of utilities. In addition, the park manager will also be able to monitor the park from this location. See Figure 14.

Maintenance Facility

The maintenance facility for the park will be located in the general area of the Nature Center/Park Office, but will be located away from the parking area and the Nature Center/Park Office. Given the size of the park, a small maintenance facility is envisioned with a two bay garage and storage areas.

Should the park require any large or specific equipment, arrangements will be made to borrow equipment from other nearby State Park facilities. Please refer to Figure 14.

Comfort Facilities

Restrooms will be available at the Nature Center. In addition, a self-composting toilet will be installed near the accessible parking and drop-off area, closer to the shore.

Environmental Education and Historical Interpretation

Environmental education and historical interpretation within the park will be developed in accordance to the Agency's mission including:

- Develop quality written interpretive material (signs, brochures)
- Develop outdoor environmental education classrooms
- Offer public programs year-round
- Partner with various organizations including, but not limited to:
    - Hallockville Museum Farm
    - Peconic Land Trust
    - North Fork Audubon
    - New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)
    - United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
    - Cornell Cooperative Extension

Signage

Signage for the park will include way-finding, kiosks, interpretive, and trail signage. Signs will be developed in an efficient and informative manner so that signage blends into the landscape and does not clutter the park. Interpretive signage will be placed in strategic locations in the park to bolster the visitor experience while on the trails or at significant or scenic locations of the park. In addition, a park entrance sign will be fabricated and installed to reflect the new name of the park.

Utilities

The utility infrastructure within the park will be owned and operated by OPRHP. Existing utilities at the park are currently unused and will require significant upgrades, as well as an extension into the park.

OPRHP will also seek to advance the agency's sustainability goals through energy efficient design of the park buildings, and exploration of the potential for on-site energy generation, such as photovoltaic panels.

Communications infrastructure will continue to be owned and operated by the telephone and cable companies as appropriate.

- Extend communications infrastructure from western area of the park
- Extend electrical service from western area of the park
- Extend water service from Sound Avenue to the park
- Install septic system for park manager residence and nature center

Tree Maintenance

The management of trees will be in accordance with OPRHP's tree management policy.

Sustainability

In keeping with its commitment to sustainability, the park will incorporate sustainable practices into its daily operations.

Sustainable Sites Initiative

The park will be developed using the best practices developed by the Sustainable Sites Initiative project. A sustainable site is one that effectively balances environmental, social and economic outcomes to improve the quality of life and long-term health for a community.

Energy Conservation

The park will explore the feasibility of harnessing renewable energy sources through the use of solar panels and geothermal heating systems. Green roofs will be installed where appropriate.

Water Conservation and Stormwater Management

Bathrooms and kitchens will be designed with water saving fixtures such as reduced flow fixtures and dual flush toilets. Stormwater management measures will be utilized with enhanced infiltration systems, rain gardens, wetlands, or other practices as appropriate.

Building and Infrastructure Design and Maintenance

Green building design principles, methods, and materials will be integrated into all new construction, specifically, the nature center, maintenance facility, park manager residence, and road surfaces. LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification will be considered for these projects.

Carbon Sequestration/Greenhouse Gases

The park will follow the guidelines set forth in the reduced mowing program, though there are not any large areas of grasslands or fields in the park. Following this policy will reduce the potential for increased fuel consumption and greenhouse gas production, and additional vegetation will increase carbon sequestration. New plantings should be designed with native plants and xeriscaping principles.

Vehicle/Fuel Consumption

The park will utilize alternative fuel and fuel efficient vehicles whenever practicable. Opportunities for expanded non-vehicular or public transportation access will be encouraged and bike racks will be located near the main parking lot for park patrons wishing to access the park by bike.

Recycling/Waste Control

The park will provide recycling bins located at the nature center/park office and in the park lots. A composting area will be established for park kitchen waste.

Implementation

Priority Assessment

Implementation of all of the above actions will require a significant investment of state funds, along with additional funding from other public and private sources. While implementation of certain actions will begin in 2011, OPRHP anticipates it will require ten to fifteen years – and perhaps longer – to accomplish all of the actions recommended in the plan. The implementation of the

Master Plan for Hallock State Park is divided into three priority phases (Table 2). The initiation and completion of these priority phases will depend upon funding and demand for the development of the park. The priorities groupings are conceptual and subject to reorganization based on available funding for specific components of any given group.

Table 2 - Master Plan Implementation Priorities

Implementation Priorities	Description/Development Component
Priority 1:	• Construct main park road • Construct main parking lot • Construct temporary contact station • Begin to implement endangered species management measures • Designate, improve and/or construct select trails • Begin to implement management measures for bluffs and maritime dunes • Begin to implement invasive species management measures • Begin to implement Hallock's Pond management measures
Priority 2:	• Construct beach access road • Construct drop-off area and accessible parking near the shoreline • Construct select trails • Conduct additional studies about the bird population of the park • Construct observation areas at scenic points in the park • Continue development of trail system • Begin to implement environmental education and interpretation programs—guided walks, hikes, etc.
Priority 3:	• Construct observation areas at Hallock's Pond • Construct Nature Center/Park Office • Construct maintenance area • Construct Park Manager residence

Relationship to Other Programs

The master plan seeks to foster partnerships by connecting with local organizations and interest groups with a likeminded vision and goal for the park and the stewardship of its natural resources. OPRHP management of these partnerships, and the evaluation of opportunities for new partnerships

within the park, will be governed by OPRHP's Policy on Public/Private Partnerships in New York State Parks and Historic Sites (adopted 3/12/09). Of particular concern is the carrying capacity of the park's roadways and parking areas to accommodate partner activities that attract significant crowds. The stresses placed on the natural features of Hallock State Park Preserve, which this plan seeks to preserve and enhance, must be weighed against the benefits offered by any new partnership activity to invest in programming, buildings or infrastructure. Partnership activities should be environmentally and fiscally sustainable, with the impacts on the park's facilities, landscapes, natural and cultural resources, and operational and capital programs all factored into the partnership arrangement.

Another focus of efforts with future and current partners will be making sure that any organization Hallock State Park Preserve partners with will work with the park to achieve the operation and institutional goals. This will ensure that, along with OPRHP, the partners are working to protect the park's cultural and natural resources. The focus will be to work with partners to reach the park's and the partner's goals.

In addition to the partnerships within the confines of the park, this master plan calls for strengthening the partnerships with organizations operating in the larger region to advance goals for trail development and water quality and stream preservation. For example, the Hallockville Museum Farm is a park neighbor with strong connections to the history of the land where the park is situated and has been a partner in developing the plan. The Peconic Land Trust and the North Fork Audubon Society are organizations that can help provide trail connections from the park to the broader community. The East End Horseman's and Livestock Association is a park partner that has been permitted to ride in the park on a bi-annual basis. The group has also spent many hours volunteering to clean-up the park and wishes to continue their relationship with the park. School groups and students wishing to conduct research or study the resources of the park are encouraged to do so (for additional information, please contact the Long Island Regional Office).

This plan encourages the development of Friends Groups to assist the park with the development and management of specific park resources. This plan has attempted to maximize the resources of the park through the development of four-season recreational uses, each of which present their own management challenges. Assistance from Friends Groups will help ensure timely implementation of the ambitious recommendations herein.

The park is located within the Towns of Riverhead and Southold and the relationship between the park and these towns is important, especially for consistency with the respective Comprehensive Plans and the Local Waterfront Revitalization Programs for each town. Proposals to be undertaken in the park will continue to be evaluated as to applicability with these programs. In particular, projects subject to consistency procedures under the LWRP will be coordinated with the Town of Southold and, eventually, with the Town of Riverhead (upon completion of their LWRP).

The master plan will be consistent with Ecosystem-based Management (EBM). EBM is an emerging, integrated approach to managing human activities and natural systems. The EBM approach considers the entire ecosystem, including humans. EBM has six components. It: 1) is placed based, 2) is science based, 3) has measurable objectives, 4) uses adaptive management, 5) recognizes interconnections, and 6) increases stakeholder involvement. Master planning is very consistent with the principles of EBM. The park itself is clearly place-based and the agency has formulated the master plan based on the knowledge of the local ecosystem. Also, public involvement has been utilized, incorporating local knowledge in decision-making and in this plan. In addition to interconnections with other related programs discussed in this section, the park resources are connected to adjoining ecosystems that are also considered within this plan and will be considered in implementation of the objectives in this plan. As proposals pursuant to the master plan are advanced

and developed, they will be based on the best available science using current scientific understanding of impacted ecosystems and the advancement of scientific investigation. Measurable objectives for implementation will provide a basis for gauging the impact of activities on the health of the ecosystem. Adapting management to respond to new knowledge and changing conditions will allow us to consider how adjustments can be made to reflect new information to accomplish goals and local knowledge and expertise will enhance these activities.