

Executive Summary

Introduction

The Commissioner of the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) is proposing the action of adoption and implementation of a Master Plan for Caumsett State Historic Park Preserve. The Final Master Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) provides the opportunity for individuals, organizations and other government agencies to participate in the park planning process.

On September 24, 2008 a public information meeting was held to gather information, concerns and issues surrounding the development and management of Caumsett State Historic Park Preserve. Oral and written comments were received from the public at that meeting. Written comments were received until October 17, 2008. The Draft Master Plan/Draft Environmental Impact Statement was published on November 18, 2009 and a public hearing was held on December 8, 2009 at the Cold Spring Harbor Public Library in Cold Spring Harbor, NY. The public comment period ended on January 8, 2010.

The Commissioner has decided that a Master Plan/EIS is necessary to guide the management and development of the resources at Caumsett State Historic Park Preserve. At this time the Commissioner has also decided that the final plan is to be adopted. With the adoption of this plan, the park is designated as a Park Preserve and is now identified as Caumsett State Historic Park Preserve

Environmental Setting

The park is located within the Village of Lloyd Harbor in the Town of Huntington within the Long Island State Park Region. Encompassing approximately 1550 acres, Caumsett State Historic Park Preserve is home to a wealth of historic, natural, geologic, archeological, and pre-historic resources. While the park is defined by its historic structures and landscapes, it also has open fields, forest communities, trails, a 12-acre freshwater pond named Fresh Pond, and an 89-acre low salt marsh.

The general topography of the park is flat with rolling hills and steep slopes near the bluffs at the shoreline. The ecological communities of the park consist of salt marshes to mature terrestrial forests. A Bird Conservation Area was designated in the park in 2006 to highlight the importance of the park for the avian population from both a migratory and breeding perspective. In addition, the New York State Department of State has designated the coastal areas of the park as Significant Coastal Fish and Wildlife Habitat areas, per the recommendation of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

The park is home to the Lloyd Harbor Historical Society, Volunteers for Wildlife, Nassau County BOCES, the Caumsett Foundation, and the equestrian center.

Recreational resources in the park include equestrian, hiking, biking, fishing, and SCUBA diving. The park is open year-round with winter activities including snowshoeing and cross country skiing.

Vision and Goals

Agency Mission Statement

The mission of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation is to provide safe and enjoyable recreational and interpretive opportunities for all New York State residents and visitors and to be responsible stewards of our valuable natural, historic and cultural resources.

Park Vision

Caumsett State Historic Park Preserve will continue to be a place for visitors to enjoy passive recreational opportunities while, at the same time, affording visitors the chance to enjoy and appreciate the natural and cultural resources of an historic former estate on Long Island's North Shore.

Overall Park Goal

Achieve a balance between recreation and the protection of natural and cultural resources of Caumsett State Historic Park Preserve while making available compatible public environmental and historic education and interpretive programs.

Natural Resource Goal

Identify, protect, manage, and interpret the natural resources within and associated with the park.

Recreation Goal

Provide recreational programs that are compatible with the park's natural, cultural, and physical resources.

Cultural Resource Goal

Identify, protect, preserve and interpret buildings, sites and areas significant to the history, archaeology and culture of the local community, region, state and nation.

Scenic Resource Goal

Protect the scenic quality of the park, its classic landscape architecture, and views of natural areas.

Access Goal

Provide appropriate access to the park and its recreational, cultural and natural resources.

Education and Interpretation Goal

Provide opportunities for education and interpretation of the natural, cultural and recreational resources of the park.

Operation and Maintenance Goal

Operate and maintain the park in a safe, clean, and sustainable manner that protects the natural, cultural, and recreational resources of the park.

Communication and Partnership Goal

Develop partnerships with organizations, federal, state and local agencies, not-for-profit organizations and the private sector. Ensure open and transparent communications with the public.

Facility Development and Capital Investment Goal

Maintain, improve, and invest in the built infrastructure of the park to meet the needs of the recreation and operation goals of the park in a sustainable manner.

Inventory, Monitoring and Research Goal

Encourage scientific research into the natural and cultural resources of the park.

Sustainability Goal

Integrate sustainability considerations into all aspects of the park's operation, management and stewardship; make this park a leader in sustainability for the region.

Analysis and Alternatives

The plan presents a series of “preferred alternatives” for future development and operation of Caumsett State Historic Park Preserve. Cumulatively, the actions described below present OPRHP's long-term vision for the rehabilitation and enhancement of the park.

The Master Plan

The master plan considers the historic, natural, geological, and recreational resources of the park and responds to the recreational needs and safety of park patrons, protection of cultural and natural resources and principles of sustainability.

The plan provides protection of natural resources through several means.

- Designation as a Park Preserve and a Natural Heritage Area
- Management measures for the low salt marsh, maritime beach ecosystems and Fresh Pond
- Control strategies for invasive species management
- Management measures for successional fields, woodlands and rare bird species that nest in the park

The plan contains several recreation facility development recommendations:

- Creating a permit system to allow launch of car-top watercraft (kayaks and canoes) to provide enhanced recreational access to Long Island Sound
- Expanding, marking, and improving the existing trail system, and closure of certain trails in appropriate locations

Measures to protect and interpret cultural and historic resources include:

- Development of Historic Structure Reports for several buildings in the park
- Development of a Cultural Landscape Report for the park
- Development of a Phase 1A Archeological Resource Survey
- Rehabilitation of several historic gardens from the Field Era of the estate
- Opening the Power and Pump House for historic interpretation of the Field Era of the estate
- Stabilization and rehabilitation of the Greenhouses to be used for passive recreation or interpretation
- Seeking proposals from potential licensees to operate two vacant structures—Main House and the Winter Cottage—as well as consideration of opening these buildings for interpretation and exhibit space
- Interpretation the dairy history of the park by opening sections of the Farm Group

Park operations, maintenance and infrastructure improvements include:

- Improvements to the main vehicle entrance of the park from Lloyd Harbor Road including formalizing the existing overflow parking area as the new main parking lot, relocating the contact station, making stormwater and landscaping improvements to the main lot, and widening the main entrance road with a landscaped median separating traffic entering and exiting the park
- Development of three new pervious parking areas—the Northwest Lot, the Northeast Lot and the Weir Barn lot to improve access to the park
- Closing the park exit near the Henry Lloyd House
- Improvements to the vehicular circulation in the park including widening the Service Road and Entrance Road
- Improvements way-finding signage and trail signage in the park
- Reconfiguration of the Farm Group area including creating a Visitor Center in one or more of the vacant structures and relocating the park office and public restrooms within the Farm Group
- Improvements to the equestrian center including the parking area, renovating non-historic structures with structures so that they are consistent with the park’s architecture, and upgrading electrical utilities
- Development of written guidelines for the types, size of special events that are appropriate in the park (such as equestrian and running events) and operational guidelines to ensure the integrity of the parks resources are not compromised

Implementation

Implementation of all of the above actions will require the investment of tens of millions of dollars of state funds, along with additional funding from other public and private sources. While implementation of certain actions will begin in 2010, 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 Caumsett State Historic Park Preserve is divided into three priority phases (Table 1). The initiation and completion of these priority phases will depend upon public and private funding. The priority groupings are conceptual (are in no particular order) and may be subject to reorganization. In addition, significant capital expenditures will be needed to maintain and rehabilitate the park’s underlying infrastructure. Capital maintenance projects will be prioritized and scheduled in the three phases by the capital facilities manager.

Table 1 - Implementation Priorities

Implementation Priorities	Description/Development Component
Priority 1:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Cultural Landscape Report for the park • Upgrade electric/mechanical systems at Master’s Garage • Begin management actions for the low-salt marsh • Renovate non-historic structures at the Polo Stables • Improve existing road north of Farm Group • Develop Historic Structures Reports for Main House, Polo Stables, Farm Group, Winter Cottage, Summer Cottage, Pump and Power House, and Henry Lloyd House, etc. • Complete the exterior restoration of the farm buildings • Conduct archeological survey report for the park

Implementation Priorities	Description/Development Component
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve entrance road • Improve main parking lot • Relocate contact station • Continue with exterior restoration of the Polo Stable • Implement signage improvements • Continue management actions for invasive species • Improve trail system—designate trails, close spider trails • Renovate Farm Group for the relocation of the park office, restrooms and Volunteers for Wildlife • Improve access road to Fishermen’s parking area • Further evaluate historic Plank Road to identify method for rehabilitation • Screen and manage debris pile • Continue management actions for endangered species and successional old field management.
<p>Priority 2:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construct a dedicated walkway at the low salt marsh • Stabilize and rehabilitate the Greenhouses for interpretation • Begin management actions for Fresh Pond • Begin management actions for maritime beach. • Begin restoration and repair of Field Main Entrance gates and walls • Develop Northwest parking area • Develop comfort station at Northwest parking area • Restore dormitory interior at the Master’s Garage • Begin repairs to the brick walls and gates of the walled garden • Improve and formalize parking at equestrian center • Upgrade electric and mechanical systems at the Polo Stables and equestrian center operation • Restore gardens at Main House • Upgrade electric and mechanical systems at Main House • Begin exterior improvements/restoration at Main House • Begin exterior and interior improvements to the Pump and

Implementation Priorities	Description/Development Component
	<p>Power House</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve access from Fisherman’s parking area to the shoreline for ADA and car-top watercraft
Priority 3:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrade electric/mechanical systems as the Farm Group • Develop Northeast and Weir Barn parking areas • Open historic Service Road to vehicular traffic to the Northeast parking area and develop separate multi-use path • Construct a formalized observation area at Fresh Pond • Develop visitor center at Farm Group • Begin interior improvements to Main House • Upgrade septic systems of the park • Stabilize ruins of the first Lloyd Harbor school • Upgrade water distribution system of the park • Upgrade electrical distribution system of the park • Reset cobblestones in courtyard of the Farm Group • Begin exterior improvements to Master’s Garage

Environmental Impacts

Beneficial impacts of Master Plan implementation include renovation, restoration and interpretation of historic resources at the park, improvements in patron safety, enhancement of recreation facilities and restoration of natural vegetation and ecological communities. Buildings will be restored in accordance with the U.S. Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. New and restored buildings will be accessible, more energy efficient and will meet current building codes. Patron health and safety will also be improved by improving traffic flow and pedestrian routes.

The plan will result in substantial beneficial recreation impacts by providing for a variety of new and improved visitor amenities. The improved trail network will provide a better visitor experience by creating an organized trail system with designated trail uses and improved signage. A new visitor center, park office, public access to historic buildings including the Main House, and access improvements will provide improved visitor services, while also incorporating sustainable design.

There will be some physical change to the land, particularly where additional parking will be provided and trails constructed or segments of trails relocated. New facilities will be located in primarily open, previously disturbed areas and require little ground disturbance. New trail sections may require some vegetation removal and grading. Disturbance will be limited primarily to the required width of the trail corridor.

Overall, the Master Plan will have a positive impact on the natural resources within the park. Direct impacts associated with proposed improvements, such as new parking, will be minimal since the proposed improvements have been sited in areas with previous development and limited environmental sensitivity. The importance of the natural and historic resources of the park is recognized with the proposed designation of the park as a Park Preserve, and a portion of the park as a Natural Heritage Area (NHA). Native plants in the park will benefit from the plan through invasive plant species management activities. A Cultural Landscape Report will provide the information and framework to manage the historic landscape and recognize its significance. The park provides significant natural habitats; these and other important habitats in the park will be protected and enhanced. The plan includes natural resource protection strategies which provide a framework for enhancement and continued protection of the low salt marsh, maritime beach and Fresh Pond, as well as development of a grassland management plan for habitat restoration to enhance old fields for benefits to animals such as birds and butterflies.

The park contains a large number of major historic structures, both large and small. OPRHP will continue its work repairing and restoring these structures. Appropriate uses will be sought for buildings that are currently not used or are underutilized, in order to provide for their appropriate restoration. Improved signage and interpretive materials throughout the park will highlight the history and the importance of the park. Any project that could affect the cultural or historic resources of the park will be reviewed by OPRHP's State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) in compliance with the State Historic Preservation Act, as well as the Bureau of Historic Sites. Any recommendations or mitigation measures provided by SHPO or Historic Sites will be implemented.

Scenic resources, both the formal landscapes and the natural settings, will be protected and maintained through the actions recommended in the plan. Public health and safety are an important element in park operations. Facility design and development will meet all applicable health and safety codes as well as the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Caumsett State Historic Park Preserve is within the coastal area and within an approved Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan (LWRP) for Lloyd Harbor. The proposed Master Plan is consistent with the coastal policies identified in the LWRP, as well as with the Long Island Sound Coastal Management Program. The park is located within the Long Island North Shore Heritage Area (LINSHA) and is consistent with the LINSHA management plan. The proposed Master Plan is also consistent with the principles of ecosystem-based management (EBM) which provide guidance for the improvement, preservation and restoration of ecosystems and their watersheds and include: a place-based focus for activities and their impacts, scientific foundations for decision making, measurable objectives which allow for adaptive management, interconnections between activities and ecosystems, and local knowledge and partnerships to advance preservation, protection and restoration of ecosystems.

