

Chapter 2: Park Background

The Region

New York State is divided into 12 park regions. Eleven of these regions are under the jurisdiction of the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP). The twelfth region is composed of the Adirondack and Catskill Forest Preserves and is administered by the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). Hallock State Park is located in the Long Island Region administered by OPRHP.

Location and Access

Hallock State Park Preserve is located within the Towns of Riverhead and Southold on the North Fork of Long Island. The park is primarily accessed by vehicle from an entrance off Sound Avenue in Riverhead. The closest Long Island Railroad stop is approximately three miles from the park at the Mattituck Station. While there is no formal entrance or exit to the park at this time, this plan explores and analyzes all feasible entrance and exit options available to the site. See Figure 1 for a map of the vicinity of the park.

Economic Contribution/Ecosystem Services (Impact of the Park)

The park's ecosystems and the services they provide to the community are of great value. There is both intrinsic value in knowing that land is conserved and biodiversity is protected, as well as the value in the functions that the ecosystem provides, such as protection from flooding, nursery habitat for commercially and recreationally valuable fish, and filtering and cleansing of surface waters.

Recreational Needs Assessment

As a new facility, Hallock State Park has the potential to provide new recreation opportunities for residents in Suffolk, Nassau, Queens, and Kings County as well as visitors to the region.

According to the 2008 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), "relaxing in the park" continues to be the recreation activity enjoyed by most New York residents. This is followed by walking/jogging, visiting museums/historic sites, and swimming and biking.

Walking/jogging has the highest total of activity days followed by relaxing in the park, swimming, visiting museums/historic sites, and biking (OPRHP 2008).

Recreational Needs from Public Comment:

The comments received verbally and in writing during the public comment period reflected the community's desire to have passive recreation opportunities at the park. As an undeveloped facility, there was a range of suggestions for recreation, but many of them focused on passive uses.

Recreation activities suggested through public comments included: SCUBA access, equestrian trails and access, fishing, swimming, hiking, biking, camping, birding, the development of a nature center, the need for environmental education and interpretation, and both support and opposition of ATV use in the park.

The Park

Legal Constraints, Designations and Other Programs

Deed Restrictions

Hallock State Park Preserve is located in an area of historic agricultural significance. When the parkland was acquired, maintaining the historic character of the land was important both to OPRHP and to the residents of the North Fork of Long Island. At the time the parkland was purchased, OPRHP also purchased a conservation easement on the 300 acres immediately south of the park. The conservation easement ensures that the land will be used exclusively for agricultural operations. As such, property owners are required to seek approval from OPRHP for any modifications proposed for their land. Please see Figure 3 for a map of the adjacent land uses.

Designations

There are no formal designations within the park; at this time, but the plan recommends designations in Chapter 5.

Hallock State Park Preserve is located within the Long Island North Shore Heritage Area. The Heritage Area was established to protect and celebrate the culture, history and natural resources of the North Shore of Long Island. Designated in Parks law on July 14, 1998 (as amended September 20, 2000 and October 19, 2004), by the New York State Legislature, the North Shore Heritage Area encompasses the northern portion of Long Island and includes all of parts of the Towns of North Hempstead, Islip, Huntington, Smithtown, Brookhaven, Riverhead, Southold, and Oyster Bay, the City of Glen Cove, and many incorporated villages. A management plan for the heritage area was completed in December 2006.

The Town of Southold has an existing Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan (LWRP) in place that was adopted in 2004. The Town of Riverhead is currently developing a Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan as well.

The Long Island Sound Stewardship Act identified Hallock as an inaugural Stewardship Area (a place with significant biological, scientific, or recreational value). Sound-wide planning efforts include: the 1994 Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) and the 2003 LIS Agreement, which builds upon the goals of the CCMP.

Partnerships

Since its inception, Hallock State Park Preserve has had a strong link to the surrounding agricultural community. The Hallockville Museum Farm is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of the agricultural history of the area and is located on one of the nine adjacent farm parcels. In an effort to create a holistic historic experience, this master plan envisions a symbiotic relationship between the Hallockville Museum Farm and the park, with the intent to coordinate future interpretive exhibits and educational programs.

Audubon New York and the North Fork Audubon Society have been involved in the park since its inception. This partnership is expected to continue into the future.