

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 Hallock State Park. The Draft Master Plan/Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) was written to provide the opportunity for individuals, organizations and other government agencies to participate in the park planning process.

On September 23, 2008 a public information meeting was held to gather information, concerns and issues surrounding the development of Hallock State Park Preserve. Oral and written comments were received from the public at that meeting. Written comments were received until October 17, 2008.

The Commissioner believes that a Master Plan/EIS is necessary to guide the management and development of the resources at Hallock State Park Preserve.

Environmental Setting

The park is located within the Towns of Riverhead and Southold within the Long Island State Park Region. Encompassing approximately 220 acres, Hallock State Park Preserve is currently an undeveloped facility with former uses that included farming, sand-mining and a summer camp. The park also contributes to the local history and includes a battle site from the War of 1812.

The general topography of the park is generally flat with steep slopes and bluffs on Long Island Sound and in the northwest and northeast corners of the park. Additionally, there are geologic formations known as hoodoos, which are not often found in this part of the country, near the bluffs. The ecological communities of the park consist of successional maritime forests to maritime shoreline and a rare coastal plain pond.

As an undeveloped facility there are no recreational resources in the park, however, a local equestrian group has recently conducted rides in the park through a permit from the Long Island Regional Office.

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

Hallock State Park Preserve will be a place for visitors from New York State and beyond to experience the North Shore of Long Island while providing the opportunity to appreciate and learn about the natural, cultural and physical resources within the park to enjoy a variety of outdoor activities.

Overall Park Goal

The overall goal for Hallock State Park Preserve is to strike a balance between recreation and the protection and interpretation of the natural and cultural resources within the park.

Natural Resource Goal

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

Recreation Goal

Provide day use facilities and programming compatible with the park's natural and cultural resources.

Open Space Goal

Protect open space in and nearby the park through acquisition, easements or other cooperative agreements.

Cultural Resource Goal

Identify, protect, preserve and interpret structures, landscapes and other physical resources and educate the public of their importance to the culture of the local community, region, state and nation.

Scenic Resource Goal

Protect the scenic quality of the park and its views of Long Island Sound.

Access Goal

Provide appropriate access to and within Hallock State Park Preserve in a manner that ensures the safety and security of park patrons and the park's natural, recreational and cultural resources.

Education and Interpretation Goal

Provide opportunities for education and interpretation of the natural, cultural and recreational resources of the park that support OPRHP initiatives.

Operation and Maintenance Goal

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

Communication and Partnership Goal

Develop partnerships with other organizations, federal, state and local agencies, not-for-profit groups and the private sector whose intentions are in line with the stated mission and goal of the park.

Ensure open and transparent communications with the public.

Facility Development and Capital Investment Goal

Build a quality facility consistent with standard park design aesthetics that is fiscally responsible in its development and has a minimal impact on the environment.

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 Master Plan presents a series of “preferred alternatives” for future development and operation of Hallock State Park Preserve. Cumulatively, the actions described below present OPRHP’s long-term vision for the rehabilitation and enhancement of the park.

The Master Plan

Hallock State Park Preserve is an undeveloped facility. At present there are no developed public access points or recreational facilities. This master plan sets forth a comprehensive plan for opening the park to public use, constructing park infrastructure, and protecting and interpreting the park’s natural and cultural resources.

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

The plan provides for the protection of natural resources through several means:

- Designation of the entire park as a Park Preserve
- Designation of a Natural Heritage Area
- Management measures for the maritime shoreline community
- Management measures for the bluffs and hoodoos
- Management measures for Hallock’s Pond
- Management and control strategies for invasive species
- Management measures for the endangered species of the park

Recreation facility development opportunities were extensively reviewed. Recommendations include:

- Inclusion of car-top, non-inflatable, hand-powered watercraft (kayaks and canoes) as a recreational use at Long Island Sound
- Inclusion of scuba diving as an activity
- Inclusion of fishing at Long Island Sound
- Providing access to the park’s undeveloped, natural ocean beach on Long Island Sound
- Allowing equestrian use at the park by permit during specific times of the year
- Development of a formal trail system with designated trail uses

The cultural resources found at Hallock State Park Preserve are an important part of the master plan. Measures to protect and interpret these resources include:

- Development of interpretive signage and trails
- Fostering a link between the Hallockville Museum Farm and other local cultural organizations
- Development of interpretive panels about the history of the park at the Nature Center

Park operations, maintenance and infrastructure are proposed in this master plan. Among these are:

- Renaming the park “Hallock State Park Preserve”
- Construction of Nature Center/Park Office
- Construction of maintenance facility
- Construction of park manager residence
- Development of main loop road, entrance and exit to the park

- Development of main parking lot
- Development of “Shoreline Access Road”
- Development of accessible parking area and overlook near the beach

Implementation

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 Preserve is divided into three priority phases (Table 1). 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 1- Implementation Priorities

Implementation Priorities	Description/Development Component
Priority 1:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rename the park. • 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:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • Continue development of trail system • Begin to implement environmental education and interpretation programs—guided walks, hikes, etc.
Priority 3:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construct observation areas at scenic points in the park • Construct observation areas at Hallock’s Pond

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Construct Nature Center/Park Office• Construct maintenance area• Construct Park Manager residence
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Environmental Impacts

The proposed park classification of the park as a Park Preserve will limit the type and intensity of uses and will help protect park resources now and in the future.

Beneficial impacts of Master Plan implementation include:

- Preservation, restoration and interpretation of cultural resources
- Provision of recreation facilities, activities and amenities, and improvements in patron safety
- Protection, enhancement and restoration of natural vegetation and ecological communities
- Access to areas of interest in the park such as Hallock’s Pond and Long Island Sound (LIS), while protecting sensitive resources
- Signage and guided and self-guided tours that will provide visitors with an understanding of the history and natural resources of the park and a greater appreciation among park visitors for the natural world
- Recognition of the importance of natural resources of the park with the proposed designation of the park as a Park Preserve and Hallock’s Pond as a Natural Heritage Area
- Enhancement of native plants and habitats through invasive plant species management activities
- Implementation of natural resource protection strategies that provide a framework for enhancement and continued protection of the maritime beach, bluffs, dunes and hoodoos, as well as management of endangered species
- Protection and maintenance of scenic resources
- Interpretive exhibits

Mitigation of adverse impacts of the plan includes:

- Minimizing disturbance to land by utilizing existing right of ways, previously disturbed areas, and avoiding environmentally sensitive areas
- The proposed shoreline access road and associated handicapped parking area will be sited and constructed in ways that minimize disturbance (designed to minimize runoff and erosion, avoidance of sensitive wetland areas and utilization of pervious materials)
- Boardwalks will be utilized where there are sensitive resources that could be damaged by trails

Actions pursuant to the Master Plan will result in a permanent change to the land though projects will be designed to occur in sustainable ways so as to minimize negative impacts. From a long-term perspective, implementation of the Master Plan will result in beneficial environmental impact by insuring that the most sensitive areas of the park will be identified, monitored and provided appropriate stewardship and that the ecosystems and the services they provide are maintained, preserved and protected.

Some potential impacts that could occur during implementation of the plan may not have been adequately addressed in this plan/EIS. Under such a circumstance, an additional or supplemental environmental review will be required. As part of the agency’s responsibility under the State Environmental Quality Review Act, OPRHP will review proposed implementation projects with respect to consistency with this plan and EIS. Projects found by OPRHP to be consistent with the

plan can go forward without any additional review. Other types of proposals may require additional review.

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 coastal ecosystems and their watersheds. EBM principles that the plan is consistent with include having a place based focus for activities and their impacts, using scientific foundations for decision making, having measurable objectives which allow for adaptive management, recognizing interconnections between activities and ecosystems and using local knowledge and partnerships to advance preservation, protection and restoration of ecosystems.