



New York State
Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

CAROL ASH
Commissioner

DAVID A. PATERSON
Governor

AGENCY DECISION
AND
STATEMENT OF FINDINGS

**Adoption of Final Master Plan / Final Environmental Impact Statement for
Hallock State Park Preserve
Designation of a Park Preserve
Designation of a Natural Heritage Area**

The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation has prepared a Final Master Plan / Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), dated August 11, 2010 for Hallock State Park Preserve located in the Towns of Riverhead and Southold in Suffolk County.

By the authority vested in me in State Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation Law, I do hereby adopt the Final Master Plan / FEIS for Hallock State Park Preserve. I also designate the park as a Park Preserve within the New York State Park Preserve System. In accordance with the master planning process and its designation as a Preserve, the former Jamesport State Park shall hereinafter be named Hallock State Park Preserve and the Final Master Plan / FEIS has been revised to reflect the new name. A portion of the preserve, as detailed in the Master Plan, is also designated a Natural Heritage Area.

This decision is based on the Findings Statement and the content of the Final Master Plan/ FEIS, which have been prepared according to the provisions of Part 617, the regulations implementing Article 8 of Environmental Conservation Law - the State Environmental Quality Review Act.

Carol Ash
Commissioner
NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Date 10/8/10

SEQR FINDINGS STATEMENT
Hallock State Park Preserve Final Master Plan / FEIS

October 6, 2010

Pursuant to Article 8 (State Environmental Quality Review Act - SEQRA) of the Environmental Conservation Law and 6 NYCRR Part 617, the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP), as lead agency, makes the following findings.

Title of the Action:

Adoption and Implementation of a Final Master Plan / Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for Hallock State Park Preserve

Location:

Hallock State Park Preserve is located in the Towns of Riverhead and Southold in Suffolk County, NY.

Description of the Action:

The final Master Plan for Hallock State Park Preserve provides long term guidance for the development and management of the preserve and protection of its resources as summarized below.

Date of Completion of the Final EIS: August 11, 2010

Findings:

1. These findings consider the relevant environmental impacts, facts and conclusions disclosed in the final EIS; weigh and balance relevant environmental impacts with social, economic and other considerations; provide a rationale for the agency's decision; certify that the requirements of 6 NYCRR Part 617 have been met; and certify that consistent with social, economic and other essential considerations from among the reasonable alternatives available, the action is one which avoids or minimizes adverse environmental impacts to the maximum extent practicable, and that included within the plan are those mitigation measures that will avoid or minimize adverse environmental impacts to the maximum extent practicable.
2. The Final Plan/FEIS was subject to a complete Environmental Impact Statement process including a public information meeting and a public hearing.

3. The Final Environmental Impact Statement contains a chapter on responses to comments on the Draft EIS. This chapter contains clarification of issues raised during the review of the Draft EIS. It also provides information that has been used in the preparation of the Final Master Plan/FEIS.
4. Hallock State Park Preserve, located within the Long Island State Park Region, encompasses approximately 220 acres.
5. The park preserve is flat with steep slopes and bluffs on Long Island Sound. There are geologic formations known as hoodoos, often found in this part of the country, near the bluffs. These steep sections of the park are geologically sensitive and not suited for development or recreation. The ecological communities of the park consist of successional maritime forests to maritime shoreline and a rare coastal plain pond.
6. Agriculture and recreation have long played a role in the use of the land that makes up Hallock State Park Preserve. From 1903-1963 the Boys Club of New York operated Camp Carey on what is now the northwest corner of Hallock State Park Preserve. Various industrial and other uses were proposed for the site subsequent to that time but plans never came to fruition.
7. The area that is now Hallock State Park Preserve was created in 2006 as Jamesport State Park through the acquisition of 220 acres from the KeySpan Corporation with the assistance of the Trust for Public Land. OPRHP also purchased a conservation easement on 300 acres south of the park ensuring that the land will be used exclusively for agricultural operations.
8. The archeological resources at the park include both pre-historic and historic artifacts and the foundations or other remains of buildings and other man-made structures. Based on literature records, OPRHP's Field Services Bureau has concluded that areas of the park and its adjacent farmland are archeologically sensitive.
9. Notable scenic views can be observed from higher points in the park near the bluffs or from the top of the dunes where there are views of Long Island Sound, Connecticut and the shoreline east and west of the park. Hallock's Pond is also one of the more scenic areas of the park, as well as the views overlooking the adjacent agricultural land.
10. Hallock's Pond is part of a 5.9-acre state-designated wetland complex, and a 1-acre wetland has been identified at Lily Pond. In addition, two federally designated wetlands exist adjacent to the shoreline and in the southeast corner of the park.

11. Hallock's Pond is a coastal plain pond with special ecological significance. Coastal plain ponds are typically shallow, groundwater-fed ponds occurring in kettle-holes or shallow depressions in outwash plains of Long Island and support numerous plants and animals. In addition to Hallock's Pond, the diversity of the other 15 documented ecological systems contributes to the park's overall biodiversity.
12. The park includes more than one mile of ocean beachfront along Long Island Sound (LIS), which is a significant natural resource feature of the park and designated a National Estuary.
13. Hallock State Park Preserve is an undeveloped facility with no developed public access points or recreational facilities. However, a local equestrian group has recently conducted rides in the park through a permit from the Long Island Regional Office.
14. The Master Plan identifies a vision statement and goals for the park preserve. The vision is that 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. The overall goal is to strike a balance between recreation and the protection and interpretation of the natural and cultural resources within the park.
15. The Master Plan sets forth a comprehensive approach to open the park to public use, responding to recreational needs and safety of park patrons, and constructing park infrastructure while protecting and interpreting the park's natural and cultural resources and considering the principles of sustainability.
16. The plan presents a series of "preferred alternatives" for future development and operation of Hallock State Park Preserve. Cumulatively, the actions described in the plan present OPRHP's long-term vision for the rehabilitation and enhancement of the park preserve.
17. Status quo alternatives, consisting of current facilities, programs and practices, were evaluated for each element of the plan as well as other feasible alternatives. The Preferred Alternative combines the preferred options for recreation development and resource protection into one that best meets the goals for the park preserve. This alternative represents the Final Master Plan.
18. The Final Master Plan considers the historic, cultural, natural, geological, and recreational resources of the park preserve and responds to the needs and safety of patrons, protection of cultural and natural resources, and principles of sustainability. It also details the park preserve classification, designation, recreation and

stewardship elements. The plan also prioritizes implementation actions and recognizes that implementation will be dependent on public and private funding.

19. Article 20 of the Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Law outlines the process for designation of entire parks or portions of parks as part of a statewide Park Preserve system. The purpose of such a designation is to conserve and protect park lands containing wildlife, flora, scenic, historic and archeological sites that are unique and rare in New York State. In addition to providing legal protection to all of the park's resources, designating the Park as a preserve would come with restricting the creation of developed areas. Under the Master Plan, Hallock will be designated a Park Preserve. This designation is consistent with the type and extent of use in the plan and will encourage the study and interpretation of environmental resources.
20. The Natural Heritage Area (NHA) program was created in 2002 in Environmental Conservation Law. The goal of the NHA program is to identify and conserve rare, threatened and endangered species and significant natural communities that occur within state owned lands. These lands must meet certain criteria identified within the law. Hallock was evaluated by the NY Natural Heritage Program and a NHA will be designated for Hallock's Pond and an appropriate buffer area. Designating this area as a NHA recognizes, and will create greater awareness of, the importance of this significant ecological community within the park preserve.
21. The plan provides additional protection of natural resources through several means including: management measures for the maritime shoreline community, bluff and hoodoos, Hallock's Pond and the endangered species of the park preserve; and management and control strategies for invasive species.
22. The plan contains several recreation facility development recommendations including: inclusion of car-top, non-inflatable, hand-powered watercraft (kayaks and canoes) as a recreational use at LIS; inclusion of scuba diving as an activity; inclusion of fishing at LIS; providing access to the park's undeveloped, natural ocean beach on LIS; allowing equestrian use at the park by permit during specific times of the year; and development of a formal trail system with designated trail uses.
23. Measures to protect and interpret cultural and historic resources in the park preserve include: development of interpretive signage and trails, fostering a link between the Hallockville Museum Farm and other local cultural organizations, and development of interpretive panels about the history of the park at the Nature Center.
24. The plan proposes park preserve operations, maintenance and infrastructure, including: renaming the park "Hallock State Park Preserve"; construction of Nature

Center/Park Office, maintenance facility; and park manager residence; development of main loop road, entrance and exit to the park; and development of a main parking lot, "Shoreline Access Road", and accessible parking area and overlook near the beach.

25. In addition, the plan recognizes that implementation 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 implementation of the plan's recommendations will require at least ten to fifteen years. Implementation is divided into three conceptual priority phases subject to reorganization based on available funding for specific components of any given group, and on demand for the development of the park.

26. Beneficial impacts of Master Plan implementation include:

- Provision for 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
- 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.
- With the designation of the park as Park Preserve under Park law, Hallock and its natural and cultural resources will be better recognized and protected.
- Designation of Hallock's Pond as a Natural Heritage Area will provide greater awareness and recognition of the significance of the resource and provide guidance for the development of protection/management strategies to help protect the quality of the pond and adjacent habitat.
- Hallock State Park Preserve will give the park a more appropriate place-based title and will provide name recognition to both its preserve focus and the important resources of the pond.
- Use of plants indigenous to the area in landscape planting wherever possible. The Master Plan calls for restoration of native vegetation in certain areas of the park. Invasive plant species management activities will enhance native plants and habitats.
- 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
- Preservation, restoration and interpretation of cultural resources

- Protection and maintenance of scenic resources, and improvement of scenic vistas
- Interpretive exhibits
- Landscape planting will use plants indigenous to the area wherever possible. The Master Plan calls for restoration of native vegetation in certain areas of the park.
- Sustainable practices and alternatives were incorporated and considered in the planning process and are incorporated throughout the Master Plan. OPRHP will incorporate energy efficiency into design of park buildings, will explore potential for on-site energy generation, and incorporate sustainable practices into daily operations. The park will be developed using the best practices developed by the Sustainable Sites Initiative project.

27. Potential adverse impacts of the plan and mitigation include:

- Minimizing disturbance to land by utilizing existing rights-of-way, previously disturbed areas, and avoiding environmentally sensitive areas
- The 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).
- Use of boardwalks will protect sensitive resources that could be damaged by trails.
- Sustainable design of projects so as to minimize negative impacts
- Access and parking areas to be developed and used by visitors and staff will result in unavoidable increases in vehicle emissions, though potential air quality impacts as a result of Master Plan implementation will be minimal.
- Pervious surfaces will be provided wherever operationally feasible and suitable for site conditions. Additional analysis of appropriate pervious surfacing will be conducted during the design phase. Landscape, drainage improvements and bio-filtration swales will be among techniques utilized to reduce runoff, erosion, and infiltration of pollutants to groundwater.
- Short term temporary impacts could include a minor, temporary increase in vehicle exhaust and some generation of dust during construction periods. The construction period though will most likely take place over the period of at least a few years, and such impacts as fugitive dust will be of concern. Particular care will be taken to reduce the impact of construction on park users and to their recreational experience.
- Any projects that disturb one acre or more, such as the road and primary park facilities including the nature center, will be subject to the State Pollution Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) General Permit Process which involves development of a site-specific Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPP) including sedimentation and erosion control plans.
- Other measures to avoid or minimize impacts to water drainage and quality include: minimum clearing and ground disturbance for any proposed park

improvements; seeding and mulching of disturbed areas immediately following final grading; removal of invasive species, allowing for regeneration of native species of plants; and provided restoration plantings where needed.

- Development will be designed to be consistent with adjacent historic resources and the agricultural and North Fork vernacular. Until a comprehensive archeological survey is undertaken, any project that could affect archeological resources of the park will require site-specific survey. All such projects are reviewed by OPRHP Division for Historic Preservation in accordance with Section 14.09 of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Law. Any measures to avoid or mitigate impacts to archeological resources or recommendations for additional archaeological surveys will be implemented.

28. 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.
29. Public health and safety are an important element in park preserve operations. Facility design and development will meet all applicable health and safety codes as well as the Americans with Disabilities Act.
30. Hallock State Park Preserve is within the coastal area and a small portion of the park is within an approved Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan (LWRP) for the Town of Southold. As discussed within the final Master Plan-FEIS, the plan is consistent with the coastal policies identified in the LWRP, as well as with the Long Island Sound Coastal Management Program.
31. 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.
32. 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 SEQRA, 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 plan provides guidance as to when additional environmental review may be required and identifies the types of actions that are likely to require additional review.