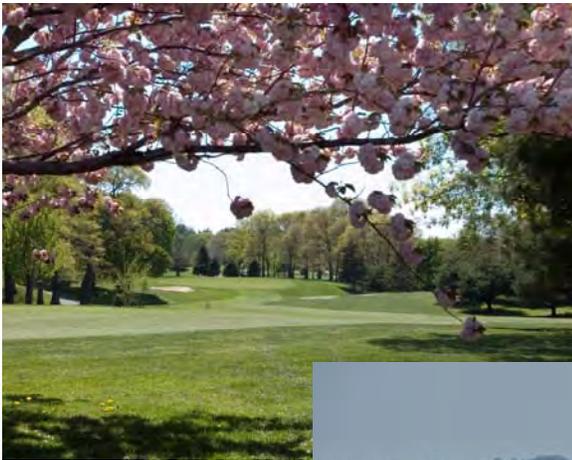


INFORMATION PACKET for the
DRAFT MASTER PLAN and
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING
Governor Alfred E. Smith/Sunken Meadow State Park
March 3, 2011
7:00 PM
Kings Park High School



Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor

Rose Harvey
Acting Commissioner

Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Agenda

1. Introductions and Welcoming Remarks
2. Overview and Timeline of the Planning Process
3. Overview of the Park
4. Public Input
5. Next Steps

Introduction

The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) has developed four Priority Themes and Initiatives that help guide the agency's activities. These priorities are revitalizing our Parks and Historic Sites, Natural Resource Stewardship and Interpretation, Creating Connections, and Sustainability. The master plan for Governor Alfred E. Smith/Sunken Meadow State Park is part of an accelerated planning initiative that will advance these themes and determine the best course of action to preserve and utilize park resources for this and future generations.

Sunken Meadow State Park is one of the Long Island Region's premier State Parks, offering year-round recreational opportunities in a unique natural setting. The park's outstanding features include almost three miles of sandy beach, three 9-hole golf courses, a driving range, sports fields, trails and numerous picnicking opportunities. In addition, the park provides ample opportunity for wildlife viewing.

The purpose of this public information meeting is to actively invite public participation and involvement in the planning process. Public participation will help OPRHP in identifying issues, concerns and alternatives as well as determining the depth to which each of the topics is explored within the Draft Master Plan/Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). It is important to provide public input opportunities now and throughout the planning process to encourage identification of the compelling issues to be addressed within this planning effort.

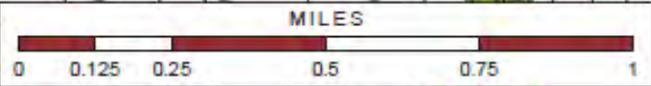
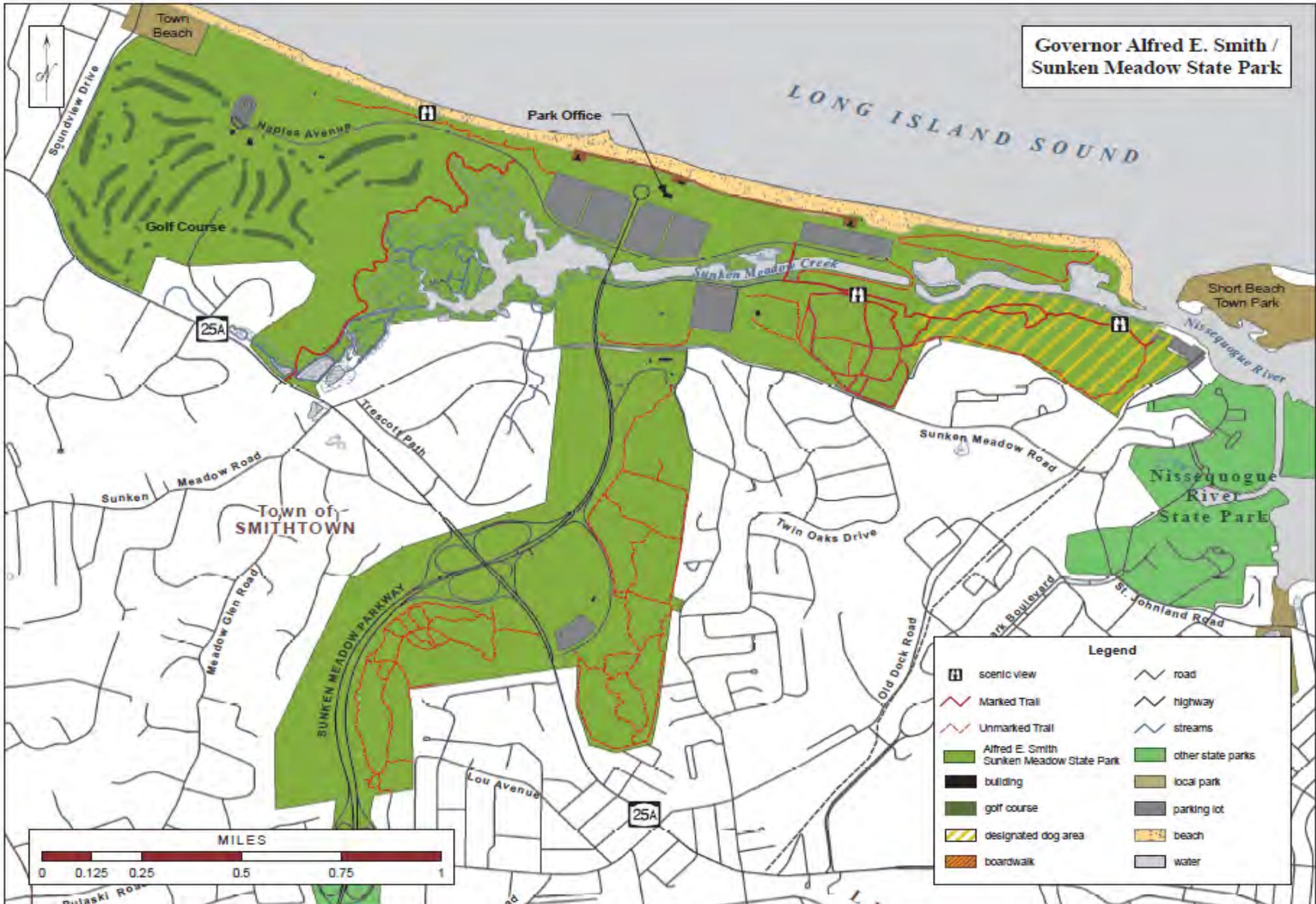
This information packet and the public information meeting are intended to provide the public with a concise overview of the park, the setting, the resources and the issues identified to this point. Additionally the meeting is designed to provide an opportunity for public input at an early stage in the master planning process.

Additional information can be obtained from OPRHP at:

Ron Foley, Regional Director
Long Island Region
Belmont Lake State Park
Southern State Parkway Exit 38
North Babylon, NY 11703
(631) 667-5055

Mark Hohengasser, Park Planner
Resource and Facility Planning Unit
Agency Building 1
Empire State Plaza
Albany, NY 12238
(518) 486-2909

**Governor Alfred E. Smith /
Sunken Meadow State Park**



Legend			
	scenic view		road
	Marked Trail		highway
	Unmarked Trail		streams
	Alfred E. Smith Sunken Meadow State Park		other state parks
	building		local park
	golf course		parking lot
	designated dog area		beach
	boardwalk		water

Proposed Master Plan Timeline

Public Information Meeting – March 3, 2011

Comments due – April 4, 2011

Draft Plan/ Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) – September 2011

Hearing – October 2011

Final Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) – January 2012

Findings and Adoption – February 2012

Overview

Governor Alfred E. Smith/Sunken Meadow State Park is 1,287 acres and offers a multitude of recreational opportunities in a unique natural setting. Activities such as golfing, swimming, kayaking, windsurfing, picnicking, hiking, biking and more are available to approximately 2.5 million visitors annually. The park contains almost three miles of Long Island coastline and provides swimming opportunities along a $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile section of beach.

Timeline

1926 - The initial land acquisition for the park took place with the purchase of 200 acres.

1930's through 1950's - Attendance grew exponentially with the development of facilities and improvements to the beachfront. The park system, at that time, was unable to keep up with the demand and additional land was purchased for facility development. During the 1950's, construction efforts focused on the Long Island Parkway system. Upon completion of the parkway, yearly visitation increased to 900,000.

1960's through 1980's - During the early 1960's additional land was acquired for the construction of the golf courses. The East and West Pavilions were constructed and parking fields were expanded. The annual park attendance grew and was consistently 1.5 million visitors through this period. Some of the developed areas of the park fell into disuse including the changing area in the Main Bathhouse, the Field 5 parking area and the Field 2 parking area. Minor improvements to the existing facilities continued, but routine maintenance was often deferred.

1990's to present – Park attendance increases. Yearly attendance ranges between 1.5 and 2.5 million visitors. On busy summer weekends, attendance can reach up to 24,000 patrons daily. The $\frac{3}{4}$ mile boardwalk and playgrounds have been replaced. However, the aging utility infrastructure is deteriorating from heavy use. Buildings throughout the park are in need of improvements to meet current operational and administrative needs.

Environmental Setting

The Park is located in the Long Island State Parks Region, in the Suffolk County town of Smithtown. It is bordered to the north by Long Island Sound. To the east and west it is bordered by residential property and local parkland. To the south the park is bordered by residential land.

The park has a single vehicular entrance at the intersection of Sunken Meadow Parkway and New York State Route 25A. There are several designated and undesignated pedestrian access points located along the park boundary. Many provide direct access to the trail system while others

Governor Alfred E. Smith/Sunken Meadow State Park

Public Information Meeting March 3, 2011

Page 4

provide access to park roadways from the surrounding residential subdivisions. A Long Island Railroad station and a bus stop on the Suffolk County Transit system are located approximately ½ mile away from the park. Access to the park is also provided from the Long Island Greenbelt Trail and along the Long Island Sound shoreline. The primary means of access to the park is by personal vehicle.

Environmental Resources

Sunken Meadow State Park is a maximum of 245 feet above sea level. The rolling hills are covered with deep fine-textured sand/gravel mixed soils and the bedrock is located approximately 1,000 feet below water level.

There are ten distinct ecological community types in the park as mapped by the NY Natural Heritage Program (NYNHP) (2003). Nearly two-thirds of the park or 727 acres is in natural cover dominated by coastal oak-hickory forest with smaller areas of maritime dune, tidal marsh and creek, and other communities. A total of 430 acres are identified as “developed” which in this case includes buildings as well as artificially maintained areas that, from an ecological standpoint, are functionally similar including picnic areas, playgrounds, playing fields, golf courses, and openings that are repeatedly mowed during the course of the summer.

Two natural communities of statewide significance were documented at the park by NYNHP: the low salt marsh complex and the maritime dunes. These two significant natural communities are located along the coastline and extend across adjacent lands and waters. Although small in comparison to other examples in the state, the maritime dunes at this site have some good quality areas and are a good representation of this coastal community. Four of the nine maritime beaches tracked by NYNHP to date are located on state park lands and are an example of the contribution park lands provide to the biodiversity of New York State. The low salt marsh within the park (81 acres) is of good quality and is part of a very large low salt marsh (403 acres), extending quite a distance down the tidal Nissequogue River. This salt marsh has been moderately impacted by development and historic ditching along much of its length, but is currently the second largest of seven that are tracked by NYNHP (NYNHP 2010).

Flora

The flora within the park is typical of that found in Long Island’s north shore ecosystems. Beachgrass is the dominant plant species in the dune areas, while the salt marsh is abundant with cordgrasses. Although the channel of Sunken Meadow Creek is dominated by large patches of *Phragmites*, there are some pockets of native plants persisting, including cordgrasses and marsh elder. The coastal oak-hickory forest found at the park also includes black cherry, sassafras, eastern red cedar, catbriar, Virginia creeper and hay-scented fern.

Fauna

For the most part, the park’s wildlife is typical of the region and the suburban setting. The park supports a wide range of mammals, birds, fish, amphibian, reptile, and insect species that are common to the coastal areas of the northeastern United States. These include whitetail deer, red fox, raccoons, gray squirrels, chipmunks, diamondback terrapins, box turtles, garter snakes, green frogs, and horseshoe crabs. Some less commonly seen animals live in the park such as river otter

and spotted salamanders. A wide variety of birds can be found at the park, making it a popular spot for bird watching.

Scenic Resources

Sunken Meadow State Park is one of the Long Island Region's most heavily used parks. The establishment of the park was focused on providing public beach access and recreation along the North Shore. The nearly three miles of shoreline combined with the dramatically rising topography creates many scenic vista points of the Long Island Sound along trails, roadways and other portions of the park. Sunken Meadow Creek also provides for many internal scenic vantage points and opportunities to see wildlife. The oak-hickory forest on the rolling terrain provides a variety of scenic fall colors.

Water Resources

Sunken Meadow State Park has three significant water resources on its surface. On its northern boundary is 2.5 miles of shoreline along Long Island Sound (LIS), an estuary where fresh water from the land and rivers and salt water from the Atlantic Ocean meet creating a highly productive ecosystem.

The Sunken Meadow Creek is a spring fed waterway that is over 2 miles long and flows eastward merging with the tidal waters of LIS. It is bordered by over 110 acres of estuarine habitat, comprised of open water and vegetated wetlands, including 89 acres of low salt marsh.

The Nissequogue River outlet sits to the east of the park and is the only major tidal river draining into LIS in which the coastal portion remains in relatively undisturbed condition. The Nissequogue River outlet creates the largest coastal wetland on the north shore. This 9 mile long spring fed river has a 40 square mile watershed, including approximately 1,235 acres of the park's land and most of Smithtown. It has several very diverse habitats, including tidal flats, coastal forests, freshwater wetlands, and a red maple black gum swamp.

Recreation Uses

Sunken Meadow State Park has three major activity zones—golf, swimming and day use. These uses are well established and take place around the primary natural features of the Sound. The park offers three 9-hole golf courses located on the western portion of the park. The golf area includes a clubhouse, a practice putting green and a driving range. The day use area is located in the center of the park and has two large picnic areas, the East and West Orchard Picnic Areas. Each has a comfort station, picnic tables, water fountains, and pedestal grills for patron use. In addition to those amenities, the East Orchard Picnic Area has a large covered picnic pavilion. There are over 11 miles of trails throughout the park offering year-round uses including hiking, mountain biking, cross-country running, equestrian use, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. Other recreational opportunities in the park include fishing, wildlife viewing, kayaking/canoeing, radio controlled plane flying, birding, geocaching, soccer, baseball, basketball and playgrounds.

Infrastructure

Electric - Electric service is provided by the Long Island Power Authority via overhead lines.

Water – The Park is on the Suffolk County Water Authority municipal water supply.

Waste water – The Park uses on-site septic systems.

Fire, Medical and Open Water Emergency Services

The park falls within the jurisdiction of the Kings Park Fire District, thus all fire, heavy rescue and medical emergency services are provided by the Kings Park Fire Department. Open water and river rescue services are jointly provided by the Kings Park Fire Department marine unit, Town of Smithtown Harbor Master boats, Suffolk County Police Marine units and U.S. Coast Guard's Eaton Neck Station.

Preliminary List of Potential Topics for Master Plan to Consider

- Recreational activities
- Picnicking
- Long Island Sound Access, Health and Watershed Protection
- Invasive species
- Pedestrian circulation
- Education and interpretation opportunities
- Historic Resources
- Connectivity to other public land
- Scenic Vistas
- Security
- Public Health
- Research
- Utility improvements
- Habitat restoration and management

Next Steps

The issues, concerns and alternatives identified at the public information meeting and through written comments, which will be **accepted until April 4, 2011**, will be summarized and made available. The Draft Master Plan/DEIS will address these issues. Further opportunities for public input may take place during the preparation of the Draft Master Plan/DEIS. Public review of this document will include a public hearing and public comment/review period. Comments made during this time will be considered in the preparation of the Final Master Plan/FEIS. After the issuance of the final plan and a public consideration period, a findings statement will be issued along with the Commissioner's decision regarding adoption of the plan.

Written comments may be sent to:

Mark Hohengasser
Park Planner
Resource and Facility Planning Unit
Agency Building One – 17th Floor
Empire State Plaza
Albany, NY 12238
SunkenMeadow.Plan@oprhp.state.ny.us