

## 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). Caumsett State Historic Park Preserve is located in the Long Island Region administered by OPRHP.

### **Location and Access**

Caumsett State Historic Park Preserve is located in Suffolk County within the Village of Lloyd Harbor. The park is primarily accessed by vehicle via a causeway on West Neck Road. The closest Long Island Railroad stop is approximately eight miles from the park in Huntington Station. There is one entrance and exit to the park used by the public on Lloyd Harbor Road. A second exit, also on Lloyd Harbor Road, located near the Henry Lloyd 1711 house, is used mostly by those accessing the park for equestrian use. Caumsett State Historic Park Preserve is within walking or biking distance for many residents of nearby neighborhoods. See Figure 1 for the park location map.

### ***Impact of the Park***

#### **Economic Contribution**

The March 2009 report “*The NYS Park System: An Economic Asset to the Empire State*” authored by Parks and Trails New York (PTNY) described significant additional benefits that state parks provide to the communities they are a part of, as well as the state as a whole. The NYS parks system, a valuable collection of natural and recreational assets, maintains and protects in perpetuity the ecosystems and biodiversity of the state, including rare, threatened and endangered species, as well as ample ecological, scenic and geological resources. Many times, it is these same resources of the parks, for example the dunes and beaches of Long Island sound shoreline parks that draw visitors to our parks, who in turn provide economic benefits.

A number of factors can go into determining the economic impact of a park including capital expenditures, money spent on operations, salaries, other costs, etc. However, on an on-going basis, the economic impact of a state park is largely a function of how many people visit the park from outside the immediate area and how much they spend while they are within the park’s community. For the latest year available, FY 2006-07, the reported attendance at Caumsett was 366,000. Caumsett is home to an equestrian center (concession) that sponsors annual equestrian events that draws people from all over to the park and to the surrounding area. Other annual sporting events (the Caumsett 50k) and cultural events also bring people to the park.

A 1997 OPRHP report, drawing upon information provided by the National Park Service in their “*Money Generation Model*” and from a 1994 Park Visitor Survey, estimated that Caumsett State Historic Park Preserve had an impact on the local economy of \$8.1 million annually. A closer review of this information indicates that it may have overstated the percentage of visitors traveling from outside Suffolk and Nassau communities.

Using the same methodology as was used previously in the Money Generation Model, but updating the input variables to be consistent with recent survey and attendance data, and adjusting dollar figures to account for inflation, the current economic impact of Caumsett State Historic Park

Preserve is estimated to be \$1.7 million. This amount should generate approximately \$77,000 in local tax revenues and 52 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) jobs.

## Ecosystem Services

Ecosystems within state parks provide many support services to communities, such as reducing negative effects of pollution, supporting soils and providing erosion control, protecting water quality, providing flood and storm protection, and supporting critical ecosystems and wildlife habitats. These irreplaceable “ecosystems services” are essential for sustaining economies and communities over time. State parks also provide affordable recreation opportunities, preserve open space and areas of historic importance, and can influence businesses to locate near parks that contribute to a higher quality of life.

The economic benefits of these services are not easy to value but research that has attempted to quantify ecosystem benefits suggests they would exceed estimates of the impacts of government and visitor spending.

## Recreational Needs Assessment

Given its location, rich history, landscaped areas and multi-use trails, Caumsett State Historic Park Preserve provides recreational opportunities for residents in both Suffolk and Nassau County and beyond. The vast open spaces of Caumsett are a draw for many in the densely populated metropolitan New York region.

According to the 2009 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), relaxing in parks continues to be the recreation activity enjoyed by most New York residents. This is followed by walking/jogging, visiting museums/historic sites, swimming, and biking. Walking/jogging has the highest total of activity days followed by relaxing in parks, swimming, visiting museums/historic sites, and biking (OPRHP 2009).

## Recreational Needs from SCORP

The Relative Index of Recreational Needs (see Table 2) in SCORP ranks needs in a county by assigning a numerical scale (10 being the highest need and 1 being the lowest) to an activity by considering the supply of recreation facilities and the level of participation and estimating how that level of participation will change in the future. According to the chart of the Index, the needs of Suffolk County are as follows: cross-country skiing, hiking, camping, bicycling, local winter activities (i.e. hockey, ice skating) tennis, relaxing in the park, walking, and golf. All of these activities received a ranking greater than 5 indicating a greater level of need. It is worth noting that, by comparison, Suffolk County’s needs are not as large as those of Kings and Queens County in New York City, but there are obvious barriers to recreational expansion in New York City given the limited availability and high cost of land.

**Table 2 - Relative Index of Needs for the Service Area of Caumsett State Historic Park Preserve**

County	Relaxing in the Park	Swimming	Bicycling	Golf	Walking	Tennis	Court Sports	Field Sports	History	Hiking	Boating	Fishing	Local Winter Activities	Cross Country Skiing
Nassau	7	6	9	6	7	5	7	6	6	10	5	6	5	10
Queens	10	8	10	6	10	6	7	10	10	10	6	6	9	10
Suffolk	6	5	8	6	6	7	5	5	5	9	5	5	7	10
Westchester	7	7	9	6	8	10	5	5	8	10	6	7	6	10
Kings	10	7	10	7	10	6	7	10	10	10	6	6	8	10

## **Recreational Needs from Public Comment:**

The comments received at the public information meeting and subsequently by post mail and email weighed heavily toward aspects of the master plan other than recreational needs. Whether this indicates a general public satisfaction with the recreation facilities at the park or the perception that other issues are more pressing is unknown at this time.

Suggestions received from the public for expanded recreation needs at Caumsett included: expanded SCUBA access, expanded equestrian trails and facilities, improvements to the facilities at the fisherman's parking lot, expanded access for non-motorized watercrafts (kayaks, canoes), limited camping, the development of a visitor center (interpretation of natural, historic and cultural resources), expanded biking opportunities, the need for environmental education and interpretation, bocce, the development of a rowing facility, improved trail connections (east and west) in the park, the need for a performing arts venue, and the development of community supported agriculture.

A comparison of the SCORP table of recreational needs in this region and public comments reveals several themes. Walking, hiking, bicycling and cultural activities (historic interpretation) were all noted as needs in SCORP and identified as needs during the public comment period.

## **2008 Visitor Survey**

A visitor survey was conducted at Caumsett State Historic Park Preserve during the period October 2, 2008 to November 2, 2008. Visitors were queried on issues facing the park, which activities they participated in while at the park, and characteristics of their visits to the park. Data was also collected on the visitor age, gender and residence.

The goal of this survey was to gauge the public's reaction to some of the preliminary ideas that were up for consideration during the master plan. The survey generally supports the themes noted above.

## ***The Park***

### **Park Boundaries**

The 1,550 acre park is located within the Village of Lloyd Harbor, in the Town of Huntington. The park entrance is on Lloyd Harbor Road and the park is nestled between two residential neighborhoods with Lloyd Harbor and the Long Island Sound bounding it on the south and north, respectively. See Figure 2 for a map of the park boundary.

### **Adjacent Land Uses**

The land surrounding the park is zoned residential with a minimum of 2-acres per parcel. According to their 2008 Comprehensive Plan, the Village of Lloyd Harbor is considering revising their zoning to require a minimum of 4-acres per residential lot. This proposed change underlies the community's desire to maintain the wooded, suburban character of the village. See Figure 3 for a map of the adjacent land uses.

## **Legal Constraints, Designations and Other Programs**

### ***Designations***

Caumsett State Historic Park Preserve has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places since April 30, 1979 and was classified as an "historic park" by OPRHP in 1997. As a National Register site, projects within the park must protect historic resources and avoid adverse impacts to

those resources. In addition, National Register listing makes the park eligible for certain federal and state funding for historic preservation efforts.

In 2006, approximately 1,200 acres of the park were designated a Bird Conservation Area (BCA) which provides land management guidelines to ensure that important bird habitats are preserved. The BCA at Caumsett encompasses nearly all of the undeveloped areas of the park. See Figure 4 for the BCA boundary and Appendices A and B for additional information.

The park is also part of the Village of Lloyd Harbor's Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP), which was adopted by the Village and the state in 1996. The LWRP designated two Significant Coastal Fish and Wildlife Habitat areas within the park located at Lloyd's Point at the northern end of the park, and at Lloyd Harbor near the southern edge of the park. This designation falls under Policy 7 of NYS coastal policies that states, "Significant coastal fish and wildlife habitats will be protected, preserved, and, where practical, restored so as to maintain their viability as habitats (NYS Department of State 2009)."

In 2005, the Coastal Fish & Wildlife Habitat Assessment Forms were updated by the NYS Department of State (DOS). The Cold Spring Harbor significant habitat area designated in the LWRP was broadened to include Oyster Bay, which forms Caumsett's western shore.

In addition to the LWRP, two areas of the park, Lloyd Point and Lloyd Harbor, have been designated as Significant Coastal Fish and Wildlife Habitat (SCHWH) areas by DOS.

Caumsett State Historic 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 PRHP law on July 14, 1998 (as amended September 20, 2000 and October 19, 2004), 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, Oyster Bay, the City of Glen Cove, and many incorporated villages.

The Long Island Sound Stewardship Act identified Caumsett as an inaugural Stewardship Area (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

The **Caumsett Foundation** is a not-for-profit friends group based on Long Island that is dedicated to the betterment of Caumsett State Historic Park Preserve. The group has been in existence since 1995. The foundation is considered a model friends group in the state due to its level of commitment and financial contributions in working with OPRHP to improve and enhance the "Caumsett experience." The Caumsett Foundation holds annual fundraising events, obtains grants to help restore structures within the park and to preserve and restore natural and historic resources, and assists in developing programming for the park.

**Nassau BOCES** has been associated with the park since the 1970s and provides environmental programming to local schools. Nassau BOCES has offices in the Summer Cottage but interprets environmental resources throughout the park. On most days during the school year, buses can be seen in the park near the Salt Marsh, Fresh Pond and in various locations throughout Caumsett.

**Volunteers for Wildlife** is a non-profit organization that rehabilitates and cares for animals on Long Island that have been hurt or cannot live in the wild due to their ailments. Volunteers for Wildlife

occupy a section of the Dairy Barn Complex. The Volunteers have been located at Caumsett since 1988.

The **Lloyd Harbor Historical Society** is a local non-profit dedicated to preserving and promoting the historic significance of Lloyd Harbor. The historical society is located at the Henry Lloyd House in Caumsett State Historic Park Preserve. The group runs programs out of the Henry Lloyd House related to the colonial history of the area.

