

**CRAB CREEK PRESERVE  
SHELTER ISLAND, NEW YORK  
STEWARDSHIP MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Introduction

In 2010 the Town and Suffolk County jointly purchased 12.6 acres of open space between Brander Parkway and Crab Creek. One third of the property had previously been farmed and has been kept open meadow by seasonal mowing. The other two-thirds of the property is undisturbed oak woodland, a coastal low forest, interspersed with beech.

Intentions

The property includes considerable frontage on Crab Creek, part of the Peconic Estuary system. Crab Creek has been stressed by development around it, and it is hoped that this stress will be reduced by preserving this frontage in a natural, undeveloped state. The property was purchased by the Town to protect the sensitive headwaters of Crab Creek by eliminating the potential for septic system damage, provide recharge for the freshwater for the fragile West Neck/Shell Beach watershed, and provide an iconic vista of the natural beauty of this area.

Crab Creek is very shallow and not suitable for motorized boating or swimming. Use of the property to encourage boating or swimming is not contemplated.

The meadow portion of the property provides a diversity of habitat, so it should be kept meadow by seasonal mowing.

Name

The property will be called "Crab Creek Preserve" (formerly owned by Brandenstein) and will be so-called on all Town maps and descriptive material. The only entrance to the property shall be from Brander Parkway, on the south side of the property, and shall/shall not be marked.

Improvements

There are no improvements on this property.

Management

A habitat restoration plan, authored by a leading local naturalist has been prepared. It is strongly recommended that in order to promote the protection and enhancement of the natural, scenic and open space character for which the real property was acquired it will be necessary to reduce the growth of invasive plants to promote the health of the meadow. This plan promotes, protects and enhances the scenic vista character for which the open space property was acquired. The Town will mow the meadow area on a seasonal basis. The balance of the property shall be left undisturbed, except that a simple 3' dirt path through the property may be allowed to provide access to the water and to keep visitors from causing wider damage to the property. At the implementation of this plan the Town needs to conduct a heavy mowing of the meadow to return it to its semi grassland/shrubland

status. The heavier brush should be removed. The Town could either let a contract or use Town employees to do this work, whichever is less expensive. If the contract is awarded to a private contractor, the costs will be a charge against the Community Preservation Fund. The clearing is estimated to be approximately \$2000 for the first year and \$1000 per year thereafter. This may have to be conducted for two or three years upon the recommendation of our naturalist.

The property has never been fertilized or watered, and therefore both are deemed unnecessary and are not contemplated. All activities on the site shall be conducted to maximize protection of the aquifer.

#### Public Access and Signage

Public access will be permitted by laying out a small dirt path on the higher portions of the property, allowing hikers to travel on a 3' wide dirt path, marked out with a small rustic bench made of a fallen log or other natural materials, set for bird watching, resting and enjoying the view across the wetlands, Crab Creek and the vista on to Southold Bay. A few non-paved parking spaces on Brander Parkway will be provided at the dirt clearing on the southeasterly corner currently used for parking now. Once inside the woods, some small markers will mark the path. A weather-proof sign at the head of the path will illustrate the path. The sign will note that all visitors should respect the natural beauty of the property, honor the need for privacy for the adjacent home owners and will state that the property will be closed from sundown to sunrise. The cost to make such improvements is estimated to be approximately \$750 and may be charged against the Community Preservation Fund.

The Town will erect the standard town/county community preservation fund signage at the southerly side of the property near Brander Parkway.

#### Measures to Protect Ecology

The Town will manage the property to protect the ecology of this property. Specifically:

- (i) Birds: no particular action will be taken except to keep the meadow open to encourage diversity.
- (ii) Animals: Nuisance hunting if necessary may be authorized by the Town Board, and shall be conducted in conformance with Town rules and regulations. The fox dens on the south and west water edges of the property shall be left undisturbed and any trail shall maintain a distance from the den area.
- (iii) Wetlands: The area fronting Crab Creek shall be left undisturbed.

The CPF Committee will prepare an annual report to the Town Board of expenditures from the Community Preservation Fund for stewardship of this property.

Adopted: April 18, 2011

Recommended unanimously by CPF Committee