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### *History of Post-Morrow*

The Post-Morrow Foundation, Inc. is located in the Hamlet of Brookhaven, Suffolk County, New York. Its principal office is at 16 Bay Road, Brookhaven, NY 11719.

Conceived by Thomas and Elisabeth Post Morrow and established in 1969, the Foundation is dedicated to the preservation of the rural countryside character of the Hamlet and the surrounding areas. Through the acquisition of properties, either by gift or purchase, the Foundation seeks to establish a nature preserve and sanctuary for the benefit and enjoyment of the immediate community. The preservation of Beaver Dam Creek, where the Foundation owns over 100 acres, is a priority.

The Post and Morrow families have had a long tradition of philanthropy in the community. James H. Post purchased the land along Carmans River, now known as Squassux Landing, which was later donated to the Brookhaven Village Association for use as a marina. The land upon which the Brookhaven Free Library is situated was another gift. Elisabeth Post Morrow continued the tradition of her father by donating various gifts to community groups, mostly anonymously. It was the hope of the Morrows that this legacy be continued through the establishment of the Post-Morrow Foundation, Inc.

# Post-Morrow Foundation NEWSLETTER

volume 6, number 4

Fall 2003

## HISTORY OF OLD INLET

by Bob Starke as told to Marty Van Lith,  
recorded and written by Marty Van Lith

**I was born in 1916** and I'll be 87 years old on Feb. 11 this year. My father had bought this property in Brookhaven [68 Bay Road] in 1900 along with his brother, Charles. Pop had 22 acres and Charles had 14, so we had all the property from where the house is now to the Bay. My mother died shortly after I was born so I was raised by a housekeeper here with my brother, Newell, who was six years older than I. I went to school out here, for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd grade. After pop married again we lived in the city, in Flatbush, and so we only came out here during the summer. But for my first school years I went to the schoolhouse here on Fire Place Neck Road. The old schoolhouse was where the current elementary school is today, but was an old wooden building, two stories, the ground floor had four classes and the upstairs had the other four. Only three people ran the school, two teachers and a custodian.

Now let's talk about the history of Old Inlet and the Fire Place Beach Club. The two clubs that were there were very different from each other in this respect that the Old Inlet was a private beach club with a regular membership committee, and if you wanted to belong to the Old Inlet Club you got hold of a member and had to be nominated by at least one member. It was open to Brookhaven Hamlet residents, too, but there were few. My father was a member, as were the Wellingtons and the Huberts, but I don't know if Mr. Post belonged.

During this time this was the only club in the area on the beach except for the Smith's Point House run by the Nesbitt family. They had bathhouses there, a dock, and they had surf-shore dinners occasionally, usually on Sundays. It was located west of the current bridge opposite the real Smiths Point, close to where the Coast Guard station was.

There were two ferries, sailboats, from Brookhaven. Blyth Gerard ran the first and

*continued on next page*





# HISTORY OF OLD INLET

continued from front cover



Bob Starke, his wife Helen and son Bill at Old Inlet, November 1991

his boat was called the Fanny Fern. The other one was called the Woodmere, and they went to Smith's Point and that was the only other access to the beach other than the Old Inlet Club in the early days. There was no reason to have a Brookhaven beach club because we had ferries going to the Smith's Point House from Carmans River. They were in competition with each other and both were sailboats, but I think the Fanny Fern had a kicker with it, a little one-cylinder engine.

The wooden bridges built in 1916, 1921 and 1927, spanning the area where the current Smith's Point Bridge stands, lasted only a few years each as winter storms and ice destroyed them. It was great snapper fishing from the wooden Smith's Point bridge built in 1927, in fact, when I was 12 years old I got a boat of my own, a little sailboat, and I used to go over to Clint Miller's. He had a little shack on the beach and hauled for bait, and I used to sell bait to the snapper fishermen on the bridge. I used to get 25 cents a quart for shiners. There was a hotel on the beach side of the bridge, it was called the Hedges Hotel, but I don't know who owned the hotel. I also don't know who paid to have the wooden bridges built. But Smith's Point was really the Nesbitt beach house over near the Coast Guard Station. The boats and ferries would come in on the long dock they had there. One of my most memorable childhood experiences on the beach was around 1930 when the Betsy White wrecked and broke in half with the bow section landing west of Old Inlet and stern section to the east. She was "visited" by lots of locals, my brothers Newell, Bill and I included. We ended up with a piece of the anchor chain, which lay under our front porch for years. Other locals cut up the rest of the chain and hauled it back to the mainland. Later the fire department used it for the restoration of the Brookhaven Hamlet memorial that they encircled with the chain. However, they were a few pieces short so I gave them my pieces to complete it.

The Old Inlet Club was exactly where the current, 2003, boardwalk crossing is. Before the '38 hurricane, Old Inlet had a place where you could get a sandwich or a cup of coffee and so on, and

they had bathhouses and you rented them for the season. And they had family houses and they had a women's court and a men's court, which were just lockers, and they had freshwater showers. Then the hurricane of '38 came along and wiped everything out, including Nesbitt's Smith Point House, which was never rebuilt. We [the Old Inlet Club members] had a meeting right after the hurricane and decided to rebuild the whole thing. Ted Everett had a new water tank made out of cypress and Ted towed it over to the beach. We rolled it up the boardwalk to a little promontory on the dune on the west side of the boardwalk down where the bathhouses were. Fortunately, the hurricane did not destroy the old pumping engine, which was an old, one-cylinder Fairbanks & Morse make-and-break connected to a freshwater well. We also had to replace the cesspools, which were located on the beach. Everything was put back in good shape. The members that chipped in to rebuild Old Inlet were noted in the record as equity members, and it came to pass later when the property was sold to the National Seashore those members who rebuilt the club got extra compensation. So, in short, after we rebuilt it Old Inlet resumed as before.

Now let's talk about the 1950s and the creation of the Fire Place Beach Club. How that came to pass was that I was president of the Brookhaven Village Association at the time and we more or less decided that with the threat of Robert Moses' plan to build a highway down the middle of Fire Island and also the interest in it becoming a National Seashore, if we wanted to have our own access to the beach and a beach club we'd better damn well buy a piece. We bought a stretch, from bay to ocean, that was 200ft wide from the Tibbs girls, Nancy Ljungqvist and Barbara Horan. It was altogether, I believe, about five acres. We asked ourselves "How are we going to get the money to buy this piece?" So, we decided to follow what Old Inlet originally did. They had established the Hospital Point company and they bought the property and leased it to the Old Inlet Club and they put out bonds and stock in the Hospital Point Company. [As an aside, Hospital Point, which is adjacent to where the Old Inlet Club was to be built, got its name from an incident that happened in the early 1900s. Because of the deep water there, the Coast Guard used that point to rescue shipwrecked people and took them to Bellport for help.]

So we did the same. But we didn't have a company. But like Old Inlet, which was not connected to the incorporated village, we were a private club. We thought of incorporating at the time but it was too much a complication, so we formed the Mattabank Corporation. It's an Indian name for the barrier beach. We told the people of Brookhaven they could buy one share of stock for \$25 and one bond which was \$100. And the bond would pay 6% interest. We sold enough stocks and bonds to pay the \$3,000 an acre, or \$15,000 for the lot. I don't remember the exact date, but it was somewhere in the mid-1950s. We then leased it to the BVA who, in turn, named it the Fire Place Beach Club.

The Fire Place Beach Club was different from the Old Inlet Club in this respect: The Old Inlet Club was a private club, as we



[BVA] were, but our members were restricted to a geographic area - Brookhaven Hamlet. We did not have the non-residents same arrangement as we did with Squassux Landing, where we allowed them to come in at a premium. To be a member of the Fire Place Beach Club we defined the bounds of the Hamlet as follows: on the east Carmans River, on the north Montauk Highway, on the west Arthur Avenue and Bellhaven Road and on the south the bay. The reason we wanted to keep it small is because we didn't want to spend a lot of money. We didn't feel we could spend the amount of money that they did in Bellport [with the Old Inlet Club] so we figured if we had the money for the boardwalk, and the changehouse and the toilets was the best we could do. By the way, I also kept my membership in the Old Inlet Club until it was dissolved.

Because of the way these two clubs evolved historically, Bellport's Old Inlet club was east of Brookhaven's Fire Place Beach Club, just the opposite of the Villages' position on the mainland. But we both used the Old Inlet channel to get to our respective beaches. As an aside, the Incorporated Village of Bellport was smart enough to realize the National Seashore was going to go out and buy property on the beach and they would have to automatically skip any incorporated village property so they bought what is today Ho-Hum Beach.

Then came the National Seashore. They [the Feds] were very friendly with Ted Everett [President Old Inlet Club] over the years, and I got together with Ted to see what we could do to see that whatever they offered us let's make sure it was a fair deal. After a time both the Hospital Point and Mattabank Corporations were made offers, and I thought that was a fair offer for our piece, \$32,000, nearly twice what we had paid for it a decade earlier, plus a couple of thousand extra for the boardwalk and the building. The Hospital Point Corp. was offered quite a bit more because they had five times as much property [25 acres] and after many discussions with Ted we decided that we'd take it. However, we decided we'd push for a lease back and make that a condition. We both met with the fellow doing the negotiating for the National Seashore at the same time, and we told him we would not challenge him on the price but we'd like to have a lease back and asked for five years. They agreed, we sold it to them, and we continued to run Fire Place Beach as before. The Mattabank stockholders made out quite well, receiving about \$500 for their original \$125 investment. But when our five years were up, they didn't renew and tore up the Fire Place Beach Club dock, boardwalk and buildings. A positive thing that came out of this is that the Brookhaven Village Association, which held a number of Mattabank's stocks and

bonds, received several thousand dollars and used that money to create the west canal at Squassux Landing. And, after the five year lease back of the Old Inlet Club, the National Seashore decided not to demolish the Old Inlet structures and said that this would be available to anyone with a boat and we could continue to have access to the beach as before, so we were happy that we still had access to the beach. But, as you know, the Federal government did not continue to do repairs and gradually everything fizzled out to what you see today, just a boardwalk crossing.

What the Old Inlet Club and the Fire Place Beach Club had in common was that our members liked boats, enjoyed going over to the beach, and going over there by boat was half the fun. They enjoyed swimming in the ocean and they all appreciated that the beach was one of the finest beaches in the world, and so it is, with the white sand, dunes, and to say nothing of the beach plums, which everyone picked in the fall. I think I mentioned that Dennis Puleston and Ted Everett drove up to Cape Cod at the suggestion of the Federal negotiator to see how the National Seashore was run there. Cape Cod is a little different in that they could get to most places by car. The barrier beach that we're talking about you could only get to by boat. What I hope for now is that the National Seashore would maintain just two things: the boardwalk and the dock. If they do that we could continue to have access to the beach, just like Cape Cod. It's just a small fraction of the amenities that the Old Inlet Club had. Heck, you could take a freshwater shower, you had your own bathhouse, your own locker. It was peaches and if you didn't want to take a picnic lunch you could at least have a hamburger and a cup of coffee. And they [Old Inlet] made very nice chowder, by the way.



OTIS PIKE WILDERNESS AREA OF THE FIRE ISLAND NATIONAL SEASHORE. National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior.



# THE FIRE ISLAND WILDERNESS AREA

by Joe Zysman

*Joe Zysman has been Chairman of the Fire Island Wilderness Committee for the last 25 years*

## When the Fire Island National Seashore

was established in 1964, a relatively undeveloped part of it, known as the 8-mile zone, between Davis Park and Smith Point, was specifically earmarked to be preserved *"in as nearly (its) present state and condition as possible"*. Ownership of the handful of houses in the area was assumed by the Park Service by condemnation, to be eventually removed when their leases expired.

When the National Park Service drafted its first Management Plan for Fire Island in 1975, rather than leaving the area undisturbed, it proposed the development of 4 separate recreational sites in the area, of varying sizes (Watch Hill, within the area, had already been developed). In order to contest these proposals, several seasonal residents at Whalehouse Point banded together and formed the Fire Island Natural Area Committee (FINAC) and secured the support and involvement of several local and regional environmental and civic organizations.

While the Park Service, in response to this opposition did scale its plans back somewhat - it eliminated one of the sites - in order to secure more complete, and more permanent protection for the area, FINAC, with the encouragement of several national organizations, proceeded to seek its inclusion in the Wilderness System and changed its name to the Fire Island Wilderness Committee (FIWC).

After decades of effort by environmental advocates, legislation establishing a National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) was finally enacted, coincidentally in 1964 with this statement of purpose: *"In order to assure that an increasing population, accompanied by expanding settlement and growing mechanization does not occupy and modify all areas within the United States and its possessions, leaving no lands designated for preservation and protection in their natural condition..."*

In the act, wilderness is defined as an area *"retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, . . . and which generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable..."*

There are presently over 600 separate areas in the system, in almost every state in the Union, and comprising over 100 million acres - nearly half of which are in Alaska. There is no size limit for an area to be included - they range from 5 acres to over 5 million acres in size. Once designated, restrictions of the law prohibit the use of motorized equipment and man-made structures or installations, however there may be exceptions to these restrictions.

As a result of the efforts of FIWC, the Park Service, in conjunction with the completion of its General Management Plan, agreed to undertake a review of the area to determine its suitability for inclusion in the NWPS. As required by the Wilderness Act a formal study was commenced in 1979. The area was found to meet the qualifications, and the National Park Service made a preliminary proposal and a positive recommendation.

In making its "Case for Wilderness" the proposal noted its relation to the original intent for the area: *"Perhaps the most compelling argument favoring the designation of wilderness at the seashore is that such designation would reinforce the explicit mandate contained in the seashore's authorizing legislation for the lands lying between Davis Park and Smith Point West."*

***"Perhaps the most compelling argument favoring the designation of wilderness at the seashore is that such designation would reinforce the explicit mandate contained in the seashore's authorizing legislation for the lands lying between Davis Park and Smith Point West."***

As inclusion in the Wilderness System can only be made by Congress, after NPS made its recommendation a campaign was mounted to garner support for legislation. To this end, FIWC obtained the formal endorsement of 84 national, regional, and local environmental and civic organizations supporting designation, and formed a coalition with a dozen other organizations to pursue it. The entire area falls within the 1st CD

and then Congressman Bill Carney introduced a bill in the House, while Senators Javits and Moynihan jointly sponsored a companion bill in the Senate.

The legislation was enacted and signed into law in December 23, 1980. Public Law 96-585 designated 1330 acres between Watch Hill and Smith Point as wilderness, with another 17 acres of "Potential Wilderness Additions". It was officially named the "Otis Pike Fire Island High Dune Wilderness" in honor of the multi-term district Congressman, and recognizing the existence of the highest ocean-fronting dunes on the Atlantic Coast within the area.

Designation excludes Bellport's bay to ocean tract, as well as most of the beach, as the land below mean high water is state rather than federally owned. The northern boundary is at the shoreline of the Great South Bay, and excludes all of the offshore islands. And a small enclave at Smith Point is excluded to accommodate a Visitor Center, including its future expansion.

Special provisions were made permitting the closing of a breach in the area, for the boardwalk at Smith Point as well as for the eventual replacement of the bathhouse at Old Inlet.



The FIWC has continued over the years to be active in supporting the wilderness area including this summer's effort to organize a successful fund-raising effort with three other local organizations for a wilderness-compatible replacement toilet for Old Inlet.

FIWC will continue to be vigilant. FINS has recently received authorization for funding for a revision of its almost 25 year old General Management Plan, and the Wilderness Management Plan with it. This will be a major undertaking, taking place over a year or more, and costing about a million dollars. It will involve an Environmental Impact Statement and public hearings. The completed plan will govern how the Seashore and the Wilderness Area within it will be managed for the next 25 years.

The Wilderness Area, today, is in better shape than it has been in decades and the best way to manage it is to simply leave it alone. Let us hope that FINS will have the wisdom and determination to do so.

#### THE NEW COMPOSTING TOILET AT OLD INLET.

Joining with the Fire Island Wilderness Committee, the Friends of Fire Island National Seashore and the Brookhaven

Village Association, the Post-Morrow Foundation contributed to the purchase of an environmentally friendly, composting toilet to replace toilets which had been inoperable and removed several years ago.

The four local groups were able to match funds provided by the National Seashore to restore facilities at Old Inlet. In addition to the four groups and the Seashore many residents contributed to the fund. Of especial note is Jane Quappe, widow of Lincoln Quappe who was a firefighter who died on 9/11. She noted that Linc loved the beach, always took his kids there and would have wanted to support this community effort at Old Inlet.



Photo courtesy of Jeb Barry

## THE DENNIS PULESTON OSPREY FUND

As most of our readers know, the Dennis Puleston Osprey Fund established a web-camera on an osprey nest in the Brookhaven area in April of 2003. As a result of the work of many partners and supporters, the project was a great success. During the fledging season, while the chicks were growing and prospering, we were receiving over 200 "hits" to the webcam per hour. *Newsday* has featured the project in their Long Island Nature series and we have received comments from around the world.

We will continue to have the webcam up next spring to follow our family of ospreys, who return year after year to Brookhaven.

We would welcome contributions to the Dennis Puleston Osprey Fund to assist us in this endeavor. The committee has put in countless hours to maintain and operate the project. We would like to note that all members of the committee are volunteers and have put in a personal commitment that is very extraordinary. We are very grateful for their effort

*Contributions can be made to the Post-Morrow Foundation - Dennis Puleston Osprey Fund at 16 Bay Road, Brookhaven, NY 11719*



#### DEDICATION OF THE DENNIS PULESTON OSPREY FUND WEBCAM PROJECT

*Pictured is the organizing committee at the Wertheim Wildlife Refuge.*

*Front row: Karen Rowley, Tom Williams, Pat Martinkovic*

*Second row: Regina Shea, Connie Ludlam, Ann Meinhold*

*Third row: Tom Ludlam Bill Starke Tom Shea, Tom Throwe,*

*Rick Mohlman, Dave Shore, Peter Clement*



# A TRIBUTE TO DENNIS

by Art Cooley

**Born in England, at Leigh-on-Sea,** on the north shore of the River Thames, Dennis grew up in the words of a famous author, “messing about in boats”. It is unlikely in all that time on the water that Dennis ever saw an osprey. When he came to the United States he discovered them in numbers and they became one of his most often painted birds. He, to his continual delight, studied the ospreys on Gardiners Island, maybe the densest colony of colonial nesting raptors in the world.

The fecundity of Gardiners Island ospreys would not last as the use of DDT and its effect on top predators spread following World War II. Dennis played a pivotal role in the banning of DDT in 1972 through his Chairmanship of Environmental Defense (then EDF) from 1967-1972. Fortunately, he lived long enough to witness the recovery of ospreys on Long Island and elsewhere.

It is fitting then to comment on the recovery of ospreys in Dennis' homeland for there is a success story there as well. Ospreys had been common in Scotland and probably England. They were even mentioned in Shakespeare and by numerous poets in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Subsequent persecution by those who viewed ospreys as varmits and by egg collectors, a peculiarly British pastime, reduced their numbers. By the 1830s they were gone as a nesting bird from England; in more remote Scotland, they lasted until 1916.

**Dennis played a pivotal role in the banning of DDT in 1972 through his Chairmanship of Environmental Defense (then EDF) from 1967-1972. Fortunately, he lived long enough to witness the recovery of ospreys on Long Island and elsewhere.**

Not surprisingly, it was in Scotland where they first returned in 1954 to Loch Garten. When I visited this nest in 1962, there were sentinels watching the nest around the clock. The base of the dead tree supporting the nest was surrounded with barbed wire to discourage egg poachers. Despite these efforts a person that year was caught at the base of the tree with box containing the eggs from the nest. Overcoming these setbacks, the ospreys in Scotland flourished and now there are more than 130 nests scattered around the country.

English ospreys required more time; ironically they nested for the first time in more than a century and a half in the year that Dennis died, 2001. Assisted by an artificial nest site built on the shore of

Bassenthwaite Lake in the Lake District, nesting ospreys returned to England. For three years this nest has been successful and has contributed to the tourism of the area. (Details of these efforts can be seen on [www.ospreywatch.co.uk](http://www.ospreywatch.co.uk).)

The “Return of the Osprey,” the title of a PBS special by Michael Male and the title of a book by David Gessner, has been one of the conservation success stories on both sides of the Atlantic. It is a story that is a theme of the life of Dennis Puleston. It is a story that energizes his family and friends. It is the reason we have had such a wonderful time this year observing and not disturbing the natural life of a family of ospreys. And it is why we have participated in this wonderful legacy left by our friend and mentor, Dennis Puleston.



Chicks at 12 days



Chicks at 8 weeks



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# OSPREY FAMILY UPDATES

by Dave Shore

Over the course of the project, several members of the committee commented on the activities of the osprey family. These observations and comments were made to help viewers understand what was happening and why. Many viewers were concerned that of the four hatched osprey chicks

only two survived. However, this survival rate is excellent and bodes well for this osprey family. It is almost unheard of for more than two chicks to survive. The parents are unable to care for more than two because of the hard work to feed them. With a chick survival rate of two the ospreys are in good shape.

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**July 14**, the chicks are practicing flapping and hopping for much longer periods. Early in the morning, the chicks took turns exercising their wings. The larger chick actually flew up out of the camera view for a few seconds. Even the other chick was impressed as it watched!

**July 16, 6:00 AM**, first chick leaves the nest. An adult was on the perch and the chicks were calling to it. The adult left and the smaller (#2) chick started doing exercise lift offs. After several lift offs it went up and to its right (west) and disappeared.

**July 14, 15:43 (3:43 PM)**, Adult brings a small fish and as soon as it landed in the nest the smaller chick lunged and grabbed it. The adult then took off leaving the larger chick screeching and circling around the nest. The smaller chick kept its head down and ate the whole meal in about 8 minutes. The larger chick kept circling and flapping its wings in protest, and even lunged at the smaller chick, but it didn't get the prize. Even after the fish was gone, it continued to scold and threaten. Finally, after 3 or 4 minutes, the larger chick decided to exercise its wings on the edge of the nest and quiet down.

**Adult brings a small fish and as soon as it landed in the nest the smaller chick lunged and grabbed it. The adult then took off leaving the larger chick screeching and circling around the nest.**

finally succeeds in landing on the perch and #2 appears to call out in approval, then does a little victory dance. The two call back and forth as #1 sits on the perch.

**July 16, 13:19**, second chick leaves the nest. Both chicks were in the nest, the larger (#1) was exercising and pacing about the nest, the other (#2) was lying down behind the grass. #1 took off for the perch but misses, (you can hear it hit the perch). The other chick sits up and watches as #1 circles above and around the nest. #1

**July 17**, the first full day after both fledglings have taken to the air. They have taken turns flying off, #2 more than #1, but return to the nest to be fed and rest. The adults bring small fish that are taken by one or the other fledgling, but neither will share.

**July 15, 12:36 PM**, both the chicks are lying motionless next to the grass. The hen is sitting on the perch and calling. The hen then circles the nest, lands and becomes very agitated, screeching and holding her wings out. Suddenly a shadow flies in from the north and the hen crouches down and then flips over exposing her talons upward. As the attacker flies by she flips back on her feet and watches the other bird as it flies away. The attacker makes several more passes and the hen leaps up at it. On the final pass, the hen leaps up and flies off. During the entire incident and for the next 30 minutes or so, the chicks don't move or make any sounds. At 14:00 (2:00 PM) the 2 chicks and the hen are all moving about the nest as usual.

**Suddenly a shadow flies in from the north and the hen crouches down and then flips over exposing her talons upward. As the attacker flies by she flips back on her feet and watches the other bird as it flies away.**

**July 18**, the hen and the young continue to return to the nest to feed. The competition for the fish the male delivers is fierce and sometimes violent as the young birds and the hen all go for it. The young then try to steal the fish away from each other.



# WRAPPING UP THE SEASON

## REPORT FOR THE DENNIS PULESTON OSPREY FUND

by Tom Ludlam

*Tom Ludlam has served as the chairman of the committee and kept the Osprey Fund on target.*

This final commentary is being written as the vanguard of hurricane Isabel whips across our empty nest. I must say, it is impressive that the camera we so arduously mounted above frozen ground many months ago is still faithfully broadcasting, rock-steady in a 30 knot blow. The birds, of course, are elsewhere now. We are left to recall an amazing season of events in which we were afforded unprecedented views of courtship and birth, violent death, a constant struggle for survival, and the final affirmation - as the two chicks departed fully-fledged - that this is part of an annual cycle nature has sustained for millenia. A cycle that we know is nonetheless a fragile thing in the face of present-day human activity.

Our record of this season now consists of several hundred hours of recorded video (more on that below), the archival comments posted on the database by dozens of dedicated observers, and the commentaries from our resident experts that have helped to put the unfolding events into a broader context of the osprey life cycle, the Long Island habitat, and Dennis Puleston's role in bringing about a global response to the human activities that have threatened these birds and other wildlife species.

For those of us who have organized the DPOF, this inaugural year has been a great success primarily because of the many hundreds of viewers who have gotten the opportunity to watch the daily activities of an osprey nest. From April through July, the osprey cam site recorded an average of about 2000 "hits" per day. Individuals or classroom participants found the osprey cam either through the Post Morrow Foundation website, *Newsday's* "Our Natural World", or Cablevision's "Power to Learn" sites.

### A TECHNICAL NOTE

We have received many comments to the effect that "This is the best nest cam I have ever seen." Indeed, our osprey cam is among the first, if not THE first, to provide live, high-resolution wildlife video to everyone with access to the internet. This is largely a matter of timing. The capacity of low-cost computers and software, and the capability of the internet to handle large amounts of data cheaply have been improving exponentially over the years. The system we designed and put together, for a budget of about \$10,000, would not have been feasible a year earlier, and would not have been technically possible two years ago. That we were able to take full advantage of the latest developments in the computing industry is due to the fact that two of our members, Tom Shea and Tom Throwe, researchers at Brookhaven National Laboratory, are

among the world's leaders in the design of data processing systems for large scientific experiments.

### WHO ARE WE?

A number of viewers have asked to know more about the DPOF. At the time of Dennis Puleston's death in 2001, a group of his friends established the Osprey Fund, in his memory, with the following mission statement: "The purpose of the fund will be to encourage research about ospreys on Long Island, to improve the nesting opportunities and to educate the public about these magnificent birds." The osprey cam was implemented through contributions to this fund, which is administered by the Post Morrow Foundation.

**THANKS TO ALL**  
In closing out the year, we would like to give special thanks to those dedicated observers who have kept us all informed through regular postings on the database. This has been a big help.

We are grateful for the support of Betty Puleston and her family, the Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge, *Newsday*, Cablevision, and to all of the contributors to the Dennis Puleston Osprey Fund.

The DPOF Committee that developed and maintains the osprey cam is a diverse group of about 25 people, with various professional backgrounds, some of whom are expert naturalists. All have an abiding enthusiasm for the natural world that in some way draws from the wisdom and inspiration of Dennis. All of the work of the group is done on a strictly volunteer basis - there are no employees.

You can find a discussion of how the project evolved, and see some of the people involved, in the Spring 2003 Newsletter of the Post Morrow Foundation. This can be downloaded from [www.postmorrow.org](http://www.postmorrow.org).

The nest that we have equipped is in the Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge, on the Carmans River in Brookhaven Hamlet, near the Great South Bay. The nest is not accessible to the public, but can be seen from the Carmans River.

### PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

We will leave the camera operational through October, then take it down for the winter. We will try re-orienting the camera, to view the general scene near the nest, providing a "leaf cam" as the fall colors come on. (We're not sure how satisfactory this will be, however.)

We plan to continue the osprey cam next year. Clearly, we've learned a lot in this first year, and will try to take advantage of these lessons next year. Of course, we need the cooperation of the ospreys. They certainly did their part this year! The birds are expected to appear again on Long Island around mid-March.

During the off-season, we are looking into the possibility of making all of our video archives from the past season available on our server computer, so that anyone who wants to can bring up the video from a specified day (following on-screen instructions). This should be a real boon to osprey enthusiasts and researchers. Watch the web site.

*Continued on bottom of next page*



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# THE PEAT HOLE

**The Post-Morrow Foundation** working with the County of Suffolk, the Town of Brookhaven, the Village of Bellport and many community supporters is pleased to announce that the Peat Hole in Bellport is in the process of being preserved. The Foundation held a community fundraiser and awareness program last November. Residents of the area rallied to the cause and raised considerable monies toward this preservation effort.

The Town of Brookhaven committed open space money to the project, as did the County of Suffolk. Together with the community effort, the one-acre property at the end of Peat Hole Lane has been approved for purchase and preservation. Contracts and agreements are being developed.

In addition to the one-acre parcel, an agreement with the owner Sperry Lea is being considered which would include the bottomlands on the east side of the Peat Hole and the sluiceway into the Great South Bay. Ongoing efforts are being made to develop additional easements and protection for this small but important watershed into the Estuary.



*Ice skating on the Peat Hole, winter 2003*

“The earliest citation for what most likely is the Peat Hole was found in a document dated 1733 in Records: Town of Brookhaven. Additional lots were being measured off and the directions were to go “Due west, untill it cumes to a Due North Line from a pon in Ockambamack Neck on the East side of the pinte.” There is only one pinte (Howell’s Point) in Occumbomock Neck and only one pon (pond) on the east side so it seems clearly to refer to the Peat Hole.” (K. Tomlinson, 1981)

Known as the Ice Pond in the late 1800’s and as Edey’s Pond, after Birdsall Otis Edey in the early 1900’s, the Peat Hole has been a special place for Bellport and Brookhaven residents for many generations. Ice skating has been its special attraction for children and families and it serves as a bird sanctuary and tributary to the Great South Bay.

The management of the Peat Hole will be under the jurisdiction of the Village of Bellport. It is expected that an advisory committee will be established to assist in the care and maintenance of the Peat Hole. Ownership will be tenants in common including the Town of Brookhaven, County of Suffolk and the Village of Bellport. It is expected that this project will improve the wetland management of the area surrounding the Peat Hole and of course it will be accessible to the public for walking and ice-skating as a nature preserve.



*Fall at the Peat Hole*

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## HOW YOU CAN HELP

Our effort is financed by contributions, and we will need some additional support to continue next year. Although the major investments in equipment are behind us, continued operation will require continued financial support: we will need money for internet fees, software maintenance fees, disks for archiving video, repairs, etc. If you can make a (tax-free) contribution, we’d appreciate it. See “make a donation” on the web site.

If you have suggestions or comments for improving the site next year, please let us know, via the message board. If you live in the vicinity of Eastern Long Island, and would like to become an active participant on the DPOF Committee, please let us know.



# THE ECOLOGY OF THE PEAT HOLE

by Anthony Graves

**The Peat Hole** is a shallow freshwater pond with associated freshwater wetlands extending north. The pond and wetlands are spring-fed with ground water and never go dry, even during extended droughts.



The area surrounding the Peat Hole transitions from wetlands to upland oak-dominated deciduous forest. A unique aspect of the Peat Hole is its proximity to Bellport Bay, a part of Long Island's South shore Estuary Reserve. A sandy beach area where High Tide Bush, Marsh Mallow, Phragmites and Multiflora Rose grow separates the Peat Hole from the bay.

The beach area is about sixty feet across. The outlet of the Peat Hole traverses the beach area into Bellport Bay through a wood-

en sluiceway. On very high tides and during storms, the bay level rises high enough so that it flows up the sluiceway and into the Peat Hole, creating temporary brackish conditions in the pond.

Killifish, American eels, yellow-spotted turtles, snapping turtles, green frogs, spring peepers, belted kingfishers, green-winged teal, wood ducks and many other wildlife species have been seen in and around the pond. The Peat Hole is an important area to migratory birds such as

warblers and waterfowl, and is also an important source of food, shelter, and drinking water to a wide variety of area wildlife.

The Peat Hole remains largely unspoiled and is a vibrant living resource within the South Shore Estuary Reserve.

# THE CARMANS RIVER MARITIME CENTER

## THE CENTER IS OPEN!

**A**t last the Carmans River Maritime Center's renovated Newey Boat Shop has received its Certificate of Occupancy and is now open for business. We are planning our first course for later this fall. Become a charter member, qualify for member discounts and help support the mission of CRMC. Be sure to visit the Center's new website at [www.carmansrivermaritime.org](http://www.carmansrivermaritime.org). You can also link to the website from the Post-Morrow Foundation web site at [www.postmorrow.org](http://www.postmorrow.org).



Mike Garlin and Bruce Tooker, trustees of the Carmans River Maritime Center carry a Mill Creek Kayak into her new home.



Ted Flagg of Brookhaven Hamlet is pictured alongside his partially completed Catspaw dinghy (a Joel White design). Ted has very generously donated the boat to the Maritime Center along with all the necessary lumber to complete the project. The shop will use it as a teaching tool as it is completed. The Center is very grateful to Ted Flagg for his donation.

*The Mission of the Carmans River Maritime Center is to operate an Educational facility for the building, restoration and repair of wooden boats and to sustain maritime skills and traditions, particularly those associated with Brookhaven Hamlet and Great South Bay.*

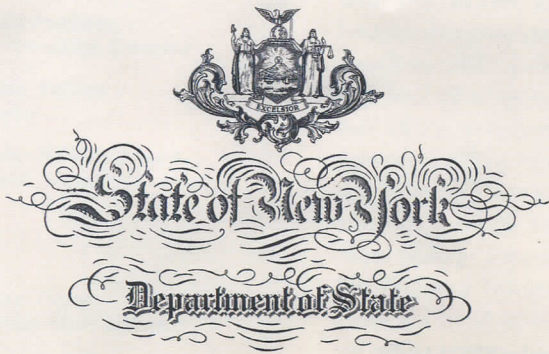


# THE HEADWATERS OF BEAVER DAM CREEK

The Foundation is very pleased to announce that we, in cooperation with the Town of Brookhaven, have been able to secure the preservation of nine acres of the headwaters of Beaver Dam Creek. Using some of the open space money approved by voters in the Town and a contribution from the Post-Morrow Foundation this important parcel of land has been saved from development. Just north of Montauk Highway and west of Old Town Road, the property encompasses the origins of the Creek. It is also adjacent to a parcel the Foundation purchased several years ago sometimes referred to as the "Arnold Bread Store" property and the original site of a gas station.



The headwaters in winter



WHEREAS, on Earth Day, 2003, the Long Island South Shore Estuary Reserve Council members, local leaders, and citizens gathered at the Village of Freeport's waterfront esplanade, to celebrate Earth Day and recognize outstanding contributions of grassroots organizations and citizens for their work to advance the South Shore Estuary Reserve Comprehensive Management Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Reserve Council was created to represent a cross section of the broad interests and stakeholders in the South Shore Estuary and with its great diversity, has worked closely with its partners in a spirit of cooperation to promote its principal goal of protecting the health of the South Shore Estuary; and

WHEREAS, the Post-Morrow Foundation has shown leadership and creativity in coordinating an exemplary restoration planning and implementation model in the Beaver Dam Creek watershed; and

WHEREAS, the Post-Morrow Foundation has been instrumental in expanding public awareness and understanding about the natural resources of the Beaver Dam Creek watershed and the South Shore Estuary; and

FURTHER, the Post-Morrow Foundation is hereby recognized for its outstanding contribution to the South Shore Estuary;

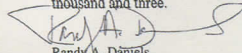
NOW, THEREFORE, I, Randy A. Daniels, present this

Certificate of Recognition  
to the  
Post-Morrow Foundation

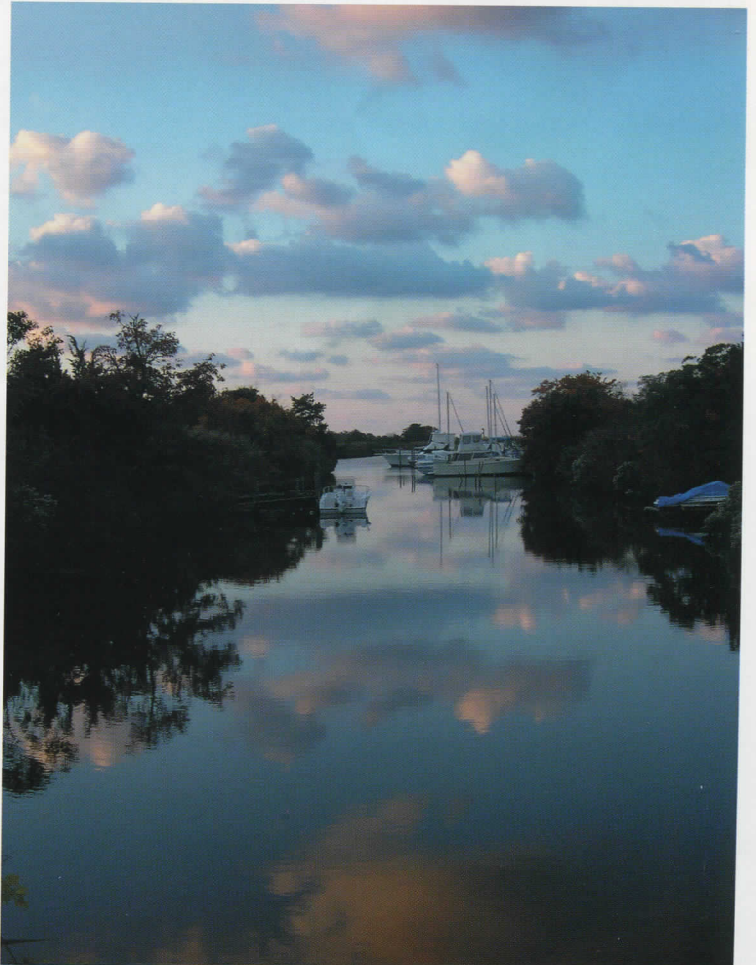
as it continues its fine work and unwavering commitment to implementing the collective vision of the people who live, work, and recreate in the South Shore Estuary Reserve. Best wishes for future accomplishments.



Given under my hand and the official seal of the State of New York this 22<sup>nd</sup> day of April in the year two thousand and three.

  
Randy A. Daniels  
Secretary of State

The Department of State recognized the Foundation for its "leadership in coordinating a restoration planning and implementation model in the Beaver Dam Creek watershed." The Foundation received this certificate of Recognition from Randy Daniels, New York Secretary of State and Chair of the South Shore Estuary Reserve Council on Earth Day, 2003.



Looking south from Beaver Dam Road, photo by Frank Muller





**Post-Morrow Foundation, Inc.**

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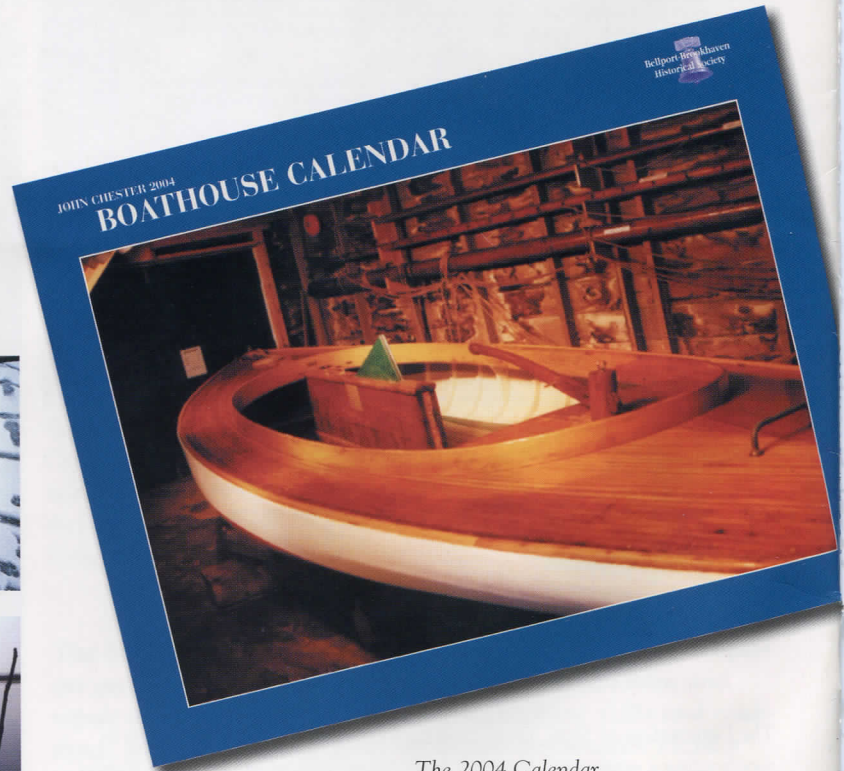
email: [pmfinc1@earthlink.net](mailto:pmfinc1@earthlink.net)  
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# JOHN CHESTER 2004 BOATHOUSE CALENDAR

Bellport/Brookhaven Historical Society

The **Post-Morrow Foundation** sponsored the month of November in the recently published Historical Society Calendar for 2004. Developed as a fundraiser for the John Chester Boathouse at the Museum. The Calendars are on sale at the Historical Society. Copies can be purchased at several establishments in Bellport Village as well.



The 2004 Calendar



Photos by P. Casanova