

MOTTS CREEK AND HOWELLS CREEK

The Post-Morrow Foundation is pleased to announce that two significant properties were donated this spring for the purposes of preservation. Both properties impact tributaries to the Great South Bay Estuary and will protect important wetland areas.

Evalyn Nulle and Janet Smaldon as executors of the estate of Madlyn and Joseph Shaber donated the parcel on Motts Creek. This 2.6 acre piece falls within the Motts Creek watershed. It is a beautiful wetland area that is the home of many species of birds and wildlife. One of its particularly beautiful residents is the Great Egret. During the spring and summer you can see them settling in for the night perching high on the trees. Motts Creek runs along the eastern boundary of the Village of Bellport and flows into the bay through land now owned by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. It is our hope to further protect the watershed of Motts Creek and we are currently working with other landowners in the area.

Dr. Laszlo Biro of New York City donated the second parcel of land. This very special land is

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MOTTS CREEK... *continued*

adjacent to Mother's Beach in Bellport Village. Dr. Biro wished to preserve the land because of its value to the wetland area just to the north of a small tidal wetland area and east of Howell's Creek and Mother's Beach. Because of its value as a building lot it is a significant gift to the Foundation.

The Foundation has set a high priority on preserving land in wetlands that impact the Great South Bay. Other efforts have preserved an area of Hedges Creek and Abbets Creek in East Patchogue, Lons Creek in Old Mastic and of course Beaver Dam Creek, noted elsewhere in this newsletter.



HISTORY OF POST-MORROW

As conceived by Thomas and Elisabeth Post Morrow and established in 1969, the mission of the Post-Morrow Foundation is "to preserve and conserve the rural, cultural and historical character of the hamlet of Brookhaven and surrounding areas... This land to be kept in its natural state as a sanctuary, open space or natural garden..."

Tom Morrow and Elisabeth Post grew up in Brooklyn and both families spent their summers in Brookhaven. After graduating from Cornell in 1916, Tom joined the Aviation Branch of the U.S. Navy. When he returned from the war, Tom and Elisabeth fell in love and married.

They decided to live in Brookhaven and build a home and they chose a piece of property along Beaver Dam Creek. One of the things that drew them to this land was an Atlantic White Cedar that had a unique shape. That tree is now represented by the logo

for the Post-Morrow Foundation.

The Post and Morrow families have had a long tradition of philanthropy in the area. James H. Post, Elisabeth's father, 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 gifts to various community groups, mostly anonymously. It was the hope of the Morrrows that this legacy be continued through the establishment of the Post-Morrow Foundation, Inc.

Increased public awareness of our community's heritage, its historic and cultural resources, and open space is one of our primary goals. It is with this in mind that the Foundation believes it has a special task to nourish the vision of Tom and Elisabeth Morrow.

BEAVER DAM CREEK RESTORATION PROJECT

In our fall 2002 newsletter we wrote about the restoration efforts being undertaken on Beaver Dam Creek. We have completed phase II, restoring about eight acres of wetlands on the east side of the creek at the end of Clover Lane. This wetland will provide important habitat for waterfowl, wading birds, shorebirds, salt marsh fishes, and a host of other wetland dependent wildlife. Spearheaded by Ducks Unlimited, the project has recreated what we hope will be a healthy tidal wetland.

The eight-acre parcel that has been restored had been degraded over time by a variety of factors. The majority of the site was covered with dredge spoil, deposited on the wetlands when the creek was dredged decades ago. The entire restoration area on the inside of the dike is mapped as 'dredge spoil' on the 1974 NYS Department of Environmental Conservation tidal wetland maps. A dike was built from the dredge spoil along the shoreline, preventing tidal inundation of the marsh interior and the southern half of the area was dominated by *Phragmites australis*, an invasive species. This site is directly adjacent to a successful pilot restoration project that was completed several years ago.

Funding for the project has come from several sources including Ducks Unlimited, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Restoration Center's Community-based Program, US Fish and Wildlife Service, The Town of Brookhaven, and New York State Senator Caesar Trunzo. The construction firm of Bay Area Excavating, owned by Brookhaven residents Matt and Carole Kerins accomplished the excavation work.

The effort was greatly assisted by the good works of many volunteers. Bob Kent from NY Sea Grant brought students from Westhampton Beach High School; Cornell Cooperative Extension supplied students from Project SOAR (Stewards of America's Resources). Suffolk County Department of Parks provided assistance through their summer interns. In addition volunteers from the Brookhaven Community as well as members of the Beaver Dam Creek Task Force (including staff from Suffolk County Office of Ecology, Suffolk County Soil and Water Conservation District, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, New York Sea Grant, NOAA, Ducks Unlimited, Post-Morrow Foundation, Friends of Wertheim and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service were of tremendous assistance. These volunteers were responsible for planting several thousand plugs of smooth cordgrass, spike grass, and salt marsh bulrush.

The planting of native species grasses was also supported by contributions from The Brookhaven Village Association, New York Sea Grant, Friends of Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge, Post-Morrow and Kurt Roeser. Pat Martinkovic provided a wonderful barbeque for all the volunteers. We are grateful for this wonderful community participation.



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The following background and description of the project is drawn partially from the newsletter of Winter 2002 and a report written for the New York Department of State

Introduction

Beaver Dam Creek remains today a characteristic example of one of the numerous rivers, creeks, and smaller tributaries that were an integral part of the rich and diverse natural resources of the south shore of Long Island. The headwaters of these creeks typically originated as freshwater springs or seeps, emerging from the glacially deposited sands and gravels that serve to purify these waters. They flowed slowly south toward the shallow bays as crystal clear water being further filtered through adjacent freshwater maple swamps and bogs. Eventually reaching the zone of tidal influence, these waters made the transition to an area of riverine marshes. As the creeks widened and emerged toward the bay, they became typified by expansive tidal salt marshes and provided sustenance for a bay system that was rich with biota, not only beautiful to look at but also economically critical to this region.

Unfortunately, as Long Island was developed, numerous human activities proved to have detrimental effects on the natural qualities of these creeks. In the 1920's and again in the 50's, Beaver Dam Creek was dredged north to Beaver Dam Road. As was typically the practice, the dredged material was deposited on the natural salt marshes along the shores of the creek. Numerous benefits normally provided by naturally functioning wetlands were subsequently lost, including a significant amount of wildlife habitat, natural filtration of overland runoff, buffering against storm surge, and nursery grounds for shellfish and finfish. Additional negative impacts resulting from development include increased storm water runoff and other non-point source pollution, hardening of the shoreline, and significant altering of the wetland hydrology from grid ditching for mosquito control.

In 1990, the Long Island Regional Planning Board published a study, which looked at two streams in the South Shore Estuary. Entitled *Evaluation of Land Use Impacts on Environmental Quality in Urban and Semi-rural Streams Tributary to Great South Bay Long Island, New York*, this study examined Neguntatogue Creek in Babylon and Beaver Dam Creek in Brookhaven. The study recommended "the need to establish stream corridor protection programs at the town level having public education, litter reduction, stream corridor improvement and surveillance components. The programs would provide a means for coordinating New York State, Suffolk County, town and village activities targeted to the development and implementation of protection plans on a priority basis for all of the streams to Great South Bay." The study noted that Neguntatogue Creek had been extensively developed within its watershed and had significant pollution problems. Beaver Dam Creek on the other hand provided a special opportunity to develop prevention efforts to insure its relatively unpolluted condition.



Volunteers planting Smooth Cordgrass (*Spartina Alterniflora*)

A later study by Voorhis and Associates in 1996 made recommendations about storm water runoff remediation for the Beaver Dam Creek corridor. (*Stormwater Inventory For South Shore Bays, Town of Brookhaven, 8/30/96*). In 2002 Suffolk county Soil and Water Conservation District (SC SWCD, 2002) described a watershed management plan for the mouth of the Creek in the area of Bellhaven Road (*Bellhaven Road Watershed Management Plan, prepared for the Town of Brookhaven Highway Department, 8/02*).

In 1999, the Post-Morrow Foundation initiated a small restoration project aimed at removing dredge spoil from a 4-acre parcel owned by the Foundation. Extensive removal of dredge spoil was accomplished and Smooth Cordgrass and Atlantic Panic grass was planted in order to create a natural tidal wetlands area. The success of this project provided the impetus for moving forward with the current restoration project.

An Opportunity for Restoration

The exhaustive effort that has resulted in a Comprehensive Management Plan for the South Shore Estuary Reserve clearly identifies the need to address these negative impacts. Corrective actions will result in both quantitative and qualitative improvements that will benefit the economic and social value of the area. These can only be fully achieved if a comprehensive approach to any restoration efforts is undertaken. The current conditions existing within the Beaver Dam Creek watershed offer an excellent opportunity to use such an approach. Furthermore, a successful comprehensive restoration effort within the Beaver Dam Creek watershed will serve as a prototype for similar restoration programs along the entire South Shore Estuary.

Action Plan

The Post-Morrow Foundation has determined the preservation and protection of Beaver Dam Creek to be its highest priority. Towards that end the Foundation reached out to potential partners in the area in order to further this project. The land being restored includes property owned by the Post-Morrow Foundation along the eastern edge of the Creek. We are currently planning an effort to restore wetlands on the western side of the creek that would include some property owned by the county of Suffolk including the Dennis Puleston Nature Preserve as well as additional Post-Morrow Foundation property.

The development of comprehensive watershed-based restoration plan for Beaver Dam Creek began in January 2001 when the Long Island Wetland Restoration Initiative first convened with the intent to improve communication and cooperation within the regional wetland restoration community. Through follow-up meetings and the work of several sub-committees, eight 'formerly-connected' tidal wetlands within Long Island's South Shore Estuary Reserve were identified as candidate sites for restoration. Wetlands on the tidal portion of Beaver Dam Creek were among these sites.

A Beaver Dam Creek Tributary Corridor Restoration Task Force comprised of federal, state and local government partners, non-governmental organizations and academic institutions was subsequently formed to develop and implement a restoration plan for Beaver Dam Creek. This planning and implementation project, coordinated and facilitated by Ducks Unlimited and Post-Morrow, will improve the tributary's water quality and aquatic habitats through the construction of storm water abatement projects, restoration of tidal wetlands, and use of public education and other best management practices, and is consistent with implementation actions identified in the South Shore Estuary Reserve comprehensive management plan.

Background

Beaver Dam Creek is an urban tributary of Great South Bay. Its 2,096 acre / 3.275 square mile watershed lies entirely within the Town of Brookhaven in Suffolk County (7.5' Quadrangle:

Bellport, NY). The 1.1-mile tidal portion of the creek, up to the Beaver Dam Road Bridge, is a designated Significant Coastal Fish and Wildlife Habitat due to the rarity in the region of such relatively undeveloped tidal channels bordered by substantial tidal marshlands. Beaver Dam Creek is also one of only five streams on Long Island with significant concentrations of sea-run brown trout and supports an autumn recreational fishery of county-level significance.

Use impairments in Beaver Dam Creek are identified in The 2000 Atlantic Ocean/Long Island Sound Basin Waterbody Inventory and Priority Waterbodies List (PWL). According to the PWL, year-round shellfishing restrictions apply in the tidal portion of the creek due to pathogens from marine toilets and urban and stormwater runoff. The tidal portion of the creek is classified as Class SC waters and therefore not assessed for shellfishing. Other recreational uses of the creek are considered stressed based on these shellfishing restrictions.

Beaver Dam Creek forms the western edge of the Carmans River floodplain and was once flanked by expansive salt marshes. Dredging in the 1920's and again in the 1950's resulted in the construction of dikes along the creek and the placement of dredge spoil on the marshes along both shores. Consequently, numerous benefits provided by wetlands were lost, including a significant amount of wildlife habitat, natural filtration of overland runoff, buffering against storm surges, and nursery functions for various estuarine species. Accompanying development within the watershed were increased stormwater runoff and other nonpoint source pollution and significant alterations to wetland hydrology from grid ditching for mosquito control. The invasive common reed (*Phragmites australis*) also became widespread.

As part of a general characterization of the watershed, the Suffolk County Planning Department (SCPD) has prepared tax map scale geographic information system (GIS) maps of the Beaver Dam Creek watershed detailing the existing land use and the ownership of all recreation and open space parcels. In addition to the field verified GIS maps, the SCPD tabulated land use acreage within the Beaver Dam Creek watershed for the thirteen land use categories that are commonly used for regional planning purposes.



Water Quality

A watershed analysis of Beaver Dam Creek completed in January of 2002 identified 12 locations where polluted stormwater runoff discharges into the creek. Three discharge points were of immediate concern:

- the farm on the northwest side of the creek;
- the Bellhaven community on the southwest side of the creek; and
- the north side of the railroad tracks (representing concentrated flow from Montauk Highway).

Water quality monitoring will be necessary to assess the impacts of stormwater inputs; the Suffolk County Health Department Office of Ecology has volunteered to conduct this monitoring. Samples will be taken on a monthly basis at four marine and four freshwater sites. Routine sampling parameters will include ammonia, nitrite + nitrate, urea, total nitrogen, dissolved inorganic phosphate, total phosphorus, silicates, total and fecal coliform bacteria, metals and volatile organic compounds (VOC's). Sampling for pesticides will be conducted on a quarterly basis. These data will be invaluable in identifying where mitigation measures should be concentrated within the watershed.

The Suffolk County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) has assisted the Town of Brookhaven with redesigning the stormwater management system at key discharge points bordering the creek in the Bellhaven community. The SWCD designed a system to retain and filter runoff through a series of infiltration chambers called Infiltrators and grass swales. The project is scheduled for construction in the spring of 2003. The Town of Brookhaven has received \$88,230 in State Clean Water / Clean Air Bond Act funds towards this project.

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service has helped develop a comprehensive conservation plan, as per Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) planning guidelines, for Deer Run Farm, a 33-acre vegetable farm bordering Beaver Dam Creek that grows lettuce, spinach and cabbage. The plan identifies conservation practices necessary to improve soil quality, reduce and filter runoff, and protect groundwater.

Site Design, Habitat Restoration and Monitoring

Site design and monitoring of the Beaver Dam Creek restoration project have been coordinated to date by Ducks Unlimited (DU) the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and the Post-Morrow Foundation with input from numerous other partners. Current restoration efforts focus on an eight-acre parcel owned by the Post-Morrow Foundation on the east side of the creek.

Efforts to create a site design for the proposed restoration project included numerous visits to the project location. In addition to DU and USFWS, several other partner agencies were involved with the initial site visits, including regulatory personnel from the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. Existing conditions on the site were surveyed to provide a base map on which to delineate the final project design. (An accurate survey of the current elevation profile is critical to determining



the amount of material, i.e., dredge spoil, to be removed from the site; Elevations of areas of healthy, functioning marsh serve as benchmarks for final grades). An overlay of the final design on the base map allows for the proposed acreage of restored mud flat, low marsh, and high marsh to be calculated. These figures are then used to determine the amount of plant material needed to revegetate the site once final grading is achieved. The proposed site design is required as part of the permit application package by the Town of Brookhaven, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, and the US Army Corps of Engineers, as well as for consistency approval by the NYS Department of State.

Construction of the east side project was completed in June of 2004. Over 10,000 cubic yards of dredge spoil and vegetative material were removed from the site over the course of the three months. Four tidal channels and four tidal pools were constructed, and a mosaic of low marsh, high marsh and mudflats were created. Volunteers helped plant roughly one-third of the site with native salt marsh grasses after the project was completed.

The wildlife response has been dramatic, with immediate use following construction by waterfowl, shorebirds, wading birds, salt marsh fishes and blue crabs. Resident finfish such as common mummichog, striped killifish, and sheepshead minnow, and seasonal visitors such as Atlantic silverside, bay anchovy, Atlantic menhaden, winter flounder, bluefish, striped bass, and fluke are benefiting from increased foraging, breeding, and nursery habitat. These expected increases in marsh fishes will provide important foraging opportunities for predators such as blue crab, terns, egrets, and herons.

Monitoring

Monitoring of the physical and biological characteristics at the proposed restoration site was initiated in Fall 2001. Several parameters were chosen to provide an objective assessment of the pre-restoration conditions and will be used to evaluate post-restoration conditions. Parameters being measured include height of the water table, soil salinity, and plant species composition.

Visual documentation of the site will be captured through photo monitoring from specific fixed-point locations.

Measurements of the water table and soil salinity will be taken monthly during the growing season, and vegetation data collection and photo monitoring will be completed annually at the end of summer. After completion of the project, post-restoration monitoring will continue for five years.

The monitoring efforts will follow protocols established in a regional study of Open Marsh Water Management (OMWM) by US Geological Survey and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. With limited resources always an issue, the monitoring plan for this project will allow for the collection of relevant physical and biological characteristics with reasonable time and financial commitments by the partner agencies. Photo monitoring, in particular, will provide a low-cost method for evaluating the structural attributes of the site from year to year.

With funding from a Community-based Restoration Program grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, DU is working with Southampton College and Cornell Cooperative Extension to monitor the fisheries community at the restoration site. Both pre- and post-restoration sampling has been conducted to evaluate the impacts of the restoration efforts on finfish that are dependent on salt marshes for their life cycle.

Education and Outreach

Critical to the project is an education and outreach subcommittee comprised of New York Sea Grant, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County, Ducks Unlimited, the US Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service, Trout Unlimited, the Suffolk County Soil and Water Conservation District, and the Post-Morrow Foundation. The group has focused on documenting and promoting the progress of the restoration effort, developing educational materials on preventive and restorative measures to protect the creek for residents of the watershed, and identifying undeveloped land in the watershed that could be protected.

In addition to these efforts, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County has begun development of an instructional video of the entire planning and restoration process. The video will be used for education and outreach within the Beaver Dam Creek watershed and made available to other communities interested in embarking on such watershed-based resource management.

The subcommittee has held discussions with the Bellport High School Science Department in an effort to develop projects that include high school students. One such project identified is a summer science program that focuses on the impacts of lawn care products on the creek's water quality and what homeowners can do to reduce these impacts.

The subcommittee plans to continue its education and outreach activities in an effort to create a strong investment in the restoration project on the part of all residents within the watershed, and in particular among those landowners whose properties are adjacent to the creek. Having local residents become active stewards of the watershed is key to ensuring the long-term health of Beaver Dam Creek.



Aerial photo of Beaver Dam Creek as it flows into the Great South Bay

SOUTH COUNTRY PARTNERSHIP

The Post-Morrow Foundation and the South Country Partnership held a Community Awareness Day on May 22nd. The mission of the Partnership is to bring together the not-for-profit, community-based agencies serving children, youth and families within the South Country School District. Through the Partnership, agencies can coordinate existing programs and support each other to benefit the community.

Held at the Hamlet Organic Garden in Brookhaven, the day included arts and crafts, music featuring the Boys and Girls Club Steel Drum Band and the South Country String Band.

Atlantica/Tierra Mar, Kitchen and Coffee, The Bellport, and the Chowder House made generous donations for the "Cold Soup Contest" organized by Tom Schultz. Thanks too, to King Kullen Grocery Stores for a generous donation of food and drinks.

Helping to make the day successful the following groups participated.

Bellport/Brookhaven Historical Society
 Bellport Film Society
 Bellport Sailing Foundation
 Boy Scouts-Brookhaven Troop 4
 Brookhaven Free Library
 Friends of Wertheim
 Post-Morrow Foundation
 South Country Education Foundation
 South Country Ambulance
 South Country Soccer League

Bellport Day Care Center
 Bellport, Hagerman, East Patchogue Alliance
 Boys and Girls Club of the Bellport Area
 Brookhaven Fire Department
 Carmans River Maritime Center
 Hamlet Organic Garden
 Something Old/Something New
 South Country Montessori
 South Country Even Start

Earth Day 2004

The Post-Morrow Foundation was honored by Secretary of State Randy Daniels. Pictured from left to right, Craig Kessler, Cindy Patterson, John Cushman, Randy Daniels and Tom Williams at the "Ground Breaking" for the Beaver Dam Creek Restoration Project.

The Beaver Dam Creek Task Force was presented with a certificate "in recognition of their vision, stewardship, and fine work in protecting and restoring this valuable resource."

Legislative Grant

We are pleased to announce that New York State Senator, Caesar Trunzo has awarded the Post-Morrow Foundation a special \$15,000 grant to assist the project. We are especially pleased and grateful to Senator Trunzo for his assistance.



COMMUNITY AWARENESS DAY



COMMUNITY AWARENESS DAY





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STEWARDSHIP

“PRESERVE; TO PROTECT FROM INJURY, PERIL, OR OTHER ADVERSITY” -

NEW AMERICAN DICTIONARY

The acquisition and preservation of land, is the first step in the conservation process. Conservation prevents harm or loss to the natural environment. After the first stage of the conservation process the owner of the conserved property must become a good steward of the land. Good stewardship ensures that the organization meets its responsibility to protect environmental resources in perpetuity.

The Post-Morrow Foundation takes the responsibility of land stewardship very seriously. It is both time consuming and costly. Oftentimes we find ourselves having to clean up litter and material that is dumped on Foundation property. Sometimes neighbors will intrude on protected property because a boundary is not clear. It is our wish that most of our preserved property be available to the public for its enjoyment but it is important that we care for it.

We are also working to restore some of our property to a more natural state. For

example in this newsletter we discuss the restoration of Beaver Dam Creek. It is our belief that as good stewards of this land we have a responsibility to return it to a productive, active wetland. Another project is the restoration of a grass meadow to

Longmeadow Farm on Old Stump Road. The Foundation has received a small grant from the USDA to restore approximately eight acres to a meadow of warm season grasses.

We would respectfully ask our neighbors and friends to look for opportunities to assist us in our stewardship responsibilities. Through vigilance and financial support we can continue to keep our lands in their natural state.

For further information on how to support our preservation efforts, please do not hesitate to call the Foundation. Kenny Budny is our facilities manager and provides leadership for stewardship of Foundation properties. You may reach him at our main number 286-0686.

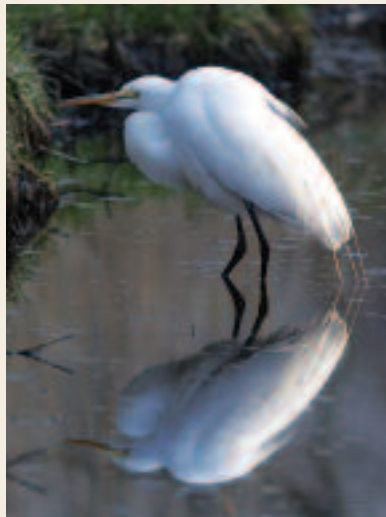


Photo by Frank Muller