



MILL POND OVERLOOK



A project of the
Town of Oyster Bay

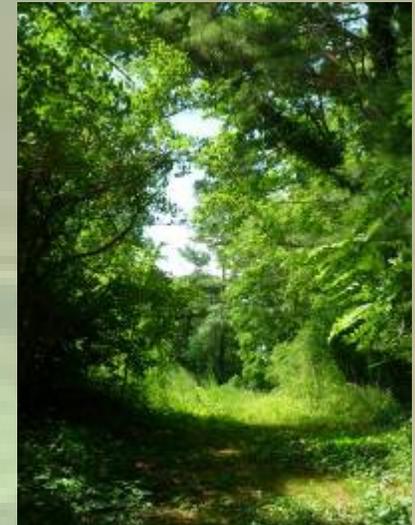
Prepared by
Cameron Engineering & Associates, LLP



Funded in part through an EPF grant from the NYS Department of State

Project Goals & Advisory Committee

- Planning and design for
 - Habitat restoration and protection
 - Public use and access
- Advisory Committee
 - Town of Oyster Bay
 - Engineering, Highways, Environmental Resources, Parks
 - US Fish & Wildlife Service
 - Friends of the Bay
 - North Shore Land Alliance



Site Assessment - Topography

- Steep slopes
- Flat area by wetland
- Flat, open areas on hill top
- Flat, filled area by roadway
- Ravine to flat area by wetland
- Lower property boundary also wetland edge.



Site Assessment – Ecology

- Old Field (hill top)
 - Non-maintained field and meadow plant community.
 - Field dominated by grasses and forbs (herbaceous flowering plants)
 - Shrub-scrub thicket and areas with younger trees
 - Natives and remnant ornamental species.
- Oak-Tulip Forest (most of site)
 - Dominants: tulip, beech, black birch, red maple, white ash, black walnut, Norway maple, eastern red cedar, red oak, black oak.
- Red Maple Hardwood Swamp (most on FWS property)
 - Old fill along wetland edge, 1.5-2 foot elevation difference
 - Hummocks separated by open mud in wetland area
 - Large black walnuts and red maples in FWS wetland



Site Assessment – Ecology

- Birds observed in the ground layer
 - Cardinal, bluejay, tufted titmouse, turkey.
- Herptiles observed on property
 - Red-backed salamander, garter snake.
- Mammals located on property
 - Deer mouse, meadow vole, gray squirrel, raccoon.



Site Assessment – Ecology

- Invasives and Exotics
 - Norway maples everywhere.
 - Heavy vine coverage (various grape species, Asian bittersweet, poison ivy, English ivy), particularly on hilltop.
 - Some ornamentals and garden plants on hilltop, northern edge.
 - Tree of heaven, autumn and Russian olives in hilltop field.



Manmade Features

- Flat area by wetland
 - Concrete pads near wetland.
 - Old chimney lying on concrete pad.
 - Built on fill, ~1.5-2 ft higher than wetland.
 - Posts (4x4) approximately along FWS property line
 - Survey shows 12 foot ROW.
- Mill River Road
 - Sidewalk is narrow and needs improvement.
- Collapsed old shed in ravine
- Hilltop
 - Black chain link fence surrounds hilltop.
 - Drive to hill top from Underhill Avenue



Manmade Features

- Trash
 - Some debris in 'ravine' from 'parking area' down to large tulip tree, including a collapsed shed.
 - Miscellaneous light trash in lower portion of property near wetland.
- Dumping
 - Use of NW corner for residential yard waste disposal.



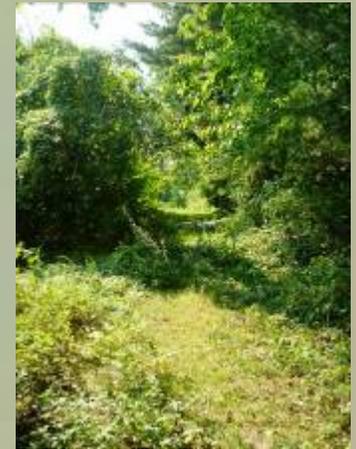
Site Constraints & Opportunities

- Steep slopes and elevation change
 - Safety, erosion, tree cover, access, ADA.
- Ravine
 - Erosion, challenging access, fill.
- Hill top
 - Access from north and south, views, open areas for activities.
- Wetland and pond
 - Habitat protection, access, education, passive use.
- Specimen trees
 - Habitat, protection, education, passive recreation.
- Vegetation
 - Invasives, exotics, heavy canopy coverage.



Site Constraints & Opportunities

- Concrete pad
 - Restricts plant growth, historic (?)
 - Sitting area, educational opportunity
 - Or, removal for more natural area.
- Debris in ravine and by pond
 - Create activity to discourage, removal to restore.
- Drive to hill top
 - Not ADA compliant, adjacent to mature vegetation.
- Connections to/from site
 - 430ft to school, $\frac{1}{4}$ mi to downtown, walking distance.
- Open area by road
 - Filled area good for parking and access,
 - Adjacent to residence, buffer needed.

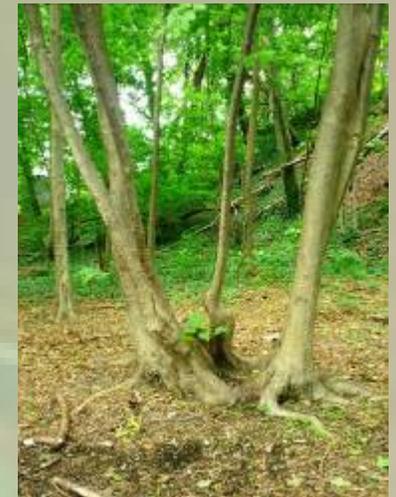


Habitat Restoration Opportunities

- Hilltop could be restored by removal of vines and other exotics and invasives.
- Gradual replacement of Norway Maples on hillside
- Native garden possible on hilltop. Could be maintained by garden club, school, others.
- Lower area could benefit from invasives/exotics removal.
- Thinning of Norway maples could stimulate growth of understory vegetation and native trees
- Removal of small stand of *Phragmites* and yard waste debris along pond edge advisable

Programmatic Considerations

- Preservation and passive uses
- Historic background for site
- Distinct areas for different uses
 - Parking area for small number of vehicles.
 - Two open areas on hill top.
 - Slopes (east and west) surrounding hill top.
 - Flat area adjacent to FWS wetland.
 - Possible access through FWS wetland to pond.



Program Possibilities

- Walking, bird watching, nature appreciation.
- Quiet places for sitting, views.
- Space for presentations, small events.
- Special garden – native, sensory, educational, demonstration, master gardeners.
- Education – school groups (nearby elementary school), ecological organizations, garden groups, historic information, others.
- Area for children.
- Universally accessible wherever possible.



Draft Conceptual Plan 1



- Paver, grass parking area
 - Parking for limited number of vehicles
 - One handicap space.
 - Access path to hill top (not ADA accessible).
- Walkway to sitting and pond access area.
 - ADA compliant switchback path past specimen tulips, wetland.
 - Grading required with some loss of trees and understory.
 - Native vegetation to be replanted.
 - Connection to wetland and possible pond access walk.
- Ravine debris removed, regraded, planted.

Draft Conceptual Plan 1

- Historic (?) concrete pad
 - All/most of concrete pad resurfaced for sitting/educational area.
- Wetland and pond access walk (natural, passive area).
 - FWS to determine if walk should be considered. Need to minimize bird disturbance and habitat disruption.
 - If FWS approves, exact walk location to be determined.
 - Preferred walk location would pass specimen red maple and walnut trees, and different wetland habitats.
 - Walk could end at pond with overlook.



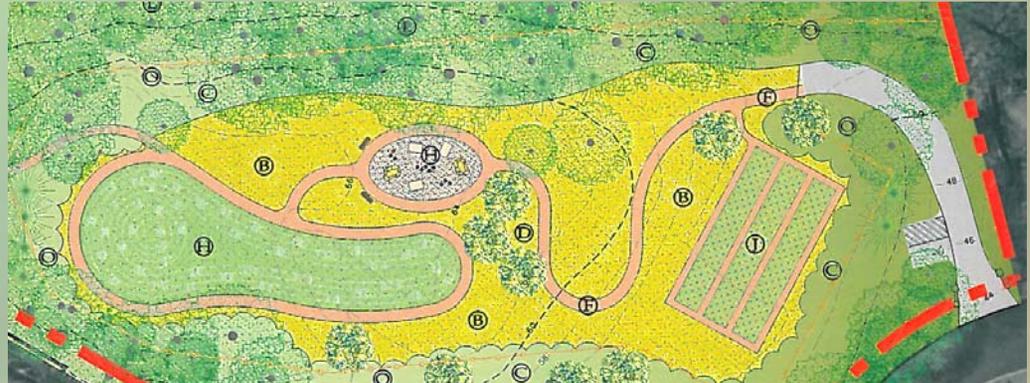
Draft Conceptual Plan 1

- Hill top (managed area)
 - Grass knoll and berm for views, sound protection, play.
 - Informal play area for children (eg. natural/artificial logs, boulders, etc.).
 - Universally accessible handicapped parking at drive entrance with ADA compliant walkway to open areas, sitting/viewing area at hill top.



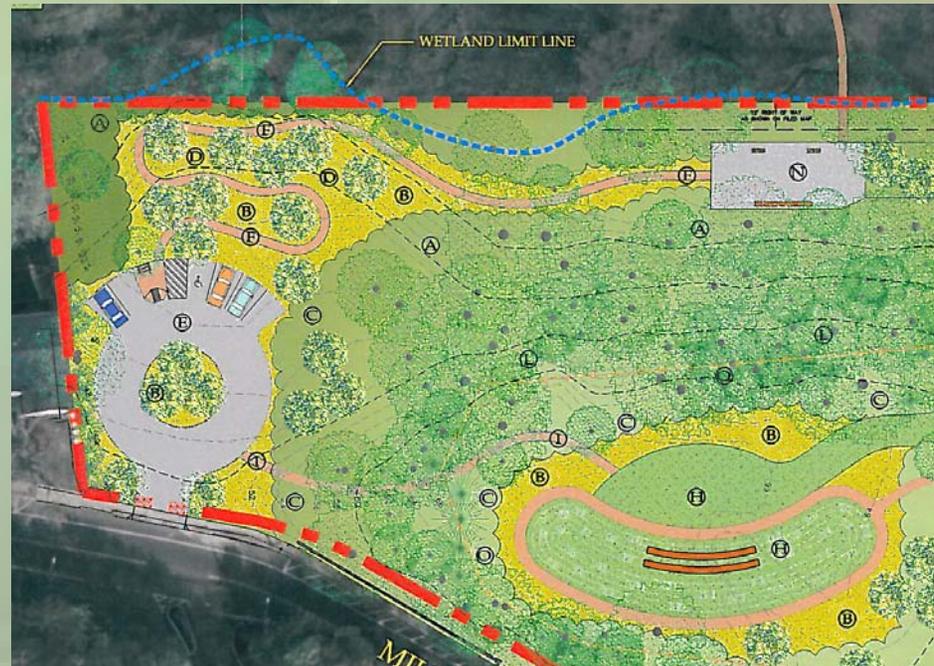
Draft Conceptual Plan 1

- Garden at lower open area
 - Different garden themes possible.



- Upper open area
 - For sitting, viewing pond and harbor (?), play, small gatherings.
- Invasive plant removal
 - Oriental bittersweet, poison ivy, some Norway maples,
 - Selective exotic plant removal (eg. apple trees and spruces to remain, English ivy, yews, olives, others to go).

Draft Conceptual Plan 2



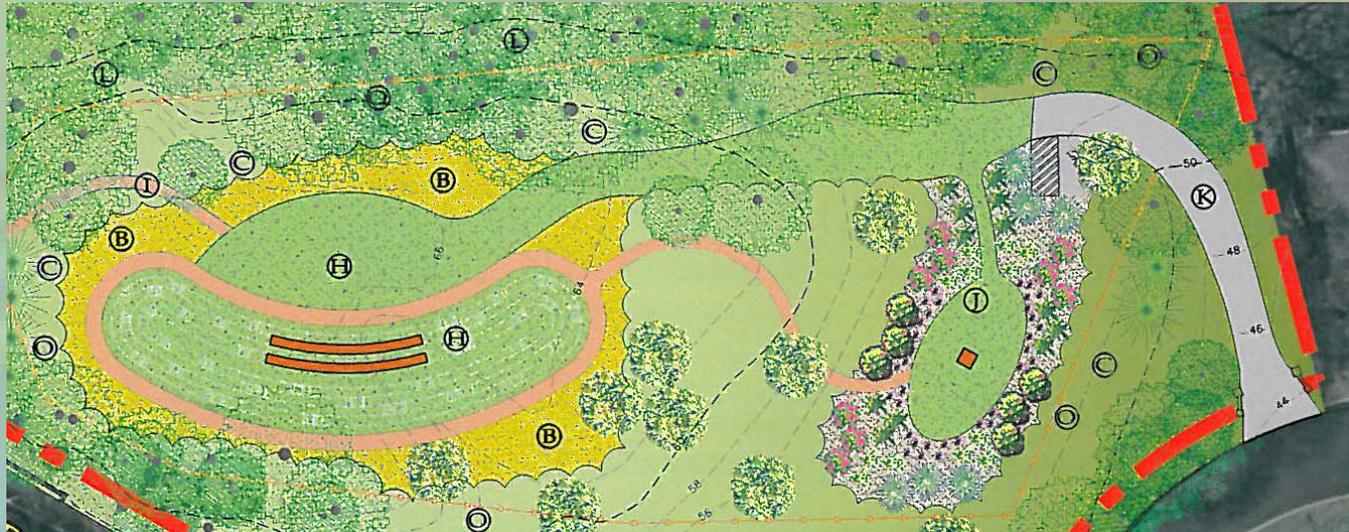
- Parking area
 - Gravel parking area.
 - Landscape buffer.
 - *One handicap space.
 - *Access path to hill top (not ADA accessible).
 - *Access path to area adjacent to wetland (ADA accessible), grading required with some loss of trees and understory vegetation to be replanted with natives.
 - *Ravine debris removed, regraded, planted.

Draft Conceptual Plan 2

- Walkway to historic (?) concrete sitting area
 - Most of concrete pad removed, remainder resurfaced for sitting/educational area
 - *Switchback path past specimen tulips and wetland.
 - *Connection to wetland and pond access walk.
- *Wetland and pond access walk (natural, passive area).
 - *FWS to determine if walk should be considered. Need to minimize bird disturbance and habitat disruption.
 - *If FWS approves, exact walk location to be determined.
 - *Preferred walk location would pass specimen red maple and walnut trees, and different wetland habitats.
 - *Walk could end at pond with overlook.

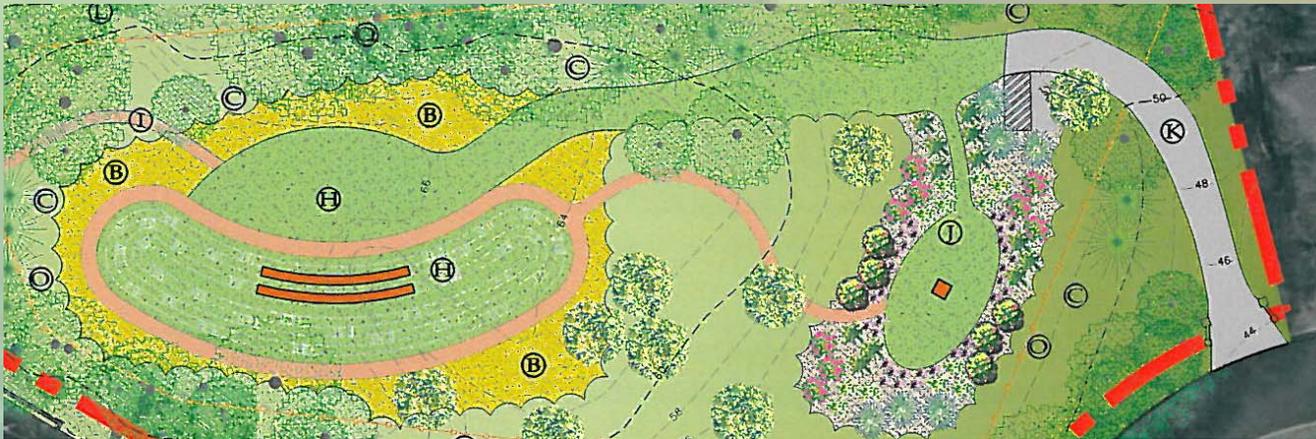
Draft Conceptual Plan 2

- Hill top (managed area)
 - Berm for views, sound protection, play with seating for presentations.
 - Universally accessible – One handicapped parking space halfway up drive entrance with ADA compliant walkway to both open areas and presentation area at hill top.



Draft Conceptual Plan 2

- Hill top (managed area)
 - Sensory garden or residential native plant demonstration garden at lower open area.
 - Upper open area for presentations, sitting, viewing pond and harbor (?), play, small gatherings.



- *Invasive plant removal (oriental bittersweet, poison ivy, some Norway maples), selective exotic plant removal (eg. apple trees and spruces to remain, English ivy, yews, olives, others to go).

Both Plans

- Signage and educational materials
 - Signage useful to highlight ecological and historical features.
 - Signage to be vandalism resistant.
 - No paper materials.
 - Use of electronic information – through Town website, podcasts for download with audio tour.
- Approvals
 - NYSDEC for lower area – adjacent to a freshwater wetland.
 - Town Parks and Public Safety for maintenance and security issues.



Both Plans

- Fences and Gates
 - Split rail fence along lower property edge to protect habitat and restrict access to FWS property.
 - Fence along edge of slope at hill top for safety and erosion prevention.
 - Fence around entire site less desirable (pending public safety thoughts) to allow visitors to enter site early and late in day.
 - Fence and locking gate (possibly automated) desirable for hill top portion of site.
- Vandalism
 - ‘Friends of’ Mill Pond Overlook organization could adopt park and report problems.
 - Use less destructible materials where possible.

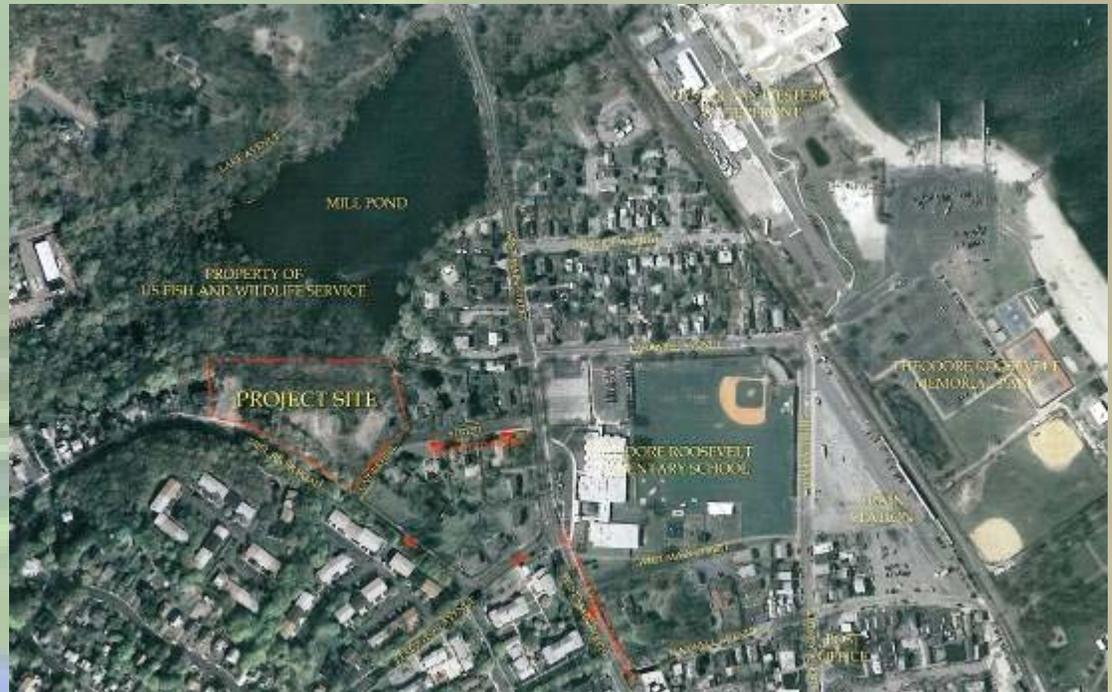
Both Plans

- Tree pruning and removals
 - Tree removals (Norway maples) and limbing up on hillside to open views to pond and encourage understory growth.
 - Retain sufficient tree cover to protect hillside from erosion.
 - Possible tree removals and limbing up to create views to harbor (determine after leaf fall if views of harbor possible).
 - Tree removals (Norway maples) on/adjacent to concrete pad to open to sunlight for understory growth, cool season visitor comfort.



Both Plans

- Connections
 - Underhill Street site entrance to elementary School (430 ft).
 - Site to Downtown (1/4 mile). Sidewalk on Mill River Road could be widened (street could be narrowed) for safety and comfort.



Next Steps

- Comments on draft conceptual plans
 - Go to ‘stations’ with plans to discuss
 - Consultants to record comments.

- Final draft plan
 - Draft final plan to reflect public comments.
- Management plan report
- Restoration engineering design/specifications
- State Environmental Quality Review
- Permit applications and approvals

