

March 15, 2017

The Honorable Rose Harvey
Commissioner
New York State Office of Parks Recreation & Historic Preservation
Albany NY, 12238

Dear Commissioner Harvey:

The following is a proposal to make Long Island's Shoreham-Wading River Forest, a New York State Park. The undersigned ask you to consider this request. The following is a brief summary of the significance and appropriateness of the parcel for consideration. Assembly Member Steven Englebright, Chairman of the Assembly's Environmental Conservation Committee is leading this initiative.

The Forest is located on approximately 800 acres of land, owned by National Grid and lies mostly south and east of the permanently closed Shoreham Nuclear Power Plan. The property lies in the towns of Brookhaven and Riverhead and the hamlets of Shoreham and Wading River.

Collectively, the approximately 820 acres of undeveloped and vegetated land at Shoreham constitutes one of the top four unprotected natural areas remaining on all of Long Island. These include the 400+ Morgan Estate on Eaton's Neck, the 650 + acres of the AVR property situated in the Pine Barrens, and the incomparable 3,300+ acre Gardiner's Island property, situated in eastern Peconic Bay. Given its size, location on the shoreline of Long Island Sound, and ecological/environmental attributes, the Shoreham Property strongly merits acquisition as New York's next "Great State Park". To this end, the property is eligible for state acquisition funding as it has been included in Governor Cuomo's 2016 iteration of the New York State Open Space Conservation Plan.

The Shoreham property collectively comprises main large tax parcels and these four parcels, from smallest to largest, are 147 acres, 175 acres, 222 acres, and 288 acres in size, respectively. There are also several smaller parcels in size.

Detailed fieldwork by botanists from the New York Natural Heritage Program, have documented the exceptional ecological diversity existing at Shoreham. Twenty-five different forest, wetland, and shoreline ecological communities have been delineated on the property. The most abundant forest type in the property is the oak-heath woodland community with more than 500 acres. Several of these communities are among the finest examples of these community types in the state.

In addition to the plant community diversity are a number of rare plant species, including a few that are very rare in New York State containing less than five occurrences. The salt marsh in the northeastern corner of the property is especially rich in rare species. A total of 13 rare species have been documented on the entire property.

Hundreds of various wildlife species utilize the abundant habitat existing here. These include various waterfowl, kingfishers, and wading birds which frequent frequent the Wading River Marsh and with loons, grebes, and sea ducks occurring in the main channel of the marsh, in the man-made channel, and in the immediate offshore waters of the Long Island Sound. Additionally, a large variety of woodland birds are found here including, but not limited to, warblers, vireos, tanagers, thrushes, and several species of hawks and owls. Whip-poor-will likely call from the woodlands during spring and summer nights.

A number of mammals, reptiles, and amphibians occur here given the size, intactness, and contiguity of the natural areas. A detailed faunal inventory is warranted for the property.

The Shoreham Property is situated on the Roanoke Terminal Moraine. As is often the case on terminal moraines, the end points of glacial advance, large boulders, known as glacial erratics are scattered throughout the property. These boulders were carried in the glacier and deposited in their present location when the glacial front stalled. These large boulders add an interesting landscape feature to the beach and forests. They were likely plucked from the bedrock underlying Long Island Sound and are estimated to be about 425-450 million years old.

Although positioned along the coast and situated within the shallow-flow recharge zone, the Shoreham property has significant watershed and water supply potential. An estimated 465 million gallons of clean water recharge through the undeveloped portions of the site, on an annual basis. Thus, the undeveloped watershed here helps to maintain water quality in the adjacent coastal waters of Long Island Sound as well as provide a significant real and potential water supply source for adjacent residential communities.

The property has very high recreational potential. Its preservation would enable the realization of a contiguous "shore-to-core-to-shore" hiking trail tying the Long Island Sound coastline with the Pine Barrens forests in the interior of the island to the Great South Bay shoreline on the south shore. A number of hiking trails lace throughout the woodlands here, allowing for abundant hiking opportunities. And the mile-long beachfront could provide great opportunities for surf casting fisherman, beachcombers, and, if the state thought appropriate, abundant swimming opportunities.

For all the above reasons the Shoreham Property should not be destroyed but preserved, treasured, and enjoyed as a wonderful part of Long Island's irreplaceable natural history heritage for the benefit of the island's 2.6 million residents.

Sincerely,

Richard Amper
Executive Director
Long Island Pine Barrens Society