

**NAME:** Cedar Beach Creek Habitat Restoration Demonstration Project

**LOCATION:** Cedar Beach County Parke, Suffolk Co., NY

**ACRES:** 24.2 within a 65 acre area (19.5 salt marsh, 1.7 seagrass meadow, and 3 open water)

**NON-FEDERAL SPONSOR:** Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

The Cedar Beach Creek Habitat Restoration Demonstration Project will restore local essential ecosystem functions in a degraded marsh system. This project (involving a cooperative effort between Suffolk County Parks, the Southold Town Trustees, the Peconic Estuary Program and Cornell Cooperative Extension) will create numerous marsh islands from the beneficial reuse of clean dredge material, planting of submerged aquatic vegetation (*Ruppia maritima*), and oysters (*Crassostrea virginica*) into a complex 65 acre marsh, beach, and open water mosaic. This project will establish and enhance three critical marine habitats in the Peconic Estuary, an EPA designated “Estuary of National Significance”.

**EXPECTED BENEFITS:**

Creating elevations on the islands that are at the upper limit of the current intertidal low marsh range will ensure that the initial marsh elevation is as high as it can be to outpace sea level rise. The growth of cordgrass on sandy soil should assist in resolving the lack of surface accretion in surrounding peat areas.

The creek is productive for marine finfish, shellfish, and other wildlife and contributes significantly to the biological productivity of Noyack Bay. The creek serves as a nursery and feeding area for many estuarine fish species including scup, summer flounder, bluefish, and winter flounder. Soft clams, hard clams and razor clams are found most years, supporting a recreational shellfishery of town-level significance. Diamondback terrapin breed in the fringing wetlands. The creek serves as a feeding area for a variety of birds and waterfowl. Beach-nesting birds are found along the barrier beach including Piping Plover and Least Tern. The restoration of oyster beds will provide additional structural diversity among other benefits.

**STATUS:** Planning and Design