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Ecological Study of

Coindre Hall Park

also known as

West Neck Farm

Huntington, Suffolk County, New York

By David Jakim, MS, MA

Report to the Coindre Hall Park Community,

Huntington, New York

Updated 3/22/23

Introduction

In September 2022, the Coindre Hall Park community asked David Jakim to conduct a preliminary ecological assessment of Coindre Hall Park at 101 Browns Rd., Huntington, NY 11743. Jakim conducted field reconnaissance of Coindre Hall Park on September 29, 2022 from 1pm to 3pm. Desiree Benn accompanied Jakim and shared observations on habitats and species observed. Our limited time onsite and the season did not allow for a full survey of flora and fauna.

Local Setting

Coindre Hall Park is a 33-acre park and historic site owned by Suffolk County. Adjacent is Huntington Harbor to the north; Goldstar Beach as well as a four-acre woodland and a development to the east (across the street from Browns Road); development with a fringe of salt marshes along Huntington Harbor to the west; and development to the south. Coindre Hall Park the historic West Neck Farm on the southern portion of the park. On the northern portion of the park by the Bay, is a historic boathouse with an ice pond.

Coindre Hall Park Habitats

Coindre Hall Park consists of a mowed lawn area, woodlands, and a wetland complex that is approximately five acres. The wetland complex includes a small hardwood swamp, wet meadow, freshwater marshes, and a pond. The wetland complex appears to be fed by springs and seeps and an intermittent woodland stream on the western portion of the site as well as other areas of runoff. There are also culverts on the site that may or may not be functional. The wetlands are fragmented by a wide gravel access road constituted of recycled concrete aggregate leading to the historic boathouse.

Wildlife Observed

117 species of birds have been recorded on the site (eBird, 2022). This includes great blue heron, green heron, and great egret observed using the ice pond. A muskrat has been photographed in a flooded portion of the marsh by the ice pond. Fowler's toads (*Bufo fowlerri*) have been observed across the site and photographed. A blue dasher dragonfly was photographed on the leaf of a common reed.

Woodlands

Woodlands on the site were not surveyed on David Jakim's visit to the property. According to Desiree Benn, woodland habitats include Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*), red maple (*Acer rubrum*), pin oak (*Quercus palustris*), black cherry (*Prunus serotina*), and sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*). Photographs by Desiree show fall-flowering asters (*Symphyotrichum oblongifolium*), mayapple (*Podophyllum peltatum*), and *Aralia spinosa*. An intermittent stream is located in woodlands on the western portion of the site. Formal trails and social trails are located in woodlands across the site. It's recommended to limit the use and growth of social trails to prevent fragmentation, loss of habitat, and altered hydrology.

Hardwood Swamp

A hardwood swamp on the site is predominantly composed of sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), red maple (*Acer rubrum*), and black tupelo (*Nyssa sylvatica*). The assemblage of trees in this swamp including sweetgum is remarkable in Suffolk County. Prior to clearcutting in 2020, the hardwood swamp area was over one acre in extent. After the clearcutting, most of the swamp was lost. The area previously cleared is now a wet

meadow habitat that supports saplings growing from the stumps of former trees.

Wet Meadow

Wet meadow habitats are regionally rare on Long Island. The wet meadow habitat was generated in 2020 after the clearcuting of a former hardwood swamp. The wet meadow habitat at Coindre Hall Park is remarkable for its diversity of flora including numerous sedges. Sprouts from the stumps of previously cut trees are widespread. New and established invasive species are located primarily on the western edge of the wet meadow. These invasives include porcelain berry, mugwort, and other species. The Coindre Hall Park community has obtained permits and has been active in removing invasive species, mostly from the wet meadow habitat area. A long-term invasive species management plan is recommended for this site. Because of the great diversity of flora in the wet meadow, floral surveys and rare species surveys are recommended on a seasonal basis.

Freshwater Marsh

The two freshwater marshes on the site have different flooding regimes, possibly different salinities, and include different species assemblages. The first salt marsh adjacent to Huntington Harbor is irregularly flooded by storms and hurricanes. The predominant species of this marsh are common reed and seaside goldenrod. The second salt marsh surrounding the ice pond is fed in part by an artesian spring. The predominant species of this second marsh is common reed. Other species include swamp milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*) and pussy willow (*Salix sp.*). Monarch butterflies have been photographed feeding upon the swamp milkweed. A blue dasher dragonfly (*Pachydiplax longipennis*) has been photographed upon the leaf of a common reed. Other species photographed at the ice pond include great blue heron, green heron, great egret, and muskrat.

Recommendations for Further Study

Biodiversity assessment of the Coindre Hall Park wetland complex and woodlands is recommended. In addition, rare species surveys for particular taxa including flora is recommended by qualified individuals. Surveys for other taxa are recommended based upon the findings of the biodiversity assessment.

Appendix A: Habitat Map of Coindre Hall Park



Habitat map by Desiree Benn

Appendix B: Habitat Map of the Coindre Hall Park Wetland Complex

Appendix C: Coastal Flooding to Roads and Habitats by the Boat House

