

COASTAL FISH & WILDLIFE HABITAT ASSESSMENT FORM

Name of Area: **Cranberry Bog County Park**
Designated: **March 15, 1987**
Date Revised: **May 15, 2002**
County: **Suffolk**
Town(s): **Southampton**
7½' Quadrangle(s): **Riverhead, NY**

Assessment Criteria

Ecosystem Rarity (ER)--the uniqueness of the plant and animal community in the area and the physical, structural, and chemical features supporting this community.

ER assessment: The largest remaining coastal plain Atlantic white cedar swamp plant community in New York. 64

Species Vulnerability (SV)--the degree of vulnerability throughout its range in New York State of a species residing in the ecosystem or utilizing the ecosystem for its survival.

SV assessment: Spotted turtle (SC), swamp darter (T), and banded sunfish (T) utilize the area. Calculation: $25 + (25/2) + (16/4) =$ 41.5

Human Use (HU)-- the conduct of significant, demonstrable commercial, recreational, or educational wildlife-related human uses, either consumptive or non-consumptive, in the area or directly dependent upon the area.

HU assessment: No significant fish or wildlife related human uses of the area. 0

Population Level (PL)--the concentration of a species in the area during its normal, recurring period of occurrence, regardless of the length of that period of occurrence.

PL assessment: Banded sunfish (*Enneacanthus obesus*) population unusual in New York State. 16

Replaceability (R)--ability to replace the area, either on or off site, with an equivalent replacement for the same fish and wildlife and uses of those same fish and wildlife, for the same users of those fish and wildlife.

R assessment: Irreplaceable. 1.2

Habitat Index = [ER + SV + HU + PL] = 121.5

Significance = HI x R =

NEW YORK STATE
SIGNIFICANT COASTAL FISH AND WILDLIFE HABITAT
NARRATIVE

CRANBERRY BOG COUNTY PARK

LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION OF HABITAT:

Cranberry Bog County Park is located south of the County Center near Riverhead between the Peconic River and Wildwood Lake in the Town of Southampton (7.5' Quadrangle: Riverhead, NY). The fish and wildlife habitat consists of a 60-70 acre coastal Atlantic white cedar swamp, an adjacent abandoned cranberry bog complex with holding pond (Sweezy Pond), and an attached coastal plain pond. The Park includes several New York Natural Heritage Program-identified rare plant species and communities, including the coastal plain pond shore and an excellent example of the globally rare coastal plain poor fen community. Most of the area is included in the Cranberry Bog County Park (owned by Suffolk County); a small section to the east is owned by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. Cranberry Bog County Park is located within the Central Pine Barrens Core Preservation Area.

FISH AND WILDLIFE VALUES:

Cranberry Bog County Park is the site of the largest remaining coastal plain Atlantic white cedar swamp plant community in New York. This community was once well represented along the south shore of Long Island and up the Hudson River in freshwater sites near the limit of saltwater penetration up tidal rivers and creeks. The coastal plain Atlantic white cedar swamp community is currently documented at only four sites in New York. Other communities present at this site include coastal plain pond shore and globally rare coastal plain poor fen.

Several insect species are restricted to this plant community. A large population of *Lithophane lemmeri*, a noctuid moth, is found at the Cranberry Bog County Park. *Mitoura hesseli*, Hessel's hairstreak (E), is found at only six sites in New York; the best occurrence in the state historically was in Cranberry Bog Park. However, mid-1990s surveys in the Park failed to find this species. The lateral bluet (*Enallagma laterale*) is a rare dragonfly species also found in the Park.

Spotted turtle (SC) inhabit the wetland area. This wetland complex also supports rare fish species including the swamp darter (T) and four documented occurrences of the banded sunfish (T), which is found at only ten sites within New York State (all in eastern Suffolk County). Cranberry Bog County Park is also a popular freshwater fishing site and supports numerous migratory birds.

The wetlands in the Cranberry Bog County Park support one of the highest concentrations of rare plant species in New York. The New York Natural Heritage Program has identified several plants listed and rare in the State of New York including: screw-stem (*Bartonia paniculata*),

Atlantic white cedar (*Chamaecyparis thyoides*), drowned horned rush (*Rhynchospora inundata*, E), knotted spike rush (*Eleocharis equisetoides*, T), fibrous bladderwort (*Utricularia fibrosa*), rush bladderwort (*Utricularia juncea*), pine barren sandwort (*Minuartia caroliniana*), and swamp smartweed (*Polygonum setaceum* var *interjectum*). Several of these plant occurrences are considered excellent examples at Cranberry Bog.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

Any activity that would substantially degrade the water quality in the Cranberry Bog County Park wetlands would affect the biological productivity of this area. All species of fish and wildlife would be adversely affected by water pollution, such as chemical contamination (including food chain effects resulting from bioaccumulation), oil spills, excessive turbidity or sedimentation, and waste disposal. County Route 51 bisects the Cranberry Bog County Park site. Any road runoff problems should be identified and corrected to prevent habitat degradation. Highway modifications in the habitat area should be designed to avoid any wetland impacts. The County Center at Riverhead occupies the northern boundary of these wetlands. Any further construction at this office/prison complex should avoid impacts on the adjacent wetlands.

Elimination of open water or wetland areas, through excavation or filling, would result in a direct loss of valuable habitat area. The existing hydrology in the wetland must not be disturbed. Water diversions for nearby construction may negatively impact the Atlantic white cedar and should be prohibited. Control of invasive nuisance plant species, through a variety of means, may improve fish and wildlife species use of the area and enhance overall wetland values.

Recreational uses should be managed consistent with the natural resource sensitivities of the Atlantic White Cedar Swamp.

KNOWLEDGEABLE CONTACTS:

Habitat Unit
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Division of Coastal Resources
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Phone: (518) 474-6000

Bureau of Marine Resources
NYSDEC
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Wildlife Manager
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State University of New York, Building 40
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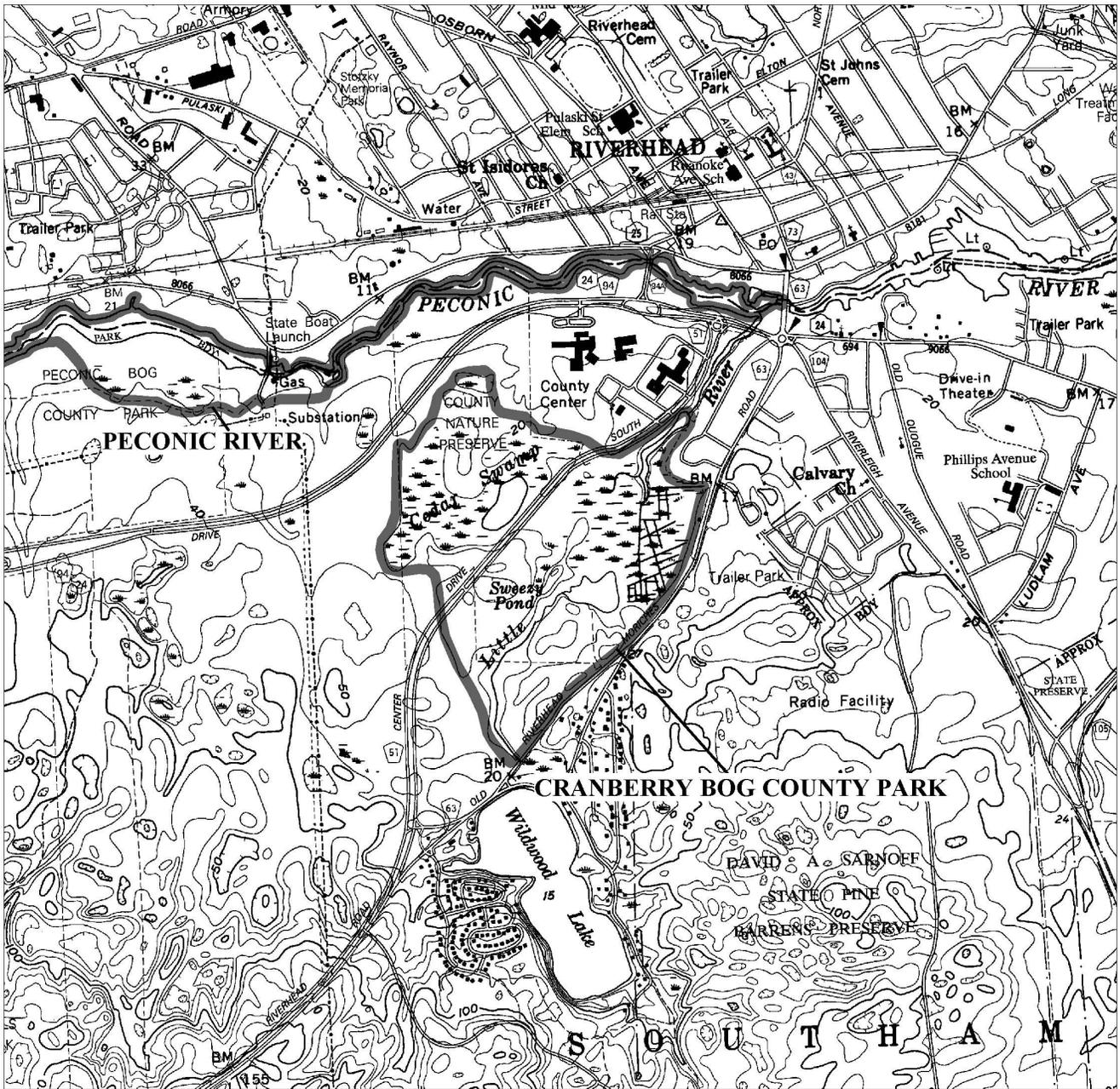
Fisheries Manager
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New York Natural Heritage Program
Wildlife Resources Center
700 Troy-Schenectady Road
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Environment Division
Department of Land Management
Town of Southampton
116 Hampton Road
Southampton, NY 11968
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Group for the South Fork
P.O. Box 569
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Office of Ecology
Suffolk County Dept. of Health Services
Bureau of Environmental Management
County Center
Riverhead, NY 11901
Phone: (631) 852-2077



Significant Coastal Fish and Wildlife Habitats

Cranberry Bog County Park
Peconic River (In part)



New York State
Department of State

Division of
Coastal Resources

