

# **GOLDART POND PRESERVE**

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## **MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**Adopted by Nature Preserve Committee  
May 13, 2021**



**19, 25, & 35 LaForêt Lane & 16 Southwood Court, Amagansett  
SCTM #300-126-1-14.33, 14.34, 14.35, & 14.40  
8.7 Acres**

### **East Hampton Town Nature Preserve Committee for 2021**

*Richard Whalen, Chair  
Zachary Cohen, Vice Chair  
Tyler Armstrong  
Mike Bottini  
Russell Calemno  
David Cataletto  
Richard Mamay*

*James Grimes  
Reggie Cornelia  
Michael Jordan  
Celine Keating  
Arlene Tesar  
David Lys, Councilman & Liaison*

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## **Foreword**

This management plan applies to four separate building lots in the Map of the Bell Estate, a 109.813-acre subdivision filed on July 25, 1979 as Map No. 6834. The Map of the Bell Estate is situated in the Stony Hill area of Amagansett. The Town of East Hampton purchased its holdings here in a series of three acquisitions, spanning the period of time from 2004 to 2019. All of the Town's acquisitions were accomplished using proceeds of the Community Preservation Fund. The purpose of the first two acquisitions, according to the Town Board's resolutions, was preservation of open space. For the Goldart property, the expressed purpose of the Town's acquisition was "the establishment of parks, nature preserves, or recreation areas."

The centerpiece of the preserve is an approximately 33,000 square foot man-made pond, which was built in about 1982. The pond is named for Susan Goldart, who owned the westerly part of the pond (and eventually the whole pond), for 32 years. During that time period Ms. Goldart also owned a house overlooking the pond from the west.

The southernmost lot in the preserve, a 2.25-acre lot with the street address of 16 Southwood Court, which the Town bought in 2004, is technically separated from the remainder of the preserve by a 30-foot "bridle path" reserved area in the Map of the Bell Estate.

This management plan does not apply to the property at 36 LaForêt Lane (SCTM #300-126-1-14.27), a 1.98-acre Town-owned lot which is located directly across LaForêt Lane from the Goldart Pond Preserve.

## **History**

The Goldart Pond Preserve is located within the Bell Estate Subdivision, a 1979 subdivision map. The Map of the Bell Estate, in turn, is part of Stony Hill, which is a segment of the Ronkonkoma Moraine, a terminal glacial moraine. This area was also part of the Amagansett Woods.

The Preserve is an amalgamation of four individual building lots (Lots 33, 34, 35, and 40) in the Bell Estate subdivision. The Town acquired these lots in 2004, 2006, and 2019, from three different sellers. The final purchase, of two lots including the pond itself, was made from Susan Goldart on March 28, 2019. Total acreage of the preserve is approximately 8.7 acres. As noted above, the pond is approximately 33,000 square feet in size when full. The pond was constructed in 1982 within a natural hollow, using a plastic liner to hold water. The pond was intentionally built straddling the boundary line between Lots 33 and 34, so that future owners of both lots would have the perceived benefit of this unusual and picturesque feature.

The preserve is named for its most notable feature, a man-made pond built in about 1982. Susan Goldart was the longest-running owner of at least part of the pond. She bought 35 LaForêt Lane in 1987. The house on that lot had been constructed in about 1985. Ms. Goldart bought the lot to the east, 25 LaForêt Lane, in 1992, and thereby became the owner of the entire pond.

In connection with the Town's purchase of the Preserve, the seller demolished the preexisting house prior to closing, along with all associated improvements other than part of the gravel parking area.

### **Location & Description of the Property**

The Goldart Pond Preserve is 8.7 acres of rolling morainal woods, in an area known for its relatively rich soils. Beech trees are common on the property, which also contains black birch and various oaks. All of the preserve's land is on the south side of LaForêt Lane, in Amagansett. LaForêt Lane was created by the Bell Estate subdivision.

As noted above, the pond that was built in around 1982 was originally the bottom of a natural, albeit dry, kettle hole. The pond was constructed with the use of a plastic liner, a common technique for building artificial ponds at that time. The pond liner seems to be partly deteriorated in its exposed edges, but obviously the majority of the liner is still intact and the pond continues to hold water just as a natural pond would be expected to do.

Goldart Pond has a maximum depth of 12 to 12.5 feet, as determined by the Town Department of Land Management in Spring 2021. The pond's profile steepens rapidly as one moves away from its banks. In fifteen or so separate soundings made from a kayak, Land Management personnel found an average pond depth of 10.5 feet. The surface elevation of the pond is approximately 75 feet above mean sea level (AMSL).

### **Management Goals & Recommendations**

The Goldart Pond Preserve is the first property acquired by the Town for park purposes which includes a manmade or artificial pond. In part because of this, the property presents some interesting and even unique management issues. These will be addressed below.

#### **Wetland & Vegetative Restoration:**

The habitat around Goldart Pond is mainly beech and oak woods, which are commonplace in the Stony Hill area. Along the verge of the pond, though, some areas have been invaded by non-native plants such as Japanese barberry. Many of the barberry plants have recently been cut and removed by the Department of Land Management. There is a very minor amount of wetland vegetation near the easterly shoreline of the pond.

- a) Any remaining invasive plant species along the fringe of Goldart Pond should be removed. Barberry in particular should be looked for periodically and removed if found. The surrounding forest should be maintained in its natural state.
- b) Recently a couple of trees have toppled into the pond itself. The committee believes that such deadfall should not be removed but should be allowed to decay naturally.

#### **Pond Management & Usage:**

During 2020 blue-green algae was purportedly identified in the pond, but there is some question about the validity of this identification. There was also a surface covering of

duckweed, up to 90% of the pond's surface area, by late August. It should be noted that the summer of 2020 was a particularly dry summer.

- a) No special measures should be taken to control algae or duckweed. It is considered unlikely that blue-green algae will be a serious and continuing problem in the pond, if in fact it does exist here. Duckweed is a natural phenomenon which is considered to be harmless. No efforts should be made to remove it when it occurs.
- b) There do appear to be some small fish in the pond, as well as green frogs. The fish species have not been determined as of this date. The Town, through either the Natural Resources Department or the Department of Land Management, should undertake an inventory of fish and amphibian species found in the pond.
- c) In regard to human use of the pond, the Nature Preserve Committee finds that swimming should be prohibited for health and safety reasons. However, ice skating should be allowed. Ice skating is deemed reasonably safe at this property; skaters locally have proven to be generally cognizant of ice conditions.
- d) There should be no kayak racks or other boat racks erected in the preserve.

#### Long-Term Management and Maintenance of Upland:

In the spring and summer of 2020 a bald eagle nest was spotted in a tree near the edge of Goldart Pond. The nest appears to have led to the fledging of two young eagles. Bald eagles have been undergoing something of a renaissance around the East End of Long Island lately. But as far as is known, the 2020 discovery marked the first occasion on which eagles have nested near this pond. The eagles appear to have returned in 2021, using the same nesting location. Committee member Mike Bottini has pointed out that, barring some intervening event such as the collapse of the tree which the eagles are using, bald eagles will nest for life in the same place. The future use of the property as a nesting site for bald eagles could considerably affect how public access to the pond is handled during the time of year that eagles are or may be in residence.

- a) The Nature Preserve Committee finds that it is imperative to limit disturbance to any eagles who nest in this preserve. This priority should affect how public access to the preserve is handled. For example, the preserve parking area should be closed by the Department of Land Management if eagles are found to be nesting anywhere in the vicinity of the parking area.
- b) Signs should be posted at or near the perimeter of the preserve alerting users of the preserve to the presence of bald eagles and informing such users not to disturb the birds. Other pertinent information should be provided on these signs.
- c) The grassy area formerly occupied by the Goldart house should be mowed at least twice each summer (but, of course, not while eagles are nesting nearby). This area could serve as a small picnic ground, with perhaps a number of benches and/or picnic tables. Picnic tables and overlook benches could be installed as memorial donations.

d) The parking area and grassed area should be kept separate with split-rail fence. It is important to maintain the fence to avoid vehicle access and damage to the grass area.

#### Public Access & Parking:

The removal of the Goldart house has left a grassy open area south of LaForêt Lane, as well as a remnant of the property's gravel driveway. The driveway area is currently used for parking by preserve visitors and is separated from the grassy opening by a split-rail fence.

a) This driveway/parking area should probably be enlarged or reconfigured somewhat. Otherwise, parking here will be chaotic with even just three or four cars, and there is a realistic chance that motorists will back up into trees (or other cars) when trying to depart.

b) As noted above, it is appropriate for the Department of Land Management to close the parking lot when the Department deems such closure necessary to protect nesting eagles.

c) The Committee has discussed the possibility of erecting a wildlife viewing blind near the southeast corner of the pond, to be used to view birds and other wildlife which use the pond, and not just the eagles. An access path to the blind would have to be cleared through adjoining woods, possibly from the road shoulder on LaForêt Lane. Due in large part to uncertainty as to how the blind, and people using it, might affect the eagles nesting nearby, the Committee declines to recommend the installation of a wildlife viewing blind at Goldart Pond. This issue might be addressed again at some future date.

d) The preserve should be open to the public 365 days a year, from sunrise to sunset.

#### **Permitted Activities & Restrictions**

##### A. Permitted Activities on the Property

- 1) Walking & exploring the preserve on foot.
- 2) Picnicking.
- 3) Bird watching.
- 4) Fishing.
- 5) Ice skating if conditions permit.
- 6) Nature or outdoor photography or videography (not including commercial photo or video shoots unless specifically authorized by Town Board).
- 7) Foraging (nuts, fruits, berries, leaves, shoots, mushrooms) for personal consumption.
- 8) Geocaching/placement of geocaches.
- 9) Community functions or gatherings if approved by Town Board or its designee.

##### B. Prohibited or Restricted Activities on the Property

- 1) Unauthorized digging and artifact recovery.
- 2) Unauthorized wood cutting or removal of vegetation.
- 3) Abandonment of pets and other domesticated animals.
- 4) Littering and storage or abandonment of personal property or boats.
- 5) Fires or burning of any kind.
- 6) Motor vehicle access.
- 7) Hunting.

- 8) Camping.
- 9) Swimming in the pond.
- 10) Use of motorized boats or other watercraft in the pond.
- 11) Commercial photo or video shoots unless specifically authorized by Town Board or its designee.
- 12) Weddings or similar private events, unless specifically authorized by Town Board or its designee.
- 13) Concessions/catering services/rentals/commercial uses not in accordance with Village Code Chapter 214 (Peddling and Soliciting).
- 14) Target shooting/skeet shooting
- 15) Placement of memorials, plaques, benches, art installations, etc., unless authorized by Town Board or its designee.
- 16) Unauthorized commercial activities.

*Appendices Follow*