

Nature Conservancy & E.H. Town

FINAL MANAGEMENT PLAN Grace Estate Preserve, East Hampton, NY

December, 1987

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I Introduction

The following management plan for the Grace Estate Preserve is consistent with the conservation easement of January 2, 1986 between the Town of East Hampton and The Nature Conservancy. (copy attached).

The plan is proposed for the Grace Estate in order to protect the natural value of the property, conserve and protect the animals, plants and natural communities of the Grace Estate and to prevent any use of the property that conflicts with its maintenance as a scenic, natural area for the benefit of this and future generations.

II History¹

The Grace Estate (also referred to as Northwest Woods) encompasses 516 acres of unspoiled beach front, upland forest, tidal and fresh water wetlands in East Hampton Town. This pristine coastal wilderness helps safeguard Northwest Harbor, one of the Atlantic Seaboard's most productive shell and finfish breeding grounds.

Town records mention Northwest as early as 1652 (four years after the first settlers arrived in East Hampton) and mention "a cartway to ye Northwest meddow". This "cartway" was used by locals to cart salt hay. A series of articles written by Helen Rattray and published in The East Hampton Star explain that salt hay was a very valuable resource at a time "when there was little cleared land and before anyone dreamed of planting grass seed".

"In 1653, land at Northwest was allotted to a long list of East Hampton settlers, including the following names still remembered here, and others long since passed out of our history: William Barnes, Thomas Baker, William Simons, Ananias Conkling, William Hedges, Richard Stratton, Thomas James, William Fithian, Ffulke Davis, John Hand, Thomas Talmage Sr., and Jr., John Mulford, Samuel Parsons, Ralph Dayton, William Edwards, and

¹Taken from materials provided by Kathy Lester and including information obtained from Town records and quotes from articles written by Helen Rattray, published in The East Hampton Star.

History (continued)

Thomas Osborne Sr. and Jr."²

During this same time wharves along the shoreline of what is now called the Grace Estate, saw the beginning of the whaling trade in colonial America. "It hardly seems possible now, that Northwest Creek was once considered a good landing place. But the vessels used in those days . . . drew relatively little water"³. In 1700 Abraham Schellinger (master of the sloop "Endeavor") built a home and pier and the Town of East Hampton built a wharf and cut through a new highway at Northwest. In 1712 "merchants path" was laid out so the whaling companies of Mecox, Sagaponack and East Hampton could ship from East Hampton's first still-water port. Whale bone and oil, furs and horses were shipped from wharves at Northwest. Some of this trade went directly to the West Indies and Boston to be trans-shipped to England.

Shipbuilding made a start at Northwest in 1757. Timber cutting for use as the building materials for shipbuilding was allowed.

It was during this same time that the land became part of

²Helen Rattray article, EH STAR

³Helen Rattray article, EH STAR

History (continued)

one of East Hampton Town's first farming communities and has remained as open space since that time. Isaac and Mercy (Edwards) Van Scoy were one of the earliest known families to settle at Northwest and farm the land. At that time it was almost entirely timberland.

In 1792 Henry Dominy was hired by the Town Trustees to build the first schoolhouse at Northwest. Later, in 1827 a new school house was built for \$250. Northwest had its own school district and Trustees until 1885. They had their own librarian in 1841.

An Atlas of Long Island dated 1873 shows 16 houses belonging to J. A. Van Scoy, B. Richardson, S. Ranger, D. W. Bennett, W. Bennett, Mrs. Osborn, S. D. Ranger, J. Foster, A. Bennett, J. Kirk⁴, H. La Farge, A. Ranger, G. E. Van Scoy, T. Quaw, S. D. Ranger, And A. D. Ranger. It also shows J. Terry's Cedar Point fish factory, the schoolhouse, Scoy's Pond, Ely brook, Hand's Creek, Sammy's Beach and Northwest Creek; and a landing in Northwest Harbor, just inside Cedar Point. Other names associated with the settlement at Northwest are Miller, Mulford, Parsons, Hedges, Hayes, Howell, Anderson, Burdette, Cornwell,

⁴ "Kirk's Place" is still known by locals familiar with the Grace Estate. Josiah Kirk sued the Town of East Hampton over seaweed rights in front of his 391-acre Northwest farm. He won his suit, but spent \$40,000 - a fortune in the 1870's and 1880's.

History- (continued)

King, Harkness, Payne, Loper, Beckwith, and Rogers.⁵

In Helen Rattray's series of articles about Northwest, she mentions that she has a "1916 map showing owners of Northwest land at that time. Many of the early names had disappeared. William R. Grace . . . (from whence comes the name "Grace Estate") . . . owned a great tract at what is still called Grassy Hollow, not very far from Hand's Creek".

During the 1900's trees have slowly re-claimed much of the former farmland at Northwest. Over the years, the Grace Estate has become a favorite recreation area for the people of East Hampton. Townspeople have enjoyed activities such as hiking, bird watching, nature study, cross-country skiing, fishing, hunting, shellfishing, horseback riding and photography.

In the last ten years 3,000 acres of the Northwest Harbor wetland system, including the 516-acre Grace Estate, have been preserved. This extensive wetland system hosts over 50 species of nesting birds, including a large population of osprey. Its tidal salt marshes, kettle hole bogs and coastal ponds guard many threatened species of plants and animals.

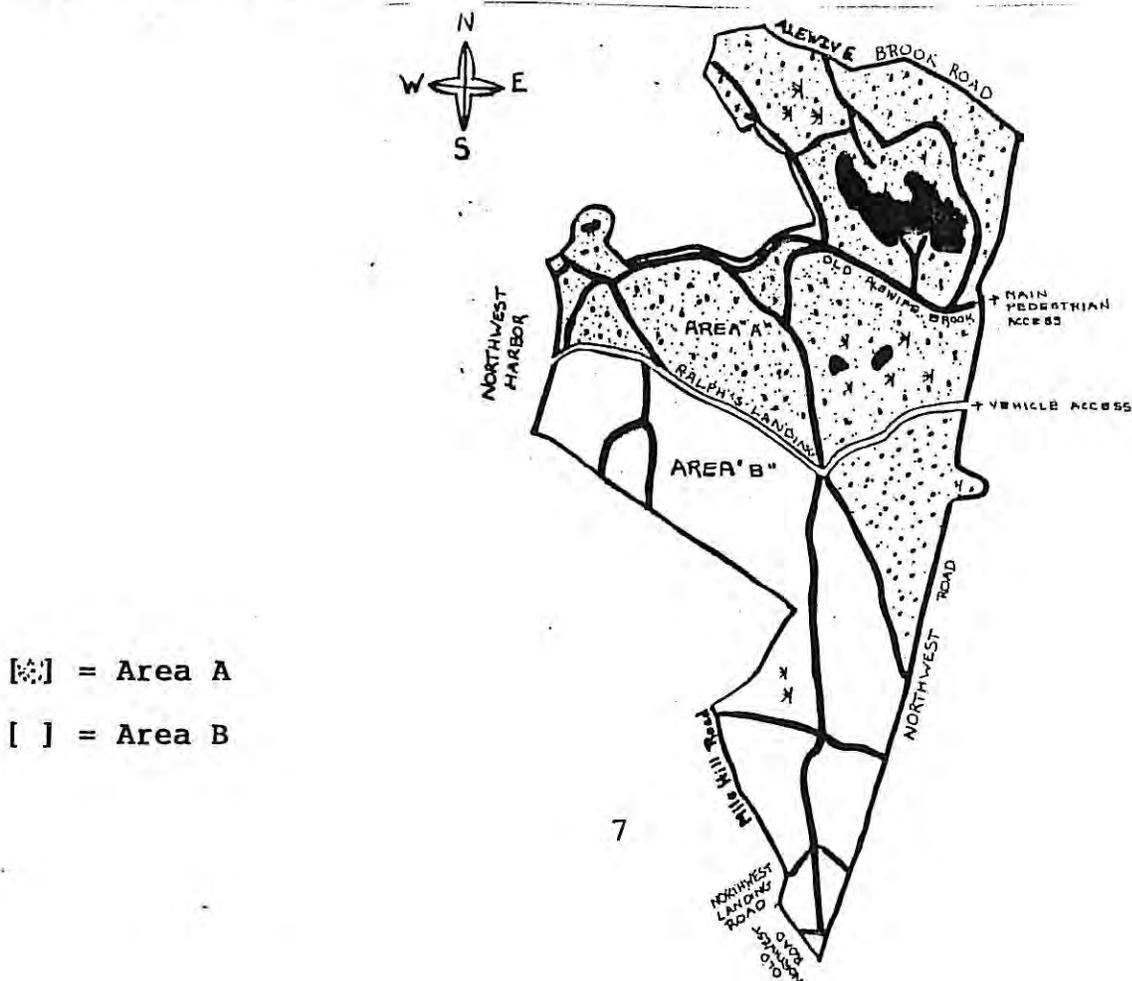
⁵Helen Rattray article, EH STAR

III Preserve Hours

The Grace Estate Preserve is open to East Hampton Town residents and their guests from dawn to sunset, 365 days per year.

IV Access to the Grace Estate Preserve

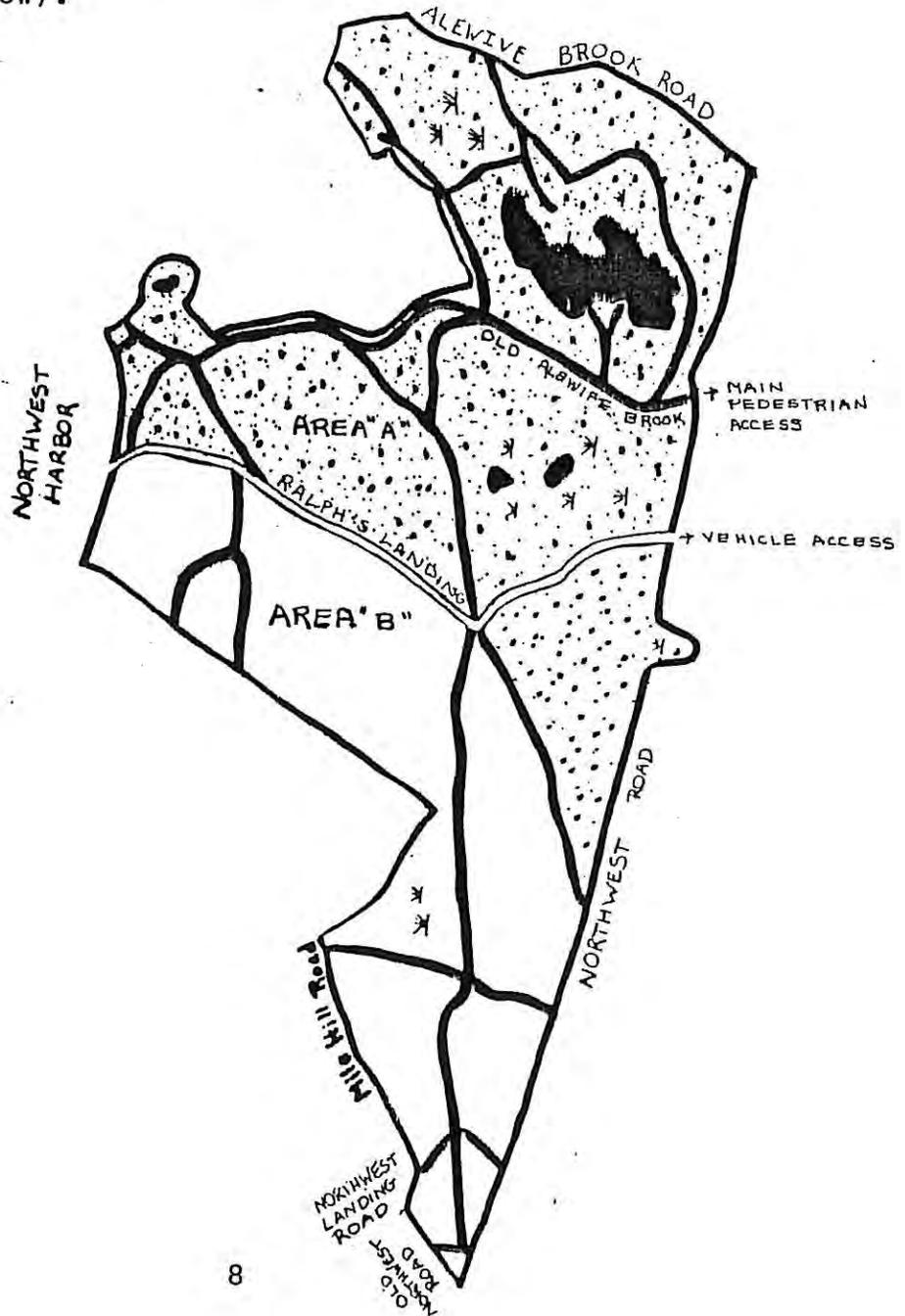
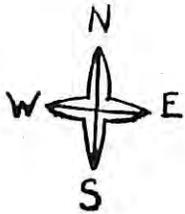
The main pedestrian access to the Grace Estate is at the intersection of Old Alewife Brook Road and Northwest Road. Vehicular access will be permitted on one road from the intersection of Ralph's Landing Road and Northwest Road to the shore (see map below). Vehicles may be parked on the Town right-of-way next to the Old School House marker, where Ralph's Landing Road intersects Northwest Road.



V Uses of Grace Estate

A. Visitor Uses

As per the conservation easement (copy attached), the Grace Estate has been divided into areas A and B, Area A being the most biologically sensitive portion of the Grace Estate (see map below).



V Uses of Grace Estate (continued)

The following uses are permitted in both Areas A and B unless otherwise stated:

1. Hiking
2. Photography
3. Picnic Lunches (Carry in; carry out)
4. Educational Uses
 - a) Guided nature walks by naturalists and educators
 - b) Supervised groups of school children and youth organizations
5. Research Uses
 - a) By written request to the Grace Estate Management Committee
6. Camping as per East Hampton Town Code
 - a) By permit
7. Bicycling
 - a) On vehicle trail only
8. Horseback Riding
9. Vehicles as designated in Section C Below
10. Hunting
 - a) Will be permitted pursuant to all state and local laws with the exception that further limits on numbers of game taken may be set by representatives

V Uses of Grace Estate (continued)

of East Hampton Town Natural Resources Department and The Nature Conservancy based on recommendations of a sub-committee made up of representatives from The Nature Conservancy, the Maidstone Gun Club, the East Hampton Town Natural Resources Department and the Grace Estate Preserve Manager.

- b) Warning notices will be posted in order to protect the public during hunting season.

13. Fishing

- a) Will be permitted pursuant to all state and local laws

B. Restrictions

The following uses are prohibited in both Areas A & B unless otherwise stated:

1. No commercial, residential or industrial use
2. No construction or maintenance of camping accommodations
3. No construction or maintenance of mobile homes
4. No construction or maintenance of billboards
5. No construction or maintenance of advertising materials

V Uses of Grace Estate/Restrictions (continued)

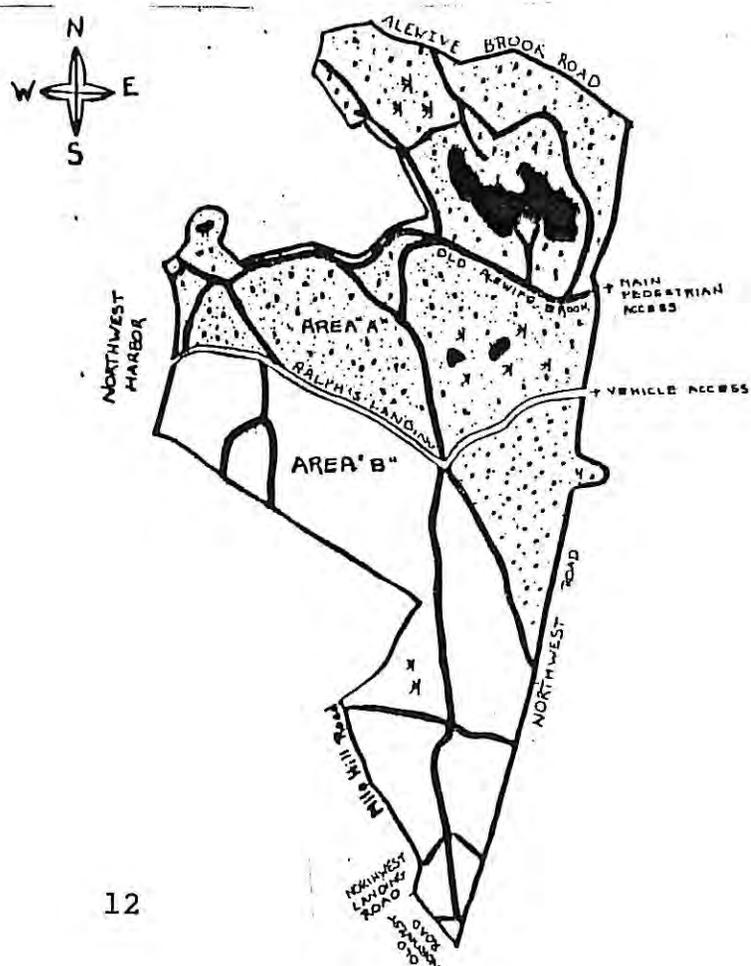
6. No active recreation (e.g. golf, organized sports such as tennis, baseball, etc.)
7. No filling
8. No excavation
9. No dredging
10. No mining
11. No drilling
12. No removal of topsoil, sand, gravel, rock or minerals
13. No building of roads
14. No change in topography of land
15. No removal, destruction or cutting of trees or plants (except for trail maintenance)
16. No planting of trees or plants
17. No spraying with biocides
18. No disturbance or change in natural habitat
19. No dumping of ashes
20. No grazing of domestic animals
21. No dumping of trash or garbage
22. No dumping of unsightly or offensive material
23. No manipulation or alteration of natural water courses
24. No manipulation or alteration of wetlands or other water bodies and their shores

V Uses of Grace Estate/Restrictions (continued)

25. No activities detrimental to water purity
26. No removal of any historical artifacts
27. No operation of radios and televisions
28. No alcoholic beverages

C. Boats, Motorized Vehicles and Aircraft

Vehicular use on the Grace Estate Preserve shall be limited to police, fire and government vehicles except for those exceptions listed under "Vehicle Trails" in Paragraph VI, C, of this report. (see map below).



[] = Area A

[] = Area B

V Uses of Grace Estate (continued)

C. Boats, Motorized Vehicles and Aircraft (continued)

The following restrictions apply to vehicular use on the Grace Estate:

- b) No operation of snowmobiles, dune buggies, motorcycles or all-terrain vehicles
- c) No operation of motorized boats or aircraft

VI Trails

A. Maintenance

Existing trails may be maintained in order to allow adequate and safe passage of pedestrians (and, when appropriate, vehicles) within the Grace Estate Preserve.

In order to protect the safety of visitors, trails within the Grace Estate are to be clearly marked for pedestrian, equestrian, or vehicle use.

B. Pedestrian Trails:

Pedestrian access shall be permitted along all trails within the Grace Estate.

C. Vehicle Trails

Vehicles (cars, trucks and bicycles) will be permitted access along one road from the intersection of Ralph's Landing and Northwest Road to the shore.

VII Surveillance

In order to ensure that the natural features of the Grace Estate Preserve are protected and for the safety and health of visitors to the preserve, staffing needs must be met. The interest from a \$250,000 endowment fund is available to pay for these needs. A Job Description with job duties, hours and salary/benefits needs to be agreed upon by Committee members and qualifications of applicants should also be discussed.

Town of East Hampton
GRACE ESTATE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

JOB DESCRIPTION

TITLE: Grace Estate Preserve Manager

SUPERVISOR: Superintendent of Parks and Recreation
Town of East Hampton

LOCATION: East Hampton, New York 11937

SUMMARY OF POSITION:

The Grace Estate Preserve is a 516-acre preserve bounded on the west by Northwest Harbor and on the east by Northwest Road in the Town of East Hampton. The preserve is owned by the Town of East Hampton with a conservation easement by The Nature Conservancy. The Grace Estate Preserve Manager is responsible for maintaining the preserve according to the management plan drawn up by the Grace Estate Management Committee. Responsibilities include regular surveillance of the property, trail maintenance, posting of signs during hunting season, removal of trash and/or obstructions on trails, dissemination of information to visitors.

DUTIES:

1. Carry out preserve maintenance as required. Duties will include trail maintenance and general clean-up, sign posting, possible fence erection and repair and special building projects, as directed by the preserve management committee.
2. Interface with visitors and provide information about visitor uses and restrictions.
3. Conduct regular surveillance of property to ensure that it is being used according to the management plan and report any irregularities found to Superintendent of Recreation and Parks.
4. Surveillance will be done seven days a week with hours to vary, depending upon the season.

REQUIREMENTS:

1. Provide own transportation to and from preserve.
2. Able to operate four-wheel-drive vehicle.
3. Good physical condition allowing for strenuous outdoor work.
4. Some knowledge and experience in park/forest management.
5. Ability to deal with all types of people.
6. Commitment to land conservation.