



# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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Sag Harbor Village is located on the north shore of the south fork, in the eastern portion of Suffolk County, Long Island. Sag Harbor, with its interconnected system of embayments, is one of the major cruising ports on eastern Long Island and contains two important areas of marine activity. The harbor provides anchorage, docking and a variety of marine support services making this area a popular location for recreational boating, particularly during the summer season. This popularity has led to the need for the Village of Sag Harbor to assess the extent of this marine activity and waterfront development. The following Harbor Management Plan examines these conditions, and sets forth a number of comments and recommendations with regard to the future growth and management of Village waters.

The main goals of this plan are described as follows:

- to address conflicts between surface water uses and mitigate harbor congestion;
- to protect the important natural resources of the harbor complex, especially shellfish populations, tidal wetlands, and wildlife communities;
- to preserve and, to the extent possible, enhance water quality conditions in the harbor complex; and
- to ensure that human recreational and commercial activities are allowed to continue in these waters, in a manner and at a level that does not result in significant adverse impacts to water quality or natural resources.

The inland boundary for the Harbor Management Plan study area includes all properties fronting on the surface water bodies located within the Incorporated Village of Sag Harbor. The waterside boundary begins at the point of mean high water on the shoreline, where the boundaries for the Village of Sag Harbor and the Town of East Hampton converge in Little Northwest Creek, and extends into Sag Harbor Bay for a distance of 1,500 feet from the shoreline. The study area boundary follows the shore at this distance until reaching the municipal boundary between the Village of Sag Harbor and the Village of North Haven. At this point, the study area boundary follows the line of equal-distance between the two villages through Sag Harbor and Outer Sag Harbor Cove to the Big Narrows. At this point, the waterside boundary for the study area follows the line of equal-distance between the Village of Sag Harbor and the Town of Southampton until it reach the mean high water line at the head of Ligonee Brook.

Most of the watershed area of the Sag Harbor Cove/Bay Complex is comprised of low and medium-density residential development, recreational facilities, the Sag Harbor business district and open space. Higher density residential development is found in the vicinity of the Village center. Waterfront uses include a number of marinas, two boat yards, the Sag Harbor Village sewage treatment plant, recreational facilities and residences.

Jurisdiction over the Sag Harbor Cove/Bay Complex and its shoreline is divided among numerous entities at various levels of government. These include the Town of Southampton, the Town of East Hampton, and the Incorporated Village of North Haven, in addition to the Incorporated Village of Sag Harbor, the State of New York and various Federal government agencies. Based on this multiplicity of political jurisdictions which apply to the study area, the cooperation of many of these involved political entities is necessary to achieve some of the management goals set forth in this document, such as the improvement of water quality and the protection of natural resources. Therefore, this Harbor Management Plan should be viewed as a starting point for such future, comprehensive harbor management efforts.

The underwater lands in the harbor management study area are owned by the Town of Southampton and the State of New York. Southampton Town owns all the bottom lands situated within the Sag Harbor Cove system. The State owns all of the lands north and east of the line delineated by the old bridge that ran to North Haven which was destroyed in 1892. The State Office of General Services has issued a small number of grants for underwater lands in the Sag Harbor area. There are, however, a few parcels of underwater lands and former underwater lands in private ownership in this study area that have not been legally authorized by the State.

There are a number of navigation channels located throughout the Sag Harbor Cove/Bay Complex. These channels have not been dredged since they were first established, and certain areas now, or will in the near future, require dredging. In addition, there are areas situated outside of the delineated channels that are in need of dredging to mitigate shoaling and water depth problems. Dredge spoil materials from the dredging projects that have occurred in the study area have been historically disposed of in upland areas in the Village.

The Sag Harbor Harbormaster is responsible for patrolling the harbor management study area and enforcing the regulations that apply within this area. Certain surface water areas of Sag Harbor Cove, however, are located outside of the Village's jurisdiction; these areas are the responsibility of the Town of Southampton. Because this area is isolated from the main body of waters patrolled by the Town bay constables, it does not receive regular patrols. The Village Harbormaster does not have the authority to enforce the Town regulations in this area or issue citations for violations he may encounter during his regular patrols.

When the Sag Harbor LWRP was adopted in 1986, it included the establishment of three water use districts. These include the harbor district, the limited-intensity district, and conservation district. Although these districts were established, no use standards to guide activities that occurred within these districts were developed.

Recreational boating is an important water-dependent use in the Sag Harbor Cove/Bay Complex. Sag Harbor contains two anchorage areas that can accommodate up to 150 vessels. The marina facilities also provide permanent and transient dockage for over 600 vessels. Harbor congestion results from this extensive activity in the summer season. Known locations where congestion problems occur include the head of Sag Harbor, near Marine Park; the area under the North Haven/State Route 114 bridge; the area where the channels meet near the north end of the Long Wharf; and occasionally in the vicinity of the Sag Harbor Cove West Marina and Village docks.

The Village contains a significant number of freshwater wetland areas and extensive areas of tidal marsh throughout the Sag Harbor Cove Complex. The Sag Harbor Cove/Bay Complex is also a highly productive area for shellfish and marine finfish. The cove complex is also an important wintering area for a variety of waterfowl.

Stormwater runoff is the primary source of coliform bacteria contamination in the harbor complex. Depending on the type of development present, stormwater runoff can also be a source of metals, organic compounds, nutrients, or other contaminants. Other sources of water quality degradation include malfunctioning on-site sewage disposal systems, effluent from the Sag Harbor Village sewage treatment plant and direct inputs of wastes from waterfowl. Vessel discharges, although not the only source of pollutants to the Sag Harbor Cove/Bay Complex, can cause localized water quality problems. The discharge of sanitary wastes from boats can degrade water quality by: introducing microbial pathogens into surface waters; and locally increasing biological oxygen demand.

Marinas can also contribute significantly to the concentration of pollutants in the water column, bottom sediments, and tissues of benthic organisms living within the limits of the marina itself. Pollutants from marinas and recreational boating may enter the water through discharges from boats, spills, maintenance areas, stormwater runoff and vessel operation. The types of pollutants often associated with marinas and recreational boating activities include: organic materials discharges from recreational boats; toxic heavy metals associated with boat maintenance and repair operations at boat yards and marinas; petroleum hydrocarbons from refueling activities and bilge or fuel discharges from boats; fecal coliform bacteria; and disruption of sediments and habitat from boat operations and dredging.

In order to advance the management objectives of this Harbor Management Plan, as specified above, a number of measures have been recommended, as summarized below.

- To provide the State Office of General Services, as well as the Village of Sag Harbor, with an accurate understanding and record of underwater land ownership in the harbor district, those parties who currently hold deeds to upland properties that were formerly lands underwater, or that include lands underwater, should negotiate appropriate leases for these lands with the State.
- The portion of the main navigation channel that extends from the North Haven/State Route 114 bridge west to the Big Narrows, including the spur for the Village docks and the spur to the Marine District, should be maintained in the public interest.
- That portion of the navigation channel that extends into Paynes Creek and the Inner and Upper portions of Sag Harbor Cove should remain as designated channels, but no longer be maintained with public funding, except in extreme circumstances.
- The Village of Sag Harbor should promptly advise the Suffolk County Department of Public Works of their dredging needs to commence the application process and facilitate dredging, where required, in areas that have been dredged in the past and in areas adjacent to the Long Wharf and the breakwater, that have not been dredged before.

- The Village of Sag Harbor must make a determination as to whether the navigation channel in Sag Harbor that the village has demarcated on the Waterways Chart and that was formerly dredged by the Army Corps of Engineers, should be: re-authorized by the Corps; added to the County list of projects that are considered in the public interest; or privately maintained.
- The Village of Sag Harbor should evaluate dredge spoil disposal options; unless appropriate upland sites can be identified, spoil materials should be removed from dredging sites and properly disposed of outside of the Village.
- To ensure that an appropriate level of enforcement is provided in the areas of Sag Harbor Cove that are under the jurisdiction of Southampton Town, the Village should strive to establish a cooperative arrangement with the Town that would allow the Village Harbormaster to assist with patrols in this area and extend authority to the Village so they can enforce the Town's existing regulations.
- The boat launching ramp located in the boat basin in Marine Park is in need of repair. The Village should investigate appropriate means of funding for the reconstruction of this amenity.
- When the water use districts were established as a part of the adoption of the Sag Harbor LWRP in 1986, no use standards were developed to regulate the activities that occur in these districts. The Village should adopt the standards set forth in this Harbor Management Plan as appropriate.
- In an effort to control the construction of docks, this activity should be directly connected with the character of the upland use. If the upland use is not water-dependent, then a dock should only be permitted to provide necessary access to reach navigable waters. Therefore, significant dock construction would essentially be restricted to the harbor district, where water-dependent uses are concentrated.
- The Village of Sag Harbor should designate a pierhead line along the shoreline of the harbor management area to delineate the area that is considered suitable for dock construction.
- The Village should issue requests to the Army Corps of Engineers for the repair of the breakwater.
- In an effort to place greater emphasis on environmental protection and resource preservation, a new water use district should be adopted. This "preservation" district would be more restrictive than the existing conservation district. Areas to be included in this district are Otter Pond, Round Pond, and the upper reaches of Ligonee Brook and Little Northwest Creek. These issues will require attention in the village Local Waterfront Revitalization Program.

- In an effort to ensure that Village public recreation areas and open spaces remain as such, the Village should adopt an Open Space/Recreation Law and rezone Otter Pond, Mashashimuet Park, Haven's Beach and the NYSDEC conservation area adjacent to Little Northwest Creek under this classification.
- The Village should adopt a Wetlands and Watercourses Law that would: specifically outline provisions for activities that may impact both tidal and freshwater wetlands; define what these areas are; outline the significance of protecting these resources; delineate protected areas in the Village; and contain standards required to implement the proposed preservation water use district and the existing conservation district.
- To strengthen the Village's commitment to protecting coastal water quality, the Village should include standards in the Site Plan Review Law that would apply to marinas and boat yards and their associated upland activities.
- To address the impacts associated with vessel waste discharges, the Sag Harbor Cove and Sag Harbor areas, and Shelter Island Sound should be designated by the USEPA as a vessel waste "no-discharge zone". This designation would prohibit the discharge of these wastes in these Village waters, and afford the Village the authority to enforce laws governing such discharges and inspect vessels within the bounds of the harbor complex.
- To improve the quality of stormwater discharges conveyed to Sag Harbor Bay through the drainage ditch at Haven's Beach, a stormwater detention system should be constructed to significantly reduce contaminant loadings prior to discharge to the receiving waters.
- The culvert that connects the Outer Sag Harbor Cove to Upper Sag Harbor Cove should be renovated to restore adequate tidal flushing in this area.
- The implementation of best management practices at marinas and the installation of additional vessel pump-out facilities in the study area, particularly in Outer Sag Harbor Cove, should be instituted to improve surface water quality in the harbor district.
- The activities occurring in Sag Harbor are not compatible with shellfish harvesting and are not predicted to change in the future. Furthermore, since the NYSDEC water quality standards that mandate the closure of the harbor area to shellfishing will continue to be maintained, the water quality classification in this area should be revised to "SB" to reflect actual conditions.
- Mitigation actions should be implemented in the vicinity of Otter Pond and the southeastern extreme of Upper Sag Harbor Cove to improve surface water quality in this area, including conducting an educational campaign to instruct the public about the detrimental impacts of feeding waterfowl.
- A dye-testing program should be undertaken that would allow for the testing of on-site sewage disposal systems in the southeastern area of Upper Sag Harbor Cove and provide financial incentives to homeowners to upgrade failing systems.

- The boat ramps located at the ends of Amherst Road and John Street should be upgraded to improve stormwater detention and water quality in the adjacent cove waters.