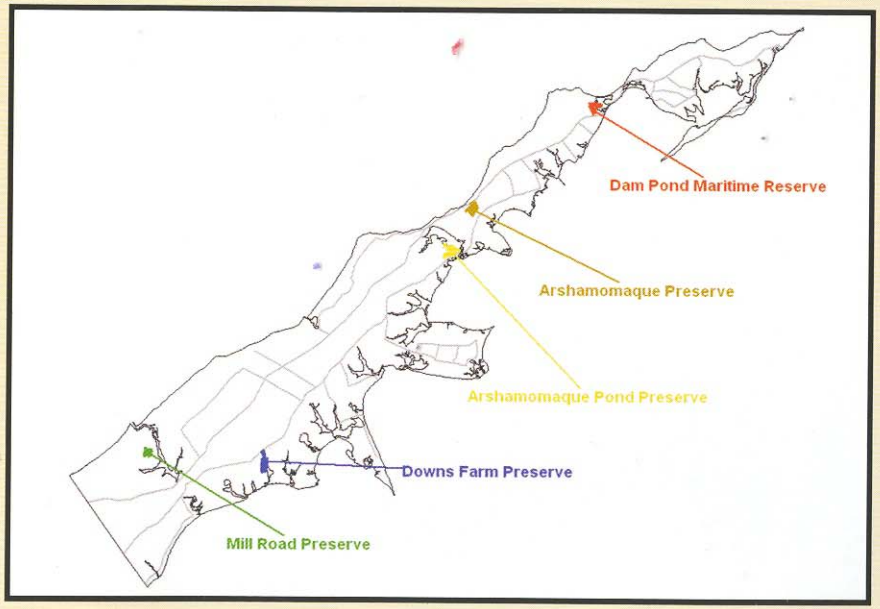
Welcome to Down's Farm Preserve:

The Down's Farm Preserve was purchased by the Town of Southold, with assistance from the Peconic Land Trust, in 1997 and encompasses an area of 51 acres of old-field, mixed hardwood forest, hill side seep, and salt marsh communities.

Site History:

The Down's Farm Preserve also includes the remains of Fort Corchaug, a Native American encampment on the southern end of the property, which is off limits to hikers.



Help protect and maintain the natural beauty and wildlife habitat of the area.

Please:

Stay on designated trails.

Take nothing but pictures, leave nothing but footprints.

Leash your dog.

Check carefully for ticks after your walk.

Educational content provided by the Marine Program of:
Cornell University
Cooperative Extension
of Suffolk County

Cornell Cooperative Extension provides equal program and employment opportunities.

The Down's Farm Preserve is open to the public year-round from dawn to dusk.

DOWNS FARM PRESERVE

Cutchogue N.Y.

Town of Southold

PO Box 1179
Southold N.Y. 11971
631-765-1800
http://southoldtown.northfork.net

Trail Guide

Habitat and Wildlife:

As the name implies, this preserve was at one time a working farm. Presently there is little indication that the site had once been clear cut, due to its forested nature. However, there are still indications of the preserve's succession into a mixed hardwood community, especially along the western edge of the preserve adjacent to the vineyard. This western section of the property includes a high concentration of black locust and remnants of eastern red cedars that must have dominated the landscape at one time. This old-field successional community is close to its transition into the oak dominated forest that occupies the majority of the preserve. The remaining upland areas of the preserve consists of oaks (white, black, and scarlet), pignut and bitternut hickories, American beech, and several other species. Toward the trail head, the understory is choked with shrubs and briar, but as one continues along the trail, the understory thins and eventually disappears totally. Animals are prevalent in this area and the preserve is home to a family of red fox and roosting great horned owls have been observed in the trees off of the trails. Woodpeckers and flickers can be heard hammering on trees and a variety of songbirds can be encountered along the forest edges.

A freshwater wetland lies adjacent to the salt marsh at the base of the sloping forest. Except for the muddy soil that is traversed by a foot bridge, this hillside seep would likely be overlooked as a patch of weeds, instead of a unique community. Irises, a few scattered cattails, and the poisonous water hemlock are some of the indications that this location is freshwater in origin. This wetland drains to the south, through a dense stand of common reed (*Phragmites australis*) and into the salt marsh fringing Downs Creek.

Key:

- Blue Trail
- Red Trail
- Preserve
- i = Trail Head

Site Map

The eastern border of the preserve's property is formed by the channel of Downs Creek. The head of the creek (close to Route 25) has become overgrown with common reed. The common reed gradually gives way to salt marsh as the creek meanders to Great Peconic Bay. Canada geese, mute swans, and other waterfowl take advantage of the quiet, sheltered marsh area to dabble for food or roost for the night. Diamondback terrapins may be observed, especially at high tide, swimming the creek channel in search of food. Across the creek, whitetail deer make use of the open golf course to move between feeding and bedding areas and can be easily observed from the Downs Farm trails.

There has been some restoration activity near the entrance to the preserve. Several Norway maples, an introduced shade tree, were removed and the area has been returned to grassland.

For more information about this and other recreational opportunities in the Town of Southold, please contact:

Town of Southold
PO Box 1179
Southold NY 11971

631-765-1800
or:
http://southoldtown.northfork.net

TOWN OF SOUTHOLD SUFFOLK COUNTY, NEW YORK