

James Farm Preserve Master Plan

Ocean View, Delaware



A new master plan for an important coastal ecological preserve strengthens its resilience in the face of climate change while enhancing recreation and educational opportunities.

James Farm Ecological Preserve, a 150-acre site along the shore of Delaware’s Indian River Bay, was established to promote environmental preservation, education, and recreation. One of 28 National Estuary Programs around the coastal U.S., the Preserve features mixed hardwood forest, tidal salt marsh, sandy beaches, a saltwater cove, and upland fields. Farmed for generations, the Preserve has more recently seen the restoration of warm season grasslands and upland forests.

Having already completed a management plan for the Preserve, the Center for Inland Bays wanted to develop a Master Plan to ensure that future development would be sustainable and cohesive, and would integrate updated facilities, trails, and public access areas with the site’s unique and sensitive ecosystems. The

potential effects of sea level rise in the Inland Bays added to the challenge of long-term planning for the Preserve.

Working collaboratively with Oasis Design Group whom served as the project’s master planner, Biohabitats developed a series of maps that describe the existing vegetative communities, landscape ecological connections, and the potential effects of sea level rise. The maps informed the master plan, and helped set the stage for an iterative design process and holistic approach to capacity building which seamlessly integrates public access, recreation, ecosystem conservation, stewardship, and education.

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