



Monmouth County Park System Claypit Creek Area Improvements, Hartshorne Woods Park PROJECT INFORMATION

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Claypit Creek is one of the few areas in Hartshorne Woods with frontage on the water where the topography is conducive for visitor access (level, open etc.) A major reason for the acquisition was to provide waterfront access. Public improvements include enhanced access to the waterfront for fishing, crabbing, kayaking and general enjoyment as well as restrooms, expanded parking and accessible pathways that meet Americans with Disabilities Act standards. Improvements will also support recreational and educational programming.

The deteriorated bulkhead on the southwest shoreline has been removed and a high and low salt marsh established. This salt marsh restoration will provide habitat while protecting the shoreline from erosion. The project was implemented in partnership with NJDEP at no cost to the County. A wildlife viewing blind near the pond was constructed by students from the Marine Academy of Science and Technology (MAST) under supervision of Park System personnel.

Improvements completed to date in 2021 include: removal and restoration of the existing parking area which must be relocated because it lies within the 300' riparian buffer for C1 waters; construction of a 50-vehicle pervious stone parking area outside the buffer (see plan on page 2); establishment of an information area around the former mill house wall; accessible pathways from the parking lot to the information area and down to a bluestone patio overlook; improvement of existing trails and select removal of invasive plant material. The signature Japanese Maples will remain, and landscape plantings will be added. The new parking area will serve not only visitors to the Claypit area but also trail users of Hartshorne Park proper. The parking area is a sustainable design, allowing recharge to groundwater and will not require drainage structures. The accessible pathways will also allow improved access to the waterfront and use of the site for those people with mobility challenges.

Planned future improvements include landscape management to protect habitat and views; a restroom building adjacent to the parking area; stabilization of the eroding coastal bluff; and an open shelter building at the site of the former house. This shelter will support programming and small group use.

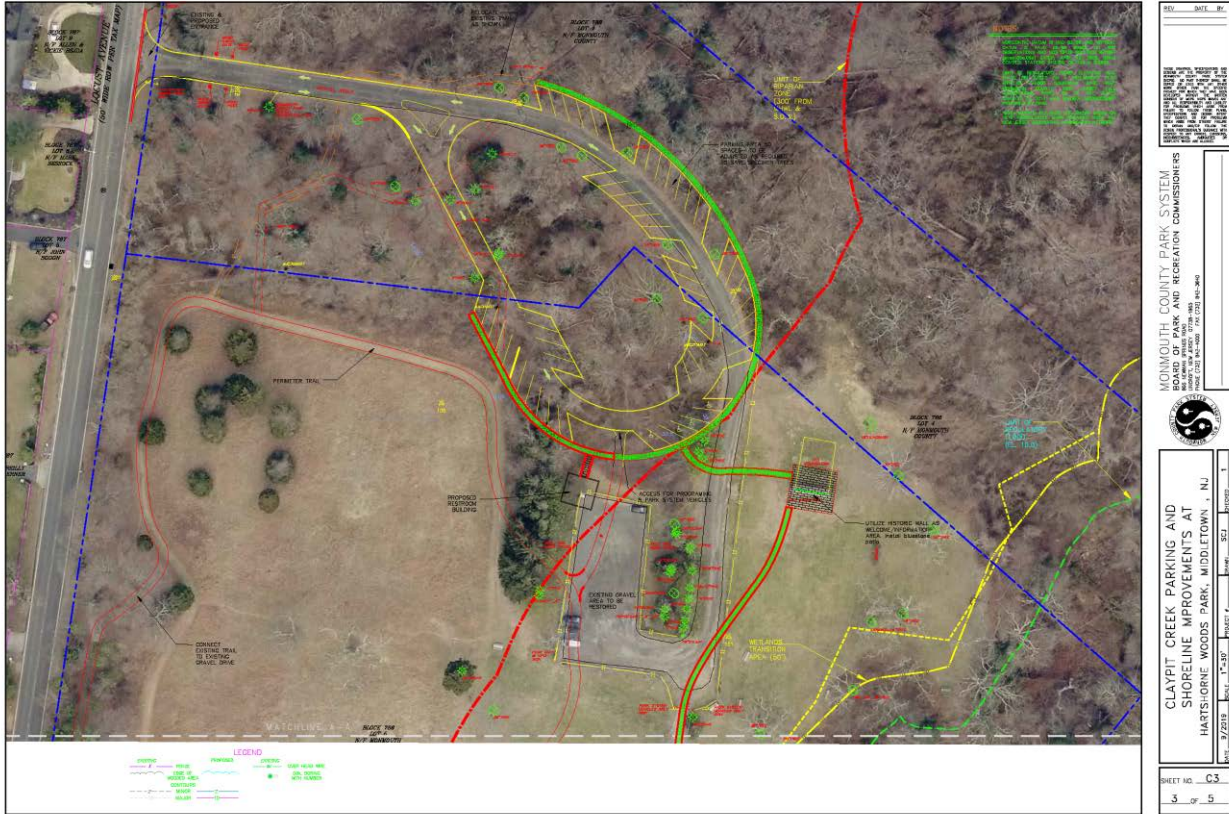
DESIGN APPROACH: The Park System prepared a comprehensive plan for the Claypit Creek Area to enhance public waterfront access while protecting the site and its critical resources. The design objectives were to minimize disturbance, take advantage of views, maintain openness of site, improve habitat, and consider the concerns of neighbors.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS: Site borders C-1 waters, the highest water classification in the State requiring sustainable stormwater management practices. Critical freshwater habitat. Tidal marsh attempting to establish itself. Wave action and shoreline erosion. CAFRA zone. Invasive plant species compromising the native vegetation.

PROJECT STATUS: The CAFRA permit for the project has been approved by the NJ Department of Environmental Protection. Bio-stabilization of a portion of shoreline and construction of a wildlife blind are complete. The construction contract for the parking lot and circulation improvements began in March 2021 and is now complete.

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Improvements to Claypit Creek Area- North



Establishment of Salt Marsh for Bio-Stabilization of SW Shoreline (2018)

