

PLUM ISLAND: A CONNECTING LANDSCAPE

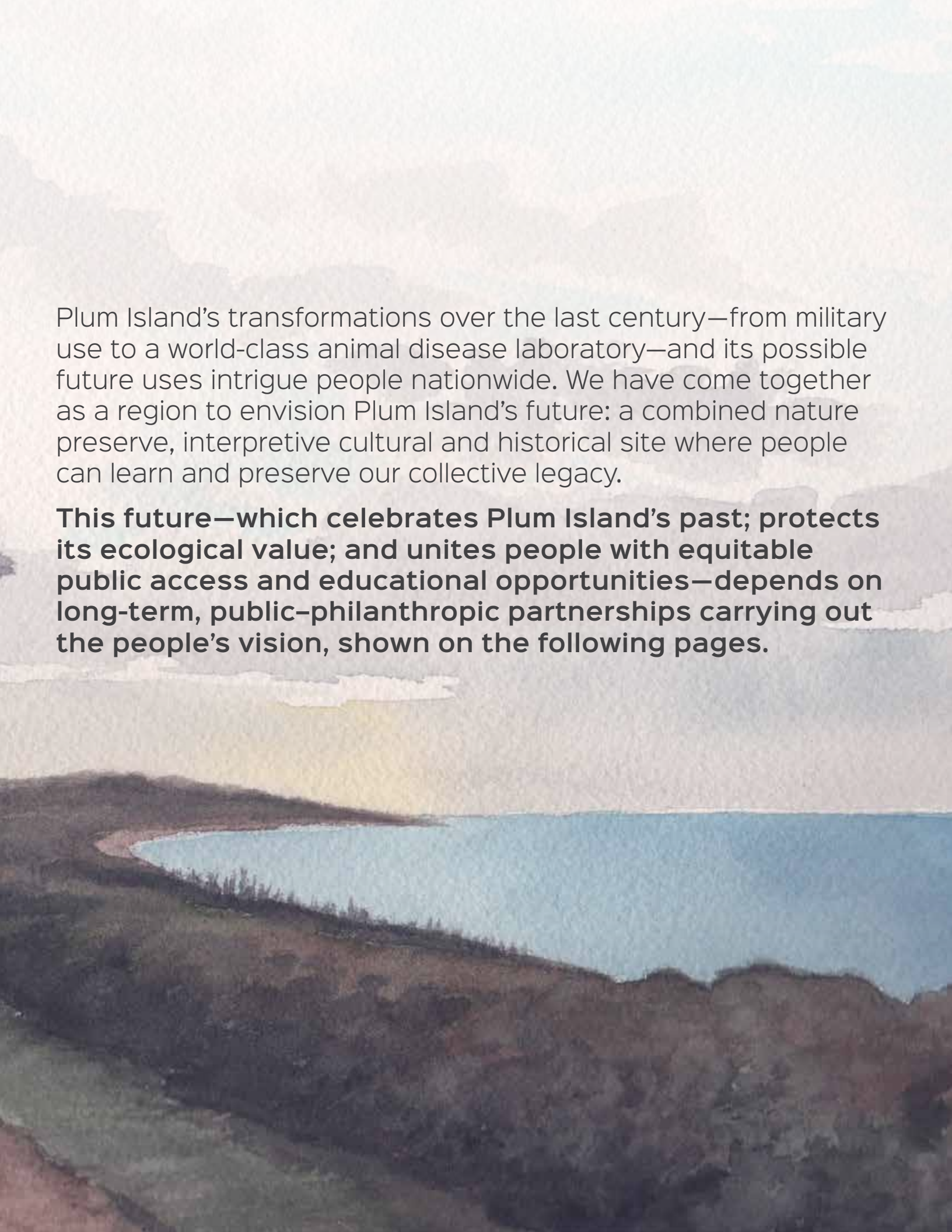
OF HISTORY, NATURE, LEARNING

PLUM ISLAND: A CONNECTING LANDSCAPE

Beautiful and mysterious Plum Island is an 822-acre, inspiring landscape about a mile and a half off the eastern tip of Orient Point, New York, where Long Island Sound and the Peconic Estuary mix with clean, oxygen-rich, ocean waters. It is a landscape that connects people with history, nature, and opportunities to learn the stories of America.

Ecologists and other scientists are learning and sharing the story of high biodiversity on the island, in its surrounding waters, and as part of an island chain and coastal ecosystem. Historians and archaeologists are investigating the island's earliest human uses.





Plum Island's transformations over the last century—from military use to a world-class animal disease laboratory—and its possible future uses intrigue people nationwide. We have come together as a region to envision Plum Island's future: a combined nature preserve, interpretive cultural and historical site where people can learn and preserve our collective legacy.

This future—which celebrates Plum Island's past; protects its ecological value; and unites people with equitable public access and educational opportunities—depends on long-term, public-philanthropic partnerships carrying out the people's vision, shown on the following pages.



1 BE IMMERSED IN THE RAW BEAUTY OF LONG ISLAND SOUND

1 Windswept, surrounded by biologically rich waters, and hosting significant ecological communities, Plum Island invites us to visit, learn, and continue ecological research. A marine eelgrass meadow, a community declining in New York, could be an underwater research site.

2 While absorbing panoramic views of coastal and fresh-water landscapes, visitors will enjoy passive recreation, nature observation, and historic site interpretation through equitable public access tourism and educational opportunities or a sensitively-sited extension of New York's trail system. Access would be managed for ecosystem protection.

3 Guides and guests will celebrate specifically planned and managed areas of cultural, military, and natural heritage, learning how the island's location and its geological and ecological attributes have influenced uses by wildlife, plants, and people over the ages. "Friends of Plum Island" will help to secure and steward the natural resources of the island.







2

ENCOUNTER THE CULTURE & HISTORY OF AN EARLY AMERICAN COASTAL LANDSCAPE

4 The iconic Plum Island Lighthouse, a National Register historic site overlooking turbulent Plum Gut, will be restored and reused for tours and tales of mariner rescues. Visitors will read interpretive signs and maps along historical pathways and elevated walkways. Areas with cultural and historical significance will be managed carefully to ensure compatibility with natural processes.

5 Day visitors will enjoy tours of National Register historic site Fort Terry to explore the finest example of a seacoast defense post remaining in the country—a site that also played a role in early injustice against sexual minorities in the military. At a dedicated Plum Island visitor center located at Orient Point, explorers can also learn of earlier uses of Plum Island by Native Americans, colonists, and subsequent owners. Archaeologists will conduct sensitively-undertaken research to expand understanding of our shared cultural heritage.

6 Researchers and students might use a small field station and dormitory in an adaptively refurbished building for academic studies and one-night stays. Interpretive programs may also commemorate the Plum Island Animal Disease Center's research and vaccine development, which have been vital to protecting animal agriculture.







3 CONSERVE A RARE NATURAL ECOSYSTEM

7 Through partnerships with federal, state, and local governments, nonprofit organizations, Friends of Plum Island, and volunteers, Plum Island will become a place of study, conservation, and ecological restoration. Researchers will study the island's exemplary marine rocky intertidal zone; maritime bluffs, beaches, and dunes; and eelgrass beds and nearshore marine biology. Conservation efforts will demonstrate how natural areas can rebound and thrive.

8 Academic researchers and students could study sensitive natural areas by special permission. Day visitors will be inspired viewing wildlife at a 96-acre freshwater wetland and join guided walks to learn about natural communities and the island's 228 bird species and 111 species of conservation concern.

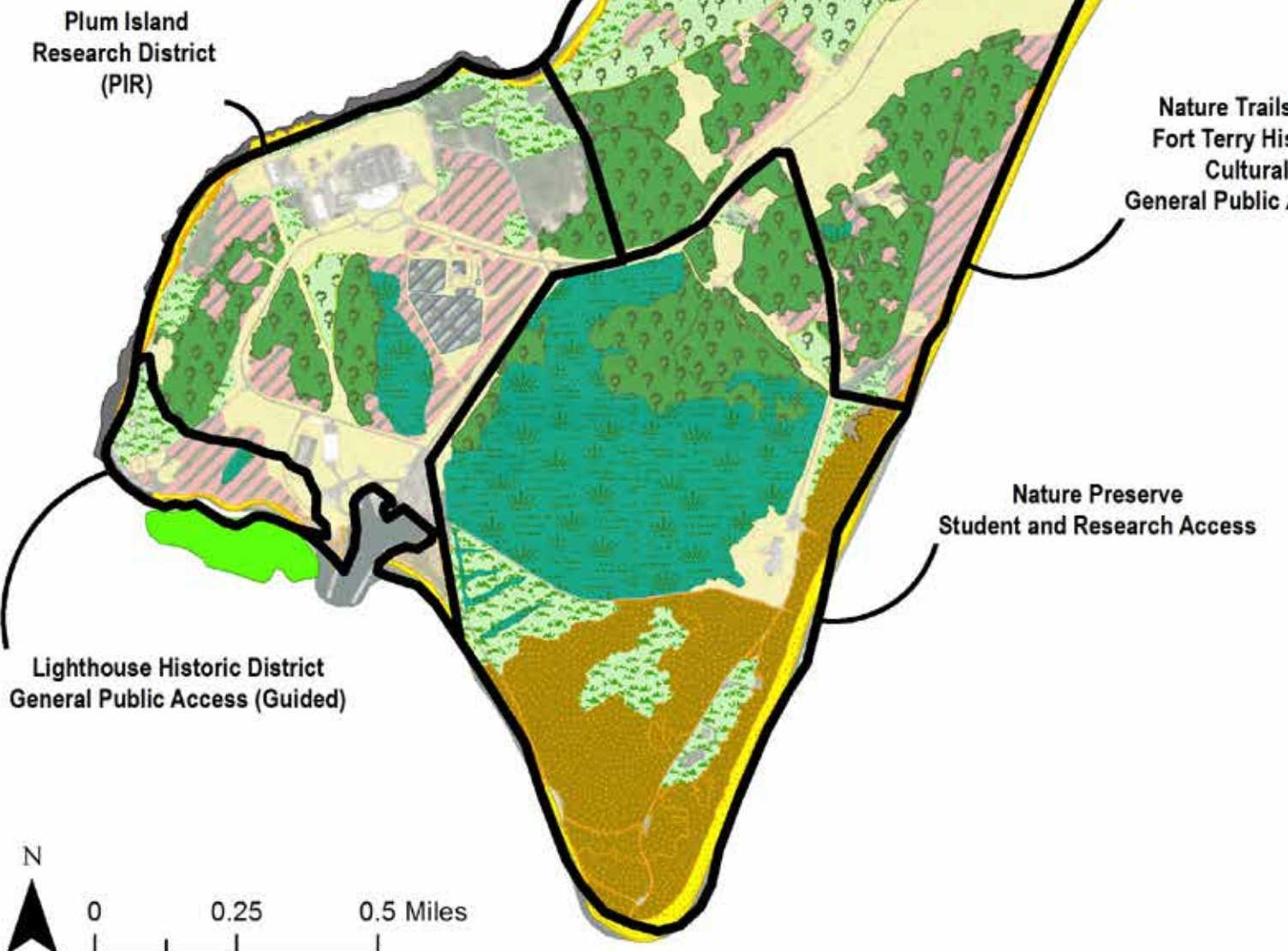
9 Harbor seals haul out on the rocks at Plum Island during the winter in the largest numbers anywhere in New York. Sea turtles, harbor porpoises, and whales use the surrounding waters. Advancing the conservation potential of this critically valuable natural resource area, in 2019 New York created the Marine Mammal and Sea Turtle Protection Area around Plum, Great Gull, and Little Gull Islands. Subtidal habitats are rich in biological diversity.





Plum Island Pres

Vision Concept

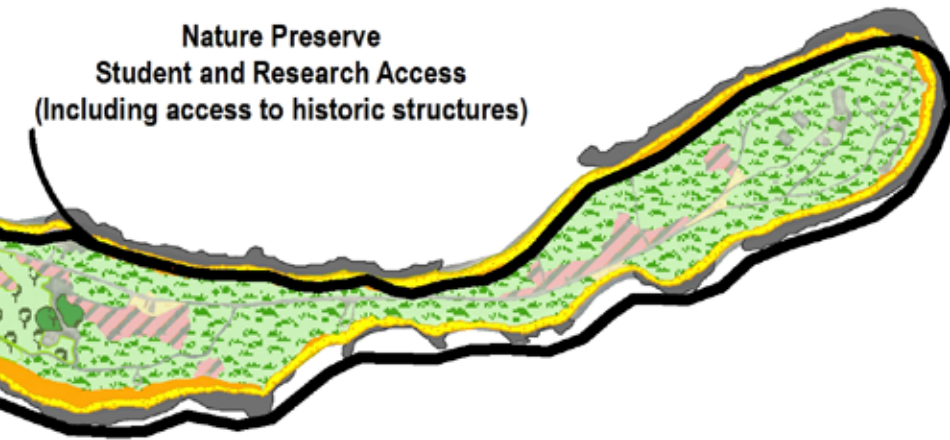


serve

The Nature Conservancy

Preserve Plum Island Coalition






Save the Sound®
ACTION FOR OUR REGION'S ENVIRONMENT












Nature Preserve
Student and Research Access
(Including access to historic structures)

Recreation,
Historic District,
Exhibits
Access (Guided)

Significant Natural Communities:

-  Marine eelgrass meadow
-  Marine rocky intertidal
-  Maritime beach
-  Maritime bluff
-  Maritime dunes

Natural Communities*:

-  Marsh
-  Maritime forest
-  Maritime forest/Shrubland mix
-  Shrubland
-  Old field/grassland
-  Invasive/Mix
-  Dunes and beach
-  Erosion control/artificial beach
-  Sewage treatment pond

* Natural communities condensed from 25 classes - See NYNHP report for details.

Data Sources:

NYNHP Natural Community Map - Schlesinger et al. 2012

NYNHP Element Occurrence Communities 2018

Aerial imagery from Esri

Map updated July 2020

ENVISION PLUM ISLAND PRESERVE: A CONNECTING LANDSCAPE

- **Conservation:** Public–philanthropic partnerships—federal, state, and local governments, nonprofits, Friends of Plum Island, volunteers
- **Historic Preservation:** Fort Terry, Plum Island Lighthouse
- **Visitor Center:** Natural and Indigenous cultural heritage, history
- **Ferry:** From Orient Point, NY
- **Sustainability:** Equitable, managed ecotourism, connections to trail system
- **Friends of Plum Island:** Partnerships for security and support

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Story 3: Louise Harrison (background); New York Natural Heritage Program; cluster: A.J. Hand, New York Natural Heritage Program, B. Van Valen at bvanvalenphotography.com, New York Natural Heritage Program; Robert Lorenz
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Action for our region's environment.



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Learn more: read the *Envision Plum Island* public report at
preserveplumisland.org/envision-report

For questions or copies: write info@savethesound.org or call (203) 787-0646