

UDALLS COVE PRESERVATION COMMITTEE, Inc.

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About Us

The Udalls Cove Preservation Committee (UCPC) is a volunteer organization founded in 1969, dedicated to the preservation, conservation and restoration of Udalls Cove and its associated wetlands and wooded uplands. Much of the area is now protected as the Udalls Cove Wildlife Preserve, managed by the New York City Parks Department.

About Udalls Cove

Udalls Cove is an inlet of Little Neck Bay, part of Long Island Sound, between the Douglaston and Great Neck peninsulas. At the head of the Cove is a large and healthy salt water marsh. Behind that, Aurora Pond lies at the center of freshwater wetlands, bounded by steep, wooded slopes.



Two freshwater streams drain into the Cove. One of these, Gabler's Creek, runs through the Wildlife Preserve. It flows north from Northern Boulevard (opposite St. Anastasia's Church) through the "Ravine," a deep wooded gully that lies between Little Neck and Douglaston. Gabler's Creek passes underneath the Long Island Railroad tracks just west of the Little Neck Station. It feeds Aurora Pond, then continues underneath Sandhill Road (known locally as "the Back Road") out to the Cove through the salt marsh.

Udalls Cove is home to a wide variety of wildlife including ospreys, egrets, herons, ducks, geese, and swans; mammals such as muskrat and raccoons (and even an occasional fox); toads, frogs and salamanders; turtles; and many kinds of fish.



History of the Udalls Cove Preservation Committee

Prior to the 1950s the area between Douglaston and Great Neck north of the Long Island Railroad was sparsely developed. Two small boatyards at the northern end of Little Neck Parkway, at what is now called Virginia Point, were surrounded by salt marsh. During the 1950s and 1960s many more houses were built, and plans were even made for a golf course to be built on filled wetlands. At the same time, the wooded uplands were also being whittled away, as development encroached from all sides. To make matters worse, the remaining marshlands and woods had become dump sites, littered with garbage, demolition debris and even wrecked cars.

Then one woman said, "Enough." Aurora Gareiss, a feisty, middle-aged Douglaston resident whose home looked out on Udalls Cove, determined that what was left of the wetlands and woods around the Cove should be conserved.

On a Saturday morning in April, 1970, on the occasion of our nation's first Earth Day, a dedicated group of citizens from Douglaston, Little Neck and Great Neck assembled at the "Back Road" just west of the Little Neck railroad station, between Little Neck and Douglaston. Standing at the edge of a picturesque, one-acre freshwater pond, they committed themselves to preserving the last remnants of undeveloped



marshlands, shoreline and wooded uplands in the Udalls Cove watershed. Inspired by the indomitable and inimitable Ms. Gareiss, they formed the Udalls Cove Preservation Committee (UCPC). They followed up with the first of what would become annual cleanups of the wetlands and the shoreline.

Our Mission

Our Mission is to preserve, conserve and restore the last remnants of undeveloped marshlands, shoreline and wooded uplands in the Udalls Cove watershed.

Preserving the Park

With Aurora Gareiss as our first president, and later with Doug MacKay, Ralph Kamhi and Walter Mugdan as her successors, UCPC has achieved many of its goals. Most of the area has been acquired by New York State and City, and the Village of Great Neck Estates, and is now protected as the Udalls Cove Park and Preserve. In recognition of Ms. Gareiss' outstanding contributions to conservation in Udalls Cove and around the City and State, the lovely pond, with its water fowl and toads and fish and snapping turtles was officially named *Aurora Pond*. Sadly, Ms. Gareiss passed away in 2000.



Most of the undeveloped land north of the railroad has been acquired by the City or State and is now fully protected. But in the "Ravine" area, between the LIRR and Northern Boulevard, and between 243rd St. in Douglaston and 247th St. in Little Neck, several parcels totaling a bit more than two acres are still in private ownership, and remain at risk of development. UCPC will continue to work to ensure that these parcels are acquired in coming years to complete the protection of our Park. Meanwhile, over-development continues to threaten the watershed on which the health of the Preserve depends.

Restoring the Park



➤Aurora Pond, just north of the LIRR, was in dire need of restoration. Thanks to years of effort by UCPC and our elected officials, that project was funded and completed by the NYC Parks Department in 2006, with beautiful results. ➤Since the early 1990s UCPC has worked to restore the Ravine. We planted hundreds of native trees in the large field where Udalls Cove Park borders Northern Boulevard; a lovely forest now grows where there was barren wasteland. ➤Since 2003 UCPC has spent over \$250,000 on restoration and improvement projects. We removed over a million pounds of concrete rubble that had been dumped

in the area behind the Douglaston Firehouse over 50 years ago. The area was covered with new top soil and wood chips, and many native trees were planted.

➤ In 2008 we carried out a \$75,000 restoration project at another tract near the Firehouse, installing a rock-lined watercourse to prevent severe erosion from stormwater running off the nearby streets, and planting dozens of native trees and shrubs. ➤ We have installed attractive wooden guard rails along portions of Sandhill Road and Douglas Road abutting the park; and rustic split rail in numerous other locations ➤ We cleared heavy debris left over from the commercial marinas, and removed invasives and planted native trees and shrubs at Virginia Point (at the north end of Little Neck Parkway). ➤ We've sponsored 21 Eagle Scout projects – the scouts have built trails, and foot bridges over streams, and wooden walkways over muddy sections! ➤ We clear trees that fall and block the trails, and we trim back the overgrowth from the sides of the trails. ➤ And much more!



Helping the Habitat

UCPC has installed two osprey nesting platforms in Little Neck Bay. The first, installed in 1997, is in Alley Pond Park northwest of the Douglaston LIRR station. It has been inhabited ever since, and osprey chicks have been fledged each year. The second, installed in 2004, is on the shore of Udalls Cove between Douglaston and Little Neck. A pair of osprey took up residence there two weeks after it was installed, and chicks have fledged from that nest regularly.



Cleaning the Park – Your Chance to Help for a Couple of Hours

Every spring since 1970, UCPC has sponsored our **ANNUAL CLEANUP** of the wetlands, woods and shoreline. Watch for the date each year, then join your neighbors for a couple of hours as we clean up our little corner of the world.

Visit our website: www.udallscove.org
and follow us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/UdallsCove

Please Join Us – We Can't Do It Without You!

Regular Membership: \$10; Family Membership: \$15; Sustaining Membership: \$25;
Sponsor: \$50; Champion: \$100. (All contributions are fully tax deductible.)

**Mail your membership contribution to: Udalls Cove Preservation Committee, Inc.
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