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Cc: Beers, Andy (Parks); Alworth, Tom (Parks); Otis, Pamela (Parks); Grimaldi, Joseph (Parks); Draper, Elisabeth (Parks)
Subject: Notice of Completion of the Final 2014-2019 SCORP
Attachments: 2014 03 26 Final 2014 SCORP GEIS-Generic notice .pdf

To: Persons interested in the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)

Pursuant to Part 617 of the implementing regulations pertaining to Article 8 (State Environmental Quality Review) of the Environmental Conservation Law, OPRHP, as lead agency, has prepared a Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement (FGEIS) regarding the adoption and implementation of the 2014-2019 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP).

The document is also used to guide the allocation of state and federal funds for recreation and open space projects. The direction for recreation in the state is guided by three overarching statewide initiatives, with associated goals and recommendations. These together respond to the current issues impacting the state's natural, cultural and recreational resources. The initiative areas are: 1. Enhance and Revitalize the State Outdoor Recreation System, 2. Improve Connections between Recreation, Economics, Sustainability, and Healthy Lifestyles, and 3. Strengthen the Link between People, Nature, Recreation, and Resource Stewardship. Potential environmental impacts associated with adoption and implementation of the plan as well as mitigation measures that could be taken to reduce potential impacts, are included as a part of the Plan which, in its entirety, constitutes a FGEIS.

Agencies and the public are afforded the opportunity to consider the FGEIS; this consideration period ends on April 7, 2014. The Final SCORP/GEIS contains a comments and responses chapter as well as provides updates and additions to the Draft SCORP/GEIS as necessary. The final document is posted on the Parks public website at: http://nysparks.com/inside-our-agency/public-documents.aspx.

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New York State Office of Parks,
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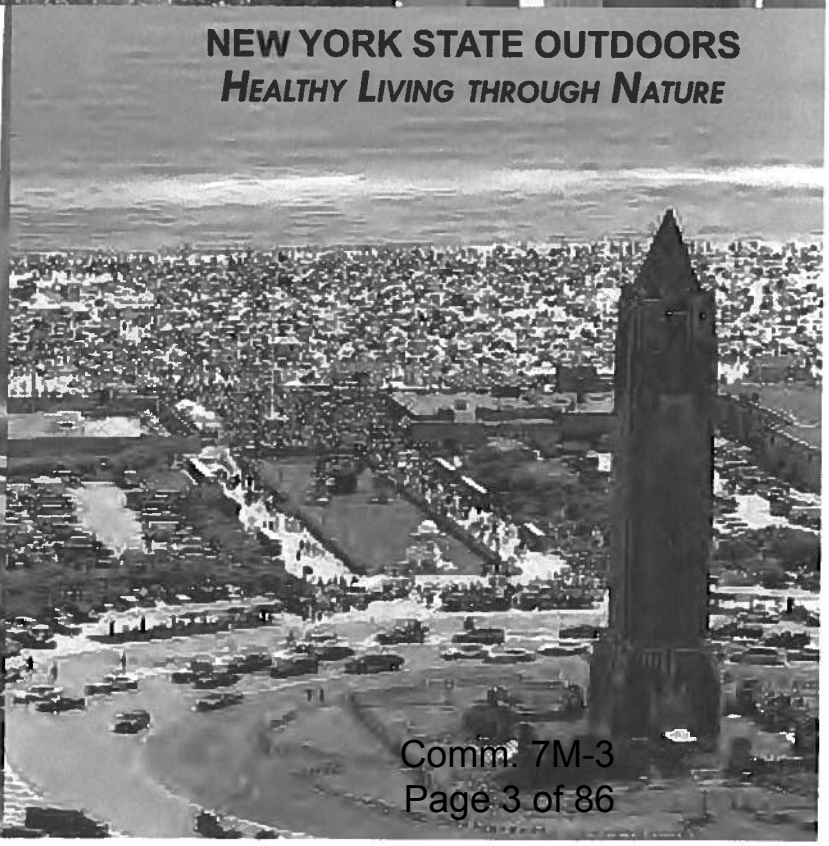
Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2014-2019



NEW YORK STATE OUTDOORS
Healthy Living through Nature

The National Park Service, Department of the Interior, under the provisions of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 (Public Law 88-578) , as amended, provided support in the preparation of this report. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, strictly prohibits unlawful discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age or disability. Any person who believes he or she has been discrimintated against in any program, activity, or facility operated by a recipient of Federal assistance should write to: Office of Equal Opportunity, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington DC 20240.

The New York State Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan and Generic Environmental Impact Statement 2014 – 2019

Prepared by : New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Completed: March 26, 2014

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OFFICE OF PARKS · RECREATION · HISTORIC PRESERVATION
NEW YORK STATE

Andrew Cuomo
Governor

Rose Harvey
Commissioner

SEQR
NOTICE OF COMPLETION OF A FINAL GEIS

Date of Notice: March 26, 2014

Lead Agency: New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP)

Title of Action: **Adoption and Implementation of the 2014-2019 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan**

SEQR Status: Type I

Location of Action: Statewide

This Notice is issued pursuant to Part 617 of the implementing regulations pertaining to Article 8 (State Environmental Quality Review) of the Environmental Conservation Law.

OPRHP, as lead agency, has prepared a Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement (FGEIS) regarding the proposed action described below (Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2014-2019).

Brief Project Description: The Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) is prepared periodically by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) to provide statewide policy direction and to fulfill the agency's recreation and preservation mandate. The updated SCORP serves as a status report and as an overall guidance document for recreation, resource preservation, planning, and development from 2014 through 2019. The document is also used to guide the allocation of state and federal funds for recreation and open space projects. The direction for recreation in the state is guided by three overarching statewide initiatives, with associated goals and recommendations. These together respond to the current issues impacting the state's natural, cultural and recreational resources. The initiative areas are: 1. Enhance and Revitalize the State Outdoor Recreation System, 2. Improve Connections between Recreation, Economics, Sustainability, and Healthy Lifestyles, and 3. Strengthen the Link between People, Nature, Recreation, and Resource Stewardship. Potential environmental impacts associated with adoption and implementation of the plan as well as mitigation measures that could be taken to reduce potential impacts, are included as a part of the Plan which, in its entirety, constitutes a FGEIS.

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AVAILABILITY OF FGEIS: Agencies and the public are afforded the opportunity to consider the FGEIS; this consideration period ends on April 7, 2014. The Final SCORP/GEIS contains a comments and responses chapter as well as provides updates and additions to the Draft SCORP/GEIS as necessary. The final document is posted on the Parks public website at: http://nysparks.com/inside-our-agency/public-documents.aspx.

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The SCORP is part of a continuing planning process that evolves over time. The value of this document is not just in what it says, but in how it is used to protect and manage the natural, cultural, and recreation resources of New York State for future generations.

The plan provides 10 programmatic goals. The recommendations of the goals were crafted through the public outreach and the advisory committee and are framed by the three overarching initiatives of the SCORP:

1. Enhance and Revitalize the State Outdoor Recreation System
2. Improve Connections between Recreation, Economics, Sustainability, and Healthy Lifestyles
3. Strengthen the Link between People, Nature, Recreation, and Resource Stewardship

Lastly, this document includes a review of the potential environmental impacts of the plan and a series of appendices that provide a more in-depth perspective of the recreation and outdoor resources of New York State.

Introduction

Parkland and open space are two of New York State's most valuable, nonrenewable resources that enhance our quality of life. These important places have a long history dating back to Niagara Falls State Park, the "Oldest State Park" in the country, and Central Park in New York City. With a vast range of year-round outdoor recreation opportunities, New Yorkers enjoy the outdoors. With the Hudson and Mohawk Rivers traversing the state, the Adirondacks, Catskills, and Taconic mountain ranges, the majesty of Letchworth State Park—the Grand Canyon of the east, and the beaches of Long Island and the Great Lakes, there isn't much you can't find in New York State.

As the environmental and economic value of recreation / open space increases, federal, state, and local governments, who act as stewards of these resources, are faced with a challenging situation of maintaining and revitalizing aging park systems. At the same time, they must look to the future to keep the core services of these great resources attractive, affordable, and accessible—especially to underserved communities. The benefits derived from these efforts are far reaching; enhanced quality of life, increased tourism, improved health, protected ecosystems, and sustainability of our environment. Parks and open spaces are truly important places and must be protected.

These protected places are the result of a long history supported by various funding sources including, but not limited to: bond acts, the State's Environmental Protection Fund (EPF), and the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). The parkland conversion process (associated with parks funded through LWCF) and the parkland alienation process (applicable to all municipal park lands) afford long term protection of these special places. It's important that these mechanisms are maintained for the benefit of future generations.

Waterfalls at Letchworth State Park

Chapter 1: Executive Summary and Introduction

Executive Summary

The Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) is prepared every five years by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) to provide statewide policy direction and to fulfill the agency's recreation and preservation mandate.

While the overall purpose of this document is to satisfy eligibility requirements for continued funding under the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), the 2014 SCORP will serve as a status report and as an overall guidance document for recreation resource preservation, planning and development of the State's resources through 2019. It is the State's assessment and policy statement to the executive and legislative branches of state government, other units of government, recreation and preservation interest groups, and the general public on the state of recreation in New York. Planners, researchers, administrators, legislators, educators, special interest groups, the general public and private sector entrepreneurs utilize the SCORP document as a basic information source particularly for outdoor recreational issues, policies, priorities, and for supply and demand data. The SCORP is used to inform the allocation of state, federal, municipal, and not-for-profit funds for recreation and open space projects. The information and analysis presented throughout the SCORP are translated into criteria for evaluating projects in an objective manner.

The 2014-2019 SCORP for New York titled, New York State Outdoors: Healthy Living through Nature, is divided into four sections. The first chapters focus on the public participation element of the plan, as well as the research and analysis completed for the document. The latter sections contain goals and recommendations and the implementation / action plan to facilitate improvements to New York's outdoor recreation system.

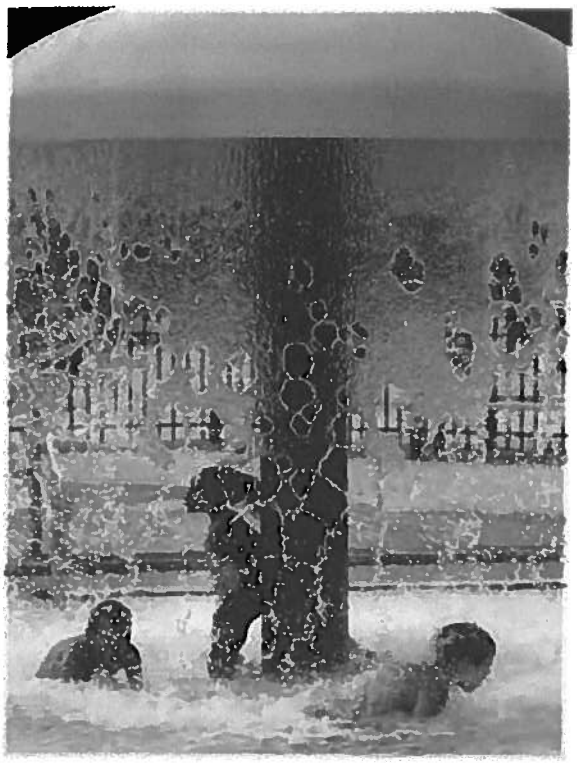
The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP), the state agency designated as the plan liaison, began planning efforts in 2012. As the plan liaison, OPRHP has been charged with identifying the research necessary to better understand the state's outdoor recreation needs over the next five years. OPRHP teamed up with a consultant, Fountains Spatial, to assist with the analysis of statistical, census, and outdoor recreation data on a county basis throughout New York State.

In order to assure maximum opportunity for public participation, OPRHP has:

- Surveyed and inventoried recreation providers statewide
- Evaluated public preferences for recreation
- Coordinated with user groups

Gauging the public's perception and feedback on the recreation and open space opportunities is an on-going process. OPRHP routinely conducts park surveys and visitor surveys at various facilities every year. Utilizing this information, the plan will lay the necessary groundwork to maximize the public benefit of the dollars spent for recreation and open space.

Currently, OPRHP and DEC are responsible for the bulk of outdoor recreation and conservation in the State. OPRHP administers about 335,000 acres of land incorporating 180 state parks, 35 historic sites, 67 marine facilities and boat launch sites, 20 parkways, over 5,000 structures, 67 developed beaches, 36 swimming pools, 29 golf courses, over 800 cabins and rental houses, 8,355 campsites, and over 1,650 miles of trail, as well as several outdoor education centers, museums, and nature centers. DEC administers 4.3 million acres of land (including 3 million acres of Forest Preserve, over 784,500 acres of State Forest, and over 199,000 acres of Wildlife Management Areas), over 907,000 acres of Conservation Easements, 52 campgrounds, several day-use areas, 12 fish hatcheries, 1,300 miles of easements for public fishing rights, over 400 boat launch and fishing access sites, three Submerged Heritage preserves, and about 4,000 miles of trail, as well as several environmental education centers and summer camps.



The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is charged with protecting the quality of New York State's land, water and air, the character of its scenery, the health and diversity of its fish and wildlife populations and habitats. Additionally, DEC conserves both living and non-living resources for appropriate use. This includes managing the Forest Preserve in the Adirondacks and Catskills, protecting wetlands, rivers, lakes, and salt water embayments, all the while serving as stewards of the State's plant and animal species. Conservation and management of open space is a key part of this mission. In doing this, however, DEC bases its approach not just on the number of citizens who wish to participate in outdoor recreation activities, but also on the value of the resources.

Today, the Empire State faces many challenges as it tries to protect lands and waters, while trying to meet the outdoor recreational needs and demands of a diverse population during a time of continual change. The population of New York is only anticipated to increase by 2% from 2010 to 2030; but the population is aging. In particular, the number of residents over the age of 65 is projected to increase by 38.2%. These changes, more than the change in total population, will have the greatest effect on recreation patterns. With an aging population, shifts are anticipated in passive recreation needs.

In addition to changing demographics in New York State, recent weather events (e.g. storms Irene and Lee and Superstorm Sandy) have proven that New York is increasingly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Coastal areas were decimated from storm damage; in addition to homes and busineses, many beaches, rivers, parks, and greenways, campgrounds, etc. were ruined. With storms of this magnitude and intensity increasing,

Swimming and jogging at Saratoga Spa State Park

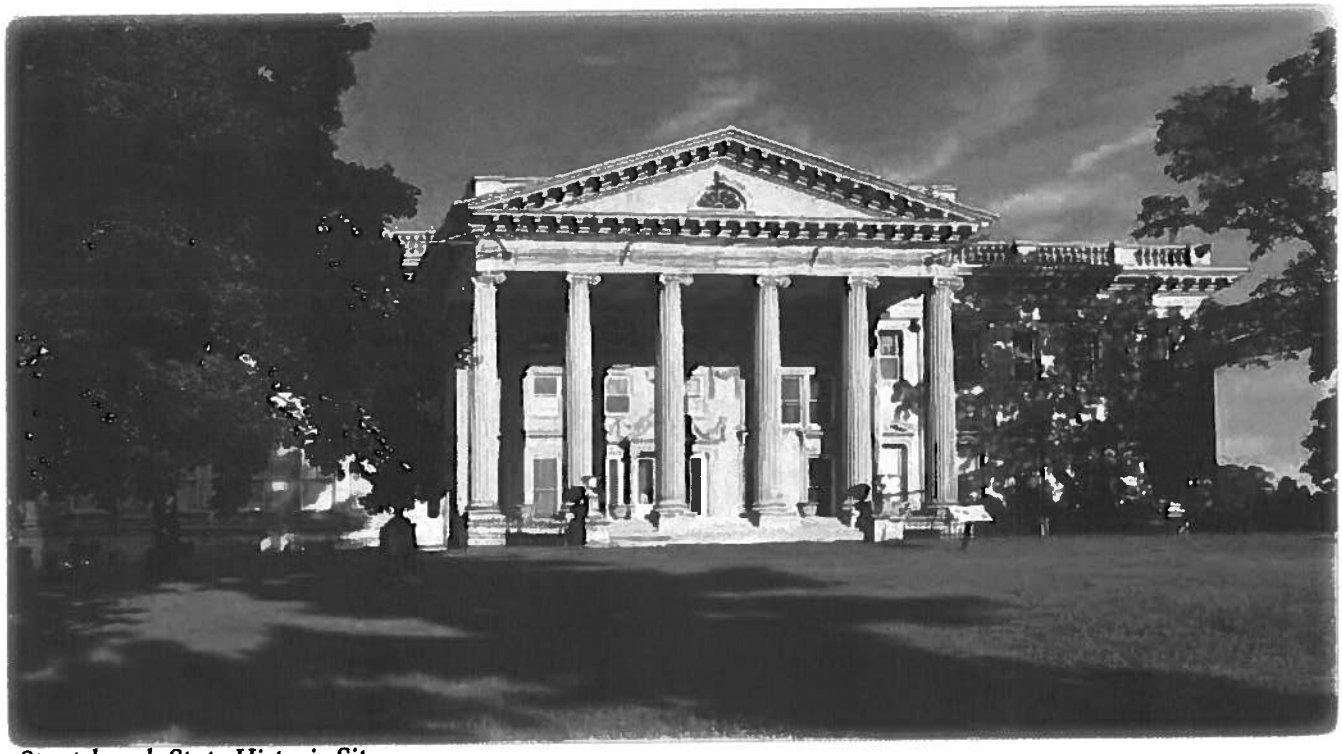
proactive planning must be done to ensure outdoor recreation areas and natural resources are more resilient to future storms.

The 2014-2019 SCORP for New York State represents a new effort to refine recommendations to ensure that funding and implementation of the plan is feasible. Like many other states, New York's parks and open spaces have suffered during economic shortfalls. While land acquisitions have remained steady, the funding to properly steward the land isn't always there. With demographics and land use shifts occurring statewide and development pressure on rural landscapes and open space, climate change, and economic recession, the need to plan for the outdoor recreation needs of New York State is more apparent than ever.

Evolution of the State Park System

In the mid-nineteenth century, most New Yorkers lived in rural areas and nature was seen as a struggle, not as a place to relax and enjoy. The only state agency managing natural resources was the New York State Land Commission, which was established to dispose of excess property. In the 1870s, old-growth timber lands owned by New York State were being sold to loggers. Attitudes gradually began to change and people thought about how they could nurture and preserve nature instead of conquer it. Industrialization and suburbanization drastically altered the land use patterns of the people and the landscape. As preservationists began to organize, so did social reformers. Their common goal was healthy people prospering among natural beauty; the result was a conservation and recreation ethic.

Throughout the nineteenth century, artists and tourists sought inspiration from the grandeur of Niagara Falls and were distressed by the commercialism growing around the falls. Efforts to preserve the scenery culminated in the creation of the State Reservation at Niagara by the New York State Legislature in 1883. Following the success at Niagara, in 1885 the State legislature established the Forest Preserve in the Adirondack and Catskill Mountain regions. These areas were also plagued by uncontrolled timbering and mining, a decline in public open space, and the growing need for fresh water. The legislation stated that the Preserve "shall be forever kept as wild forest lands." Within a couple years, New York had become the first State to not only preserve the environment, but to restore it.



Staatsburgh State Historic Site

Created in 1892, the Adirondack Park was identified by a blue line on a map within which State acquisition of private in-holdings was to be concentrated. At the 1894 Constitutional Convention, a new amendment to achieve meaningful protection of the Forest Preserve was included, stating "The lands of the State, now owned or hereafter acquired, constituting the Forest Preserve as now fixed by law, shall be forever kept as wild forest lands. They shall not be leased, sold, or exchanged, or be taken by any corporation, public or private, nor shall the timber thereon be sold, removed, or destroyed." The State constitution now prohibited logging on the Forest Preserve lands. A number of amendments have been added to Article 14 since its adoption in 1894; however, none of them changed or diminished the original wording that was approved by the citizens of the State in 1894. The Catskill Park was created in 1904 in the same manner as the Adirondack Park.

John Brown Farm State Historic Site

Across New York, wealthy and influential residents had been observing the effects of industrialization / urbanization with concern and moved to secure some of the state's most scenic areas. For example, from 1859 to 1906 William Pryor Letchworth acquired about 1,000 acres in the area of the Genesee River gorge and decided to give his land to the State for a public park. As was customary at the time, Letchworth gave control of the park to the American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society, which was originally incorporated by act of the State legislature as the "Trustees of Scenic and Historic Places and Objects" in 1895. The purpose of the Society was to acquire, preserve, and improve places of natural beauty or historical significance for public use and benefit, demonstrating the alliance between the movements for both natural and cultural preservation in turn-of-the-century America.

In 1900 the Commissioners of the Palisades Interstate Park was established by Governor Theodore Roosevelt of New York and New Jersey Governor Foster Voorhees. The group was created in response to the destruction of the cliffs from quarrying in the Palisades and this effort was intended to protect the Palisades from further decline and defacement. The Commissioners had jurisdiction in both states with power to acquire whatever territory was deemed necessary along the Palisades for preservation, education, and recreation, authorization later being extended to the north and west. Subsequently, the Palisades Interstate Park Commission (PIPC) was federally chartered by Congress in 1937. PIPC, comprised of five commissioners each from New York and

New Jersey appointed by their respective state's governor, now has jurisdiction over 24 state parks and 8 historic sites of more than 100,000 acres.

By the 1920's, New York State had more than 40 areas of scenic, recreational, and historical interest. However, there was no coordination and no single body responsible for directing park, conservation, or recreation policies statewide. Reorganization of state government in the 1920's resulted in the first unified state park system in the country with the creation of the State Council of Parks in 1924. The State Council of Parks had under its jurisdiction state parks and historic sites outside of the Forest Preserve and was charged with establishing uniform park policy, developing its parks, and acting as a clearinghouse and advisory body. It charted a course of carrying out a comprehensive outdoor recreation program, including providing recreational motor routes, or parkways, to reach parks by increasing numbers of automobile tourists, especially in the years following World War II.

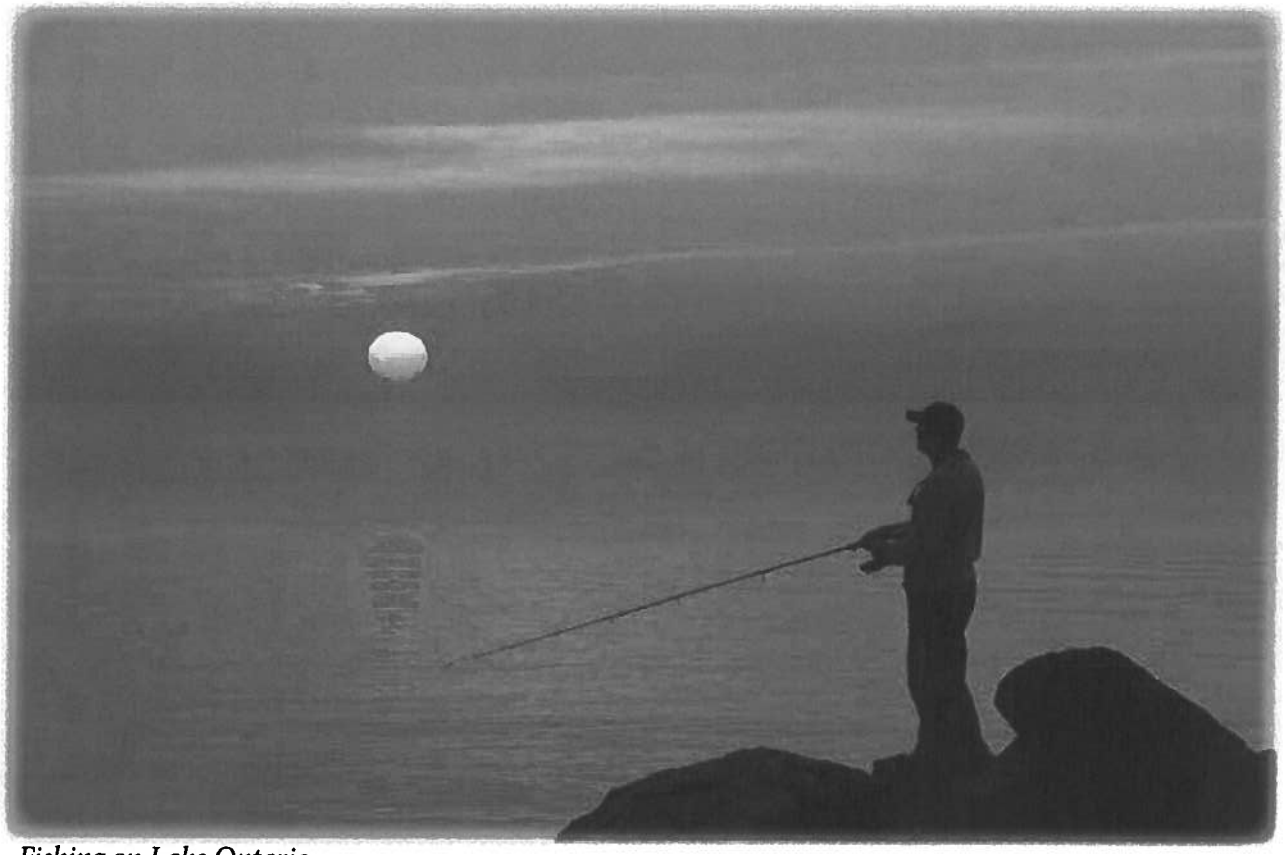
Reforestation of New York State occurred as a result of abandonment of farmland through much of the 20th century, as well as conscious efforts to return once-cleared land to forest. The State Reforestation Law of 1929 and the Hewitt Amendment of 1931 authorized the Conservation Department to acquire land for reforestation areas, consisting of not less than 500 acres of contiguous land, to be forever devoted to "reforestation and the establishment and maintenance thereon of forests for watershed protection, the production of timber, and for recreation and kindred purposes." These Reforestation Areas became the nucleus of

Young Red Foxes at Allegany State Park

our present day State Forests. Reforestation in the state has resulted in a profound increase from 20- 25% forest cover in 1890 to about 62% today.

During the 1960s, changing public attitudes and the availability of environmental science led to the realization that government had a strong role to play in preserving resources and keeping the environment healthy. In 1970, this expanded sense of awareness and responsibility led to the establishment of the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), created on the first Earth Day by Governor Nelson Rockefeller. At the same time, the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation was removed from the Conservation Department and elevated to full agency status as the new Office of Parks and Recreation (OPR).

The Office of Parks and Recreation was assigned the responsibility for maintaining state parks and historic sites, as well as providing recreational opportunities for the people of the State and being steward of the State's archeological and historical resources. Eleven State Park Regions were assigned to the OPR while the twelfth region, consisting of the Adirondack and Catskill Parks, was retained by the DEC. The official title of the OPR was changed to the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) in 1981.



Fishing on Lake Ontario.

Chapter 2: The Planning Process

Preparing the SCORP is a lengthy process that puts an emphasis on public participation pursuant to the LWCF Act of 1965, as amended. With the need for data collection and analysis, preparations for SCORP begin more than a year in advance of the actual release of the draft plan. The plan was coordinated and written primarily by staff from the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) with input from various state and regional agencies, including, but not limited to: the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC); the NYS Department of State (DOS) - Office of Planning and Development; the Adirondack Park Agency (APA); The NYS Department of Health (DOH); the Narural Heritage Trust (NHT); and many others.

The planning process is utilized to guide the decisions made and the overall direction of the plan. These decisions are largely influenced by the planning principles that were set forth by the agency many years ago.

Principles

The planning process for the SCORP is predicated upon three basic principles (outlined below). An understanding, acceptance, and faithful adherence to these principles is fundamental to the success of OPRHP's overall goal to provide a unified State Park and Recreation System which will serve the needs of all residents. The plan and the process must also be responsive to modification in an expeditious and practical manner as warranted to meet changes in societal values and environmental conditions.

The three principles are:

- Planning is a Continuous Process: Planning must match the dynamics of its environment, constantly re-examining assumptions, methods and objectives, in light of changing conditions and new information. Planning does not produce a finished blueprint of the future; it is an open-ended process which places before decision-makers the range of effective options.

- Planning Must be Comprehensive: The planning process, and thus the information and research base which supports this process, must encompass the entire range of human activity and the environment—social, economic, and physical. Accordingly, planning for recreation facilities, programs and services must include careful consideration of all available physical resources and their potential use. Recreation planning must also consider environmental impacts, socio-economic values / changes, abilities, and needs of the various segments of the population.

- Planning Must be a Coordinated Process with Public Participation: Coordination and cooperation among all government levels and the private sector is essential. No planning process should fail to include opportunity for a citizen's participation and input.

Objectives

The following objectives have been established to support the aforementioned goals and planning principles:

- To formulate, maintain and update the Statewide Park and Recreation Plan as required under the Parks and Recreation Law (Consolidated Laws, L. 1972, Chapter 660) Article 3, Section 3.15, (See Appendix B) as part of a continuous planning process.
- To develop an outdoor recreation component within the framework of the Statewide Park and Recreation Plan in accordance with the Land and Water Conservation Fund Manual, Chapter 630.1.
- To establish a statewide recreational planning framework to serve as a guide to regional and local agencies in the formulation of plans, program policies, and priorities.
- To develop and maintain adequate information in support of OPRHP's planning, development, administration, coordination, and review functions.
- To establish and maintain citizens' participation through outreach and surveys.

Process

The 2014-2019 SCORP represents a shift from previous planning efforts; a more efficient document that works off of the stated agency goals of both the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. This plan will refine recommendations from these agencies, build on the findings of previous plans, and will develop implementable projects based on the public input process and surveys.

Planning is a continuous, open-ended process. The programs and statewide initiatives outlined in the SCORP have a five-year horizon; as a result, the SCORP is always evolving in light of changing conditions and new information. The policies and recommendations of the plan reflect a continuous and extensive effort to collect and analyze information vis-a-vis public outreach, engagement of recreation and outdoor experts, as well as original and collected research.

Fireworks at Niagara Falls State Park

Chapter 3: Research and Analysis -- New Yorkers Respond

During the second decade of the 21st Century there are many challenges in meeting the recreation needs and desires of the citizens of New York State and its visitors. The financial crisis and the recession that followed raised concerns about funding outdoor recreation resources. However, with the rise of childhood obesity rates and the public's growing desire for outdoor activities it is important to have a clear understanding of the supply and demand for recreational facilities. The State is part of a dynamic recreation system that includes county, local, and private facilities. As the population composition, land use and environmental conditions change so do the types and demand for recreation activities and available resources. To meet the future demand for recreation, all factors need to be considered. This includes an assessment of existing recreation supply, participation rates, demand, demographics, issues and trends.

Population Trends

New York State is the third most populous state in the United States with population of 19.3 million according to the 2010 Census. The population level will remain fairly level through the year 2030 by which time the population is estimated to be 19.8 million.

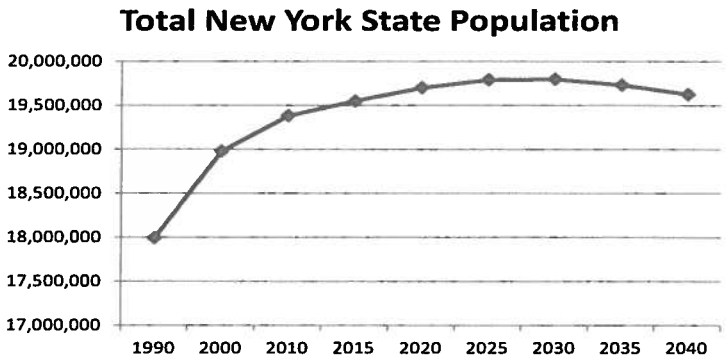


Figure 3.1 - New York State's Population Growth

The population of New York State will increase by 2% for the period 2010 to 2030. This population increase is almost completely due to an increase in the population of the five boroughs of New York City. Long Island has a very modest increase in Suffolk County balanced by a small decrease in Nassau County resulting in growth of about 0.7%, while the remainder of New York State will have a slight decrease in population, both in absolute numbers and relative to the rest of the state. As geographic location influences what types of facilities are available, this will affect the overall patterns of recreation.

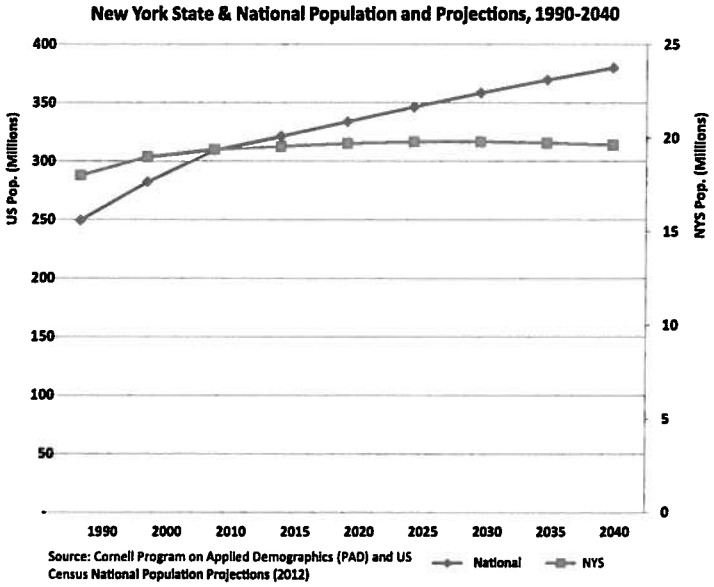


Figure 3.2 - New York vs. US Population Growth

These changes are a result of the large number of immigrants from abroad; a net out-migration especially among younger New Yorkers; an increase in racial diversity; and the increased proportion of the elderly population resulting from both the continuing increase in life expectancy and, most importantly, the aging of the baby boomers. In particular, the number of residents over the age of 65 is projected to increase by 38.2%. These changes, more than the change in total population, will have the greatest effect on recreation patterns.

Aging

The baby boom generation (those born from 1946 to 1964) will continue the transition from being the most elderly part of the workforce to retirement. For recreation providers, this means a trend away from activities typically associated with youth: team sports, court games and other highly physical activities and a growth of

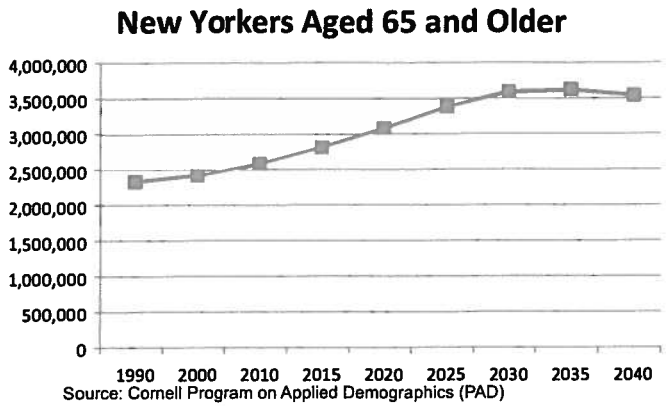


Figure 3.3 - New York State's Aging Population

other activities such as golf, relaxing in the park, walking, and other passive activities. Although New York's population is increasing slightly over the projected period, the number of senior citizens is increasing substantially. This will have a dramatic effect on the quantity and types of outdoor recreation taking place within New York State.

The changes to the state's population will require OPRHP to adapt to its new clientele. Attendance is expected to increase. Much of the increase may occur during the week when some of OPRHP's services are provided free or at reduced cost to seniors. However, this increase in attendance (as any increase in the use of facilities, trails, etc.) will cause increased impacts on the environment and the aging recreation facility infrastructure. An aging population will also require greater adherence to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards in order to be able to enjoy these facilities and services. Further, additional training of OPRHP staff to work with the aged will be required.

Table 3.1 - Most Population Activities among New York Residents Age 65 -85

Most Popular Activities Among New York Residents Age 65-85		
Rank	Activity	Percent Participating
1	Walking for Enjoyment - including jogging/day hiking	80.6%
2	Relaxing in the Park - picnicking, playground use, visiting nature areas or gardens	75.4%
3	Swimming - Ocean, lake and river swimming and public and private pools	52.7%
4	Motorboating/Sailing/Canoeing, Kayaking, etc.	26.1%
5	On and off-road biking including mountain biking	17.1%
6	Fishing - from land or boat	17.0%
7	Golfing - 9/18/par 3 courses	14.7%
8	Camping- Tenting/Backpacking/RV usage	10.2%
9	Court Games - Tennis/Handball/Racquetball/Basketball, etc.	8.7%
10	Local Winter Activities- Ice Skating/Cross Country Skiing/Snowshoeing	8.4%
11	Downhill Skiing/Snowboarding	8.4%
12	Field Sports- Baseball/Soccer/Football, etc.	6.2%
13	Snowmobiling	1.3%

Based on the 2013 General Public Recreation Survey, the most popular activities, with participation rates, among New Yorkers, age 65 - 85 are shown above.

The charts on page 15 show the age/sex breakdown for New York State in the years 2010 and 2030. The most notable change is the movement of the baby boomers, from the age group 43 to 62 years old to 66 years old and older.

Youth

Young people today are less connected to the natural world than ever before. They spend half as much time outdoors than they did 30 years ago and the effects of sedentary indoor lifestyles have become increasingly evident as the childhood obesity rate has more than doubled and the adolescent obesity rate has more than tripled. Obesity decreases life expectancy and leads to a higher risk of diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and joint problems.

There has been a growing movement to get children to exercise and eat healthier as part of their daily life. Federal agencies, the White House, research organizations, NYS agencies and non-profits are taking the charge at changing the course when it comes to this nation's youth. The National Association of State Park Directors and the National Park Service agreed on a joint "Children and Nature Plan for Action" in September of 2007.

This initiative calls for state and national parks to work collaboratively to increase public awareness of the value of connecting children and nature, discuss common issues and solutions, share information about opportunities, engage other agencies and organizations in shared technology, programs, and activities, and promote a national campaign to highlight the importance of connecting children and nature.

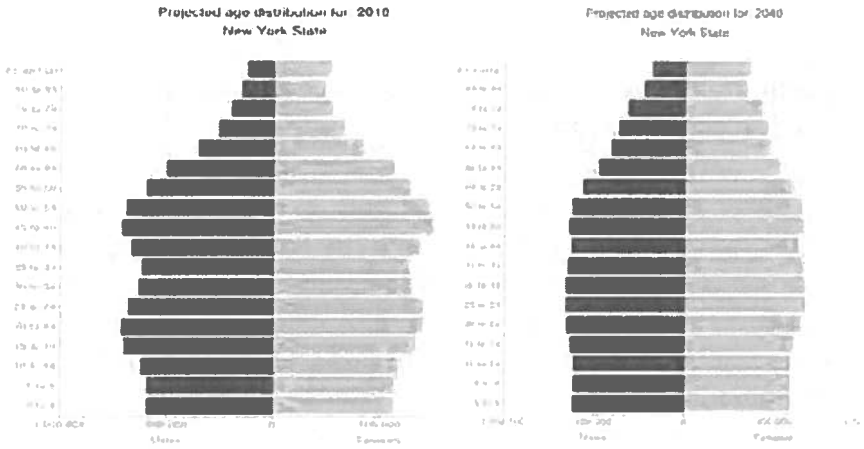


Figure 3.4 - New York State's Changing Population

There are numerous programs to encourage and aid children visiting parks. The National Park Foundation has a "Ticket to Ride" program which makes an effort to provide transportation to students in order to visit parks. There has also been an effort to have local New York State transportation agencies connect urban residents to state parks. For example, the Capital District Transportation Authority, in Albany, NY, has buses connecting residents to Grafton Lakes State Park. The US Department of the Interior also has the *Youth in the Great Outdoors Initiative* to help achieve the vital goal of connecting young people with America's natural and cultural heritage. Working with partner organizations they hire, educate and engage young people on conservation, culture, wildlife and more.

Social Conditions

The economic gap between the affluent and the poor continues to increase. According to research, social economic status of a community can have an impact on recreation activities. Some studies show that there are fewer free-for-use facilities in areas with lower socio-economic status while higher socio-economic status communities have a greater number of free-for-use facilities. Other studies have also shown that communities with a poverty rate of 1% were 57% more likely to have a bike path whereas a community with 10% poverty rate only had a 9% chance of having a bike path in their community. The disparity of facilities and programming are not the only reason that those communities with low socio-economic status lag in outdoor recreation participation. There are concerns regarding fees, safety, drug abuse, gangs and crime rates in parks and playgrounds that research suggests could lower use. Car ownership and/ or accessible public transportation are also factors that impact recreation use.

Public Health and Parks

The 2013 NYS General Public Recreation survey indicated that there was a significant correlation between obesity rate and activity days on a county level. On a federal level the U.S. Surgeon General and the White House are working on building momentum and initiatives to tackle obesity. The U.S. Surgeon General has an *Every Body Walk!* Initiative to explore the roles of walking and walkable communities to increase active living and improve public health. At the White House, First Lady Michelle Obama's campaign *Let's Move* is a comprehensive initiative dedicated to solving the problem of obesity within a generation. The *Let's Move* campaign is dedicated to increasing physical activity and works with parents, schools, local officials, community leaders, chefs, kids, and health care providers in achieving change.

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's (RWJF) is the nation's largest philanthropic organization devoted to public health and they have been working with the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute to create the County Health Rankings & Roadmaps program. The Health Rankings & Roadmaps program aims to help communities create solutions that make it easier for people to be healthy in their own communities, focusing on specific factors such as education, income and access to recreation facilities.

Additionally, organizations like the Trust for Public Land are making the case that parks are good for public health. Their 2006 report, "The Health Benefits of Parks" described the benefit of physical activity, reducing pollution, and the positive psychological effects of parks. In their 2011 report, "From Fitness Zones to the Medical Mile: How Urban Park Systems Can Promote Health and Wellness" they call on parks to improve public health through partnerships with other stakeholders and programming that can enhance the value of parks as a tool to improve community health.

The New York State Prevention Agenda 2013-17 is the blueprint for state and local action to improve the health of New Yorkers and to reduce health disparities for racial, ethnic, disability, socioeconomic and other groups who experience them. The Prevention Agenda asks community partners to work together to foster healthy communities and improve the health of New Yorkers. This initiative focuses on primary prevention strategies to promote healthy environments and behaviors that lower the risk of disease. One of these priorities - to promote healthy and safe environments – entails enhancing the quality of our physical environment to improve public health and safety including enhancing the design of communities to promote healthy physical activity. The Prevention Agenda highlights many health conditions in its five priority areas including diabetes and cardiovascular disease for which risks can be reduced by providing opportunities for exercise and recreation. It also includes an objective to reduce the percentage of children and adults that are obese by 5 percent by the end of 2017.

The agenda includes the goal increasing the number of municipalities that have passed complete streets policies which can include connecting to complementary trails and bike paths that provide safe places to walk and bike. Furthermore, the Agenda promotes establishment of agreements to open public areas and facilities for safe physical activity and adopting, strengthening and implementing local policies and guidelines that facilitate increased physical activity for residents of all ages and abilities.

The Prevention Agenda supports offering information regarding the availability of parks and trails to and in discussion with those seeking free activities close to home. It also suggests increasing State parks infrastructure, repairing and improving park operations and providing technical assistance to community groups and local government wishing to create or enhance parks, playgrounds and trails as physical activity opportunities for residents, including those with disabilities. The agenda supports increasing awareness of and demand for additional local and State parks and open space protection in each community.

The Healthy Soils, Healthy Communities program in New York, supported by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences is a collaboration between the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH), Cornell University and New York City Parks. This program works to serve NYC Parks' 20,000 community gardeners, including those who garden at 300 community gardens on Parks' land, along with many others, to encourage gardening as a healthy activity while reducing exposure to urban soil contaminants.

Olana State Historic Site

NYSDOH also works on a project funded by the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry that is helping transform brownfields in communities like Utica into green fields such as a community park and community gardens. More information is available at: http://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/prevention_agenda/2013-2017/.

Urban Areas

There are 61 cities in New York State. Not including New York City, approximately 2 million people live in these cities. Most of the cities, particularly those in the "rust belt" (that portion of America most affected by the decline of manufacturing) are losing population. However, with the aging of population and change in living styles by the younger working class, there is renewed interest in residing in urban areas that provide services and cultural opportunities. Revitalization of these areas should be guided by smart growth principles. Past development and transportation practices will need to be revisited to make communities more walkable and pedestrian friendly. For example, Buffalo, NY has committed to install at least 10 miles of new bike infrastructure annually.

Universal Accessibility

Approximately 11% of the New York State population above the age of 5 is considered to have a disability. Providing recreational opportunities to this segment of the population will require existing and future recreation facilities to be universally accessible.

It is the mission of OPRHP to provide safe and enjoyable recreational and interpretive opportunities for all visitors, recognizing individual needs and disabilities. Pursuant to the agency's Accessibility Policy, OPRHP is committed to making all reasonable efforts to ensure that our facilities, programs and services are accessible to and usable by visitors of all abilities, including those with limitations. OPRHP is continually working to be in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and the New York State Building Code. OPRHP is committed to providing accessibility to State Parks, Historic Sites, and park programs and services through physical design, specialized adaptive recreation equipment, interpretive resources and reasonable accommodations. All newly built and/or newly renovated facilities and trails, as well as newly developed programs and services will adhere to the most current standards for accessible design, as applicable. All existing facilities, as well as programs and services, are being assessed to determine compliance with the current standards. An Accessibility Committee has been established to review and assess existing facilities, and a plan has been developed and implemented with the objective of renovating all non-compliant areas to ensure accessibility. State Parks has taken the initiative to ensure that individuals with disabilities are afforded access to many areas, including the use of wheelchairs in areas where pedestrians are allowed. As OPRHP increasingly make our facilities and programs more accessible, information will continue to be made readily available at our facilities, publications, informational materials and on the website.

Figure 3.5 - OPRHP State Park Regions

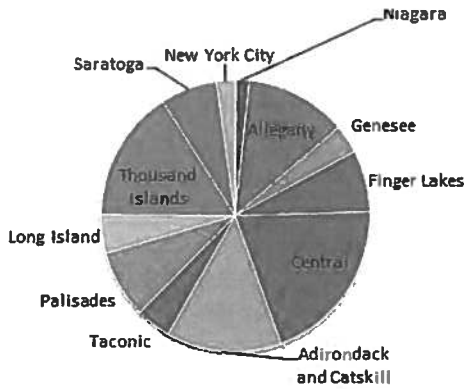


Figure 3.6 - Acreage of Sites by Region

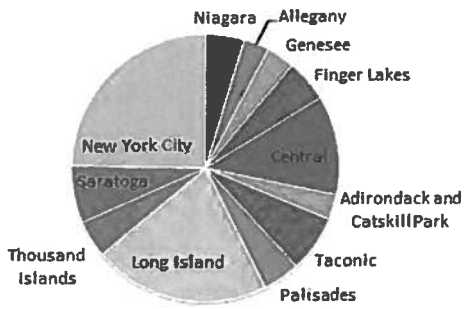


Figure 3.7 - Number of Sites by Region

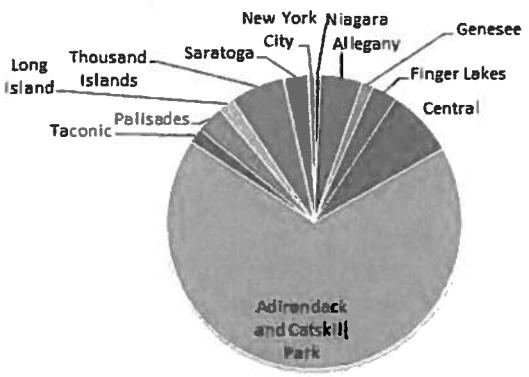


Figure 3.8 - Recreational Acreage by Region

Note: Included in the chart to the right and the rightmost 2 columns of the table below are undeveloped recreational lands under the jurisdiction of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

Table 3.2 - Recreational Facilities in New York State by OPRHP Region

Recreation Facilities in New York State by OPRHP Region						
Region	**Number of Sites**		**Acreage of Sites**		**Total Acreage**	
Niagara	328	4.6%	26,101	1.6%	26,101	0.61%
Allegany	216	3.0%	196,606	12.2%	196,606	4.60%
Genesee	247	3.5%	55,837	3.5%	55,837	1.31%
Finger Lakes	362	5.1%	118,571	7.3%	118,571	2.77%
Central	855	12.0%	320,453	19.8%	320,453	7.49%
Adirondack and Catskill Park	218	3.1%	223,293	13.8%	2,885,000	67.45%
Taconic	484	6.8%	68,140	4.2%	68,140	1.59%
Palisades	316	4.4%	130,791	8.1%	130,791	3.06%
Long Island	1,520	21.4%	75,035	4.6%	75,035	1.75%
Thousand Islands	319	4.5%	253,148	15.7%	253,148	5.92%
Saratoga	495	7.0%	110,109	6.8%	110,109	2.57%
New York City	1,753	24.6%	37,200	2.3%	37,200	0.87%
Total	7,113	100%	1,615,285	100%	4,276,992	100.00%

Composition of the Population

The population of New York State will increase very slightly over the next twenty years, but the composition of this population will be different from what it is today. There will most likely be increased diversity especially a greater Asian and Hispanic population, the two ethnic groups that have had an increase in population in New York State between 2000 and 2010. Facility design, signage and public awareness will need to consider the populations being served.

Energy & Climate Change

The future of travel, tourism and recreational activities dependent on gasoline will become more uncertain due to cost and availability. This can impact such recreational activities as snowmobiling, ATV usage, boating and camping. As a result, there will be an increase in non-fuel related activities.

As the previous SCORP described "climate change will undoubtedly impact the landscape, environmental resources and recreational activities." Over the last five years our recreational facilities have had to deal with the impact of storms such as Irene, Lee, and Sandy and respond with increasing the resiliency of facilities. Planning ahead for sea level changes has become a component of the recreation planning process.

Recreation Supply

There are over 15,500 public and private recreation sites within New York State. OPRHP's Outdoor Recreation Facilities Inventory maintains information on the location of each of these sites and the number and types of recreation facilities each provides. For analysis, this report only takes into consideration publicly owned facilities.

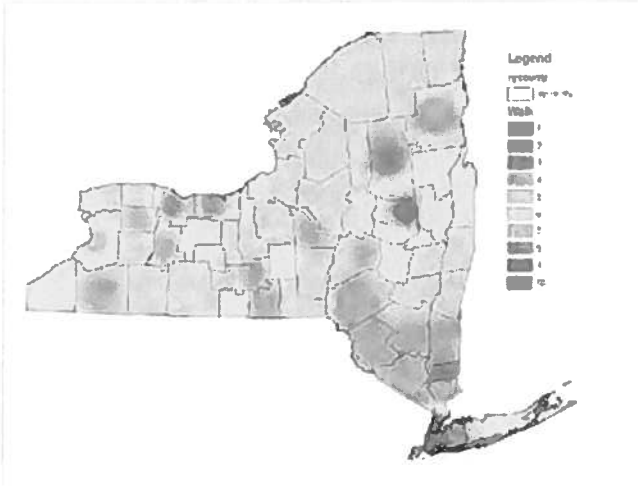
Table 3.3 - 2012 Activity Participation and Activity Days

2012 Activity Participation and Activity Days					
Activity	2012 Participation		2012 Activity Days		Per Participant
Walking for Enjoyment - including jogging/day hiking	12,892,228	20.25%	612,082,197	55.84%	47.48
Relaxing in the Park - picnicking, playground use, visiting nature areas or gardens	12,497,573	19.63%	159,236,899	14.53%	12.74
Swimming - Ocean, lake and river swimming and public and private pools	9,463,546	14.87%	109,070,526	9.95%	11.53
On and off-road biking including mountain biking	5,231,355	8.22%	51,840,992	4.73%	9.91
Motorboating/Sailing/Canoeing, Kayaking, etc.	4,435,908	6.97%	27,826,552	2.54%	6.27
Field Sports- Baseball/Soccer/Football, etc.	3,357,543	5.27%	28,580,614	2.61%	8.51
Court Games - Tennis/Handball/Racquetball/ Basketball, etc.	3,332,135	5.23%	24,730,878	2.26%	7.42
Local Winter Activities- Ice Skating/Cross Country Skiing/Snowshoeing	3,067,683	4.82%	17,042,229	1.55%	5.56
Camping- Tenting/Backpacking/RV usage	2,831,970	4.45%	17,625,031	1.61%	6.22
Fishing - from land or boat	2,721,649	4.28%	19,133,393	1.75%	7.03
Golfing - 9/18/par 3 courses	1,888,807	2.97%	16,083,391	1.47%	8.52
Downhill Skiing/Snowboarding	1,422,305	2.23%	9,343,580	0.85%	6.57
Snowmobiling	513,080	0.81%	3,517,504	0.32%	6.86
Total	63,655,783	100%	1,096,113,786	100%	17.22

There are fewer facilities operated by State agencies as compared to other operators but the sites are larger in acreage. Commercially operated sites account for about one-quarter of the total sites but are generally smaller in acreage than government run facilities. An important difference between these two groups is that one function of the government is to provide recreation opportunities of various types and locations which are not profitable for the private sector. This would include large areas that are set aside for conservation and passive recreation.

The following maps are a visual representation of the Relative Index of Need (RIN). Red represents 10 indicating the greatest need and green represents 1 indicating the lowest need.

Figure 3.9 - Need for Walking, Jogging and Hiking Facilities



There is a considerable difference in the distribution and number of recreation sites and recreational acreage throughout the state. The table and charts show this information by OPRHP regions and the DEC Forest Preserve.

Additional details on the supply of recreation facilities for selected activities are presented in tables in the following section on activity analysis. The data in these tables are derived from the New York State Outdoor Recreation Facilities Inventory.

Recreation Demand

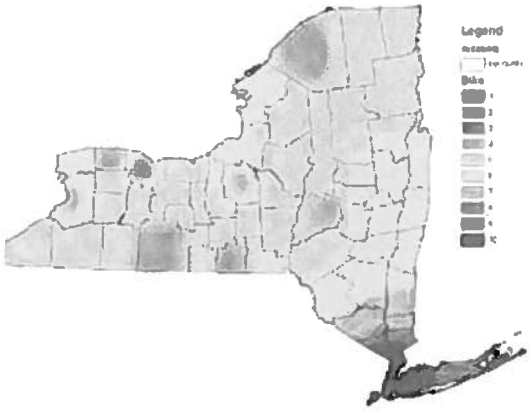


Figure 3.10 - Need for Bicycle Facilities

The demand for recreation facilities is derived from the 2013 General Public Recreation Survey. The survey addressed levels of participation and perceived recreation needs for the community.

The 2013 General Public Recreation Survey was directed at a geographically stratified selection of households residing in New York State. The survey is a valuable component of the SCORP process because it is one of the few opportunities to receive input from the entire citizenry, rather than special interest groups, park visitors, activity club members and the like. Findings from the survey were analyzed and demographic variables were assessed as to their influence on recreation choices. The results of this analysis were used together with U.S. Census data to make projections for current and future levels of recreation by activity and county within New York State.

In this survey, OPRHP collected data from 3,187 individuals on participation in outdoor activities during the 2012 calendar year. Walking for enjoyment--including jogging/day hiking--is now the recreation activity enjoyed by most New York residents. This is followed by relaxing in the park, swimming, biking and boating. This is a change from previous surveys in that relaxing in the park had a higher participation level. Walking for enjoyment continues to have the highest total of activity days followed by relaxing in the park, swimming, visiting sites, and biking and participating in court games such as basketball or tennis.

As part of the General Public Recreation Survey, New Yorkers were also asked what recreation facilities they felt were needed within 30 minutes of their home. Seventy-one percent of respondents replied that they thought more facilities were needed and 27% of those respondents thought that more local parks for picnicking and playground use were most needed in their community. Twenty percent of those who wanted more facilities said that trails for hiking, biking and equine use were needed.

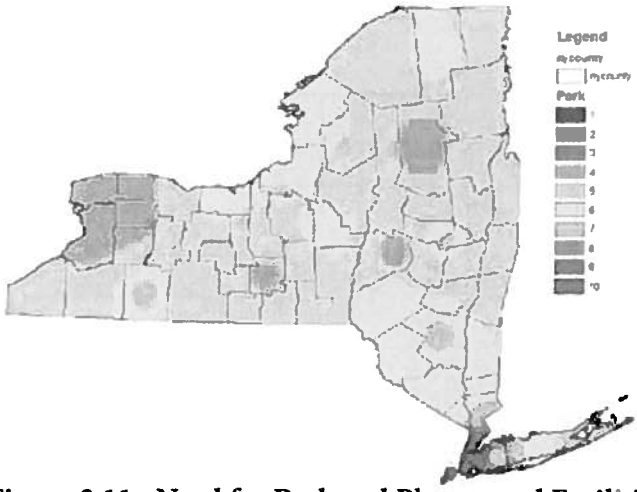


Figure 3.11 - Need for Park and Playground Facilities

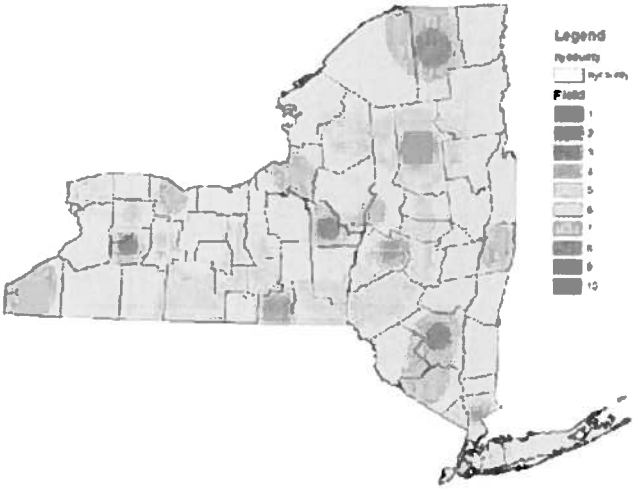


Figure 3.12 - Need for Field Sport Facilities

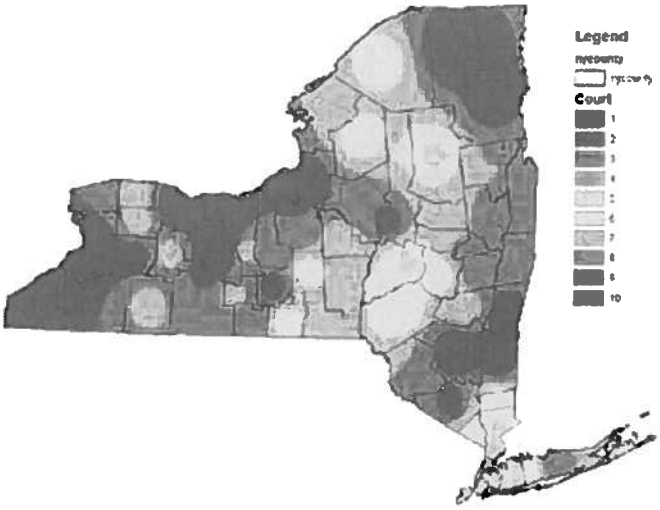


Figure 3.13 - Need for Court Game Facilities

Activity Analyses

Trail Activities

Walking for Enjoyment/Jogging/Day Hiking

Walking, jogging and day hiking was the most popular activity from the 2012 General Public Recreation survey with over 88% of the population between the ages of 18-85 participating and encompassing over half of the total activity days. Trails are an important component to active transportation such as cycling and walking and increasing recreation. According to the American Public Health Association using active transportation can lead to a decreased risk of cancer, decreased risk of cardiovascular risk, and better mental health.

Bicycling

Bicycling is one of America's major outdoor recreation and transportation activities. While this document is more focused on the recreational aspect of bicycling, it should be noted that the transportation component will likely grow in importance as the cost of gasoline and concerns over environmental issues increase in the future. According to the National Household Travel Survey (NHTS) bicycle use is already growing both for recreation and for commuting, with an increase nationally by 27% from 2001-2009.

For recreation purposes, on and off-road biking, including mountain biking, was the fourth most popular activity in the 2012 General Public Recreation Survey with 36% of respondents participating at least once. Statewide there were over 50 million activity days.

Because bicycling is a growing mode of transportation, and because much of the recreational bicycling takes place on public roads, an important component of improving this activity is increased safety. This can be accomplished in a number of ways including the use of helmets, traffic law education and the construction or designation of separate lanes for bicyclists. The installation of separated bike lanes has been gaining in popularity and acceptance across the country and has been shown to increase cycling and reduce risk to cyclists.

Table 3.4 - Day Use Facilities by Operator and Region

Day Use Facilities By Operator																
Operator	Places with Picnicking		Picnic Tables # (est.)		Places with Tennis		Places with Basketball		Places with Playgrounds		Baseball		Football		Soccer, Rugby and Multi-Use	
State	314	20.7%	39,946	49.1%	31	3.0%	53	3.7%	138	5.2%	39	2.6%	13	5.7%	56	21.6%
County	177	11.7%	21,931	27.0%	56	5.4%	27	1.9%	100	3.8%	69	4.6%	16	7.0%	13	5.0%
City or Village	489	32.3%	10,101	12.4%	566	54.4%	985	68.2%	1,620	60.9%	801	53.8%	118	51.8%	87	33.6%
Town	528	34.9%	9,260	11.4%	385	37.0%	380	26.3%	802	30.1%	578	38.8%	81	35.5%	103	39.8%
Federal	7	0.5%	121	0.1%	2	0.2%	-	0.0%	1	0.0%	3	0.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	1515	100%	81,359	100%	1,040	100%	1,445	100%	2,661	100%	1,490	100%	228	100%	259	100%

Day Use Facilities By Region																
Region	Places with Picnicking		Picnic Tables # (est.)		Places with Tennis		Places with Basketball		Places with Playgrounds		Baseball		Football		Soccer, Rugby and Multi-Use	
Niagara	95	6.3%	15,026	18.5%	111	10.7%	65	4.5%	164	6.2%	161	10.8%	32	14.0%	19	7.3%
Allegany	73	4.8%	2,035	2.5%	21	2.0%	12	0.8%	39	1.5%	35	2.3%	5	2.2%	3	1.2%
Genesee	105	6.9%	6,381	7.8%	42	4.0%	24	1.7%	96	3.6%	105	7.0%	17	7.5%	7	2.7%
Finger Lakes	139	9.2%	5,766	7.1%	35	3.4%	64	4.4%	133	5.0%	109	7.3%	8	3.5%	19	7.3%
Central	258	17.0%	9,937	12.2%	134	12.9%	191	13.2%	324	12.2%	198	13.3%	38	16.7%	50	19.3%
Forest Preserve	97	6.4%	4,092	5.0%	13	1.3%	6	0.4%	41	1.5%	11	0.7%	2	0.9%	3	1.2%
Taconic	142	9.4%	7,166	8.8%	115	11.1%	104	7.2%	159	6.0%	148	9.9%	35	15.4%	72	27.8%
Palisades	100	6.6%	5,795	7.1%	41	3.9%	59	4.1%	102	3.8%	68	4.6%	19	8.3%	11	4.2%
Long Island	202	13.3%	12,596	15.5%	252	24.2%	228	15.8%	528	19.8%	289	19.4%	24	10.5%	23	8.9%
Thousand Islands	118	7.8%	4,397	5.4%	52	5.0%	51	3.5%	97	3.6%	69	4.6%	23	10.1%	22	8.5%
Saratoga	133	8.8%	5,858	7.2%	83	8.0%	130	9.0%	192	7.2%	109	7.3%	17	7.5%	17	6.6%
New York City	53	3.5%	2,310	2.8%	141	13.6%	511	35.4%	786	29.5%	188	12.6%	8	3.5%	13	5.0%
Totals	1,515	100%	81,359	100%	1,040	100%	1,445	100%	2,661	100%	1,490	100%	228	100%	259	100%

Equestrian

Horse ownership and ridership is a popular activity throughout New York State and is important to many local economies. Based on information from the New York State Horse Council, there are over 200,000 horses in New York and this activity produces $2.4 billion worth of goods and services within the state providing the equivalent of over 35,000 full-time jobs.

Horseback riding is not limited to the suburban and rural areas of the state. The Outdoor Recreation Facilities inventory lists equestrian trails in every county, including New York City. Within New York State, many of the trail networks provided by DEC provide support facilities such as hitching rails, horse shelters, lean-tos for riders and parking amenities.

Day Use Activities

Relaxing in the Park

This category includes picnicking, relaxing in the park and playground use. Requiring minimal physical exertion and almost no equipment costs, these activities can be enjoyed by the young and old, rich and poor. It is therefore no surprise that the number of participants for picnicking/day use/relaxing in the park is one of the largest of all the activities studied for this report – 85% of the State's population. Additional facilities for relaxing in the park was also the top requested facility in 2012 General Public Survey.

Figure 3.14 - Need for Swimming Facilities

Table 3.5 - Swimming Facilities by Operator and Region

Swimming Facilities by Operator										
Operator	Places with Swimming		Places with Beaches		Beaches Linear Ft.		Places with Pools		Pool Sq. Ft. (est).	
State	204	15.1%	117	20.0%	90833	31.5%	71	9.7%	330,111.00	18.8%
County	69	5.1%	38	6.5%	23085	8.0%	30	4.1%	102,980.00	5.9%
City/Village	575	42.5%	142	24.3%	67294	23.3%	425	58.1%	828,679.00	47.2%
Town	501	37.1%	285	48.7%	92129	31.9%	206	28.1%	494,676.00	28.2%
Federal	3	0.2%	3	0.5%	15270	5.3%	0	0.0%	-	0.0%
Total	1352	100%	585	100%	288611	100%	732	100%	1,756,446.00	100%

Swimming Facilities by State Park Region										
Operator	Places with Swimming		Places with Beaches		Linear Ft. of Beach		Places with Pools		Pool Sq. Ft. (est).	
Niagara	102	7.5%	17	2.9%	12480	4.3%	84	11.5%	124664	7.10%
Allegany	21	1.6%	14	2.4%	6550	2.3%	7	1.0%	6500	0.37%
Genesee	38	2.8%	12	2.1%	6240	2.2%	25	3.4%	46545	2.65%
Finger Lakes	74	5.5%	31	5.3%	11640	4.0%	41	5.6%	62575	3.56%
Central	205	15.2%	44	7.5%	24008	8.3%	146	19.9%	394236	22.45%
Forest Preserve	88	6.5%	84	14.4%	23291	8.1%	3	0.4%	11000	0.63%
Taconic	92	6.8%	40	6.8%	9815	3.4%	48	6.6%	83179	4.74%
Palisades	70	5.2%	25	4.3%	10060	3.5%	41	5.6%	171922	9.79%
Long Island	375	27.7%	229	39.1%	115023	39.9%	146	19.9%	472747	26.91%
Thousand Islands	67	5.0%	47	8.0%	22732	7.9%	19	2.6%	28149	1.60%
Saratoga-Capital District	91	6.7%	22	3.8%	6865	2.4%	63	8.6%	156532	8.91%
New York City	129	9.5%	20	3.4%	39907	13.8%	109	14.9%	198397	11.30%
Total	1352	100%	585	100%	288611	100%	732	100%	1756446	100.0%

Field Games (Baseball/Soccer/Football, etc)

Field sports are ranked the 6th most popular activity in the 2012 General Public Recreation Survey. Field sports have an adult participation rate of 23%. There are over 2,500 public facilities (excluding school districts) that have sport fields. There are many more fields for baseball than any other fields for recreational use with Long Island having the most baseball fields.

Court Games (Tennis/Handball/Racquetball/Basketball, etc)

Court games also had a participation rate of 23%. There are over 7,000 courts in New York State operated by cities, counties, state, town and federal operators. The largest operator of court games are cities and villages. The New York City region has the greatest number of basketball courts, according to the Outdoor Recreation Facilities Inventory

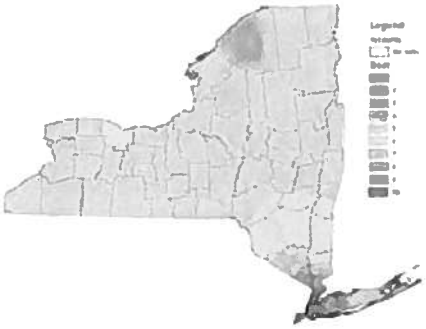


Figure 3.15 - Need for Boating Facilities

Table 3.6 - Boating Facilities by Operator and Region

Boating Facilities by Operator										
Operator	Cartop Launches		Boat Ramps (#)		Places with Docks or Anchorages		# of Docks/Moorings		Boat Rental	
State	209	83.3%	188	36.6%	135	36.1%	3426	20.7%	106	49.3%
County	12	4.8%	50	9.7%	26	7.0%	1464.3	8.8%	46	21.4%
City or Village	20	8.0%	105	20.4%	90	24.1%	4673	28.2%	33	15.3%
Town	10	4.0%	169	32.9%	122	32.6%	7001	42.3%	30	14.0%
Federal	0	0.0%	2	0.4%	1	0.3%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%
Totals	251	100%	514	100%	374	100%	16565.3	100%	215	100%

Boating Facilities by State Park Region										
Region	Cartop Launches		Boat Ramps (#)		Places with Docks or Anchorages		# of Docks/ Moorings		Boat Rental	
Niagara	7	2.8%	34	6.6%	15	4.0%	522	3.2%	10	4.7%
Allegany	10	4.0%	15	2.9%	11	2.9%	533	3.2%	10	4.7%
Genesee	14	5.6%	16	3.1%	9	2.4%	102	0.6%	9	4.2%
Finger Lakes	23	9.2%	52	10.1%	31	8.3%	1484	9.0%	16	7.4%
Central	57	22.7%	41	8.0%	20	5.3%	464	2.8%	24	11.2%
Forest Preserve	26	10.4%	52	10.1%	23	6.1%	330	2.0%	47	21.9%
Taconic	14	5.6%	22	4.3%	20	5.3%	2414	14.6%	17	7.9%
Palisades	23	9.2%	14	2.7%	8	2.1%	64	0.4%	20	9.3%
Long Island	12	4.8%	146	28.4%	131	35.0%	7914.3	47.8%	26	12.1%
Thousand Islands	46	18.3%	71	13.8%	69	18.4%	1543	9.3%	10	4.7%
Saratoga-Capital District	17	6.8%	30	5.8%	21	5.6%	146	0.9%	11	5.1%
New York City	2	0.8%	21	4.1%	16	4.3%	1048	6.3%	15	7.0%
Totals	251	100%	514	100%	374	100%	16564.3	100%	215	100%

On the Water

Swimming

Of the activities studied in the 2013 General Public Recreation Survey, swimming was the third most popular when measured by activity days and number of participants. When asked what type of recreation facility was needed within 30 minutes of their homes, respondents mentioned swimming facilities was the second most requested facility behind local parks.

Swimming is very popular in the southern areas of the state, including New York City and Long Island. Based on information from the Outdoor Recreation Facilities Inventory, Long Island is home to approximately 40% of New York's developed beaches and approximately 20% of the state's pools.

Boating

New York State has abundant water resources and most areas of the state provide numerous facilities for this activity. The Long Island Region has the greatest percentage of boating facilities. The analysis zones that have the greatest number of participants in boating are in the Central and Northern regions of the state. OPRHP is responsible for providing the public with a safe, enjoyable environment for recreational boating. Ultimately, the goal is to help boaters develop safe boating habits.

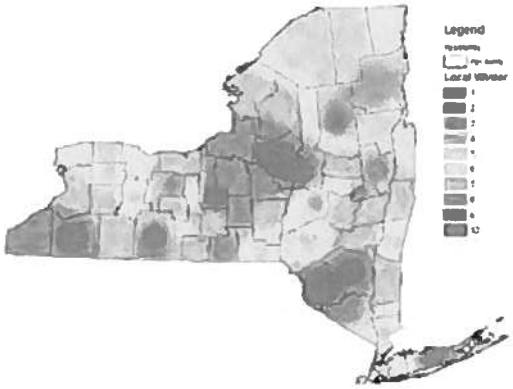


Figure 3.16 - Need for Local Winter Activities

Table 3.7 - Winter Activities by Operator and Region

Winter Activities By Operator								
Operator	Places with Ski Areas		Lifts (#)		Places with Ice Skating		Winter Trails Miles	
State	10	17.2%	3	23.1%	52	9.4%	1,467.18	85.3%
County	9	15.5%	3	23.1%	51	9.3%	45.45	2.6%
City or Village	19	32.8%	1	7.7%	232	42.1%	30.00	1.7%
Town	20	34.5%	6	46.2%	215	39.0%	176.50	10.3%
Federal	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.2%	-	0.0%
Totals	58	100%	13	100%	551	100%	1,719.13	100%

Winter Activities By Region								
Region	Places with Ski Areas		Lifts (#)		Places with Ice Skating		Winter Trail Miles	
Niagara	5	8.6%	1	7.7%	44	8.0%	46.40	2.7%
Allegany	1	1.7%	0	0.0%	8	1.5%	25.00	1.5%
Genesee	5	8.6%	0	0.0%	36	6.5%	24.50	1.4%
Finger Lakes	1	1.7%	0	0.0%	22	4.0%	117.90	6.9%
Central	6	10.3%	1	7.7%	94	17.1%	390.55	22.7%
Forest Preserve	11	19.0%	7	53.8%	24	4.4%	251.00	14.6%
Taconic	6	10.3%	0	0.0%	67	12.2%	99.70	5.8%
Palisades	3	5.2%	1	7.7%	33	6.0%	351.00	20.4%
Long Island	4	6.9%	1	7.7%	81	14.7%	20.20	1.2%
Thousand Islands	3	5.2%	2	15.4%	31	5.6%	177.30	10.3%
Saratoga- Capital Region	3	5.2%	0	0.0%	64	11.6%	209.20	12.2%
New York City	10	17.2%	0	0.0%	47	8.5%	6.38	0.4%
Totals	58	100%	13	100%	551	100%	1,719.13	100%

Fishing

New Yorkers can choose from a variety of fishing experiences. Salt water fishing, surf casting and deep water fishing are popular throughout Long Island and New York City. Because of the abundant sources of water throughout New York State, freshwater fishing is also popular. In the winter, ice fishing is popular in many areas. Fishing is most popular in the Western region according to the 2013 General Public Recreation Survey. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation requires fishing licenses and publishes an annual guidebook for fishing regulations and locations.

To help people make healthier choices about which fish to eat, the New York State Department of Health (NYS DOH) issues advice about eating sportfish (fish you catch). People can get the health benefits of fish and reduce their exposures to chemicals, or contaminants, by following the NYS DOH advice. The advisories tell people which fish to avoid and how to reduce their exposures to contaminants in the fish they do eat. More information can be found here:

http://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/outdoors/fish/health_advisories/

Winter Activities

Local Winter Activities

For a number of reasons, the shorter season and school attendance, to mention two, total participation in winter sports is generally lower than summer activities. This category includes a number of outdoor winter activities, e.g. ice skating, sledding, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. It does not include snowmobiling or downhill skiing as these two activities require considerably more of an investment by their participants in both equipment expenses and travel time. There are approximately 1,700 miles of trails in New York State for winter activities and 21% of the state participated in at least one day of local winter sport activities in 2012.

Autumn at Fahnestock State Park

Snowmobiling

Snowmobiling is an important part of the economy in many remote New York communities. A recent report (2012) indicated that spending attributable to snowmobiling is in excess of $860 million. This figure includes expenditures not only on equipment, but insurance, maintenance, gasoline and travel. However, in recent years the number of snowmobiles registered in New York State has decreased from approximately 172,000 in 2002-03, to 130,000 in 2006-07 and 117,000 snowmobile registrants in 2012-13.

Downhill Skiing

As with snowmobiling, this activity is an important component of the local economy for certain areas within New York State. Skiing is a commercially viable operation and the private sector provides most of New York's facilities. Over 55 million dollars was spent on winter sports equipment in New York State last year. The New York State Olympic Regional Development Authority

Table 3.8 - Camping Facilities by Operator and Region

Camping Facilities by Operator										
Operator	Places with Camping		# of Campsites (est.)		Places with Cabins		# of Cabins (est.)		Places with Group Camps	
State	197	59.3%	15,701	73.9%	32	86.5%	827	95.5%	24	50.0%
County	63	19.0%	2,594	12.2%	4	10.8%	38	4.4%	14	29.2%
City or Village	19	5.7%	891	4.2%		0.0%		0.0%	3	6.3%
Town	47	14.2%	1,906	9.0%	1	2.7%	1	0.1%	5	10.4%
Federal	6	1.8%	148	0.7%		0.0%		0.0%	2	4.2%
Total	332	100%	21,240	100%	37	100%	866	100%	48	100%

Camping Facilities by State Park Region										
Region	Places with Camping		# of Campsites (est.)		Places with Cabins		# of Cabins (est.)		Places with Group Camps	
Niagara	14	4.2%	1,023	5.2%	2	5.4%	2	0.2%	1	2.1%
Allegany	23	6.9%	538	2.7%	2	5.4%	380	43.9%	2	4.2%
Genesee	13	3.9%	1,312	6.7%	4	10.8%	114	13.2%	5	10.4%
Finger Lakes	38	11.4%	2,478	12.6%	8	21.6%	96	11.1%	5	10.4%
Central	46	13.9%	1,756	9.0%	7	18.9%	104	12.0%	7	14.6%
Forest Preserve	66	19.9%	6,268	32.0%		0.0%		0.0%	3	6.3%
Taconic	26	7.8%	849	4.3%	3	8.1%	60	6.9%	4	8.3%
Palisades	19	5.7%	1,101	5.6%	2	5.4%	39	4.5%	1	2.1%
Long Island	24	7.2%	1,674	8.5%	1	2.7%	1	0.1%	9	18.8%
Thousand Islands	42	12.7%	1,674	8.5%	7	18.9%	68	7.9%	8	16.7%
Saratoga- Capital District	20	6.0%	889	4.5%	1	2.7%	2	0.2%	3	6.3%
New York City	1	0.3%	38	0.2%	-	0.0%	0	0.0%		0.0%
Totals	332	100%	19,600	100%	37	100%	866	100%	48	100%

(ORDA) was originally created by New York State to manage the facilities used during the 1980 Olympic Winter Games at Lake Placid. In addition to operating these former Olympic sites, ORDA operates the ski areas at Whiteface Mountain, Gore Mountain and Belleayre Mountain. These ski areas had almost $25 million in revenue for the 2012-2013 seasons.

Table 3.9 - Golf Facilities by Operator and Region

Golf Facilities by Operator								
Operator	Places with Regulation Golf		# of Holes		Places with Miniature Golf		Places with Driving Ranges	
State	19	14.7%	465	18.5%	6	28.6%	12	23.1%
County	25	19.4%	495	19.7%	7	33.3%	12	23.1%
City or Village	48	37.2%	873	34.7%	6	28.6%	13	25.0%
Town	34	26.4%	630	25.0%	2	9.5%	14	26.9%
Federal	3	2.3%	54	2.1%		0.0%	1	1.9%
Totals	129	100%	2517	100%	21	100%	52	100%

Golf Facilities by State Park Region								
Region	Places with Regulation Golf		# of Holes		Places with Miniature Golf		Places with Driving Ranges	
Niagara	17	13.2%	270	10.7%	0	0.0%	6	11.5%
Allegany	0	0.0%	3	0.1%	3	13.6%	0	0.0%
Genesee	5	3.9%	99	3.9%	1	4.5%	1	1.9%
Finger Lakes	8	6.2%	154	6.1%	3	13.6%	4	7.7%
Central	10	7.8%	208	8.3%	2	9.1%	2	3.8%
Forest Preserve	3	2.3%	36	1.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Taconic	15	11.6%	234	9.3%	3	13.6%	4	7.7%
Palisades	13	10.1%	243	9.7%	0	0.0%	8	15.4%
Long Island	24	18.6%	675	26.8%	7	31.8%	15	28.8%
Thousand Islands	8	6.2%	81	3.2%	2	9.1%	3	5.8%
Saratoga-Capital District	8	6.2%	172	6.8%	1	4.5%	6	11.5%
New York City	18	14.0%	342	13.6%	0	0.0%	3	5.8%
Totals	129	100%	2517	100%	22	100%	52	100%

Other

Camping

Camping differs from most other outdoor recreational activities in that it is a multi-day activity frequently involving other activities such as hiking, fishing, boating, etc. The style of camping, e.g. tent, RV, etc. changes over the course of the individual's lifetime. Younger campers are more likely to participate in backpacking and tent camping. Older campers prefer cabins and RVs.

Camping facilities are available throughout New York State although limited within New York City and Long Island. Because travel is an important component of these activities, campers in New York City and Long Island are willing to travel to the more remote areas of the state. The Catskill and Adirondack Forest Preserves contain the most camping sites of any other region and offer a variety of other recreation opportunities year round.

Golfing

Golfing is one of the few activities that participation rates seem to increase with age, although an increase in income over the same years of the lifetime may also be a contributing factor. With the aging of the baby boomers, this has been a rapidly growing activity for many years. Now, however, with the youngest baby boomers turning 49 the number of golfers is not increasing as rapidly as before.

The General Public Recreation survey indicated that golf was the 7th most popular activity among those ages 65-85 with over 2 million activity days in 2012.

Recreation Need

Recreation need considers the supply of recreation facilities and the level of participation (demand) in estimating how this level of participation will change, both geographically and quantitatively in the future. The Relative Index of Needs (RIN) translates this need by county into a numerical scale, +10 the highest level of need and +1 the least. Five is considered the statewide average. In all cases, there is a future need for all activities, but the relative level will be different among activities and counties.

A number of sources of data are used in calculating the Relative Index of Needs. One of the factors used is the current population of New York State by age and county. These figures are available from the U.S. Census Bureau. The next step is to estimate what percentage of the population engages in the activities being evaluated and how many days per year they participate. These figures have been calculated based on a recreation survey conducted during the spring of 2013, asking New York State residents about their participation in 2012.

The sources of data provide information on where recreationists live and how often they participate. However, much recreation involves travel, including travel across county lines. The Relative Index of Needs also takes into account the fact that people travel for recreation by using available information on the location of parks and other recreation facilities. Using data on the quantity of recreation amenities at various destinations and an estimate of an individual's resistance to traveling for a particular activity, it is possible to calculate how much activity takes place at various destinations.

Comparing the number of future recreationists at the destination counties with the availability of present facilities helps to project the present and future needs for both new and rehabilitated facilities.

The 2013 Relative Index of Needs only assessed recreation facilities on the federal, state, and county level. This excluded many of the private and city operated facilities. For activities, the data on the supply side, that is location and quantity of recreation facilities, were inadequate in some counties or regions. Some activities, like golf and downhill skiing/snowboarding are largely operated privately. To account for this change the average of the surrounding counties or analysis zone was used to determine the county's capacity. Another possible data shortfall could be a lack of information on willingness to travel to participate in an activity. For these reasons, relative index of need figures were, unfortunately, not computed for certain activities, e.g. surfing, ATV riding, birding and equestrian use.

To get a more comprehensive view of the relative need variables the percentage of seasonal housing and adult and childhood obesity in a county was also considered in calculating the RIN. These figures were supplied by the US Census Bureau and the New York State Department of Health.

Due to the limitations of the 2013 General Public Recreation Survey an alternate means can be utilized to provide a RIN at the county level for grant rating purposes. In these cases, an estimated RIN can be calculated on an ad hoc basis using information from the available RIN table. For instance, if a RIN figure were needed for ATV activity, its value might be estimated by averaging the values in the snowmobiling column with those in the hiking column. While ATV use is distinct from both of these activities, there are certain commonalities. ATV use appeals to participants that enjoy using vehicles to explore the outdoors and, at the same time, often requires the availability of trails such as those that are enjoyed when hiking. This approach, while not optimal, would provide an approximation of real-world needs. If this methodology is applied, the inputs will be determined by OPRHP and maintained for future use so that figures are applied consistently through time.

While these figure are valuable in looking at the big picture, often times, the number presented for the county represents an average for the county as a whole and the actual need is not homogeneous within

a county. For example, a county may have a river or other natural resource that would attract great numbers of recreationists with limited facilities while at the same time having largely undeveloped areas elsewhere in the county that satisfy the recreational needs in those locations. The county-wide figure would consider both areas. It would over-estimate the needs in certain areas of the county and underestimate it in others. Nonetheless, the Index of Need is relevant in comparing one county to another.

The Relative Index of Needs is a valuable tool to determine need for facilities at geographic areas over the next twenty years, but other factors can and should be taken into account for any final decisions.

Table 3.10 - Relative Index of Needs

County	Park	Swim	Bike	Golf	Court	Field	Walk	Camp	Fish	Boat	LocW	Ski	SnM
Albany	4	7	6	5	8	6	4	5	6	5	6	6	6
Allegany	7	6	4	5	6	5	5	5	6	5	6	6	5
Bronx	10	6	10	5	4	6	9	8	4	9	5	6	10
Broome	4	4	5	5	7	4	5	5	5	4	4	6	5
Cattaraugus	5	6	4	6	8	5	3	5	5	4	9	6	5
Cayuga	5	5	5	6	8	5	4	6	6	5	10	6	6
Chautauqua	4	6	4	6	10	7	6	5	5	5	8	6	5
Chemung	5	7	5	5	8	6	6	6	6	5	6	6	6
Chenango	5	5	4	5	6	5	4	6	6	5	6	6	6
Clinton	4	4	5	5	8	5	5	5	6	4	6	5	5
Columbia	4	5	5	5	9	5	4	6	6	5	4	6	7
Cortland	5	5	5	5	5	6	6	6	6	5	8	6	6
Delaware	6	5	5	5	5	4	3	6	6	5	4	6	6
Dutchess	5	6	6	5	9	5	4	6	5	5	7	6	7
Erie	3	6	7	7	10	5	7	5	6	5	7	8	6
Essex	4	4	4	5	9	5	3	5	5	4	3	5	5
Franklin	6	6	5	6	10	8	5	6	6	5	4	6	6
Fulton	4	5	5	5	6	5	10	6	6	5	7	6	6
Genesee	3	5	4	5	6	4	3	5	5	4	4	5	4
Greene	5	5	5	5	6	6	5	6	6	5	7	6	7
Hamilton	3	4	4	5	4	3	2	5	5	4	2	5	5
Herkimer	5	5	5	5	9	7	5	6	6	5	9	6	5
Jefferson	6	5	6	7	7	5	5	6	6	5	6	7	6
Kings	10	6	10	6	4	7	10	8	5	10	5	6	10
Lewis	5	4	4	5	5	4	5	5	5	4	7	5	5
Livingston	4	5	4	5	6	4	3	5	5	4	4	5	5
Madison	6	5	5	5	6	8	3	6	6	5	7	6	6
Monroe	5	7	8	7	10	7	8	6	7	6	6	6	6
Montgomery	5	5	5	6	6	4	5	6	6	5	5	6	6
Nassau	6	5	9	5	5	4	7	7	6	7	5	6	9
New York	10	6	10	6	5	7	10	8	5	9	5	6	10

Table 3.10 (Continued): Relative Index of Needs

County	Park	Swim	Bike	Golf	Court	Field	Walk	Camp	Fish	Boat	LocW	Ski	SnM
Niagara	4	5	6	6	8	4	5	5	6	5	6	7	6
Oneida	4	5	4	5	8	5	5	5	5	4	10	6	5
Onondaga	5	7	7	7	8	5	5	6	7	5	7	8	7
Ontario	5	5	4	5	10	5	5	5	5	4	8	5	5
Orange	5	7	6	5	9	7	3	6	6	6	8	6	8
Orleans	3	5	3	4	6	6	4	4	4	4	4	5	4
Oswego	5	5	5	6	10	7	5	6	5	5	8	7	6
Otsego	3	4	3	4	4	3	3	5	5	4	3	5	5
Putnam	5	5	6	4	5	6	2	6	5	5	6	5	7
Queens	10	6	10	6	4	6	9	8	5	10	4	6	10
Rennselaer	4	5	5	5	7	7	4	5	5	4	6	5	6
Richmond	9	5	10	5	4	5	7	7	5	8	5	6	9
Rockland	5	5	8	5	6	4	3	6	5	7	5	5	7
St. Lawrence	4	4	3	5	5	6	4	4	5	3	4	6	4
Saratoga	5	6	6	6	8	6	5	6	6	5	8	6	6
Schenectady	7	6	6	6	8	6	6	6	6	5	8	6	7
Schoharie	4	5	5	5	5	4	6	6	6	5	7	6	6
Schuyler	4	5	4	5	6	4	4	6	6	5	5	6	5
Seneca	4	5	4	5	6	4	4	6	5	5	4	6	5
Steuben	4	5	3	4	8	4	4	5	6	4	9	5	5
Suffolk	5	5	7	5	8	5	5	6	5	6	9	6	10
Sullivan	5	5	5	5	7	6	4	6	6	5	10	6	7
Tioga	5	4	3	4	5	3	3	5	4	4	8	5	5
Tompkins	3	5	4	5	9	4	3	5	5	4	6	6	5
Ulster	7	6	6	5	10	8	4	6	6	6	9	6	8
Warren	4	4	5	5	7	5	6	6	6	5	4	5	6
Washington	5	5	5	5	7	5	5	6	6	5	5	5	5
Wayne	6	5	5	6	8	6	8	6	6	5	6	6	6
Westchester	6	4	8	5	4	3	3	7	6	7	4	6	8
Wyoming	4	7	5	6	9	8	5	5	6	5	7	6	5
Yates	4	6	4	5	10	6	6	6	6	4	7	6	5

Abbreviations used in the Relative Index of Needs Table

Park – Relaxing in the park, picnicking, playground use, other generic day use.

Swim – Outdoor swimming, either pool, lake, ocean or other.

Bike – Non-motorized use of bicycles whether on trails, established paths, off-road or on highways for recreational purposes.

Golf – Golfing on either regulation 18 or 9-hole courses as well as par 3 and pitch and putt courses.

Court– Court Games includes basketball, handball and similar sports.

Field – Field Games includes baseball, football, soccer and other similar sports.

Walk – Walking/Jogging on paths and trails. Walking for pleasure, generally requiring less equipment than hiking.

Camp – Camping including tent, RV camping and backpacking.

Fish – Fishing, Salt and Fresh Water fishing from either shore or a boat, but not ice fishing.

Boat – Boating including canoeing, sailing, motorboating, row boating.

LocW – Miscellaneous local winter activities: Ice Skating, Sledding, Hockey

Ski – Downhill skiing and snowboarding

SnM– Snowmobiling

Chapter 4: Goals and Recommendations

Vision for Recreation in New York State

The vision for recreation in New York State is: "to provide a system of safe and enjoyable recreational and interpretive opportunities for all New York State residents and visitors and to protect and improve the quality of the valuable natural, historic and cultural resources." In meeting this vision, the quality of life will be improved with incentives for a healthier life style and economic vitality. This vision establishes a direction and leadership role for the State in providing a "greener" environment.

Goals and Recommendations

The direction for recreation in New York State is guided by three statewide initiatives with stated goals. These goals provide direction and support for protection and management of natural, cultural and recreation resources. These goals will provide a strong, statewide structure to support specific actions and administrative and legislative decisions. Recommendations that support the goals are also identified.

Enhancing and Revitalizing the State Outdoor Recreation System

Since taking office, the Governor and his administration has made preserving, enhancing and revitalizing the state outdoor recreation system a priority. Parks and recreation areas have been the backbone of the state's economy for decades, but have been slowly deteriorating. According to the NYS Office of the State Comptroller, every state park and historic site has some infrastructure need and OPRHP estimates that there is a $1.1 billion backlog of park improvements ranging from health and safety to infrastructure. Utilizing funds from the NY Works Initiative, the Governor and the NYS Legislature allocated $89 million to OPRHP in 2011 and another $90 million in 2012 which leveraged a historic infusion of capital funding to hundreds of millions to create jobs and stimulate local economies throughout the state. These numbers represent the changing tide towards recreation infrastructure in New York State.

Resource and Facility Planning

State agencies have responded to the commitment of funding from the Governor and the Legislature through the preparation of plans for recreation and open space throughout the state. With plans completed, several in-progress, and more in the queue, projects to improve parks and other recreational facilities have been vetted and reviewed pursuant to the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) and are now shovel ready.

At the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, thirteen state park master plans, several trails plans, management plans, and other plans have been completed for state park facilities. In addition, special planning efforts have been undertaken at the keystone parks within the state park system like, Niagara Falls State Park, Jones Beach State Park, Roberto Clemente State Park, and Riverbank State Park.

MASTER PLANS COMPLETED SINCE 2008:

- Black Diamond Trail
- Midway State Park
- Saratoga Spa State Park
- Minnewaska State Park Preserve
- Caumsett State Historic Park Preserve
- Allegany State Park
- Hallock State Park Preserve
- Robert G. Wehle State Park
- Green Lakes State Park
- Fahnestock State Park / Hudson Highlands State Park Preserve
- Grafton Lakes State Park
- Mills-Norrie State Parks / Staatsburgh State Historic Site
- Rockland Lake, Hook Mountain, Nyack Beach, & Haverstraw Beach State Parks
- Thacher and Thompson's Lake State Parks
- NYS Trails Plan

Goal: Increase and Deepen the Visitor Experience by Reinventing and Redesigning Our Parks and Historic Sites

Recommendations:

- Rehabilitate and/or adaptively reuse existing recreation and historic facilities when feasible, to satisfy existing and projected recreation, interpretive and education needs.
- Promote compatible multiple uses and maximize, as appropriate, the length of activity seasons.
- Promote public health and safety and universal access in rehabilitation and new construction.
- Protect natural and cultural resources in undertaking park and historic site operation, maintenance and management activities.
- Encourage the training of park, historic site and land managers in best management practices for protection of natural and cultural resources, as well as for operation and maintenance of facilities to ensure public health and safety.
- Continue to develop master plans, site plans, management plans, and other planning documents to facilitate the reinvention and redesign of parks and historic sites.
- Facilitate inventories and analyses of park, recreation, natural and historic resources through Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and other technologies.
- Ensure appropriate public participation in planning, research and environmental review efforts.

Focus On: Caumsett State Historic Park Preserve Master Plan

The Caumsett State Historic Park Preserve Master Plan was adopted in 2010 after a nearly 18-month planning and environmental review process. The planning team consisted of OPRHP staff, members of the friends group associated with the park, the Caumsett Foundation, and assistance from a consultant. This 1,200-acre park preserve is one of the largest undeveloped tracts of land on the north shore of Long Island. A former country estate for Marshall Field III, Caumsett was acquired by the state in the 1960s and has largely remained untouched since that time. The plan recommended designating the historic park as a park preserve under Article 20 of NYS Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Law. This designation provides added protection to the wealth of natural and cultural resources at the park. In addition, cultural and natural resource management strategies were developed for the facility and car-top boat launching was recommended at the Long Island Sound.

Goal: Build a 21st century green and sustainable park system: fix and green the aging infrastructure of our parks and historic sites and open new facilities

Recommendations:

- Improve and expand the statewide commitment toward environmental sustainability in all parks, recreation and historic sites and support facilities.
- Develop policies and procedures for reductions in energy consumption, reduction in the production of greenhouse gases through increased energy efficiency and increased use and support of renewable energy sources.
- Develop policies and procedures to maximize the procurement of environmentally preferable or 'green' products and services.
- Ensure practices that promote waste reduction, reuse, and recycling.
- Promote the procurement of locally produced commodities.
- Increase the use of non-fossil-fuel-based transportation, public transit and alternative transportation to and within recreational areas and open spaces.
- Develop "green" design standards for buildings where LEED certification may not be feasible.
- Maximize energy efficiency and utilize sustainable / green building materials in new facility design and construction.

Above: Swimmers enjoy Robert Treman State Park in the Finger Lakes Region

Hummingbird at Thacher State Park

Improving Connections between Recreation, Economics, Sustainability, and Healthy Lifestyles

There is an intrinsic value and relationship between open space, recreation, economics, and healthy living. As a steward of extensive recreation opportunities and open space, the State of New York works to bring people to nature. In addition, natural and recreation attractions serve as a critical piece of the economy in New York State, especially in upstate and western New York. The world around us is increasingly technological; we're always "connected" via the internet and smart phones. Longer commutes and other lifestyle changes have yielded a more sedentary lifestyle and, as a result, the need to connect people with the outdoors and recreation has never been greater.

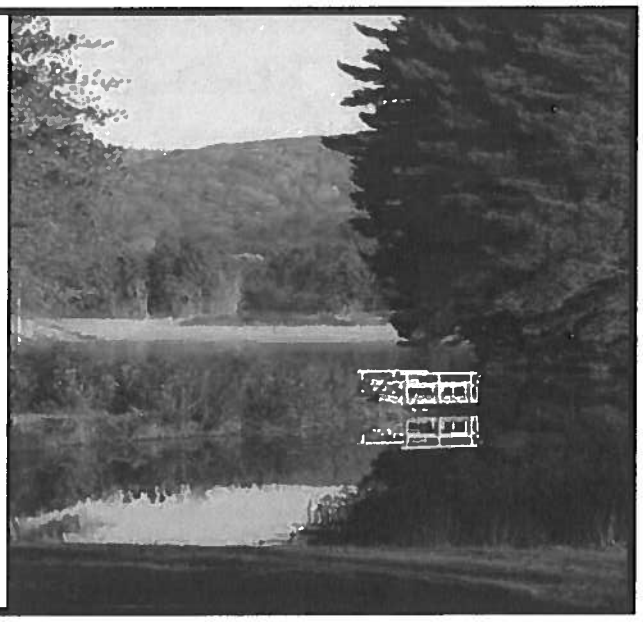
The Value of the Outdoors (Economic, Human Spirit, and Natural)

When thinking about open space, parks, and recreation areas it's often easiest to place a value on the land itself. If this park wasn't here, how many houses could be built here? Or what business would be here? While there is a value to the land, there is also a value that can sometimes be difficult to associate a number with. That value is in the economic benefit that the open space brings to a community. Parks and open space provide a destination where people go to recreate, exercise, spend time with family, connect with nature, look up at the sky, and enjoy the views. Open spaces allow humans to disconnect and embrace their surroundings. Children can explore on a hike; see a salamander—build their self-esteem when they reach the end of the trail.

There is a real economic benefit to outdoor recreation, as well. According to a 2010 report from the NYS Office of the State Comptroller, outdoor recreation contributes approximately $11.3 billion dollars to New York's tourism economy —that's over 25% of the state's total tourism industry. In addition, nearly $800 million dollars of tax revenue can be attributed to the outdoor recreation economy. The NYS Park System alone generates approximately $1.9 million in sales and output in visitor spending.

Focus On: Allegany State Park Master Plan

After nearly twenty years with a draft plan (never formally adopted) the master planning effort for Allegany State Park was revived in 2009 and completed in 2010. One of the biggest accomplishments of the plan included designating park preserve areas to help protect the natural resources of the park. In addition, new camping facilities, upgrades to existing ball fields and courts, a new basketball court, new playground equipment, a new car-top boat launch at Quaker Lake, and numerous improvements to the extensive trail system were recommended (non-motorized and motorized trails).



In addition, visitor spending helps to supports 20,000 public and private sector jobs that represent roughly $440 million in employment income here in New York State.

More recently, extraordinary weather events have put the value of natural processes in a new light. In the wake of Superstorm Sandy, hundreds of miles of coastline were damaged. The beaches with sand dunes and other protective features, however, fared the storm significantly better than those without.

With climate change upon us and the idea that 100-year storms are arriving with greater frequency (Hurricanes Irene, Lee, and Superstorm Sandy), people are starting to appreciate the value of natural resources in protecting interior lands and development. For example, with strong storms impacting New York State, the value of wetlands is becoming increasingly apparent in coastal areas. Similarly, when floods ravage upstate areas, the pervious surfaces and vegetation found in parks and open space allow for water absorption and help to slow stormwater runoff. Thereby demonstrating an ecological value to natural resources and open space as well.

Beach at Hither Hills State Park

Goal: Launch a statewide "Explore Your Outdoors" campaign in conjunction with Empire State Development Corporation (ESDC) and the "I Love NY" program

Recommendations:

- Promote the outdoor recreation opportunities statewide.
- Highlight New York's unique landscape and diverse recreation opportunities.
- Launch a website dedicated to outdoor recreation opportunities in NYS that would combine OPRHP, DEC, county, and private recreation information in one location. The site would be interactive and searchable.
- Continue to utilize social media and technology to engage younger generations and gain their interest in outdoor recreation.

Goal: Continue to Improve, Repair, and Expand Outdoor Recreation Facilities to Attract Visitors

Recommendations:

- Encourage the legislature to continue to keep OPRHP capital budget allocations consistent ($90 million in 2013) so that the excessive backlog of capital projects can be addressed.
- Evaluate existing infrastructure to address critical repair needs.
- Address facilitiy needs in a comprehensive and thoughtful manner.

- Evaluate vulnerable coastal parks and lands to ensure natural processes are not hindered by development and embrace improvements/repairs that will prepare facilities to better handle future weather events.
- Continue to improve recreation facilities to ensure universal access with recognition of the needs of the aging population.

Reducing Obesity through Outdoor Recreation

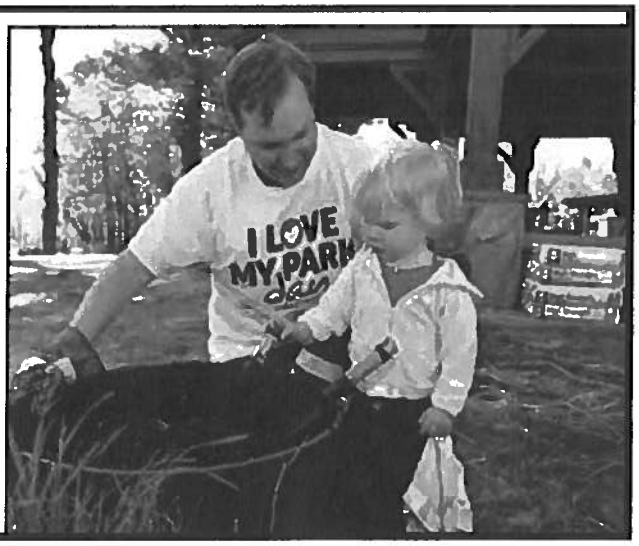
According to the May 2010 report from the Taskforce on Childhood Obesity, one in three (approximately 32%) children in America, ages 2-19, is overweight or obese. In addition, when polled, 40% of children ranked "watching TV or playing video games" as more important to them compared to 4% of the 10,000 children polled who felt saving the environment was most important. Obesity is a major risk facing the future of America, as well. With higher obesity rates, the likelihood of developing diabetes or other diseases increases significantly. Ergo, health care costs are anticipated to rise as our collective health as a nation diminishes. Our military readiness is also put at risk with soaring obesity rates as more than a quarter of all Americans ages 17-24 are considered unfit to serve in the military because they are too heavy .

Enjoying the snow at Grafton Lake State Park

Childhood obesity rates are further complicated by socio-economic factors. Studies show that obesity rates are higher among non-Hispanic black and Hispanic children, though non-Hispanic white children are not far behind. There is also a higher incidence of obesity amongst non-Hispanic white (16.7%) and Hispanic boys (25.5%) and non-Hispanic black girls (29 %). Adults and children are getting less physical activity in general. School districts are experiencing budget reductions and are choosing to save money by eliminating physical education teachers and/or reducing the state required class time for students. Recess, perhaps the only time

Focus On: I Love My Park Day!

I Love My Park Day is an annual event sponsored by Parks and Trails New York, a non-profit dedicated to advocating for the betterment of New York's parks, trails, and open spaces. I Love My Park Day began in 2012; in its second year more than 4,000 volunteers spent a Saturday in early May sprucing up parks and historic sites. Volunteers from across the state helped with clean up, gardening, painting, and construction projects in 80 parks and historic sites! The event brings together public and private entities that work as partners with a shared interest to improve the parks and historic sites.



during the school day for free play, is also being eliminated or reduced. Increased "screen time" between television, iPads, video games, and personal electronic devices is also contributing to increased obesity in children and adults. Time spent in front of a screen yields less time outside for physical activity, organized sports, and informal play.

Goal: Reconnect Children and Adults with Nature and Recreation by Improving Access to Outdoor Recreation Opportunities

Recommendations:

- Identify new outdoor recreation opportunities for underserved communities.
- Improve access to outdoor recreation opportunities through public transit, bikeways, and greenways.
- Partner with corporate sponsors to develop a bike program for eligible children.
- Explore bike sharing opportunities in parks.
- Promote greenways, water trails, and blueways as a means of urban recreation and transportation.
- Develop programming in parks for kids and adults that encourages physical activity.
- Explore partnerships with NYS Department of Health, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, and NYS Economic Development Corporation to support programs that connect New Yorkers with nature, recreation, and health.
- Develop a public health campaign to encourage people to reduce their "screen time" and get outside.
- Encourage the use of trails to increase physical activity and combat the obesity epidemic, as well as reduce the risk of many chronic diseases.
- Support NYS Department of Transportation and their efforts for the Safe Routes to School Program that encourages kids to get more physical activity by walking or bicycling to school.
- Foster partnerships with like-minded companies (i.e. LL Bean and REI) to support outdoor recreation programs.

Connecting Communities and Nature through Parks, Open Space, and Trails

Now, more than ever, there is a need and desire to find alternative transportation; not only to reduce our dependency on fossil fuels, but for recreation and physical activity. One such way is through the creation of parks, trails and greenways and the preservation of open space. All of these things provide recreation space and can also serve as a physical link between communities. New York City is home to several and very well-used bikeways and greenways. According to the New York City Department of Transportation, over a half a million New Yorkers ride a bike at least several times a month according to a recent study. Greenways are defined as a separated two lane path (for biking and walking/jogging).

Goal: Continue to develop a comprehensive, interconnected recreation-way, water trails, greenway and blueway trail system.

Recommendations:

- Identify and encourage when feasible, the creation of recreation-ways, greenways, water trails, and blueways in and around metropolitan areas, along major water corridors and along other natural, abandoned railroad and utility corridors.
- Foster partnerships between federal, state and local governments, not-for-profit organizations, trail groups and private landowners in the development and maintenance of trails.
- Support improvements to the canal recreation-way system.
- Encourage local volunteer participation in the development and management of trail segments.
- Strengthen the statewide trails program for the coordination, planning and technical assistance of trail development.
- Encourage the development of trails within subdivisions to provide pedestrian access to neighboring communities and facilities.
- Encourage trails and open spaces in the revitalization of urban areas.
- Encourage the expansion of universally accessible trail systems.

Focus On: The Manhattan Waterfront Greenway

With over 578 miles of waterfront, New York City has some of the most spectacular views in the world. Developed in 2003, the Manhattan Waterfront Greenway has allowed New Yorkers to access 32 of those miles and connects several waterfront parks, esplanades, and trails to create a cohesive and dedicated space for bicyclists, walkers, joggers, and other users. The Manhattan Waterfront Greenway even connects to the larger Hudson River Valley Greenway that runs from Albany to New York City.

Land Conservation

Open space conservation and expanding existing parks has been a long time goal in New York State. With increased development pressures throughout the state, the need for open space and parkland also increases. Open space, as this document has explored, has a monetary and intrinsic value. Land conservation is critical for habitat preservation and wildlife, too. It also can help preserve historic landscapes and areas of scenic significance.

Goal: Continue to Protect Natural Connections Between Parks and Open Space

Recommendations:

- Continue to inventory and identify important ecosystems and natural connectors.
- Encourage the protection and/or acquisition of critical connectors between parks and open space acquisition of in-holdings and important properties adjacent to existing public landholdings.
- Ensure that the acquisition of open space resources is consistent with the approaches and recommendations identified in the NYS Open Space Plan.
- Encourage open space preservation by assessing lands adjacent to parks and forests to gauge their potential for future acquisition.
- Encourage the use of fee and non-fee acquisition as well as other techniques in the protection of important open space, scenic, historic, and ecologically sensitive areas.
- Continue to promote efforts to increase knowledge and awareness of biodiversity and develop statewide, local and regional approaches to biodiversity protection and maintenance.

Below: Jones Beach State Park

Strengthening the Link between People, Nature, and Resource Stewardship

The tagline for the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation is "Escape; Experience; Explore." This is an active message that the agency endorses and wishes to strengthen vis a vis the SCORP. In previous sections of this chapter there are recommendations for expanding parks and increasing accessibility to recreation. In this section, the idea is to foster the link between people, nature and resource stewardship—specifically younger generations. Over 70,000 students visit NYS Parks annually for school-led environmental education and they should be met with expanded programs.

In addition, with climate change and the severity of recent storm events, it is imperative to educate and engage residents about the impact climate change has on ecosystems and the environment and what can be done to help lessen those impacts.

Goal: Engage Park Visitors through Programming at Parks and Historic Sites

Recommendations:

- Expand environmental and cultural education and interpretation programs throughout the state park and historic site system.
- Explore partnerships with colleges and universities to help develop and implement environmental education and interpretation programs throughout the state (see the SUNY Environmental Sciences and Forestry (ESF)—example in the Central/Finger Lakes Regions).
- Expand existing environmental education programs throughout the state (i.e. the Taconic Outdoor Education Center; Emma Treadwell Nature Center; etc.).
- Expand partnerships with established park, trail and advocacy groups.
- Continue to foster partnerships with Friends groups to garner support for individual parks and historic sites.

Walkway Over the Hudson State Historic Park

From 1989 through 1995, federal funding was extremely limited. From Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 1996 to FFY 1999, there was no stateside appropriation. This "0" appropriation trend was finally broken in FFY 2000, when $40 million was appropriated nationally resulting in nearly $1.9 million for the State.

Table 5.1 - LWCF Appropriations for New York State 1989-2012

1989 $ 758,549	2000 - 1,881,460	2011 – 1,801,087
1990 - 957,052	2001 - 4,518,431	2012 – 2,035,726
1991 - 1,632,851	2002 - 7,085,103	
1992 1,090,278	2003 – 4,823,954	
1993 1,365,492	2004 – 4,543,804	
1994 1,323,714	2005 – 4,462,762	
1995 1,313,382	2006 – 1,382,142	
1996 0	2007 – 1,382,142	
1997 0	2008 – 1,139,569	
1998 0	2009 – 1,339,888	
1999 - 0	2010 – 1,885,406	

These federal funds, as they have been used in the past, provide recreational opportunities for the public in close proximity to where they live. Every federal dollar spent on stateside LWCF is matched by the local sponsor and results in no less than two dollars spent on local recreation facilities. In fact, for the State, the $224 million provided between 1965 and 2006 resulted in $500 million being invested in park and recreational facilities. Annually, enhanced federal funds to the states for LWCF initiatives will provide an assurance that federal commitments for important initiatives are kept, as well as assuring that the states are able to plan for future acquisitions and the development of outdoor recreation facilities most effectively.

MAP 21 Act--Transportation Alternatives Program

Recreational Trails Program

The U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration administers the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) in consultation with the Department of Interior (National Park Service and Bureau of Land Management) and the Department of Agriculture (U.S. Forest Service). The RTP is a state-administered, federal assistance program to acquire, develop and maintain recreational trails for both motorized and non-motorized trail use; the funds come from the Federal Highway Trust Fund as well as an excise tax on recreationally used motor fuel. OPRHP administers the program for the State.

Rafting in the Adirondacks

Funds are available to state, municipalities, tribal governments, and private organizations. Since 1993 through 2011, the States obligated $762 million in RTP funds for about 15,000 projects (http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational_trails/overview/benefits/).

Safe Routes to School Program

The Safe Routes to School Program was developed in the 1970s to create safe, viable, pedestrian and cylingg routes and options for school children. Safe Routes to School was not funded as a stand alone program under MAP-21, but Safe Routes to School activities (sidewalk; crosswalk; signage; signal improvements; transportation studies--collecting speed data, etc.)are eligible for funding under the Transportation Alternatives Program (US DOT, Alternative Transportation, 2013).

Transit in the Parks Program

The Transit in the Parks program was administered by the Department of Transportation and provided grants for planning or capital projects in or near federally owned or managed park, refuge or recreation areas that are open to the public. The goal of the program was to reduce automobile traffic near the federal lands to reduce congestion and improve air quality. This program was not funded for 2014, but funds were most recently applied in 2012.

There are a number of federal lands throughout New York State, so this program provided an opportunity to build or improve alternative transportation and connectivity of the State and Federal park system. Most recently (2011-2012), grant funding was been awarded to the Gateway National Recreation Area in and around Jamaica Bay in Queens, NY for planning of the Jamaica Bay Greenway including identifying alternative routes and non-motorized multi-modal connections and the Riis Landing Basin final planning and environmental assessment/permitting (US DOT Alternative Transportation, 2013).

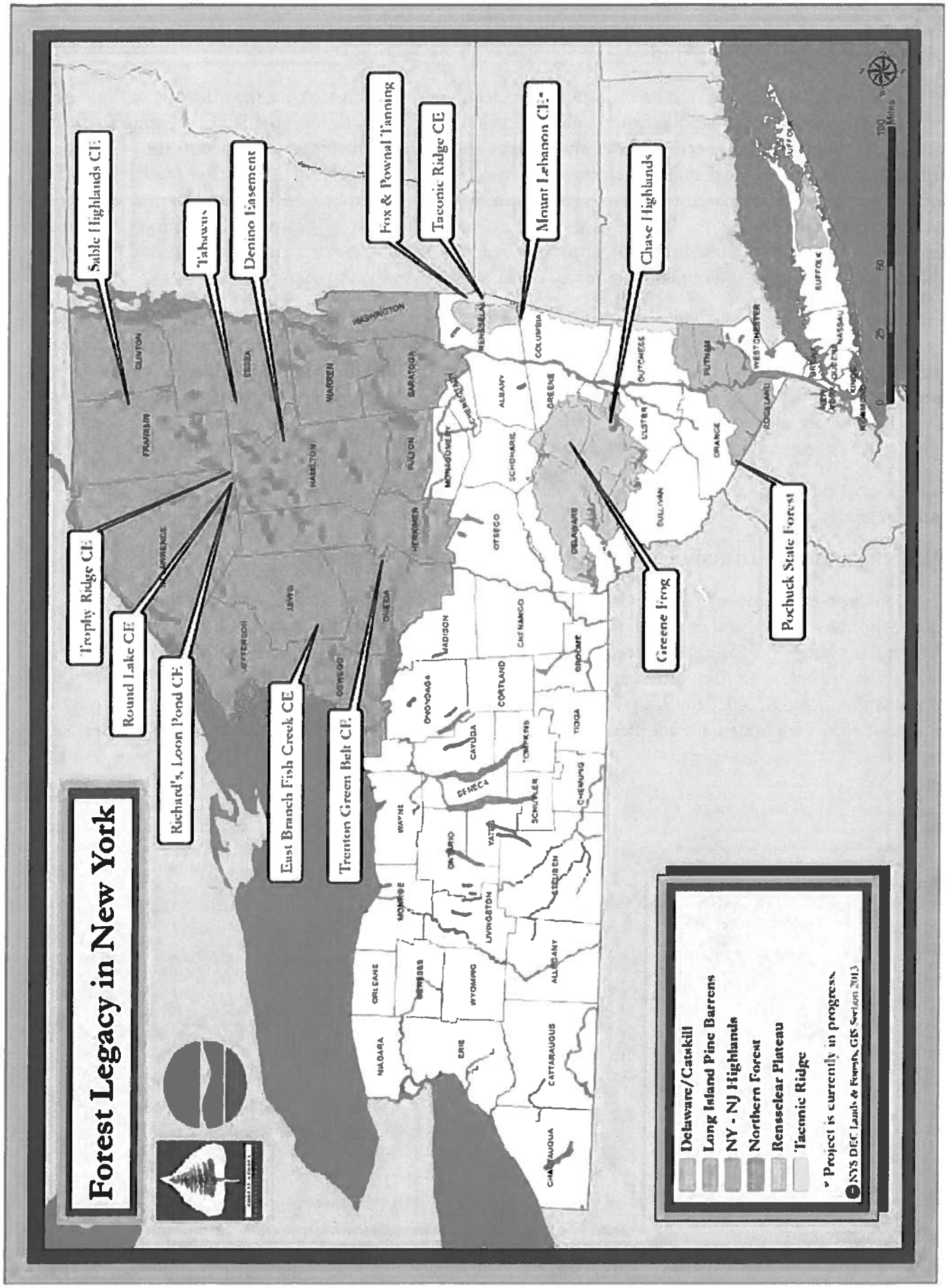
Forest Legacy Program

The Forest Legacy Program was established as federal law in the 1990 Farm Bill. The goal of the program is to identify and protect environmentally sensitive forests which are threatened by conversion to non-forest uses. The law authorizes the U.S. Forest Service, through the Secretary of Agriculture, to acquire land and conservation easements from willing sellers in participating states.

Under the state grant option, the State is using Forest Legacy funds to enhance the Working Forest program. Projects that have been undertaken using Legacy funds include the Taconic Ridge, Sterling Forest, the New York City Watershed in the Catskills, throughout the Adirondacks, and the Pine Barrens on Long Island.

Eligible forestlands include those with one or more resource values, such as scenic, recreational, cultural and ecological values, as well as riparian areas, fish and wildlife habitats and threatened and endangered species. Potentially eligible lands also should provide opportunities for traditional forest uses, such as timber management and forest-based recreation.

All such easements acquired must meet the conservation objectives and goals contained in the NYS Open Space Conservation Plan.


Forest Legacy in New York
Sable Highlands CE
Tahawus
Denino Easement
Fox & Pownal Tanning
Taconic Ridge CE
Mount Lebanon CE*
Chase Highlands
Trophy Ridge CE
Round Lake CE
Richard's, Loon Pond CE
East Branch Fish Creek CE
Trenton Green Belt CE
Greene Frog
Pochuck State Forest
Delaware/Catskill
Long Island Pine Barrens
NY - NJ Highlands
Northern Forest
Rensselear Plateau
Taconic Ridge
* Project is currently in progress.
NYS DEC Lands & Forests, GIS Section 2013

State

Environmental Protection Fund

In 1993, the Legislature enacted the Environmental Protection Act and created, for the first time in the State's history, a permanently dedicated Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) to meet the State's pressing environmental needs. Some of these needs include: the acquisition of priority projects identified in the NYS Open Space Conservation Plan; work on the identification, research and conservation of the State's biodiversity; the municipal parks and historic preservation grant programs administered by OPRHP; local farmland protection projects administered by the Department of Agriculture and Markets; local waterfront projects administered by the Department of State (DOS), and, more recently, stewardship funding for DEC's and OPRHP's land and facility holdings and implementation of the Hudson River Estuary Action Plan.

The acquisition of open space conservation projects is provided for in Title 3 of Article 54 of the Environmental Conservation Law. Title 9 of Article 54 authorizes OPRHP to administer a matching grants program for municipal parks, recreation and historic preservation projects. Revenues to support the EPF include real estate transfer tax (RETT), refinancing of state and public authority obligations, sale of surplus State lands, sale or lease of State-owned underwater lands, revenues from a conservation license plate program dedicated to open space conservation land projects and the "Bottle Bill."

More information can be found at the Agency's website (http://nysparks.com/grants/documents/EPFRules-Regulations.pdf).

NYS Department of Transportation Complete Streets Program

In 2011, Governor Cuomo signed the Complete Streets Act "... requiring state, county and local agencies to consider the convenience and mobility of all users when developing transportation projects that receive state and federal funding." The Complete Streets Act looks to improve the dialogue amongst government, pedestrians, bicyclists, people with disabilities, and others to develop the best practices and most suitable design for transportation facilities. Since the adoption of the Complete Streets Act, several municipalities and counties throughout New York State have adopted Complete Streets resolutions to create a cleaner and greener New York.

Fresh snowfall at Thacher State Park

Grant Allocation

SCORP provides the foundation for the allocation of state and federal funds for recreation and open space projects. The policies, needs assessment, initiatives and goals, are translated into criteria for evaluating projects in an objective manner. The SCORP is utilized to develop the rating systems for the Open Project Selection Process (OPSP) for LWCF projects, the EPF grants for municipal and not-for-profit projects, RTP grants and various acquisition categories consistent with the Open Space Plan.

SCORP helps guide the allocation of municipal and not-for-profit organization funds to local areas in greatest need and for facility types which are most deficient. The State's park and recreation priority rating system helps rank projects on a statewide basis, translating measurements of need and statements of policy to the maximum fulfillment of recreation wants and protection of natural assets.

All applications receive statewide and compliance reviews. Joint meetings with regional field representatives and technical staff provide final review, ranking and approval, assuring full continuity from assessment and policy formulation to resource protection and program implementation.

Partnerships

Partnerships among governmental agencies with the private sector, not-for-profit organizations, and volunteers are an important tool in the acquisition, development, operations, and maintenance of recreation facilities. The State has made significant efforts to foster new partnerships at several recreational facilities over the past five years. The goal for these partnerships is to assist public agencies in providing quality and safe recreation opportunities while protecting natural and cultural resources, all the while maintaining a high level of service to the public.

In order for a partnership to be successful, it must maintain the integrity of the park/site and its recreational, natural and cultural resources. The administrating agency should not relinquish ownership, control or responsibility for the protection of the land and facilities under its stewardship. Partnerships should be designed to supplement not supplant resources provided to an agency through their normal budgetary process.

Over the past five years OPRHP has entered into several new partnerships including, but not limited to the following: park visioning and revitalization efforts at Niagara Falls and Jones Beach State Parks with the Alliance for NYS Parks; I Love My Park Day! An annual event organized and sponsored by Parks and Trails New York with larger, corporate sponsors such as LL Bean; a Learn to Swim program at Riverbank and Roberto Clemente State Parks with the American Red Cross; Smorgasburg—a weekly food event held from April to November at East River State Park; and an organic farming operation at Mills-Norrie State Parks.

Types of Partnerships

Partnerships at parks and other state owned facilities are designed to be mutually beneficial for the administering agency, the partners, the facility, the environment, and the public. The following is a listing of some of the types of partnerships:

Acquisitions – In some cases, a not-for-profit has the ability to advance acquisitions with a landowner in a more efficient manner than a government agency. The not-for-profit organization purchases and then holds the property until the governmental body can secure the funding and facilitate the acquisition process. In addition, a not-for-profit can function as a third party in the negotiations with a landowner.

Cooperative/Management Agreements – A public agency can enter into an agreement with either a not-for-profit group or a municipality where the group/municipality operates a facility on the agency's behalf. The not-for-profit/municipality is then largely or solely responsible for all day-to-day operations and expenses for that facility.

Friends Groups - An agency can enter into an agreement with a not-for-profit organization to form Friends Groups to support a specific park, historic site or recreation area.

Concession Agreements – These generally involve for-profit entities, an agency determines that there is a need for a service and solicits proposals from the private sector. One objective is to encourage competition for private sector investment and operation of public service facilities.

Gifts - Gifts in terms of land or facilities from the private sector to a governmental body.

Sponsor – Some events conducted at public facilities are sponsored by various businesses or organizations. Typically, events advance the goals of the sponsor(s) while providing an activity / benefit for / to the public.

Volunteers - In addition to the more formal arrangement with the not-for-profits, there are numerous informal arrangements with volunteers on public lands. These may range from local service organizations to Camper Assistance Programs.

"I Love My Park Day" Volunteers at Riverbank State Park

Adopt a "Beach" or "Trail" Program - These are programs directed at a specific resource such as a beach or trail, etc. The supporting groups would be responsible for the stewardship of that resource.

Research - These are partnerships with individuals, not-for-profit organizations, and institutions to conduct inventories and research on public lands to improve their stewardship, protection and management. The information is also valuable in the development of environmental education and interpretive programs.

Multi-agency and organization partnerships can promote common goals such as invasive species management, environmental and cultural interpretation and education, and wildlife monitoring.

Guidelines

Guidelines for partnerships are important to ensure that the partnership is compatible with the mission of the agency and with the framework that governs the agency. With the assistance of a working group comprised of representatives from various recreation, environmental and cultural organizations, OPRHP developed a set of public/private partnership guidelines. Although these are specific to OPRHP, they could apply to other public agencies as well. The guidelines flow from the Agency's mission statement to the goals and objectives identified in SCORP and can found online here: http://nysparks.com/publications/documents/PublicPrivate-PartnershipsinStateParksAndHistoricSites.pdf

Chapter 6: Environmental Impacts

New York's State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR) requires all state and local government agencies to consider environmental factors in agency decision-making processes and actions, including actions they have the discretion to approve, fund or directly undertake. SEQR requires agencies to balance environmental impacts with social and economic factors when deciding to approve or undertake an "action." Agencies must assess the environmental impacts of actions which they propose, evaluate alternatives, develop methods for minimizing potential adverse impacts, and provide an opportunity for the public to participate in the planning process when proposals may have significant impacts.

When an action is determined to have potentially significant adverse environmental impacts, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is required. The SEQR process uses an EIS to examine ways to avoid or reduce adverse environmental impacts related to a proposed action, including an analysis of all reasonable alternatives to the action.

The action in this case is the adoption of the updated SCORP 2014- 2019. The updated SCORP will guide future recreational planning, activities, and development. Its adoption and implementation has the potential for significant effects. Since SCORP is a broad-based plan, an EIS that evaluates site-specific impacts of projects is not possible; thus, a Generic EIS (GEIS) is being prepared. It is more conceptual in nature than a site specific EIS which addresses a particular proposed project.

Generic EIS

This chapter, together with the remaining chapters of SCORP, constitutes a draft GEIS for SCORP and discusses the impacts and mitigation of impacts associated with adoption and implementation of the 2014 SCORP by OPRHP. SCORP 2014 describes changing recreational needs, development of statewide initiatives and related goals and recommendations, as well as general projections for future recreation needs and activities.

The GEIS presents a review of the overall SCORP direction in the context of maximizing needed recreational opportunities while protecting the State's natural and cultural resources from significant adverse impacts, and improving and enhancing the durability and resilience of the state's recreational opportunities and resources. The environmental analysis of SCORP focuses on the adequacy, clarity, and appropriateness of the stated initiatives, goals and recommendations that implement the vision of SCORP.

The Draft SCORP/GEIS are being made available for public review and will be the subject of a public meeting in accordance with the public review process of the SEQR. Comments on the Draft SCORP/GEIS are welcome and will be incorporated and addressed in the Final SCORP/GEIS as part of the SEQR record, prior to adoption of SCORP.

Environmental Setting

The environmental setting for SCORP consists of the people and the natural, recreational, scenic, historic and cultural resources of New York State, as well as social and economic characteristics. The resources potentially affected by SCORP include recreational areas, lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands, coastal and estuarine waters, significant habitats, fish and wildlife, rare species of plants and animals as well as common species, forests, agricultural areas, parklands, historic sites, archeological areas, scenic areas, and communities. The setting also includes the general public, park and recreation service providers and both resident and nonresident users.

Alternatives

Choosing not to prepare this plan is not a viable option since the state is required to prepare SCORP, both pursuant to State law and to maintain eligibility of federal funds under the LWCF.

At the implementation level, not preparing the SCORP would mean that there would be no statewide guidance for the provision of outdoor recreation, or if the 2008 SCORP were continued, there would be no updates concerning changing recreation supply and demand, and initiatives and goals for recreation. In addition, failure by the State to implement SCORP may result in the loss of opportunities for public access and outdoor recreation, without proper identification of those opportunities. Adverse impacts to the environment could occur without the guidance provided in the goals and recommendations. Moreover, without the focus and goals set by SCORP, the opportunity for creation and maintenance of statewide systems of natural, cultural and outdoor recreation facilities will be substantially hindered.

Environmental Impacts and Mitigation

Within this section, the implications as to the environmental impacts of SCORP are discussed and, where possible, general approaches to mitigation of potential adverse impacts are also identified.

Planning Process

The planning principles described in Chapter 2 assure that recreation planning in the State considers natural as well as human resources. Constantly reevaluating assumptions, methods and objectives in the planning process helps assure protection of natural resources by adjusting preservation measures when conditions change or new information is available.

The objectives of OPRHP's planning process continue to support SCORP goals and planning principles. These objectives further the protection of resources by guiding agencies in formulating priorities. Adequate information and analysis, coordination and citizens' participation are key to implementation of actions that protect resources and enhance recreation.

The planning process considers land and water resources and user impacts, and emphasizes the best use of available resources and knowledge. Participation by the public in the planning process provides a balance of interests in plan formulation. Protection of open space, natural and cultural resources, and interests and priorities of the public are reflected in SCORP as well as in specific programs and projects implemented pursuant to SCORP.

Trends, Issues and Needs

The information in Chapter 3 provides an objective framework for the evaluation of future impacts upon the recreation system, as well as guidelines for the allocation of recreation resources. By continuing to improve communication and coordination among public and private recreation providers, the information network on recreation supply can continue to improve. Inventories and analyses will be furthered by ongoing use of GIS and other technologies.

While information is generated on supply and demand, it can also be used in evaluating the impact of recreational use on the environment, particularly whether a facility is being used within its capacity or exceeding proper use levels.

As in the past, this SCORP recognizes that urban recreation needs are a major component of the State's total recreational need. Changing populations and ethnic diversity are also recognized. Due to demographic changes, activities with high entry costs, such as golf and downhill skiing, will decrease in total participation. Such activities also have a greater tendency to cause adverse environmental impacts compared to other activities such as trail uses. There will also be an increase in trail uses such as biking, and for cultural activities such as historic sites and museums. There will be a need for non-fuel activities due to pressures on energy supplies. Generally, there will be a trend towards recreational uses that will have less intensive impacts. Providing recreational opportunities at the local level will be subject to local review processes, including SEQR if applicable.

Camping may include resource-intensive development, especially due to an increased demand for recreational vehicle (RV) camping facilities which usually require paving and higher capacity water and sewer (or pump-out) facilities. Even tent camping can result in impacts due to overuse and compaction of soil. There is a need for additional research on campground impacts and development of alternative development methodologies to minimize the adverse impacts of campground development.

Winter activities involve a range of impacts, from low-intensive snow shoeing to more intensive downhill skiing and snowboarding. The latter activities will continue to be provided primarily by the private sector, with a likely emphasis on expansion or redevelopment of existing facilities due to costs and approval processes. Provision for comfort stations and warm-up facilities for lower intensive outdoor activities such as skating is important; such facilities must be provided in an environmentally sensitive manner.

Trail activities include some winter sports such as cross-country skiing. A system of looped trails of varying difficulty in a park-like setting tends to best meet the needs of the users. Walking and hiking are also popular trail activities. These generally involve low intensity development, and are usually provided on public lands. Cross-country ski areas can be adapted for summer trail use, or vice versa. ATVs and other off-road vehicles are used by a small percentage of the population and most trails are on private lands. Biking is a favorite of many, young and old, and is expected to increase. Bike trails can be provided in association with improvements in transportation corridors as well as with other trail facilities. User conflicts can occur with multiple uses and more intensive use of trails, and negative impacts to resources can occur when trail users venture off trails Communication and cooperation among all types of trail users and providers is necessary, as well as research to enhance resource protection in providing and using trails.

Initiatives, Goals and Recommendations

In order to maximize the social and economic benefits associated with providing recreation while minimizing adverse impacts to the resources of the State, it is critical that during planning for recreation programming and development of recreational facilities, consideration be given to the entire set of SCORP initiatives, goals and recommendations.

Focus on a portion of the goals or giving undue weight to certain recommendations can result in substantial reduction in the quantity of potential recreation services (and the associated benefits) or in the quality of the State's natural and cultural resources.

The SCORP initiatives, goals and recommendations are comprehensive and are consistent with OPRHP's mission to provide safe and enjoyable recreational and interpretive opportunities for all state residents and visitors and to be responsible stewards of its valuable natural, cultural and historic resources. The initiatives and goals also reflect the guiding principles of the mission which are commitments to people, preservation, service and leadership. The Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Law contains a provision to declare stewardship of resources as a responsibility of the State, and includes as a guiding principle that OPRHP conserve, protect and enhance the natural, ecological, historic, cultural and recreation resources and provide public access in a manner that will protect them for future generations.

Resource protection is continually balanced with other goals to achieve optimal levels of recreational facilities and programs in view of the capability of resources to support use. Each time that SCORP is updated, suggestions for additions or revisions are sought from OPRHP staff, State Council of Parks and regional councils, and cooperating agencies as well as the public through the public participation process. This process assures that the goals and recommendations continue to be responsive to recreational needs and resource protection.

Since SCORP is a broad framework within which more detailed planning will take place, it is not possible to definitively identify adverse effects. It is consequently infeasible to suggest specific mitigation measures. Consistent, however, with OPRHP's stewardship mission, the review processes assure that due consideration

is given to protection of the State's natural and cultural heritage. These processes by which more detailed plans and projects are developed and evaluated should serve to minimize, if not eliminate, adverse effects possibly associated with development of recreational facilities.

This SCORP contains initiatives and goals that reflect major issues and provide a larger context to enhancing existing recreational programs and activities across New York State.

Initiative: Enhancing and Revitalizing the State Outdoor Recreation System

Goal: Increase and deepen the visitor experience by reinventing and redesigning our parks and historic sites.

Rehabilitation has significant beneficial impacts, and with the exception of major expansion or reconstruction, adverse environmental effects are minor. Rehabilitation is generally more cost effective than development of new facilities.

Planning for each facility must be done with a careful evaluation of the capacity of resources to accommodate increased use and effects on the quality of recreation, with an emphasis on compatibility of the uses with the resources.

Proper management of the resources requires the training of park, historic site, and land managers. This should be done on a continuous basis to assure best management practices are being utilized in protection of environmentally sensitive areas. This also includes training for operation and maintenance of facilities to ensure public health and safety and protection of sensitive natural resources and

The recommendation to develop master and management plans for parks, recreation, natural, historic and cultural areas recognizes the potential for substantial adverse environmental effects due to the lack of proper planning. Deficiencies in resource inventories can result in damage to significant resources, and overuse due to unknown resource capacity. Without adequate knowledge of resources, facility design and park operations may be inadequate to assure resource protection. The absence of planning may result in unnecessary environmental reviews of individual projects, duplicating previous efforts resulting in delays of project implementation.

Overall, the recommendations are consistent with and may advance coastal policies under the Coastal Management Program (CMP). For instance, rehabilitation and adaptive reuse promotes the CMP's development policy to restore, revitalize and redevelop deteriorated and underutilized waterfront areas. Training of managers in best management practices can advance the fish and wildlife policy to protect, preserve and restore habitats; the recreation policy to protect, enhance and restore historic sites or areas; and, water resources policies related to the use of best management practices in control of stormwater runoff and non-point discharge of pollutants.

Goal: Build a 21st century green and sustainable park system: fix and green the aging infrastructure of our parks and historic sites and open new facilities.

The potential benefits of new, installed sustainable infrastructure means that the Agency has the ability to perform and implement these recommendations with little environmental impact to the resources of the State.

Enhancing the Agency's commitment toward environmental sustainability is one mitigating factor in any project design, as environmental sustainability ensures there is a balance and reduction of the impacts on natural resources. Policies for the reduction of energy use and energy consumption have a beneficial environmental impact, as do practices that promote the use of green products and services. Enhancing reuse and recycling as well as procurement of locally produced commodities reduces the environmental impacts of facility operation. Energy efficient design standards for new buildings include reduction of impacts on natural resources as well as actions to increase and improve the natural aspects of a site, such as green storm water control, day-lighting of streams, improved culverts and use of native plants.

This goal reflects a commitment for State Parks to be a leader in demonstrating sustainable design technologies. An agency-wide sustainability initiative to adopt energy efficient technologies, green building design, fuel efficient vehicles, and green products procurement will provide a framework for similar efforts by other recreational providers.

Initiative: Improving the Connections between Recreation, Economics, Sustainability and Healthy Lifestyles

Goal: Launch a Statewide "Explore your Outdoors" campaign in conjunction with Empire State Development Corporation and the "I Love NY" Campaign.

Promoting outdoor recreation, highlighting NY's unique landscape and diverse recreational opportunities and utilizing social media will likely have no adverse impact on the environment. These recommendations and actions could potentially increase visitor's knowledge of the ecosystems of the State and enhance their appreciation of these resources, leading them to respect the fauna and flora around them.

Such actions as interpretive programs promote recreation policies and informal recreational use of fish and wildlife resources. Compatible recreation and interpretive programs generally do not adversely impact coastal areas and are thus consistent with coastal policies. Site specific review should be conducted as applicable to assure that the manner in which recreation and interpretive programs are provided will be consistent with coastal policies.

Goal: Continue to improve, repair and expand outdoor recreation facilities to attract visitors.

Recommendations within this goal to encourage continuous budget allocations, evaluate existing infrastructure, and evaluate coastal parks and lands to preserve natural process, are activities that are not likely to have any adverse impact on the environment. Continuing to improve recreational access to ensure universal access will be an action that could potentially be reviewed under the state SEQR processes.

Such activities as basic information gathering, research and planning must take place to support the achievement of other goals. This is no less important than protection and preservation of resources, since only through adequate information base and proper planning can such protection be assured.

Goal: Reconnect children and adults with nature and recreation by improving access to outdoor recreation opportunities.

Recommendations within this goal, such as identify new outdoor recreation opportunities, improve access to outdoor recreation through public transit and greenways, partner with corporate sponsors to develop a bike program, explore bike sharing opportunities, promote greenways as a means of urban recreation and transportation and develop programming in parks that encourages physical activities, could be both beneficial and adverse to the environment. Following the process of environmental review helps to identify and mitigate potential adverse impacts. For example, in identifying new outdoor opportunities for underserved communities, the agency will follow review processes that ensure open space is conserved and that ecological communities are protected. In general though, these types of actions will not require or likely have a large impact on the environment. Other recommendations with this goal such as partnerships, a public health campaign, and fostering partnerships are not actions that would require SEQR review or that would be likely to have negative impacts.

Partnerships are essential in improving outdoor recreation opportunities. Partnerships can also be used to assist individuals in gaining access to the parks, such as working to improve roads outside the park to include bicycle lanes and bus stops.

To support urban recreation initiatives and reaching out to underserved communities, creative use must be made of existing school, community, and park facilities. Outreach, encouragement of public transportation to distant parks, facilitation of pedestrian access and coordination with community groups are all necessities for

successful urban recreation programs. Through environmental interpretation and other programs, better use can also be made of urban open space to create an awareness of important natural resources even within the confines of urban areas.

Encouraging physical activity not only improves health, but can reduce greenhouse gas emissions (walk and bicycle) and increase awareness of the need to preserve open space and recreation.

Goal: Continue to develop a comprehensive, interconnected recreationway, water trails, greenway, blueway, and heritage trail system.

Identifying and encouraging the expansion of recreationways and trail connections could potentially have adverse and beneficial impacts on the environment. The use of defunct transportation and utility corridors to extend trail systems can be beneficial. These corridors lend themselves naturally to the development of trails because they are nearly ready-made facilities with little need for additional development and environmental impacts.

The recommendations related to developing different types of trail systems are consistent with, and advance coastal policies. Trail systems assist in protecting and increasing the levels and types of access to public water recreation resources. The greenway concept promotes water dependent and water enhanced recreation, as well as preservation of historic and cultural resources. This is accomplished while providing primarily passive uses and minimizing effects related to intensive development. Recreationways along shorelines promote coastal policies with regard to development, scenic quality, public access, and recreation.

The 2010 Statewide Trails Plan provides a framework for statewide trails, water trails, and greenways.

Many of the connections discussed are related to coastal resources and are fully integrated with or are part of the coastal program, thus promoting coastal policies related to public access, recreation, historic and scenic resources, as well as natural resources such as fish, wildlife and water.

Goal: Continue to protect natural connections between parks and open spaces.

Recommendations within this goal include inventory and identification, protection and acquisitions, and efforts to increase knowledge and awareness of biodiversity and approaches to biodiversity protection and maintenance. In general these types of recommendations will have positive impacts on the environment. Acquiring important and otherwise non- protected lands to encourage open space protection can protect biodiversity. Creating connections between parks and open space is important for ecological integrity especially in the light of current threats such as climate change, habitat disturbance, and invasive species.

This goal recognizes the importance of natural connections to the maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity. It ensures that landscapes and buffer lands that surround our parks are protected from encroaching development and incompatible land uses. It fosters the development of "connections" of protected lands, greenways, and trails so that people and wildlife can move across New York's landscapes. In order to protect these natural connectors, it is important first to inventory and identify the ecosystems that should be connected, and then to encourage the protection and/or acquisition of critical connectors. One way in which this recommendation will be promoted is through the identification and prioritization of land parcels adjacent to State Park land suitable for acquisition based upon their potential to protect and enhance biodiversity. The overall impact of supplying and preserving open space where it is most needed is beneficial; however, careful consideration, planning and public cooperation is necessary.

Another strategy is acquisition of in-holdings and important properties adjacent to existing public land holdings. Acquisition of such properties is normally cost effective, since operational mechanisms are already in existence. If additional land is acquired for the purpose of new recreational development, careful analysis is necessary to assure that the new facilities are needed and that development will be compatible with existing resources. The impacts of acquisition are further addressed within the 2009 Open Space Conservation Plan.

This goal furthers coastal policies regarding protection of fish and wildlife resources. Also, through careful balancing of protection and use of these corridors, recreation and public access goals can be advanced as well.

Initiative: Strengthen the Link between People, Nature and Resource Stewardship

Goal: Engage the park visitors through programming at parks and historic sites.

The goal to expand environmental education and cultural interpretation throughout the park system and to explore partnerships to help develop and implement such programs is important for expanding the number of supporters of state parks. As people learn more about their parks they become more connected to them and thus may work to protect and preserve them. The inventory and recognition of natural and cultural resources within parks has increased and this has resulted in a growing demand to make these resources available for interpretation and viewing by the public. Encouraging interpretation and access to natural and cultural resources is not likely to have a negative environmental impact as long as resources are protected.

There are other important considerations in the provision of interpretive and recreational programs. These programs must be geared towards availability to all potential users: the disabled, underprivileged and other underserved populations. Without properly qualified and trained personnel, recreational and interpretive programs may be inappropriate and ineffective. OPRHP must coordinate with other agencies to enhance recreational and interpretive programs.

OPRHP and DEC continue to provide important interpretive opportunities, and interpretation of significant natural and cultural resources will be encouraged at a statewide level. As indicated previously, opportunities for natural and cultural resource observation, interpretation, and education are essential to provide users with an awareness of the value of those resources. This, in turn, creates new generations with a greater appreciation of the need to preserve our resources.

Education and interpretive programs connect people with nature. They help empower the public with a greater role and involvement in, environmental protection and sustainability. Connection to nature among the young, and new connections or reconnections among adults, will increase not only awareness but prompt action on the part of citizens to protect the environment and promote sustainable actions.

Efforts to enhance partnerships with both friends groups and other trail and advocacy groups to expand environmental and cultural education at parks and historic sites are vitally important. With decreased staffing and resources the state faces, partnerships enable work to be completed while benefiting both groups with the public as the major benefactor. It is unlikely that entering into agreements with these groups to provide education will result in negative impacts to the environment, but agreements and understandings should be developed and in place, so that each understands their role and responsibilities.

Goal: Continue efforts to restore, conserve and protect biodiversity of state lands.

Responsible stewardship of plants, animals and their habitats reflects the broad duties of protectors of open space to be caretakers of the biological resources under their jurisdiction. This goal recognizes that species and their habitats need to be protected. This protection may not always require management, such as the correct siting of projects that mitigate negative impacts on biodiversity. In other cases, specific projects may be undertaken with the goal of improving, preserving or restoring biodiversity. These projects, such as habitat restoration or invasive species removal, would have beneficial impacts on the environment. These projects may be undertaken by State Parks, DEC and/or in combination with any number of partners (local, state, federal and not-for-profit organizations).

The recommendations within this goal are imperative to carrying out the State's stewardship responsibilities. Protection of the State's resources is critical in providing opportunities to use those resources and maintain quality recreation. Ensuring that recreation development is compatible with environmental limitations and

carrying capacities of resource areas is accomplished through the various review processes. It is important to note, however, that better resource information is necessary to identify limitations and carrying capacities.

Partnership efforts regarding invasive species policy and management and education efforts will also enhance awareness and sensitivity to the impact of invasive species and result in measures to reduce the effect of such species and enhance biodiversity.

Identifying threats to natural, cultural and recreational resources assists in preservation efforts by anticipating potential adverse impacts. Improved resource inventories and evaluation help identify those important resources that may be impacted by actions occurring outside or within recreation resource bounds.

Land Conservation

Some of the State's most significant natural and cultural assets are located within State Parks and other protected lands. These recreation and open space areas provide numerous benefits to society, direct and indirect, short-term and long-term. There are both tangible and intrinsic values associated with recreation. These can be characterized as tourism and visitor expenditures, environmental protection, quality of life and reduction in public service requirements. Tourism and economic development programs must take into account the important contribution of natural and cultural resources to these programs.

Stewardship of the state's natural, cultural and recreational resources is essential to protect them. Through stewardship programs potential adverse impacts of recreational development and use are minimized and consistency with coastal policies is assured.

Statewide Programs

Appendix F describes numerous programs that provide recreation and protect natural and cultural resources within the state. These programs are subject to environmental review processes and balancing of policies as described earlier in this chapter. This GEIS is not designed to evaluate the impacts of each of these programs. Where adverse environmental impacts may be significant, the programs are subject to SEQR. Many of the programs described in Appendix F are designed to protect resources, such as Heritage Programs, wetlands, fish and wildlife, biodiversity, and coastal programs. Following is a further discussion of the latter and its relationship to SCORP.

The State's Coastal Management and Inland Waterways programs, administered by the Department of State (DOS), are carried out in partnership with local governments and state and federal agencies. These programs are designed to better manage coastal resources and advance revitalization of waterfront communities.

New York State developed a Coastal Management Program (CMP) and enacted implementing legislation (Waterfront Revitalization and Coastal Resources Act) in 1981. The CMP is based on a set of 44 coastal policies that guide coastal management actions at all levels of government in the State and ensure the appropriate use and protection of coasts and waterways. The coastal policies are grouped into the following categories:

- Development Policies
- Fish and Wildlife Policies
- Flooding and Erosion Hazards Policies
- General Safeguards
- Public Access Policies
- Recreation Policies

Goal: Continue Efforts to Restore, Conserve and Protect the Biodiversity of State Lands

Recommendations:

- Continue to work towards eradicating invasive plants, insects, and other animals statewide.
- Continue wildlife management efforts to improve biodiversity in parks and natural areas.
- Continue to preserve and connect natural areas and ecosystems to improve biodiversity statewide.
- Educate staff and visitors to parks and natural areas about the importance of biodiversity and how threats like climate change, habitat loss and fragmentation and invasive species can impact and change the environment.
- Take maximum advantage of conservation and youth service corps and other volunteer groups in the preservation of natural areas.
- Strengthen consistency and collaboration among state, federal and local programs and policies.

Above: Gantry Plaza State Park in New York City

Chapter 5: Implementation and Funding

One of the main reasons for completing the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan is to prioritize goals and direct federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) dollars. New York State is fortunate to have funding for outdoor recreation projects through the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) but the slow economic recovery, increasing fuel prices, and higher priorities for funding (transportation/infrastructure needs, health care, education, etc.) has led to park budgeting challenges. The funding from the LWCF and other sources helps fill those critical gaps.

The goals and recommendations set forth in the SCORP provide the framework to allocate the parks budget and other funding. There are four implementation priorities that have been distilled through the planning process for SCORP:

Keep Parks / Outdoor Recreation Areas Open

Find new ways to perform routine operations--embrace technology/automation, staff training, adopt new ways to manage facilities (team approach), enhance/improve facility management by developing new partnership with friends groups and volunteers. Continue to develop master / management plans for recreation facilities and historic sites to assist these facilities in the future.

Performance Metrics

Measurable results—how are we doing? Provide more quality services and increase the numbers of satisfied visitors. Bolster marketing and branding and develop more visitor surveys utilizing technology.

Improve Access and Deepen the Experience

Ensure universal access for all patrons. Reassess concession agreements to increase access to healthy food options at concessionaires. Expand and improve environmental education, interpretation and connections.

Sustainable Recreation Facilities

Ensure that sustainable design and construction measures are incorporated into the capital program. Support energy efficiency initiatives, alternative fuel maintenance equipment, changes in maintenance and landscaping practices, alternative/green energy sources, recycling, waste and water reduction, composting, and adaptive reuse of structures.

Repairing the roof at Olana State Historic Site

Funding and Partnership Opportunities

In addition to helping direct the allocation of funds, this chapter explores some of the funding sources on a federal and state level and how those funds are used in New York State.

When managing recreation facilities and open space statewide, it is helpful to look at the big picture and to balance the past, present and future needs. Looking at the past shows that many facilities and open spaces which were acquired years ago are now worn out, not designed to meet today's needs, or have met and exceeded their life expectancy. Looking ahead, it is important to try and predict the need to develop new facilities and to continue to protect natural, cultural and open space resources. To achieve this balance, a partnership of all segments of the population is required — individuals, interest groups, private industry, and all levels of government.

Federal

Land and Water Conservation Fund

The LWCF was enacted by Congress in 1964 as a dedicated fund to provide grants to the states for outdoor recreational facilities and to provide funds for federal land management agencies to acquire additional holdings for their systems.

Swimming and playing at Roberto Clemente State Park

Funding for the program was authorized at $900 million a year through revenues from offshore oil and gas leases. The funds are split between the stateside grant-in-aid program and the federal agencies. The grants-in-aid program requires at least 50% of total project cost as a local match with LWCF.

In the history of the program, over $3.6 billion has been provided for the LWCF, which has helped support 40,000 local park projects, including the protection of over 2.6 million acres of open space.

At its high point in 1979, New York State received about $24 million, which was used to provide grants to municipalities and to undertake State Park development and land acquisition projects. Since 1965, the LWCF has partially funded 1,250 projects within the State. Virtually every community in the State has acquired and/or developed outdoor recreational facilities with the help of the LWCF.

When funds are apportioned, it is the State's responsibility to solicit applications, evaluate projects and recommend grants to the National Park Service for approval. The State may allocate funds among both local and state projects.

Eligible projects include parkland acquisition, the development of new parks, and the rehabilitation of existing recreational facilities. All project areas are "mapped" and cannot be converted to any use other than public outdoor recreation without the approval of the Secretary of the Interior.

- Historic and Scenic Resources Policies
- Agricultural Lands Policy
- Energy and Ice Management Policies
- Water and Air Resources Policies

The full text of the coastal policies can be found at: http://www.dos.ny.gov/opd/programs/pdfs/CoastalPolicies.pdf

Decision-making standards and procedures known as "consistency provisions" ensure coordination of governmental decision-making that affects the achievement of the State's coastal policies. Consistency review is the decision-making process through which proposed actions and activities are determined to be consistent or inconsistent with the coastal policies of the CMP or approved LWRPs. State agencies are also required to follow certain consistency review procedures for actions, direct or funding, and for any action, including permits, for which they are an involved or lead agency pursuant to the SEQR and for which an EIS may be necessary.

Implementation

To fully implement the recommendations outlined, specific and programmatic actions will need to be developed, translating initiatives, goals and recommendations into the delivery of recreation services and protection of natural and cultural resources.

Implementation vehicles include state and federal funding, such as the allocation of state and federal funds for recreation and open space projects. The partnership philosophy is supported throughout SCORP, particularly relating to improving cooperation and coordination in providing recreational opportunities and in enhancing natural and cultural resource stewardship and education between all levels of government and the private sector. These partnerships play an increasingly important role in providing quality recreation and assuring resource protection

Environmental justice must be an overarching goal in providing recreational facilities and services. Environmental justice responds to the need to reach underserved communities.

Implementation strategies advance numerous coastal policies, including those related to development, public access and recreation.

The grant rating system is revised on an annual basis to reflect changing initiatives, goals and recommendations within the context of the most recent SCORP. The SCORP priority system assures that consideration is given to an appropriate balance of SCORP policies when evaluating and ranking applications for federal and state assistance in acquiring or developing recreation or open space resources. Projects which directly relate or contribute to SCORP or other state programs receive a relatively high priority, and those identified in adopted regional or local plans also receive priority. Protection of ecological, historical and open space resources is another important factor. Negative impacts on these resources would result in a lower rating. Through continuous agency review and input from providers and the public, evaluation assures that a proper balance of policies and fair distribution of monies is achieved.

Cumulative Impacts

The initiatives, goals and recommendations defined within SCORP 2014-2019 will have a positive impact on the environment. The primary effect of SCORP is to promote the initiatives, goals and recommendations identified in Chapter 4. Highlighting goals which describe processes to protect, conserve and maintain the environment, such as the ecosystem-based management goal, brings natural resource stewardship on par with development activities and recognizes that healthy ecosystem mean healthy communities.

SCORP recommendations regarding resource protection are consistent with, and promote, a number of coastal policies identified in the State's CMP. Open space programs promote coastal policies dealing with preservation, recreational use of fish and wildlife resources, public access and water recreation.

Chapter 3 identifies major recreational needs in all counties of the State and the activity maps provide an indication of where the highest levels of need exist within the State. Rehabilitation of existing facilities and the acquisition and development of new facilities is required to satisfy the demand. Innovative, regional and statewide approaches need to be considered to make the facilities more accessible. Accomplishing this will have cost and environmental implications. Some of the types of recreation facilities have greater impacts on the environment than others. Trails and informal picnic areas will have less of an impact than swimming pools and ball fields. However, for some sites, such as brownfields, any recreation development will be an environmental improvement. Public health and safety considerations must be incorporated into planning for recreational opportunities.

The cumulative effects of applying the policies and objectives of the 2014 SCORP in a systematic manner will be substantially beneficial. Existing recreational services to the public will be maintained while at the same time protection of natural and cultural resources will be ensured.

Perhaps one of the most important cumulative effects of SCORP is also the least tangible. The implementation of recreational and resource protection programs through the SCORP policies substantially enhances the physical and psychological wellbeing - the quality of life - of the residents of the State.

Enhancing the quality and quantity of recreational services and programs has substantial beneficial effects on economic activity. Implementation of efficiently designed plans for recreational facilities often contributes to the attractiveness of a municipality for investment by businesses. Thus, the facilities and programs flowing from SCORP are an important adjunct to factors leading to economic recovery and development. Growth usually occurs in the State where there is already a sufficient base of tourism, transportation and support services. These existing and recognized centers generally stabilize existing investments and services. Identification of the need for recreational services and facilities is based primarily on existing population and on growth projections.

Additional planning and sustainability recommendations will facilitate proper balancing of the SCORP and advance environmentally sensitive recreational development and use.

The stated in SCORP will not result in any significant increase in energy consumption associated with recreation activities. On the contrary, several of the recommendations and initiatives defined in SCORP will promote reduction in energy consumption by recreation providers and users. These policies should offset increased energy use which would be associated with extension of activity.

Since SCORP is a general plan, identification of program-specific or site-specific adverse impacts, including those which are unavoidable, will be accomplished during future planning and environmental review of programs and projects.

Recommendations in SCORP for the development of recreation require a commitment of planning resources. Resources are committed through programs or projects identified within state or federal legislative action or through gifts to the State. SCORP helps determine the priority for use of these committed resources. Implementation of the recommendations defined in SCORP will result in irreversible and irretrievable commitments of time, funds, and energy resources, but overall the benefits of preservation, stewardship and providing recreation outweigh these commitments.

Left: Fishing at Taconic State Park

Chapter 7: Comments and Responses

The public comment period yielded approximately 15 comments from various state agencies, advocacy groups, and individuals. The majority of the comments received during the public comment period were editorial in nature and there were no substantive changes made to the document. Many comments did suggest bolstering sections of the plan with additional information or made clarifications about various statewide programs (for example, one correction included the updated length of the completed Erie Canalway Trail).

The Universal Accessibility section was significantly improved with additional information supporting expanded universal access improvements in state owned recreation facilities.

During the public webinar a question was asked regarding the methodology used to developed the Recreational Inddex of Need (RIN) for the SCORP. Given that OPRHP embraced technology for the public outreach and survey for the research and analysis of the plan, some activities were weighted to balance and better reflect the recreational needs of a region. This is especially true in the Adirondacks / North Country region where the population is very seasonal and not reflective of the demand.

The following is a list of the most substantive comments that were recieved during the public comment period:

Comment #1

Please include the pedestrian and bicycling programs run by DOT in Chapter 5.

Response:

Thank you for your comment. Additional information regarding the Safe Routes to School Program and the Complete Streets Program were added to pages 48 and 50, respectively.

Comment #2

Greenway initiatives should receive added references in SCORP.

Response #2

Thank you for your comment. Additional and corrected information regarding greenways, blueways, water trails, and the Hudson River Greenway Initiative has been added to the text. Please see Chapter 4 and Appendix A and F.

List of Commenters:
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