The background features a stylized landscape. On the left, a large, light-colored triangle with a fine dot pattern represents a hill. To its right, a smaller, similar triangle is partially obscured. Further right, a larger, textured area with a dense, irregular pattern represents a hillside. The bottom of the page is filled with a pattern of overlapping, scalloped shapes, resembling a field of flowers or a decorative border, also filled with a fine dot pattern.

**ULSTER COUNTY**  
**OPEN SPACE**  
and  
**PARKS PLAN**

**ulster county planning board**

OPEN SPACE AND PARKS PLAN

ULSTER COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

AUGUST 17, 1972



ULSTER COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING -- U. P. O. BOX 483

KINGSTON, NEW YORK 12401

TELEPHONE AREA CODE 914 331-9300

August 30, 1972

Mr. Richard A. Wiebe, Director  
State of New York  
Office Of Planning Services  
488 Broadway  
Albany, New York

Ulster County Legislature  
Ulster County Planning Board  
Kingston, New York, 12401

Gentlemen:

The Ulster County Planning Board is pleased to herewith forward its report Open Space and Parks Plan. The document is submitted in partial fulfillment of the Board's responsibilities pursuant to the Urban Planning Assistance Program Project N.Y.P. #246.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David N. Mesches".

David N. Mesches, M.D.  
Chairman

DNM/dms

ULSTER COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

Dr. David N. Mesches, Chairman  
Frederick A. Muehleck, Vice-Chairman  
Thomas V. Polizzi, Secretary

Irving Maurer  
Reiner Thieben  
Wilbur Peters  
Harry Sleight  
Gifford R. Beal

Stanley W. Walker  
Raymond Cruthers  
John Klein  
Richard T. Sherman  
Theodore O. Nusal

Irving R. Oltmann  
Joseph A. Carfizzi  
Raymond H. Coles  
William Eckert  
Benjamin L. Webster

Andrew Helgesen  
Dr. Thomas Nyquist  
John O'Sullivan  
Eugene Perry  
Charles McCullough

STAFF

Herbert Hekler . . . Director  
Rick Jacob . . . . . Senior Planner  
Galina Samoilova . . Draftsman  
Donna M. Spada . . . Secretary

TITLE - OPEN SPACE AND PARKS PLAN  
AUTHOR - ULSTER COUNTY PLANNING BOARD  
SUBJECT - SPACE AND PARKS PLAN  
DATE - AUGUST 1972  
HUD PROJECT NUMBER - NYP #246  
SERIES NUMBER - 246-2  
NUMBER OF PAGES - 31  
SOURCE OF COPIES - ULSTER COUNTY PLANNING BOARD  
U.P.O. Box 483  
Kingston, New York, 12401

**ABSTRACT:**

This report fulfills the planning requirements for certification for open space functional planning and programming for Ulster County. It summarizes the inventory of facilities, standards and criteria, and projections of needs prepared in a previous volume and presents the recommended program for implementation, including specific county park sites.

**FINANCIAL AID:**

The preparation of this report was financially aided through a grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development under the Urban Planning Assistance Program authorized by Section "701" of the Federal Housing Act of 1954, as amended. This report was prepared under the Urban Planning Assistance Program for the New York State Office of Planning Services. It was financed in part by the State of New York.

## CONTENTS

### INTRODUCTION

County Recreation Policies

### INVENTORY

Regional Open Space Facilities  
Local Open Space Facilities

### OPEN SPACE NEEDS AND DEFICIENCIES

Catskill Preserve (1)  
Minnewaska State Park (2)  
Other State Facilities (3)  
County Open Space (4)  
Local Parks And Open Space Needs - (In Acres)

### STANDARDS AND POLICIES

Local Recreation Policies  
County Recreation Policies  
Our Specific County Park Policies  
State Policies

### AREA-WIDE OPEN SPACE PROGRAM

Regional Open Space - State and County  
County Farm Or Fair Grounds Property - New Paltz - (1)  
St. George's Camp - Ulster - (2)  
Binnewater Lakes - Rosendale - (3)  
Other County Parks - (4)  
  
Local Open Space and Parks Program -  
(by town)

INTRODUCTION

County Recreation Policies

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to further develop the recreation and open space plan for Ulster County begun in the report County Recreation Policies, prepared in April 1971. This is required to maintain federal certification of the County's open space program without which no municipality in Ulster County is eligible for federal grants or loans for recreational purposes.

County Recreation Policies was a lengthy report providing basic information on the supply of recreation facilities, demand, methods of implementing an open space plan, and a series of proposed policies for local, County, and State open space planning for Ulster County. Its purpose was to set the stage for specific proposals which would follow in a later report.

Since the preparation of County Recreation Policies the staff of the Planning Board has been working with the Recreation and Youth Committee of the Ulster County Legislature to develop specific proposals for the County's future park system. The Committee has accepted the basic principles presented in County Recreation Policies and has approved the recommended county park sites enumerated in this report. The recommendations for local park facilities are those of the County Planning Board, which is responsible for land use and open space program for the entire County.

The report is divided into four parts - an inventory of facilities, standards and criteria for land acquisition, projections of needs, and the recommended program itself. These are in accordance with Circular MPD 6415.3 of the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development.



**INVENTORY**

**Regional Open Space Facilities  
Local Open Space Facilities**

## INVENTORY

We will not duplicate the detailed description of facilities of each municipality presented in County Recreation Policies. Instead we will summarize the overall county situation and update significant local changes which have occurred since April 1971.

### Regional Open Space Facilities

New York State now owns 131,437 acres of land in the Catskill Park. This land is mountainous and is mainly located in the western portion of the County. The use of the State owned land is regulated by the New York State Constitution, which stipulates that these lands should remain "forever wild". Under this provision the State permits hunting, fishing, hiking, and some camping, but more intensive uses like ski areas, need special constitutional authorization before they can be developed. The only intensive use facilities now in operation in Ulster County are the Belleayre Mountain Ski Center, the Woodland Valley Campsite, and the Little Pond Campsite which straddles the Ulster - Delaware County border.

In addition to these existing facilities, the State is now developing Wilson State Park in the Wittenbergh section of the Town of Woodstock. This 546 acre park is planned to have a lake for swimming and boating, an 18 hole golf course, picnic areas, athletic fields, campsites, nature trails, a museum, and wildlife sanctuary. Wilson Park is within the Catskill preserve and its development is under the auspices of the State Department of Environmental Conservation. This department is also responsible for the administration of 1,714 acres of other State lands in Ulster County which are located outside of the "Blue Line" of the Catskill Park.

Minnewaska State Park is another large State holding but is in the Shawangunk Mountains. This 6,995 acre tract has just been recently acquired. It is planned to remain a wilderness area, with access essentially limited to hiking. Nature trails, back-pack camping, horse and bike trails, picnic facilities, swimming (in beautiful but remote Lake Awosting), canoeing, cross country skiing, and sledding would be permitted. A visitor center with interpretative exhibits would be developed. At present, access to the park is controlled by the Lake Minnewaska Hotel, but the Palisades Interstate Park Commission, which administrates the property, hopes to develop a hiking trail to Lake Awosting across State property this summer.

The City of New York is next largest land holder in the County, second only to the State. The Ashokan Reservoir is a huge impoundment with 9,000 acres of land in Olive and Hurley. The Rondout Reservoir has 1300 acres in the Town of Mawarsing. In addition, there are many miles of grass covered land above the Catskill and Delaware Aqueducts.

Other major open space holdings in Ulster County are the Mohonk Trust, a private trust which presently has more than 3000 acres acquired with another thousand scheduled for future purchase, and Sams Point, a 3500 acre tract of land owned by the Village of Ellenville adjacent to Minnewaska State Park. The Lake Minnewaska Hotel and the Mohonk Lake Hotel each own 3000 acres of land and are managed with a philosophy of retaining the beautiful natural character of the land. All of these holdings are in the Shawangunk Mountain Range in the center of Ulster County. Although there are many other substantial private land holdings in the County, they are not available for public use. These include private fish and game clubs in the Catskills, hundreds of acres

of Hudson River shoreline owned by religious institutions (primarily in the Town of Esopus), and individual private estates such as the 8000 acre estate of Mr. Kingdon Gould in the Town of Hardenbergh. In addition the County has 100,000 acres in agricultural use and several hundred thousand acres of privately owned woods. Of the County's 700,000 acres of land, less than 10% is occupied by urban uses.

#### Local Open Space Facilities

Municipal parks in Ulster County are with only a few exceptions either non-existent or inadequate. Most communities own a few acres of land with perhaps a ballfield and some picnic tables, but very few have adequately developed municipal parks with swimming facilities, attractive picnic areas, boating, and other amenities included in the beautiful parks built by earlier generations. Of twenty Towns in Ulster County, we find only three which have adequate public swimming facilities. Even the City of Kingston which has beautiful old parks throughout the City and a beach on the Hudson River, has no swimming pool for its thousands of residents in the mid and uptown parts of the City. The County of Ulster has no park for day use, only a few acres for picnicking and parking at the site of the Perrines Bridge. While the Perrines Bridge site is attractive and is a great credit to the County for having the wisdom to restore this historic covered bridge, there are no day use county parks such as those in Orange and Dutchess Counties.

While the provision of adequate public parks has generally been neglected, there are reasons for this situation. Ulster is a big and still rural County.

To many residents, the whole county is a great park with swimming holes provided by a friendly neighbor and thousands of acres of woods where anyone can walk. Hotels like Williams Lake and private recreation areas like Hidden Valley provide fine recreation facilities for those of sufficient affluence to join membership clubs for \$75 per person per year, or pay daily user fees of \$4.50 a day for a typical family of four. Another factor contributing to the neglect of municipal parks are the availability of private corporate facilities like the IBM recreation center in Ulster and Central Hudson's employee-developed park in Rifton.

While many people have access to some facilities, there are many more who must leave the County to enjoy a Saturday afternoon in beautiful surroundings like North Lake or Taghkonig. But these State facilities are over-crowded and the days of using the old swimming hole are fast coming to an end, e.g., the recent closing of the popular Spillway in Marbletown.

In reviewing local changes since April 1971, the most significant was the inability of the Town of New Paltz to raise the local share for a \$230,000 matching grant from the federal government for the development of its proposed swimming pool-park complex. The Town of Gardiner was also intending to develop a 25 acre Town park with swimming facilities. The Town has purchased the site, but development of a swimming area is proceeding very slowly. A third community which had indicated it was very close to expanding its facilities was the Town of Olive. A pool and park was proposed for the Ashokan area of the Town and would have provided the Town with good geographic balance for the small pool and park located in West Shokan. But again because of money, this proposal was defeated. Thus of the twenty towns in Ulster County, only Lloyd, Marbletown, and Marlborough now have adequate public swimming facilities for their people.

OPEN SPACE NEEDS AND DEFICIENCIES

Catskill Preserve (1)  
Minnewaska State Park (2)  
Other State Facilities (3)  
County Open Space (4)  
Local Parks and Open Space Needs -  
(in acres)

## OPEN SPACE NEEDS AND DEFICIENCIES

### Regional Open Space

#### 1. Catskill Preserve -

The 140,000 acres of State owned land in Ulster County provide more than adequate gross acreage for the County's needs. But even with this large amount of land(20% of the County's total)- there are certain deficiencies which should be noted. As discussed in detail in other reports, most of the State owned land in the Catskills consists of mountain tops with the controlling valleys held by private interests. Some of these private land holders permit hikers to use trails across their lands, but many other prohibit public access. The most publicized example of this was the recent closing of the very popular Overlook Mountain trail in Woodstock. Without access, the State mountain-top land is useless for public enjoyment and becomes the private domain of those persons who control access and then have exclusive use of the State land for themselves.

Another deficiency of the Catskill Park is that private land in the interior sections are being exploited for ragtag hunting camps using dilapidated trailers and even old school buses. These are a travesty on the beauty and character of the park. We think additional State land acquisitions are needed to provide both access and to protect critical wilderness areas in the interior of the park.

Under the provisions of the State Constitution, no tree may be cut or destroyed without a special constitutional amendment. There is no recognition of forestry management, nor any recognition of the recreational value of the land

There is no acknowledgment of differences in character or use of land. Thus a section along Route 28 is treated in the same manner as the wilderness areas of the interior of the park. Watershed protection is an important goal, but without forestry management, optimum results cannot be achieved. Although hunting is permitted, there is no management policy to provide areas for the sustenance of wildlife. The normal natural process of fire or disease to provide for new growth is interrupted by man with a result that deer find very little feed in the mountains. Hiking and fishing are permitted, but as previously discussed, access is largely owned by private clubs which have posted nearly all of the valleys.

We think there is a need for a thorough review of the Catskill Forest Preserve and the governing constitutional provisions. In our view, stronger actions are needed to protect areas of wilderness in private ownership within the park while more balanced policies, particularly toward recreational use of State land, are needed on the perimeter. It is in the interest of both this region and our county that we provide for improved skiing, hunting, fishing, camping, hiking, and wildlife management. It is also advisable that scientific forestry management practices be used to strengthen the forest and better protect the watershed.

## 2. Minnewaska State Park -

New York State has acquired 6,995 acres of land in the Shawangunk Mountains. We are essentially in agreement with the Palisades Park Commission that most of this land needs to be preserved in its present wilderness character. We differ with the Park Commission however, in seeking the inclusion of more family oriented recreation facilities in the plan. Our recommendations advocate three types of use areas within the park.



The Sanders Kill area off Route 44-55 is old farmland and second growth woods. In this section, we would like to see a State park development like Taghkanic or North Lake, where families can camp, swim, picnic, and enjoy other activities typical of State parks. This would not take up much land (probably a couple hundred acres) and would provide a very needed facility for our region. It would also not impair the character of the park for this is the area already proposed by the Park Commission to be used for a visitor center, parking lots, etc.

The second type of use area is Lake Awosting. This is very beautiful and fragile area needing very careful control to prevent excessive use. We suggest the Palisades Interstate Park Commission establish a maximum limit on the number of people who would be allowed into the area and swim in the lake. To enable all people the opportunity to enjoy this area and not just hikers, we recommend that vehicular access of some sort, for example horse drawn carriage or mini-bus, be used to convey people into the Awosting area. No private vehicles should be permitted in this part of the park. When the maximum number of persons have entered the area, no more people should be admitted. Thus a fair system of first-come, first-served, as used in other parks in this region, would determine who would use the Awosting area. Because there is an existing dirt access road directly into Lake Awosting from Route 44-55, half of which is already State owned, we suggest that the remainder either be purchased or an easement acquired to use this right-of-way. However, if a better right-of-way can be located to accomplish the same purpose, we would certainly concur.

We agree with the Palisades Park Commission that no elaborate facilities should be constructed at Awosting; only the basic essentials for swimming, canoeing, picnicking, and the like. Paths like those at Lake Mohonk should be developed around the lake and scenic vantages like Castle Point. By providing controlled vehicular access, we could provide a unique experience for the elderly and others who would also like to enjoy this beautiful place. We would exercise tighter control over the number of people using the area.

As for the remainder of the Park, we agree with the Park Commission that it should remain exactly as it is to provide a wilderness experience for naturalists and back-packers. This wilderness designation would comprise most of the park.

### 3. Other State Facilities -

The State of New York now has two other properties being developed for recreational use - the Wilson Park in Woodstock and Bristol Beach on the Hudson. These should prove to be popular facilities for Ulster County residents. We look forward to their construction.

From a regional context, the most unique resource we can supply to the metropolitan area is first class skiing opportunities. Our high mountains and natural northern exposures to retain snow make the Route 28 corridor a natural for further ski development. Belleayre earns a substantial profit for the State by accommodating up to 6,000 skiers on a weekend day. From our personal experiences, the area gets crowded. Skiing is also a mainstay in our resort villages like Pine Hill or Phoenicia. It provides needed employment for

residents of these areas. We therefore advocate the construction of another major ski center in this section of Ulster County.

The reservoirs of the New York City water supply are another tremendous regional recreational resource. The Ashokan Reservoir is the largest water body in the County with 8,315 acres of surface area and 40 miles of shoreline. The Rondout has 2,100 acres. Fishing is permitted by permit from the shore and from flat bottom row boats. But sailing, canoeing, swimming, hiking, picnicking, camping, etc., are all prohibited. In a region desperately needing water oriented outdoor recreation, we find it a great waste to not have multiple use of these reservoirs. We think it would be desirable to have all water resources managed by the State for water supply and other uses. In this way the New York City Department of Water Resources would not have to bear the possible expense of additional water treatment or of maintenance and policing of the property. Development of State parks on these reservoirs, coupled with further ski area development, coupled with use of the thousands of acres of forest preserve lands, would make the Catskills an unrivaled recreation area for the eastern United States

#### 4. County Open Space -

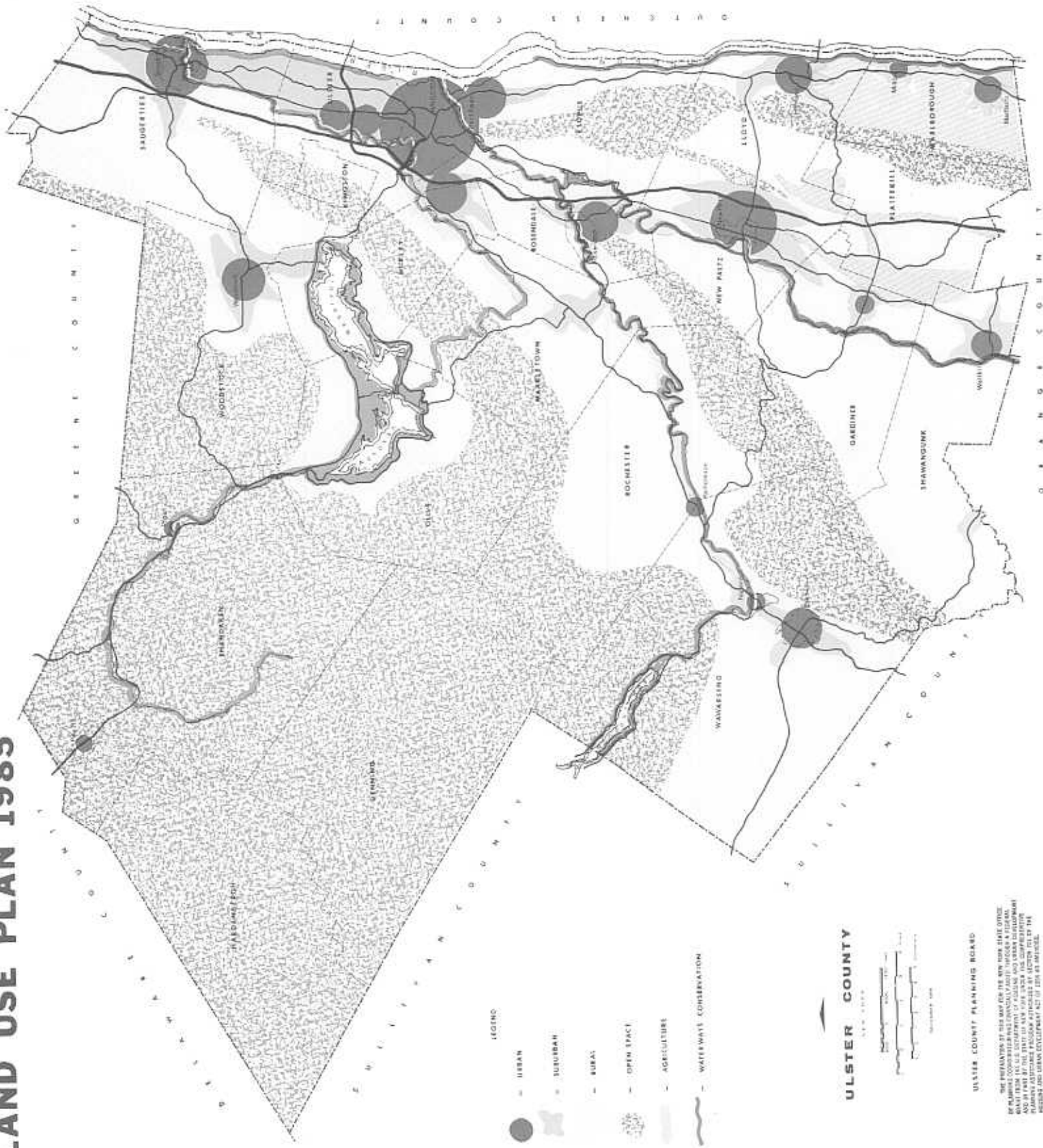
Turning to County open space systems, the County Land Use Plan has identified the agricultural areas along the lower Esopus, the Rondout, the Wallkill Valley, and the southern Ulster apple orchards as being important open space holdings. In addition, the plan recommended that a greenbelt free from urban development be established in flood plains and agricultural areas

along the major streams of the County. Certain portions of the Hudson River shoreline and the Marlborough Mountains have also been identified for open space retention. In these places, local and county land use controls are suggested to keep densities low.

With regard to County parks and open space holdings, the County has no multi-purpose parks in operation now. Development of an active park system with facilities for swimming, boating, picnicking, camping, etc., should receive prompt attention. In view of the paucity of lakes and clear streams, highest priority should be given to acquiring county parks with lakes or good creek or river frontage. According to national standards, the County should acquire approximately 2,500 acres of land for park use in the next twenty years.

The following page shows the County's land use plan and proposed major open space systems.

# LAND USE PLAN 1985



- LEGEND**
- URBAN
  - ◐ SUBURBAN
  - ◑ RURAL
  - ◒ OPEN SPACE
  - ◓ AGRICULTURE
  - ~ WATERWAYS/CONSERVATION

**ULSTER COUNTY**  
NEW YORK



ULSTER COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

THE PREPARATION OF THIS MAP FOR THE NEW YORK STATE OFFICE OF PLANNING COOPERATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WAS MADE POSSIBLE THROUGH THE GENEROUS CONTRIBUTION OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK AND THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND IS PART OF THE STATE LAND USE PLAN FOR AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND OPEN SPACE. THE PLANNING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AUTHORIZED BY SECTION 201 OF THE GENERAL AND UNINCORPORATED ACTS OF 1984 IS APPLICABLE.

Local Parks And Open Space Needs -

Based upon the National Recreation Association standards, local communities should provide a minimum of 10 acres of park and playground area for each 1,000 persons. Using this standard, localities in Ulster County should now be providing 1,400 acres of land for parks and athletic fields. The localities and schools are now providing 623 acres for such facilities. By 1990, projected growth trends indicate a need for 2,000 acres for local use. The following table shows the estimated park needs of each municipality for 1970 and 1990.

LOCAL OPEN SPACE NEEDS AND DEFICIENCIES  
(In Acres)

MUNICIPALITY	1970 NEED	1990 NEED	PRESENT	1970 DEFICIT	1990 DEFICIT
DENNING	3	4	0	3	4
ESOPUS	70	100	26	44	74
GARDINER	26	65	32	-	33
HARDENBERGH	2	2	0	2	2
HURLEY	65	100	10	55	90
KINGSTON (C)	255	280	90	165	190
KINGSTON	8	15	2	6	9
LLOYD	70	100	15	55	85
MARBLETOWN	41	65	5	36	60
MARLBOROUGH	57	90	70	-	20
NEW PALTZ	104	200	100	4	100
OLIVE	29	40	30	-	10
PLATTEKILL	45	85	5	40	80
ROCHESTER	39	60	18	21	42
ROSENDALE	54	75	5	49	70
SAUGERTIES	170	230	70	100	160
SHANDAKEN	26	35	5	21	30
SHAMANGUNK	57	120	15	42	105
ULSTER	117	180	80	37	100
WAWARSING	117	125	20	97	105
WOODSTOCK	57	80	25	32	55
TOTAL	1412Ac	2051Ac.	623Ac.	807Ac.	1424Ac.

\* Based on N.R.A. standard of 10 Acres per 1000 persons.

\*\* Includes local parkland and estimated public school property used for recreation.

**STANDARDS AND POLICIES**

**Local Recreation Policies**  
**County Recreation Policies**  
**Our Specific County Park Policies**  
**State Policies**

## STANDARDS AND POLICIES

The following section details the standards and policies the Ulster County Planning Board has adopted for the function of different levels of government in providing for recreation facilities in the County. These policies will be used in both the development of specific proposals for County facilities and in the review of plans for local and State parks.

### Local Recreation Policies

In the inventory section of County Recreation Policies, we gave an appraisal of each community's supply of recreational resources and concluded with a specific recommendation for each community. With the exception of Gardiner, New Paltz, and Olive, which were given adequate ratings because of their proposed facilities, the comments for the other communities remain unchanged. These are summarized in the conclusion of this report. While we think these are the most needed facilities, and will use these as a basis for federal aid reviews, we respect the right of each community to develop their own standards, policies, and priorities. The following are the Planning Board's policies toward local facilities.

1. School sites should provide the developed playground and athletic field facilities needed by a community. The schools can use these facilities during the school day and the community can use them at other times. Examples of such activities are baseball, football, basketball, tennis, archery. While some school districts may raise objections to aspects such as insurance or maintenance, successful arrangements for dual use can be



made - e.g., Ellenville or Highland which have outstanding programs for community use of school facilities.

2. Town parks serving an entire community should basically provide for swimming and picnicking plus some space for informal fields sports and games. Lifeguards and other supervisory personnel for day program activities are likely necessary. Such parks should generally be 10 acres or more in size.
3. Neighborhood parks are undeveloped areas for the immediate benefit of residents of a neighborhood. They can be a stream bed, a section of creekfrontage, a field to toss a ball, an attractive wooded area. The emphasis in these neighborhood parks is to preserve a place to fish or play "hide and seek" - a place for unorganized activity with little maintenance chores. The minimum size should generally be 2 acres. These parks may be acquired in the subdivision review process under section 277 of the General Municipal Law.
4. Private swim or recreation clubs have been formed to serve a need for recreation facilities. In several cases these have been developed with low cost federal loans. While these private clubs serve some residents of a community, we are concerned that the long range effect is to stunt the provision of public facilities available to all members of the community (this has happened in communities in Westchester). Membership fees range from \$45.00 to several hundred dollars a year. With leadership drawn off to these private clubs, public facilities suffer. Therefore we will look with great reservations on any requests for federal loans for private clubs.

## County Recreation Policies

The Mid-Hudson Development Guide prepared by the Regional Plan Association and Mid-Hudson Pattern for Progress strongly recommended county park land acquisitions. Using an accepted standard of 12 acres per 1,000 residents, they estimated our 1970 minimum park need as 1700 acres and the 1985 minimum need as 2,550 acres. It is significant to note that while Ulster County now has only a few acres of county park land, Dutchess County owns 763 acres and Orange County owns more than 2,000 acres.

Our general policy is that county parks should provide a variety of activities for family day outings. Sites should be of highest scenic quality so that people would be willing to drive 1/2 to 3/4 of an hour to spend the day. Examples of activities which might be provided are swimming, picnicking, fishing, boating, golf, skiing, snowmobiling, sledding, group camping, fair grounds, and special scenic or historic attractions. Ballfields might be included in a county park as an auxiliary use, but the County should not be in the ballfield business - that is the responsibility of school and town recreation programs.

### Our specific county park policies are:

1. County parks should be places of special merit and generally be at least 50 acres in size. This size is needed to permit adequate parking and diversity of use. They should ideally be located off state or county roads.
2. Proximity to our existing and future population centers should be a prime consideration in developing new facilities.

3. Where state, local, or private facilities reasonably serve the public need, there should be no duplication of services.
4. In accordance with federal guidelines, facilities serving urban areas and low income and minority groups should receive highest priority.
5. Parks for active use should receive priority over those which provide only acreage for open space. Highest priority should be given to sites which provide water oriented recreational opportunities.

#### State Policies

State parks provide facilities encouraging day, weekend, or even week long use. These attractions serve not only residents of Ulster County but people from other areas as well. The State's policy is to provide for both active day use facilities like swimming, boating, picnicking and quieter interests like hiking, nature study, and open space preservation. Examples of State facilities are major ski centers like Belleaye, wilderness areas for hiking and hunting in the forest preserve, and multiple use facilities like the Kenneth E. Wilson Park under construction in Woodstock.

AREAWIDE OPEN SPACE PROGRAM

Regional Open Space - State and County  
County Farm or Fair Grounds Property - New Paltz (1)  
St. George's Camp - Ulster (2)  
Binnewater Lakes - Rosendale (3)  
Other County Parks - (4)

Local Open Space and Parks Program By Towns

## AREA-WIDE OPEN SPACE PROGRAM

### Regional Open Space - State and County

The discussion of regional open space deficiencies in this report also included our recommendations concerning the State's open space and park system within Ulster County. State actions which should receive highest priority are the use of the New York City Reservoirs for swimming and non-motorized boating, acquisition of access rights and wilderness areas in the Catskill Park, completion of the installation of snow making equipment at Belleayre Mountain Ski Center, and development of swimming and day use facilities at Wilson State Park and Minnewaska State Park. Recommended State actions of second priority should be the development of the campgrounds, visitor center, museums, and other facilities at Minnewaska and Wilson State Parks, development of another major ski area in the Catskills, and review of the State Constitution's provisions regulating use of the Catskill Park. We think these actions would serve the best interests of both the State and our County.

The policy section of this report listed the objectives we wished to satisfy in developing specific county park site recommendations, for example, geographic balance, variety of use, waterfrontage, serving urban needs, etc. The following recommendations are specific locations in which we think we can satisfy these objectives. They are listed in order of priority for implementation.

#### 1. COUNTY FARM OR FAIR GROUNDS PROPERTY - NEW PALTZ

The County Farm is a 145 acre county owned tract located two miles south of the Village of New Paltz off Libertyville Road. Libertyville Road is an excellent principal county collector and provides

good access for the entire southerly portion of the County. The property abuts the Wallkill River with 1400 feet of frontage. 110 acres are located on the westerly side of Libertyville Road and 35 acres are located on the easterly side. The existing County Fair Grounds and the County Home occupy approximately 17 acres of the site. Soil characteristics vary. The upper bank on the easterly side of Libertyville Road has a gravel base which is excellent for the construction of buildings, parking fields, and the like. The middle bank between the river and the upper bank is marshy in part. This is subject to flooding every few years. The river bank is steep and is subject to crushing ice jams in the winter. It will not support permanent installations such as a beach or docks. Open fields on the westerly side of Libertyville Road have heavy soils which are wet in the spring. With drainage improvements, these fields could be used for low intensity uses such as golf or picnicking. There is also a back lot of 40 acres of which approximately half is wooded. An ample supply of water is provided by a 6" main from a reservoir located on Mohonk properties. The gravelly soils on which the existing buildings have been constructed are excellent for septic systems.

The Wallkill Valley communities have no municipal swimming areas and very limited park facilities. There is therefore a great need for an active county park in this section of the County.

The following are possible facilities which may be developed at the Fair Grounds property. Because of good water supply and favorable

favorable building conditions, a large swimming pool, bath houses and parking areas can readily be constructed on the upper bank near the County Home buildings. The middle bank could likely be excavated to develop a pond for fishing and ice skating and also be used for picnicking, sledding, informal ball fields, archery, and the like.

A natural amphitheater might be developed in the bank to provide a beautiful setting for summer concerts or plays. The stream frontage is popular for fishing and can be used for canoe launching. The 110 acres on the westerly side of Libertyville Road can be developed for a nine hole golf course, picnic grounds, nature trails, and camping. The present Fair Grounds and Home can remain and are compatible with an active county park. They also provide the advantage of constant surveillance of the property.

The Ulster County Legislature has authorized the preparation of a detailed architectural and engineering master plan for the park. It should be completed this fall.

## 2. ST. GEORGE'S CAMP - ULSTER

The St. George's Camp property is a magnificent 92 acre tract along the Hudson River in the northernmost section of the Town of Ulster approximately 2 miles north of the Kingston-Rhinecliff Bridge. It is located off County Road #60, Ulster Landing Road, which provides excellent access to the property. It has been operated for many years as a childrens camp by St. George's church of New York City.

The property is heavily wooded with many beautiful old trees. Rock formations and ravines give the property great interest for nature study or simply walking in an interesting wooded area. The most valuable feature however, is 3000 feet of unspoiled river frontage with several hundred feet of sand beach. Accessible river frontage is very hard to find in Ulster County because of the intrusion of the railroad south of Esopus, and steep banks for most of the remainder. The water quality of the Hudson in this section is classified A for water supply. The beach was developed 20-30 years ago when the Corps of Engineers deepened the Hudson River Channel. As the years have gone by, the beach has however eroded due to wave and tidal action. We have been told by the Corps that if the channel is dredged again in the future, they see no reason why the dredgings could not once again be deposited along this shoreline. This could create the finest beach on the Hudson River.

The site is quite hilly with approximately half of the land on the same general level as Ulster Landing Road. The remainder is either steep bank or waterfront level. Most of the land is not suitable for intensive development because of heavy soils and steep slopes.

The property includes several buildings which could easily be converted for County park purposes. Among the more significant are a caretaker's residence, a dining hall - kitchen building, two former dormitories with toilets and showers, and former recreation hall which includes a stage.



St. George's is located in the center of the County's existing and future highest population concentration. Public facilities in this area are inadequate for the 70,000 persons directly served.

We think this property has great potential as a quiet natural riverfront park offering swimming, boating, beautiful woods, picnicking, camping and simply a delightful place to be near the Hudson River. It would be a fine contrast to the probable hustle and bustle at the County Fair Grounds park.

The property is now for sale for \$280,000. If the County Legislature decides to purchase the property, immediate action for acquisition is necessary.

3. BINNEWATER LAKES - ROSENDALE

Ulster County has very few lakes. Nearly all of these are either privately owned or are used for public water supply - the only exception we can think of being Lake Awosting which thus far is inaccessible for most of our people. While commercial bathing areas are provided at a few privately owned lakes, the cost is generally steep and there is no assurance that these lakes will remain available to the general public in the future. We therefore would like to include at least one lake for swimming and boating in the county park system.

In searching for lakes which are both clear and readily accessible to our population centers, the Binnewaters come immediately to the

forefront. These lakes are located in the northern part of the Town of Rosendale. They are well located to serve the entire middle section of the County including Kingston, Hurley, Marbletown, Rochester, New Paltz and Esopus as well as Rosendale. The lakes are now all privately owned.

The most desirable of the lakes are - First Lake (now owned by Camp Unity), Third Lake (Hidden Valley), and Fifth Lake (Williams Lake Hotel). Fourth Lake is the largest of the Binnewaters, but has problems because of algae and terrain.

None of these lakes is now for sale. If in the future any of these lakes do become available, the County should buy it for a park.

#### 4. OTHER COUNTY PARKS

In the future, another major county park should be developed in the Mawarsing - Rochester area of the County. We have not made a specific proposal at this time because opportunities available when the County will act are now only speculation. The other three park sites have higher priority because Minnewaska State Park is located in this area and the New Paltz Farm site is only 20 to 30 minutes away if facilities at Minnewaska become crowded. A county park in this area should not only provide facilities for local residents but also be designed to support the very important tourist industry of these towns.

With four major county parks and the State parks at Woodstock and Minnewaska, we feel that nearly all of our residents will be served

with adequate day use facilities. Although we wish to emphasize a system of few major parks rather than many small holdings, there will also be special cases and opportunities for sites which should not be passed by. Examples of this are the existing Perrines Bridge County Park in Rosendale, which was a very important contribution to the preservation of our historic heritage, and the O&W railway right-of-way acquisition, which provides for a continuous path from Hurley to Kerhonkson for hiking, snowmobiling, horseback riding as well as a future right-of-way for parts of new Route 209. In the future, sections of the D&W Canal might also be acquired for historic preservation and to stimulate the tourist industry. Or special opportunities might arise such as Reservoirs 1 and 4 of the City of Kingston, if they are no longer needed for water supply, or Bristol Beach in Saugerties, if the State decides it doesn't want to build a park there, or the Catskill Division Railroad if it is abandoned. Special cases like these can provide useful additions to the basic county park system as long as the cost is low and they do not divert funds from the more important major parks.

## Local Open Space and Parks Program

The Ulster County Planning Board has reviewed the existing facilities of all of the municipalities of Ulster County. In the following section we present our opinions on the most urgently needed facilities for each community.

We have not separated the Villages from the Towns because in most cases, there should be cooperation between the two local units of government.

### DENNING -

Because of the small population involved, we do not see any need for public facilities.

### ESOPUS -

The Town has good playground - playfield facilities but badly needs a public swimming area or pool.

### GARDINER -

Gardiner has made a good start by acquiring property for a town park. The Town should now develop it.

### HARDENBERGH -

Because of small population involved, we do not see any need for public facilities.

### HURLEY -

The Town of Hurley has no facilities other than those provided at the schools and the private facilities of the Hurley Recreation Association. It should acquire and develop a Town park.

KINGSTON CITY -

Has well developed parks. Should develop Kingston Point and provide swimming pool in mid or uptown section of the City.

KINGSTON TOWN -

Needs larger town park and a swimming area.

LLOYD -

Needs to develop additional playground and athletic facilities. Should use Highland Water District property for town park.

MARBLETOWN -

Should expand town park along Esopus Creek for field games and parking. Should look for land in High Falls - especially at the Falls or on the Old D&H Canal.

MARLBOROUGH -

Has excellent town park and athletic fields at schools. Should acquire more land for future - possibly smaller neighborhood parks in subdivisions

NEW PALTZ -

The development of the town park has been defeated. There is still a great need for adequate swimming facilities. Land should continue to be acquired for future population growth.

OLIVE -

Needs another park with swimming facilities in the easterly portion of the Town.

PLATTEKILL -

Except for school sites, has no public facilities. Should acquire land for public park in the future.

ROCHESTER -

Has no real public park - only athletic fields at schools and small pool in Kerhonkson. Should develop major Town park with swimming adequate for tourists as well as residents. The D&H Canal would be good area to look for park.

ROSENDALE -

Has no public park - only limited school facilities. Need a public park for those who cannot afford rates at private recreation facilities.

SAUGERTIES -

Has excellent field sports facilities - needs better swimming area or pool.

SHANDAKEN -

Has excellent field sports at schools, but needs public swimming area.

SHAWANGUNK -

Has excellent school facilities in Wallkill but needs larger town park and public swimming area.

ULSTER -

Should develop its park on the Hudson River.

WAHARSING -

Needs larger Town park with swimming facilities, picnicking, etc.

WOODSTOCK -

Should develop existing Town parks and sites.