

Final Master Plan/Final Environmental Impact  
Statement  
for  
Ogden Mills & Ruth Livingston Mills Memorial  
State Park,  
Margaret Lewis Norrie State Park,  
and  
Staatsburgh State Historic Site



*April 17, 2013*



Andrew Cuomo  
Governor

Rose Harvey  
Commissioner

Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation



SEQR  
NOTICE OF COMPLETION OF A FINAL EIS

**Date of Notice:** April 17, 2013  
**Lead Agency:** New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP)  
**Title of Action:** Adoption and Implementation of a Master Plan for Ogden Mills & Ruth Livingston Mills Memorial State Park, Margaret Lewis Norrie State Park and Staatsburgh State Historic Site  
**SEQR Status:** Type I  
**Location of Action:** Town of Hyde Park, Dutchess County

Pursuant to Part 617 of the implementing regulations pertaining to Article 8 (State Environmental Quality Review) of the Environmental Conservation Law a Final Master Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for Ogden Mills & Ruth Livingston Mills Memorial State Park, Margaret Lewis Norrie State Park and Staatsburgh State Historic Site has been prepared and accepted by OPRHP. The Executive Summary of the Final Master Plan and FEIS describes the proposed action, the environmental setting, alternatives and potential environmental impacts and mitigation and the agency's responses to comments on the Draft Plan/DEIS.

Agencies and the public are afforded the opportunity to consider the FEIS. This consideration period ends on April 29, 2013. Copies of the Final Plan/FEIS are available for review at the Park Office; at the offices of the agency contacts; the Staatsburg Library, 70 Old Post Road, Staatsburg and the Hyde Park Library, 2 Main Street, Hyde Park. The online version of the Master Plan/FEIS is available at the following publically accessible web site:

<http://www.nysparks.com/inside-our-agency/master-plans.aspx>

Agency Contacts:

Linda Cooper, Regional Director  
NYS OPRHP  
Taconic Region  
PO Box 308  
9 Old Post Road  
Staatsburg, NY 12580  
Phone: (845) 889-4100  
Fax: (845) 889-8217

M. Pamela Otis, Director  
Environmental Management Bureau  
NYS OPRHP  
Albany, NY 12238  
Phone: (518) 474-0409  
Fax: (518) 474-7013

---

Final Master Plan /  
Final Environmental Impact Statement

for

*Ogden Mills and Ruth Livingston Mills Memorial State  
Park, Margaret Lewis Norrie State Park,  
and Staatsburgh State Historic Site*

*Town of Hyde Park, Dutchess County*

Prepared by

The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation  
and Historic Preservation

Completed: April 17, 2013

Contact: Linda Cooper, AICP, Regional Director  
Taconic State Park Region  
PO Box 308  
9 Old Post Road  
Staatsburg, NY 12580  
Phone: (845) 889-4100  
Fax: (845) 889-8217

M. Pamela Otis, Director, Environmental Management Bureau  
NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation  
Albany, NY 12238  
(518) 474-0409  
Fax: (518) 474-7013

Email: [Mills-Norrie.plan@parks.ny.gov](mailto:Mills-Norrie.plan@parks.ny.gov)



---

## Table of Contents

Table of Contents .....	v
Acknowledgements .....	vii
Executive Summary .....	ix
Chapter 1 – Introduction .....	19
Planning and Environmental Review .....	20
Sustainability .....	20
Chapter 2 – Park Background .....	23
The Region .....	23
The Parks .....	24
Chapter 3 – Environmental Setting .....	29
Physical Resources .....	29
Natural Resources .....	31
Historic Resources .....	36
Scenic Resources .....	39
Recreational Resources/Activities .....	40
Interpretive and Educational Programs .....	42
Emergency Plans and Services .....	44
Infrastructure .....	44
Operations .....	45
Chapter 4 – Park Vision and Goals .....	47
Agency Mission Statement .....	47
Overall Parks and Site Goal .....	47
Mills-Norrie Vision .....	47
Staatsburgh Vision .....	47
Chapter 5 - Analysis and Alternatives .....	49
Introduction .....	49
Major Master Plan Elements and Basis for Selection .....	50
Chapter 6 – The Master Plan .....	51
Natural Resource Management Strategies .....	51
Recreation Facility Development and Programs .....	53
Visitor Services, Orientation and Amenities .....	56
Cultural Resource Protection .....	57
Vacant, Underutilized and Deteriorated Structures .....	57
Operations and Infrastructure .....	59
Implementation .....	61
Sustainability .....	63
Relationship to Other Programs .....	64
Chapter 7 – Environmental Impacts and Mitigation .....	65
Introduction .....	65
Environmental Impacts of Alternatives .....	65
Potential Environmental Impacts associated with Implementation of the Master Plan and Mitigation .....	66
Supplemental Environmental Review .....	75

---

Chapter 8 – Comments and Responses .....	77
Introduction.....	77
Significant Changes to the Draft Master Plan in the Final Master Plan .....	77
Response to Comments.....	77
References.....	99

## List of Tables

Table 1 - Implementation Priorities .....	xiv
Table 2 - Wetland Types within Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh .....	30
Table 3 - Priority Phases .....	62

## List of Figures

Figure 1—Vicinity
Figure 2—Boundary
Figure 3—Adjacent Land Use
Figure 4—Surficial Geology
Figure 5—Topography
Figure 6—Soils
Figure 7—Water Resources
Figure 8—Indian Kill Watershed
Figure 9—Ecological Communities
Figure 10—Scenic and Cultural Resources
Figure 11—Buildings
Figure 12—Existing Trail System
Figure 13—Existing Recreation Resources
Figure 14—Bird Conservation Area
Figure 15—Mowing
Figure 16—Trails Assessments
Figure 17—Trail System Alternatives
Figure 18—Trails Plan
Figure 19—Recreation Resources
Figure 20—Historic Site Expansion
Figure 21—Management Zones
Master Plan (Large Format Insert)

## Appendices

Appendix A: Analysis and Alternatives
Appendix B: Trail System Implementation Steps
Appendix C: Flora
Appendix D: Fauna
Appendix E: Ecological Communities
Appendix F: History of the Parks and Historic Site
Appendix G: Existing Buildings
Appendix H: Bird Conservation Area Management Guidance Summary
Appendix I: Management Zones
Appendix J: Coastal Assessment

## **Acknowledgements**

The Ogden Mills and Ruth Livingston Mills Memorial State Park, Margaret Lewis Norrie State Park and Staatsburgh State Historic Site Final Master Plan/Final Environmental Impact statement is a result of a cooperative effort by many persons. The Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) acknowledges the time and effort of each individual, public agency and interest group who participated in the development of the plan and this Master Plan Document.

In a cooperative effort, the Agency worked with and coordinated input from the following agencies/organizations: NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, Winnakee Land Trust, Norrie Point Environmental Center, Friends of Mills Mansion, the Ralph T. Waterman Bird Club, and the Calvert Vaux Preservation Alliance.

**Rose Harvey**  
Commissioner

**Linda Cooper, AICP**  
*Regional Director,*  
Taconic State Park Region

---

### ***OPRHP Core Plan Team Members***

#### **Taconic Region Staff**

Garrett Jobson, Capital Facilities Manager

Frank Boger, Park Manager 2

Michael Bucholsky, Park Manager 1

Pam Malcolm, Historic Site Manager

Don Fraser, Interpretive Programs Assistant

Jesse Jaycox, Regional Biologist

Melodye Moore, Volunteer

Ken Lutters, Volunteer

#### **Albany/Peebles Island Staff**

Edwina Belding, Environmental Analyst 2

Elisabeth Draper, Park Planner

Nancy Stoner, Trails Planner

Erin Moroney, Historic Sites Restoration Coordinator

#### **Master Plan Initiative Coordination**

Thomas Lyons, Director of Resource Management

Pam Otis, Director of Environmental Management

Diana Carter, Associate Natural Resource Planner

THIS PAGE WAS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

## **Executive Summary**

### ***Introduction***

The Commissioner of the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) is proposing the action of adoption and implementation of a Master Plan for Ogden Mills and Ruth Livingston Mills Memorial State Park, Margaret Lewis Norrie State Park and Staatsburgh State Historic Site (Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh). The Final Master Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) was written to provide the opportunity for individuals, organizations and other government agencies to participate in the planning and development of a plan for an OPRHP facility.

One public scoping/information meeting was held to gather information, concerns and issues surrounding the development and management of the Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh Park Complex. The meeting was held at the Taconic Regional Office in Staatsburg, NY on June 2, 2011. A public meeting on the Draft Plan/DEIS was held on August 16, 2012.

The Commissioner has decided that a Master Plan/EIS is necessary to guide the management and development of the resources at the Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh Park complex.

### ***Park and Historic Site Background***

Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh is a multi-faceted facility that encompasses a wide variety of recreational, natural and historic resources. It encompasses 1,100 acres in the Town of Hyde Park, Dutchess County, New York. The park complex includes more than three miles of Hudson River shoreline that is unimpeded by rail line. The parks are physically contiguous with Mills on the north and Norrie to the south. Staatsburgh State Historic Site lies within the limits of Mills Memorial Park.

Norrie State Park was established in 1934 with the gift of 323 acres of land to the state. Four years later Mills State Park was established through the donation of 190 acres of land, including the 1895 mansion (Staatsburgh State Historic Site) and numerous outbuildings. Staatsburgh State Historic Site was designated as a historic site in 1970. The park complex has been gradually added to over the decades, particularly with the addition of the Hoyt property, the Lewis Gordon Norrie playground, the former Stonehurst estate, the Staatsburg School, and the former Hull and Huntington properties.

The entire facility is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Hudson River Historic District (1990), the Sixteen Mile District (1978) and are also part of the larger Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area and Staatsburgh is listed as a designated Heritage Site.

The Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh complex is a mix of historic designed landscapes, historic buildings, areas of undeveloped shoreline, and wooded areas. In addition, there are approximately 11 miles of year-round trails, an 18-hole golf course, a campground, cabins, a marina, picnic areas, kayak rentals, and an environmental education & interpretation program. People also come to the park to take guided house tours, to enjoy scenic views, for fishing, wildlife observation and for dog-walking. The OPRHP Taconic Regional Headquarters is also located in Norrie in the former Staatsburg Public School.

### ***Environmental Setting***

#### **Physical Resources**

The parks and historic site are underlain by the Austin Glen Formation which consists mostly of graywacke and shale. The area along the river contains many bedrock outcroppings of calcareous

sandstone. The topography of the upland portions of Mills consists of mostly rolling hills (0-8% slope) towards the river. The soils of the area consist of gravelly loams with calcareous sandstone outcrops along the river, fine sandy loams on rolling hills and muddy sand in tidal portions of creek beds. The soil types are dominated by Hudson and Vergennes, Nassau-Cardigan complex and Knickerbocker fine sandy loam.

## **Water Resources**

The parks and historic site fall within the Rhinecliff to Wappinger Creek sub-watershed area of the Lower Hudson watershed. The primary water resources of Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh are the Hudson River, the Indian Kill, North Staatsburg Creek, smaller unnamed streams, and approximately 50 acres of wetlands. The parks contain a unique number of high quality small woodland vernal wetlands. These water resources contribute significantly to the park's biodiversity and are important scenic resources as well.

## **Natural Resources**

Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh has a long history of human use, particularly for agriculture. Currently, the facility encompasses a mix of primarily second growth forest, expanses of lawn, maintained successional old fields and a golf course, as well as an extensive area of Hudson River shoreline that also includes Esopus Island. Numerous vernal pools and forested wetlands are scattered throughout the park. The final stretch of the Indian Kill is within Norrie, flowing through tidal marsh and tidal swamp communities near its mouth before emptying into the Hudson River. This diversity of forests and fields, intermittent, permanent and tidal wetlands, Hudson River shoreline, and human-influenced landscapes supports a variety of flora and fauna.

Invasive plant species have been identified throughout the parks. Large populations of Canada geese (*Branta canadensis*) and white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) also present considerable management challenges.

A diverse array of bird life can be found throughout the varied habitats with the parks. Following an evaluation of bird data, it was determined that the parks meet three criteria to be designated a Bird Conservation Area including migratory bird concentration area, diverse species concentration site and species-at-risk site.

## **Significant Ecological Communities and Rare Species**

Two of the ecological communities found in the park have been identified as significant by the Natural Heritage Program (NHP). These are the Hudson River and the freshwater tidal swamp located along the Indian Kill. Four rare plant species and at least six species of rare animals have been recorded in Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh. The area of the Hudson River adjacent to the parks supports significant fish habitat and is also a winter waterfowl concentration area.

## **Cultural Resources**

The majority of the cultural resources that exist within Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh are associated with the establishment of American Renaissance and Gilded Age country seats along the Hudson River. The significant cultural resources that remain include numerous structures as well as designed landscapes. Native American tribes and cultural groups occupied both sides of the Hudson River for thousands of years before European settlement. No coordinated effort has been made to interpret specific sites within the parks.

Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Sixteen Mile District (1978) and is a National Historic Landmark as part of the Hudson River National Historic Landmark District. The complex is also part of the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area.

## **Scenic Resources**

The parks and historic site are set in the 32-square-mile Hudson River National Historic Landmark District on the east bank of the scenic Hudson River Valley. In addition to the natural beauty of this region, the parks and historic site contain historic, designed landscapes that date back to when the facility was separate Hudson River estates. Views from U. S. Route 9 near the golf course sweep down towards the river, as do views from “Staatsburgh” (Mills Mansion) and Norrie Point. The park facility is also located within a Scenic Area of Statewide Significance (SASS) per the NYS Department of State (DOS).

## **Recreation Resources**

Mills and “Staatsburgh” are day-use facilities, whereas Norrie provides overnight accommodations at its campground and cabins during the summer and fall. Both Mills and Norrie provide passive recreation activities including: hiking, bird watching, walking in the parks, and informal picnicking. In addition, camping, cabins, a golf course, marina/boat launch, kayak rentals, fishing, winter activities (sledding, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, etc.) are also allowed at the park facility. The vast cultural resources of the facility are interpreted in many ways; most significantly, guided tours are offered at Staatsburgh State Historic Site. Environmental education and interpretation is offered at the Norrie Point Environmental Center.

## ***Vision and Goals***

### **Mills-Norrie State Parks**

The parks will continue to offer existing recreational opportunities within the highly scenic and historic setting with extensive direct and visual access to the Hudson River. The golfing, boating, camping and trail facilities will be improved, respond to changing trends, and retain their design character. Infrastructure needs for improved operations, Hudson River access, and sensitive reuse of historic buildings will be given priority in capital construction.

Interpretive research and programming will be developed in conjunction with other partners on the numerous themes identified within the parks and the general Hudson River Valley. An emphasis will be placed on Native Americans, land-use, including agriculture and estate development, transportation, Civilian Conservation Corps, and the parks movement.

Management plans for the parks’ historic structures, cultural, scenic, and natural features will be prepared, integrated, and implemented.

### **Staatsburgh State Historic Site**

Staatsburgh State Historic Site is a tourist destination in the Hudson Valley that provides protection and interpretation of a country estate and tells a multigenerational story of the Lewis-Livingston-Mills family and those who lived, worked and visited the mansion. While on-going restoration of the mansion and its collection will continue, Staatsburgh will expand to include the historic designed landscape and the outbuildings originally included in the estate to properly preserve historic resources and allow for expanded interpretative and passive recreation opportunities.

## ***Analysis & Alternatives***

The master plan presents a series of “preferred alternatives” for future development and operation of the Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh complex. Cumulatively, the actions described below present OPRHP’s long term vision for the management and enhancement of the complex.

## ***The Master Plan***

The Master Plan alternative presents several capital improvements which pertain to resource protection and recreation development. The items in the following list are more extensively described in Chapter 6 – The Master Plan. The alternatives and analysis used to arrive at these decisions are depicted in Appendix A – Alternatives and Analysis.

## **Natural Resource Protection**

- Natural resource protection and management strategies for water resources, significant habitat, rare, nuisance and invasive species, and successional old fields will be implemented.
- A Bird Conservation Area will be designated within the facility.
- The Taconic Region will work with the Town of Hyde Park and the Dutchess County Soil and Water Conservation District on stormwater management mitigation efforts.

## **Recreation Resource Development/Management**

- The campground will be assessed for impacts related to soil compaction. Additional tent platforms will be constructed at existing sites and a new shower building/comfort station will be sited.
- The existing group camp area will be redesigned and improved to include a pavilion, new restroom, and a parking area to improve the desirability of this camping location.
- The campground will be assessed for the potential and/or need for expanding camping to include RVs and additional sites.
- A new ADA compliant cabin will be sited and constructed in a complementary design aesthetic to the existing CCC era cabins.
- Trail recommendations will be implemented, including rehabilitation of the River Trail (erosion control and protecting the shoreline habitat) and promoting external trail connections.
- Self-guided tours of the parks will be developed utilizing technology (podcast or other smartphone application).
- The Lewis Gordon Norrie Playground Area will be enhanced to utilize the natural, tiered landscape of the site to have a connected, dynamic passive recreation area. Improvements will include: a picnic grove, new parking/roads, a composting toilet, a playground, fishing access, improved ADA access, and car-top watercraft launch at the Hudson River.
- The Dinsmore Golf Course’s irrigation system will be upgraded and improved.

## **Cultural Resource Protection/Management**

- Ongoing restoration efforts will be continued at Staatsburgh, including completing the restoration of the mansion’s exterior, east portico and roof. Staff and volunteers will be trained in the care of the site’s historic furnishings collection.
- A Cultural Landscape Report will be developed for the park facility and Historic Structures Reports will be developed for most historic buildings.
- Hoyt House will be stabilized as funding becomes available. OPRHP will attempt to secure a licensee or concessionaire to renovate and reuse the building pursuant to Appendix G, the State

Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

- The numerous historic views and vistas within the parks and site will be restored in concert with applicable OPRHP Policies.
- The historic stone wall of the estate will be repaired and the entrance may be widened to allow for large vehicles (trucks, buses, emergency vehicles, etc.) to better enter Mills without damaging the wall.

### **Park and Historic Site Operations**

- The boundary of the Staatsburgh State Historic Site will be revised to include the adjacent historic buildings and landscapes. The Historic Site Manager will become responsible for those structures and will continue to work in concert with Park Manager with respect to maintenance.
- A new maintenance facility will be constructed to better serve the entire complex and Taconic Region storage needs. Regional storage will be relocated out of the historic Carriage Barn to this new facility. The building will be approximately 7,500 square feet and located across from the golf course between the railroad and Old Post Road.
- The parks and site will be divided into management zones to help provide better direction with respect to the care and maintenance of the historic landscape, natural and recreational resources.
- Infrastructure upgrades (roads/bridges, waste water, water, electrical/internet) will occur throughout the complex.

### **Implementation**

The Master Plan sets forth the Agency's vision for capital improvements and operational enhancements to Mills-Norrie State Park and Staatsburgh State Historic Site for the next ten to fifteen years. Cumulatively they will cost tens of millions of dollars to implement. The pace and sequencing of recommended actions will be determined by the availability of funding, which is a function of the size of OPRHP's annual capital budget and the need to balance investments throughout the entire State Park System. The master plan will be reviewed annually to select projects that will be added to the park's budget for implementation and to assess the progress of plan implementation.

The implementation of the Master Plan for Mills-Norrie State Park and Staatsburgh State Historic Site is divided into three priority phases. The priority groupings described below are conceptual and subject to reorganization based on available funding for specific components in any given group.

**Table 1 - Implementation Priorities**

• Implementation Priorities	• Description/Development Component
Immediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create the Bird Conservation Area.</li> <li>• Repair the historic stone estate wall as well as widen the entrance and re-hang the historic gates.</li> <li>• Complete marina dredging and dock improvements at Norrie to improve this Hudson River facility.</li> <li>• Replace/repair roof of Hoyt House.</li> </ul>
Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue the ongoing restoration of “Staatsburgh” including completing the restoration of the mansion’s exterior, east portico and roof.</li> <li>• Continue implementation of natural resource management strategies for invasive species, wildlife, storm water, wetlands, streams, and the river, successional old fields and scenic vistas.</li> <li>• Continue limited agricultural use of the park complex, consistent with the facility’s historic land uses.</li> <li>• Implement trails recommendations per Appendix B.</li> </ul>
Priority 1:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand/implement natural resource protection strategies/management.</li> <li>• Work with the Town of Hyde Park and Dutchess County Soil &amp; Water Conservation District to design and implement upland stormwater management control efforts.</li> <li>• Develop Cultural Landscape and Historic Structures reports.</li> <li>• Revise the boundary of Staatsburgh State Historic Site.</li> <li>• Develop guidelines for park and site management zones.</li> <li>• Rehabilitate former greenhouse area and repair the deer fence that protects the garden.</li> <li>• Evaluate vacant and underutilized structures for potential adaptive reuse.</li> <li>• Complete road, parking and drainage rehabilitation in the vicinity of “Staatsburgh.”</li> <li>• Replace irrigation system at Dinsmore Golf Course.</li> <li>• Install new, cohesive signage throughout the parks.</li> </ul>

• Implementation  
Priorities

• Description/Development Component

---

Priority 2:

- Design and construct a new layout for the Lewis Gordon Norrie Playground area to provide a picnic grove, adequate parking, river access and a children’s play area.
  - Design group camp area improvements.
  - Renovate/repair Hoyt House as funding becomes available.
  - Actively search for a licensee to rehabilitate and operate Hoyt House.
  - Restore Scenic Vistas at: “The Point,” “Staatsburgh,” and the cabin area.
  - Assess and monitor the campground for expansion need.
  - Upgrade campsites with new picnic tables, grills, tent platforms, and relocate sites as necessary.
  - Design and construct an accessible, ADA compliant cabin.
  - Selectively thin trees and vegetation near the existing cabins.
  - Repave, restripe and reconfigure the parking area at Norrie Point.
  - Develop new parking area at Carriage Barn and close/remediate existing lot.
  - Design and construct new maintenance facility.
  - Conduct infrastructure upgrades (water, waste water, electrical, internet).
  - Develop Landscape Management Plan.
  - Expand environmental and cultural education and interpretation programming.
  - Improve park roadways and historic carriage roads.
- 

Priority 3:

- Assess Treehouse for adaptive reuse.
  - Move regional storage out of the Carriage Barn and into the new maintenance facility.
  - Move maintenance equipment and materials out of the Dairy Barn Complex and into the new maintenance facility.
  - Develop a concept plan for the adaptive reuse of the Carriage Barn as new park visitor’s center, with restrooms, meeting space, gift shop, and interpretive panels.
  - Rehabilitate the Dairy Barn Complex for interpretation of the “working farm” aspect of the Mills era of the park and potential adaptive reuse.
-

### ***Environmental Impacts***

Consistent with the intent of the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR), environmental considerations were among the criteria used in evaluating alternatives and in selection of elements within the Master Plan. The environmental impacts of the proposed plan were addressed under several categories. Some projects are still in a conceptual design stage and these may require additional environmental review as they are developed.

The plan will result in some physical change and disturbance to land where new construction is proposed. Some new projects will be constructed in areas with soil or slope limitations for development, and in these cases special considerations will be given in their design. All projects which involve ground disturbance, whether new or within an existing developed area, will minimize sedimentation and erosion impacts through the use of Best Management Practices.

New trail construction will include review of final trail layouts in the field by appropriate agency staff to ensure consistency with trail standards and protection of sensitive environmental resources. The policy and guidelines for trail building that have been established by recognized trail organizations and governmental agencies will be followed. The goal of all trail work is to have trails that provide access to the resource without adversely affecting it.

The Master Plan implementation is expected to have minimal impact to water resources. Several of the Natural Resource Management strategies provide guidance for the future management and protection of important water resources such as wetlands, streams and the Hudson River. Projects that require permits, such as the new fishing dock at Norrie, will follow all permit requirements regarding mitigation of potential water quality impacts. Projects that involve new construction as well as those that are rehabilitative will incorporate buffer areas near water resources and features such as bio-swales or pervious pavement to minimize storm water runoff.

Limited new development is proposed and therefore direct impacts to biological resources are expected to be minimal. Projects have generally been sited in areas with previous development, limited environmental sensitivity and which generally possess accessibility to and use of existing infrastructure. The natural resource management strategies provide guidance for the future protection of biological resources.

In areas that will require vegetative restoration (e.g. campground improvements; tree replacement; trail closure) native species or historically appropriate non-invasive species that are indigenous to the area will be used.

The designation of a Bird Conservation Area (BCA) will provide added recognition of the importance of the facility for bird habitat, particularly as a migratory concentration site and for species at risk. The plan's natural resource management strategies call for additional protection particularly sensitive wildlife habitats such as the Indian Kill, vernal pools and river shoreline.

Control of nuisance Canada geese around the marina has been successful and further controls will be implemented in northern sections of the facility. Deer population levels may be adversely affecting the vegetation at the park through over browsing and these impacts will be further examined to allow for informed decision making with regards to future management options or strategies

The master plan calls for the preparation of an invasive species strategy that will provide guidance for prioritizing control efforts, so that invasive species control can be undertaken in the most effective manner from both ecological and economic perspectives.

Implementation of the Master Plan will not result in any significant adverse impacts on scenic resources. The plan proposes continued maintenance of the existing scenic vistas. In addition some

historic vistas will be restored, such as between the Hoyt House and the Hudson River. New construction or renovations to existing structures will be designed to complement their surroundings and will not be visually intrusive.

The Master Plan will have significant beneficial impacts on the many significant cultural resources within the Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh complex. This includes preparation of Cultural Landscape and Historic Structures Reports that will provide important information about these resources and provide guidance for their future management and protection. The use of management zones will provide the needed guidance for the appropriate management of natural and cultural resources, including historic buildings and landscapes.

Implementation of the Master Plan will result in substantial beneficial recreation and open space impacts. The plan provides for new and improved recreation facilities and visitor amenities. The plan will create a better organized trails system which will accommodate a variety of uses including hiking, biking, and cross country skiing. It is anticipated that implementation of the Master Plan will result in increased use of the parks and historic site. This increased use will be managed to maintain the quality of the recreational, natural, scenic and historic resources.

The plan proposes no changes to traffic circulation or access and current capacity is expected to meet the proposed needs. Health and safety of patrons and staff will continue to be a priority. Sustainability principles and energy efficiency will be incorporated into the design of all proposed construction. Master Plan implementation may result in some temporary increases in noise during construction. Construction is generally scheduled for periods of low park use to minimize impacts to park visitors.

As this facility is located within New York's coastal area, the Master Plan was reviewed for consistency with the NY Coastal policies. Based on review of applicable policies, it is OPRHP's determination that the plan will not substantially hinder the achievement of any of the State's coastal policies.

### ***Response to Comments***

The Draft Master Plan/DEIS was issued June 27, 2012. A public meeting was held August 16, 2012 at the Taconic Regional Office in Staatsburg, NY. The comment period ended August 31, 2012.

During the public meeting, seven people spoke out of approximately twenty-five in attendance and their comments were recorded. During the comment period for the Draft Master Plan/DEIS, the Agency received ten written comment letters. A list of persons providing comments is included at the end of Chapter 8.

### ***Significant Changes to the Draft Master Plan in the Final Master Plan***

- Agricultural use within the parks will include limited animals and livestock in designated areas (to be determined by OPRHP).
- The mowing regime for the park now has dates associated to the mowing and there is a map of the area to be managed.
- Hoyt House and its surrounds will undergo a conversion as per LWCF regulations.
- Adaptive reuse consistent with resource protection guidelines, including the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Structures, will be considered for any vacant and/or underutilized structure.

THIS PAGE WAS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

## **Chapter 1 – Introduction**

### **Establishment of the Parks and Historic Site**

Margaret Lewis Norrie State Park was established in 1934 as a result of a gift of 323 acres for park purposes by Lewis and Geraldine Thompson. The land was donated in memory of Mrs. Thompson's sister. The transfer of Esopus Island from the State Land Board was completed in 1934, as well. The park was expanded in 1936 with the addition of a small parcel at the entrance off of Route 9 and again between 2003 and 2009 with the purchase of four adjacent parcels totaling about 26 acres.

Ogden Mills and Ruth Livingston Mills Memorial State Park was established in 1938 by a gift from Gladys Phipps. Mrs. Phipps donated 190 acres of the Staatsburg estate and farm in memory of her parents. The donation included their home, "Staatsburgh," the major outbuildings and farm complex across Old Post Road and extended from the Hudson River up to U.S. Route 9. Between 1952 and 1961, Mills was expanded by additional donations of property by Helen Huntington Hull. A total of 125 acres was given to the state during this period, including the nine hole Dinsmore Golf Course (known as the "south nine") and the land north of the Mills farm property between U.S. Route 9 and Old Post Road (which became the "north nine").

During the 1960s and 1970s, 265 acres were added to Mills State Park, including the Hoyt property, the Lewis Gordon Norrie playground, and the former "Stonehurst" estate, then occupied by the Anderson School. This resulted in the Mills and Norrie parks becoming contiguous along the Hudson River shoreline. Additional lands were later added to Mills, including 158 acres of the former Huntington property on the north side of the park. Together the two parks currently consist of 1,100 acres. "Staatsburgh" (Mills Mansion) lies within the original Phipps gift, has been operated as a museum since 1938 and was designated as a State Historic Site in 1970 and was later re-named Staatsburgh State Historic Site.

### **Planning That Has Been Done in the Past**

A master plan for Margaret Lewis Norrie State Park was prepared and largely implemented under the Civilian Conservation Corps program between 1934 and 1938. The roads, utilities, campground, picnic areas and the Norrie Point Inn were all developed during this period. The marina and additional cabins were constructed in the 1950s.

At Mills, donation of the former Staatsburg Golf Club and subsequently gifts of adjacent lands led to a plan to re-design the existing nine-hole course, add a second nine holes and construct a golf course clubhouse and restaurant. The expanded golf course and Dinsmore Clubhouse opened in 1968.

A master plan for both Mills and Norrie was prepared by Vollmer Associates in 1968. This plan envisioned an extensive road network, a swimming pool complex, picnic and parking areas. The portions of this plan which were implemented include the relocated park entrance road, the bridge over the railroad and improved access to Norrie State Park by eliminating the use of a narrow railroad underpass. Road construction extended north to intersect with River Road. The remaining elements of the plan were subsequently abandoned.

A master plan effort for both parks and the historic site was conducted during the late 1980s and early 1990s. The plan was neither completed, nor reviewed under the State Environment Quality Review Act (SEQRA).

## ***Planning and Environmental Review***

The environmental review of proposed master plans for state park facilities is conducted in accordance with the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR) and section 14.09 of the State Historic Preservation Act. OPRHP fully integrates the planning and environmental review processes. This document serves as both the Master Plan and the Environmental Impact Statement for Ogden Mills and Ruth Livingston Mills Memorial State Park, Margaret Lewis Norrie State Park and Staatsburgh State Historic Site.

## **Principles and Policies**

The OPRHP planning process adheres to three basic principles:

1. Planning must be coordinated and provide for public participation: Cooperation among appropriate governmental organizations, the public at large, special interest groups and the private sector is not only desirable, but necessary.
2. Planning is a continuing process: Assumptions for the classification and management of park resources must be constantly reevaluated in light of new information, changing needs and priorities, and resource character.
3. Planning must be comprehensive: The information base, and pertinent additional research, should support the planning process and should encompass relevant social, economic and physical factors relating to the management and operation of the park and its resources.

Overarching OPRHP program principles, policies, and goals and objectives provide a foundation for planning, development, and operation and management decisions made during the master plan process. The following sections summarize current directives considered throughout the planning process for Mills-Norrie State Parks and Staatsburgh State Historic Site.

## **OPRHP Policies**

OPRHP has developed a number of agency-wide policies to address management issues commonly faced by the park system. Visit our website and go to the following links to view our Agency policies.

<http://nysparks.com/environment/documents.aspx>

## ***Sustainability***

Sustainability is a philosophy on how to improve, operate and maintain State Parks and Historic Sites, while at the same time, reducing energy use where possible and minimizing or reducing the impacts of State Parks and Historic Sites have on the natural environment.

Sustainability looks at the whole rather than the individual parts to maximize energy efficiency and minimize environmental impact; reduce use of fossil fuels; reduce or eliminate hazardous substances; protect biodiversity and ecosystems; and use resources carefully, respectfully and efficiently to meet current needs without compromising the needs of other living creatures and the use of those resources by future generations. Sustainable practices and alternatives were considered in the planning process and incorporated throughout the Master Plan.

## **Ecosystem-Based Management (EBM)**

OPRHP has embraced the principles of ecosystem-based management (EBM) that support master plans in providing direction for the conservation and protection of coastal and watershed ecosystems. The principles of EBM are included and represented with the master plan. These principles are: to

start with a place based focus, base management decisions on the best available science, have measurable objectives to direct and evaluate performance, use adaptive management to respond to new knowledge and changing conditions, recognize interconnections within and among ecosystems, and involve stakeholders to incorporate local knowledge. An EBM approach to management ensures that decisions are made holistically focusing not on a single species or resource, but considering all parts of the ecosystem, including humans.

THIS PAGE WAS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

## **Chapter 2 – Park Background**

### ***The Region***

Ogden Mills and Ruth Livingston Mills Memorial and Margaret Lewis Norrie State Parks, and Staatsburgh State Historic Site are located in OPRHP's Taconic Region, which encompasses Columbia, Dutchess, Putnam, and Westchester counties.

### **Location and Access**

Ogden Mills and Ruth Livingston Mills Memorial State Park and Margaret Lewis Norrie State Park are located in west northern Dutchess County in the Town of Hyde Park. Staatsburgh State Historic Site lies within the limits of the Mills park. The parks are physically contiguous, with Mills on the north and Norrie to the south. Both are located on the Hudson River with a combined frontage in excess of three (3) miles unimpeded by the East Shore Railroad. The principal vehicular access to both parks is U.S. Route 9, a two-lane State highway. Old Post Road, a Town of Hyde Park maintained highway, serves the hamlet of Staatsburg and both parks. The railroad passes through both parks carrying freight and Amtrak passengers, but there are no rail services (stops) in the vicinity of the parks. Metro North operates the Poughkeepsie station 9 miles to the south and Amtrak operates the Rhinecliff station 8 miles to the north. The Norrie Marina provides limited service for transient boaters on the Hudson River, along with seasonal docks, a boat launch ramp and other services. A pier for US Coast Guard/Hudson River Pilots Association's use is located adjacent to the Norrie Point Environmental Center. Car-top boat launching is found adjacent to the marina and in the central portion of the park near the Lewis Gordon Norrie playground area (gazebo).

The parks have a total of 11.6 miles of trails including the River Trail which is a designated Hudson River Valley Greenway Trail and is part of the Hyde Park Trail System. The parks receive substantial local day-use, being located within the hamlet of Staatsburg, and the Dinsmore Golf Course draws people from the mid-Hudson region. The Norrie campground and marina, and the Staatsburgh State Historic Site serve a larger geographic area including the New York City Metropolitan area and adjacent states. See Figure 1 for a Vicinity Map of the parks.

### **Economic Contribution**

In March 2009, a study prepared for Parks & Trails New York by the Political Economy Research Institute (PERI), University of Massachusetts-Amherst, found that the combination of annual state and visitor spending at all New York State Parks supports up to \$1.9 billion in economic output and business sales and up to 20,000 jobs throughout the state. For the Taconic Region, which includes Ogden Mills and Ruth Livingston Mills Memorial and Margaret Lewis Norrie State Parks and Staatsburgh State Historic Site, the figures are \$102 million and 957 jobs.

While Mills-Norrie State Park complex is not the highest attended park within the Taconic State Park Region, it is the largest revenue generator for the region. The park does not collect vehicle use fees, but collects fees from the Norrie Point Marina, Norrie Campground, and Dinsmore Golf Course.

Ecosystems within state parks also provide many support services to communities, such as reducing negative effects of pollution, supporting soils and providing erosion control, protecting water quality, re-charging ground water, providing flood and storm protection, and supporting critical ecosystems and wildlife habitats.

## **Recreational Needs Assessment**

According to the 2009 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), relaxing in the parks continues to be the recreation activity enjoyed by most New York residents. This is followed by walking/jogging, visiting museums/historic sites, swimming, and biking. Walking/jogging has the highest total of activity days followed by relaxing in parks, swimming, visiting museums/historic sites, and biking (OPRHP, 2009).

Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh attracts primarily local users with some visitors from surrounding counties and outside the region. Given its location in the Hudson Valley, and proximity to several counties, the service area for the park includes Dutchess, Columbia, Putnam, Ulster, and Westchester counties. The Recreation Index of Need (RIN) for Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh shows that the activities with the highest relative index of need for service area are hiking, cross-country skiing, biking, tennis, camping, walking/jogging, downhill skiing, fishing, visiting historic sites/museums, day-use, snowmobiling, boating, and local winter activities. These activities vary from statewide recreational desires noted above. Hiking is indicated as the most needed recreation activity in this area.

## ***The Parks***

### **Park Boundaries**

The parks, taken together, are bound by the Hudson River shoreline on the west and U.S. Route 9 to the east. They are bisected by Old Post Road and the east shore railroad corridor. The west boundary is the Hudson River. The east boundary follows U.S. Route 9, portions of Old Post Road and residential properties within the hamlet of Staatsburg. On the north, the park abuts a private estate west of the railroad and vacant fields and woods north of Old Post Road. On the south, the park boundary abuts one residential parcel at U.S. Route 9, an elder care facility and undeveloped woodlands on the edge of the Anderson Center for Autism. The southern boundary of the golf course portion of the park abuts residential properties within Staatsburg. In the vicinity of the at-grade crossing of the railroad at River Road, the park boundary also follows several residential parcels lying west of the railroad. Esopus Island, located within the Hudson River slightly southwest of Norrie Point, is part of the park.

See Figure 2 for Park Boundary Map.

### **Surrounding Land Uses**

The large majority of the land adjoining the two parks has been developed for residential use. The hamlet of Staatsburg is nearly surrounded by the parks and contains few undeveloped or vacant properties. The parks are unique in that their western boundary is the Hudson River—a recreational, commercial and scenic resource. Unencumbered by the railroad tracks, this river frontage allows for direct waterfront access from the parks. Other adjacent, transportation related land uses include the railroad, U.S. Route 9 and Old Post Road. The railroad corridor carries both freight and passenger service (Amtrak). A town maintained park, Dinsmore Park, and the Staatsburg Library, abuts the state park along Old Post Road. An historic estate property lies directly north of the Mills north boundary and is encumbered by a conservation easement held by the Scenic Hudson Land Trust. There are no commercial properties located on the parks' boundaries. Please see Figure 3 for the Adjacent Land Use map.

## **Legal Constraints, Designations and Other Programs**

### ***Deed Restrictions***

#### ***Ogden Mills and Ruth Livingston Mills Memorial State Park:***

The Phipps gift of the Mills property contained two stipulations in the deed dated June 30, 1938 and recorded July 15, 1938 at Liber 568, page 316. The first states that "...the lands to be conveyed herein by the Owner to the parties of the second part shall forthwith and forever after be known exclusively by the name of The Ogden Mills and Ruth Livingston Mills Memorial State Park." This applies to the original 190 acres conveyed by Mrs. Phipps. It does not apply to subsequent additions to the park, although no distinction has ever been made between the original property and the later acquisitions from other parties.

The second stipulation reads as follows: "This conveyance is made to the ends and for the purposes hereinafter outlined, and subject to the condition that the parties of the second part, their successors and assigns forthwith upon such conveyance being made and at its and their own expense at all times shall set apart and thereafter maintain in perpetuity said premises and the whole thereof exclusively as and for an ornamental park to provide an oasis of beauty and of quiet for the pleasure, rest and refreshment of those who delight in outdoor beauty, to preserve and develop an apprehension of the historical associations of the place, and to bring about an understanding of the value and importance of informal planting and landscape development, and that the parties of the second part, their successors and assigns, shall keep and maintain the main residence on said premises as an historical museum and for educational purposes as above indicated (subject, however, to the right of the parties of the second part to maintain in parts of such residence, other than the entrance floor, offices for the administrative officers of the body now known as Taconic State Park Commission and the successors to that body), the use of said premises and appurtenances, including such residence, to be subject at all times to such regulations and restrictions as shall protect and preserve, as far as shall be deemed practicable by the officials in charge, the general character and natural beauty of said property and its historical associations; provided however in respect of said main residence the parties of the second, their successors and assigns, shall be required to keep and maintain the same as aforesaid only in the event that, and for as long as, the Owner, her heirs or executors, shall pay to the Taconic State Park Commission, representing the State of New York, on the first day of July, 1938, and on the same day in each year thereafter the sum of Five thousand Dollars (\$5,000), the same to be used by said Commission for the maintenance and operation of the main residence thereon in accordance with the purposes and intention of the conveyance and an additional sum of One thousand Dollars (\$1,000) on the same date in 1938 and each year thereafter if and as requested to pay for major repairs to the said main residence..."

The requirement for annual payments by Mrs. Phipps and her heirs was subsequently terminated by agreement between Mrs. Phipps and the State in 1970 and the requirements concerning the main residence (Mills Mansion, now "Staatsburgh") were therefore extinguished. The purposes outlined for the property itself were not altered and remain in effect.

The stated purposes call for the entire property, all 190 acres, to be "set aside and maintained in perpetuity as an ornamental park..." and that the State "...shall protect and preserve...the general character and natural beauty of said property and its historical associations..." The portion of the original gift lying east of the Old Post Road is included in this restriction and contains a portion of the present Dinsmore Golf Course, the farm barn complex, and the golf course clubhouse. The stated

purposes are consistent with a “historic park” and focus on the care and interpretation of the landscape design including structures and site features.

Latter additions to Mills also have name restrictions. The 2 acre former Schouten parcel on Old Post Road, acquired in 1958, is to be known as “Sterling B. Schouten Memorial Grove” (Liber 986, page 480). This parcel is located adjacent to and south of the Hoyt entrance drive and is currently wooded.

The 1951 gift of the original portion of the golf course stipulated, or expressed ...”the hope of the Donor that said parcel of land will continue to be used as a golf course and will be designated “The Dinsmore Golf Course”. (Liber 805, page 509). This applies to the 49+ acre southern portion of the existing golf course but has been informally extended to include the entire present golf course. There was no intent to create a separate entity and the golf course was acquired as an addition to the Mills State Park.

At Mills, a conservation easement is held by OPRHP on a small portion (0.06 acre) of the Staatsburg Library Society property located on the east side of Old Post Road adjacent to Dinsmore Golf Course.

### ***Margaret Lewis Norrie State Park:***

At Norrie, there is a name restriction contained in the original gift of 323 acres from the Thompson family stipulating that the park be known exclusively as “Margaret Lewis Norrie State Park.” Deed was dated April 30, 1934, recorded October 22, 1934 at Liber 541, page 258.

Esopus Island, now part of Norrie State Park, was “...reserved from settlement, occupancy, lease or sale, and dedicated as a public park...” under Article 2, Section 16 of the Public Lands Law. The southern portion of the island was ceded to the Federal Government in 1903 for only the “...purposes of erecting thereon light-house, beacons, light-house keepers’ dwelling and works for improving navigation...” (Recorded /dated August 6, 1903 in Book 53 of Patents page 25). A transfer of jurisdiction between the Land Board and the Taconic State Park Commission, for park purposes, was approved by the Land Board on June 25, 1934, subject to the jurisdiction ceded to the United States.

At Norrie, the Dutchess County Water & Wastewater Authority installed a municipal water line through the park west of and parallel to U.S. Route 9, from the north boundary of the park to a point near the present Taconic Administrative Office. An easement does not currently exist for this water main.

### ***Designations***

The two parks are located wholly or partially within a variety of state and federally designated districts, including the Hudson River National Historic Landmark district, the Estates District Scenic Area of Statewide Significance, and individually designated Scenic Byways (DOT) and Scenic Roads (DEC). Staatsburgh State Historic Site has also been designated an official "Heritage Site" by the Management Committee of the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area.

### ***Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)***

Mills and Norrie State Parks and Staatsburgh State Historic Site have received funding through the National Park Service Land and Water Conservation Fund. Acceptance of this federal funding includes a requirement these facilities remain in public outdoor recreation use in perpetuity. Any proposals for use of these lands other than public outdoor recreation requires the prior approval of the National Park Service through a process known as “conversion.” The conversion process includes a requirement that replacement lands be provided that are of at least equal fair market value and offer reasonably equivalent recreational opportunities (LWCF Manual, 2008).

### ***Partnerships***

- Norrie Point Environmental Center is operated by the NYS DEC. The Environmental Center provides research and interpretive opportunities for the region.
- The Friends of Mills Mansion is the non-profit friends group dedicated to Staatsburgh State Historic Site.
- A concessionaire operates the café and restaurant at the Dinsmore Golf Course.
- Town of Hyde Park and National Park Service—on-going summer concert series (held at Mills Mansion and Vanderbilt Estate) that is sponsored by the park, the town and NPS.
- Town of Hyde Park Department of Recreation—partnership on trail maintenance and connections.
- Marist College—partnership with the ROTC program for repair and maintenance work and other community service projects.
- Calvert Vaux Preservation Alliance is the non-profit friends group dedicated to the Hoyt House site.
- Hudson River Valley Greenway is a park partner and the management entity for the Hudson River National Heritage Area.
- Scenic Hudson has been instrumental in orchestrating the acquisition of additional land for the parks, as well as viewshed protection and easement projects across the river.
- The Great Estates Consortium is an organization dedicated to the history of the historic estates of the Hudson Valley

THIS PAGE WAS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

## **Chapter 3 – Environmental Setting**

### ***Physical Resources***

#### **Geology**

##### ***Surficial Geology***

The parks and historic site are underlain by the Austin Glen Formation which consists mostly of graywacke and shale. Characteristic of the Middle Ordovician, this bedrock type is common in the Hudson Valley and Taconic Region (USGS, 2011). The area along the river contains many bedrock outcroppings of calcareous sandstone. Please see Figure 4 for a map of the Surficial Geology of the facility.

#### **Topography**

The topography of the upland portions of Mills consists of mostly rolling hills (0-8% slope) down to the river. Closer to the river, primarily within Norrie, the topography is more irregular with numerous bedrock outcroppings. The river shoreline consists of fairly steep terrain and some highly erodible soilshale cliffs or talus slopes and therefore provides almost continuous scenic overlooks of the river and western shoreline. Please see Figure 5 for a map of the Topography of the park complex.

#### **Soils**

The soils of the area consist of gravelly loams with calcareous sandstone outcrops along the river, fine sandy loams on rolling hills, and muddy sand in tidal portions of creek beds. The soil types are dominated by Hudson and Vergennes, Nassau-Cardigan complex and Knickerbocker fine sandy loam and are suitable for many uses, including farming (USGS, 2011). Please see Figure 6 for a map of the Soils.

#### **Water**

The primary water resources of Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh are the Hudson River, the Indian Kill, North Staatsburg Creek, smaller unnamed streams, and a variety of wetlands. These water resources contribute significantly to the park's biodiversity by providing essential habitat for many species and are important scenic resources as well. Please see Figure 7 – Water Resources.

##### ***Hudson River***

The parks and historic site fall within the Rhinecliff to Wappinger Creek sub-watershed area of the Lower Hudson watershed (USGS, 2011). There is 3.8 miles of Hudson River shoreline along the mainland and Esopus Island provides another mile of shoreline. The river is a particularly unique resource in this area as access to the shoreline is almost entirely west of the train tracks. There are very few other areas along the Hudson River with such extensive direct riverfront public access. The vista from the parks and site to the north overlooks a very scenic widened section of the Hudson where the river is almost one mile across. The highly erodible nature of the cliffs and slopes along the shoreline has resulted in areas where the trails have started to erode.

### **Indian Kill**

The Indian Kill is a tributary of the Hudson River and runs through the southern portion of the park, emptying into the river at the park’s marina. The Indian Kill’s watershed is over 2,977 acres in size and parkland comprises 480 acres of that, or 16%, along the western boundary of the watershed. .

The Indian Kill originates in the Township of Rhinebeck, near the Rhinebeck/Hyde Park town lines and flows south and then west to the Hudson River. Along the way, it flows through several wetlands and is fed by several unnamed tributaries that join the main branch near the entrance to Norrie. One of these tributaries originates on the east side of U.S. Route 9 and flows westerly through the southern section of the Dinsmore Golf Course, through the hamlet of Staatsburg and then behind the Taconic Regional Office before reaching the main branch of the Indian Kill near the Norrie entrance. Two other tributaries flow northerly, entering the Indian Kill east of U.S. Route 9.

The Indian Kill is classified by NYS DEC as a Class C stream, indicating that its best use is for fishing. The mouth of the Indian Kill provides a sheltered area on the river for the marina as well as a storm refuge for boaters. The portion of this stream and associated wetlands near the river are tidal.

Please see Figure 8 for a map of the Indian Kill watershed.

### **North Staatsburg Creek**

Another Hudson River tributary, the North Staatsburg Creek, flows through a portion of the park along the north side of the golf course and a small area on the west side of Old Post Road. The section on the west side of the road is adjacent to one of the park’s maintenance areas. A stream bank restoration project was undertaken here by the Hudson Valley Student Conservation Association in 2003. The area was cleared of debris, and a buffer area to protect the stream from adjacent activities was delineated and planted with native vegetation.

### **Other Water Resources**

An unnamed stream flows through the northern portion of the park known as “Hopeland” and is dammed at one point, creating a small pond that is designated as “Dragonfly Pond.” Another small unnamed stream flows into the river cove near the Mills Gardener’s House.

### **Wetlands**

There are approximately 50 acres of wetlands within Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh. Figure 7 illustrates those that are regulated by NYS DEC as well as those identified by the US Fish and Wildlife Service National Wetland Inventory (NWI). Wetlands are an extremely important feature of these parks and there are eight different types of wetlands ranging from estuarine intertidal and tidal communities, to forested and shrub-dominated wetlands, and a number of vernal pools. The types of wetlands identified by the Natural Heritage Survey (Smith and Lundgren, 2010) are shown below with their respective acreages:

**Table 2 - Wetland Types within Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh**

Name	Acreage
Freshwater tidal marsh	2
Freshwater tidal swamp	11
Floodplain forest	9

Red maple-hardwood swamp	23
Vernal pool	Approx. 4
Shallow emergent marsh	1
Shrub swamp	2
Reedgrass/purple loosestrife marsh	<1

Of particular significance is the quantity and quality of small woodland vernal or intermittent pools. As these types of wetlands retain water only for a portion of the year (generally from spring into mid to late summer), they do not support fish and therefore provide important predator-free breeding and nursery habitat for salamanders and frogs. Despite their small size, they can actually support amphibian diversity equal to or greater than that of larger wetlands (Bell and Stevens, 2009). The leaf litter from the surrounding forest provides a basis for the pool’s food web and provides habitat for adult amphibians, as well (Ibid).

The shrub swamp, also identified by Bell and Stevens (Ibid) as a kettle shrub swamp, is another regionally unique wetland type found in Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh that has the potential for threatened species such as the Blanding’s turtle. This wetland is also valuable habitat for pool-breeding amphibians.

Another unique aspect to the wetlands here is the park’s calcareous geology, which provides buffering from the effects of acid rain and further enhances their habitat value (Kiviat and Stevens, 1993).

## **Air**

The Air Quality Index (AQI) in 2010 for Staatsburg, NY was 27.6 and the Ozone level was 28.6—about average for both, nationwide. The Particulate Matter level was 7.92 which were lower than the national average (EPA, 2011). The average AQI in Staatsburg is considered “Good” (anywhere from 0-50) which means air quality is considered satisfactory and there are no air pollution risks.

## **Climate**

The climate of the area is typical of the northeastern United States with four distinct seasons. However, given the mansion’s hilltop location, the area is subject to intense western winds throughout the year.

The average temperature at the parks and site is typical of the Mid-Hudson River valley and the Hudson Highlands region. Average temperatures in January are around 15 to 34 degrees Fahrenheit. The area enjoys pleasantly warm summers, marred by only occasional, brief intervals of sultry conditions. Summer daytime temperatures usually range from the upper 70s to mid 80s (The Weather Channel, 2011).

## **Natural Resources**

Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh has a long history of human use, particularly for agriculture. Currently, there is a mix of primarily second growth forest, with additional areas of successional old fields, maintained grasslands, and a golf course, as well as an extensive area of Hudson River shoreline that also includes Esopus Island. Numerous vernal pools and forested wetlands are scattered throughout the park. As discussed under Water Resources above, the final stretch of the Indian Kill is within

Norrie, flowing through tidal marsh and tidal swamp communities near its mouth before emptying into the Hudson River. This diversity of forests and fields, intermittent, permanent and tidal wetlands, Hudson River shoreline, and human-influenced landscapes supports a varied diversity of flora and fauna in the parks and site.

## Flora

Appendix C provides a listing of known and potential plants for the parks.

### **Rare Plants**

As part of the biodiversity inventory, four rare plants were recorded and these are noted in bold in Appendix C. These include state-endangered blunt-lobe grape-fern (*Botrychium oneidense*), state-threatened swamp cottonwood (*Populus heterophylla*) and two rare sedge species, state-threatened cat-tail sedge (*Carex typhina*) and state-rare false hop sedge (*Carex lupuliformis*). The discovery of these rare plant populations suggests that the forest, wetlands, and rocky outcrops within the park provide good habitat for a number of rare plant species (Smith and Lundgren, 2010).

In addition, a specimen from the Bailey Horatorium in Ithaca, NY was recently determined to be Provancher's Fleabane (*Erigeron philadelphicus* var. *provancheri*) that was collected along the cliffs at Norrie Point in 1951. The Heritage survey identified the cliff areas as having a suitable habitat and potential for rare plants and additional rare plant survey work is recommended in this area of the park (Ibid).

### **Invasive Plants**

There are many invasive plant species impacting the native ecological communities of Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh. Particular attention should be paid to control of black swallow-wort (*Cynanchum louiseae*) and mile-a-minute (*Persicaria perfoliata*) as these species are particularly aggressive and especially harmful to native habitat. There are many other prevalent invasive species throughout the park complex including: phragmites (*Phragmites australis*), Japanese barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*), Japanese stiltgrass (*Microstegium vimineum*), Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), Norway Maple (*Acer platanoides*), and bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*).

## Fauna

Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh contains a varied assemblage of fauna characteristic of western Dutchess County and the parks support both common and rare species. Fauna lists, based on information from the OPRHP Regional Biologist, NYNHP reports (Evans 2000; Smith and Lundgren 2010), Hudsonia, Ltd. biological surveys of the park (Kiviat and Stevens, 1993; Bell and Stevens, 2009), the New York State Breeding Bird Atlas (McGowan and Corwin, 2008), the Ralph T. Waterman Bird Club, and the New York State Amphibian and Reptile Atlas (NYS DEC, 2009), are summarized in Appendix D.

### **Mammals**

Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh support at least 23 species of mammals, but additional species are undoubtedly present. The Indian Kill and other streams and wetlands in the park support aquatic mammals such as river otter (*Lontra canadensis*), mink (*Neovison vison*), beaver (*Castor canadensis*), and muskrat (*Ondatra zibethicus*). Other common species in the park include Eastern coyote (*Canis latrans*), red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*), Eastern cottontail (*Sylvilagus floridanus*), woodchuck (*Marmota monax*), and white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*).

### **Birds**

A diverse array of bird life can be found throughout the varied habitats within the parks. Species such as the bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) and a variety of waterfowl and marsh birds are found in the shoreline and emergent marsh communities in the park, warblers and scarlet tanagers (*Piranga olivacea*) can be found in the wooded environments, while Eastern bluebirds (*Sialia sialis*) and American kestrels (*Falco sparverius*) are present in the open fields. In all, approximately 170 species of birds may be seen at various times of the year at the park, including 57 species reported to breed here according to the bird checklist entitled “Birds of Staatsburgh State Historic Site” (OPRHP, 2003).

Because this checklist is somewhat outdated, additional data on breeding birds was obtained from the most recent New York State Breeding Bird Atlas (BBA) completed between 2000-2005 (McGowan and Corwin, 2008). An analysis of the BBA records resulted in 80 species reported in BBA blocks that cover Mills-Norrie State Parks. Of these, confirmed breeding was documented for 30 species, while species reported as likely to be breeding (probable breeding status) include 31 additional species (iBid).

The Ralph T. Waterman Bird Club has maintained a bluebird “trail” (i.e., a series of nest boxes) within Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh since 1996. At present, the trail consists of 55 nest boxes located in successional old field areas on the north and south sides of Old Post Road, around the Taconic Regional Office, and along the entrance road to Margaret Lewis Norrie State Park. Due to the dedicated monitoring efforts of this volunteer group, 585 bluebirds fledged from this trail from 2008-2012. The group also reported that from 2011-2012 236 tree swallows and 64 house wrens fledged from these boxes as well.

A list of known and likely birds for Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh is found in Appendix D.

### **Reptiles and Amphibians**

According to information from the State Parks Regional Biologist, data from the New York State Amphibian and Reptile Atlas Project (NYS DEC, 2008), and data from Hudsonia, Ltd. staff, at least 12 species of amphibians and 8 species of reptiles and turtles are found in Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh. These include six species of salamanders, six species of frogs and toads, four species of snakes, and four species of turtles.

An important complex of vernal pools is found within the parks and this system supports an array of facultative and obligate vernal pool breeding amphibians, including spotted salamander (*Ambystoma maculatum*), wood frog (*Rana sylvatica*), Northern spring peeper (*Pseudacris crucifer*), and gray treefrog (*Hyla versicolor*). Marbled salamander (*Ambystoma opacum*), a fall vernal pool breeder, is also likely to be present.

Additionally, the Indian Kill supports the only Dutchess County records for the common mudpuppy (*Necturus maculosus*), a fully aquatic species of salamander.

### **Fish**

Fish found at Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh include various species found in the Indian Kill and other park streams and ponds. The Hudson River, adjacent to the park, supports important species such as the state-endangered shortnose sturgeon (*Acipenser brevirostrum*), which overwinter in large numbers just north of Mills-Norrie State Park in the vicinity of Esopus Meadows (Chris Bowser personal comment), as well as popular sportfish like the striped bass (*Morone saxatilis*). Atlantic

sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus*) spawn just south of Norrie Point near the mouth of Crum Elbow Creek (Ibid.) and this species is known to congregate in the channel around Esopus Island (Tom Lake pers. comm.).

A list of fish documented within the park is found in Appendix D.

### ***Invertebrates***

Invertebrates found at Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh include multiple species of odonates (dragonflies and damselflies) that occupy the streams, ponds, and wetlands, as well as rare freshwater mussels found in the Indian Kill.

A partial list of invertebrates documented or expected within the complex is found in Appendix D.

### ***Rare, Threatened, Endangered and Special Concern Species***

The NYNHP and Hudsonia, Ltd. reports, along with field surveys by the Regional Biologist and others, identified at least six species of rare animals in Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh. These species include three invertebrates (freshwater mussels) – alewife floater (*Anodonta implicata*), yellow lampmussel (*Lampsilis cariosa*), and eastern pondmussel (*Ligumia nasuta*); two reptiles – Wood turtle (*Glyptemys insculpta*) and Eastern box turtle (*Terrapene c. carolina*); and one bird – bald eagle. The state-endangered shortnose sturgeon is present in the adjacent Hudson River.

The near shore areas of the Hudson River that border the parks also support a winter waterfowl concentration area, as well as an anadromous fish concentration area (Smith and Lundgren, 2010).

Appendix D contains a listing of the rare animals and their state status for Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh.

### ***Nuisance Fauna***

There are some native animal species that have become nuisances, impacting the park or native ecological communities of Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh; specifically, Canada geese and white-tailed deer.

### ***Esopus Island***

Esopus Island is a 6.8 acre Hudson River island that is part of Margaret Lewis Norrie State Park. The island contains numerous rock outcroppings along the shoreline and is primarily covered in mixed deciduous vegetation. Due to the lack of predators here, it is used by approximately 55 to 70 nesting pairs of Canada geese each spring. Other waterfowl that use the island for nesting include mallard ducks (*Anas platyrhynchos*). Species such as the double-crested cormorant (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) use the Hudson River in the vicinity of the island's shoreline. Bald eagles are frequently spotted on island trees, particularly in the winter. The island is an excellent example for tree and shrub regeneration, as white-tailed deer are absent. A few small wetlands are also present in shallow depressions here.

### ***Significant Coastal Fish and Wildlife Habitat***

Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh borders two areas along the Hudson River that have been designated by the New York Department of State Coastal Management Program as significant coastal fish and wildlife habitats areas. They are: Vanderburg Cove Shallows and the Kingston Deepwater Habitat. Another designated significant habitat, Esopus Meadows, is located along the west shore of the Hudson River opposite the park.

The following are brief descriptions of the significance of these areas taken from the “Coastal Fish and Wildlife Habitat Rating Form” (NYS DOS, 1993). Vanderburg Cove Shallows - This area consists of a large contiguous area of shallow, freshwater, subtidal flats that provides extremely valuable fish and wildlife habitat. These flats provide spawning, nursery, and feeding habitats for anadromous species such as striped bass, American shad (*Alosa sapidissima*), and white perch (*Morone americana*), and for a variety of resident freshwater species, such as largemouth bass (*Micropterus salmoides*), carp (*Cyprinus carpio* - exotic), brown bullhead (*Ameiurus nebulosus*), yellow perch (*Perca flavescens*), and shiners. It also provides habitat for a variety of waterfowl and is particularly important during spring and fall migration periods. It is an important recreational fishing area as well as a popular waterfowl hunting area.

Kingston Deepwater Habitat – This area is the northernmost section of the unique deepwater habitat in the Hudson River. This type of deep water habitat (greater than 30 feet) is especially important for the Atlantic and shortnose sturgeon. This area is also considered responsible for the abundance of marine life upriver particularly during low freshwater flows in the summer.

Esopus Meadows – Much like Vanderburg Cove on the eastern shoreline, Esopus Meadows is also a relatively large, undisturbed area of shallow, freshwater, tidal flats located along the opposite shore of the river. It too is a valuable fish and wildlife habitat, serving as an important spawning and nursery area for anadromous fish as well as resident species and even wintering shortnose sturgeon. It also attracts significant concentrations of waterfowl and other water birds. The area is popular for fishing, waterfowl hunting and bird watching.

## **Ecological Communities**

As part of the New York Natural Heritage Program (NYNHP) survey work conducted at the parks and site, all of the natural community types have been mapped (Figure 9). These communities are defined as both natural and human-influenced, or cultural ecological communities. This community survey was originally created for Mills-Norrie in 2000, was updated and refined in 2003 and 2010. Twenty-eight different communities have been identified. A listing of the communities and their sizes is found in Appendix E.

Approximately two-thirds of Mills-Norrie consists of natural communities dominated by forests that include patches of open areas and wetlands. Some of the communities in this “natural” category are less diverse than others. For example, lawns and croplands, while considered natural areas, are less biologically diverse than old fields and successional shrublands. Approximately a third of the parks are classified as cultural communities – those that are man-made and maintained. One hundred ninety seven acres of the parks are mowed lawn (primarily the golf course); 86 acres are considered developed with buildings and parking lots; and 48 acres is considered cropland/hayfields, including an area to the north of the golf course.

The dominant forest types include successional northern hardwood forest, hemlock-northern hardwood forest, and Appalachian oak-hickory forest, which is the most mature forest type present.

There is a small tidal swamp just upstream of the marina along the Indian Kill. Freshwater tidal swamps are uncommon in New York and therefore, while small, this is an important habitat (Smith and Lundgren, 2010) and the NY Natural Heritage Program has mapped this as a significant natural community. Additionally, the Town of Hyde Park has designated this area as part of a Critical Environmental Area encompassing the Indian Kill.

## **Significant Ecological Communities**

“Significant natural communities,” as defined by NYNHP, are known locations of rare natural community types as well as the best known examples of common natural community types. Two significant ecological communities were identified within Mills-Norrie (Ibid.). One is the Hudson River, as it is considered a statewide significant example of a tidal river. The second is the freshwater tidal swamp located along the Indian Kill. Although it is only 11 acres in size, the freshwater tidal swamp community is very uncommon and therefore considered to be of statewide significance. This community is located at the upper tidal zone of the freshwater reach of the Indian Kill Creek and floods twice a day with the tides. This type of community is considered biologically diverse although poorly studied (Bell and Stevens, 2009). The railroad corridor passes through this area and a former park landfill is located within it as well. This landfill is slated to be formally closed within 2012 and trees growing on the landfill have been cut to allow for remediation of the site.

## ***Historic Resources***

### **History of the Parks and Historic Site**

The history of human occupation at Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh begins with the Native American settlements of the Wappinger and the Mahican tribes. Their lands later came into European hands and by the 1760s the hamlet of “Staatsburgh” was established. The late 18<sup>th</sup> century in the Hudson Valley marked the beginnings of the age of the country seat and wealthy landowners began to establish estates around the hamlet. One of the first of these was Morgan Lewis, a Revolutionary War officer and the third Governor of New York State.

Lewis’ first house at Staatsburgh, completed prior to 1797, was surrounded by substantial farm buildings including a stone barn, stables, a carpenter shop and a cider mill. Additional property was extensively leased out for tenant farming. After an 1832 fire destroyed the house a new Greek Revival structure was constructed. After the death of Morgan Lewis and his wife Gertrude the house was inherited by their daughter Margaret Lewis Livingston. She and her husband, Maturin, were the parents of twelve children, two of whom acquired property near their parents and established their own country seats. These two properties are located within the current boundaries of the Mills and Norrie parks. “The Point,” located southwest of Staatsburgh, was the home of Geraldine Livingston and Lydig S. Hoyt. Designed by celebrated architect and landscape architect, Calvert Vaux it is considered one of Vaux’s most significant achievements. The c. 1855 Gothic Revival house still stands. Geraldine’s sister Gertrude and her husband Rawlins Lowndes established their country seat to the northeast of Staatsburgh on the property known today as the Hopeland Area. The Lowndes’ house, also designed by Calvert Vaux no longer exists but it is likely that the existing road systems with the Hopeland area is a remnant of Vaux’s landscape design for the property.

The 1832 house built by Morgan Lewis was ultimately inherited by his grandson, Maturin Livingston, and through him it passed in 1890 to his daughter Ruth Livingston Mills. Shortly after acquiring the property Ruth, and her husband Ogden, began a major campaign to remodel the 1832 house and the surrounding grounds. The prestigious New York City architectural firm of McKim, Mead and White was retained to transform the simple, 25-room residence into a European style mansion elaborately finished with ornamental ceilings, marble fireplaces and decorative walls and floors. The house was furnished to match with elaborate Louis the XV and XVI furnishings. The estate was also enhanced by numerous other outbuildings including a carriage barn and an animal barn complex. The estate itself was defined by the stone wall that runs along west side of the Old Post Road. Helen Huntington Hull donated the golf course first, then another wooded piece on the

southeast corner of the golf course, then 4 annual gifts of 10 acres which allowed the north course to be constructed. She also stipulated the name of Dinsmore Golf Course (and was the guest of honor when the golf clubhouse was dedicated.) She also donated the properties outside the Mills exit gate known as the Hayes and Russell houses.

In the 1980s, OPRHP acquired 51 acres on the north side of the golf course from Robert Ford Huntington, plus a conservation easement on a 10 acre adjacent parcel containing the Huntington barn and a residence. The acquisition pushed the park boundary north to Old Post Road and Route 9. In the late 1990s Scenic Hudson had the opportunity to acquire the 10 acre parcel plus 97 acres on the other (north) side of Old Post Road from Route 9 to the Hudson River. After consulting with OPRHP on the future desirability of adding this property to the park, the Scenic Hudson Land Trust acquired the 107 acre “Hopeland” area of the present park in 1999 and held it until OPRHP could purchase it in 2003-04. Scenic Hudson also holds a conservation easement on the property lying between the Hopeland and Mills Mansion portions of the park, as well as substantial acreage and other easements directly across the Hudson River from the park. The properties help preserve the principal view across the west lawn from the mansion.

Staatsburgh State Historic Site is one of many historically significant attractions in the region. Olana State Historic Site, Clermont State Historic Site, Wilderstein Historic Site, Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Site, Locust Grove Historic Site, Val-Kill National Historic Site, and the Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site, to name a few, are all relatively nearby. Together, these properties are a window into a previous time in our nation’s history and help tell the story of the Hudson River Valley.

Included within the Mills and Norrie parks are numerous other historical features detailed in the full “History of the Parks and Historic Site” located in Appendix F.

## **Archeological**

The archeological resources at Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh include both pre-historic and historic artifacts and the foundations or other remains of buildings and other man-made structures. Archeological testing within the boundaries of Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh has uncovered evidence of pre-historic (Late Archaic and Mid-Late Woodland Period) activity along with 19<sup>th</sup> century cultural material. This includes hearth features, pottery, tool making and projectile points relating to the Native American occupation. Testing within the parks and near the Historic Site has uncovered a great deal of domestic debris scattered across the landscape relating to the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century occupation of the site. The burn layer associated with the 1832 fire and destruction of Morgan Lewis’ (1790) structure was documented as well as hundreds of items relating to construction activities, food and drink and personal objects. Archeological testing within one-mile of Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh has revealed dozens of pre-historic sites, the remains of a 20<sup>th</sup> century estate and an early to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century burial ground. Excavations have also documented the remains of the 1872 rail station, historic quarries and building foundations.

Based on the evidence to date, all of Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh is considered archeologically sensitive.

## **Cultural Resources**

Native American tribes and cultural groups occupied both sides of the Hudson River for thousands of years before European settlement; however, no coordinated effort has been made to interpret specific sites within the parks.

The majority of the documented cultural resources that exist within Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh are associated with the establishment of American Renaissance and Gilded Age country seats along the Hudson River. The significant cultural resources that remain include numerous structures as well as designed landscapes. Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Sixteen Mile District (1978) and is a National Historic Landmark as part of the Hudson River National Historic Landmark District (1990). Please refer to Figure 10 for a map of the cultural resources of the park complex.

### **Historic Buildings & Structures**

There are a total of 46 significant historic structures within Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh in addition to a number of small garages and other small buildings. The majority of the structures are connected to one of the Gilded Age estates, “Staatsburgh,” “The Point,” “Stonehurst,” or “The Locusts.” The structures related to the Staatsburgh estate include the mansion, the extensive dairy complex, out buildings related to the greenhouse complex, water towers and pump houses as well as a number of vernacular domestic structures used to house staff. “The Point” estate is also primarily intact including the mansion known as (Hoyt House), as well as a number of barns, garages and other outbuildings. The stone water reservoir/ice house is the only structure remaining from “Stonehurst.” The large stone foundations of one or more former icehouses are located at the foot of the park road called River Road. These served the NYC market. The industry was probably defunct prior to 1900; Knickerbocker Ice Company was one of the companies operating in Staatsburg and it is believed that the Norrie family purchased the old icehouse properties from them for the Lewis Gordon Norrie Playground, or had purchased those properties earlier and then converted them into the memorial playground. The existing building on the “Stonehurst” property (north of the playground site, south of Hoyt) was a combination water tower / ice house for just that estate. Only two primary structures relating to “The Locusts” estate remain in the park, including a large barn and a vernacular staff house (also known as the Huntington house and area).

In addition to the structures related to the estate period, Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh also features a number of other significant buildings. The park includes an early Park Pavilion (1925) at the Lewis Gordon Norrie Playground as well as the former Staatsburg School (1930). In addition, Norrie contains a number of buildings that were constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1934-37. These structures are not specifically identified as part of the National Register Listing but have only recently achieved eligibility. The CCC era buildings include the Norrie Point Inn, bridges, comfort stations, rental cabins and several outbuildings (water towers and pump houses). A listing of existing buildings and structures is in Appendix G. Please refer to Figure 11, as well.

Most of the historic buildings have survived relatively intact, albeit suffering from a backlog of deferred maintenance. The distinctive porches from Hoyt House have been removed as have many of the exterior trim elements from Staatsburgh.

### **Historic Designed Landscapes**

The 1,100 acre Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh facility was created largely through the acquisition of several historic designed landscapes. The designed landscape was a fundamental characteristic of the country seats/estates that were built in the Hudson Valley in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century. While the style of the landscape may vary depending on the time the estate was created or last re-designed, it is important to understand that every element was carefully designed to create a specific atmosphere. Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh is especially significant because it features an intact Calvert Vaux Romantic

Style landscape associated with “The Point,” as well as significant portions of “Staatsburgh’s” English country manor style landscape and smaller portions of other historically designed landscapes.

“The Point’s” landscape is nationally significant for its exceptional design and intrinsic scenic beauty. The property’s significance is heightened by its association with Calvert Vaux, a distinguished architect and landscape designer, and a proponent of the Romantic styles in art and architecture. Vaux was an advocate of the harmonious union of buildings and scenery and “The Point” skillfully captures these Romantic ideas. “The Point” may be the last, or one of the last, remaining examples of an intact Gothic Revival structure and landscape designed by Calvert Vaux.

The landscape surrounding “Staatsburgh” was developed in the image of an English country manor. An English country landscape is inherently artificial but it is designed to appear natural and imbued with a sense of antiquity. Such landscapes feature expansive lawns planted with trees (specimen trees), woodland, fenced pastureland, orchards and meadows. Views were carefully placed and configured, and the process of moving through the landscape was intended to be one of discovery. The carriage roads that wind through the estate were a critical element of the design, the approaches were carefully planned to take advantage of the beauty of the natural scenery and designed landscape. The working dairy farm, orchard, and tenant farms were all important elements of the design.

Significant elements of historic designed landscapes at Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh include specimen trees, meadows, lawns, carriage roads, and estate walls, stone walls and viewsheds. These features are critical elements of the scenic beauty that permeates the parks and historic site.

## ***Scenic Resources***

### ***Vistas***

The Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh complex has a large number of specific scenic views. These typically relate to the Hudson River, the largely wooded west shore in Ulster County’s Town of Esopus, rolling agricultural terrain, and distant views of mountains including portions of the Catskills. A number of views are available from public roads, such as Route 9 and the Old Post Road. Other long views are found on the elevated portions of the Dinsmore Golf Course and from the clubhouse itself.

In the vicinity of “Staatsburgh,” the river becomes the foreground and near middle ground of views to the west and north toward the Catskills, often with the Esopus Meadows Lighthouse included in the view. Along a few trails and at the powerhouse, the views are enhanced by the direct contact with the river. This is especially true along the length of the River Trail, at the Lewis Gordon Norrie Playground area, in the camping/cabin area, within the marina and its riverside picnic area. An exceptional view from the Norrie Point Environmental Center site is to the west and south down the Hudson River with Esopus Island in the foreground.

The Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh complex is also a scenic contribution to the view from the west shore and from the Hudson River. Its wooded slopes, sometimes rugged terrain at river’s edge, well secluded park structures, and distant view to the west façade of ‘Staatsburgh’ all contribute to the high quality character of the view.

Some historic scenic views have been lost, notably in the vicinity of “The Point” and others are closing in such as the west view from the Clay Hill area near Route 9 and the middle level of the Lewis Gordon Norrie playground.

## **Scenic Roads**

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation has designated the Old Post Road in Staatsburg and the park roads within Margaret Lewis Norrie State Park as Scenic Roads under Article 49 of the Environmental Conservation Law (ECL). This designation is based on the uniformly high quality of the natural and historic features along these road corridors. The Old Post Road is considered the entrance to the hamlet of Staatsburg as well as the entrance to the Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh holdings. The parks contribute significantly to the character of the roadway and account for some 75% of the frontage along the road.

In 1978, the state legislature passed the Hudson River Study Bill. This bill directed the State Department of Environmental Conservation to study and report on the issue of scenic, recreational and ecological resources in specific areas of the valley.” The February 1979 report “Hudson River Valley - A Heritage For All Time” included a recommendation that Article 49 of the ECL be used to designate the state’s first scenic area. The Mid-Hudson Historic Shorelands Scenic District, a 20 mile stretch of the Hudson’s east shore, was subsequently designated and includes the Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh complex (Mid-Hudson Historic Shorelands Scenic District Management Plan—Draft, 1983).

## **Scenic Areas of Statewide Significance (SASS)**

The New York State Department of State has identified a 27-mile stretch of the Hudson River and its eastern shorelands from the Town of Germantown to south of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Home National Historic Site as the Estates District SASS. The designation includes all of the Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh property and additional adjacent areas. The SASS was created because of the combined aesthetic values of its landscape character and its uniqueness, public accessibility and public recognition. This SASS is unique in the Hudson River coastal area, the State and the nation because of the collection of large estates with their designed landscapes, the many undisturbed natural features and the significant public historic sites and architectural treasures.

The Estates District SASS is publicly accessible both visually and physically, from the Hudson River, from public streets and highways and from significant national and State parks and sanctuaries despite the large private estates along the eastern shoreline, (DOS, 2011).

Please refer to Figure 10 for a map of the Scenic Resources of the park complex.

## ***Recreational Resources/Activities***

### **Boating**

There is a marina at Norrie State Park with 150 recreational boat slips, a pump-out facility and a boat launch. The marina offers seasonal boat slip rentals and transient slips, if available. Slips with electric hookups are available for a fee. Electric hookups are available at all slips. The marina area also includes a publically accessible boat launch for day users. Transient boaters are heaviest in spring during striped bass season. Adjacent to the marina is a kayak rentals/lessons concession. The marina is scheduled for maintenance dredging in 2012-2013 and at that time the fixed docking system will be replaced with a floating dock configuration. This will provide additional docking spaces. Informal car-top launching occurs at the Lewis Gordon Norrie Playground area.

## **Day-use Areas**

### ***Picnic Areas***

There are several picnic areas located at Norrie with tables and grills. Informal picnics often take place in the landscaped lawn areas at Mills. There is no designated group picnic area in either park.

### ***Pavilions***

There is one pavilion located at the Lewis Gordon Norrie Playground area in the north end of Norrie State Park. It is available on a first-come-first-serve basis and there is no rental fee associated with its use.

## **Trails**

There are over 11 miles of trails in the parks (See Figure 12 – Existing Trail System) consisting of wider carriage or service roads as well as narrow single track trails. Some of the trail alignments are historic in nature following estate roads, walking paths, or horse trails, while others were developed more recently. Hiking, biking, and horseback riding are allowed uses within the trail system. As a year round facility, many of the trails and open areas (e.g. golf course) are used for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. Snowmobiling is allowed informally in open field areas near the Norrie entrance. There are no groomed trails for winter use.

## **Campground and Cabins**

There is a campground located at Norrie State Park. It includes forty-five tent campsites; three of these sites have tent platforms. The campground provides direct access to the trails and marina. There is one central comfort station that provides toilet and shower facilities.

There is also a Group Campground, located near the main campground area that is available to groups of fourteen or more. Users share the comfort station at the main campground. This camping area is used by groups such as the Boy Scouts, day camps and colleges, but can also be used for larger gatherings such as reunions.

There are no camping facilities within Mills State Park.

There are ten cabins at Norrie State Park located on a plateau above the Hudson River that provide scenic views of the river. The cabins sleep four people with bunk beds; have a small kitchenette and a screened porch. There are no restrooms, but the cabins are served by a common comfort station. Five of the cabins were constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and five were constructed in the CCC style in the 1950s.

## **Winter Activities**

Winter activities include: cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and snowmobiling is allowed in the open area near the Norrie entrance, but there are no groomed trails. Sledding is also a popular activity in Mills State Park and attracts many visitors in the colder months. Sledding occurs on the west lawn at “Staatsburgh.”

## **Fishing**

Fishing is allowed from sunrise to sunset at Dragonfly Pond and the Indian Kill, with a valid NYS fishing license. A fishing license is not required while fishing the tidal Hudson River. Depending on the water body, the parks host both fresh and saltwater fish. Fish species present include sunfish

(several species), smallmouth bass (*Micropterus dolmieu*), largemouth bass, catfish (several species), white perch, and striped bass, to name a few. Size and bag limits are set by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. Additionally, the NYS Department of Health issues fish consumption guidelines for New York State waters, including the Hudson River estuary, due to health concerns from contaminants in fish.

### **Golf**

The Dinsmore Golf Course is an 18-hole course located at the east side of the Mills park. Cart (hand and electric) rentals and accessories are available at the pro shop. The clubhouse is available for catered events and a cafe is open for golfers at the lower level. The catering and café operations are operated under a concession agreement.

### **Geo-caching**

Geo-caching occurs in the parks and is monitored through a statewide permit system.

### **Bird Watching**

With an abundance of species, including some rare species and access to the Hudson River shoreline, the parks provide an excellent location for birding. The local Ralph T. Waterman Bird Club uses the parks regularly and has maintained a bluebird “trail” within the park since 1996.

### **Passive Uses**

Passive uses such as walking, running/jogging, dog walking and just sitting and enjoying the views are perhaps the most popular recreational activities at Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh. Many patrons may visit the parks for lunch hour or an after-work walk. The west lawn at “Staatsburgh” is often used to watch the river and passing vessels, and simply relaxing in the park.

Please refer to Figure 13 for a map of the existing recreational activities of the parks and historic site.

## ***Interpretive and Educational Programs***

### **Public Programs**

#### ***Staatsburgh State Historic Site***

The historic site interprets the story of the Mills family in the years between 1895 and 1920, the year Ruth Livingston Mills died. Through tours and public programs, site staff and volunteers inform the public about the history of Gilded Age America and particularly the Hudson Valley arena of Gilded Age social activity. The site has a calendar of events and special programs in addition to house tours, and it offers curricula-driven school programs to more than 1,000 students, from kindergarten through college each year.

#### ***Norrie Point Environmental Center***

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation operates the Norrie Point Environmental Center, located in Norrie State Park. The center offers environmental education programming to schools, groups, and the general public during the week and on the weekends. In addition, staff at the environmental center conducts research on the Hudson River and its ecosystems. This facility is operated under a Memorandum of Understanding between NYS DEC and OPRHP and is the headquarters of the Hudson River National Estuarine Research Reserve (HRNERR). The

Reserve is a partnership with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) for the stewardship of federally-designated and state-protected sites within the Hudson River Estuary. The center includes a research laboratory, classroom and conference space, and a weather station. An important component of its mission is education which includes: "...guided canoe programs, lectures, interpretive exhibits and community events for the general public; information and training sessions for coastal decision makers; workshops for teachers; and field-based programs for middle school, high school, and post-secondary students (NYS DEC, 2011)."

## **Annual Events**

### ***Antique Car Show***

"Staatsburgh's" annual antique car show showcases classic automobiles against a backdrop of October foliage. Organized in conjunction with the Red Hook Car Club, this event draws cars from all over the tri-state area. The spectacular setting combines with a relaxed atmosphere of good fun and includes informal judging.

### ***Summer Concert Series***

The summer concert series occurs each Wednesday during the summer, alternating between Staatsburgh State Historic Site and the nearby Vanderbilt Mansion. The concert features free family-friendly music on the great lawn at each site where families can picnic and enjoy views of the Hudson River.

### ***Holiday Whodunit***

During Staatsburgh's busy Holiday Season, the site offers children a chance to become Edwardian detectives. Children are invited to step into the past to solve a mystery from 100 years ago. Costumed interpreters portray house guests and servants to provide clues to the young detectives.

## **Special Events**

Weddings and other special events are allowed within the parks at designated locations. A fee is charged for use of the grounds.

## **Arts and Culture**

### ***Friends of Mills Mansion***

The Friends of Mills Mansion is a 501(c) 3 not-for-profit organization that was founded in 1988 to support the historic site's activities. The Friends consists of a dedicated group of volunteers who have contributed significantly to major restoration and interpretive projects and are currently engaged in the restoration of the mansion's basement level. From 1938 until December 2010, the basement housed the Taconic Regional Office. This area of the house historically included the kitchen and other key areas of household operations, as well as bedrooms for male guests and male servants' quarters. Once completed, interpretation of this level of the mansion will provide an even fuller understanding of the way the house functioned in its heyday, and the interaction among the different classes and groups of people who inhabited, visited, or labored within it.

### ***Calvert Vaux Preservation Alliance***

Calvert Vaux Preservation Alliance is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit advocacy organization that is committed to preserving the architectural and landscape design legacy of Calvert Vaux and related

designers, particularly in the vicinity of New York State's Hudson River Valley. A central component to CVPA's mission is its role as friends group of the Hoyt House and continues to raise funds for the restoration of the site.

### ***Emergency Plans and Services***

The parks and historic site comply with an emergency action plan that provides protocols for responding to a variety of emergency situations such as accidents, theft or illness. Confined space entry and hazard communication plans for workers' safety are maintained, as are lists of Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for all supplies and chemicals used at the parks and historic site. There is also a Certified Pesticide Applicator on staff to record and report pesticide use annually to the NYS DEC.

The Emergency Response Plan for the parks and historic sites describes the evacuation plans for the facilities in the event of fire. During an evacuation situation, the park will notify the New York State Park Police who will assist with the evacuation of the facilities.

Security within the parks and historic site is provided by the New York State Park Police, located at the Regional Headquarters in Staatsburg (Norrie State Park). The State Park Police patrol and respond to emergencies within the park. In addition, State and Town of Hyde Park Police provide backup assistance. The parks and historic site are served by the Staatsburg Fire Department and the Hyde Park Fire Department. Ambulance services are contacted by the NYS Park Police, or in their absence, through the Dutchess County 911 Emergency Response system. Park staff is certified in CPR and First Aid and assist until volunteer ambulance services arrive.

### ***Infrastructure***

#### **Water Supplies**

The potable water supply for facilities within Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh is purchased through the Dutchess County Water and Wastewater Authority. Potable water is not available in all buildings.

#### **Wastewater and Sewerage Systems**

Wastewater is treated using subsurface septic systems. There are seventeen septic systems that serve the parks and historic site. The tank sizes range from 500 gallons (for a small residence) to upwards of 6,000 gallons for larger facilities (the clubhouse at the golf course, the Norrie Point Environmental Center, the marina). The tanks are checked and pumped on a regular schedule.

#### **Electricity**

Electric service is provided by Central Hudson Gas and Electric via overhead and underground lines. Some utility lines within the parks are owned and maintained by OPRHP.

#### **Telephone**

Telephone service is provided to the parks and historic site by Verizon.

#### **Roads and Bridges**

There are 5.3 miles of internal park roads that traverse both parks. Both parks are adjacent to Route 9 and Albany Post Road. There are five bridges over the railroad tracks and several small bridges located throughout both parks.

## **Access Points and Parking Areas**

Visitors to the parks and historic site have multiple access points into both parks given their location and proximity to Route 9 and Albany Post Road. A vehicle use fee is only applied in one location, the marina at Norrie State Park. There are nine parking areas for the parks and two parking areas for the historic site and approximately 630 parking spaces for the entire facility.

## **Culverts**

There are ten culverts in the parks located in various locations, including the following: the golf course, railroad, marina, Gardener's house, the old and new entrance to Norrie State Park, and the driveway at "The Point."

## **Accessibility**

There are accessible parking spots located within the parking areas. Both parks and the historic site make every attempt to remain compliant with current indoor and outdoor accessibility standards. New construction is built in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guides and the New York State Building and Fire Code.

## **Buildings**

There are 62 buildings within the parks and historic site, including the Taconic Regional Office. See Figure 11 for a map of and Appendix G for a detailed listing of the existing buildings of the park complex.

## **Operations**

Mills and Norrie State Parks are under the supervision of a park manager, and "Staatsburgh" is under the supervision of a historic site manager. The Taconic Regional Office is located within Norrie State Park and the building also serves as a meeting space for the region and the community.

## **Maintenance**

The primary maintenance/storage facilities are located in the Mills Carriage Barn and adjacent to the Dinsmore Golf Course in the historic Dairy Complex. The latter is the storage area for golf course equipment such as mowers. Fuel pumps are located at both areas.

## **Solid Waste Management and Recycling Programs**

The parks and historic site are carry-in/carry-out facilities, except for the campground which provides garbage cans and a dumpster, which is emptied weekly. The Regional Office at Norrie State Park does provide recycling, but this is the only location within the parks and site where recycling occurs.

## **Season and Hours**

The parks and historic site are open year round, with the exception of the marina and campground, both seasonally operated. . The parks are open from sunrise to sunset and Staatsburgh State Historic Site is open 11am-5pm, Wednesday through Sunday from April to October and from 11am-5pm during the weekends November through March. The site is open additional hours during the month of December.



## **Chapter 4 – Park Vision and Goals**

### ***Agency Mission Statement***

The mission of OPRHP is to provide safe and enjoyable recreational and interpretive opportunities for all New York State residents and visitors and to be responsible stewards of our valuable natural, historic and cultural resources.

### ***Overall Parks and Site Goal***

The Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh complex is a model for the integration of recreational, cultural and environmental resources. It will continue to achieve a balance between recreation and the protection of natural and cultural resources of the parks and historic site. Proposals for new programs, activities or projects will be evaluated based on the needs of the facility and program as well as their compatibility with the park setting and consistency with resource protection guidelines including the Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Structures.

### ***Mills-Norrie Vision***

The parks will continue to offer existing recreational opportunities within the highly scenic and historic setting with extensive direct and visual access to the Hudson River. The golfing, boating, camping and trail facilities will be improved, respond to changing trends, and retain their design character. Infrastructure needs for improved operations, Hudson River access, or relocation from historic buildings will be given priority in capital construction.

Interpretive research and programming will be developed in conjunction with other partners on the numerous themes identified within the parks and the general Hudson River Valley. An emphasis will be placed on Native Americans, land-use, including agriculture and estate development, transportation, Civilian Conservation Corps, and the parks movement.

Management plans for the parks’ historic structures, cultural, scenic, and natural features will be prepared, integrated, and implemented.

### ***Staatsburgh Vision***

Staatsburgh State Historic Site is a tourist destination in the Hudson Valley that provides protection and interpretation of a country estate and tells a multigenerational story of the Lewis-Livingston-Mills family and those who lived, worked and visited the mansion. While on-going restoration of the mansion and its collection will continue, the historic site will expand to include its historic designed landscape and the outbuildings originally included in the estate to properly preserve historic resources and allow for expanded interpretative and passive recreation opportunities.

### **Goals**

- Protect and preserve natural resources through developing habitat management strategies, maintaining and monitoring water quality and identifying and managing threats.
- Provide and improve sustainable day use, water related and overnight facilities that are compatible with the natural and cultural resources and enhance public use and enjoyment of the parks and historic site.
- Protect and preserve important historic designed landscapes and structures, and archeological resources in the parks and historic site.

- Protect, preserve and restore the scenic and historic views, vistas and landscapes while minimizing impacts to internal and external viewsheds.
- Protect and preserve open space resources in and adjacent to the parks and historic site through acquisition, easements and coordination with existing partners.
- Provide and enhance connectivity to nearby parks, natural areas and open spaces.
- Provide appropriate access to the parks and historic site and their various resources and programs in a manner that ensures the safety and security of park patrons and its resources.
- Provide year-round opportunities for educational and interpretive programs and activities that focus on the parks' and historic site's natural, cultural and scenic resources while exploring various themes relating to the parks and historic site.
- Operate and maintain the parks and historic site in a safe, clean and sustainable manner that protects the resources and the welfare of the patrons.
- Improve park maintenance, operation and development through the use of sustainable practices and educate patrons on how to practice sustainability while visiting the parks and historic site.
- Restore and designate appropriate uses for historic buildings and structures and provide appropriate facilities for the proper maintenance and operation of the parks and historic site.
- Develop partnerships and improve communications with other organizations, user groups, federal, state and local agencies, not-for-profit groups and the private sector.
- Encourage inventory, monitoring and scientific research of the natural and cultural resources of the parks and historic site.

## **Chapter 5 - Analysis and Alternatives**

### ***Introduction***

One of the important aspects in the master planning and environmental review process is the identification of alternatives and associated analysis. This section represents a concise summary of a detailed report on Analysis and Alternatives evaluated as part of the planning process for Ogden Mills and Ruth Livingston Mills and Margaret Lewis Norrie State Parks and Staatsburgh State Historic Site. The detailed report is contained in Appendix A.

The planning team used information contained in Chapter 2 – Park Background, Chapter 3 – Environmental Setting and Chapter 4 – Vision and Goals during the analysis of alternatives. Plan elements were identified and alternatives for each element were evaluated. All of the preferred alternatives were then reviewed in concert to determine if any additional adjustments were needed. The end product of this effort on plan element analysis was two master plan alternatives: Status Quo and Preferred Master Plan Alternative.

### ***Analysis and Alternatives of Master Plan Elements***

For each plan element the resource and inventory information was analyzed, identifying opportunities and limits of the resources and existing facilities. The findings from this analysis were used in developing and defining element alternatives pertaining to the stewardship of resources, recreation and historic preservation opportunities, and facility development.

Appendix A provides a thorough description of alternatives considered for natural resource stewardship strategies, recreation resource development/management, cultural resource protection, scenic resource protection and infrastructure development. The discussion of each element includes: 1) a background section with analysis, 2) a list of alternatives including the Status Quo alternative along with a listing of considerations for each alternative, and 3) identification and description of each preferred alternative.

### ***Master Plan Alternatives***

There are two Master Plan alternatives that have been considered for this plan. The first is the Status Quo Alternative which is a compilation of all the Status Quo element alternatives listed in Appendix A. Under this alternative, the park would continue to operate as it is now. The Status Quo alternative proposes no changes to natural resources protection strategies, recreation resource development/management, cultural or scenic resource protection and infrastructure improvements.

The second alternative is the Preferred Master Plan alternative. This alternative is a compilation of the preferred alternatives identified for each element discussed in Appendix A. OPRHP staff reviewed the listing of each preferred master plan element to determine if any adjustments were needed in arriving at the Master Plan. This synthesis review did not identify the need for any substantive changes in the set of preferred master plan elements. The master plan alternative is preferred over the status quo because it provides recreation development opportunities for the park that will increase visitation and patron satisfaction as well as increased awareness and new strategies for natural and cultural resource protection. Thus, the Preferred Master Plan Alternative represents the master plan itself which is fully described in Chapter 6 – The Master Plan.

## ***Major Master Plan Elements and Basis for Selection***

Before the start of this master plan process, the park had been undergoing continued improvements such as the rehabilitation of the former Staatsburg School for the Taconic Regional headquarters, rehabilitation of the basement of “Staatsburgh”, trail reconfigurations, road and drainage work, and plans for dredging the marina, closing the Norrie landfill and other infrastructure projects.

This ongoing improvement and maintenance is important and is not overlooked in the analysis of master plan alternatives. Many of the recommended plan elements and directions chosen are consistent with the ongoing projects. In addition, projects designed to improve on current functions and provide for new opportunities are included. These include changes to trail configurations and designations, natural resource protection strategies, recreation resource development and infrastructure not currently in the park.

A significant change to the park recommended in this master plan is the expansion of Staatsburgh State Historic Site to include historic designed landscapes and buildings that contribute to the National Register listing.

Another important addition to the park is the re-development of the Lewis Gordon Norrie Playground Area. This new, passive recreation area will take advantage of the tiered topography of the site that will be connected via paths and trails that will bring one, tier by tier, down to the river. A picnic area, playground, comfort station, parking area, improved ADA access, car-top launch and a fishing dock will also be located here.

Cultural resource protection is an important part of the plan. A Cultural Landscape Report and Historic Structures Reports will be prepared for the park and select buildings to inform future treatment of the historic features of the parks and site. The stone wall at Mills will be restored; the roof of “Staatsburgh” will be repaired, and the remaining three sides of the mansion will be rehabilitated. Repairs and stabilization of “The Point” will occur as funding becomes available. The Carriage Barn will be adaptively reused as a visitor center for the park complex complete with restrooms, interpretive panels, and meeting space. Sections of the Dairy Barn Complex will also be utilized for interpretation to help tell the larger story of the Mills family and their life at Staatsburgh. Any historic underutilized structure will be evaluated for adaptive reuse pursuant to the resource protection guidelines, including the Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Structures.

The plan also recommends the development of a new maintenance and regional storage facility. The existing maintenance facility is located within the Dairy Barn Complex and is not truly suited for maintenance and equipment storage. The new maintenance building will be approximately 7,500 square feet and will accommodate the needs of the entire complex (including the golf course) and the storage needs for the Taconic Region.

Natural resource protection is an important part of the plan. A Bird Conservation Area (BCA) will be created at the park complex to help maintain and protect bird habitat. The creation of several other natural resource protection strategies is recommended, as well as water quality monitoring, improved stormwater management practices, and invasive species protection protocols.

It is also recommended that the park complex be divided into separate management zones to provide improved maintenance guidance and direction for specific areas of the park complex.

In choosing the Master Plan Alternative over the Status Quo Alternative OPRHP is providing an overall direction for improvements and changes which will have a positive impact on the historic, recreation, and natural resources within the complex.

## **Chapter 6 – The Master Plan**

This chapter provides a description of what will be done at Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh in terms of natural and cultural resource protection, recreation resource development, management and operations. The actions described here are based on the analysis in Appendix A and the preferred alternatives.

### ***Natural Resource Management Strategies***

#### **Bird Conservation Area (BCA)**

The parks and historic site will be designated as a Bird Conservation Area, with the exception of the Dinsmore Golf Course. The BCA designation provides recognition of birds and bird habitat on a statewide level which adds to the overall significance of the park relative to other parks and open spaces within the state. Such designation will encourage the public to support or visit the parks because of the bird species that may exist here and to be more sensitive to their habitats. The BCA designation will not prohibit existing or future recreation uses or operational needs. The BCA designation will inform the process for future actions (development, recreation, etc.) at the facility. A BCA Management Guidance Summary is provided in Appendix H and provides guidance for operations and management, education, outreach and research activities within this BCA. Refer to Figure 14 for a map of the BCA.

#### **Natural Heritage Area (NHA)**

No Natural Heritage Area was proposed within the parks or historic site. If the NHA law is modified in the future, the designation will be reevaluated.

#### **Park Preserve/Park Preservation Area (PPA)**

The parks and historic site will not be designated as a Park Preserve or have designated Park Preservation Areas.

#### **Invasive Species Management**

Invasive species are a significant threat to the parks biodiversity. A site-specific management strategy will be developed to provide guidance for invasive species control. This strategy will include monitoring and control of new or recent infestations through an Early Detection/Rapid Response plan. It will also include best management practices (BMP) to prevent accidental introduction of invasive species through construction, operations and other activities. Due to the extent of invasive species at these parks, the strategy will call for the need to prioritize control efforts to focus first on areas around high quality habitats and rare plant populations. Control efforts will include restoration with native species. Monitoring for invasive forest pests will also continue. Aquatic invasive species signage will be developed for the marina to educate and inform boaters not to spread aquatic invasive species. The main goals of this effort will be to keep the facility free of invasive species and in particular to identify core areas that are invasive free zones. Boaters will be encouraged to clean their boats when leaving the river and to place vegetation in a disposal station to be installed at the marina boat launch.

#### **Wildlife Management**

White-tailed deer and Canada geese are abundant at this facility and present management challenges. Canada geese management is presently occurring, primarily through the treatment of eggs on Esopus

Island. This has resulted in a significant reduction in negative impacts from goose droppings at the marina and on lawn areas. Additional management is still needed in northern areas, including the “Staatsburgh” lawn and the golf course.

OPRHP will also develop a deer management strategy for the parks in coordination with NYSDEC that will be compatible with the recreational uses and events at the parks and historic site. Any management activity will include the establishment of vegetation monitoring plots so that control efforts can be measured. OPRHP will be looking to partner with local colleges to collect this monitoring data.

### **Stormwater Management**

Stormwater runoff, particularly at the Dinsmore Golf Course, is an on-going problem that is beyond the control of OPRHP. Given the topographical location of the park facility, non-point source runoff and water collects and overwhelms portions of the parks and adjacent areas within the hamlet of Staatsburg. As a result, stormwater management will be addressed in a more holistic, comprehensive, and local fashion. It is recommended that the Taconic Region work more closely with the Town of Hyde Park to ensure that upland land use decisions will not have an adverse impact on low lying areas (specifically, the parks and the hamlet of Staatsburg). In addition, the Taconic Region will work in concert with the Town of Hyde Park and the Dutchess County Soil and Water Conservation District to identify stormwater management measures to help mitigate the existing problem. This partnership could help when applying for funding for design and implementation of on-site mitigation controls for non-point source runoff. These controls may include bio-filtration areas, swales, and stormwater detention areas.

### **Freshwater Tidal Swamp Management and Protection**

The 11-acre freshwater tidal swamp near the mouth of the Indian Kill has been identified as a significant natural community (Smith and Lundgren, 2010) The Indian Kill and its watershed play a vital role in the ecology of the parks, although the majority of the Indian Kill’s watershed is not located within the parks. OPRHP will work with the Town of Hyde Park to monitor development within the watershed that may impact the Indian Kill. Additionally, OPRHP should identify available lands within the watershed that should be protected. Within the parks, vegetative buffers will be maintained or established to help reduce siltation, pollution, and nutrient input from runoff. These buffers will also be considered for inclusion in the parks’ reduced mowing program. As culverts or bridges that cross the Indian Kill within the facility are scheduled for rehabilitation, they will be evaluated to determine if their design requires modification to protect the stream and to improve biological connectivity or water quality.

Stormwater management improvements (bio-filtration swales, etc.) will be included in the redesign of the parking area for the marina and Norrie Point Environmental Center, as this area is very close to the mouth of the Indian Kill. In addition, the agency will institute a review of the marina’s “Best Management Practices” to ensure that operations are not inadvertently impacting the Indian Kill in an adverse way. OPRHP will also work with NYSDEC regarding “Green Marina” programs.

### **Wetland, Stream and River Protection**

In addition to the Indian Kill, there are other streams and numerous small wetlands in the facility. The Hudson River forms the western boundary of the parks. It is recommended that periodic streamside biological surveys be conducted to monitor stream health. Surveys of buffers around wetlands and along streams and the river will be conducted to monitor for impacts from adjacent activities. Trails

and rock outcrops that are adjacent to the Hudson River will also be monitored for rare plant species. Signage will be developed to help better interpret the wetlands and water resources. The erosion issues along the Hudson River in the “Staatsburgh” area will be addressed, as well as shoreline stabilization efforts. Best Management Practices, such as erosion controls, will be used to protect these areas from any adjacent construction activities. Additional survey work for reptile and amphibian populations, as well as for rare plants, is recommended, particularly within the Hudson River shoreline rocky outcrop community. Lastly, OPRHP will work with Norrie Point Environmental Center staff to provide additional interpretative opportunities about these water resources.

### **Successional Old Field Management**

Several successional old field areas on either side of Old Post Road near U.S. Route 9 have become desirable habitat for many species of wildlife, including birds. These areas will continue to be maintained as this habitat type and a formalized mowing regime will be continued to protect nesting birds and other wildlife. Following NYSDEC Best Management Practices for grassland nesting birds, no mowing will occur in these areas between April 23 and August 15 to insure the continued protection of habitat for nesting birds and other wildlife. The mowing regime for these areas is documented in Figure 15.

### **Scenic Vista Management**

Several areas of the Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh complex are known for their historic designed landscape and scenic vista management is a major component of preserving the history of the parks and site. Many areas are currently managed to maintain views, but others have been lost. Maintenance of the existing vistas (view from “Staatsburgh”) will continue and historic vistas such as at “The Point”, views from the cabins at Norrie, the River Trail and views from U.S. Route 9 and the golf course will be restored. Vista maintenance will continue to incorporate protection of natural resources, such as the timing of mowing of the fields along Old Post Road to protect nesting birds. The removal of trees to restore lost historic vistas, or the thinning of trees to improve views will include consultation with the Regional Biologist.

## ***Recreation Facility Development and Programs***

### **Camping at Norrie State Park**

The campground at Norrie is a well-used area in need of improvements to better serve the public. It is recommended that the existing tent campsites be evaluated and assessed based on location, pad creep, and vegetation to determine if the layout needs to be re-worked. The campsites would then be furnished with new grills, tables, tent platforms, comfort station improvements, and other amenities as funding allows. The existing nearby picnic area north of the campground will be assessed for the feasibility of expanding the campground or developing a campground for small recreational vehicles (less than 20 feet). Further analysis will be done to determine the capacity of this area and what amenities are possible in this location. Lastly, it is recommended that the existing group camp area be improved to better serve group camping needs. A pavilion, comfort station, tent platforms, and permeable parking area are all proposed for this area.

### **Cabins**

The CCC era cabins at Norrie will continue to be maintained and rented for seasonal use. Measures to help reduce and/or mitigate soil compaction in the areas surrounding the cabins will be implemented.

The existing cabins are not suited for any major renovations (expansion of existing structures, adding private bathrooms, etc) due to spatial and historic preservation constraints. A new, accessible cabin is recommended to be built in the cabin area to accommodate the needs of all park patrons. The building may have its own bathroom or may rely on the improved comfort station proposed under the “Camping at Norrie State Park” section and will comply with ADA guidelines. The building will be aesthetically complimentary to the surrounding architecture (CCC era cabins) and setting. Lastly, the view of the Hudson River from many of the cabins has diminished greatly over time and it is recommended that the trees be thinned to restore the views from the cabin area.

## Trails

The trail system at Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh was assessed during the planning process (See Figure 16 – Trails Assessments). The trail recommendations included within this plan were prepared using information on existing trails, connection to trail systems outside the park and proposed recreational and environmental education and interpretation uses. See Appendix A for a detailed analysis of the trail system improvements and Figure 17 – Trail System Alternatives. Hiking, biking, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing will remain as allowable uses within the parks and historic site. Horseback riding will no longer be allowed. Snowmobiling will remain as an allowable informal use in the field areas near the Norrie entrance only. See Figure 18 – Trails Plan.

### ***Proposed improvements to the trail system include:***

- Designate several existing undesignated trails and develop new trails to provide appropriate trail connections and access to resources in the parks and historic site.
- Designate trail connection from the regional/park office into trail system.
- Designate trail connections from Staatsburgh SHS into trail system.
- Designate a short connector trail along the Blue loop trail.
- Develop a river access trail in the Hopeland area.
- Develop a southern trail connection to the existing Hyde Park Trail System.
- Close a number of trails (parallel trails, including deteriorated equestrian trails, and trails through wetland areas).
- Rehabilitate one railroad crossing in the Hopeland area to provide pedestrian access to the Hudson River and abandon the northern railroad crossing structure.
- Rehabilitate the River Trail in its current historic alignment; reroute short sections as necessary around severely eroded areas; develop 2-3 lookout areas and increase education and interpretation about the environmentally sensitive cliffs and rocky outcrops along the shoreline to help protect natural resources.
- Designate specific uses, including hiking, biking and cross-country skiing, for each trail; allow snowshoeing on all designated trails.
- Enhance interpretation throughout the trail system to highlight important resources in the parks and develop two interpretive loop trails:
  - Establish an interpretive trail from Staatsburgh SHS including the Greenhouse Complex.
  - Design and construct a Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Camp Interpretive Trail.
- Enhance blazing (including changing blaze colors on a few trails to create a more cohesive system) and install trailhead and intersection signage.
- Partner with local organizations and user groups for maintenance and monitoring of the trail system.

### **Connections to external trail systems:**

- Southern trail connection to the Hyde Park Trail System.
- The River Trail is a designated Hudson River Valley Greenway Trail; future connections to the north may be considered.
- Alternate transportation opportunities include: Dutchess County LOOP bus stop along U.S Route 9 near the Norrie entrance; U.S Route 9 as a designated Hudson River Valley Greenway Trail for on-road biking.
- Norrie SP is designated a Hudson River Valley Greenway Water Trail site and will remain as such.

All trails in the facility will be brought up to the trail development standards as listed in the *Trail Standards and Guidelines for NYS Parks*. Signage in the form of trailhead and intersection signs, as well as kiosks at main parking areas will be developed to improve the overall trail signage system, to orient visitors, and to encourage visitors to remain on trails. Signage will be developed in conjunction with the *Trail Signage Guidelines for the NY State Park System*. Closure for rerouted sections of trail and trails to be closed will follow techniques as laid out in the *Guidelines for Closing and Restoring Trails in NYS Parks*. These standards and guidelines are located at:

<http://nysparks.com/recreation/trails/technical-assistance.aspx>

A long-term maintenance and monitoring plan will be developed to ensure the continued sustainability of the trails system. These improvements to the trail system will improve the quality of the existing trail system, protect natural and cultural resources, and provide an enhanced user experience.

### **Swimming**

There is currently no swimming opportunities at the parks and historic site. Swimming facilities on the Hudson River shoreline at various locations and the development of a swimming pool complex have been explored and researched (see Appendix A). Hudson River swimming or the development of pool swimming is not recommended.

### **Lewis Gordon Norrie Playground Area**

The Lewis Gordon Norrie Playground Area is a unique setting that will be transformed into a new picnic grove that will incorporate the natural topography to create a multi-level passive recreation area. Recommendations include: new picnic tables, grills, a new 35+/- car parking area, a new composting comfort station, road improvements, utilities, ADA improvements to parking and an ADA fishing dock, car-top watercraft drop-off area and launch, and a playground area will be designed to provide a new recreation opportunity for kids at the parks.

### **Norrie Marina**

The marina and boat launch area has an existing plan for dock improvements, electrical upgrades, and dredging. It is recommended that these plans move forward. In addition, park staff will work with NYS DEC to explore the opportunities for the marina to become a “green marina.”

### **Car-Top Boat Launch**

There are few formalized car-top boat launch areas in the parks. It is recommended that the existing car-top boat launch areas at the gazebo near the Lewis Gordon Norrie Playground Area and the launch at the cove at Norrie Point (near the environmental center, not the marina) be improved with additional parking or drop-off locations and signage. These new launch areas will help ease the

current conflict between day-use boat launch users (with larger vessels) and kayaks, canoes, and other car-top boats. In addition, when the new dock system is put in place at the Norrie Marina, a location for public car-top boat launching (unrelated to the kayak concessionaire) from the dock should be identified to further separate car-top watercraft from the larger vessels launching at the boat ramp.

### **Amphitheatre/Performance Space**

The development of a dedicated amphitheatre/performance space was considered during the planning process and was determined to not be suitable for this park facility. A rain location is identified for all summer, outdoor performances at the parks and developing a dedicated structure would be considered visually intrusive in the historic grounds of the parks.

### **Dinsmore Golf Course**

Over the years many improvements have been suggested for the golf course, including the development of a driving range. A driving range was considered during the planning process and it was determined that the space and associated infrastructure needed to support a driving range is not feasible or desirable. It is recommended that the existing irrigation system be replaced at the golf course to improve energy efficiency and water consumption and the overall patron experience. Drainage improvements will also be made to the greens, tees and fairways. Use of the Hudson River as a water source for the irrigation system will be phased out and a new water source will be identified.

Please see Figure 19 for a map of the recommended recreation improvements.

## ***Visitor Services, Orientation and Amenities***

### **Carriage Barn**

In an effort to improve the visitor experience and help better orient and educate park and historic site visitors, it is recommended that a visitor center be established at the existing, historic carriage barn. The space would not only help orient and familiarize visitors, but would also help tell the story of the parks, as a whole, and would include exhibits and educational interpretation opportunities. In addition, the visitor center would include restrooms and meeting/event space. Any adaptive reuse will be consistent with resource protection guidelines, including the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Structures.

### **Signage**

Road and way-finding signage will be improved to have a consistent aesthetic throughout the parks and historic site. A concerted effort will be made to design signs in an efficient and informative manner so that signage blends into the landscape and does not clutter the parks/site. Additional interpretive signage will be placed in strategic locations in the parks to bolster the visitor experience on trails or in significant and/or scenic locations.

### **Environmental/Cultural Education and Interpretation Programs**

In addition to establishing a visitor's center, the existing environmental and cultural education and interpretation program will be expanded. With limited staff resources, emphasis will be placed on developing self-guided tours and smartphone or podcast tours. Additional interpretive panels will also be developed and placed throughout the parks and historic site to better interpret the natural and

historic resources of the parks/site. The parks will continue to work with the NYS DEC at the Norrie Point Environmental Center to expand programming as well as develop a symbiotic education program that benefits both.

## ***Cultural Resource Protection***

### **Cultural Landscape Report**

A Cultural Landscape Report will be developed for the parks/historic site. The report will ensure that the character defining features of the facility will be considered and handled properly during any change or development at the facility. In addition, the report will provide a historic context to avoid adverse impacts on the integrity of the built environment and designed landscapes.

### **Historic Structures Reports**

Historic Structures Reports will be developed for buildings with a proposed change in use (Carriage Barn, Dairy Barn, etc) at the parks/site and the important buildings at the facility in need of repair and/or rehabilitation. A report exists for the Hoyt House.

### **“Staatsburgh” (Mills Mansion)**

Exterior elements, including the south façade of the building and the west terrace have been restored. The remaining three un-restored exterior sides of the mansion will be rehabilitated and roof repairs will be made. These recommendations are being made to ensure that “Staatsburgh” is restored and will be maintained for future generations. Additional staff and volunteers will also be trained in the care and maintenance of the interior furnishings in order to better preserve the collection. Appropriate partnerships and/or adaptive reuse consistent with resource protection guidelines, including the Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Structures, will also be considered.

### **Estate Wall**

The historic stone wall of the Mills Estate along Old Post Road will be repaired to improve the aesthetics of the structure and maintain an important historic element of the original estate and community. The stone wall main entrance area will also be widened to better allow large trucks, buses, and emergency vehicles to enter the park without damaging the walls. The historic iron gates will be restored and re-hung to better reflect and interpret the Mills-era of the facility.

### **Other Structures**

The Gardener’s House, Huntington house, Park Manager’s house, and Assistant Park Manager’s house were all evaluated during the planning process, but were not considered for any proposed change in use. Exterior and interior renovations will continue to occur to ensure these buildings are maintained and preserved appropriately. Adaptive reuse consistent with resource protection guidelines, including the Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Structures, will also be considered.

## ***Vacant, Underutilized and Deteriorated Structures***

### **Hoyt House**

While a specific use has not been identified for the structure, a Cultural Landscape Report was prepared for the property in the past, and the Hoyt House was evaluated in the management zones

table (Appendix I). These studies and guidelines will guide future restoration and adaptive use efforts. In addition, they may assist in the procurement a concessionaire or licensee for the house.

When funding becomes available to OPRHP, Hoyt House and its related outbuildings will be rehabilitated. In the meantime, OPRHP will stabilize the building, carriage house and garage complex as feasible and seek approval from the National Park Service for conversion of the property (see page 27). Following this, the agency will pursue outside proposals for the adaptive reuse of these structures. Any outside proposals will be evaluated based on their compatibility with the park setting and consistency with resource protection guidelines including the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Structures.

### **Dairy Barn Complex**

The maintenance function and equipment will be removed from the Mills Dairy Barn Complex upon the completion of the proposed new maintenance facility. Given that the Dairy Barn Complex is largely intact, areas of the barns will be devoted to interpretation and education to show how a self-sufficient country estate operated during the Mills era. This new opportunity will improve the overall visitor experience of the park and historic site. Adaptive reuse consistent with resource protection guidelines, including the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Structures, will also be considered.

### **Greenhouse Area and Treehouse**

The Greenhouse Area will be rehabilitated and more routine maintenance of the area will occur. The deer fencing will be repaired and the park facility will reach out to the Friends group and local community to see if there's any interest in helping to take care of the area. The existing pathways are in good shape and some interpretive signage does exist. Staff will work with SHPO staff to see how this area can be bolstered from an interpretation/education standpoint to help tie into the larger story of the Mills family and their time on the estate. The greenhouse area will be improved with a sitting area, interpretative signage, and will become a destination within the trail system to help interpret the Mills era of the estate.

Additional studies need to be done to determine the feasibility of reusing the treehouse. The Treehouse building will be evaluated by engineering and SHPO staff to make sure it is structurally sound and viable. It is recommended that the Treehouse be reused for classroom/meeting space if reasonable alterations will permit compliance with NYS building code and ADA regulations. The lower level and surrounding area could remain in use for limited storage and maintenance activities. The vision for this area will likely be informed by the Historic Structures Report and Cultural Landscape Report recommended by the plan.

### **Other Vacant Structures**

There are several vacant structures in the park complex. Some have very identifiable potential uses and others do not. All buildings will be maintained so as to prevent deterioration and may be utilized upon the determination of a viable use. Proposals for use of buildings will be evaluated on a case by case basis for historic appropriateness and compatibility. Any major alterations to buildings are subject to review and approval by the SHPO.

## ***Operations and Infrastructure***

### **Staatsburgh State Historic Site Boundary Revision**

As noted earlier in the document, Staatsburgh State Historic Site consists of the mansion only. The site manager for the house, however, is involved with other aspects of park management—beyond the walls of the mansion. It was suggested during the public comment period that the historic site boundary be expanded to include the historic outbuildings that relate to the original estate of the Mills family. The planning team largely agreed with this concept, especially given that the site manager is trained in the care of historic buildings and designed landscapes and the park manager is not. It is recommended that the historic site boundary be revised to include the contributing outbuildings and historic designed landscapes of the original Mills and Hoyt estates. Please see Figure 20 for the boundary of the expanded historic site.

### **Develop Management Zones for the Parks and Historic Site**

The parks and historic site will be divided into eight management zones to help better steward the numerous cultural/historic, recreational, and natural resources of the park facility. This decision came out of the suggestion that Staatsburgh State Historic Site be expanded to include historically contributing outbuildings (barns, houses, landscapes, etc.) so that they will be managed as part of the site. The management zone recommendation also includes the development of guidelines for each zone. This will be especially helpful when training new or seasonal staff in the care of unique historic, cultural, and natural resources. The development of management zones will also allow and facilitate greater involvement and shared responsibility of the stewardship of historic resources in that the site manager will play a larger role in management decisions and recommendations in designated historic zones. Please see Figure 21 for a map of the management zones and Appendix I for a description of each zone.

### **Landscape Management Plan**

A landscape management plan will be developed, separate from the Cultural Landscape Report, to help identify important aspects of the historic, designed landscape and other landscape features that contribute to the unique character of the park facility. The landscape management plan will work hand-in-hand with the management zones to provide specific direction on the treatment and care of these important landscape features (such as stone walls, foundations, carriage roads, etc.).

### **Maintenance Area**

The existing maintenance facilities, located within the Dairy Barn Complex and Carriage Barn, neither appropriately serve the needs of the parks/site, nor reside in buildings that were constructed as a maintenance facility. These are two major factors that not only hinder the efficiency of the maintenance facility but these uses are detrimental to the historic barn structures themselves. In the case of the Carriage Barn, this existing use creates unnecessary traffic within the core of the historic site and damage to features including the entrance pillars and roadways. As a result, it is recommended that a new maintenance facility be developed within Mills State Park, near the existing debris pile. The proposed maintenance area would be approximately 7,500 square feet with several garage bays. This facility would not only provide a more appropriately designed building for maintenance needs, but would also serve as the Taconic Region storage facility. Design of the new maintenance facility will include a delineated vegetative buffer area along the entire segment of North Staatsburg creek in this area. Additional plantings of native species will be included in the design as well as fencing, or other field markers to physically delineate the boundary. A new

maintenance facility would also allow for the existing storage facility, the Carriage Barn, to be adaptively re-used as a visitor center with restrooms, meeting space, and interpretive panels. With the Dairy Barns vacated, they will be able to be used for historic/cultural education and interpretation.

## **Agricultural Use**

Historically, farming/agricultural uses have occurred at the park complex; specifically, prior to and during the Mills era. Farming/agricultural use occurred throughout the Hudson Valley and it is still known for its desirable soils and agricultural uses today. Utilizing some areas of park land (where feasible) for agricultural use is a type of partnership and land use opportunity that OPRHP is willing to explore. It is recommended that small scale, limited farming/agricultural use be permitted within the complex. The use will be limited in size and any animals (livestock, chickens, pigs, etc.) will be permitted on a case by case basis and will be limited in number to limit any potential adverse olfactory or environmental impact. It will include educational programming regarding sustainable agricultural practices, the benefits of healthy food and organic agriculture and the historic use of the area for farming. In addition, any proposed farming operations will not adversely impact the natural or cultural/scenic resources. Equipment associated with the farming operation will be concealed and stored in a discreet fashion.

## **Utilities**

### ***Electrical, Telecommunications, and Internet***

Some of the existing utility infrastructure serving the facility has been deemed insufficient and does not meet the needs of park staff or the Norrie Point Environmental Center. In addition, some of the utility lines are in remote locations and are not easily accessible when they require repair which leads to a delay in service to patrons in the wake of a large storm. It is recommended that the electrical/internet lines be replaced or upgraded in the following locations: Norrie Point and the Marina, the campground, Dinsmore Golf Course, Hoyt House, “Staatsburgh,” and the Carriage Barn. The line for Norrie Point and the Marina should be relocated.

### ***Water Systems***

The majority of the facility has sufficient water service, with the exception of Mills State Park, including “Staatsburgh.” The water here is not potable and although there is municipal water service, the water lines (including hydrants and pipes) servicing the park and historic site are state owned and do not provide viable drinking water or adequate pressure for fire suppression purposes. It is recommended that the water distribution system be replaced for Mills State Park and Staatsburgh State Historic Site.

### ***Wastewater Treatment Systems***

Many of the existing wastewater treatment systems at the facility are old and have reached their usable life. The systems at the following locations will be replaced: Marina and Norrie Point Environmental Center; Staatsburgh; the Clubhouse at Dinsmore Golf Course; Endikill Cottage (Park Manager’s residence); and the campground. Remaining systems will be monitored and replaced as needed.

## **Roads and Bridges**

There are over five miles of roads in the park facility and five bridges. The public roadways in Norrie have been recently repaved and the public roads in Mills were repaved and repaired in 2012. Many of

the access and/or internal park service roads, and historic carriage roads, however, are in need of improvements such as re-grading. Most of these roads are gravel or dirt roads and are rutted or difficult to pass. It is recommended that the carriage road from River Road to Hoyt House be re-graded to improve road conditions, but it will not be a paved road. In addition, Thompson Road, the historic entrance road to Norrie State Park, should also be re-graded and improved for internal park use. Thompson Road will also receive bollards at any access points large enough for a vehicle to access the roadway as it will not be maintained or identified as a public roadway. It is also recommended that the existing bridge at the Mills/Staatsburgh entrance be restriped to create a designated space for pedestrians and cyclists who wish to cross the bridge.

## **Parking Areas**

### ***Staatsburgh and the Carriage Barn***

The existing parking lots in the vicinity of “Staatsburgh” were repaved in 2012. The larger parking area, to the north of the house, has been reconfigured to better accommodate buses and allow some areas to revert to grass. The existing gravel parking area under the allee of trees at the approach to the Mills Carriage Barn will be removed. The trees will be evaluated to see if they require replacement. A new parking area will be located to the west of the Carriage Barn and will accommodate approximately 30 cars. This new lot will alleviate the impacts of the existing lot on the allee and provide sufficient parking when the visitor’s center is located at Carriage Barn. The new parking area will be developed prior to closing the existing parking area.

### ***Norrie Point Environmental Center and Marina***

The current parking area at the Norrie Point Environmental Center and Norrie Marina is aged and haphazard. Given that this parking lot serves many park use areas, it is recommended that the lot be reconfigured and repaved. The new configuration will accommodate approximately 85 vehicles and 14 boat trailer parking spots, and the Norrie Point Environmental Center will be allocated a number of parking spots for their use. In addition, the traffic flow and circulation of the lot will be assessed and improved to create a more efficient and understandable parking situation. Lastly, the lot will be restriped and will better identify boat trailer parking.

## ***Implementation***

### **Timeline**

The Master Plan sets forth the Agency’s vision for capital improvements and operational enhancements to Mills-Norrie State Park and Staatsburgh State Historic Site for the next ten to fifteen years. Cumulatively they will cost tens of millions of dollars to implement. The pace and sequencing of recommended actions will be determined by the availability of funding, which is a function of the size of OPRHP’s annual capital budget and the need to balance investments throughout the entire State Park System. The master plan will be reviewed annually to select projects that will be added to the park’s budget for implementation and to assess the progress of plan implementation.

The implementation of the Master Plan for Mills-Norrie State Park and Staatsburgh State Historic Site is divided into three priority phases. The priority groupings described below are conceptual and subject to reorganization based on available funding for specific components in any given group.

**Table 3 - Priority Phases**

• Implementation Priorities	• Description/Development Component
Immediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create the Bird Conservation Area.</li> <li>• Repair the historic stone estate wall as well as widen the entrance and re-hang the historic gates.</li> <li>• Complete marina dredging and dock improvements at Norrie to improve this Hudson River facility.</li> <li>• Replace/repair roof of Hoyt House.</li> </ul>
Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue the ongoing restoration of “Staatsburgh” including completing the restoration of the mansion’s exterior, east portico and roof.</li> <li>• Continue implementation of natural resource management strategies for invasive species, wildlife, storm water, wetlands, streams, and the river, successional old fields and scenic vistas.</li> <li>• Continue limited agricultural use of the park complex, consistent with the facility’s historic land uses.</li> <li>• Implement trails recommendations per Appendix B.</li> </ul>
Priority 1:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand/implement natural resource protection strategies/management.</li> <li>• Work with the Town of Hyde Park and Dutchess County Soil &amp; Water Conservation District to design and implement upland stormwater management control efforts.</li> <li>• Develop Cultural Landscape and Historic Structures reports.</li> <li>• Revise the boundary of Staatsburgh State Historic Site.</li> <li>• Develop guidelines for park and site management zones.</li> <li>• Rehabilitate former greenhouse area and repair the deer fence that protects the garden.</li> <li>• Evaluate vacant and underutilized structures for potential adaptive reuse.</li> <li>• Complete road, parking and drainage rehabilitation in the vicinity of “Staatsburgh.”</li> <li>• Replace irrigation system at Dinsmore Golf Course.</li> <li>• Install new, cohesive signage throughout the parks.</li> </ul>

• Implementation Priorities	• Description/Development Component
Priority 2:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design and construct a new layout for the Lewis Gordon Norrie Playground area to provide a picnic grove, adequate parking, river access and a children’s play area.</li> <li>• Design group camp area improvements.</li> <li>• Renovate/repair Hoyt House as funding becomes available.</li> <li>• Actively search for a licensee to rehabilitate and operate Hoyt House.</li> <li>• Restore Scenic Vistas at: “The Point,” “Staatsburgh,” and the cabin area.</li> <li>• Assess and monitor the campground for expansion need.</li> <li>• Upgrade campsites with new picnic tables, grills, tent platforms, and relocate sites as necessary.</li> <li>• Design and construct an accessible, ADA compliant cabin.</li> <li>• Selectively thin trees and vegetation near the existing cabins.</li> <li>• Repave, restripe and reconfigure the parking area at Norrie Point.</li> <li>• Develop new parking area at Carriage Barn and close/remediate existing lot.</li> <li>• Design and construct new maintenance facility.</li> <li>• Conduct infrastructure upgrades (water, waste water, electrical, internet).</li> <li>• Develop Landscape Management Plan.</li> <li>• Expand environmental and cultural education and interpretation programming.</li> <li>• Improve park roadways and historic carriage roads.</li> </ul>
Priority 3:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess Treehouse for adaptive reuse.</li> <li>• Move regional storage out of the Carriage Barn and into the new maintenance facility.</li> <li>• Move maintenance equipment and materials out of the Dairy Barn Complex and into the new maintenance facility.</li> <li>• Develop a concept plan for the adaptive reuse of the Carriage Barn as new park visitor’s center, with restrooms, meeting space, gift shop, and interpretive panels.</li> <li>• Rehabilitate the Dairy Barn Complex for interpretation of the “working farm” aspect of the Mills era of the park and potential adaptive reuse.</li> </ul>

**Sustainability**

Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh and the Taconic Region have taken steps to ensure that sustainability is considered during the construction and renovation of structures. This can be seen at the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Platinum certified adaptive re-use and renovation of the Staatsburg School as the Taconic Regional headquarters. This example proves that historic structures can be modified and modernized to improve energy efficiency. The park facility will

explore the feasibility of harnessing renewable energy sources through the use of solar panels and/or geo-thermal heating systems and green roofs will be installed where appropriate.

In addition to adaptive reuse of existing structures, any new construction proposed will be designed in an energy efficient manner (locally sourced materials, day-lighting, reduced flow fixtures, solar panels, etc.) to a level that is appropriate and/or financially viable. Whenever feasible, the park will utilize native plants and plants requiring minimal water/care.

The park facility will also make a greater effort to improve recycling actions throughout the facility through the installation of additional recycling bins and contracting with a recycling hauler.

### ***Relationship to Other Programs***

Mills-Norrie State Park and Staatsburgh State Historic Site staff continues to be committed to partnering with groups that are interested in furthering the mission of the complex. The staff is also interested in working with other outside planning groups to further the facility's contribution to and participation in the recreation, natural and historic resources of the area.

OPRHP will continue to work with existing partners, including The Friends of Mills Mansion, HRNERR staff of the Norrie Point Environmental Center/Estuarine Sanctuary Program, Dutchess County Tourism, Ralph T. Waterman Bird Club, Hudson River Valley Greenway, The Calvert Vaux Preservation Alliance, various state agencies, and the Town of Hyde Park.

The Taconic Regional office continues to reach out to the larger service area to encourage individuals, groups and agencies to contribute to the park.

OPRHP will continue to work with state and federal agencies, such as New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC), the New York State Department of State Coastal Management Program (DOS), the National Park Service (NPS) and the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Program, the Hudson River National Heritage Area, the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE), the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), as well as county and regional governments.

## **Chapter 7 – Environmental Impacts and Mitigation**

### ***Introduction***

Consistent with the intent of the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR), environmental factors were considered in evaluating the plan alternatives and in selecting the preferred alternative, i.e., the Master Plan, which is described in Chapter 6. This chapter focuses on environmental impacts and mitigation of adverse effects. For the purposes of SEQR compliance, however, the entire document (Master Plan/EIS) satisfies the requirements for an environmental impact statement as specified in Part 617, the rules and regulations implementing SEQR. The environmental setting is discussed in Chapter 3, and Chapter 5 and Appendix A contain the alternatives analysis.

This chapter has two primary parts: a summary of environmental impacts associated with alternatives and a more detailed analysis of impacts associated with implementation of the Master Plan for Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh including a discussion of mitigation measures.

### ***Environmental Impacts of Alternatives***

In Chapter 5 and Appendix A, alternative management and development directions were developed for the parks using information on existing conditions, the analysis of recommended directions for activities, and constraints and considerations identified in the resource analysis. The preferred alternative (i.e. the Master Plan) for the parks and historic site consists of the preferred alternative each identified activity and resource.

Much of the information on the environmental impacts of alternative actions is discussed in Appendix A. The following is a summary of the findings from the impact analysis of the status quo and the preferred alternative.

### **Status Quo Alternative**

The Status Quo alternative consists of the current facilities, programs and practices as described in Chapter 3 (Environmental Setting). Under this alternative, the current resource protection, operation, and facility management practices would continue. The increasing demands on the facility would not be addressed or impacts mitigated. Any improvements would be assessed on a case by case basis.

The Status Quo alternative would result in no disturbance from proposed development, including roads, parking, buildings and infrastructure needs. While this alternative would ostensibly not result in any additional adverse environmental impacts, the potential for long-term indirect adverse environmental impacts is likely, since there would be no plan to guide use and implement protection measures. It is predicted that additional demands will be placed on the facility's resources. Natural resources may be degraded without adequate planning and measures to assure their preservation. Projects that may be undertaken on an as-needed basis would require individual reviews under SEQR. A master plan will direct the manner in which use and development should proceed to protect sensitive areas and reduce the potential for adverse impacts on environmental resources. It also lays out what projects may proceed under the Master Plan/EIS as well as those that may require additional review.

### **Preferred Alternative and the Master Plan**

The preferred alternative is the compilation of the preferred recreation activity and resource stewardship options identified in Chapter 5 and Appendix A. This compilation at the end of Chapter 5

and within Chapter 6 was subject to a final evaluation (or synthesis) to assure that there was consistency among the various alternatives. The master plan, described in Chapter 6, provides considerable recreational and resource protection benefits. This Master Plan/EIS also identifies potential adverse impacts, both short and long term, as well as ways to minimize, if not eliminate them to the fullest extent possible through appropriate mitigation measures. From a long-term perspective, implementation of the Master Plan will result in a beneficial environmental impact by insuring that the most sensitive areas will be identified, monitored and provided appropriate stewardship. Environmental impacts of the master plan are discussed more fully in the rest of this chapter.

### ***Potential Environmental Impacts associated with Implementation of the Master Plan and Mitigation***

#### **Land (Topography, Geology and Soils)**

The Master Plan seeks to provide improvements to existing recreational and historic preservation programs and opportunities while providing additional protection of sensitive natural and cultural resources. Planning for new facilities reflects this and the proposed locations of new facilities avoid sensitive resources to the extent practicable. Implementation of the plan, however, will result in some physical change and disturbance to the land particularly where new facilities are proposed. These new projects will include:

- Maintenance facility on Old Post Road across from the golf course
- 30 car parking facility at the Mills Carriage Barn
- Lewis Gordon Norrie Playground Area off River Road

The new maintenance facility will be constructed north of the Park Manager's residence in a relatively level area (3% -8% slope) between a small hill adjacent to Old Post Road and the railroad tracks. The hillside will block the view of this facility from Old Post Road. Construction will include an approximately 7000 square foot building, improved access drive and small parking area, septic system, utilities, and fuel tanks. The soils here are classified as Knickerbocker fine sandy loam which are described as very deep, well and somewhat excessively drained with moderately rapid permeability (<https://soilseries.sc.egov.usda.gov>) and, in general, should be suitable for the proposed development. Some special considerations may be required in the design of the septic system due to this soil's poor filtering qualities

The new 30 car parking facility at the carriage barn will be constructed in a level area adjacent to the proposed visitor center at the carriage barn. This new lot will use permeable pavement and the Knickerbocker soils here will provide adequate drainage.

The redesigned Lewis Gordon Norrie Playground Area will be constructed within Nassau Cardigan complex soils. This soil type has limitations for development due to shallow depth to bedrock, rock outcroppings and thin and stony soils. Design of these facilities will need to factor in site specific conditions such as outcroppings when siting picnic sites and the playground. Conceptually the new picnic facility will be incorporated into the topography by creating terraced sections that will connect to each other and the river shoreline. Additional fill material will be required on the surface at the proposed playground to meet safety regulations. The comfort station at the picnic area will include composting toilets to avoid the development of a raised leach field in that area.

The master plan will also result in more minor physical changes to the land where facilities will be re-constructed, rehabilitated or somewhat expanded but will still be within the same “footprint” of an already developed or managed area. These projects include the following:

- Conversion of the carriage and dairy barns from maintenance and storage areas to areas that will be open to the public for visitation as part of the interpretation of the historic site.
- Restoration of the mansion exterior and stone estate wall along Old Post Road.
- Replacement of the golf course irrigation system.
- Rehabilitation of the cabins.
- Improvement of the layout of the campground, including rehabilitation of campsite amenities (e.g. grills) and restoration of vegetation.
- Improvement of the group camp area including a new pavilion, comfort station and parking.
- Improvement and rehabilitation of the parking area at the marina and Norrie Point Environmental Center.

Some minor grading and earthwork will be involved with the replacement of the golf course irrigation system, campground improvements, at the marina parking area and with development of land for agricultural purposes.

The master plan identifies the potential for use of a small portion of the park complex as an agricultural use. Any maintenance of the open field areas done by a potential licensee will be in accordance with the present mowing schedule to protect bird habitat.

Agricultural use, while consistent with past practices in this area prior to the creation of the park, may have potential adverse impacts such as disturbance of soil through tilling and runoff of nutrients and sediment into nearby watercourses. This operation, should it go forward, will be done in accordance with Best Management Practices (BMP) promulgated through the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets under such programs as Agricultural Environmental Management ( AEM).

Agricultural pesticide use can be a significant concern within a state park setting, however, one very important and positive element to an organic farming program in the park is its consistency with the Agency’s Alternatives to Pesticide policy.

All projects which involve ground disturbance, whether new or within an existing developed area, will minimize sedimentation and erosion impacts through the use of Best Management Practices as described in the *New York State Standards for Erosion and Sediment Control* (NYS Soil and Water Conservation Committee, 2005). This includes incorporating information into the project plans on the soil characteristics at each project site and the limitations of soil types with respect to storm water management and erodibility. It also includes the use of various techniques such as silt fencing, preservation of vegetated buffers and seeding and mulching of disturbed areas as soon as possible. Pervious pavement, vegetated drainage swales and proper drainage design will be used in the design where applicable, to help mitigate water quality impacts from runoff following storm events. Disturbed areas will be restored using native vegetation following construction. Sustainable design will be utilized for the buildings as much as possible to minimize the effects of roof runoff. Projects that will disturb one acre or more will be subject to the State Pollution Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) General Permit process. This process will require the preparation of a site-specific Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPP).

The golf course irrigation improvements will include the installation of new equipment such as water lines, sprinkler heads and pumps. The new lines will be installed in a manner that will likely require little ground disturbance and will generally be placed adjacent to the existing lines. All of the erosion and sedimentation controls discussed above will be employed.

The scope of drainage improvements to the course is not known at the present time. It will include consideration of the impact of the flash flooding issues within the hamlet. Additional environmental review of this work will be required.

The plan also points to the need for the upgrade and replacement of utility lines and wastewater treatment systems. These projects may be replacement in kind and involve minor impacts or they may require relocation and potentially more significant environmental impacts. As these plans are not yet begun, they will also receive additional review under SEQR when further design details become available.

The Master Plan calls for some changes to the trail system which are not expected to have a significant impact on land. There will be 1.2 miles of new trails developed in new undeveloped locations and 0.51 miles of newly designated trails which will follow existing alignments. In addition, there will be 1.8 miles of trails that will be formally closed (1.2 miles that are currently designated and 0.6 miles that are currently undesignated).

New trail construction will include review of final trail layouts in the field by appropriate agency staff to ensure consistency with trail standards and protection of sensitive resources. New trail sections may require minor grading. Disturbance will be limited primarily to the required width of the trail corridor (e.g. 4 feet for hiking trails). The policy and guidelines for trail building that have been established by recognized trail organizations and governmental agencies will be followed; a compilation of standards that OPRHP uses is provided within the OPRHP Technical Documents located at: <http://nysparks.com/recreation/trails/technical-assistance.aspx>. These established guidelines will assure that work will be completed in a manner that maximizes the protection and preservation of resources. Trails to be closed will use appropriate and sustainable closure methods and will be restored using native vegetation, as necessary. Sections of existing trails that are currently experiencing erosion will be evaluated on a case by case basis and stabilized or realigned to a more sustainable route. The goal of all trail work is to have trails that provide access to the resource without adversely affecting it.

The River Trail (White Trail) specifically will require reconstruction of historic retaining walls and also some areas will require re-routed sections to be constructed around steep, severely eroded banks. Due to the thin and erodible soils here, this trail will be designated for hiking only to maintain traditional use, and limit user numbers and impacts in this area. Public education about the sensitive nature of this trail will be incorporated into trail maps.

## **Water Resources**

It is not anticipated that the implementation of the Master Plan will have significant adverse environmental impacts on water resources. The “Land” impacts section above included discussion of how construction of new facilities will minimize impacts from sedimentation and erosion to protect water quality. Several of the Natural Resource Management strategies provide guidance for the future management and protection of important water resources such as wetlands, streams and the Hudson River.

The following specific projects identified in the plan have the potential to affect water resources:

ADA accessible fishing dock platform at the Lewis Gordon Norrie Playground Area - The construction of this facility will involve removing the remnants of a former dock structure and installation of a bulkhead that will anchor the platform. The bulkhead will be designed to minimize the amount of fill required below the water line which in turn will minimize the amount of construction in water. This project will require permits from the NYS DEC and US Army

Corps of Engineers for any work below the mean high water mark and all permit conditions regarding mitigation of water quality impacts will be followed.

Dinsmore Golf Course Irrigation System Improvements - A new irrigation system will be far more efficient and employ conservation measures while providing better course conditions. The existing water source for the golf course irrigation system is the Hudson River and it is expected that this source will not continue to be used due to sedimentation problems. At the present time the type of water source and its location is not known, therefore additional environmental review of this project will be required.

Parking Areas – An increase in impervious surfaces could result in an increase in the quantity and velocity of runoff generated during storm events. The new parking facilities at the proposed visitor center and maintenance area and the reconstruction of the marina/Norrie Environmental Center may include the use of pervious pavement, bio-filtration swales and/or rain garden areas to minimize the impacts of storm water runoff.

Trails - The trails recommendations (see Appendix B) include a trail assessment effort that identified several trails that may be causing water quality impacts. There are existing trails with identified drainage issues, including locations with standing water and seasonally wet areas as well as trails that are located adjacent to wetlands or streams that by their design or location may be causing water quality impacts. While providing access to water resources is an important component of the trails plan, proper design is critical near these resources to insure that inadvertent impacts on water quality or aquatic habitat are not occurring. The Trails Plan recommends that these trails be further assessed on a case by case basis to determine the best course of action for avoidance of impacts to water quality. In some cases, trail realignment to provide an additional buffer area may be required. In other cases, additional design features or signage may be necessary. This work will minimize impacts to water resources and water quality.

It is expected that the retaining wall work along the River Trail (White Trail) will not involve work below water in the Hudson River. However, since the work will be in close proximity to the river, consultation with NYS DEC and Army Corps of Engineers will take place to determine if permits are needed. At a minimum, consultation with DEC will determine if mitigation measures such as turbidity curtains are necessary to prevent potential water quality impacts from construction activities. There will be some small sections of trails that will be re-routed away from severely eroded areas in order to protect river water quality from on-going erosion and sedimentation impacts.

New trails or newly designated trails will be designed to insure that adequate vegetative buffers are maintained between the trail and any adjacent water resource and that the design is sustainable and will not result in erosion or bank destabilization. In particular, the new connection trail from the south passes through an area with numerous vernal pools and the final alignment will insure that there will be an adequate buffer between the trail and these important wetlands. This is not meant to prohibit trails which cross water bodies (streams).

New Maintenance Facility – This new facility will be located adjacent to a short section of the North Staatsburg Creek and, therefore, there is potential for runoff from both construction activities and operations to inadvertently impact the creek's water quality. At present there is a vegetative buffer in place along the eastern section of the stream that is delineated by bollards. This buffer will be extended to the western edge of the park property to include the entire length of the stream segment in this area. It will be physically delineated to provide added protection from inadvertent encroachment from maintenance facility operations.

In addition, the design of this facility will include provisions to direct storm water runoff to bio-swales or other retention areas so that such runoff does not adversely affect creek water quality. All appropriate sedimentation and erosion controls will be employed during construction and will be specified within a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan.

## **Air Quality**

When fully implemented, the master plan will result in increased use of the parks and historic site. Resulting air quality impacts from increased traffic, however, are not expected to be significant. Short term temporary air quality impacts may occur due to a minor temporary increase in vehicle exhaust and some generation of dust during construction. These will be temporary and localized and will occur over time as the plan is implemented.

## **Plants and Animals**

### ***General***

Limited new development is proposed and, therefore, direct impacts to biological resources are expected to be minimal since projects have generally been sited in areas with previous development, limited environmental sensitivity and which generally possess accessibility to, and use of, existing infrastructure. This includes those projects that will be built in currently undeveloped areas, as well as those that will be within existing development footprints (see listings under “Land” above.).

The natural resource management strategies provide guidance for the future protection of biological resources. There is one significant ecological community of statewide significance within the park, the freshwater tidal swamp, and specific strategies are called for with regard to this area that will provide some additional protection of the plants and animals within this community. The wetland, stream and river strategy and the management strategy for field and successional shrubland areas will also provide protection for these important habitats.

### ***Vegetation/Plants***

Facility rehabilitation and development will require removal of some minor amounts of vegetation during construction. The new maintenance facility location will likely require some construction outside of the existing development footprint, however these areas are mowed lawn/field areas with smaller second growth trees. The new parking area next to the carriage barn is also in a mowed area with a few trees. Trees provide important buffers to adjacent property in both of these areas and additional trees will be planted to maintain this visual buffer.

The new picnic playground area will be designed around the existing landscape and will preserve trees to insure that the recreational facilities remain within a wooded area. There will be some select trimming or tree removal to open views here.

None of the construction/rehabilitation proposed under the Master Plan will be located near known rare plant locations; however, the Natural Heritage Survey report calls for a search for rare plants prior to any development or new management practices. During the design of the proposed rehabilitation and development projects, the Regional Natural Resource Steward will be consulted regarding the need for additional rare plant surveys in these areas and regarding any trees to be removed, particularly trees along the river shoreline that may be important to bald eagles.

Norrie State Park contains a vernal pool complex, and some of these small wetlands may be close to the proposed development of the new picnic playground area, redesign of the campground layout and the enhanced group camp facilities. Some of these important wetlands also contain rare plants. Staff

will identify their location early in the design process to insure that they are adequately buffered in the development plans as well as protected during construction.

The construction or realignment of trails will also include vegetation removal. Final trail layouts will be reviewed in the field by appropriate agency staff (e.g. Park Manager, Regional Natural Resource Steward) to insure there are no significant trees or rare plant species affected. Existing sections of trails that align near sensitive natural areas such as wetlands will be assessed on a case by case basis to determine ways that inadvertent impacts caused by recreational use can be mitigated.

Consideration will be given to adding boardwalks or bridges on trails in seasonally wet areas that receive heavy use. The River Trail in particular contains less common native plants and communities. Reroutes around severely eroded areas, limiting use to only foot traffic and additional public education about the sensitivity of this trail will mitigate impacts to the natural communities along this unique shoreline.

In general, areas that will require vegetative restoration (e.g. campground improvements, tree replacement) or where trails will be closed, will incorporate the use of native species or historically appropriate non-invasive species that are indigenous to the area. The Regional Landscape Architect and the Regional Natural Resource Steward will be consulted regarding the appropriate species to be used in any planting plans.

### ***Animals***

The designation of a Bird Conservation Area (BCA) will provide added recognition of the importance of the facility for bird habitat, particularly as a migratory concentration site and for species at risk. A Management Guidance Summary (MGS) has been developed and is included in Appendix G. The MGS provides site specific recommendations relating to habitat protection, access, operation and education and outreach programs focusing on the protection of birds and bird habitats. A kiosk and other educational efforts such as bird checklists will be developed to educate the public about the Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh BCA.

The plan's natural resource management strategies call for additional protection, particularly to sensitive wildlife habitats such as the Indian Kill, vernal pools and river shoreline. They also provide guidance for management of areas such as open fields to protect nesting birds, or shoreline trees for wintering Bald eagles, as well as evaluation of current practices (e.g., "green marina", Integrated Pest Management on the golf course) and additional surveys of amphibians and reptiles.

Current wildlife policies and practices will continue in consultation with NYS DEC. Control of nuisance Canada geese around the marina area has been successful and further controls such as egg treatment and hazing will be implemented in northern sections of the facility as well. Deer population levels are adversely affecting the vegetation at the park through over browsing. The master plan calls for the collection of additional information about the size of the current deer population and the establishment of vegetation monitoring plots. Analysis of this data will then allow for more informed decision making with regards to future management options or strategies.

In general, areas proposed for improvements either through rehabilitation or new construction are not located near sensitive environmental areas and are not expected to significantly impact wildlife in the area. Timing can mitigate disturbance to wildlife by avoiding periods of higher biological activity, such as bird breeding seasons. Site-specific design of new facilities and trails will include surveys for sensitive or rare species or habitats, if needed, adjustments in design can be made to further minimize any adverse impacts.

### ***Invasive Species***

Trail use, boating, and other recreational uses can facilitate the spread of invasive species. Invasive plant seed can be inadvertently introduced on construction equipment and through the use of mulch, imported soil, gravel, and sod. Some invasive plant species may have been intentionally planted in erosion control, landscape, or wildflower projects. Additionally, invasive plants migrate into the park from the surrounding communities.

The Natural Heritage report (Smith and Lundgren, 2010) identified invasive species as a significant threat to the biodiversity of this park complex. The master plan calls for the preparation of invasive species strategy plan to provide guidance to prioritize control efforts so that control of invasive species can be done in the most effective manner from both an ecological and economic perspective. Early detection and rapid response for species such as mile-a-minute and black swallowwort will also be part of this strategy to limit infestation by these particularly aggressive invasive species.

Best Management Practices (BMP) will be implemented to minimize spread of invasive species. Practices such as proper material disposal and equipment cleaning methods limit the potential of invasives to establish in new locations within and beyond a site. NYS DOT has developed useful BMPs for invasive plant control (NYS DOT, 2009) that can be tailored to agency or park-specific projects and operations.

The Emerald Ash Borer, Asian Long-horned beetle, and the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid have the potential to result in major damage to the forests if they are introduced into the park. Precautions such as surveying and monitoring for such species should be included as part of the invasive species strategy. Continued enforcement of firewood regulations and providing local sources of firewood to campers is critical to control efforts. Educational information for campers will continue to be provided, including brochures, posters, bookmarks and other materials as available.

### **Scenic Resources**

The scenic character of the Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh complex is a very significant resource of the Hudson Valley and is located within an area designated by the NYS Department of State's Coastal Management Program as a Scenic Area of Statewide Significance (SASS). Implementation of the Master Plan will not result any significant adverse impacts on scenic resources. The plan proposes continued maintenance of the existing scenic vistas shown in Figure 10. In addition, some historic vistas may be restored, such as between the Hoyt House and the river. The removal of shoreline trees will be done in consultation with the Regional Natural Resource Steward to insure that important habitat for bald eagles is not affected.

New construction or renovations to existing structures will be designed to complement their surroundings and will not be visually intrusive. Opening new views, such as within the new picnic area will be done in a phased manner to minimize vegetation removal while providing views of the river. The new maintenance area will be well screened from Old Post Road by topography and vegetation. The new parking area at the Carriage Barn will be sited and designed in such a way as to not adversely affect the historic landscape. Vegetation will be used to screen both of these facilities from the adjacent private property.

### **Cultural Resources**

The Master Plan will have significant beneficial impacts on the many significant cultural resources within the Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh complex. This includes preparation of a Cultural Landscape Report and Historic Structures Report, both of which will compile and provide important information

about these resources and provide guidance for their future management and protection. Expanding the historic site to include historic outbuildings that contribute to the Mills era of the estate, combined with developing management zones throughout the facility will provide the needed guidance for the appropriate management of historic buildings and landscapes.

The Cultural Landscape Report may call for landscape restoration activities such as vegetation removal, drainage system removal or repair or reconstruction of historic roads or paths. As these details are not known at the current time, additional environmental review will be needed when the report is complete prior to any implementation.

The relocation of the existing uses in the Carriage Barn and Dairy Complex will significantly reduce the impact on these structures and provide important opportunities for public access and interpretation. The Master Plan also calls for the completion of important historic restoration projects including the remaining three sides of the mansion exterior, the remainder of the estate wall along Old Post Road, and the stabilization of the Greenhouse complex. Finally, the Master Plan calls for protection of vacant historic structures, in particular the Hoyt House and its outbuildings, and the continued pursuit of funding and/or outside proposals for the adaptive reuse of these structures and other underutilized historic structures. Any outside proposals will be evaluated for compatibility with the park setting and consistency with resource protection guidelines including the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Structures.

The complex is archeologically sensitive and any projects or activities that require ground disturbance either associated with the master plan or routine operation and maintenance will require review by OPRHP's Division of Historic Preservation to insure that such resources are not adversely impacted.

Improved signage and interpretive materials will improve understanding of the history of the facility. In particular the proposed CCC interpretive trail will increase awareness of this important chapter in Norrie State Park's history.

## **Recreation and Open Space**

Implementation of the Master Plan will result in substantial improvements to virtually every aspect of the parks' existing recreational facilities. The plan calls for some level of rehabilitation or reconstruction of the marina, campground, cabins, and golf course. The new visitor center, in particular will provide important benefits to visitors including orientation and tourism information, new exhibits and needed amenities such as parking and restroom facilities. The new River Picnic and playground area will also be a significantly upgraded facility that will fulfill a need for additional day use opportunities. There will also be expanded public interpretive opportunities, such as the CCC era interpretive trail. Improvements to the trail system will result in a better organized trails system that will be more protective of the surrounding environmental resources.

The plan calls for consideration of the expansion of the campground or developing a small recreational vehicles (less than 20 feet) loop. If this proposal is advanced additional review under SEQR will be needed at that time.

The 1,100 acres of public parkland on the Hudson River that is provided at Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh is an important piece of the region's open space system. Within the facility there are areas that provide significant open space resources such as the lawn in front of the mansion or the open fields along U.S. Route 9 and Old Post Road and these areas will continue to be protected under the master plan. The agency will evaluate and consider acquisition of fee, title or easements on adjacent

properties as they become available. It will also monitor any development proposals that may affect the quality of its scenic and open space resources.

### **Traffic and Access**

Implementation of the Master Plan will result in some access improvements, but does not call for any significant changes to traffic patterns or access. The new parking lot at the carriage barn will provide improved parking facilities for the public. At the present time, parking is within a formal double allée of trees and the soil here has become compacted and is damaging trees. This new lot will provide access to the park and historic site while minimizing impact on the historic landscape. The marina parking lot will also be upgraded to provide more efficient use. The new picnic area will also provide improved and safer road access and parking in this area of Norrie.

Full implementation of the master plan will result in increased use of the complex and an associated increase in traffic. The capacity of the existing road system was examined during the planning process and it was determined that it generally functions effectively and with the proposed improvements called for in the plan, the system should be able to accommodate added use and provide for safer traffic flow as well.

### **Public Health and Safety**

OPRHP places a strong emphasis on safety. New and rehabilitated facilities will be designed and constructed to meet all applicable health and safety codes including compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Design and rehabilitation of infrastructure systems such as electric, water, and sewer will ensure public health protection. A priority project is to provide potable water to the historic site.

### **Energy, Noise and Odor**

Sustainability principles and energy efficiency will be incorporated into the design of all proposed construction. Any new structures will utilize sustainable design practices and any renovations to existing structures will incorporate sustainable elements when feasible. Master Plan implementation may result in some temporary increases in noise during construction. Construction is generally scheduled for periods of low park use to minimize impacts on public use.

### **Unavoidable Adverse Effects**

The proposed Master Plan will result in some unavoidable adverse impacts. These will be primarily construction related (e.g. dust and noise from construction equipment and vehicles, etc.). There will be a loss of pervious soil surface and vegetation as a result of construction of proposed maintenance facility and minor losses of vegetation from the development of the River Picnic areas facility and from restoration of scenic views.

### **Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources**

The planning, development and implementation of this Master Plan including rehabilitation of facilities and new construction has and will involve the irreversible and irretrievable commitment of public resources in the form of time, labor and materials. It will also require a commitment to the long-term operation and maintenance costs of the park.

## **Impacts on Growth and Character of Community and Neighborhood**

It is anticipated that implementation of the Master Plan will result in increased use of the parks and historic site. This increased use will be managed to maintain the quality of the natural, scenic and historic resources. The increase is expected to result in positive economic impacts to the communities surrounding the facility in the form of increased business to gas stations, restaurants and convenience stores. Tourism-related expenditures for camping and day use activities that are offered at the parks will also support the local economy.

Many local residents take advantage of the opportunities these parks have to offer. It is expected that implementation of the master plan will increase the awareness of this facility throughout the state and country and that it will become a destination for more visitors that come to the National Park Service facilities in Hyde Park and other tourist attractions in the area.

## ***Supplemental Environmental Review***

Portions of this Master Plan/EIS are somewhat general or conceptual. Decisions regarding the type and extent of certain actions will be dependent on the findings from more specific studies or analysis still to be completed. The findings from these site specific evaluations may identify impacts that were not adequately addressed in this plan/EIS. Under such a circumstance, an additional or supplemental environmental review will be required. As part of the agency's responsibility under the State Environmental Quality Review Act, OPRHP will review proposed implementation projects with respect to consistency with this plan and EIS. Projects found by OPRHP to be consistent with the plan can go forward without any additional review. Other types of proposals may require additional review ranging from completion of an environmental assessment form to perhaps a site specific environmental impact statement.

To assist in this consistency evaluation, the following types of actions have been identified as likely to require additional review under SEQR:

- Any new actions not addressed within the Master Plan that do not meet the Type II categories with Part 617, the rules and regulations implementing SEQR;
- Any change from the preferred alternative for recreational and facility elements of the plan which would result in significant environmental impacts;
- Any leases, easement, memoranda of understanding, or other agreements between OPRHP and private entities or other agencies that affect resources in a manner that is not sufficiently addressed in this plan.
- Conversion of the Hoyt House and surrounding area will require the completion of a federal environmental assessment and public review.
- Any project determined through review by the OPRHP Division for Historic Preservation to have an Adverse Impact on historic or cultural resource at the parks;
- Any proposals for new trails, trail segments or trail uses not addressed within the master plan;
- Design and construction of golf course drainage systems, and development of a new water supply for the golf course irrigation system;
- Adaptive reuse proposals for vacant or underutilized structures;
- Non-point storm water runoff mitigation controls that affect parkland;
- Design and construction of additional campsites and/or a new small RV loop in the Norrie campground;

- Implementation of any portions of the cultural landscape management plan that include removal of trees and successional growth, restoration or removal of drainage systems, or rebuilding missing drives and paths;
- Relocation of utility lines or wastewater treatment systems.

### **Coastal Zone Management Program Consistency**

Ogden and Ruth Livingston Mills Memorial State Park, Margaret Lewis Norrie State Park and Staatsburgh State Historic Site are located on the Hudson River within New York’s coastal area. In accordance with the NY Waterfront Revitalization and Coastal Resources Act (Executive Law Article 42) state agency actions within the coastal area must be evaluated for their consistency with the State’s coastal policies. The overall objective of this program is to assure a balance between development and preservation of the State’s coastal areas.

After a review of all policies (NYCRR Title 19, Part 600.5) OPRHP determined which policies are applicable to this Master Plan. A Coastal Assessment Form (CAF) was completed to assist in the identification of applicable policies. The CAF and discussion of those policies are provided in Appendix I. Policies applicable to the plan include those related to water dependent uses and facilities, development in areas where public services are adequate, significant fish and wildlife habitat, access to public water related recreation, water-dependent and water-enhanced recreation, significant historic and cultural resources, scenic resources of statewide significance, best management practices, and protection of wetlands.

### **Summary**

Based on the coastal policy discussion contained in Appendix J, it is OPRHP’s determination the action will not substantially hinder the achievement of any of the policies and purposes of the State Coastal Policies as described in the New York Coastal Management Program.

## Chapter 8 – Comments and Responses

### ***Introduction***

This chapter contains the responses to the comments received by OPRHP on the Draft Master Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for Ogden Mills and Ruth Livingston Mills Memorial State Park, Margaret Lewis Norrie State Park, and Staatsburgh State Historic Site. The Draft Master Plan/DEIS was issued June 27, 2012. A public meeting was held August 16, 2012 at the Taconic Regional Office in Staatsburg, NY. The comment period ended August 31, 2012.

During the public meeting, seven people spoke out of approximately twenty-five in attendance and their comments were recorded. During the comment period for the Draft Master Plan/DEIS, the Agency received ten written comment letters. A list of persons providing comments is included at the end of the chapter.

OPRHP appreciates the time and effort that persons interested in the future of Ogden Mills and Ruth Livingston Mills Memorial State Park, Margaret Lewis Norrie State Park, and Staatsburgh State Historic Site have invested in their review and comments on the Draft Master Plan/DEIS and their participation in the public meeting.

The types of comments received included document editing suggestions, requests for clarification of information presented in the document, and comments related to specific aspects of the plan. All comments were reviewed and organized by categories.

Responses to these comments are found in this section and were considered in the revisions found in this Final Master Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS).

### ***Significant Changes to the Draft Master Plan in the Final Master Plan***

- Agricultural use within the parks will include limited animals and livestock in designated areas (to be determined by OPRHP).
- The mowing regime for the park now has dates associated to the mowing and there is a map of the area to be managed.
- Hoyt House and its surrounds will undergo a conversion as per LWCF regulations.
- Adaptive reuse consistent with resource protection guidelines, including the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Structures, will be considered for any vacant and/or underutilized structure.

### ***Response to Comments***

The following section contains a detailed list of comments received from the public during the comment period and public hearings and the responses. The comments are organized by category. Following each category heading, there is a summarized comment. Following each summarized comment is the Agency's response.

### ***Cultural Resources***

---

#### ***Comment: Ice Houses***

The ice house foundations are mentioned in Appendix G, yet there is no word about the presence of this major industry at its riverfront location within the park under "History of the Parks and Site," nor an explanation of its transformation in to the L.G. Norrie park and playground.

**Response:**

The ice house foundations are briefly mentioned on page 38 under the heading “Historic Buildings and Structures.” Supplemental information regarding this industry has been added to the plan on page 38.

---

**Comment: Hoyt House and Estate**

Extreme caution should be used in procuring a licensee for the Hoyt House. Require any individual or group undertaking a project at the Hoyt House to restore it to its original state for purposes very close to if not the same as the original purposes.

**Response:**

OPRHP has issued Request for Proposals in the past and should they decide to seek a licensee to rehabilitate and operate the Hoyt House again, another Request for Proposals will be issued. All proposals will be evaluated to ensure that they protect the integrity of the historic structure and also that they are compatible with the operation of the park and its environmental setting. All manner of uses may be submitted and a careful evaluation will be conducted on all proposals to ensure they meet with OPRHP guidelines and agency intentions for the site.

---

**Comment: Restore Entry Road and Bridge to Hoyt House**

Vaux's original approach to the Hoyt House site should be restored. Restoration should include the stone wall and pillars at the beginning of the approach on Old Post Road as well as the more recently damaged railroad bridge. The Hoyt railroad bridge is not mentioned in Appendix G, and the needed restoration of its deck is not mentioned in the text. It was suggested that OPRHP pursue the reuse of Irving grate to repair the deck of the Hoyt rail road bridge. Irving grate is a structurally sound material for use at slower speeds, such as those enforced in state parks. OPRHP should secure a supply of this material for its own use

**Response:**

The Hoyt Bridge is in very poor condition and in need of rehabilitation. This bridge is critical to the integrity of “The Point.” Its existence predates the estate development and effectively fixed the location of the estate entrance – the Old Post Road frontage, low wall/pillars, entrance lane and bridge over the railroad are all one piece and all capable of being restored.

There is a consensus that this original entrance is not suitable for access for future uses of “The Point” and that an alternate route is necessary for that purpose. Therefore, the treatment of the entrance, the bridge deck and nearly all of the estate’s carriage road system can and should be as close the original as possible; including grade, alignment, and width. These resources will be restored as funding allows.

---

**Comment: Restore Hoyt Estate Carriage Roads**

The carriage drives of the Hoyt Estate should be very carefully restored. OPRHP should not contemplate paving the Vaux carriage drives with asphaltic concrete, nor widening, nor re-grading any of these drives.

**Response:**

OPRHP will restore the Vaux carriage roads using period appropriate materials. Some roads that require heavy vehicular use or service the recreation portion of the park will necessarily be paved for ease of access, use and maintenance.

---

**Comment: Boundary of the Historic Site**

Support and agreement was expressed for the amendment and expansion of the historic site boundary.

**Response:**

Support for this recommendation is appreciated.

---

**Comment: Include Hoyt House in the Expanded State Historic Site**

Page 59 and Figure 19, Proposed Historic Site Expansion, [of the Draft Plan] does not include the Hoyt House and associated buildings, even though the rationale for increasing the boundary is that the site manager is trained in the care of historic buildings and designed landscapes and the park manager is not. The Hoyt Estate buildings should be included in the Historic Site Expansion because these structures need precisely the kind of knowledgeable attention provided by a Historic Site Manager.

**Response:**

Hoyt House was excluded from historic site expansion, but is included in the historic management zone as proposed in the plan. Hoyt House was excluded from the expanded State Historic Site boundary because a licensee may be retained in the future for the structure, out buildings, and surrounding land. An RFP was issued (and may be reissued) for the reuse of “The Point” and the agency felt that, in the long run, it made more sense to exclude the Hoyt Estate from the historic site boundary. In the interim, the Site Manager for Staatsburgh will continue to work with the Park Manager to respectfully attend to Hoyt House and will oversee any activity as it relates to the historic management zone.

---

**Comment: Support for Cultural Landscape Report and Landscape Management Plan**

The commitment to executing a Cultural Landscape Report and a Landscape Management Plan was supported. These reports should be developed with public outreach that provides ample opportunity for public input during the document drafting and for review and comment of preliminary draft documents.

**Response:**

These reports are listed as an initial priority under the implementation section of the plan. OPRHP will conduct these reports and provide for public comment and input when appropriate.

---

**Comment: Executive Summary-Adaptive Reuse**

In the “Vision and Goals” section of the Executive Summary, what historic buildings are in the parks and how will they be adaptively reused?

**Response:**

There are several historic buildings within Mills-Norrie State Parks, including the CCC era cabins, the Lydig Hoyt Estate Buildings, the Huntington Barns, and the Hayes House and Russell Farm House. While the plan identifies a preferred use for some of these structures, the plan also states that

adaptive reuse decisions will be informed by the completion of Historic Structures Reports and Cultural Landscape Reports. For additional information about the historic buildings, please refer to Figure 21, Management Zones and Appendices F and I.

---

***Comment: Adaptive Reuse of Hoyt House***

Hoyt House and its associated structures are not resources to be adaptively reused. The designer's stature and the buildings' contribution to the federal designations of Hudson River National Historic Landmark District and Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area require a more stringent adherence to preservation standards than "sensitive reuse." The plan should read "historically accurate use" with no implication that the master plan is sanctioning any repurposing of the historical buildings in either the Hoyt Estate, or the Mills Mansion farmstead complexes. "Reuse" connotes new uses, not restored old uses.

***Response:***

OPRHP has committed to stabilizing the structures of the Hoyt Estate, including the Main House. The Master Plan states that OPRHP will seek a licensee to rehabilitate and reuse the structures in a manner that is consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Structures. An RFP was issued in 2011 and reissued in June 2012. Areas of the Dairy Barn Complex will be rehabilitated to interpret the working estate aspect of the Mills era of the estate.

---

***Comment: Fully Restore Structures to their Original Use***

The vision for historical resources at Staatsburgh State Historic Site and Hoyt House should be full restoration of structures and re-introduction of original uses as closely resembling the period of interpretation as possible.

***Response:***

Comment noted. As stated in the plan and in the responses above, full restoration of the structures and reviving original uses is not a viable option for the park complex from a management and financial perspective. OPRHP is committed to rehabilitating the structures, where feasible, to ensure compliance with NYS Building Code and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Structures.

---

***Comment: Historic Gates***

Do not widen the historic entrance gate to Staatsburgh as there isn't adequate justification provided for altering the gateway. It is not appropriate to widen the gateway. OPRHP should be respecting the integrity of the gateway as a key landscape element that informs of bygone transportation. In this day and age, many options for small utility trucks are available. European-style vehicles are in much more common use in the region.

***Response:***

As noted in Appendix A on page 31, there is significant damage to the existing stone wall and entrance. So much so, that the iron gates were removed several years ago to prevent further damage from large trucks and buses. While the plan calls for relocating the regional storage area (which would, in turn, alleviate some potential for damage from large trucks), the historic site is often visited by buses and tour groups and the opening for the gate is not wide enough to accommodate modern buses, therefore, buses continue to damage the stone wall. Widening one side of the gate, as has been

done in other locations throughout the historic site system, would solve this problem. The iron gates will then be rehung.

---

***Comment: Dairy Barn Complex***

Add a bullet to the Master Plan section regarding the protection of the Dairy Barn complex. The master plan should make a commitment to removing the equipment and materials storage and restoring the dairy barn, draft barn, birthing barn, and creamery. These buildings should also have historical uses reestablished rather than reuse for new purposes.

***Response:***

As stated in Appendix A and in the Master Plan, maintenance equipment and other park maintenance materials will be removed and the Dairy Barn Complex will be rehabilitated for cultural resource education and interpretation of the Mills era of the estate (see page 58 of the plan and page 34 in Appendix A). Adaptive reuse of areas of the Dairy Barn Complex is also a recommendation of the plan.

---

***Comment: Carriage Barn Improvements and Reuse***

Comments expressed support for the removal of storage and maintenance functions from the Carriage Barn, but adaptive reuse is not appropriate for the Carriage Barn. These buildings should be restored and returned to their correct historic use—the storage of carriages and stabling of horses. Do not upgrade utilities to the carriage barn in anticipation of turning it into a visitors’ center (page 60). Similarly, no new 30-car parking lot should ever be developed at the carriage barn as proposed on page 61 [of the Draft Plan]. This will lead to many difficulties for future restoration. Removal of the existing gravel parking from the Carriage House and barn entry road is a good idea.

***Response:***

Returning the Carriage Barn to its historic use is not a viable option for the Agency, but rehabilitating the building for education and interpretation of its historic use is recommended. The utilities will be upgraded in anticipation of the rehabilitation and reuse of the Carriage Barn. The facility must provide sufficient parking for visitors and accessibility. Parking areas will be designed to minimize any adverse visual impact.

---

***Comment: Treehouse and Greenhouse***

Articulate a vision for the treehouse and greenhouse area.

***Response:***

Additional studies need to be done to determine the feasibility of reusing the treehouse. The vision for this area will likely be informed by the Historic Structures Report and Cultural Landscape Report recommended by the plan. The greenhouse area will be improved with a sitting area, interpretative signage, and will become a destination within the trail system to help interpret the Mills era of the estate.

---

***Comment: Historic Integrity***

All parking lots, visitors’ center, gift shops, bathrooms and meeting places should be kept away from the historic structures and estate grounds to preserve the discovery experience of the landscape, the approaches to which were carefully planned to exploit the natural beauty of these very scenic

designed landscapes into which the historic structures are nestled (Referring to page 38 of the Draft Master Plan).

**Response:**

Any circulation, parking, and access changes will be carefully designed and incorporated into the current layout and will be consistent with historic preservation, circulation, and accessibility goals for the facility.

---

**Comment: Carriage Rides**

Horses and carriages operating out of the Mills Carriage House and Stables can take visitors through the park trails for a fee per hour as part of historic interpretation of the historic structures and estate grounds which produces income.

**Response:**

Comment noted. The plan describes the desired use for the Carriage Barn. Returning the Carriage Barn to its historic use is not a viable option for the Agency. Carriage rides through the park may be considered as a proposed seasonal use of the park complex and state historic site.

---

**Comment: Stone Wall**

Support was expressed regarding OPRHP's commitment to repairing the stone walls along Old Post Road. A suggestion was then made to pursue sponsorship or "adoption" of wall segments by private groups or organizations. This same suggestion was made for other portions of the park/site complex. It was further suggested that developing these public/private partnerships, which have been proven successful in other locations, should be part of this plan.

**Response:**

As stated in the plan, OPRHP remains committed to the restoration of the Mills estate stone wall along Old Post Road and work is currently underway to repair the wall. Work is expected to be complete by September 2013.

---

**Comment: Cultural Sustainability**

In the draft document, on page 20 – 21 the issue of sustainability should include the notion of cultural sustainability, not just environmentally green practices. Staatsburgh SHS has a special responsibility to protect and interpret historical resources, estate living, transportation including the essential connection with New York City by steam train and steam ferryboat, interrelationship with the nearby villages and hamlets such as Rhinecliff and Barrytown, and the nexus with farm practices onsite and on farms in the vicinity. This relates to a cultural ecosystem which is an appropriate aspect of EBM for Staatsburgh SHS managers to consider.

**Response:**

Through programming and cultural and education and interpretation, Staatsburgh already achieves many aspects of "cultural sustainability." The site anticipates additional opportunities to promote cultural resources once many of the recommendations of the plan are implemented, especially the rehabilitation of the Dairy Barn and Carriage House.

## **Recreation Resources**

---

### ***Comment: Mountain Biking***

Support for mountain biking was expressed along with a request to keep the Mills-Norrie trail system open to bikers. The trail system, although small compared to some, currently provides a great, close to home, recreation area, as well as training grounds for local racers.

### ***Response:***

Mountain biking continues to be allowed on designated trails within the parks with the exception of the River Trail and the new southern trail connection to the Hyde Park Trails.

---

### ***Comment: Trails***

I don't think hiking is a passive activity. It is supported by constructed trails and demarcation signs. Hence, the park puts resources and reserves space towards supporting trail-related activity. Horseback riding and cross-country running should be listed in addition to hiking as activities supported by the trail system that traverses challenging terrain.

### ***Response:***

Horseback riding is identified as an existing use on page 41 of the plan. Please see comments below regarding the decision to discontinue this use. Running has been added as an existing passive use. OPRHP characterizes these uses as passive because they have considerably less impact than other uses such as snowmobiling, for example.

---

### ***Comment: Horseback Riding***

Page 40 of the Draft Plan says horseback riding is an allowed use on the trails. Where do horse trailers park and how is this use supported? Is potable water available? On page 54, under *Trails*, the Draft Plan states: "Horseback riding will no longer be allowed." Horseback riding and horses should not be eliminated from these parks. The plan's information base has not been sufficiently expanded and the pertinent additional research has not been conducted to support the discontinuation of horseback riding in the park.

### ***Response:***

Equestrian considerations were reviewed by the planning team. Currently there is little demand for equestrian use of the parks/site. OPRHP conducted a visitor survey in 2011; however, response to this survey did not produce a statistically viable sample to derive conclusions for this plan. The plan team relied upon an extrapolation of data collected in 2005 for the development of the 2009-2013 Statewide Comprehensive Recreation Plan and interviews with local user groups and friends groups to determine recreational needs of equestrians at the facility. For example, the team held discussions with the Landsman Kill Trail Association (LKTA), a local horseback riding club. LKTA is willing to work on the trail system if a trail connection can be made to their trails but the general public would not be able to use LKTA trails (80+ miles). This information was analyzed and used to make the determination to discontinue equestrian use at the park complex. There is no designated trailer parking area. Providing safe access to the parks from trails east of Route 9 is prohibitive due to the speed limit and high use of the road. Dutchess County has a great deal of equestrian use, but it appears that the demand is being met elsewhere. Trail mileage in the parks/site does not accommodate the minimum desired standard of 7 miles of trail. Given these considerations the planning team recommended to prohibit equestrian use within the park. If demand warrants in the

future and a northern connection could be made to public trails, OPRHP will consider an area along Old Post Road near the golf course for an equestrian trailer parking facility and provide access to the north at the Hopeland area trails. See also Appendix A, pg A-19.

---

***Comment: Snowmobiling***

Why are snowmobiles allowed in the parks/site while horseback riding is being eliminated?

***Response:***

Snowmobile use is very infrequent and dependent upon ample snowfall. When conditions support snowmobile use, it is allowed in the open areas near the Norrie entrance. There are no designated snowmobile trails within the park complex and snowmobiles are not allowed to use the established trail system. No special accommodations are made or planned for snowmobiles in the plan. As stated in the plan, there is little demand for horseback riding that necessitate the development of equestrian support facilities in the park.

---

***Comment: Horse Related Events***

Make Mills-Norrie/Staatsburgh an equine destination with the implementation of trail riding, horse drawn sleigh rides in winter and holding different local, state and national sanctioned equine sporting events. This could increase park attendance and park revenues. Using Mills-Norrie State Park as an equine destination would not prevent or impede any of the other existing recreation activities and would turn these park goers into spectators who spend dollars at park concessions to watch equine sports.

***Response:***

The park complex and site host and coordinate a number of interpretive and educational events throughout the year. Programming is not considered a master plan issue, but the plan can make recommendations for potential programming themes. While there may be the potential for smaller equestrian events to take place at the parks/site, large scale events would not be feasible due to lack of space for stabling horses, other related infrastructure, manure management issues, etc.

---

***Comment: Recreational Needs***

The second paragraph of the recreational needs assessment does not include the recreational needs of the equine enthusiast.

***Response:***

Recreational needs are identified by the SCORP on a county level. These figures are used as a starting point to identify needs for a facility. The planning team also uses surveys and public information meetings to identify and gauge recreational needs and issues. The planning team did investigate demand and need for equestrian activities on a local basis. See previous comments on horseback riding and the activity analysis on page A-19 in the Appendices.

---

***Comment: Trails***

Many of the trails throughout the parks are used on a regular basis for bird watching and there is support for the proposed work on them. There is no explicit plan to create public trail maps mentioned in the draft plan. Please include new and updated trail maps as part of the plan.

**Response:**

Updated trail maps, trail signage, and kiosks will be provided as funding allows. Please refer to pages 54-55 of the plan.

**Partnerships**

---

**Comment: Partner with Equine Groups**

OPRHP should partner with local equine clubs and businesses to enhance equine uses in the park and generate revenue.

**Response:**

OPRHP and the planning team have consulted with local equestrian groups in determining use of the parks. The parks can develop equestrian themed events that can be incorporated through programming with the appropriate assistance and support from local equine groups that would bring horses to the parks for that event.

---

**Comment: Hudson River Valley Partners**

The Hudson River Valley Greenway is a partner, and is the management entity for the National Heritage Area, a federal program of the National Park Service, page 64.

**Response:**

Comment noted. The text has been corrected to reflect this omission. Please refer to page 27.

---

**Comment: Scenic Hudson**

Scenic Hudson has worked with the agency on many acquisition projects within the park/site complex, specifically, the Hopeland property. Scenic Hudson's role should be mentioned. Scenic Hudson has also worked with OPRHP on a number of viewshed acquisition and easement projects across the river. This partnership should be acknowledged and encouraged to continue.

**Response:**

Comment noted. The text has been changed to reflect this omission. Please refer to pages 27 and 37.

---

**Comment: Calvert Vaux Preservation Alliance Role and Description**

On page 43 of the plan draft, the description of Calvert Vaux Preservation Alliance's (CVPA) role is not reflective of the work they've done, the part they've played in galvanizing public sentiment for Hoyt House restoration or CVPA's vision for the site. Their adaptive reuse plan is not acknowledged in the draft even though it was developed in consultation with SHPO and continues to be discussed with OPRHP. The description of CVPA on page 43 should be clarified as follows:

"Calvert Vaux Preservation Alliance is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit advocacy organization that is committed to preserving the architectural and landscape design legacy of Calvert Vaux and related designers, particularly in the vicinity of New York State's Hudson River Valley. A central component to CVPA's mission is its role as friends group of the Hoyt House. CVPA continues to raise funds for the restoration of the site and has developed an adaptive reuse plan that will employ the house as an educational center for humanities and arts programs. This plan also includes the return of the grounds to its use as a sustainable, working farm, much as it was as recently as the first half of the twentieth century."

**Response:**

OPRHP appreciates the efforts of the Calvert Vaux Preservation Alliance (CVPA) to raise public awareness and the importance of preserving, “The Point.” The text on page 40 has been revised to underscore this partnership. CVPA’s plan for “The Point” is ambitious in that it calls for complete restoration of historic uses of the site. While this may be the goal of CVPA, it was not considered feasible for a state park setting.

---

**Comment: Historic Resources Partners**

It should be noted in the plan that the Hudson River Valley Greenway and its predecessor, the Heritage Task Force for the Hudson River Valley, led the effort to complete the Historic Structures Report for the Hoyt House.

**Response:**

The plan has been changed to reflect this omission. Please refer to page A-32 in Appendix A.

**Designations**

---

**Comment: Staatsburgh Heritage Site**

Staatsburgh State Historic Site has been designated an official "Heritage Site" by the Management Committee of the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area. This is missing from the text.

**Response:**

The text has been changed to reflect this omission. Please refer to page 27.

---

**Comment: Scenic Areas**

The inclusion of these parks/sites in the DEC-designated Scenic Area is omitted in page 26 (but mentioned on p. 39) [of the Draft Plan].

**Response:**

The text has been changed to reflect this omission. Please refer to page 27.

---

**Comment: Listing of Designations**

Include the Great Estates Consortium in the partnerships section on page 26 of the draft plan.

**Response:**

The text has been changed to reflect this omission. Please refer to page 27 under “Partnerships.”

---

**Comment: Hudson River Valley Greenway**

We are pleased to see the recognition of the Greenway designated River Trail and Water Trail access sites. We would encourage you to designate the planned upgraded boat landing at the Gazebo to go along with the previously designated Water Trail sites at the marina, the Environmental Education Center cove, and Esopus Island.

**Response:**

The plan includes establishing an accessible fishing pier and observation area at the old dock area near the gazebo. The plan does call for improvements to the boat landing/launching area for cartop

boats, canoes, and kayaks. OPRHP will consider designating this location as a Water Trail access site after improvements are made.

## **General Master Planning**

---

### ***Comment: Adjacent Land Uses***

In the *Vision and Goals* Staatsburgh SHS subsection, it would help to provide a little context that Staatsburgh is not one isolated mansion museum, but rather is one of over a dozen such offerings with Olana, Clermont, Wilderstein, Vanderbilt mansion and the Roosevelt properties all nearby.

### ***Response:***

The relationship between Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh and the other nearby estates is discussed in the plan on page 36-37 under the “History of the Parks and Site” section and again on page 40 under the “Scenic Areas of Statewide Significance” section.

---

### ***Comment: Acquisitions—Huntington***

The gift by Helen Huntington Hull of the lands adjoining the golf course ought to be credited to her by name.

### ***Response:***

Comment noted. The text has been updated to reflect this suggestion. Please refer to page 36.

---

### ***Comment: Acquisitions—Esopus Island***

The Public Lands Law, on the matter of Esopus Island, was never amended to reflect the transfer from what is now OGS to the Taconic Commission in 1934 (?), even though the Land Board approved it. This amendment should probably be accomplished.

### ***Response:***

In a resolution adopted June 18, 1934, the Board of Commissioners of the Land Office transferred jurisdiction of Esopus Island, in the Hudson River, Dutchess County, to the Taconic State Park Commission of the New York State Conservation Department for public park purposes, with the exception of the most southerly part of the island which is under the jurisdiction of the United States government. This resolution was passed pursuant to the Public Lands Law. The resolution constitutes the transfer of jurisdiction; an amendment to the law is not required.

---

### ***Comment: Master Plan Content***

The actual heart of the draft plan pages 47 through 64 still appears to need more development. There is a lot of inventory information still within this plan portion of the document

### ***Response:***

Comment noted. Chapters 4 (Vision and Goals), 5 (Analysis and Alternatives), and 6 (the Master Plan) were thoroughly reviewed and it has been determined that the inventory information included was sufficient. In an effort to reduce redundancies within the plan there has been a concerted effort to edit information so as not to be repetitive. The bulk of detailed information and analysis that informed the recommendations of the plan can be found in the Appendices. In addition, OPRHP master plans range in depth and specificity depending on the needs of the facility and the current

demands of the region. The plan is intended to be a tool for the Park Manager and information should be readily available and easily found within the document.

## **Plan Layout**

---

### ***Comment: Executive Summary, Organization of Information***

Consider numbering the italicized headings to correspond with the chapters of the master plan. Italics and bold don't differentiate the heading and subheading hierarchy very well for this executive summary, which is very outline driven.

### ***Response:***

Comment noted.

---

### ***Comment: Executive Summary, Park Background, Scenic Resources, Vision***

1. In the *Park and Historic Site Background* section, Undeveloped shoreline should really say “areas of undeveloped shoreline” since there is a substantial amount of development in the form of marina docks, lawns, a former boathouse-turned-meeting-and –reception-building, rock revetment, and dock cribbing along the shoreline.
2. In the last paragraph of the *Park and Historic Site Background* section on page ix, the last sentence should be changed as follows: “People also come to the park to take guided house tours, to enjoy scenic views, for fishing, wildlife observation and for dog-walking, which is a popular activity.”
3. In the first sentence of the Scenic Resources subsection, page xi, add that they “are set in the 32-square-mile Hudson River National Historic Landmark District on the east bank of “the scenic Hudson River Valley. It is important that this area on the east bank has several layers of national recognition for its incredibly intact historical assets. These assets feature villages, train infrastructure, farms, estates, and dockage.
4. Add to the Executive Summary under Cultural Resources, that, as noted in Figure 10-Scenic and Cultural Resources, the entire area is located in the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area. Also note that the sites are National Heritage Area designated sites.

### ***Response:***

The text has been changed to reflect these suggestions. Please refer to pages ix, x, and xi.

---

### ***Comment: Executive Summary, Recreational Resources***

In the fifth bullet under Recreational Resource Management on page xi, what are the trails connecting externally to? Generally, this section reads like a “to do” projects list, whereas the other sections outline broad policies without getting into many specific small projects. Are there any policy statements to be made for Recreational Resource Development/Management?

### ***Response:***

The trails in the park will, ideally, connect to other trails in the region that are not managed by OPRHP. The section being referred to falls under “Vision and Goals” and the listed items are goals for recreation resource development and management at the complex.

## **Natural Resource Protection and Management**

---

### ***Comment: Bird Conservation Area***

Under the Natural Resource Protection subheading, is there only one bird conservation area or potentially more? It appears that the wording should use the plural, at least for this policy-level document, by referring to Bird Conservation Areas.

### ***Response:***

The plan proposes that a portion of the parks/site be designated as a Bird Conservation Area (BCA) and there is only one designation for the entire park complex.

---

### ***Comment: Bird Conservation Area***

Support was expressed for the designation of a BCA within the park complex and historic site.

### ***Response:***

Comment noted. The BCA designation will help ensure that birds and critical bird habitat will be considered when development occurs or when management decisions are made within the park complex.

---

### ***Comment: Invasive Species***

In the invasive species subsection, add Norway maple, (*acer platanoides*).

### ***Response:***

Norway Maple is noted in the Master Plan on page 32 and in Appendix C. While the Norway maple is an exotic species, its existence is widespread across the state.

---

### ***Comment: Stormwater Management***

Concern was expressed over stormwater management in the Village of Staatsburg and that developing solutions to control flooding in the Village should be high priority before the parks or house.

### ***Response:***

Stormwater management on the golf course and in the Village was identified an important issue and is described in the plan on page 52. The plan recommends that the Taconic region will work with the county, town, and village to help address stormwater management issues in a comprehensive manner.

---

### ***Comment: Bluebird Trail***

It should be noted in the plan that since 1996 the Ralph T. Waterman Bird Club has maintained a Bluebird trail on the Mills/Norrie State Park property. At present the trail consists of 55 nest boxes. The boxes are located in various locations, consisting of Hopeland Area, grounds of the Taconic Regional Office, Norrie Park, and lands north of the golf course. From 2008 thru the 2011-breeding season 414 Bluebirds fledged from this trail. Due to the longevity and productivity of this trail it is urged that this trail be noted in the above referenced section(s) of the Master Plan. It is also urged that the Bluebird Trail be referenced in the General Site Information Section of Appendix F. The Bluebird Trail may warrant specific operational and management considerations in dual use areas of the BCA and Cropland/field cropland use designations which are not currently part of the BCA/MGS.

**Response:**

The Waterman Bird Club's bluebird trail is an important feature of the park and was inadvertently omitted in the Draft Master Plan. Text regarding this trail has been added to the plan in both Chapter 3, the Environmental Setting, under "*Birds*" and "*Bird Watching*" (pages 33, 42) and also in Chapter 6, the Master Plan, under "*Successional Old Field Management* (Page 53)."

---

**Comment: Physical Resources of the Park Complex**

1. On page 29 [of the Draft Plan], provide some indication of the suitability of the stated soil types.
2. On page 31 [of the Draft Plan], explain what this air quality means for humans. Provide some context for any limitations or freedom from them.
3. Mention the prevailing west wind in the climate section. Suggest that the site has lots of topographic relief which creates unique onsite microclimates. The effects support a wide variety of park uses and provide varied experiences for visitors. Also micro-topography creates unique ecological niches.

**Response:**

Comments noted. The text has been updated to reflect these suggestions. Please refer to pages 29 and 31.

**Parking and Infrastructure**

---

**Comment: Horse Trailer Parking**

The area to the north of the Carriage house/barn buildings is currently used for park vehicle storage. It would make an excellent parking area for horse trailers to support use of bridle paths and trails by horseback riders visiting the park.

**Response:**

The plan proposes that parking be developed to the west of the Carriage Barn. Equestrian parking will not be provided at this location because the plan recommends that equestrian trail use be discontinued at the parks / site. Please see Carriage Barn and horsebacking riding comments for additional information regarding these decisions.

---

**Comment: Removal of Parking**

A longer term plan for removal of the parking adjacent to the mansion should be drawn up, perhaps with shuttle services for disabled visitors.

**Response:**

Comment noted. As of right now there are no plans to remove parking areas adjacent to the mansion, although the north lot has been reduced in size recently. A shuttle service was not considered feasible due to the existing road system's current use and the repairs recently made to the roadways. Vehicular circulation at the State Historic Site is adequate and is not considered inconsistent with the use of the property.

***Comment: Riverfront Parking***

Does the historic site designation minimize the user amenities such as ADA/senior parking close to the river, waterside benches and picnic tables?

***Response:***

No, the historic designation does not limit such amenities, but maintaining the historic and designed views is a consideration. There are parking areas closer to the river, specifically, near the Lewis Gordon Norrie Playground Area and Gazebo and near the cove at Norrie Point. Picnic tables and benches are located throughout the park complex; suggestions for additional benches or tables may be made to the park manager.

---

***Comment: Huntington (Hopeland) Bridge***

The two Huntington rail road bridges are mentioned in the appendix but there should be a commitment to not removing them, even if now deteriorated and unused; one cannot know what uses may emerge in the future, and replacing them would be enormously costly.

***Response:***

The southern rail road bridge is expected to be rehabilitated as part of the trail system to provide pedestrian access to the river. The northern railroad bridge is slated for removal. Due to the high costs for rehabilitation, their close proximity to each other on 5 acres of land (because the parcel was originally under two separate ownerships) and the challenges associated with construction over active rail lines, a need to keep both structures was not identified.

---

**Operations and Maintenance**

***Comment: Proposed Location for New Maintenance Facility***

Under the *Park and Historic Site Operations* subheading the location for the new regional storage facility should be better justified. How was this site chosen? There appear to be several other potential sites for this proposed facility, including:

- Directly off of SR 9 south of the Dinsmore Golf Course clubhouse
- Across from the Golf Course between the 16<sup>th</sup> fairway and Old Post Road

At the Taconic Regional Office parking lot on Old Post Road, with smaller sheds for mowers and greens equipment located as indicated in the preceding two bullets.

***Response:***

The proposed location for the new regional storage facility is currently the site of a former dump. This area is considered disturbed and of low ecological value and, therefore, desirable for development. The region and park staff considered several sites, but felt that this was the best location for the storage and maintenance facility. The sites suggested were not considered due to the fact that they would be visually intrusive and the proposed maintenance facility is a large building that would be very obvious in the suggested locations.

---

***Comment: Proposed Location for the Visitors' Center***

The proposed new visitors' center should include a relocated gift shop and house tour ticket sales. This center should be relocated to the area near the dumpsite that the master plan has identified for the regional storage facility. The visitors' center could use this area for parking, and might also

incorporate the house located just north of the main entrance to the Mills Mansion. Visitors could then access the site directly from Old Post Road and car storage would not be visible from any of the historical resources.

**Response:**

Comment noted. The planning team felt that revitalizing the former Carriage Barns as a multi-use space close to the mansion—the gift shop and ticket sales, would be the best use for this structure. The current incompatible uses of this building can then be moved to the new maintenance building. The location for the new maintenance and storage facility had several distinct advantages that are outlined on page A-39 in Appendix A.

---

**Comment: Hydroelectric Power**

Consider reestablishing hydroelectric power for green usage and interpreting this aspect of estate living along the Hudson River.

**Response:**

At this point, utilizing hydroelectric power for the park complex is not something the agency is capable of taking on.

---

**Implementation**

**Comment: Funding Sources**

In regards to the Implementation section, the size of OPRHP’s annual capital budget should not be a constraint to master planning. The pace and sequencing of actions should be determined by prudent planning. With a commitment to restoration and interpretation the historic resources of Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh are fundable using resources outside the OPRHP annual capital budget. Consider establishing a funding mechanism for interpretive programming from private sources, volunteers and charitable organizations. The master plan should also explore events and activities that generate revenue which could be spent in the parks/site and offset costs for capital projects and routine expenses.

**Response:**

Budget is not a constraint to master planning, but rather an influencing factor on implementation. Many of the implementation steps will be funded through various sources including monies obtained through grants and private donations. OPRHP will work with its partners to continue the restoration efforts of the historic and cultural resources of the Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh Complex.

---

**Comment: Implementation Timeline**

The implementation timetable of priorities and in fact the overall master plan map should not include projects that are already funded or underway, such as the wall restoration, the Hoyt House Roof, Mills façade repairs, etc.

**Response:**

Comment noted. These projects were in the planning stage when the master planning process began. The Planning Team felt it was important, nonetheless, that they be considered throughout the planning process, so they were incorporated into the text. In the end, construction was underway or

completed before the completion of the plan; however they are consistent with and support the master plan recommendations.

---

***Comment: Financial Sustainability***

Nowhere in the Master Plan has the issue of revenue generation or of future revenue generation growth or goals been mentioned or identified as a Master Plan element. For a plan that focuses as much as this one does on the concept of “sustainability”, there is no mention or plan for making the Mills-Norrie State Park and Staatsburgh Historic Site financially sustainable. The park is a resource that can be appropriately used to generate income to sustain itself. This is a vital element of any Master Plan especially in these financially austere times.

***Response:***

OPRHP Master Plans typically do not address revenue generating items or financial impacts of proposed park improvements. Many elements of the plan are contingent upon the availability of funding. However, with the plan in place the needs and desires of the park complex are now articulated and provide strong support for funding from any number of sources.

---

***Comment: Exterior Restoration of the Mansion and Estate Wall***

Support was expressed for the plan’s commitment to continue funding for the restoration of the mansion’s exterior, portico and estate stone wall.

***Response:***

Comment noted.

---

***Comment: Utilize Local Contractors for Work at the Park Complex***

Construction and repair/restoration projects can and should be performed by local contractors, so that money can be put back into the local economy. The state pays big money to big out-of-state contractors where local contractors could have done the same job for less money. Please consider buying local services for these construction projects.

***Response:***

All state contracts are procured through a competitive bidding process.

**Mapping**

---

***Comment: Vicinity Map***

- Staatsburgh, Clermont and Olana are State Historic Sites, not State Parks. This is not discernible as indicated on the Vicinity Map. The map should have a separate color key for a State Historic Site (SHS) to show the SHS as separate and distinct from a state park in the map legend.
- The Taconic State Parkway (TSP) could be indicated as green swath to show a linear park operated by NYSDOT. The TSP connects three state parks shown on the vicinity map and provides one of the main access routes to Mills/Norrie/Staatsburgh.
- The box showing the label for the parks is poorly placed. Move the label for the parks so the box is on the west side of the Hudson River, to uncover Rhinebeck and Rhinecliff and the connection with the TSP. This is important vicinity information.

- Consider adding a sky blue box to the legend to indicate water.
- Remove the red star. Consider using a similar device to show the locations of the Kingston-Rhinecliff Bridge, and label it in the legend.

**Response:**

Most of these suggestions have been addressed in the Vicinity Map, Figure 1.

---

**Comment: Adjacent Land Use Map**

Change colors on map and legend to standard planning color key. As it is now, the map is virtually illegible to a professional planner because it confuses the standard land use colors.

- Yellows for residential uses such as single-family and town houses.
- Browns for multi-family and high-rise residential
- Reds for retail and commercial uses
- Purples for industrial uses
- Blues for institutional and public facilities
- Greens for recreational uses
- Grays for industrial utilities

<http://www.gsd.harvard.edu/gis/manual/style/ColorConventions.pdf>

Further, consider showing agricultural land as light green. Drop the label “forested” from the legend box of show the Staatsburgh grounds down to the riverfront and the Dinsmore fairways as open using another shade of green.

**Response:**

The colors used for the maps are taken from the NYS tax parcel data, where OPRHP obtains land use information. These comments will be taken into consideration for future planning efforts.

---

**Comment: Various Mapping Comments**

1. Change the label “till” to read “Glacial till.” Consider varying the hue in the legend to be more distinct from kames.
2. The NWI wetlands are slightly faint and maybe NWI should be spelled out in the legend. Vanderburgh Cove should be shown as a tidal wetland.
3. Add “SASS” after the labels in the legend for Esopus Lloyd and Estates District to indicate that they are Scenic Areas.
4. Figure 16 Trail System Alternatives: “Greenway” is misspelled. We suggest that the River Trail should be noted as a designated Greenway Trail.

**Response:**

The maps have been updated to reflect these suggestions. Please see Figures 6,7, 10, and 17

---

**Comment: Soils**

Consider a little more variation in tone for the colors. The hues chosen make a beautiful map, but might benefit a little from some slight changes in value to help distinguish Cc (maybe make it a bright red) from Ra, Ha from Lv, Dw from Nx, and Fr from Sc.

**Response:**

Comment noted. These suggestions will be taken into consideration for future planning efforts.

***Comment: Horseback Riding***

There is no mention of horseback riding as a recreational use on the recreational uses map.

***Response:***

Comment noted. Horseback riding has been added as an activity on the existing recreational uses map. Please see Figure 13.

---

***Comment: Hoyt House***

Proposed expansion of the State Historic Site appears to encroach on the Hoyt House grounds and dependencies. If not, that is desirable. The Hoyt House grounds, cottage, and dependent buildings should be left intact. They should be preserved and interpreted for historical landscape values. The roadways and buildings contribute to the integrity of the landscape and cottage designed by the renowned engineer and architect Calvert Vaux.

***Response:***

Comment noted. The expanded state historic site boundary follows the original Mills boundary and does not include any of the former Hoyt property.

---

***Comment: Birding and Recreational Resources***

Existing and Proposed Recreation Resources, there is only one place marked for “birding.” There are several other good places to visit. The place marked for “birding” is seldom used because of trail conditions. A list of places to designate for birding can be supplied.

***Response:***

Birding occurs throughout the park complex, not at this sole location. In this case, the marker notes that birding is a recreation resource, not the only location for birding.

---

**Agricultural Uses**

---

***Comment: Livestock and Agricultural Use***

The *Agricultural Use* section should be carefully rethought and expanded. How was it determined that the plan should state that no livestock will be allowed? The dairy complex is specially designed for Jersey cows and is state of the art even today for sustainable design. Equipment associated with farming should be period-appropriate and not be concealed in a discreet fashion but rather available for visitors to see in use and in storage to demonstrate agricultural and dairying practices of the 19<sup>th</sup> century gentry-elite using state-of-the-art technology for those times which has not been improved upon much even with advantages of modern technology and veterinary medicine.

***Response:***

Agriculture is a new use for the park (albeit historic for the area). During the development of the draft plan OPRHP felt it was best to limit the use to plants. This issue has been reevaluated and OPRHP has determined that limited farm animals would be acceptable in some areas of the park facility (to be determined by the Agency). The number of animals will be limited so as not to have an adverse olfactory or environmental impact. The area currently designated for agricultural use is a working farm and utilizes modern equipment which some consider to be visually intrusive. Perhaps once the Dairy Barn Complex is rehabilitated period equipment can be displayed for park patrons.

***Comment: Mowing, Farming, and the Blue Trail***

In Chapter 6, Successional Old Field Management – p 53 [of the Draft Plan] Old Field habitat is important to maintain. Details of the “formalized mowing regime” should be available for review, either included in the EIS or in a publicly accessible document referenced by the EIS. Factors considered in designing the regime and dates should be included. On page 60 [of the Draft Plan] -- Organic farming and a bluebird trail are compatible land uses. Where they overlap, communication between the farmer and the person handling the bluebird trail should be encouraged. Items for discussion would include location of boxes, timing and location of farm operations that could impact the bluebirds, such as mowing. In Chapter 7 under the Agricultural Use section on page 67 [of the Draft Plan], the mowing schedule to protect the bird habitat should be consistent with the mowing regime for the old fields. The specific dates should be given so they can be reviewed for appropriateness.

***Response:***

OPRHP will insure that the lessees of the farming area are fully aware of the bluebird trail activities and of the mowing regime for this area. Our Regional Biologist will work with the farmer and the maintainers of the trail to facilitate communication between them regarding their respective activities. The Final Plan includes an additional figure which provides a map of the areas to be maintained as old field areas and the dates when these areas should not be mowed to insure protection of habitat for birds and other wildlife. Reference to Figure 15 is noted in the Master Plan chapter under "Successional Old Field Management."

---

***Comment: Agricultural Uses, Farming, and Pesticide Policy***

The organic farming program guide lines and the "Agency's Alternatives to Pesticides Policy" should be available in the appendix or as a link to an online document for reference. We were unsuccessful in finding them using the link in OPRHP Policies on Page 20.

***Response:***

Comments noted. OPRHP’s Pesticides Reduction Policy can be found on our website under: “Inside Our Agency” > “Public Documents” and the heading “Policy Announcements.”

---

**Impacts and Mitigation**

***Comment: Master Plan Alternative***

The master plan alternative will not have a positive impact on the historic, recreation, and natural resources within the complex in view of how the Mills Carriage House and Stable and the Dairy Complex have been misused thus far and seem to be heading for continued if not permanent misuse in contradiction of the stated OPRHP mission and Master Plan stated goals.

The visitor experience, orientation and education goals are not correctly achieved through the destruction and misuse of the very historic buildings the public comes to see.

***Response:***

OPRHP does not view use of the Carriage Barn as a visitors’ center / exhibit space and use of the Dairy Complex for education and interpretation as destruction and misuse of a historic resource. The preferred alternative is neither contrary to OPRHP’s mission, nor to the stated goals of the Master Plan.

***Persons/Organizations Who Provided Comments***

Name	Title	Organization
Wint Aldrich		
Barbara Butler	Records Chairman	Ralph T. Waterman Bird Club
Mark Castiglione	Acting Executive Director	Hudson River Valley Greenway
Caroline Carey	President	Friends of Mills Mansion
Calvin Decker		
Susan Gilnack	Bluebird Trail Chairman	
Andrew Homar		
Jaime Reppert	Coastal Resources Specialist	NYS Department of State
Evan Rothman		
Warren Smith		Hudson River Heritage
Alan Strauber	President	Calvert Vaux Preservation Alliance
Phillip Tillou		
David Wansor		



## References

- Bell, K. and G. Stevens. 2009. Significant habitats in Northern Hyde Park, Dutchess County, New York. Hudsonia, Ltd., Annandale, NY.
- Birds of Staatsburgh State Historic Site. 2003. Taconic State Park Region. Staatsburgh State Historic Site, Old Post Road, PO Box 308, Staatsburg, NY.
- Cornell Cooperative Extension Dutchess County Environmental and Energy Program, et al. 2010. *The Natural Resource Inventory of Dutchess County NY*. Website : <http://www.co.dutchess.ny.us/CountyGov/Departments/Planning/nritoc.pdf> Accessed: May 2011
- Evans, 2000. Evans, D.J. Rare Species and Ecological Communities of Mills Norrie State Park. Prepared for New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. New York Natural Heritage Program. March, 2000.
- Kiviat, E and G. Stevens. 1993. Preliminary Ecological Assessment of the Mills-Norrie State Parks, Town of Hyde Park, Dutchess County, New York. Hudsonia, Ltd. Annandale, NY
- Land and Water Conservation Fund Manual, 2008. <http://www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/lwcf/manual/lwcf.pdf>. Accessed: October 2012
- Lundgren, 2010. Lundgren, Julie. Communication via email. February 16, 2011.
- Mid Hudson Historic Shorelands Scenic District Draft Management Plan January, 1983, page xiii.
- McGowan, K. J., and K. Corwin, eds. 2008. *The Atlas of Breeding Birds in New York State: 2000-2005*. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY.
- New York Natural Heritage Program. *Communities of Mills-Norrie State Park*. Prepared for New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. January, 2010.
- New York Natural Heritage Program, 2004. *Supplemental Report for Rare Species and Ecological Communities of Mills-Norrie State Park*. Prepared for New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. New York Natural Heritage Program. March 2004.
- Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). Ambient Air Quality Monitoring. <http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8406.html>. June 2011.
- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation pers. comm. 2011
- New York State Department of State Division of Coastal Resources and Waterfront. 1993. *Scenic Areas of Statewide Significance*. Reprinted 2004, Albany, NY.
- New York State Department of Transportation, 2009. *Special Specifications for Invasive Plant Species Control*. ENGINEERING INSTRUCTION 09-002. NYSDOT, Albany, NY
- New York State Soil and Water Conservation Committee, 2005. *New York State Standards for Erosion and Sediment Control*. Prepared for New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, August, 2005. Albany, NY.
- National Register Nomination for the Hudson River Historic District, 1978.
- OPRHP. New York State Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan and Generic Environmental Impact Statement 2009-2013. New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Albany, NY. Dec. 2008.

- Political Economy Research Institute - University of Massachusetts-Amherst, March 2009. The NYS Park System: An Economic Asset to the Empire State. Prepared for Parks & Trails New York.
- Ralph T. Waterman Bird Club. 2011. Bird Observation Database for Mills-Norrie State Park.
- Smith and Lundgren, 2010. Smith, K.J. and Lundgren, J.A. *Rare Species and Ecological*
- United State Geological Survey (USGS). 2011. *Geologic Units in Dutchess County, New York*.  
Website: <http://tin.er.usgs.gov/geology/state/fips-unit.php?code=f36027>. Accessed: May 2011.
- Weather Channel. Staatsburg, NY. [www.weatherchannel.com](http://www.weatherchannel.com), Accessed: May 2011