

Appendix A: Analysis and Alternatives Considered

Appendix A – Analysis and Alternatives

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Introduction

This appendix contains the results of discussions on natural resource protection, recreation resource development and operations proposed for the park. Each proposal is analyzed using the inventory information (Chapters 2 and 3), park goals, and other factors. The analysis results in considerations as to the appropriateness of each alternative for the park. Findings from this analysis are used in identifying preferred alternatives for each of the resource categories. The status quo, alternatives, considerations and preferred alternative for individual issues are described in tabular form.

A complete description of the park master plan that results from these preferred alternatives is found in Chapter 6 of this document.

Resource Analysis and Alternatives

Natural Resource Protection Strategies/Management

Protection of natural resources is an important part of OPRHP's mission. There are significant natural communities within the park as well as significant invasive plant threats to those communities. According to the NY Natural Heritage Report for the park (Lundgren and Smith, 2008), while the park contains few rare species or high quality natural communities, it is still a valuable natural area that contributes to the long-term biodiversity of the region. The following assessment of the park's natural resources provides the basis for the development and examination of alternatives.

Natural resource protection and management strategies are needed to provide guidance and direction for the management of significant natural communities, water resources, flora and fauna and invasive species. These management strategies must also consider potential future impacts to the park, including different user groups and changing environmental conditions. The following is an analysis of several natural resource protection and management alternative strategies and the rationale for the preferred alternative.

Designations

Park Preserve/Park Preservation Areas/Natural Heritage Areas (NHA)

Article 20 of the Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Law outlines the process for designation of entire parks or portions of parks as part of a statewide park preserve system. Portions of parks may be designated as Park Preservation Areas (PPAs).

The goal of the Natural Heritage Area Program is to provide state land managers with a tool to recognize and assist in the protection of rare animals, rare plants, and significant natural communities on state-owned land. The New York Natural Heritage Areas Program (NHA) was established in 2002 in amendments to the Environmental Conservation Law (§11-0539.7).

OPRHP staff has assessed the park for significant ecological communities and significant/rare species. While there are significant communities, such as calcareous pavement barrens and calcareous shoreline outcroppings, these specific communities have been impacted and do not possess the qualities necessary to warrant the designation of the park as a Park Preserve, Park Preservation Areas or as a Natural Heritage Area.

Bird Conservation Area (BCA)

OPRHP staff has not analyzed or recommended a Bird Conservation Area (BCA) designation for the park due to a lack of information regarding the park’s bird community. The New York State Breeding Bird Atlas (2000-2005) identified 90 bird species as possibly nesting in the Stony Point area. Furthermore, the park and adjacent lands on Stony Point are likely to host good concentrations of migrant land birds, particularly as birds make their way north along the shoreline during spring migration. BCA designation may be considered in the future if site surveys indicate that the park does meet BCA criteria.

Wetlands

There are approximately 98 acres of wetland habitat at the park. Wetland habitat not only contributes to the biodiversity of the park by supporting a variety of flora and fauna, but also serves other important functions such as flood or storm water runoff storage, groundwater recharge, and can function as a natural filter, by storing nutrients, sediments and pollutants before water is released to surface water or groundwater. Wetlands should be protected as well as buffered to insure that these functions are not compromised.

Rare Species

Background for Analysis

The NY Natural Heritage Program survey discovered one rare plant species, the cork elm (*Ulmus thomasi*), at the park. Based on a review of the Natural Heritage database and record reviews at the New York State Museum several rare plant species are known in the vicinity of the park. These other rare plant species were not found during the 2008 surveys, however, as with any such data, absence of data is not proof of absence. Additional surveys would need to be completed in order to ensure that these species are not present somewhere within the park.

No rare animals were discovered at the park. Preliminary searches of the Natural Heritage database and other records revealed no known or historical occurrences of rare animals within the park or within one mile of the park boundary. There is, however, some potential for the federally endangered Indiana bat to occur within the park based on records of Indiana bats found elsewhere in Jefferson County.

Preferred Alternative

The NY Natural Heritage Report (Lundgren and Smith, 2008) and the planning team recommends that additional survey work for rare species be undertaken prior to any management actions such as creating trails or clearing of new areas for development.

Significant Natural Communities Management

Protect Calcareous Pavement Barrens

Background for Analysis

The calcareous pavement barrens found within the park and the neighboring Henderson Shores Unique Area represent a globally rare ecological community with very few examples in New York

State. In order to maintain biodiversity, it is important to manage the threats to this community type. Another threat to this community type can be over-use by recreational pursuits which can result in trampling of delicate plants and compaction of soils. Currently, some of the trails in the park traverse through this sensitive habitat.

Alternatives	Considerations
1. Status Quo –Existing trails remain in existing locations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are sections of trails which currently cross through the pavement barren community. • The impacts from existing trails have already taken place.
2. Relocate trails to minimize damage to Pavement Barrens Move/eliminate portions of trails that cross sensitive habitat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moving trails would avoid trampling impacts to this sensitive community. • Closure and relocation of trails can present challenges given the dense character of the forest at the park.
3. Build boardwalks to span sensitive habitat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boardwalk construction will impact trail maintenance (e.g. how mowing equipment cross boardwalks or go around them) • Could be considered where trail relocation is not feasible • Boardwalk would offer park visitors a more interesting interpretive opportunity • Impact of boardwalk on pavement barren community must be assessed.

Preferred Alternative: 2

Minimizing the trail network through the barrens will promote a balance between recreation and conservation of this rare habitat. In lieu of boardwalk construction, trails within the barrens will be evaluated on a case by case basis for relocation away from or around the most sensitive barren areas.

Manage the Calcareous Pavement Barrens

Background for Analysis

The Natural Heritage Program’s Conservation Guide for calcareous pavement barrens (located in an appendix to the NHP Report) suggests reclaiming the barrens through tree removals and shrub buffer plantings as well as implementing a prescribed burn plan. These are general recommendations for calcareous pavement barren habitat. Without management, this significant habitat area may be lost over time. While other examples of this community type in the state are threatened by development, the major threat to the calcareous pavement barrens at Robert G. Wehle State Park is the presence of the non-native invasive species pale swallow-wort.

Alternatives	Considerations
1. Status Quo – allow natural processes to maintain size of the barrens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No additional resources would be required • Non- native species are affecting this significant ecological community.

<p>2. Conduct invasive species management within the barrens. This will include both removal of invasive species and planting of a native species.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robert G. Wehle State Park has a high diversity of native tree species that are native to the barrens habitat • Native shrub plantings along the edges could contain the spread of non-native species into the barrens
<p>3. Design and implement a prescribed burn plan in order to imitate a natural fire regime, maintaining the barrens habitat</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would require outside partnership for planning, coordination, and expertise • Further research would be needed to determine if this site has a history of wildfires that maintained the barrens and how wildfire would affect swallow-wort.

Preferred Alternative: 2

Without knowing more about the natural history of this site, the manual removal of invasive plants followed by the restoration of native species as recommended by the Invasive Species Management Plan is the most appropriate course of action at this time. This action will maintain the current extent of the barrens and allow for the adaptive management of future plans to consider more aggressive site goals such as maintenance and expansion through the use of prescribed burning.

Calcareous Shoreline Outcrops

Background for Analysis

While not as rare as calcareous pavement barrens, high quality calcareous shoreline outcrops such as those found at Robert G. Wehle State Park, are rare. These shorelines, characterized by large, flat protrusions of calcareous bedrock, are one of the most striking features of the park. These areas can be impacted by erosion, trampling, invasive species, and pollution and sediments carried by storm water runoff. This community at the park was found to be in good condition with relatively few invasive species and limited human disturbance or impacts (Lundgren and Smith, 2008).

Currently, much of the shoreline is buffered from on-shore disturbances by dense vegetation. There is, however, a desire to provide additional scenic overlooks at the park which have the potential to impact this buffer.

<p>Alternatives</p>	<p>Considerations</p>
<p>1. Status Quo – Vegetative buffer is present along entire park shoreline with the exception of minimal buffer along the rental compound and the picnic area shoreline areas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scenic vistas of the lake from the park’s shoreline are an important feature of this park • Maintenance of existing vegetative buffers at rental compound and picnic area need to be protected in order to protect shoreline • Buffer maintenance also needs to consider scenic vistas from these popular areas.
<p>2. Insure that vegetative buffers are maintained at existing developed areas and are incorporated into new shoreline access areas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vegetative buffer needs to be incorporated into the design plans for new shoreline public use areas

3. Develop shoreline without vegetative buffers

- Lack of vegetative buffer could result in impacts to the significant outcrop community.

Preferred Alternative: 2

Some development of the shoreline near this habitat type is desirable to provide additional recreational opportunities, but it must be done in such a way as to incorporate the important vegetative buffer that currently protects the shoreline into the design. Park maintenance procedures should insure that maintenance of the important vista areas include protection of the vegetative buffer. Shoreline areas should be monitored for overuse, trampling and invasive species.

Invasive Species Management

The control of invasive species is a key element of the agency's priority initiative of natural resources stewardship. In establishing priorities for invasive species control, OPRHP considers the degree of threat to biodiversity, including ecological communities and rare and other native species, as well as operational and health concerns.

An invasive species control program has been established in OPRHP, with the overall goal to preserve biodiversity and reduce the threat of invasive species to the quality of the natural, recreational, cultural and interpretive resources within State parkland. OPRHP has developed a statewide strategy for management of invasive species, in concert with multi-agency state and regional partnership efforts. An invasive species management plan template (O'Brien and Cady-Sawyer 2008) has been developed that can be used to prepare site specific plans for state park lands. In general an invasive species management plan contains information and tools needed to prioritize and implement control efforts.

The NY Natural Heritage report (Lundgren and Smith, 2008) recommends the following regarding an approach to management of invasives species at the park:

“Management plans for the park should provide details on which invasive species are present, whether or not actions are warranted, and why those decisions are made. It is likely infeasible to remove all invasives from the park, so maintaining a record of those decisions can help guide current and future land managers. When new invasive species are detected within previously uninfested areas, quick action to remove these pests may prevent long-term ecological impacts and reduce potential costs associated with invasive species control.”

Background for Analysis:

The exotic species that currently poses greatest threat to the natural areas of the park is pale swallow-wort (Lundgren and Smith, 2008). Other non-native invasive species occur at the park and could be a threat as well, but the threat they pose is less urgent than that of swallow-wort. Buckthorn, multiflora rose, purple loosestrife, and phragmites are all known from the site. Also the invasive zebra mussel, now common throughout Lake Ontario is also present.

Control of invasive species, especially pale swallow-wort, is a high priority for Robert G. Wehle State Park.

Alternatives	Considerations
1. Status Quo – continue current control practices without a plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently no defined, measurable goals or ways to measure effectiveness
2. Prepare an invasive species management plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This plan will identify a process to follow to manage and control invasive species in the park. • Limited resources can be better directed. • Plan will ensure that the best available science, best management practices, and adaptive management are utilized. • Plan will prioritize control based on a park and regional framework.
3. Undertake broader management actions without a park-specific invasive species management plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to set priorities for management without a plan • Control may not be based on the best management practices

Preferred Alternative: 2

The extent and severity of the swallow-wort infestation at the park presents an extremely challenging invasive control scenario. Preparation of an invasive species management plan will provide needed guidance and priorities so that control efforts are undertaken in the most cost effective means possible.

Vista Management

Background for Analysis:

The park consists of approximately three miles of undeveloped shoreline, a rarity along Lake Ontario. Boaters on the lake have a nearly unobstructed view of a large portion of the park.

Alternatives	Considerations
1. Status Quo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development along the shoreline and bluff top is limited to the existing trails, picnic area, log cabin, and rental compound structures.
2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional shoreline development has the potential to impact the viewshed of those utilizing Lake Ontario. • Facilities should be designed and located to minimize visual impacts. • Use appropriate materials, designs and setbacks to minimize impacts.

Preferred Alternative: 2

It is recognized that additional park infrastructure and facilities are in demand and will be added as funds allow, however, impacts of development within the park as viewed from the Lake Ontario will be considered within the design of all facilities.

Wildlife Resources and Nuisance Wildlife

Background for Analysis

Approximately 84% of the 330,000 acre State Park System is considered natural habitat. As a general rule State Parks will follow a “passive management” approach, allowing natural processes to maintain wildlife populations. However, there are times when a more active management approach will become necessary in an effort to reach ecological balance.

OPRHP, through an integrated approach, will actively manage wildlife on lands and waters under its jurisdiction to: protect the health and safety of park staff and patrons, protect species at risk, protect and enhance biodiversity, and prevent damage to park buildings or infrastructure. Habitat management in the support of wildlife populations and biodiversity will be based on goals that lead to the appropriate functioning of local ecosystems. Wildlife management generally begins at the facility level with an evaluation of the need for a management activity by the facility manager and staff. Management activities will be conducted in consultation with the Regional Office, the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB), and DEC. In addition, OPRHP partners with the DEC and the Natural Heritage Program (NHP) to identify and monitor populations and occurrences of endangered, threatened and other species at risk within state park facilities. In the case of federally endangered and threatened species, and migratory birds, the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) will also be consulted.

There are particular protocols for dealing with nuisance wildlife on a species by species basis.

Preferred Alternative:

The recommendation is to continue the park policies concerning wildlife. Current policies and programs dealing with wildlife resources at the park are adequate and effective. The park should continue its relationship with OPRHP partners as a part of these policies, including nuisance wildlife on a case by case basis.

Recreation Resource Development/Management

The recreation resource development alternatives primarily focus on the recreation use areas of the park. These areas currently constitute approximately 7 percent of the park. They also include roads, and trails. This section of the chapter also includes other forms of recreation including such activities as hunting, fishing, and wildlife observation. Each recreation and support element is discussed individually. There is a brief discussion of the existing condition and the alternatives considered. This is followed by a description of the preferred direction.

Trails

Background for Analysis:

The trail system was developed to provide access to areas of the park. Several trails are undesignated and unmarked. A trail assessment (See Figure 13 – Trail Assessment Map) was conducted to identify areas that were moist, had erosion taking place or missing signage.

Alternatives	Considerations
1. Status Quo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main trails are named and have trail blazes. • Some trails are undesignated (unnamed and unblazed) and maintained.
2. Enhance trail signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trails will be named, designated and trail blazes placed along trails and at intersections. • Key intersections should have a small trail map identifying that specific location. • Trail signage could be included within interpretive/educational panels.
3. Modify the existing trail system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close certain undesignated trails • Name and provide signage for all designated trails. • Remove a portion of the Dancing Dog Trail from a wetland area. • Reroute a portion of the Bobolink Trail around calcareous pavement barren habitat. • Reroute a small section of the Midge Trail. The portion of the Snakefoot Trail that connects to Parking Lot B will then be renamed the Midge Trail. • Reroute a portion of the Huckleberry Trail to an existing unnamed trail. The unnamed trail will then be designated as Huckleberry Trail • Reroute a small portion of the Snakefoot Trail around the log cabin area. • All trail closures will take place per OPRHP Trail Standards – Trail Closure Guidelines.

Preferred Alternative: 2 and 3

These alternatives will provide a more clearly defined circulation pattern for park patrons, protect the natural resources and continue to provide a high quality trail experience. All unnamed trails will be named, blazed and signage provided at all intersections.

Hiking

The park allows hiking on all trails. Hiking is a significant use within the park and it will remain as an activity acceptable on all trails. The park has 16 miles of mowed trail which is deemed a suitable quantity. Some minor changes will be considered to protect resources. No significant expansion or reduction is recommended.

Mountain Biking

As with hiking, mountain biking is allowed on all trails. Mountain biking is also a significant use within the park and it will remain as an activity acceptable on all trails. The park has 16 miles of mowed trail which is deemed a suitable quantity. Some minor changes will be considered to protect resources. No significant expansion or reduction is recommended.

Cross Country Skiing and Snowshoeing

The park currently allows cross country skiing and snowshoeing on all trails. Park staff groom four miles of trails. The current quantity of groomed trails is considered suitable. No expansion or reduction is recommended.

Primitive Camping

Background for Analysis:

Primitive camping (a cleared area to set up a tent with a fire ring) was identified in the five year development plan for the park but never constructed

Alternatives	Considerations
1. Status Quo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groups are allowed to camp in the park during special events. • The general public is not allowed to camp in the park. • A camping area is not currently developed.
2. Develop a primitive walk-in camping area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would require a minimal increase in infrastructure if sized appropriately and located near existing facilities. • Would increase the quantity of overnight users. • Would provide an opportunity not currently available at the park. • Should be located near an existing restroom and off the trail system.

Preferred Alternative: 1

Developed campgrounds are located nearby at Westcott Beach and Southwick State Parks. Primitive camping opportunities are not recommended for the park. The main focus will remain as a day-use park.

Fishing

Background for Analysis:

Current lake access areas for fishing are located a considerable distance from the main parking lot due to the vertical or steep shoreline topography. The most convenient access point is from the existing picnic area, 1.5 miles from the main parking lot.

Alternatives	Considerations
1. Status Quo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fishing is allowed on the lake shore. • Fishing structures are not provided. • Access to fishing locations is through existing trails. • Specific fishing locations are not promoted.
2. Fishing access is enhanced without additional structures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional trails to the lake are created. • Access points to the lake are more feasible on the west side of the park. • The closest access point deemed reasonable for lake access is 1.5 miles from the main parking lot.
3. Fishing access is enhanced through the construction of a cliff-side stairway down to the water.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considerable cost would be associated with the construction of a stairway to the lake. • Long term maintenance and upkeep of the structure would require regular funding. • Does not provide a convenient means to provide access for disabled individuals.

Preferred Alternative: 1

The shoreline at the park does not lend itself to convenient and safe access to the water. Informal access to Lake Ontario may be achieved through the existing picnic area and at the southwest portion of the park.

Swimming

Background for Analysis:

The park has points along the shore which allow for lake access. However, swimming is not allowed. A natural beach is not provided and the wave action is very unpredictable.

Alternatives	Considerations
1. Status Quo	Swimming is not allowed. Swimming opportunities are provided at nearby parks along the lake.
2. Allow swimming at the park	A designated lifeguard-operated swimming area would be required. Shoreline is rocky and contains high cliffs which pose major safety hazards.

Preferred Alternative: 1

Safer and more suitable swimming opportunities are provided in designated areas at other regional State Parks along Lake Ontario. The shoreline of Robert G. Wehle State Park does not have suitable locations/conditions for swimming opportunities.

Snowmobiling

Background for Analysis:

This is currently not an activity provided in the park.

Alternatives	Considerations
1. Status Quo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Snowmobiles are not allowed in the park.
2. Provide snowmobiling opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would provide an opportunity not currently available at the park. • Would increase the potential for user conflict. • Would change the visitor experience for those who enjoy a quiet experience • There are no statewide snowmobile trails adjacent to the park to provide connectivity.

Preferred Alternative: 1

Snowmobiling will not be allowed within the park.

All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV) Access

ATV access was suggested during the public comment period. ATV use by the general public is illegal on state park lands as per OPRHP Rules and Regulations. ATV use will continue to be a prohibited activity.

Group Camping

Background for Analysis:

Groups currently use the park for various outdoor educational programming. They presently are allowed to camp overnight in tents in the mowed areas around the park office and firing range by special permit only. See Figure 14 Group Camping and Day Use Area Alternatives for locations.

Alternatives	Considerations
1. Status Quo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restrooms are nearby. • Minimal trees are located in the area. • The group camping area is within an actively used portion of the park.
2. Option A group camping area is constructed behind the maintenance area (see map)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would require minimal clearing of vegetation. • Is located away from existing restrooms. The constructing of a new restroom facility is required. • Roadway and parking improvements would be needed.
3. Option B group camping area is constructed behind the maintenance area (see map)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would require slightly more clearing of vegetation than Option A. • Is located closer to the existing restrooms which can serve the area if constructed. Additional restrooms would not be needed. • The existing parking lot and walkway can be used. No new roadway or parking is required.
4. Option C group camping area is constructed adjacent to the firing range.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would require minimal clearing of vegetation. • Is farther away from the parking lot than other options. • Water and restroom facilities are required.

Preferred Alternative: 3

The location of this alternative makes it the most suitable choice. It is located within convenient walking distance from the parking lot and uses an existing restroom located within 500' of the site. The group camping site will consist of areas to pitch a tent, several fire rings.

Hunting

Background for Analysis:

Currently the park allows hunting for all types of game during regulated seasons in accordance with State rules and regulations. Designated no hunting zones exist within the park.

Alternatives	Considerations
1. Status Quo	Existing opportunities are maintained.
2. A non-hunting zone is created from an area east of North Schoolhouse Road.	Not a heavily hunted area. Is separated from the main park by North Schoolhouse Road. Is not a significant impact to the hunting area.

Preferred Alternative: 2

A small section of park property will be removed from the designated hunting area. This small area is separated from the rest of the park by a road and not considered a popular hunting area. All other designated hunting areas will remain open for hunting in accordance with all State hunting rules and regulations. See Figure 9 – Hunting Map.

Cultural Resource Protection Strategies/Management

Archaeological Resources

Archaeological artifacts have been located within the park including objects from the military activities, previous farmstead settlements and Native American occupation. A Phase 1a Archeological Sensitivity Assessment for the park was completed 2004. A Phase 1A. A Phase 1B archeological survey was conducted before the entrance roadway construction. Any new development will require a Phase 1B to identify any archaeological artifacts before development begins. It is recommended that additional Phase 1B surveys be conducted in undisturbed areas prior to any future sub-surface work is undertaken within the park.

Historic Resources

An interim assessment of structures within the park was conducted by OPRHP’s Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau (FSB) to determine if they were eligible for listing on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. The military components at the park including the firing range and infrastructure which made up the Stony Point Firing Range were considered to be significant historic features. The structures constructed during the ownership of the Wehle family are not National Register eligible and, while there are no historical requirements or limitations associated with these structures, they do continue the legacy of Robert G. Wehle. Alternatives for historically significant structures are identified in the tables below.

Firing Range

Background for Analysis:

The firing range and wall are significant cultural resources. Currently, trees and shrubs are growing on the firing range wall and are scattered throughout the firing range. The area, including the associated berms are mowed to control swallow-wort and to keep the range open. Very little interpretation is provided at the park for the firing range

Alternatives	Considerations
1. Status Quo - The firing range and wall are not interpreted and structures remain unprotected.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The firing range wall is covered in vegetation and the root systems are adversely impacting the structure. • Educational panels are not provided at the wall or firing range and berms. • Field and berms are mowed.
2. The firing range features are protected and interpreted as a cultural feature.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vegetation is removed to protect the firing wall. • Educational panels are provided to educate patrons about its significance. • The firing range field and berms continue to be mowed. • Trees are removed from the firing range to enhance interpretation opportunities.

Preferred Alternative: 2

As register eligible features, the firing range and wall will be interpreted as a significant cultural feature within the park. The firing wall will be cleared of vegetation and the berms and firing range will remain mowed. Select trees will be removed from the firing range to enhance the visual connection with the firing range. Panels will be installed to educate patrons on the significant military activities.

Watch Stations and Foundations

Background for Analysis:

The park has several concrete watch stations and foundations on the property that are significant cultural features.

Alternatives	Considerations
1. Status Quo - Watch stations are not interpreted and foundations are unmaintained and unprotected.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Watch stations located on the shoreline are impacted by the erosional forces of the lake.• Other watch stations and foundations located away from the shoreline are in relatively good condition.
2. Protect and preserve watch stations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Follow guidance from OPRHP’s Division for Historic Preservation regarding the protection of these structures including conducting an analysis of their condition and repair or reconstruction as needed.• A consolidant would be applied to the surface to protect structures.• Vegetation located near watch stations may be removed to facilitate viewing by patrons.

Preferred Alternative: 2

As register eligible features of the park these watch stations and foundations will be interpreted as a means to inform visitors of their importance and to help protect them. The watch stations will be inventoried and their condition further evaluated. These structures will be left in their current condition. Protection, repair or reconstruction will be conducted as deemed necessary in accordance with OPRHP standards.

Wehle Structures

Robert Wehle had many structures constructed on the property. These structures include the former Wehle residence, including the guest house, “game house”, log cabin, garages, barns, statuary and bird/dog enclosures. These buildings were determined to be not eligible for listing on the National Register. The structures do provide historical context related to the Wehle history and the operation and management of the property before State acquisition. Any proposed repair or maintenance work at these features or their grounds will not need to be reviewed by the Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau.

Scenic Resource Protection

Viewshed from Lake Ontario

Background for Analysis:

The park consists of approximately three miles of undeveloped shoreline, a rarity along Lake Ontario. Boaters on the lake have a nearly unobstructed view of a large portion of the park.

Alternatives	Considerations
1. Status Quo	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Development along the shoreline and bluff top is limited to the existing trails, picnic area, log cabin, and rental compound structures.
2. Develop additional facilities along the shoreline	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Additional shoreline development has the potential to impact the viewshed of those utilizing Lake Ontario.• Facilities should be designed and located to minimize visual impacts.• Use appropriate materials, designs and setbacks to minimize impacts.

Preferred Alternative: 2

It is recognized that additional park infrastructure and facilities are in demand and will be added as funds allow, however, impacts of development within the park as viewed from the Lake Ontario will be considered within the design of all facilities.

Infrastructure Development

An analysis of the infrastructure options was conducted to determine the needs of the park. The maintenance shop and park office were constructed in 2007. An existing structure was rehabilitated into a visitor center in 2008. These structures are in good condition. However, their septic systems will soon undergo improvements. The rental compound has seen significant improvements in 2008 and does not need any structural improvements. Smaller improvements to enhance the park patron experience will be considered. The septic system has been assessed by OPRHP Regional staff and will require a new system to meet the current demands on the compound.

Roadways do not require any significant modifications. The main entrance road to the park and the main parking lot are asphalt. The secondary roadways which serve park staff and/or the rental house compound are single lane gravel roadways. Operational or physical demands on these roadways do not warrant improvements.

Public restroom facilities are located in the picnic area, inside the visitor center and adjacent to the tennis courts. The demand on these facilities does not warrant improvements. Additional development, depending on the location may require additional restroom facilities.

Infrastructure alternatives were assessed and options provided to determine the appropriate and preferred uses within the park. The analysis and assessment of the alternatives for the key infrastructure components is presented below in tabular form.

Log Cabin

Background for Analysis:

A log cabin within the park is not open for public access but is in good condition.

Alternatives	Considerations
1. Status Quo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The log cabin is located on a bluff along the edge of Lake Ontario near the Rental Compound.
2. Allow for the opportunity to rent the log cabin as an additional amenity to the rental compound	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Would provide a rustic experience for up to four additional people using the rental house compound. Is located near a bluff and safety considerations would need to be addressed. The structure would need upgrades and repair before being available for public use. Would need a nearby restroom facility. Could provide electric to the cabin. A gravel drive would need to be constructed. The Snakefoot Trail would need rerouting around the cabin. No use currently exists for the structure.
3. The log cabin is a rented to patrons as a separate facility to the rental compound.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All considerations for Alternative 2 except for the first one would be considered for Alternative 3. The log cabin would provide a unique

- lodging experience for patrons.
- Rental fees would be less than the rental compound.
- Would serve only groups up to four.
- Potential noise impacts exist between large groups at the rental house compound and the log cabin.

Preferred Alternative: 2 and 3

The log cabin will be an optional amenity provided for an additional fee with the reservation of the Rental House Compound. The cabin will need enhancements before it becomes available for public use. Based upon usage trends and public desires, the long term goals for the log cabin may be for a stand alone rental structure, separate from the Rental House Compound.

Storage Barns

Background for Analysis:

Two barns are located in the park and could have multiple uses.

Alternatives	Considerations
1. Status Quo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barns are used for storage.
2. Develop the barns into a public use facility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could be used as a group shelter or other facility for public use.

Preferred Alternative: 1

The barns currently are used for storage of materials. As the park expands and operational and maintenance needs increase, the barns will provide additional storage space and serve operational needs.

Rental House Compound

Background for Analysis:

The rental house compound is rented to both large and small groups. Large groups have significantly higher impact on the house and grounds surrounding it. Groups as large as 200 can use the house and grounds with additional fees and sanitary services provided by the renter. Due to the impact to the area and additional demands placed upon park staff.

Alternatives	Considerations
1. Status Quo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is rented to both large and small groups/individuals. • Large groups provide portable toilets to supplement the flush toilets within the structures.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sanitary system improvements will be provided to meet the designed capacity for the compound. • Improvements to the structure will continue including; the installation of a treatment system for potable water, an ADA accessible walkway to the game room and a gas fire place insert. • Gatherings over the occupancy of eight are coordinated with the park staff.
2. Rental house compound is only used for small groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large groups would not be allowed access to the rental compound. • Impacts to the facility would be reduced. • Operational and maintenance demands would be reduced. • The game room is made ADA accessible.
3. Rental compound area is enhanced to better accommodate larger groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fencing moved to accommodate portable tents. • Sewer system enhancements designed to meet large group capacities. • The roadway to the rental house compound is widened and hard surfacing provided. • The impacts to the compound remain. • Operational and maintenance demands would remain the same. • The game room is made ADA accessible.

Preferred Alternative: 1

The rental compound will serve both large and small groups. Operational and maintenance demands are increased when large groups use the rental compound and impacts to the structure are increased. However, the rental of this facility for both large and small groups provides unique, high quality experiences for a variety of patron uses.

Boat Docks

Background for Analysis:

Boat docks are not currently provided at the park for access from Lake Ontario. People wishing to access the park from the lake do not have a convenient access

Alternatives	Considerations
1. Status Quo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No boat docks are provided.
2. Boat docks are constructed on the shore of the lake for access to the park.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would provide an opportunity for boaters to access the park. • Significant wave action would damage docks on a regular basis.

- Docks would need to be removed during winter.
- Docks would require significant time from maintenance staff.
- Safety issues exist with dock usage.
- Topography makes access extremely difficult.
- Other boat access areas exist within the surrounding area.

Preferred Alternative: 1

This alternative recognizes the fact that the park shoreline is not conducive to the installation of boat docks. Significant time and effort would be required to maintain and repair a dock in this unprotected location. Convenient boat access to Lake Ontario is provided at the Town of Henderson Boat Launch and Westcott Beach State Park. Boat docks will not be provided at the park.

Picnic Area

Background for Analysis:

The park currently has one small picnic area located approximately 1.5 miles from the main parking lot along a wide gravel pathway/service road.

Alternatives	Considerations
1. Status Quo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The picnic area is not expanded • The access remains limited with patrons walking 1.5 miles to get to the designated picnic area.
2. Construct a new picnic area on the lake shore. (Option B on the Development Map)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides lakeside access to the water. • Is easily accessible from the parking lot. • To make area compliant with the American Disabilities Act (ADA), construction costs and land disturbance would be significantly greater than at alternate locations. • Provides scenic vistas to the lake. • In close proximity to cultural features which could be interpreted.
3. Construct a new picnic area at the top of the bluff. (Option A on the Development Map)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is easily accessible from the parking lot. • Can be made ADA compliant. • Provides dramatic scenic vistas of Lake Ontario. • Is located atop a cliff. • Is located along the trail system. • Can be expandable as needed.

Preferred Alternative: 3

The proximity to the main parking lot and scenic vistas make this the preferred alternative. A small picnic area can be easily constructed on this site with a portion of the Snakefoot trail enhanced to meet ADA requirements.

Picnic Shelter

Background for Analysis:

The park does not currently have a covered picnic shelter for group functions. The addition of a picnic shelter would serve many people and groups.

Alternatives	Considerations
1. Status Quo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Picnicking remains in the picnic area. No shelter is provided. • The rental house compound serves large group functions.
2. Construct a new picnic shelter adjacent to the proposed picnic area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is easily accessible from the parking lot. • The area will be ADA compliant and conveniently located. • Allows for scenic vistas of Lake Ontario. • Is located along the trail system.

Preferred Alternative: 2

Providing a small group shelter for public use adjacent to the proposed picnic area allows for groups to have easy access to a picnic shelter in a very scenic location. The Snakefoot trail will be enhanced between the parking lot and the picnic shelter to meet ADA requirements.

Observation Tower

Background for Analysis:

An observation tower would provide a unique view of the park, Lake Ontario and the surrounding landscape.

Alternatives	Considerations
1. Status Quo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cannot view the expanse of park lands from a high vantage point.
2. Construct an observation tower.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would provide scenic vistas the park and Lake Ontario. • ADA considerations would need to be implemented into the design to provide access to all users. • Long term maintenance costs.

Preferred Alternative: 1

An observation tower would provide a unique opportunity to view the flora, fauna and the lake. However, the extensive construction considerations and costs combined with the existing scenic opportunities at ground level and the minimal demand for an observation tower make the status quo alternative preferable.

Overlook

Background for Analysis:

The park has many opportunities for scenic lakeside vistas. There is a desire to create a scenic vista location which is easily accessible from the main parking lot.

Alternatives	Considerations
1. Status Quo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal scenic vistas are provided along the Snakefoot Trail, the picnic area and at other locations.
2. Create a new scenic vista location near the main parking lot. See Figure 14 - Group Camping and Day Use Alternatives Map	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The area is easily accessible from the parking lot and can be made ADA compliant through the construction of a gravel pathway. • The area is in a very suitable location on a bluff top. • Lake access would not be provided. • The proposed site location would minimally impact the land. • Location would serve the proposed picnic area users and other patrons. • People using the lake would see more people and possibly a fence. • The area could be incorporated into the interpretive programming.

Preferred Alternative: 2

This alternative provides a suitable location for a scenic vista for all users. It will enhance an area that is already very scenic and will be used by many patrons upon the construction of the picnic area. Visual impacts from the lake will be considered during the design of the area and minimized to the greatest extent possible. Informal scenic vistas will remain along the Snakefoot Trail.

Cabin Colony

Background for Analysis:

A cabin colony would expand the overnight facilities currently available and provide a new type of camping experience at the park.

Alternatives	Considerations
1. Status Quo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A cabin colony is not provided at the park. • A log cabin is located in the park but is not rented to patrons. • The rental compound provides overnight rental opportunities for park patrons.
2. Construct Cabin Colony with individual restroom and showers or shared bathhouse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would provide a new opportunity at the park. • Would be very popular with some patrons. • Requires significant infrastructure. • The shallow soils limit the development of the infrastructure.

Preferred Alternative: 1

The primary focus of the park will continue to be day-use. Other supporting facilities such as a swimming beach and boating facilities will not be provided at the park.

Roads and Parking

Background for Analysis:

The roads and parking are in good condition. The main parking lot is asphalt while the smaller trailhead parking lots are gravel. The roadway to the rental compound is a single lane gravel road. During large group events, this roadway is heavily used. The majority of traffic enters at the same time and exits at the same time with some conflict in between. The shoulders have been extended by moving the split rail fence away from the road to allow vehicles to pass and pedestrians to walk on the grass.

Alternatives	Considerations
1. Status Quo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The entrance road and main parking lot remain asphalt • The access road to the rental house compound remains gravel surfacing. • Trailhead parking lots remain gravel. • Parking capacity is not expanded.
2. Pave and widen road to the rental compound	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meets the needs of larger groups having access to the rental compound • No need to re-grade the road. • Vehicles speeds would increase on the widened roadway.

Preferred Alternative: 1

The current roadway and parking layout is preferred. The current parking lots meet the capacity needed for park use. The asphalt roadway and parking is in very good condition and the gravel roadway to the rental compound will remain as a single lane gravel road. While the gravel roadway does involve more labor, it fits with the character of the park and keeps traffic moving slower than if it were asphalt. The fences have been moved away from the roadway and allow substantial room for two vehicles to pass.

Comparison of Status Quo and Preferred Master Plan Alternative

Element/Topic	Status Quo Alternative	Preferred Master Plan Alternative
Park office	The park office was constructed in 2007 and is located within the maintenance area.	No changes are recommended for this building.
Maintenance area	The maintenance area consists of several buildings. A new shop was constructed in 2007 and is located in the same structure as the park office.	No changes are recommended for these buildings.
Visitor Center	The Visitor Center was opened in 2008 and will receive minor changes to enhance visitor satisfaction.	No significant changes are recommended for this building.
Picnicking	A picnic area is provided one and a half miles from the parking lot on the shore of Lake Ontario.	A second picnic area is constructed one quarter mile from the parking lot and will include ten picnic tables in the short term. In the long term, a picnic shelter will be constructed.
Fishing	Fishing is allowed from the shoreline. The park does not have a designated fishing access location.	No changes are recommended. Informal access to Lake Ontario may be achieved through the existing picnic area and at the southwest portion of the park.
Trail activities	Hiking, mountain biking, cross country skiing and snowshoeing are allowed on all 16 miles of trail. In the winter, four miles of trail are groomed.	Hiking, mountain biking, cross country skiing and snowshoeing are allowed on all trails. Minor improvements will be made to the trail system.
Rental Compound	The rental compound is used by both large and small groups.	The rental compound will continue to be used by both large and small groups. The septic system will be replaced and minor improvements will be made to enhance the experience of the park patrons.
Log Cabin	The log cabin is not open for public use. The cabin continues to deteriorate.	The log cabin will be available for public rental as an optional rental feature for patrons renting the compound. Upon demand, the long term goals for this structure may include having it as a stand alone rental cabin including

Element/Topic	Status Quo Alternative	Preferred Master Plan Alternative
		restroom facilities, electric, roadway improvements and the realignment of the Snakefoot Trail.
Barns	The barns are in good condition and used for storage.	The barns will continue to store materials and equipment.
Roadways	The main roadway and parking lot are asphalt. Secondary roadways and parking lots are gravel. The secondary roadway to the rental compound is single lane.	No changes are recommended for any roadways.
Bird Conservation Area	The park is not designated as a Bird Conservation Area (BCA).	Little is known about the potential for bird habitat at the park. Designation may be considered when more detailed information is known about birds within the park.
Cultural Resources	Cultural resources from the military era are unprotected. Ground disturbing projects receive an archeological review.	The military features including the firing range, gun wall and the spotter stations will be managed to protect the features. The firing range will have some vegetative management and the firing wall will be cleared of vegetation. Ground disturbing projects are subject to an archeological review.
Interpretive and Education Programs	Interpretation and educational opportunities are provided at four kiosks and within the visitor center. A swallow-wort interpretation plan has been developed.	Interpretation and educational opportunities are expanded to include additional topics such as the military activities. The swallow-wort interpretation plan will be implemented to educate patrons.
Invasive Species Management	Invasive species are controlled through mowing. Studies are underway to determine effective methods of control.	An Invasive Species Management Plan is developed and provided as Appendix B of the master plan. Various methods of control will be implemented and studied. Mowing will remain a significant method of controlling swallow-wort

