



New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

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Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor

Rose Harvey
Commissioner

STATE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY REVIEW FINDINGS STATEMENT

April 2014

Pursuant to Article 8 (State Environmental Quality Review Act – SEQRA) of the Environmental Conservation Law and 6 NYCRR Part 617, the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, as the lead agency, makes the following findings. These findings consider the relevant environmental impacts, facts and conclusions disclosed in the Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement (FGEIS); weigh and balance relevant environmental impacts with social, economic and other considerations and provide a rationale for the agency’s decision.

Name of Action: Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) 2014-2019

Description of Action: Adoption and Implementation of the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) 2014-2019

Location: Statewide

Agency Jurisdiction: Lead Agency under SEQRA
New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Law

Final SCORP/Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement Filed: March 26, 2014

Findings:

1. The SCORP was subject to a Generic Environmental Impact Statement process including a public webinar and a comment period.
2. Chapter 7 of the SCORP/Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement (FGEIS) contains the agency’s responses to comments received on the Draft SCORP/DGEIS. This chapter includes clarification of issues raised during the review of the Draft SCORP/DGEIS and also provides information that was used in the preparation of the Final SCORP/FGEIS.
3. The updated final 2014-2019 SCORP will guide future recreational planning, activities, and development. Additional information on SCORP may be found in the on the OPRHP website page, <http://nysparks.com/inside-our-agency/documents/201419StatewideComprehensiveOutdoorRecreationPlan.pdf>.
4. The vision for recreation in New York State is: “to provide a system of safe and enjoyable recreational and interpretive opportunities for all New York State residents and visitors and to protect and improve

the quality of the valuable natural, historic and cultural resources.” This vision establishes a direction and leadership role for the State in providing a “greener” environment.

5. The resources potentially affected by SCORP include recreational areas, lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands, coastal and estuarine waters, significant habitats, fish and wildlife, rare species of plants and animals as well as common species, forests, agricultural areas, parklands, historic sites, archeological areas, scenic areas, and communities. The setting also includes the general public, park and recreation service providers and both resident and nonresident users.
6. The initiatives, goals and recommendations defined within SCORP 2014-2019 will have a positive impact on the environment. The primary effect of SCORP is to promote the initiatives, goals and recommendations identified in Chapter 4. Generally, there will be a trend towards recreational uses that will have less intensive impacts.
7. The initiatives, goals and recommendations are comprehensive and are consistent with OPRHP’s mission to provide safe and enjoyable recreational and interpretive opportunities for all state residents and visitors and to be responsible stewards of its valuable natural, cultural and historic resources. The initiatives and goals also reflect the mission’s guiding principles, which are commitments to people, preservation, service and leadership.
8. The information network on recreation supply can continue to improve. Inventories and analyses will be furthered by ongoing use of GIS and other technologies. While information is generated on supply and demand, it can also be used in evaluating the impact of recreational use on the environment, particularly whether a facility is being used within its capacity or exceeding proper use levels.
9. Responding to the highest levels of recreational needs within the State will have cost and environmental implications. Some types of recreation facilities have greater impacts on the environment than others. Trails and informal picnic areas will have less of an impact than swimming pools and ball fields. However, for some sites, such as brownfields, any recreation development will be an environmental improvement.
10. The grant rating system is revised on an annual basis to reflect changing initiatives, goals and recommendations within the context of the most recent SCORP. The SCORP priority system assures that consideration is given to an appropriate balance of SCORP policies when evaluating and ranking applications for federal and state assistance in acquiring or developing recreation or open space resources.
11. The no action alternative was examined in the FGEIS but the state is required to prepare SCORP, both pursuant to State law and to maintain eligibility of federal funds under the LWCF. This alternative is not a viable option. Also a number of adverse impacts were identified in the FGEIS that would occur as a result of not updating SCORP.
12. The objectives of OPRHP’s planning process continue to support SCORP goals and planning principles. These objectives further the protection of resources by guiding agencies in formulating priorities. Adequate information and analysis, coordination and citizens’ participation are key to implementation of actions that protect resources and enhance recreation.
13. Constantly reevaluating assumptions, methods and objectives in the planning process helps assure protection of natural resources by adjusting preservation measures when conditions change or new information is available. Additional planning and sustainability recommendations will facilitate proper balancing of the SCORP and advance environmentally sensitive recreational development and use.

14. Protection of open space, natural and cultural resources, and interests and priorities of the public are reflected in SCORP as well as in specific programs and projects implemented pursuant to SCORP.
15. Highlighting goals which describe processes to protect, conserve, and maintain the environment, such as the ecosystem-based management goal, brings natural resource stewardship on par with development activities and recognizes that a healthy ecosystem means healthy communities. In meeting the SCORP vision, quality of life will be improved with incentives for a healthier life style and economic vitality.
16. SCORP includes a goal to continue efforts to restore, conserve, and protect biodiversity of state lands. This goal recognizes that species and their habitats need to be protected. This protection may not always require management, such as the correct siting of projects that mitigate negative impacts on biodiversity. In other cases, specific projects may be undertaken with the goal of improving, preserving or restoring biodiversity. These projects, such as habitat restoration or invasive species removal, would have beneficial impacts on the environment.
17. Since SCORP is a broad framework within which more detailed planning will take place, it is not possible to definitively identify adverse effects. It is consequently infeasible to suggest specific mitigation measures. Consistent, however, with OPRHP's stewardship mission, the review processes assure that due consideration is given to protection of the State's natural and cultural heritage. These processes by which more detailed plans and projects are developed and evaluated should serve to minimize, if not eliminate, adverse effects possibly associated with development of recreational facilities.
18. Providing recreational opportunities at the local level will be subject to local review processes, including SEQRA if applicable.
19. SCORP will not result in any significant increase in energy consumption associated with recreation activities. On the contrary, several of the recommendations and initiatives defined in SCORP will promote reduction in energy consumption by recreation providers and users. These policies should offset increased energy use which would be associated with extension of activity.
20. The facilities and programs flowing from SCORP are an important adjunct to factors leading to economic recovery and development. Existing and recognized centers of growth generally stabilize existing investments and services. Enhancing the quality and quantity of recreational services and programs has substantial beneficial effects on economic activity.
21. Environmental justice is an overarching goal in providing recreational facilities and services. Environmental justice responds to the need to reach underserved communities. Public health and safety considerations must also be incorporated into planning for recreational opportunities.
22. Suggestions for additions or revisions to SCORP were sought from OPRHP staff, State Council of Parks and regional councils, and cooperating agencies as well as the public through the public participation process. This process assures that the goals and recommendations continue to be responsive to recreational needs and resource protection.
23. The cumulative effects of applying the policies and objectives of the 2014 SCORP in a systematic manner will be substantially beneficial. Existing recreational services to the public will be maintained while at the same time protection of natural and cultural resources will be ensured.
24. SCORP was reviewed for consistency with Coastal policies under the NY Coastal Management Program (CMP). Overall, the recommendations within SCORP are consistent with and may advance

coastal policies. Many of the recommendations in SCORP are related to coastal resources and are fully integrated with or are part of the coastal program, thus promoting coastal policies related to development, public access, recreation, historic and scenic resources, as well as natural resources such as fish, wildlife and water. The plan will not substantially hinder the achievement of any of the State's coastal policies or of Local Waterfront Revitalization Programs.

Certification To Approve/Fund/Undertake :

Having considered the Draft and Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement and having considered the preceding written facts and conclusions relied on to meet the requirements of 6 NYCRR Part 617.11, this Statement of Findings certifies that:

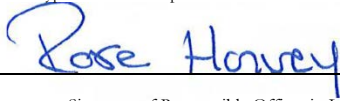
- The requirements of 6 NYCRR Part 617 have been met; and
- Consistent with social, economic and other essential considerations from among the reasonable alternatives available, the action is the one that avoids or minimizes adverse environmental impacts to the maximum extent practicable, and that adverse impacts will be avoided or minimized to the maximum extent practicable by incorporating as conditions to the decision those mitigative measures that were identified as practicable; and
- Consistent with the applicable policies of Article 42 of the Executive Law, as implemented by 19 NYCRR Part 600.5, this action will achieve a balance between the protection of the environment and the need to accommodate social and economic considerations.

Rose Harvey

Commissioner

Print or Type Name of Responsible Officer in Lead Agency

Title of Responsible Officer



Signature of Responsible Officer in Lead Agency

4/29/2014

Date