

Chapter 1: Introduction

Planning and Environmental Review

The OPRHP planning process adheres to three basic principles:

- **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.
- **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.
- **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.

The environmental review of proposed master plans for state park facilities is conducted in accordance with the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR). OPRHP fully integrates the planning and environmental review processes. This document serves as both the Master Plan and the Environmental Impact Statement for Midway State Park.

Q&A About This Plan

What is the action?

The action is the adoption and implementation of a Master Plan for Midway State Park.

Who is proposing to do this?

The Commissioner of the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation is proposing this action.

Why was the report written?

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 development of a state Park.

What opportunities have there been for public participation?

- A public information meeting was held on June 24, 2008 to gather information, concerns and issues surrounding the development and management of Midway State Park. The information packet for this meeting is available at www.nysparks.com.
- The public was invited to email and/or send written comments after the public information meeting.
- A summary of public comments received during and after (up to a closing date of July 30, 2008) the public information meeting was distributed to meeting attendees.
- A public hearing was held on August 12, 2009 in Mayville, NY to allow the public, interest groups, and state and local government agencies the opportunity to provide comments. The public comment period ended September 18, 2009.

How to review the report?

The report can be read from cover to cover or one may concentrate on a particular area of interest. A “Table of Contents” has been included with the report for easy location of chapters and sections.

What kinds of comments should be made?

All manner of comments are welcomed. Reviewers may comment on their support or opposition of the proposed action, certain parts of the plan or the course of development. In addition, comments or requests regarding the level of information provided in a particular section can be made. OPRHP is most interested in comments that provide new and pertinent information and/or clearly describe the kinds of information that should be included in the document.

What has been decided?

The Commissioner has decided that a Master Plan/EIS is necessary to guide the management and development of the resources at Midway State Park. At this time, the Commissioner has also decided that the plan be made available for public review and comment. There has not been any decision regarding the adoption of the Master Plan/EIS.

How to comment on the Plan.

People who wish to comment on this plan may write, email, fax or call the contacts listed on the title page of the report.

What happens next?

Upon completion of the Final Master Plan/FEIS there will be a 10 day period for agencies and the public to consider this document. Commissioner Ash will then issue a statement of findings which will describe the Action being taken and description of the basis for her decision.

Introduction to the Park

Establishment of the park

Midway State Park was acquired and established in 2006. Prior to that time the park was privately owned (since 1898) and one of the last surviving trolley parks in the United States. At the time of its acquisition, and for many years before, Midway Park was a privately operated amusement park suitable for family entertainment. The park was acquired by OPRHP to protect the historic and cultural resources there as well as to continue to provide public recreational access to Chautauqua Lake. (Gustafson 1996)

Planning that has been done in the past

At the time of this writing no previous planning specific to Midway Park has been found. This is not unusual as the park is a newly acquired facility.

The Chautauqua County Planning Department included Midway Park in the Draft Chautauqua Lake Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan (Chautauqua County 2007). In that plan Midway Park is identified as a primary site of historical significance as suggested by the local community as well as specifically mentioning Midway Park, among other sites, that deserve special notation even though they were not, at that time, listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The 2006 New York State Open Space Plan (NYSDEC 2006) identifies Chautauqua Lake Shorelands and Vistas as priorities for state acquisition.

What has prompted the preparation of this report?

Midway Park is a newly acquired property. It has important historic, cultural and natural resources as well as access to Chautauqua Lake, offering public access to water related activities such as boating, fishing, ice fishing and water related tourism activities. This report is needed to plan for the preservation and use of these resources as well as to promote their appropriate public use.