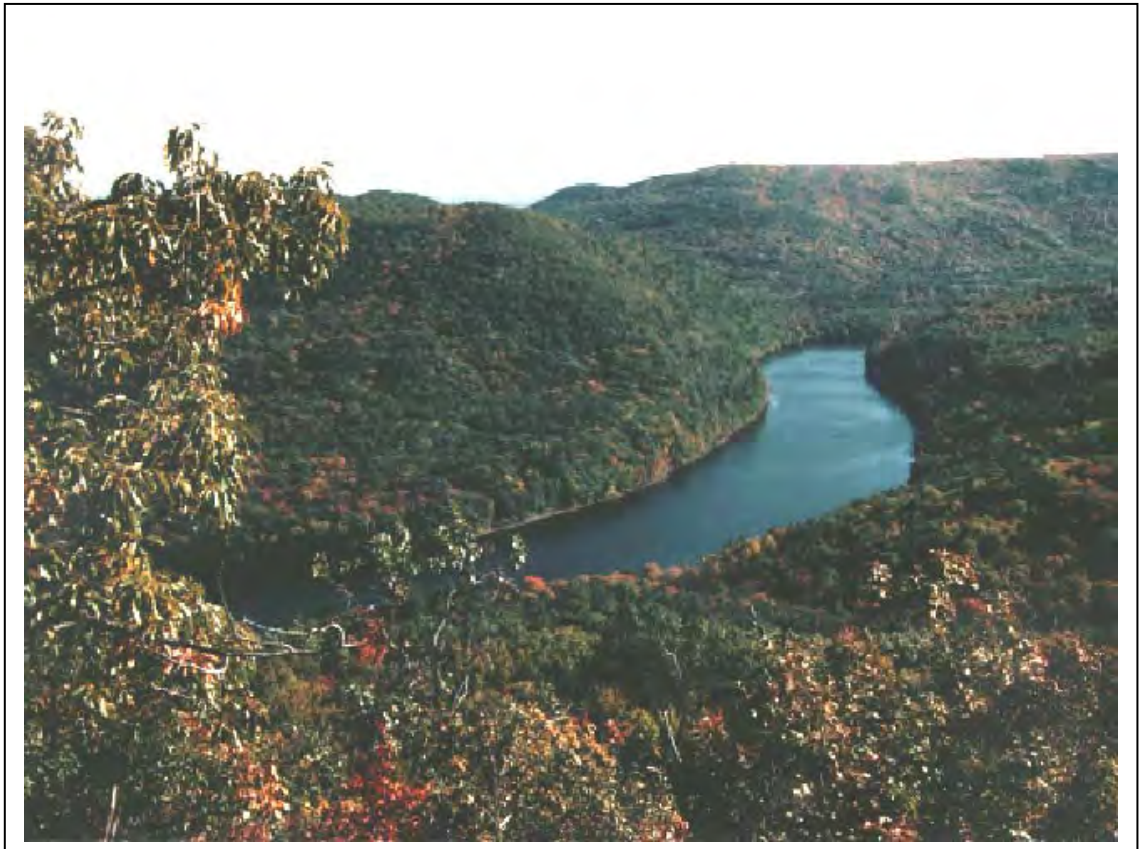


Moreau Lake State Park

Final Master Plan/ Final Environmental Impact Statement



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Bernadette Castro
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OFFICE OF PARKS, RECREATION AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION



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SEQR
NOTICE OF COMPLETION OF A FINAL MASTER PLAN FINAL
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Date of Notice: November 29, 2006
Lead Agency: New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Title of Action: Adoption and Implementation of a Master Plan for Moreau Lake State Park
SEQR Status: Type I

Location of Action: Moreau Lake State Park is located in the Towns of Moreau and Corinth in Saratoga County and the Towns of Lake Luzerne and Queensbury in Warren County.

This Notice is issued pursuant to Part 617 of the implementing regulations pertaining to Article 8 (State Environmental Quality Review) of the Environmental Conservation Law.

A Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) has been completed and accepted on the Adoption and Implementation of a Master Plan for Moreau Lake State Park. Copies of the Final Plan and FEIS are available from the agency contacts and on the agency website www.nysparks.com/news/public.

The Executive Summary of the Final Plan and FEIS contains a brief description of the proposed Plan, environmental setting, alternatives and potential environmental impacts.


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**Final Master Plan/
Final Environmental Impact Statement**

For

MOREAU LAKE STATE PARK

**Town of Moreau, Saratoga County
Town of Corinth, Saratoga County
Town of Lake Luzerne, Warren County
Town of Queensbury, Warren County**

Prepared by

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

Completed: November 29, 2006

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Executive Summary

Introduction

The area around Moreau Lake was originally a summer home and estate developed by George W. McAdam, a wealthy attorney. The lands were acquired over a 20 year period beginning in 1881. From 1935 to 1940 the area began to develop as a seasonal campground. The natural lake, existing forests and topography offered a scenic area for swimming, camping and other recreational activities. By 1940, the area of the park had been developed with dirt access roads along the southwestern and southeastern areas around Moreau Lake. Between 1940 and 1949, cabins or residences were constructed along the shores of Moreau Lake.

In 1961, the State Conservation Department, better known as the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), began acquiring land in the town of Moreau under a Bond Act to create a public campsite (Vollmer, 1969). By 1967, approximately 600 acres had been acquired and Moreau Lake State Park was established. This new park was transferred to the Capital District State Park Commission. When the Division of Parks and Recreation was separated from the Conservation Department in 1972, administration of Moreau Lake State Park became the responsibility of the Office of Parks and Recreation, which is now known as the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP). Later acquisitions increased the park's acreage to just under 900 acres. In 1998, New York State acquired over 3,200 acres from the Open Space Institute (OSI) and Niagara Mohawk. The Department of Environmental Conservation acquired the parcels in Warren County that equal 1,320 acres and OPRHP acquired the 1,920 acres within Saratoga County. Through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) DEC agreed that the 1,320 acres they acquired would be managed and operated by OPRHP as part of Moreau Lake State Park. This more than tripled the size of Moreau Lake State Park. Moreau Lake State Park is now the tenth largest State Park in New York's park system and the largest park of the Saratoga-Capital District Region.

Park Planning

The only planning document that refers to Moreau Lake State Park is a plan entitled "Master Plan for Outdoor Recreation in the Capital District State Park Region, New York State" written in 1969 by the Vollmer Associates for the Conservation Department-Division of Parks and the Capital District State Park Commission. This plan identifies parcels for acquisition and recommends expansion of park facilities at Moreau Lake State Park (Vollmer, 1969).

Shortly after the 1998 acquisition, OPRHP Saratoga-Capital District Region made the decision that, in order to properly manage the expanded park and update the existing facilities, a Master Plan was necessary. OPRHP held two public scoping meetings to gather information from the general public and other State, Local and Federal agencies about the past uses and issues associated with future uses of the park. An advisory Group was formed consisting of local governments, adjacent landowners, and State and Federal Agencies to assist with the development of the Plan. Since then OPRHP Saratoga-Capital District Region and

Albany Office have been working with the advisory group, the public and consultants to gather physical, natural and cultural resource information about the park. This information is presented in this document and was used to develop the management alternatives found in Chapter 4. A preferred alternative was selected and evolved into the Master Plan.

This document serves as the Master Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for Moreau Lake State Park. It describes the park, its existing resources and evaluates alternative actions for preserving resources, improving access and improving or expanding recreational opportunities within the park.

Environmental Setting

The park is located in the Towns of Moreau and Corinth, Saratoga County and the Towns of Lake Luzerne and Queensbury, Warren County within the Saratoga-Capital District State Park Region. The park occupies more than 4,100 acres and is divided by the Hudson River, which forms the boundary between Saratoga and Warren Counties.

The general topography of the park is hilly with a combination of rolling hills and steep slopes. The park shows typical characteristics of both the northern Adirondack Mountains and southern Appalachian forests. An outwash plain that begins along the western bank of the Hudson River and extends down the valley supports oak-pine forests. This forest type occurs in the park and has been developed as recreation areas (Evans & Novak, 2000).

The Hudson River and Moreau Lake are the two main waterbodies within the park boundaries. Moreau Lake is a “kettle hole lake” formed during the advancement and recession of glacial ice. The Hudson River bisects the park and separates the northern Luzerne Mountains from the southern Palmertown Range.

Eighteen distinct natural community types were identified within Moreau Lake State Park. Two of which are considered to be significant ecological communities. Large stands of hemlock-northern hardwood forest and associated beech-maple mesic forests dominate the landscape of the park. Other, less abundant, forest communities in the park include Appalachian oak-pine forest, chestnut oak forest, successional northern hardwoods, acidic talus slope woodland, hemlock-hardwood swamp and red maple hardwood swamp. Several nice examples of wetland community types were also observed on park land. Occurring in small patches of less than 5 acres, the dominant forested wetland of the park is hemlock-hardwood swamp.

Shady groves of trees shelter picnic grounds with play structures and a pavilion overlooking the lake. Wooded campgrounds and facilities for group campers, as well as tent and trailer sites are available. The sandy beach, nature, hiking, mountain biking and cross-country ski trails, opportunities for boating, fishing and ice fishing, and proximity to Saratoga Springs and Lake George make the park attractive to visitors. Located on the beach road, is the Lakeshore Cottage, a full service accommodation. The cottage provides everything from a refrigerator, stove, dishes and utensils to a screened porch, bathroom with shower, bedding, pillows and a cozy fireplace.

The park is open year round. Camping season runs from mid-May through mid-October. The beach is open for swimming from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day. Deer hunting is permitted in designated areas in season. Vehicle access in the winter months is limited.

Vision and Goals

Agency Mission Statement

The mission of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation 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.

Vision Statement

Moreau Lake State Park will be a place for the residents and non-residents of New York State to visit, enjoy and appreciate the natural, cultural and physical resources and the recreational opportunities that the park offers.

Park Goal

To achieve a balance between the recreational use, protection and interpretation of the biological, physical and cultural resources of the park.

Resource Goals

- To identify, protect and interpret the natural resources within and associated with the park.
- Provide day use and overnight facilities that are compatible with the park's natural and cultural resources.
- Identify, protect, preserve and interpret sites and areas significant to the history, archaeology and culture of the local community, region, state and nation.
- Protect the scenic quality of the park and its viewshed.
- Provide appropriate access to the park and its recreational, cultural and natural resources.
- Provide opportunities for education and interpretation of the natural, cultural and recreational resources of the park.
- Operate and maintain the park in a safe and clean manner that protects the natural and cultural resources of the park.
- Develop partnerships with organizations, federal, state and local agencies, not-for-profit organizations and the private sector.
- Encourage scientific research into the natural and cultural resources of the park.

Alternatives

In Chapter IV, Analysis and Alternatives, the park was divided into four management areas; Hudson River Corridor, Warren County, Palmetown Mountains and Lake Recreation. Alternative management and development directions were developed for each area using information developed on existing conditions, the analysis of recommended directions for activities and constraint and considerations identified in the resources analysis. The preferred alternative for the entire park (i.e. the Master Plan) consists of the best alternative identified for each management area.

Status Quo Alternative

This alternative consists of the current facilities, programs and practices as described in the Environmental Setting Chapter. Under this alternative, the current resource protection, operation, and facility management practices would continue. The increasing demands on the park would not be met or mitigated nor would the resources be adequately protected. Identification and implementation of protection and use guidelines for the newly acquired parklands would be deferred until a future time.

Preferred Alternative

The preferred alternative combines the preferred options from the Recreation Development and Resource Protection Alternatives sections in Chapter IV. There are many permutations that can be derived from the preferred options. The Preferred Alternative selected is the one that best meets the goals for the park.

The Master Plan

The park is classified as a Scenic Park, as the Analysis and Alternatives Chapter recommends. The development strategy within this Master Plan is consistent with this classification. While the management areas are unique in the opportunities they offer, they meet the criteria and character of a Scenic Park when viewed together as a whole park.

The primary focus of the Master Plan for Moreau Lake State Park is to establish a balance between recreational use and protection and interpretation of the park's natural and cultural resources. Moreau Lake State Park has the unique distinction of being the last State Park before reaching the Adirondack Park when traveling from southern New York State. The recent expansion of the park to include a segment of the Hudson River and the Palmertown and Luzerne Mountains provides a transition from recreation activities in a developed area to recreation activities in an undeveloped natural environment similar to the Adirondack Park. The expanded park area also offers an opportunity to interpret the historical uses of the Hudson River, from use by indigenous peoples to use as a major transportation corridor to a power generating waterway.

Management within the Hudson River Corridor will focus on providing visual and physical access to the Hudson river. The two existing boat launches will be maintained and improved with better parking and access for persons with disabilities. Primitive water-accessed campsites will be maintained and sites added as use of the Hudson River Water Trail demands. With the phased development of a campground and cabin colony on the Hudson River the overall variety of camping experiences are increased within the Park.

The Warren County Management Area focus will be on providing access to the park. A year-round parking area will be established along with trails and a cartop launch. A trail plan will be developed before any new trails are designated. Primary uses of this area are anticipated to be trail activities including: hiking, biking, horseback riding, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing and snowmobiling.

The focus of the Palmertown Management Area is on access and trail use. Trailheads and parking areas will be created and others will be improved. Trails will be constructed and designated for non-motorized uses. Trail activities will include: hiking, biking, cross-country

skiing and snowshoeing. Equestrian uses are not recommended for this area due to the steep slopes.

The Lake Recreation Area focuses on the more intense uses and recreation facilities. The day use /beach area will be improved through better parking configurations, an additional pavilion, and a reconfigured bathhouse. In the campground area, improvements will be made that address user impacts on the campsites, camper amenities, third car parking and access for persons with disabilities. The entrance of the Park will be redesigned to address vehicle stacking, overflow parking, and use of the parkland between Route 9 and Old Saratoga Road. Development of the parkland between Route 9 and Old Saratoga Road will include two RV camping loops and a picnic area, and relocating the maintenance area and the dumping station. Entrance congestion and stacked vehicles will be address through the addition of a right turning lane to the north of the entrance and an additional parking area near the Park Office. The right turning lane will be created by adding a traffic lane to the north of the park entrance on the northeast bound lane side (on the Route 9 property). The existing southwest bound lane will become the turning lane, the old northeast bound lane will become the southwest bound traffic lane and the new lane will be the northeast bound traffic lane. This alternative will not require the closure of Old Saratoga Road or interfere with existing traffic patterns. The stacking/right turning lane provides a safer alternative for park patrons waiting to enter the park.

In addition to facility development and improvement, portions of the park will also carry designations for natural resource protection. These designations include a Bird Conservation Area, a Natural Heritage Area and a Park Preservation Area. The portion of the park designated as a Bird Conservation Area (BCA) consists of primarily hemlock-northern hardwoods and beech-maple forests that exhibit characteristics critical to bird and bird habitat conservation. The Natural Heritage Area recognizes significant ecological communities found within the park and the Park Preservation Area preserves an area of the park that has significant scenic views and topography.

Implementation

The implementation of the Master Plan will be done in phases. Initiation and completion of each phase will depend upon the availability of funding, demand and environmental permit approvals. The phasing plan will be subject to reorganization based on priorities and available resources for specific components of any given phase.

Phase	Description/Development Component
Planning: 1	Master Planning/Park Programming Environmental Surveys Environmental Assessment Designations (BCA, NHA, PPA)
Development: 1	Interpretive program expansion/improvement (on going). Development of partnerships with user groups, local governments, not-for-profit groups, schools, etc.

	<p>Begin improvements to the Park entrance including the construction of a right turning lane off Old Saratoga Road.</p> <p>Negotiate access road off Corinth Road.</p> <p>Inventory Warren County trails and develop trails plan.</p> <p>Develop water-access campsites at Potter’s Point.</p> <p>Develop parking area off Hawk Road.</p> <p>Construct Western Ridge Trailhead and parking area.</p> <p>Improve Spier Falls Road “pull-off” areas and provide picnic tables at appropriate locations.</p> <p>Improve and designate uses for Lake Recreation Area Trails.</p>
2	<p>Implement Warren Co. Mgmt. Area Trails Plan.</p> <p>Begin development of cabin/camping area at Potter’s Point.</p> <p>Improve Sherman Island and Spier Falls Boat Launches.</p> <p>Designate primitive camping areas/sites in Palmertown Mountain Area.</p> <p>Construct pavilion at volleyball court.</p> <p>Develop 3rd car parking areas in campground.</p> <p>Improve group camping area and parking.</p> <p>Improve campground, showers, electric, and camper amenities and install site creep mitigation measures.</p> <p>Begin redevelopment of park entrance.</p>
3	<p>Develop access/boat launch off Corinth Road.</p> <p>Complete development of cabin/camping area at Potter’s Point.</p> <p>Complete entrance redesign.</p> <p>Relocate maintenance area, construct over flow parking, and develop picnic areas and RV camping loops on parklands between Route 9 and Old Saratoga Road.</p>

Environmental Impacts and Mitigation

Environmental Impacts associated with the implementation of the Master Plan have been addressed under seven general areas: transportation/access, recreation/open space, water resources, biological resources/ecology, cultural resources, scenic/aesthetic resources, and public health. The Master Plan will improve or expand existing parking areas in the Hudson River, Warren County and Palmertown Mountain areas. These improvements will increase parking and provide safe access to these areas of the park. A significant redesign and improvement is proposed for the Lake Recreation Area entrance. The proposed redesign will reduce traffic backups due to park patrons waiting to enter the park and create a safer more inviting park entrance. The proposed addition of a right turning/stacking lane will remove park patron vehicles from the through traffic lanes creating a safer situation on Old Saratoga Road. This option does not require the closure of Old Saratoga Road nor does it interfere with existing traffic patterns. The plan will also result in substantial beneficial recreation and open space impacts. The plan proposes additional and improved camping opportunities, an improved trail network, better access to open space and scenic areas, improved and expanded natural and cultural resource interpretive and educational programs. There will be a minimal increase in boater use of the Hudson River and a modest increase in use of Moreau Lake for swimming, non-motorized boating and fishing as a result of implementing the plan. Overall the Master Plan will have a positive impact on the natural resources within the park. Limited new development is proposed in the large forested area along the Hudson River. Direct impacts will be lessened since new development proposals will be focused in areas that have been previously disturbed, have limited environmental sensitivity and which generally possess accessibility to, and use of, existing infrastructure. Within the Warren County Area proposals for a picnic area and/or a cartop boat launch will require supplemental review. Lake Recreation Area proposals involve the rehabilitation of the existing camping loops, construction of a warming hut/shower building and a new parking lot near the park office, relocation of the maintenance area and the dump station, and construction of new picnic areas and camping loops. With the exception of the new picnic area and camping loops, all new development has been located in existing cleared or previously disturbed areas. The large expanses of unfragmented forest in the park provide significant bird habitat. The Bald Eagle, a federal and State listed threatened species, is known to use the Hudson river below the Spier Falls dam during the winter months. Potential impacts to the eagles' use of the area will be identified as projects and proposals for new activities in the area evaluated. To further protect bird species, a large portion of Moreau Lake State Park is proposed for designation as a Bird Conservation Area (BCA). In addition, the important and significant ecological communities within the park are proposed for designation as a Natural Heritage Area. The Palmertown Mountain Area of the park is proposed for designation as a Park Preservation Area. These designations each recognize and serve to further protect the significant resources within the Park. Ground disturbing activities such as digging or grading, have the potential to disturb archeological resources within the park. Phase 1A Cultural and Archeology studies have determined the potential for the park to have prehistoric cultural resources is moderate to high. Therefore, ground disturbing activities will require additional review to determine if there will be potential impacts to cultural resources. The park is to be classified as a Scenic Park under the State Parkland Classification System. Overall, the Master Plan will have a beneficial impact on the scenic resources of the park. Public health and safety are an

important element in park operations. Facility design and development will meet all applicable health and safety codes as well as the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Relationship to Other Programs

The Park works with many other agencies, and local partners in its day to day operations. These include Niagara Mohawk (National Grid), Mount McGregor Correctional Facility, the current owner/operator of the Spier Falls and Sherman Island power generating facilities, the Department of Environmental Conservation, Fernwood Fish Hatchery, and Saratoga County. In addition to these agencies the Park is also involved with State and Federal programs such as the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the American Heritage Rivers Program, and the Palmertown Range Trail. The Plan explains how each of these entities and programs influence and work with the Park.

Acknowledgements

The Moreau Lake State Park Draft Master Plan/Draft Environmental Impact Statement is a result of a cooperative effort by many persons. The Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) would like to acknowledge the time and effort of each individual, public agency, and interest group who participated in the development of the park and this Draft Master Plan document.

In a cooperative effort, the Agency worked with and coordinated input from the following contributing agencies: The Towns of Moreau and Corinth of Saratoga County, The Towns of Queensbury and Lake Luzerne of Warren County, The Counties of Saratoga and Warren, The Department of Environmental Conservation(DEC), and the OPRHP Field Services Bureau

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Questions and Answers about the Master Plan/FEIS

What is the action?

The action is the adoption and implementation of a Master Plan for Moreau Lake 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 this report written?

This 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.

How much opportunity has there been for public participation?

Two public scoping meetings were held to gather information, concerns and issues surrounding the development and management of Moreau Lake State Park. Additional public information meetings were also held throughout the planning process to update the public and get feedback on the progress of the plan. An advisory group consisting of local governments, adjacent landowners and State and Federal agencies was formed to aid in the development of this plan. A progress report and conceptual plan was also presented to the Saratoga-Capital District State Park Commission.

A public meeting was held on December 13, 2005 and a public information meeting for the Moreau Town Board on February 8, 2006. The public comment period was extended to March 20, 2006.

How should this report be reviewed?

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

What has the Commissioner decided?

Commissioner Castro has decided that a Master Plan/EIS is necessary to guide the management and development of the resources at Moreau Lake State Park. At this time, the Commissioner has also decided that the plan be made available for consideration. She has not made any decision regarding the adoption of the Master Plan/EIS.

How can someone comment on the plan?

People who wish to comment on this plan may write or call.

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What happens next?

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

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I. Planning and Environmental Review

Introduction

This document serves as the Final Master Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for Moreau Lake State Park. It describes the park, its existing resources and evaluates alternative actions for preserving resources, improving access and improving or expanding recreational opportunities within the park. Recently, the park has been expanded to include an additional 3,200+ acres. This Master Planning/EIS process was initiated to insure proper management and development of the newly acquired parkland. The planning and environmental review process require that physical, natural, cultural and recreational surveys be conducted to establish a baseline inventory and determine the existing conditions of the park. Summaries of these survey and inventory results are reported in this document. A review and analysis of the survey and inventory information is performed and also included in this document. This analysis is used to develop resource protection and recreation management alternatives and a preferred alternative is selected. This preferred alternative is then developed into the Master Plan for the park. Each alternative is evaluated for potential environmental, operational and fiscal impacts. These evaluations are documented in this report. Lastly the Master Plan is evaluated for its impacts on the environment and the measures that will be taken to avoid and mitigate these impacts are explained.

The Executive Summary summarizes the whole document by giving a brief description of what the park looks like now. It also provides a short overview of the preferred alternative and how it fits the character of the park.

The Questions and Answers section identifies and answers some very common questions often asked by the public and interested groups about the Master Planning/EIS process.

Chapter I describes the planning process used in the development of this plan. It also explains how the Environmental Impact Statement has been incorporated into the planning process and this document. This chapter also briefly identifies the programs and plans of Federal, State and Local agencies that may affect or be affected by this Master Plan.

Chapter II describes the park in great detail and establishes the “Environmental Setting” for the park. The results from the physical, natural and cultural surveys and inventories are reported in this chapter, as well as the current state of the park and its support facilities. This chapter also provides a picture of how the park fits into the local community and the niche it fills in the regional community.

Chapter III defines the vision and goals for the park and this plan. The vision provides an overall direction of what the park should be and how it serves the public. The goals and objectives outlined in this chapter provide direction in how the natural, cultural, recreational, communication and partnership resources are to be used to achieve the vision statement. The goals and objectives help to provide a framework for new construction, staffing and operating procedures associated with park development and management. The vision and goals are designed to be consistent with the statewide recreation goals of the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) and the Agency’s mission statement.

Chapter IV, titled "Analysis and Alternatives", evaluates each element by providing a brief analysis of the existing conditions of the park, resource concerns and concerns identified through the public scoping process. Alternatives for recreation management and development are created as well as alternatives for resource protection and stewardship. These alternatives are then evaluated and a preferred alternative is identified in this chapter.

Chapter V is the Master Plan. This chapter takes the preferred alternative identified in Chapter IV and expands upon it to develop a comprehensive plan for the management and development of the park. This chapter provides operation, staffing, and design guidelines for the park as well as recreation development and management guidelines. A timeline for plan implementation is also outlined in this chapter. Lastly, this chapter identifies any relationships this plan has with other Federal, State, Local and/or non-profit organization plans and programs. How this plan relates to the goals of these other plans and programs is also explained. Potential partnerships with these interest groups, Federal, State or Local agencies and non-profit organizations are identified.

Chapter VI is the result of the environmental analysis of the alternatives and the preferred alternative. This chapter identifies the potential impacts of each alternative described in Chapter IV. It also reviews the potential impacts of the Master Plan. The impacts of the Master Plan are analyzed and described in this chapter as are methods of avoiding impacts and any mitigation measures required during plan implementation.

Chapter VII is the result of the public hearings and the comment period on the Draft Master Plan /DEIS. The comments received from the general public, interested organizations and other State, Federal and Local agencies are published here along with OPRHP's response.

Planning Process

The OPRHP planning process adheres to three basic principles:

- 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.
- 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.

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 Final Master Plan and the Final Environmental Impact Statement for Moreau Lake State Park.

Moreau Lake State Park, originally a private resort/farm of the McAdam Family, became a State Park in 1967. In 1998, an acquisition of more than 3,200 acres has since tripled the size of Moreau Lake State Park making it more than 4,100 acres in size. Moreau Lake State

Park is now the 10th largest State Park in New York's park system and the largest park of the Saratoga-Capital District Region

Shortly after the acquisition, OPRHP Saratoga-Capital District Region made the decision that, in order to properly manage the expanded park and update the existing facilities, a Master Plan was necessary. OPRHP held two public scoping meetings to gather information from the general public and other State, Local and Federal agencies about the past uses and issues associated with future uses of the park. An advisory group was formed consisting of local governments, adjacent landowners, and State and Federal Agencies to assist with the development of the Plan. Since then OPRHP Saratoga-Capital District Region and Albany Office have been working with the advisory group, the public and consultants to gather physical, natural and cultural resource information about the park. This information is presented in this document and was used to develop the management alternatives found in Chapter IV. A preferred alternative was selected and evolved into the Master Plan.

Relationship to Other Programs

Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation (NiMo) (National Grid)

Although the State acquired significant acreage from Niagara Mohawk, the company retained a network of power line transmission corridors which crisscross the property. OPRHP negotiated a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with NiMo to manage the transmission corridors as state park land. The MOU permits OPRHP to create 12 pedestrian/bicycle power line crossings and 1 vehicular power line crossing for trail and trail head parking development. The remainder of the corridors is not to be used for recreational purposes. Park management of these corridors will consist of enforcing park rules and prohibiting the use of the power line corridors as recreational corridors. This Master Plan includes these lands to establish a management program for the entire land area so that the various ownerships are transparent to the park visitor.

Department of Correctional Facilities/Mount McGregor Correctional Facility

The park has a long common boundary with the Mount McGregor Correctional Facility. In the past the Facility has provided the park with work crews to preserve scenic vistas. OPRHP should pursue a partnership with the Facility to continue this practice.

Erie Boulevard Power/Reliant Energy and its Successors

The Spier Falls and Sherman Island Dam power generating stations are regulated by a license issued by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to the power company that owns the facilities. These licenses are renewed by the owner on a cycle of 30, 40 or 50 years. The power company was granted a license of 40 years for the Spier Falls and Sherman Island facilities on the Hudson River. When the licensing process is to begin again, OPRHP should be intimately involved with this process as per the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between OPRHP and the power company. Under the current license, the power company is charged with developing and maintaining recreational facilities along a 50-foot corridor of land on both shores of the Hudson River. These facilities include

two boat launches, waterfront campsites and portage trails around the Spier Falls and Sherman Island Dams. Under the terms of the MOU between OPRHP and the power company, OPRHP will be responsible for operating the boat launch and camping facilities so that the change in ownership is transparent to the visitor.

Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)

There is currently a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between DEC and OPRHP for the operation and maintenance of park lands north of the Hudson River within Warren County. The DEC is the owner of these lands; however, they will be managed and maintained by OPRHP as part of Moreau Lake State Park. Under the terms of the MOU, OPRHP and DEC are to cooperate in the development of a management plan for these lands. DEC has participated in the development of this Master Plan.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The developed areas of Moreau Lake State Park (i.e. campground, day use and trails) were constructed before agencies were required to provide facilities for persons with disabilities. As awareness to the needs of persons with disabilities increased, alterations to the park's facilities have been made. The Americans with Disabilities Act –Access Board has developed and proposed new design and development guidelines for providing facilities usable by persons with disabilities. Through recent consultation and evaluation, it has been determined that the Park's facilities do not meet the new design and development guidelines. As the existing facilities and structures require reconstruction, renovation or rehabilitation, the designs applied will conform to the ADA design and development guidelines. Likewise, components that comply with ADA design and development guidelines will be incorporated into plans for new facilities.

Fernwood Fish Hatchery

The Fernwood Fish Hatchery is located southeast of the park. It is in the floodplain of Moreau Lake. OPRHP has an easement and an agreement with the hatchery to maintain drainage structures and culverts through the hatchery property. These drainage structures and culverts help to control runoff from Moreau Lake.

Saratoga County

Saratoga County supports a county-wide fish stocking program and budgets \$21,000 each year for their program. Moreau Lake is included in the County's stocking program. Stocking of Moreau Lake is coordinated through DEC, Fernwood Fish Hatchery and Moreau Lake State Park. The County pays all of the costs for stocking. DEC issues the permits and recommends the number and species of fish to be stocked. The Park should continue the partnership with the County and its program.

Land and Water Conservation Funds (LWCF)

Appropriations from the New York State Land and Water Conservation Fund were used to construct the bathhouse at Moreau Lake. Under the regulations of the LWCF, any park

that receives such funding is granted “6F” protection. This means that no part of the park property can be converted for uses other than public recreation.

American Heritage River

In 1997, Governor George E. Pataki nominated the Hudson River to be designated, in 1998, as an American Heritage River. The 315 miles of river, from its source in Lake Tear of the Clouds to the Verrazano Narrows, and the 19 counties surrounding its shores are included in the Heritage River Area. Moreau Lake State park is included in the Hudson's American Heritage River Area.

The Palmertown Range Trail

The Saratoga-Capital District Park Region is currently working on developing a multiple use trail that will connect Moreau Lake State Park with Saratoga Spa State Park. This trail is still in planning stages and proposes to include Moreau Lake State Park trails in its route -- the Western Ridge Trail and the Ridge Run Trail. As on the Park's trails, the Palmertown Range Trail will permit non-motorized uses.

Summary of Resource Protection and Use Concerns

The following list of resource protection and use concerns was generated through the inventory of resources process and from comments collected during public scoping, and public information meetings held throughout the planning process. These issues and concerns will be considered in the development and selection of alternatives. Please note that the concerns contained in this list are presented in no particular order or priority. All issues and concerns listed are considered equally important to the development of the plan and the Park.

- The stretch of Hudson River within the Park is a quiet, undeveloped and pristine area that should be preserved. It is great for canoeing and kayaking and should not have motorboats of any kind.
- Consider designating part of the park as a Park Preservation Area.
- The Park could be eligible for BCA designation.
- Local residents like the walk-in access to the park.
- Consider expanding winter parking and uses.
- Don't install electricity in campsites; keep the campground open to tents.
- Some groups want electricity installed at the campsites.
- Park trails need to be marked better.
- Enforcement of no ATV use needs to be improved.
- Keep hunting as an activity within the Park
- Consider swimming in the Hudson River, possibly a "swim at your own risk" policy.
- Sign the route to the existing Park entrance better.
- Acquire in-holdings.
- There are restrictions with some designations.
- Consider providing more cabin or cottages within the park. They could possibly be located along the river.
- Snowmobiles, ATV's and equestrians should be limited to separate, designated areas/trails.
- Don't charge for activities that are now experienced for free (boat launching, riverside camping and swimming.)
- Hiking and hunting are two activities best suited for the expanded park property.
- Include mountain biking as an activity within the Park.

- Redesign the Park entrance. Possibly develop separate entrances for day users and campers.
- Some of the Moreau Lake campsites are in poor condition due to use impacts (i.e. soil compaction, scarred trees, pad creep and erosion).
- Trees in the picnic/day use area are stressed from soil compaction.
- Utilize the property between Route 9 and Old Saratoga Road.
- Provide a swimming beach for campers.
- Rehabilitate, renovate and/or expand the Moreau Lake camping area.
- Construction of the Spier Falls and Sherman Island Dams are great topics for historic interpretation.
- Interpret the logging industry and the log drives on the Hudson River.
- The character and capacity of the Hudson River corridor should not be destroyed by more intensive types of uses.
- There is a PCB site at the end of Hartman Hill.
- Provide boat access from Queensbury.
- Eagles are seen on the river in spring.
- Consider providing take-off/landing locations for hang gliders.
- Preserve the scenery and vistas in the Park.
- Explore the potential for rock climbing in the park.
- Make trails accessible to persons with disabilities.
- Parking, pedestrian and bicycle use along Spier Falls Road is dangerous because there is not enough shoulder space.
- Don't allow PWC's on the river.
- Litter along the river and Spier Falls Road is a problem.
- The Hudson River area is a hawk watch area.
- Karner Blue Butterflies may exist within the Park.
- The river is used by ice-fishermen in the winter.