

Sampson State Park

Seneca County

Town of Romulus • New York

Master Plan Final Environmental Impact Statement

March 3, 2021

**SEQR
NOTICE OF COMPLETION OF A FINAL EIS**

Date of Notice: March 3, 2021

Lead Agency: New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP)

Title of Action: **Adoption and Implementation of a Master Plan for Sampson State Park**

SEQR Status: Type I

Location of Action: Sampson State Park is located in the Town of Romulus in Seneca County, NY

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 Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) on the proposed action has been prepared and accepted by OPRHP. The Executive Summary of the Master Plan and FEIS describes the proposed action, the environmental setting, alternatives, potential environmental impacts and mitigation and the agency's responses to comments on the Revised Draft Plan/DEIS.

Agencies and the public are afforded the opportunity to consider the FEIS. This consideration period ends on March 14, 2021. Copies of the Final Plan and FEIS are available for review at the Sampson State Park Office and at the offices of the agency contacts.

The online version of the Final Master Plan and FEIS is available at the following publicly accessible web site: <https://parks.ny.gov/inside-our-agency/master-plans.aspx>.

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For Sampson State Park Master Plan

March 3, 2021

Town of Romulus • Seneca County

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Abbreviations Used

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
BMP	Best Management Practice
DEC	New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
ESD	New York State Empire State Development
DEIS	Draft Environmental Impact Statement
FEIS	Final Environmental Impact Statement
FSB	Field Services Bureau – OPRHP
LWCF	Land and Water Conservation Fund
ISCP	Invasive Species Control Program
MGM2	Money Generation Model 2- National Park Service
NYNHP	New York Natural Heritage Program
NPS	National Park Service
NWI	National Wetlands Inventory
NYSEG	New York State Electric and Gas
NYS	New York State
OPRHP	New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
PERI	Political Economy Research Institute
PTNY	Parks & Trails New York
RIN	Relative Index of Needs
RV	Recreational Vehicle
SEQR	State Environmental Quality Review Act
SGCN	Species of Greatest Conservation Need
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
SPDES	State Pollution Discharge Elimination System
SWPPP	Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
Sampson	Sampson State Park
UD	Universal Design

Executive Summary

Planning and Environmental Review

The environmental review of proposed master plans for state park facilities is conducted in accordance with the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR). Under SEQR, agencies consider environmental impacts along with social and economic factors early in the decision-making and planning/project design process. Land use or resource management plans are considered Type I actions under SEQR; that is, they are likely to have a significant impact on the environment and therefore require preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) fully integrates the planning and environmental review processes.

Guiding Principles and Policies

Overarching OPRHP program principles, policies, and goals and objectives provide a foundation for planning, development, operation and management decisions made during the master plan process. The following sections summarize current directives considered throughout the planning process for Sampson State Park.

The OPRHP planning process adheres to three basic principles:

- Planning must be coordinated and provide for public participation: cooperation among appropriate government organizations, the public at large, special interest groups and the private sector is not only desirable but necessary.
- Planning is a continuous 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 additional pertinent 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.

OPRHP has developed a number of agency-wide policies to address management issues commonly faced by the park system. Policies cover topics such as the management of trees and other vegetation, pesticide use, wildfire and controlled burns, oil, gas and mineral rights, wildlife management, and native plants. Please visit our website to view our Agency policies (<https://parks.ny.gov/inside-our-agency/public-documents.aspx>).

The park has received funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), administered by the National Park Service. Acceptance of this federal funding includes a requirement that these facilities remain in public outdoor recreational use in perpetuity. Any proposals for uses other than public outdoor recreation require prior approval of the National Park Service to lift the use restriction through a process known as “conversion.” Please visit the following website for more information: <https://www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/lwcf/manual/lwcf.pdf>

Location and Access

Sampson is located on the eastern shore of Seneca Lake on NY 96A. The park lies in the Town of Romulus, Seneca County. The park is easily accessed from the NYS Thruway from major cities such as Buffalo, Rochester, and Syracuse. Other cities such as Auburn, Geneva, and Ithaca are within a reasonable driving distance of the park (see Figure 1).

Economic Contribution

The OPRHP Finger Lakes region (Sampson is one of 32 facilities) annually contributes an estimated \$141 million and creates 1,776 jobs. According to the Finger Lakes Tourism Alliance’s data from 2017, tourism in the region’s 14 counties generates over \$3 billion in business and employs 58,242 people. State parks create jobs throughout New York and increase state Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as a result of spending by park visitors and by the state government on park operations and capital improvements.

Attendance at Sampson has generally increased over the past few years. Figures show that between April 1, 2017, and March 31, 2018 (FY 2017-18) the park received 162,503 visitors, while between April 1, 2018 and March 31, 2019 (FY 2018-19) 176,591 visitors came to the park. With upgrades and planned development at the facility, it is anticipated that attendance will continue to increase.

Recreation Needs Assessment

The master plan identifies the counties of Cayuga, Ontario, Schuyler, Seneca, and Tompkins, Wayne, and Yates as the service area of the park. In this service area recreational need or demand that equals or exceeds the State average are swimming, camping, walking or jogging, court games (e.g. basketball, tennis, pickleball), and local winter sports (e.g. ice skating, cross-country skiing, sledding).

Park Boundaries

The boundaries of the park are shown in Figure 2, Park Boundary and Topography Map.

Adjacent Land Uses

Surrounding land uses are predominated by agriculture, vacant, and rural residential classifications (see Figure 3, Adjacent Land Use).

Legal Considerations

There is an existing easement granted to the New York State Electric & Gas Corporation (NYSEG) for distribution lines, a sub-station, and electric service to the park manager's residence in the park. There are no known inholdings in the park.

In 2018, OPRHP entered a long-term contract (40-year lease) with a concessionaire to redevelop the marina, waterfront, and adjacent upland areas with additional camping, recreation activities and services (see Figure 12, Marina, RV and Cabin Camping Layout).

Physical Resources

Geology and Topography

The topography of the area is typical of the Finger Lakes region with gently rolling inter-lake hills and steeper gorges running perpendicular to the lake. The park has five small ravines, which were carved by streams flowing east to west from the uplands east of Seneca Lake (see Figure 4, Surficial Geology).

The Finger Lakes region was significantly altered by the last glacial episode that included impacts from the retreat of the Wisconsin ice sheet. River valleys were formed and later became what are now the Finger Lakes.

Bedrock in the vicinity of the park consists entirely of the Ludlowville formation, consisting of shale with some limestone.

Water, Watersheds, and Wetlands

The park is in the Oswego River/Finger Lakes Watershed, as well as in the in the Seneca Lake Watershed. Water resources in the park include Seneca Lake, several streams, and wetlands. The park is located along the east shore of Seneca Lake. The waters of Seneca Lake are a source of drinking water and suitable for trout spawning. Several small wetland complexes are in the park and, although not mapped as New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) regulated wetlands, they are mapped as federally regulated wetlands under the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) program (see Figure 5, Water Resources Map).

Soils

The soil in Sampson is predominantly made up of loam derived from shale, limestone, sandstone, and siltstone as parent material. The depth to the water table ranges from 6 to 24 inches and depth to bedrock is generally over 80 inches. Descriptions of soils and their limitations for certain kinds of development are detailed in Appendix C (see Figure 6, Soils Map).

Natural Resources

Sampson is one of the Finger Lakes region's largest state parks, providing significant acreage of natural cover dominated by fields, shrubland, and woodlands. The New York Natural Heritage Program (NYNHP) documented 14 distinct ecological community types within the park, which are typical of the Finger Lakes region (Lundgren, 2014-A) (see Figure 7, Ecological Communities Map). For lists of flora and fauna documented in the park, see Appendix D.

Of particular note are the locally significant maple-basswood rich mesic forest in the ravines, which harbor mature trees and a diverse flora, and the lake's three-mile long natural cobble shoreline along the lake. Four rare species have been documented in the park to date (NYNHP, 2020).

The mix of community types present in the park provide habitat for a variety of fauna that is typical in the Finger Lakes. Game species such as white-tailed deer, wild turkey, and American woodcock are present, as well as other small mammals, migratory birds, reptiles, and amphibians, which use the variety of habitats at the park.

Scenic Resources

Seneca Lake is the premier scenic resource of the park. Visitors take in views of the lake and its surrounding rural landscape while enjoying activities like swimming, picnicking, or camping at the park. The forested ravines in the park, which are characteristic of the region, are also very scenic.

Cultural Resources

For more than 10,000 years, Native Americans settled in the Finger Lakes region, with the Iroquois the last of a series of Indian cultures to have lived here. Within the boundaries of Sampson is the site of a Seneca village dating from the early 1700s. The village, Kendaia, was a well-settled town with a cemetery, described in Revolutionary War period documents as situated in a cleared area with 15 to 20 or more well-built houses, surrounded by large cornfields and mature apple and peach orchards. The site of the former village represents an important cultural resource within the park. A historic sign along Route 96B marks the location.

European settlers moved into this area between 1790 to 1850. The settlers depended on farming and logging-related industries for their livelihood, and the landscape was gradually transformed from forests to cultivated fields and pastures. The area experienced a period of decline in the late 1800's, after deforestation and depleted soils encouraged settlers to relocate to western states with more attractive undeveloped lands. By the early 1900's more than half of the farms in the area had been abandoned; remaining families struggled to survive. Federal agencies began buying up farms, allowing families to relocate to more productive lands.

The park's built features were surveyed and assessed for eligibility for listing on the State and National Register of Historic Places (S/NRHP) in 2020. Eligibility for S/NRHP requires that a resource be fifty years old or older; therefore, many structures at Sampson park have now reached an age where further analysis is required.

Park Background

Sampson State Park was established in 1960 on land purchased from the United States Air Force. Located in southeastern Seneca County in the Town of Romulus in New York's Finger Lakes region. The park presently has over 2,000 acres of land adjacent to Seneca Lake. Before transitioning into a state park, the site was used variously as a U.S. Naval training center, a college for returning veterans, and a U.S. Air Force base. Between 1942-1946, during World War II, the site served as an active naval training facility. From 1946 to 1949, the land was designated for use by Sampson State College, and from 1950 to 1956, it functioned as a U.S. Air Force base.

After purchase by New York State, in the process of transforming the facility from a military base to a public recreational facility, many of the existing structures were removed, and some were retained for park use. Some existing roads have been reconditioned or removed.

In the 1980s, a group of WWII and Korean War veterans approached OPRHP to rehabilitate the former Navy brig into a military memorial museum for the veterans that were stationed there. Air Force veterans joined in the effort and sited an Air Force museum on the opposite side of the same building.

Recreational Resources/Activities

Sampson offers a range of distinct recreational resources. Visitors may enjoy camping, swimming, boating, fishing, hunting, picnicking, court games, and wildlife viewing. The Lake Shore Trail and park roads accommodate walking and bicycling (see Figure 8, Recreation Resources) and are open year-round to accommodate snowshoeing and cross-country skiing in winter.

The park offers three interpretive routes along existing roads with audio content that can be accessed by mobile phone. Natural, historical, and regional information is provided, and stops are identified on maps and along the route with trail symbols.

Operations and Maintenance

Sampson is open year-round. Certain areas may be inaccessible in winter since snow plowing occurs only on core access roads. The campground is open for camping seasonally, from the beginning of May through the beginning of November. The marina and boat launch are open from April 1st through the 4th Monday in October, and seasonal and transient boat slip rentals are available.

The water supply for Sampson comes from Seneca County Water District No. 1. The district purchases water from the Village of Waterloo via the Seneca Lake Water District. Seneca County Water and Sewer District No. 1 provides wastewater and sewer service for the park. The campground bathhouses, park office, and military museum use the municipal system. The park's maintenance shop and regional maintenance/ navigational aids facilities have septic tanks and leach fields.

Park and regional maintenance crews maintain the park's buildings and infrastructure. Contractors are called in for routine maintenance projects when specialized equipment or skills are required.

A concessionaire is under contract for operation and maintenance of a certain portion of the park, including the marina and some camping facilities (see Figure 9, Concessionaire Contract Area).

The park has a written Emergency Action Plan which provides details about park staff roles and responsibilities, evacuations, and responses to emergencies. Park Police and other local law enforcement agencies respond to emergencies. Ambulance and fire service are provided by neighboring towns' responders for medical or fire emergencies.

Development of Alternatives

This chapter contains an analysis of the alternatives that were considered under three subject areas: natural and cultural resource protection, recreational resource development, and facilities operations. The alternatives and preferred alternative for each plan element are described in narrative form. A complete description and analysis of the plan that results from the preferred alternatives is the final outcome of the master plan.

Natural Resource Protection Strategies

Invasive Species Management Plan (ISMP) – Will expand on the current invasive species management protocols using new techniques and strategies.

Stewardship Plan (SP) – Will identify science-based natural resources projects that promote healthy forests and habitats for a variety of native flora and fauna. Protection of the known rare species in the park will be part of the stewardship plan. Upon completion, a Stewardship Plan will become an addendum to the Master Plan.

Recreational Resource Development

Waterfront and Marina

Marina upgrades were completed in 2019. Installation of new cabins and RV campsites was initiated in 2019 and were completed for the 2020 season. Also in 2020, the concessionaire opened a ship's store at the south end of the marina, and design is under way for a food concession and waterfront green space at the marina's north end. The concessionaire will continue to operate the marina and other planned improvements for the duration of the contract period.

The park will install accessible pathways and parking. Modification of the fishing pier will include resurfacing and new railings.

Recreational Facilities

Campsites, Cabins and Cottages

Ten contemporary cottages are available for rental north of the marina along the lakeshore, near campground loop 5. These cottages have running water, electric, kitchen and bathroom facilities, and a source of heat suitable for three-season rental.

Campsites in the park's existing campground will be improved with upgraded electric, WiFi, and water service, as well as site modifications to improve access and drainage and universally accessible amenities at several sites and the bathhouses. Campground loop roads will be paved.

For the 2020 season, 20 modern log cabins with waterfront views were available. The furnished cabins sleep six and are equipped with kitchenettes (refrigerator/freezer, sink, range, and microwave), a full bathroom, covered outdoor decks, firepits, electricity, heat, and air conditioning.

Additional campsites and new cabins will be developed at the park. RV campsites will have gravel parking pads and electrical, water, and sanitary hookups. Cabins will have parking and access drives as well as electrical, water and sanitary services.

Park Office/Recreation Wing

The recreation wing of the park office will be improved, and new indoor recreation opportunities will be provided. The space will also double as an indoor venue to host regional tourism events.

Athletic Courts

The existing tennis and basketball courts will be improved. Pickleball and bocce courts will be added.

Trails

The 2015 Draft Master Plan/EIS laid out a direction for the trails system within the park; however, since then OPRHP has leased a central portion of the park to a concessionaire with some existing and some future planned improvements. The planning team recognizes the need to develop a comprehensive trail system in the park but to allow time for the concessionaire's planned improvements to be implemented has not included a specific plan for a park-wide trails system in this document, Trails will be an integrated part of the park's overall vehicle/pedestrian circulation plan to be developed in the future.

The waterfront Lake Shore Trail will be improved by constructing a new composting bathroom facility.

Hunting and Fishing

Hunting and fishing activities at Sampson will be maintained and improved by accessibility improvements at the park. These programs will continue to be consistent with the NYS DEC statewide and regional rules and regulations. A park permit is also required for both.

Operations, Infrastructure, and Facilities

Internet Connectivity

The network will be upgraded in the park. The new network will support park operations, and a public wireless network will be available in select areas of the park.

Comfort Stations

Comfort stations at the park will be upgraded to include modern energy- and water-efficient fixtures. Work will include making all comfort stations and bathhouses in the park compliant with universal design and ADA guidelines.

Dump Station

The existing dump station will be replaced with a new four-bay dump station (for location and site plan see Figures 10 and 10a, New Four-Bay Dump Station).

Park Office

The park office shares space with indoor recreational activities. The building will receive interior and exterior updates. Energy- and water-efficient fixtures will replace old, inefficient ones, windows will be replaced, and additional insulation will be installed. The park office area will offer a small seating area and updated customer service counter. Universal design and ADA guidelines will be followed to improve accessibility in the building.

Park Water System

The aging water system in the park will be replaced. New water distribution lines, filters, and service pumps will replace the old system.

Park Roads

Roadways in the park and the park's circulation system need assessment and upgrading. A comprehensive circulation and roadway plan will be developed which will integrate the concessionaire development into the park's circulation system. Repaving of existing campground loops was underway 2019-2020.

Structures in the Park

A number of unused structures in the park that are in disrepair will be removed, as resources permit. Removal of the water tower and accessory building are priorities.

Firing Range

The firing range in the park will be maintained for police training only. A gate along the park road, signage and fencing may be installed to further enhance public safety.

Park Policies

OPRHP policies and guidance documents will be adhered to when designing and implementing any planned development.

Selection of the Preferred Alternative

Identification of the Preferred Alternative

The two alternatives considered are the Status Quo and the Master Plan. The preferred alternative is the master plan alternative as described in Chapter 3 of this document.

Rationale for Selection

The park is not meeting the expectations and needs of the population within its service area. The Agency developed a new vision and goals for the park to guide this planning effort. The preferred alternative is the master plan alternative described in this document.



Implementation Priorities

Action Item Sequencing & Priorities

Implementation Priorities	Description/Development Component
Natural and Cultural Resource Actions	
1st Priority:	Develop a Natural Resources Stewardship Plan that includes wildlife habitat management strategies that follow recommendations of OPRHP and DEC staff and partner organization wildlife biologists and invasive species management strategies.
	Identify and document cultural/historic resources at the park and provide for protection, stewardship, and preservation of both designed structures and landscape.
	Develop a document library/annotated bibliography on original documents on resources related to historical elements at the park.
	Develop an updated interpretation program that tells the story of the site's native inhabitants.
	Identify gaps and/or missing information on key periods in the site's military history and develop relevant programming/materials.
Ongoing:	Continue current firewood procedures & enforcement of regulations.
	Implement natural resource management strategies for invasive species and wildlife.
Recreational Development Actions	
1st Priority:	Develop a comprehensive vehicular/pedestrian/trails circulation plan for a redesigned park roadway, pedestrian pathway and trails system which will connect and integrate existing and new facilities.
	Construct a new accessible picnic area.
	Install outdoor bocce ball courts.
	Improve tennis and basketball courts .
	Provide pickleball courts.
	Improve and expand opportunities within the existing recreation building.
	Construct a new pavilion.
Underway	Improve existing campground loops, implementing Phase 2: site work and pad improvements; new paving, connector paths; reconfigure water; replace electric pedestals and upgrade to 50-amp service.

Implementation Priorities	Description/Development Component
Capital Infrastructure Actions	
1st Priority:	Replace core water system infrastructure in the park.
	Provide a new substation.
	Construct a food concession facility (concessionaire).
	Modernize comfort stations at camping loops and improve accessibility.
	Provide seasonal camping facilities with new waterfront amenities (concessionaire).
2nd Priority:	Add solar energy infrastructure to the park.
	Guarded Swim Amenity – improve accessibility.
	Remove the water tower and accessory building.
	Upgrade the existing fishing pier – resurface pavement and replace railings.
Underway	Remove existing dump station; construct new four-bay dump station
Operations Actions	
1st Priority:	Maintain the firing range for Park Police use; a gate, signage and fencing may be installed.
2nd Priority:	Explore and incorporate new green infrastructure and sustainable practices at the facility.
Underway	Provide Internet and Wi-Fi coverage in the park.



Ship's Store, Sampson SP Marina

Environmental Impacts and Mitigation

The master plan for Sampson seeks to provide improvements to existing natural resource protection strategies and recreation development while providing additional protection for sensitive natural resources within the park. Planning for new and expanded recreational facilities in the park reflects this and the proposed locations of new or expanded facilities avoid sensitive resources to the extent practicable (see Figures 14-14a, Resource Protection Areas).

Consistent with the intent of the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR), environmental considerations were among the criteria used in evaluating alternatives and in selection of elements within the Master Plan. Categories of impacts that were evaluated were: land resources; water resources; air quality; biological resources/ecology; historic and archeological resources; scenic resources; open space and recreation; transportation, access and traffic; public health and safety; energy, noise and odor; and growth inducement.

With the new 40-year concessionaire lease area, through the planning and analysis process, modifications were made to proposed new facility locations and design parameters for future development to avoid, minimize and mitigate potential adverse environmental impacts. Some of these modifications were: reducing the overall footprint for improvements; using existing infrastructure (i.e. roads) to the extent practicable; maintaining vegetated buffer areas along the ravines/streams; and maintaining a vegetated buffer along the lake shoreline.

Implementation of the master plan will result in some physical changes to the land where new recreation facilities will be constructed or where existing facilities will receive rehabilitation. Most of the project proposals are centered within the core area of the park that is already developed with other facilities. Most of the park will remain in its current condition. The majority of the planned improvements are located in open mowed areas, along park roads, and in successional shrubland habitat. There will be an increase in impervious surfaces, such as for asphalt parking areas, new road connections, RV pads (may be gravel), any paved pathways, and buildings (roofs). Impervious surfaces will be minimized to the extent practicable. Mitigation such as porous paving and rain gardens will be considered to reduce potential impacts from stormwater runoff. Erosion control and storm water management techniques will be incorporated into site specific designs for all construction projects that will disturb soils.

The master plan implementation is expected to have minimal impact to water resources. Green design will be used, where feasible considering site conditions, cost, and operations, for any new construction to minimize the effects of stormwater runoff. All construction activities will incorporate mitigation in the form of appropriate sediment and erosion control Best Management Practices (BMPs) to minimize impacts to water quality from runoff. Vegetated buffers between any new construction and water resources, including the streams in the ravines and the lake shoreline, will be retained to protect these sensitive areas and maintain water quality. Additional buffer areas will be planted with native plants as needed. There are no expected impacts to wetlands within the park.

Master Plan implementation will result in impacts to some natural communities in the park. Most planned improvements are located in the developed areas of the park to reduce the need and impacts of removing vegetation. The main exception is for proposed camping facilities in the southern portion of the concessionaire lease area. The proposed development area is mostly successional shrubland with remnant paved roads and is bounded by successional southern hardwood forest and ravines. To help protect sensitive ravine areas, some of the existing park roads will be used as boundaries to help maintain and enhance a wider vegetative buffer, educational signage will be installed, and priorities will be identified for invasive species management to abate key threats to native flora and fauna. A forested buffer area along the lake shoreline will be maintained to help protect the shoreline habitat. Positive impacts on the natural communities and flora and fauna of the park are expected through targeted control and prevention of non-native invasive species and through measures implemented as part of the stewardship and invasive species management plans.

Any project or activity proposed in the Master Plan that may impact historic resources or landscapes at the park will undergo Section 14.09 review by OPRHP's Division for Historic Preservation (DHP), in accordance with the State Historic Preservation Act. Any routine operation or maintenance that requires ground disturbance also requires review by DHP.

There may be minor adverse impacts on scenic resources in the park due to some development being visible from the lake. All new development along or visible from the lakeshore will be designed to complement the surroundings and not be visually intrusive. The proposed RV camping and cabins are consistent with existing recreational uses at the park and are not in sharp contrast to the land use patterns in the park. Additional landscaping in the form of tree and other vegetation plantings will enhance the park-like atmosphere in the new camping areas and will help screen the proposed solar arrangement.

Implementation of the Master Plan will result in substantial beneficial recreation opportunities and continued open space protection through improved and expanded recreation facilities and amenities and stewardship and invasive species management plans.

The road system will be further assessed, and a comprehensive vehicle/pedestrian/trails circulation plan will be developed to improve access to and within existing program areas of the park as well as to new facilities. Campers will generally be limited to two vehicles per site and will be strongly encouraged to walk or bicycle to the guarded swim amenity and day use areas to reduce vehicle use within the park.

Public health and safety are an important element in park operations. New or substantially rehabilitated facilities will be designed and constructed to meet all applicable health and safety codes including compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Design and rehabilitation of infrastructure systems such as electric, water, and sewer where needed will ensure public health protection.

As part of the Agency's responsibility under SEQR, all proposed master plan implementation projects will be reviewed for consistency with the Master Plan/EIS. Projects not adequately covered within the Master Plan/EIS may need additional environmental review.



Chapter 1 – Environmental Setting

Location and Access

Sampson is located on the eastern shore of Seneca Lake, on NY 96A, approximately seven miles northwest of Ovid in the Town of Romulus, Seneca County.

The park is accessible by motor vehicle using the main entrance located on NY 96A. There are no public bus routes from nearby metro areas that access the park. Pedestrians and bicyclists may enter the park using the main entrance located on NY 96A or any of several other gated access points where interior park roads meet local residential roads. There are no public foot or snowmobile trails that connect to Sampson.

The park is easily accessed from the NYS Thruway from the major cities of Buffalo, Rochester, and Syracuse. The cities of Auburn, Geneva, and Ithaca are within a reasonable driving distance of the park (see Location Map, Figure 1). For more information about getting to the park, visit the following Web page:

<https://parks.ny.gov/parks/154/getting-there.aspx>.

Park Boundaries

Sampson lies on the eastern shore of Seneca Lake. To the east, the boundary of this 2000+ acre park follows NY96A in the Town of Romulus. The Sampson Veterans Memorial Cemetery bounds the park to the south, and Lakeshore Landing, a residential community, bounds the park to the north (Figure 2, Park Boundary and Topography).

Adjacent Land Uses

Agriculture is a major use of lands surrounding Sampson, followed by rural residential. The Memorial Cemetery borders the park to the south, but road and trail connections exist between the park and the residential areas to the north and south (see Figure 3, Adjacent Land Use Map).

Economic Contribution

Background

State parks have been found to create significant economic impacts in the host region. To quantify the effects of New York's state parks, a 2017 study was prepared for Parks & Trails New York (PTNY) by the Political Economy Research Institute (PERI), University of Massachusetts-Amherst. The report, titled, *Economic Benefits of the New York State Park System*, found that between April 2015 through March 2016, state and visitor spending was about \$4 billion, and that the state parks system supported nearly 54,000 jobs. When possible, OPRHP supplements the PERI report with an internal analysis on a park-specific level using attendance figures from the park and spending profiles from the most recent visitor survey in the National Park Service's (NPS) Money Generation Model 2 (MGM2) to generate economic impacts. Although the NPS is no longer using this model, industry data from 2013 was provided to OPRHP by New York State Empire State Development (ESD) to allow continued valid use of the MGM2.

Current Contribution

Attendance figures show that Sampson received 172,968 visitors between April 1, 2019 and March 31, 2020 (FY 2019-2020). This number includes 134,002 campers, 20,992 vehicle (day) users, and 3523 other users. A survey conducted in August-September 2014 of past and present campers at Sampson indicated that 17% were local, meaning they live less than 30 miles from the park. This same survey was used to collect spending information from campers. Because only campers were surveyed, the default spending information was used for the other user groups. The survey found that, as expected, patrons traveled to other destinations during their stay at Sampson.

Wine trails were the most popular destinations among patrons visiting tourist destinations in the Finger Lakes, where an average of \$134 per party was spent. The Waterloo Outlet Mall attracted 23% of those patrons who visited other destinations; on average, patrons spent \$213 on their trips to the mall. Not surprisingly, parties spent the most on clothing when making purchases in the local community. The average was \$221 per party. The total sum of this spending in all eleven categories by non-locals in the community comes to just under \$4.2 million in economic output and 59 jobs. The full results and the Camper Survey can be found in Appendix A.

Recreational Needs Assessment

Definition of Facility Service Area – The master plan identifies Cayuga, Ontario, Schuyler, Seneca, Tompkins, Wayne, and Yates counties as the service area of the park. It is common practice in recreation planning to identify a service area from which the facility draws approximately 75% of its users (Haas, Wells, & Welch, 2007). Sampson is also a popular regional park that serves the public from neighboring counties, including the cities of Buffalo, Rochester, and Syracuse.

Determining the Relative Index of Needs – The Relative Index of Needs (RIN) is a method for comparing the demand for a particular recreational activity in the service area with the statewide demand for that activity. The RIN is expressed on a numerical scale; 10 being the highest relative level of need and one the least. Five is considered the statewide average in the current year. The most recent data is available in the *2020 NY Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Plan* (SCORP) (NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, 2020)

The RIN for each New York State county was determined using a statewide survey. The values for the seven counties in the service area are presented in Table 1, below. The index of need over the entire service area was calculated using a weighted average of the seven counties, based on population. The resulting figure expresses demand for a particular activity within the service area.

Table 1 - Relative Index of Recreational Needs

Activity	Cayuga	Ontario	Schuyler	Seneca	Tompkins	Wayne	Yates	Weighted Average
Day Use	5	5	4	4	3	6	4	4.6
Swimming	5	5	5	5	5	5	6	5.1
Biking	5	4	4	4	4	5	4	4.4
Golfing	6	5	5	5	5	6	5	5.4
Walking/Jogging	4	5	4	4	3	8	6	5.0
Tennis	8	10	6	6	9	8	10	8.6
Court Games	8	10	6	6	9	8	10	8.6
Field Games	5	5		4	4	6	6	4.9
Camping	6	5	6	6	5	6	6	5.5
Boating	5	4	5	5	4	5	4	4.5
Fishing	6	5	6	5	5	6	6	5.5
Local Winter	10	8	5	4	6	6	7	6.9
X-Country Skiing	6	5	6	6	6	6	6	5.8
Downhill Skiing	6	5	6	6	6	6	6	5.8
Snowmobiling	6	5	5	5	5	6	5	5.3

Source: 2020-2025 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (OPRHP 2019)

Legal Considerations

Concessions

In 2018, OPRHP entered into a long-term contract (40-year lease) with a concessionaire to redevelop the marina, waterfront, and adjacent upland areas with additional camping, recreation activities, and services. The contract area encompasses approximately 150 acres of the park, including and surrounding the marina (see Figure 9, Concession Contract Area). The contract included marina rehabilitation, which was completed in 2019. New cabins and RV campsites, as well as a ship's store at the marina, were completed for the 2020 season. Future marina and waterfront amenities to be constructed include waterfront green space, more parking, and a new concession building. The concessionaire may develop additional camping and recreational facilities upland within the leased area, depending on market demand.

The park's existing campgrounds are outside of the concessionaire contract area and will remain in operation by OPRHP (see Figure 9, Concessionaire Contract Area). The long-term contract with the concessionaire also includes the Seneca Lake State Park marina and adjacent area.

Programs and Partnerships

The Friends of Sampson State Park group (<https://www.facebook.com/FriendsofSampsonStatePark>), founded in 1997, have assisted with providing funding and other resources for several much-appreciated projects in the park, including the marina and the museum. Prior to when the concessionaire's contract was in place, the Friends group formed a marina committee that was active in raising awareness of marina conditions and possibility of closure if repairs and refurbishment were not undertaken.

The Military Museum at the park is managed in partnership with Navy and Air Force WWII veterans. OPRHP provides staffing, and the partners provide interpretive services, programming, and some maintenance. Partners include DOT, which helps with paving as part of an annual training program.

Student volunteers from OPRHP's FORCES program have completed various projects in the park, including mapping ash trees and assessing them for evidence of the emerald ash borer, and working on developing interpretative signs.

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

Sampson has received funding from the LWCF, administered by the National Park Service. Acceptance of this federal funding includes a requirement that these facilities remain in public outdoor recreational use in perpetuity. Any proposals for uses other than public outdoor recreation require the prior approval of the National Park Service to lift the use restriction through a process known as "conversion" (National Park Service, 2008).

Physical Resources

Geology

The Finger Lakes region was significantly altered by its last glacial episode. The Wisconsin ice sheet advanced through the region approximately 25,000 to 21,000 years ago and had a dramatic effect on shaping the landscape. River valleys were carved out and later became lakes after the glaciers retreated. Soils in the area were also affected, as till was deposited during the glacial retreat. Bedrock in the area consists entirely of the Ludlowville Formation, a shale with some limestone. The surficial geology (Figure 4) includes glacial deposits, or till, of material with a wide range of non-sorted to poorly-sorted sand or larger size particles suspended in a mud matrix), with variable texture, from boulders to silt.

Topography

The topography of the area is typical of the Finger Lakes region, with gently rolling hills between the lakes, and steeper gorges running perpendicular to the lakes (see Figure 2, Park Boundary and Topography). The gorges

are attributed to the glaciers that moved through the area and which, upon their retreat, eroded softer stone as they melted to create the spectacular deep gorges characteristic of the region. In some cases, glacial meltwater eroded gorges that stretch back miles from their point of origin near the lake. Dozens of these are scattered in and around Sampson, which has five smaller gorges—known locally as ravines—which were carved by streams flowing east to west from the uplands down to Seneca Lake.

Soils

Weathered stone is the parent material for the soils found throughout the area. The soils in the park are primarily silt loams derived from glacial till. Information on soil types found in the park and their characteristics and limitations is found in Appendix C (NRCS, 2015).

Water, Watersheds and Wetlands

Lakes and Ponds

Seneca Lake is the most prominent water feature of the park. At 38 miles long, it is the second longest of the Finger Lakes. It has a surface area of 42,800 acres and a maximum depth of 618 feet. The lake is known to support a healthy fishery. Lake trout is one of its most popular game species. The lake is classified as AA(TS) by the DEC indicating that its waters are suitable as a source of drinking water, for swimming, for fishing, and possibly for trout spawning. Sampson has approximately three miles of shoreline on the lake including a full-service marina, a boat launch, wooded areas, and a guarded swim amenity.

Streams

There are four streams located in Sampson. All four streams flow to Seneca Lake. Two originate from the watershed in the uplands to the east of the park, and two originate within the eastern uplands of the park. Three have a “C” classification from the DEC, indicating the water supports fisheries and is suitable for non-contact activities, and the most northern one has a C(TS) standard, which means that the stream is likely to support trout spawning. (<https://www.dec.ny.gov/permits/6042.html>)

Watersheds

The park is located in a portion of the Oswego River/Finger Lakes Watershed – one of the largest watersheds in NYS, which includes all of Seneca County and most of the Finger Lakes region. With 8,896 miles of rivers and streams and 76 significant freshwater lakes (including Seneca Lake), vernal pools and other wetland types, the watershed covers 5,070 square miles of land area within the State. The watershed also feeds the Oswego River and ultimately empties into Lake Ontario.

The park is in the Seneca Lake Watershed portion of the larger watershed. The Southern Tier Central Regional Planning & Development Board is developing a Seneca Lake Watershed Management Plan. The draft plan is available online at

http://www.stcplanning.org/usr/Program_Areas/Water_Resources/Seneca_Lake_Plan/DraftSenecaWMP/IV.pdf

Wetlands

There are no DEC-regulated wetlands in the park. The federal National Wetlands Inventory identifies several wetlands in the park (see Figure 5, Water Resources Map). There may be additional wetland areas in the park as suggested by NYNHP (Lundgren, 2014-A) and a 1994 biological survey (Phenix Environmental Inc., 1994).

Climate

The Finger Lakes region has a humid climate with a warm summer season and a long, cold winter season. The lakes store heat, which makes spring and fall temperatures milder. The frost-free season at Sampson is about 160 to 180 days. Precipitation averages 35 inches per year with periods of more rain during the summer.

Snowfall in the region averages 67 inches per year, with snow cover common from December through March (<http://www.nrcc.cornell.edu/>).

Visitors to the Finger Lakes region can experience four distinct seasons. Warm summers averaging between 75 to 85 degrees Fahrenheit make way for crisp, cool fall air and often breathtaking foliage. Winter snowfall typically begins in November and varies greatly throughout the region. Lake-effect snow is moderate in the Ithaca region, averaging 67.3” per year, and heavier in the Rochester and Syracuse areas, which average between 92.3” and 115.6”. Resorts around the Finger Lakes provide excellent winter recreation including skiing and snowboarding until the first hints of spring in the month of March (<http://www.fingerlakes.com/about/climate>).

Air Quality

The air quality at the park is typical for the central Finger Lakes. No monitoring station exists at the park or in Seneca County. High eight-hour ozone values were noted several times in 2018 nearby in Monroe, Wayne and Steuben counties (<https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/38377.html>). Air quality monitoring in DEC Region 8 noted no contravention of NYS/Federal Ambient Air Quality Standards in 2018 (https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/air_pdf/2018airqualreport.pdf).

Biological Resources

Information on the flora and fauna and the natural landscape of the area is documented in several reports. The New York Natural Heritage Program (NYNHP) has described and mapped the natural communities and any known rare species in the park to date (Lundgren, Ecological Communities of Sampson State Park, 2014-B), (NYNHP, Accessed 1/2020). Additional surveys for rare species are warranted, particularly for invertebrates and some more recently listed plant species. A survey of biological features in the park (Phenix Environmental Inc., 1994) provides lists of the flora and fauna and descriptions of the natural communities observed in the park. NYNHP staff also provided additional information and scientific expertise on rare species and natural ecosystems for the purposes of this plan (Lundgren, 2014-A).

An assessment of natural resources on the county level notes that only 18% of Seneca County is forested. The roughly 1200 acres of woodland in Sampson, along with the woodlands of Montezuma Wildlife Refuge and the Finger Lakes National Forest, are a significant part of that total. These forests provide clean air and water, absorb surface water runoff, and provide habitat for a woodland-dependent plant and animal life in the county (Seneca County Planning and Community Development Department, 2014).

Ecological Communities and Flora

The flora of the park is typical of Central New York and the Finger Lakes Region. The plant communities are representative of those found in the gorges and rolling uplands and the agricultural landscape between the lakes. Factors such as slope and soil characteristics have shaped the development of different plant communities within these areas. In addition, historical uses at Sampson have strongly influenced natural cover and other conditions found today. Until recently, most of the land was cleared, with the exception of the ravines and some wetlands, which harbor some of the more mature trees in the park. Numerous roads crisscross the landscape, and patches of conifer plantation—mostly of non-native species—were added here and there. Over time, the land has been allowed to revert to more natural cover, now on roughly three-quarters of the park.

Fourteen distinct ecological community types have been mapped within the 2,070-acre park (Figure 7, Ecological Communities) (Lundgren, 2014-B) based on NY Natural Heritage’s classification (Feldmann, Olivero, Novak, & Weldy, 2003). Approximately 18% of the land falls into the “cultural communities” category that includes development (paved roads, parking areas, and buildings) as well as vegetated areas that are regularly maintained and/or planted, such as mowed lawns and conifer plantations. The remainder of the park -- roughly 1,700 acres -- is a mix of community types characterized by native flora. These include established stands of maple-basswood rich mesic forest found in the ravine areas, Appalachian oak-hickory forest, and successional community types such as northern hardwoods, red cedar woodland, shrubland, and patches of old field. The intact cobble shoreline along the majority of the park’s lakefront, excepting the marina and guarded swim amenity, is of local ecological significance.

Old fields, shrubland and early successional woodland communities provide important habitat for a variety of resident and migratory bird species. The forests and woodlands in the park provide habitat for a variety of flora and fauna, including popular game species like white-tailed deer and wild turkey, as well as other species that park visitors enjoy seeing, such as rabbits, squirrels, a large array of bird species and others.

Invasive Plants

Nineteen species of non-native invasive plants have been documented in the park by NY Natural Heritage Program, OPRHP and other organizations (Table 1). Many of these are prevalent in more open sections of the park, such as the shoreline, shrublands, early successional woodlands, and roadsides. One of the most problematic invasive plants in the park is pale swallow-wort, which is hard to control, and prevalent along the shoreline and edges of some of the ravine forests. In addition to out-competing native plants, it can encroach upon trails and can be toxic to butterflies that mistake it for milkweed. These records and any more recent additions are available on the iMapInvasives website (www.imapinvasives.org).



Pale Swallow-wort (Cynanchum rossicum)

Table 1 – Invasive Flora Identified at Sampson State Park

Common Name	Scientific Name	Organization
Autumn Olive	<i>Elaeagnus umbellata</i>	NY Natural Heritage Program (NYNHP), OPRHP
Black Locust	<i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i>	NYNHP, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), OPRHP
Celadine, Greater Celadine	<i>Chelidonium majus</i>	NYNHP, TNC
Colt's Foot, Coltsfoot	<i>Tussilago farfara</i>	NYNHP, TNC, OPRHP
Common Buckthorn	<i>Rhamnus cathartica</i>	USDA, OPRHP, TNC, SUNY ESF
Common Reed, Common Reed Grass	<i>Phragmites australis</i> ssp <i>australis</i>	OPRHP
Creeping Jenny, Moneywort, Creeping Jennie	<i>Lysimachia nummularia</i>	USDA, SUNY ESF
Dame's Rocket	<i>Hesperis matronalis</i>	NYNHP, TNC, OPRHP
Eurasian Water-milfoil, European Water-milfoil, Spike Water-milfoil, Eurasian watermilfoil	<i>Myriophyllum spicatum</i>	NYNHP, USGS
Garlic Mustard	<i>Alliaria petiolata</i>	NYNHP, TNC, OPRHP
Gypsy-week, Common Speedwell, Speedwell	<i>Veronica officinalis</i>	NYNHP
Japanese Barberry	<i>Berberis thunbergii</i>	NYNHP
Morrow Honeysuckle, Morrows Honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera morrowii</i>	NYNHP, TNC
Multiflora Rose	<i>Rosa multiflora</i>	NYNHP, TNC, OPRHP, USDA, SUNY ESF
Pale Swallow-wort, Dog-strangling Vine, European Swallow-wort	<i>Cynanchum rossicum</i>	OPRHP
Periwinkle, Common Periwinkle	<i>Vinca minor</i>	NYNHP, TNC, OPRHP
St. John's wort, Common St. John's wort	<i>Hypericum perforatum</i>	USDA Forest Service, USDA, SUNY ESF
Tatarian Honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera tatarica</i>	NYNHP, TNC, OPRHP
White Clover	<i>Trifolium repens</i>	USDA, SUNY ESF
Oriental Bittersweet	<i>Celastrus orbiculata</i>	NYDOT, OPRHP
Emerald Ash Borer	<i>Agrilus planipennis</i>	OPRHP
Tree of Heaven	<i>Ailanthus altissima</i>	OPRHP
Reed Canary Grass	<i>Phalaris arundinacea</i>	NYNHP
Hemlock Woolly Adelgid	<i>Adelges tsugae</i>	NYDEC
Wild Parsnip	<i>Heracleum maximum</i>	OPRHP

Source: (iMapInvasives.org). Data retrieved May 2020

Fauna

Sampson and Seneca Lake provide habitat for a variety of fauna, including many species of resident and migratory mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish, and invertebrates. Fauna at Sampson is consistent with fauna commonly found in the Finger Lakes region (see Appendix Y for a partial list).

Many freshwater fishes, migratory and resident waterfowl, and other shorebird species can be found in Seneca Lake along the park's shoreline. The shores of Seneca Lake are excellent for viewing spring and fall migration. Common observations include black duck, redhead, common merganser, Canada goose, and scaup. The Lake is also a Winter Waterfowl Concentration Area where thousands of birds congregate.¹

Seneca Lake supports a variety of sportfish, including lake trout, smallmouth bass, and yellow perch as the mainstays. Other species include rainbow trout, brown trout, landlocked Atlantic salmon, northern pike and largemouth bass. Reptiles and amphibians present in the park include such species as the wood frog and eastern red-backed salamanders found in the woodland and wetland areas, and the common eastern garter snake found in field and edge areas.

Mammals commonly found in the woodlands and fields of the park include white-tailed deer, squirrels, chipmunks, raccoons, skunks, porcupines, white-footed mouse and eastern cottontail rabbit (Phenix Environmental Inc., 1994). Numerous species of birds can be found in the reverting fields and woodland areas of the park. Bird species typical of the woodlands in the park include ruffed grouse, woodpeckers, owls, and a variety of songbirds including common woodland species such as the veery, ovenbird, and red-eyed vireo. Bird species readily observed in the park's fields and scrublands include yellow warblers, cedar waxwings, catbirds, field sparrows, and least flycatchers. These are only a few of the many birds suspected or known to breed in the vicinity of the park (NYS DEC, 2015).

Invasive Fauna

Terrestrial – Sampson is monitored for the presence of Emerald Ash Borer (*Agilus planipennis*), recorded in the park by NYDEC as early as 2017. Asian Longhorn Beetle (*Anoplophora glabripennis*) and Hemlock Woolly Adelgid, (*Adelges tsugae*), two common destructive invasive insects, have not been officially detected in the park, but Hemlock Woolly Adelgid is likely present due to proximity of known infested trees.

Aquatic – Zebra Mussels (*Dreissena polymorpha*) have been found on the shoreline north of the guarded swim amenity area. Bloody-red Shrimp (*Hemimysis anomala*) have been found in the marina.

Rare, Threatened and Endangered Plants and Animals

Four rare species (three plants and one animal), have been documented in the park to date (NYNHP, 2020). Two rare plant species were discovered in the park as recently as 2014. Active stewardship is occurring to protect vulnerable populations. More surveys are needed. Comprehensive surveys for all rare animal taxa, such as many invertebrates or recently listed bat species, have not been done. Documenting which animal species in the park are in the State Wildlife Action Plan or other conservation initiatives can help to inform the development of a stewardship or natural resource management plan.

Cultural Resources

Background

For hundreds of years the tribes of the Iroquois Confederacy occupied what is now New York State, and two of the six Iroquois Nations lived in the vicinity of Sampson.² The lakes around which much Indian life took place now bear their names: Cayuga and Seneca. The village of Kendaia was one of these settlements, and in addition to the former village site, there is a historic cemetery in the park, now commonly known as the Pioneer Cemetery.



Historic cemetery at James Baird

Influx of European Settlers

Following the Revolutionary War, between 1790 to 1850, people from western Massachusetts, eastern New York, and Pennsylvania settled in this area. These communities depended on farming and logging-related industries for their livelihoods. Associated land-clearing replaced the remaining forest with cultivated fields, pastures, domestic shrubs and herbs, and a mix of fruit trees, maples, and some pines as shelter trees.

Late 1800's to Early 1900's

During the second half of the 19th century, there was a general economic stagnation in the area. By the late 1800's, deforestation and depleted soils led settlers to relocate to western states with more productive, undeveloped lands. By the 1930's, more than half of the farms in the area had been abandoned, and remaining families struggled to survive. State and federal agencies began to buy up farms, enabling families to relocate to more productive lands. This began the formation of what became the military reservations and Federal lands such as the Hector Land Use Area, which is now the Finger Lakes National Forest (USDA Forest Service, 2015).

Historic Structures

Sampson's built features were comprehensively surveyed in October 2020 as part of an ongoing field survey of the state's overall park and historic site system. This process allows the OPRHP Division for Historic Preservation (DHP) to update its inventory of parks and historic sites, as well as to make determinations of eligibility for listing on the State and National Register of Historic Places (S/NRHP eligibility) for parks and sites that remain unevaluated. S/NRHP eligibility requires that a resource generally be fifty years old or older and, therefore, parks developed during the administration of Gov. Nelson A. Rockefeller (1959-1973) have reached an age where further analysis is required.

Although previously classified as not eligible for listing on the S/NRHP, Sampson's status has been changed to "undetermined," as additional analysis is undertaken. The park's S/NRHP eligibility will be clarified as a state-wide survey of the state park and historic system, initiated in 2019, continues. In addition to field survey work by the DHP, a historic context for the Rockefeller period is being developed, which will ultimately provide the information necessary to render S/NRHP determinations of eligibility for this era of park expansion.

Archaeological Resources

There are several archeologically sensitive areas mapped in Sampson (see Figures 14-14a, Resource Protection Areas). The Kendaia site is an important historic period archaeological site occupied from ca. 1700 to the late 1770s that may meet the criteria for inclusion in the State and National Registers. The potential impacts of any proposed projects should be evaluated by the OPRHP Field Services Bureau (FSB), and the site is monitored by parks personnel to ensure it is adequately protected from vandals, pothunters, and looters.

The Pioneer Cemetery meets the criteria for inclusion on the State and National Registers, and any potential impacts should be evaluated by the FSB. The cemetery should be monitored by parks personnel to ensure it is adequately preserved and protected from potential vandalism.

Because of its use as a Naval and Air Force base the park has importance to military history. A study conducted for the US Army in 2008 found no munitions or explosives of concern or munitions debris anywhere in the park area. (Alion Science and Technology, 2008)

Historic Resources

Revolutionary War, 1775 to 1783 – In NYS in 1779 a military campaign known as the Sullivan Campaign resulted in the large-scale attacks on the Cayuga and Seneca Indian Nations, destroying the principal villages and food supplies in their homelands. Before the war ended, the Iroquois' homes had been destroyed and their crops and orchards burned. Without the means to support themselves, the Indians became largely dependent upon the British for food, clothing, and equipment. Many neutral and U.S.-allied warriors then fought on the British side; however, no provisions were made for the Indians in the 1783 Peace treaty the British made with the U.S.³ The entire east side of Seneca Lake subsequently became U.S. bounty land, which was given to New York's soldiers to compensate them for their participation in the war.

Evidence of the early settlers in the region still exists in the park today by a preserved cemetery near one of the deep ravines.

Outbreak of WWII – The second largest Naval training facility in the country was established in Romulus, where an astounding 411,429 recruits were trained from 1942 to 1946. This facility was named in honor of William T. Sampson from Palmyra, NY. Sampson was renowned for his victory in the Battle of Santiago during the Spanish-American War.

Post-WWII

1946-1949 – A portion of the grounds was transformed into Sampson State College, educating returning servicemen.

Korean War – With the outbreak of the Korean War, the Navy transferred ownership of the remaining land to the Air Force for the purpose of establishing a basic training Military Base. The base operated from 1950 to 1956.

1960 – Ownership was again transferred, this time to the New York State Park System, which officially opened Sampson in 1963.

1995 – The former Navy brig was opened to the public as the Military Museum, to share the history and to honor those Navy and Air Force personell that booted on Sampson's ground. Many of the military buildings and roads have been removed or modified over the years, and aside from where lawns are kept mowed, vegetation has slowly reclaimed the once-cleared military land.

Scenic Resources

The primary scenic resource of the park are views of Seneca Lake. Although in some areas the park's woodlands block lake views, there are impressive views of the lake from the large fields at higher inland points in the park, and from several places along the shoreline.

Scenic resources in the park are also concentrated at the ravines, where interesting views are found with the forested slopes, small streams, and a variety of birds and wildflowers.

Recreation Resources/Activities

Sampson is primarily a park for long-term visitation. There are some amenities for day use, but the emphasis does not lie there. A map of the park's existing recreational resources can be found in Figure 8, Recreation Resources Map.

Camping

The primary recreation resource at the park is camping. The park has five (5) camping loops with 309 campsites, including 242 electric sites. Sites accommodate tents, pop-up trailers and recreational vehicles (RV's).

In the 2020 season, 20 new cabins and 67 RV sites with views of Seneca Lake were available for short-term rental or seasonal camping (15+ days). The RV sites include hookup to electric, water, and sewer. Five additional cabins are planned to be installed in 2021.

Marina

The park marina is very popular with both long-term residents and short-term visitors. The marina provides individual boat slips for seasonal rental, and a large multiple ramp launch site. In 2019, the facility received significant upgrades. The redeveloped marina re-opened the for 2019 season and can accommodate a range of vessel sizes. Facilities include:

- 90 seasonal and transient boat slips
- New docks, landscaping, and sidewalks
- Accessible bath facilities
- New gas dock
- Hookups for electricity, water, and pump-out stations
- Ship's store

Other Recreation Resources

Additional recreational amenities within the park include:

- ball fields
- tennis courts
- mini golf
- horseshoes
- basketball and volleyball courts
- fishing
- guarded swim amenity
- playground
- hunting
- recreation building offering various indoor games

Trails

In the southernmost region of the park, the Lake Shore Trail offers scenic lake views and is very popular with visitors. Approximately 1.5 miles long, the entire length of it is paved, and it is gated from vehicular traffic on both ends. The trail is open to walkers and bicyclists, and benches are provided for resting.

A network of existing roads remains from the park's time as a military facility. Patrons use these for cycling, walking and jogging. While some roads are in acceptable condition, many are degraded with broken surfaces and overgrown vegetation.

A handful of undesignated, natural-surface trails also exist in the park. These trails are most likely a result of patrons exploring the park, of hunting activity in the park, or of adjacent neighbors accessing parklands from their property.

Hunting and Fishing

Hunting is permitted at Sampson in specified sections of the park. Hunting is subject to NYS DEC regulations.^{iv}

A state hunting license and a park permit are required. Hunting is allowed at designated times of the year (corresponding with DEC hunting seasons), and only in certain sections of the park, away from the camping loops. For more information about the hunting season schedule, park rules, and maps, please visit the following: <https://parks.ny.gov/recreation/hunting/>, and see Sampson's hunting rules and maps at <https://parks.ny.gov/parks/154/hunting.aspx>.

Fishing, with a NYS fishing license, is permitted on all waters within the park boundary. Fishing in Seneca Lake is allowed from the shore of the park property and boats. Fishermen are required to follow all state fishing regulations. For more information, see <http://www.eregulations.com/newyork/fishing/finger-lakes-tributary-regulations/>.

Operations and Maintenance

Emergency Plans and Services

The NYS Park Police support park activities and operations through enforcement of park rules and regulations, vehicle and traffic law and other criminal and environmental statutes as necessary. The NYS Park Police's enforcement and community policing efforts help maintain a good "quality of life" atmosphere at the park.

In the event of an evacuation, NYS Park Police serve as command, assisted by the Park Manager and park staff. A combination of police and staff, driving to various sites and areas of the park, will inform patrons of the need to evacuate.

In addition to the NYS Park Police, Route 96B is often patrolled by New York State Police and Seneca County Sheriffs. The Romulus Fire Department will respond to any medical or fire emergencies at Sampson.

Special Events/Permits

There are numerous special events that take place in the park. Some of the events include the annual Wine Country Dog Show, which is an American Kennel Club-sanctioned event held in late September at the park. The event has had up to 2,000 dogs and their owners enjoying the park during the several days of the event. Campground reservations are suspended for the event's duration.

Special camping groups travel to Sampson throughout the seasons. In the spring, a Winnebago users group stays at the campground. In the fall, a "tin can" (a style of lightweight camper) users group gathers at the campground. The park's large, open campsites provide an experience these campers enjoy.

Infrastructure

Buildings

There are 53 buildings located throughout the park. Numerous other buildings existed in the park; however, many have been demolished, and only their stone foundations remain. Many of the buildings still in use today are from the site's days as a naval base.

Unused warehouse buildings that comprise part of the regional maintenance facility have not received regular maintenance and have fallen into disrepair. Much of the needed maintenance of buildings used in the day-to-day operations of the park includes updating electric, providing new roofs, making energy efficiency retrofits, and painting or staining the exterior.

Water Supplies

The park's water supply comes from Seneca County Water District No.1. The district purchases water from the Village of Waterloo via the Seneca Lake Water District. This public water supply is treated using state-of-the-art disinfection and filtration to remove or reduce harmful contaminants. Activated carbon is used to absorb organic contaminants in the water, improving taste and providing additional protection against contaminants. A Source Water Assessment of Waterloo's water supply is available upon request at the Seneca County Health Department, 31 Thurber Drive, Waterloo, 13165, (315) 539-1945 (Seneca County, 2014).

Wastewater and Sewerage Systems

The park is connected to municipal sewer provided by Seneca County Water and Sewer District No.1. Beyond the connection with the sewer main is a robust system of service lines and sewage lift stations. Pump stations near the Marina bathhouse and concession building pump all wastewater to the main municipal line. The system services all bathhouses at the park, the park office, and the museum. The park's maintenance shop and regional maintenance/navigational aids facilities have septic tanks and leach fields.

Restrooms in the park will be retrofitted with low-flow or waterless toilets as part of the scheduled remodeling project that will utilize universal design guidelines to improve accessibility.

Utilities

Phone – Verizon Telephone

Fiber – Finger Lakes Technologies (park office)

Internet – NYSYS airAccess at the park shop and museum

Electricity – NYSEG. Electrical service comes from poles along Route 96 and into the park to the NYSEG substation located near the military museum. After this connection, electric is distributed using a combination of overhead and underground lines. Lines are typically owned by NYSEG until they form a connection with a transformer. Lines supply the museum, park office, regional maintenance facility, campground, marina, and manager's residence. Impacts to electric service by the concessionaire's contract area development will be assessed and usage/delivery needs determined as work proceeds.

Fiber – in 2020, fiber was available in the park office.

Fuel Oil Storage – A 12,000-gallon fuel oil tank is located adjacent to the marina. A 1000-gallon diesel fuel tank near the park maintenance shop. One 275-gallon heating oil tank, one 2000-gallon waste oil tank, and one 1000-gallon split (750-gallon gas; 250-gallon diesel) equipment fueling tank behind the regional maintenance shop. A 300-gallon waste oil tank inside the regional maintenance shop. A 250-gallon propane tank near the park manager's residence. Each of the park's restroom facilities (seven total) has a 500-gallon underground propane tank. The Military Museum has one above-ground 1000-gallon propane tank.

Roads and Bridges

There are over 25.4 miles of roadway in the park. This total includes maintained paved roads, natural surface access roads, and unmaintained paved roadways that remain from the original naval base.

Dams and Culverts

There are numerous culverts located along existing roads throughout the park. One stone box culvert on the main park road near the traffic circle is deteriorating and no longer functioning as designed.

Maintenance

The maintenance shop at Sampson is located on the main park road south of the military museum. Maintenance personnel responsible for Sampson use the facility to maintain equipment and store supplies and as an office and lunchroom.

The regional maintenance facility is located on the main park road north of the traffic circle. Regional maintenance staff use the facility to store and maintain equipment and make park signs, and as an office. NYS Parks Marine Services also uses the facility to store buoys, service boats, and other materials used to support the program. The facility has an asphalt parking lot used to store vehicles and heavy equipment, which also provides access to the park's fueling tanks.

Season and Hours of Operation

The park is open year-round, but access to some areas may be limited from mid-November through April of each year because many roads are only seasonally maintained. Roads to the park office and boat launch remain open throughout the year.

- Campgrounds are open from April to November.
- Hours and operations of the Marina and its facilities are available on their website at <http://samsenparks.com/>.
- The designated guarded swim amenity is typically open from the third Saturday in June through Labor Day. Hours are 11:00 AM to 7:00 PM daily.
- The park office is open daily from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM in winter and 8:00 AM to 5:30 PM in spring and summer.
- The Military Museum is open 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Wednesday to Sunday, from mid-May to the beginning of November.

More information on Sampson's seasonal activities and hours of operation is available on the OPRHP website: <https://parks.ny.gov/parks/sampson/details.aspx>.

Accessibility (ADA)

Accessibility is analyzed and improved during the design phase of all planned projects. Accessibility has been assessed for amenities in the campground and their connection to the park office and waterfront areas. Additional assessments will be conducted for the entire park complex as plans are developed.

Sustainability

The park incorporates energy efficiency and water conservation practices into all routine maintenance and remodeling of existing park facilities. Energy efficient LED lighting, low flow plumbing fixtures, and weatherizing of buildings (e.g., windows, insulation, and caulking) make a positive contribution toward reaching the park's and agency's sustainability goals. These measures and the incorporation of green building materials will be part of any new capital improvement projects scheduled for the park.

Solid Waste Management and Recycling Programs

Solid waste is collected from the park by park staff and transported to the municipal landfill for disposal. Recycling is promoted throughout the park by educational flyers and posters. Recycling bins for cans and bottles are provided at specific points for public use. The park office recycles paper products, aluminum, plastic, and glass. The regional maintenance facility recycles scrap metal and used oils.

A portion of the concessionaire contract area will be used for staging of stone, wood/concrete debris, woodchips and topsoil until this portion of the park is developed.

Table 2 - Parking Areas in Sampson

Location	Standard Spaces	ADA Spaces	Condition	Notes
Park Office	24 car/16 RV	None	Fair	Asphalt
Military Museum	24	None	Fair	Stone dust
Waterfront 1	200	None	Fair	Stone dust
Waterfront 2	150	None	Poor	Stone dust
Marina	125 w/trailers	None	Fair	Asphalt
Concession	30	None	Poor	Stone dust

Chapter 2 – Development of Alternatives

This chapter contains an analysis of the alternatives being considered for recreation resource development, natural and cultural resource protection, and facilities for operations. The alternatives developed are a result of an analysis on the various resources throughout the park, the park's goals, core team discussions, and other factors. Findings from this analysis are used in identifying the preferred alternatives for each of the resource categories. The status quo, alternatives, Considerations, and preferred alternative for individual issues are described in narrative form. A complete description of the plan that results from the preferred alternatives is found in the accompanying master plan document.

This chapter is divided into broad resource categories:

Natural and Cultural Resource Protection – Alternatives that focus on strategies for stewardship, study, and interpretation of the park's natural and cultural resources.

Recreational Resources – Alternatives that primarily concentrate on the areas of the park that support various recreation activities. Included in this category are the built facilities and consideration of different types of recreation activities.

Operations Facilities – Those buildings and management practices that provide support for the functioning of the park.

Natural Resource Protection

The alternatives considered below and throughout this plan will be implemented in full consideration of and commitment to following these natural resource protection strategies:

- Minimize park development in known, mapped areas and buffer zones of special habitat types;
- Protect statewide significant ecological community types and areas of known habitat for rare, threatened, and endangered plant and animal species;
- Develop a comprehensive inventory of invasive species;
- Increase patron's awareness of natural resources within Sampson through interpretive signage and environmental education opportunities;
- Partner with external groups to provide a variety of environmental education programming;
- Ensure that cultural resources are preserved and protected, receive appropriate treatments, and are made available for public understanding and enjoyment.

Natural Resource Alternatives

Invasive Species

A statewide invasive species control program (ISCP) has been established for OPRHP. Goals of the program are to preserve biodiversity and reduce the threat of invasive species to the quality of the natural, recreational, cultural, and interpretive resources in state parkland.

Background

Terrestrial Fauna – Firewood can be a source of invasive insects which can kill trees. Monitoring for the Emerald Ash Borer (*Agrilus planipennis*) and other insects possibly transported by firewood follows the protocol described in the document, Camping Procedures & Reference Manual, Chapter III, Subchapter K, paragraph 3.^v Additionally, the park and the agency follow all regulations on firewood and wood transportation issued by the DEC.

Aquatic Fauna – Two invasive species have been found in the waters near the shore of Seneca Lake in the park. Zebra mussel has been found north of the guarded swim amenity, and Bloody-red shrimp has been found in the marina. Both of these species can be spread by boats loading and unloading.

Flora – Several species of invasive plants are found in the park (listed in Table 1, Chapter 1). Control of the spread of periwinkle, garlic mustard, and pale swallow wort is particularly important as these may impact threatened plants in the park.

Action #1: Natural Resources alternatives considered

Status Quo – No change to current management of invasive species

Considerations:

- Continue to enforce all current OPRHP Camping regulations pertaining to firewood and DEC firewood transport regulations. If Emerald Ash Borer or Asian Longhorn Beetle is found in the park, work with agencies to follow containment and control recommendations
- Continue to monitor for Hemlock Woolly Adelgid
- Currently, invasives are being monitored periodically
- No plan for control of aquatic invasives
- Some species are being detected by OPRHP staff and by public
- Certain species are being removed by volunteers
- There are no measures in place for Early Detection, Rapid Response
- Develop a comprehensive stewardship plan and invasive species management plan, including early detection and rapid response, and follow recommendations of OPRHP staff and biologists

Develop a comprehensive stewardship plan and invasive species management plan with early detection and rapid response and following the recommendations of OPRHP and other state agency staff, biologists and other partners.

Considerations:

- Current control measures will continue
- Develop plan for boat washing station to control spread of aquatic invasives
- Employ concentrated observation for early detection
- Establish an Early Detection/Rapid Response protocol for the park
- Develop priorities for management based on assessments of various factors, including ease of control, potential environmental impacts, potential infrastructure impacts, and level of threat to human health
- Regional environmental field team staff will develop management plan and strategies with other OPRHP staff

Preferred alternative – (ii) Develop a comprehensive stewardship plan that includes invasive species management, with early detection and rapid response and following the recommendations of OPRHP and other state agency staff, biologists and other partners.

Under this alternative, science-based natural resources projects will be identified that promote healthy forests and habitats for a variety of native flora and fauna. Development of a stewardship plan will protect known rare species in the park and current management protocols for invasive species will be updated and expanded with new techniques and strategies.

Firewood Procedures

Background

The introduction of invasive species impacts local economies and natural resources. Transportation of firewood is a major channel by which invasive insects like the Emerald Ash Borer and Asian Long Horned Beetle are introduced into new areas. Because many visitors come to the region from neighboring states, an emerging threat is the Spotted Lantern Fly. Egg masses can be transported on firewood, vehicles, and other surfaces. These pests could have a significant impact on park resources.

OPRHP's [Camping Procedures and Reference Manual](#) (see Endnote 5) specifies requirements for bringing firewood into its parks and sites, which encourages campers to use firewood produced in the park. Procedures in the OPRHP manual mirror the DEC's regulations established to help slow the spread of these invasive insects. Under the OPRHP and DEC regulations, it is illegal to bring untreated firewood into New York State, and New York State parks. Furthermore, it is illegal to transport untreated firewood more than 50 miles from its source. A receipt or self-issued certificate stating that the firewood has been properly treated is required as proof of source when carrying firewood into the park from outside from further than 50 miles away.

The park currently enlists a concessionaire to supply certified firewood to campers. NYS Police enforce the OPRHP and DEC Firewood Regulations at this park and NYS Parks statewide.

Action #2: Firewood Management alternatives considered

- i. [Status Quo – The park will continue to provide firewood for campers through a concessionaire.](#)

Preferred Alternative: Status Quo – No alternatives to the status quo were considered.

The planning team feels that the protocols currently in place are the best alternative for protecting the park's natural resources and for complying with OPRHP and DEC Firewood Regulations.

Wildlife Resources

Background

The wildlife species and significant wildlife habitats of the state park system are important and valuable natural resources. Of the nearly 350,000 acres of lands and waters statewide, approximately 85% of the land is considered natural habitat. The diversity of wildlife present in state parks is an important component of our state's biodiversity. Wildlife is also a recreational resource that can enhance park visitors' experiences.

As a general rule, OPRHP follows a "passive management" approach, allowing natural processes to maintain wildlife populations in ecological balance. However, there are unique circumstances when an active management approach is necessary. Additional information about wildlife management in the state park system can be viewed at:

<https://parks.ny.gov/documents/inside-our-agency/PublicDocuments/GuidancePolicies/FishWildlifeManagement.pdf>.

At over 2,000 acres, Sampson is one of the largest state parks in the region. The historical land use of the park, its surrounding land use, and geographic location are all factors influencing wildlife species observed in the park. Many areas of the park show signs of past practices conducted when the land was being developed for a naval base. Trees and other vegetation were cleared to make space for planned infrastructure or parade grounds. Today, many of these areas are in a successional forest stage or are reverting old fields with shrubs present. A few forested areas support some old-growth trees, and the park's ravine areas are mature forests that have remained intact through previous and current land uses.

The mix of wildlife habitat at the park offers excellent recreational opportunities for viewing wildlife as well as remarkable hunting and fishing opportunities. Visitors can observe a variety of breeding and migratory birds, game animals (i.e., wild turkey, white-tailed deer, and American woodcock), or try their luck fishing for perch from the waterfront area.

Sampson provides excellent opportunities for hunting both large and small game species. Hunting in the park with a park permit only and is subject to provisions in the NYS DEC's [New York Hunting & Trapping 2020–2021 Official Guide to Laws & Regulations](#). The most popular game are white-tailed deer and wild turkey. The reverting old fields, shrub thickets, and successional forest provides enough cover and browse to support an abundant local deer population. The season when hunting is permitted in the park may vary from the published statewide hunting calendar. Hunting is allowed in designated areas only, and certain areas are restricted to bowhunting only. Hunters should check with the park manager for more information.

OPRHP has, and will continue, to consult with DEC wildlife biologists about managing white-tailed deer in the park, and will continue its collaboration with DEC by providing deer harvest information for the park. Deer Management Assistance Permits may be made available for use in the park during future seasons. DEC could issue these additional permits if the local population of deer in the park is considered too high. Harvest information will be evaluated, and impacts on the park's ecological communities will be monitored. As part of an adaptive management strategy, there may be changes to season dates, the number of hunter or deer management permits issued, or hunting implements permitted in the park.

Action #3: Wildlife Resources alternatives considered

- i. [Status Quo – Continue “passive management” of wildlife species and wildlife habitat in the park.](#)

Considerations:

- Wildlife observed in the park, and recreational opportunities will change as successional forests transition to later stages of succession
- Will not benefit Species of Greatest Conservation Need listed species, migratory breeding birds, or contribute to landscape level habitat needs within the state
- Does not address forest health concerns.

- ii. [Develop a stewardship plan, to include an invasive species management plan with wildlife habitat management strategies, including grassland and shrubland birds and following recommendations of OPRHP and DEC staff and partner organization wildlife biologists.](#)

Considerations:

- Identifies science-based natural resource projects that promote healthy forests and habitats for Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN)-listed species, migratory breeding birds, and game species
- Aligns with the agency's mission to be a good steward of its natural resources
- Creates a more enjoyable recreational experience for park visitors
- Restores important wildlife habitats on the landscape level

Preferred alternative – (ii) Incorporate wildlife habitat management strategies that follow recommendations of OPRHP and DEC staff and partner organization wildlife biologists into a stewardship plan.

This alternative will allow a team of natural resource professionals led by representatives of OPRHP and DEC to work collaboratively with other partner organizations and stakeholders in the region. The team would be charged with formulating long-term strategies for accomplishing park and region wildlife goals.

Cultural Resource Protection

Background

Sampson's varied history has left traces of human occupation from prehistory to the present day. As stewards of the state's historical resources, OPRHP looks to protect, preserve, and interpret historic and cultural elements at its facilities. The master plan proposes a number of actions that will foster a greater awareness of Sampson's compelling history and offer new opportunities for education and informed future development.

Documentation

Action #1: Cultural Resource Protection alternatives considered

- i. **Status quo – Do not identify and document cultural/historic resources at the park and provide for the protection, stewardship, and preservation of both designed structures and landscape.**

Considerations:

- Will not identify and document significant cultural/historic resources at the facility
- Appropriate maintenance and management measures may not be established
- Significant elements at the park may not be recognized, protected or preserved
- Will not address the OPRHP mission of being responsible stewards of the state's natural, historic and cultural resources

- ii. **Identify and document cultural/historic resources at the park and provide for protection, stewardship, and preservation of both designed structures and landscape.**

- Will help inform future development at the facility
- Appropriate maintenance and management measures can be established to protect and preserve cultural/historic elements at the park
- Enhances the visitor experience by protecting important resources
- Addresses the OPRHP mission of being responsible stewards of the state's natural, historic and cultural resources

Preferred Alternative – (ii) Identify and document cultural/historic resources at the park and provide for protection, stewardship, and preservation of both designed structures and landscape.

This alternative was selected because it will raise awareness of the park's historic and cultural resources and offer the opportunity for education and interpretation. It will inform future development and improve operations at the site, allowing for appropriate management practices to be established for identified elements.

Action #2: Cultural Resource Protection alternatives considered:

- i. **Status quo – Do not develop a document library/annotated bibliography on resources related to historical elements at the park.**

Considerations:

- Does not compile resources in one place for park staff and others to access/utilize
- Potential for loss of documents
- Will not facilitate informed decision-making related to historic/cultural elements
- May lose institutional history of park's background and items of historic/cultural significance

- ii. **Develop a document library/annotated bibliography on original documents on resources related to historical elements at the park (DHP staff to support/guide).**

Considerations:

- Facilitates ease of access to documented resources for staff and others
- Protects historic assets
- Informs future development and park management issues
- Preserves institutional history and identifies documents related to the park's background

The preferred alternative is (ii) Develop a document library/annotated bibliography on original documents on resources related to historical elements at the park (DHP staff to support/guide).

This alternative will create a resource for park management and facilitate and inform future development at the site. It will contribute to a larger OPRHP effort to identify and document the agency's institutional history.

Education and Interpretation

Action #3: Cultural Resource Protection alternatives considered:

- i. **Status quo – Do not develop an interpretation program that tells the story of the area's native inhabitants.**

Considerations:

- A lack of public awareness of the significance of these elements may put some at risk or insufficiently protected; visitors may not use the facilities fully and sensitively.
- Will not address the park's complete history and educate visitors about significant historic/cultural elements related to native habitation in the area
- A significant period in the park area's history will not be recognized/interpreted

- ii. **Develop an updated interpretation program that includes the story of the park's native inhabitants.**

Considerations:

- Encourages a wider knowledge/curiosity about the park's culturally significant elements
- Enhances the visitor experience and may attract new patrons
- Fosters better stewardship of the park's historic/cultural elements
- Tells a more complete history of the park and region to include native habitation and experience

The preferred alternative is (ii) Develop an updated interpretation program that tells the story of the site's native inhabitants.

This alternative will help provide a more comprehensive history of the site. It will improve the visitor experience with expanded education opportunities and potentially attract new visitors. It offers the potential for new partnerships.

Alternatives Cultural Resource Protection considered:

- i. **Status quo – Do not identify gaps/missing information on military history at the park and develop relevant programming/materials.**

Considerations:

- Programming at the facility will not address these periods and other identified gaps in interpretative materials regarding the park's military history
- The park's educational/interpretive materials will not include content that addresses an area of high public interest (i.e., the role of veterans in Seneca County)
- Existing educational materials will not provide a comprehensive understanding of the park's history

- Does not improve the visitor experience with additional opportunities to engage the public
- ii. Identify gaps and/or missing information on key periods in the park’s military history and develop relevant programming/materials (e.g., oral histories of persons serving in World War II/the Korean War).

Considerations:

- Provides documentation and interpretation on key periods in military history and other identified gaps relevant to the site’s military activities.
- Offers visitors a more accurate and comprehensive understanding of the park’s military history
- Addresses areas of high public interest/demand for this type of content
- Improves the visitor experience by offering additional opportunities to engage the public

The preferred alternative is (ii) Identify gaps and/or missing information on key periods in the site’s military history and develop relevant programming/materials.

This alternative was selected because it will allow the park to offer a more complete picture of the site’s history. There is strong interest in this type of content, and it may help attract new visitors to the park.



Recreational Resource Development

Campground Improvements and Expansion

Background

The campground at Sampson has one of the highest overall occupancy rates in the region, and the need for more full-service camping facilities in the Finger Lakes region is supported by OPRHP analyses. Surveys of campers have documented a demand for campsites with electric and water service, higher amperage electrical service, sewer hook-up at sites and seasonal camping opportunities. The feedback indicated that additional full-service camping sites at Sampson would increase demand for these recreational offerings in an already popular camping location.

Since the 2015 Draft Master Plan/DEIS, OPRHP has entered a contract with a concessionaire (40-year lease) to redevelop the marina, the waterfront, and adjacent upland areas with additional camping facilities, recreation amenities, and services. Portions of this were discussed as an alternative in the 2015 Draft Master Plan/DEIS. The section below, Camping Improvements, refers to existing OPRHP-managed camping facilities only. The new elements will be discussed more fully in the section following this, entitled Concessionaire Lease Area.

Campground Improvements

Action #1: Campground Improvements alternatives considered

- i. **Status Quo – No additional campsites, sewer hook-up, or improved electric and water service at existing sites.**

Considerations:

- Patron desire for short-term full-hookup sites will not be addressed
- Would not add support for regional tourism initiatives (e.g., wine trail, scenic byway, casino, etc.)
- No new environmental impacts
- Will not attract additional users

- ii. **Upgrade existing campsite loops with improved electric and water service.**

Considerations:

- Aligns with the vision for the park
- Meets the master plan goal of providing and expanding recreational opportunities at the park
- Meets statewide goal of fixing aging infrastructure
- Will attract additional users
- Improves campsite utilities, including water and electric service
- Upgrades comfort stations
- Increases accessibility
- Paves campground loop roads
 - Some ground disturbances from site work and construction
 - Roadways, campsites and trenching for electric and water service may impact vegetation, depending on location
 - Design will include a planting plan for shade trees and buffers

Preferred Alternative – (ii) Upgrade existing campsite loops in the park with improved electric and water service.

The planning team selected this alternative because it meets multiple master plan goals. This action directs the park toward the vision developed as part of this planning effort. The improvements will meet the expectations of patrons camping at the park.

Concessionaire Lease Area

Background

As noted above, the need for more full-service camping facilities in the Finger Lakes region is supported by OPRHP analyses. The vision for the Park is that it will be the extended-stay waterfront destination of the Finger Lakes, providing a variety of recreational opportunities that are compatible with and make the best use of the natural and cultural resources of the park (see Figures 14-14a, Resource Protection Areas). Portions of the contract area are archeologically sensitive and will require consultation with Historic Preservation staff when projects are proposed.

OPRHP's contract with a concessionaire includes proposals for additional camping facilities, recreation amenities, and services. The contract area encompasses approximately 150 acres of the park, including and surrounding the marina (see Figure 9, Concession Contract Area). The marina rehabilitation was completed in 2019. Installation of a number of new cabins and RV campsites, and a ship's store, was completed for the 2020 season. These upgrades were reviewed separately under SEQR and are not covered in this EIS; they are considered existing conditions. All other facilities proposed as part of the concessionaire contract are being reviewed under this Final Master Plan/FEIS. Additional planned marina and waterfront amenities include new waterfront green space, more parking, and a new concession building.

Proposal

In a full build-out scenario, the concessionaire has proposed:

- New full-service RV camping sites east (uphill) of the marina and RV sites installed in the open mowed field area;
- Additional cabins to the south of this area, on the south side of the park road (previous location of cabins recently moved to Cayuga Lake and adjacent to ravine);
- Full-service RV camping sites and cabins in the successional shrubland areas in the southern third of the lease area;
- Associated amenities including playgrounds, pools, picnic areas, comfort stations, open areas for events/gatherings, gazebos, a small band shell, and pedestrian pathways/trails; and
- A hotel and event center with associated parking.

Discussion

Additional facilities are expected to be developed based on market demand and in phases. Development of these facilities aligns with the vision of the park; meets the master plan goal of providing and expanding recreational opportunities at the park; is expected to attract additional visitors/users; will help meet the expectations of camping patrons; and will be done in a manner to protect natural and cultural resources within the park.

Guarded Swim Amenity

Background

Located just north of the marina, the guarded swim amenity at Sampson provides opportunities for relaxing in the park and swimming. There is a small lifeguard building and a public comfort station nearby. The guarded swim amenity is staffed with lifeguards when the facility is open.

Visitors may access the guarded swim amenity on foot, by car and by bicycle using park roads and paved pathways. The large parking area adjacent to the waterfront playground provides ample parking and reasonable access to the area. Camping facilities are within walking distance of the guarded swim amenity. Many of the paved pathways leading to the waterfront area have steep slopes that make meeting universal design guidelines challenging.

The number of day-use patron visits to the guarded swim amenity is low, with most of the use coming from campground patrons. However, during the busy summer season, the sandy area at the guarded swim amenity is often near capacity.

Action #2: Guarded Swim Amenity alternatives considered

i. Status Quo – No changes to the guarded swim amenity.

Considerations:

- Does not align with the vision for the park
- Does not meet the goals of the master plan for providing improved recreational resources for park patrons
- Does not address accessibility issues
- No environmental impacts

ii. Improve guarded swim amenity accessibility.

Considerations:

- Universal design elements will improve access to the guarded swim amenity for all patrons
- Improvements for accessibility will have some environmental impacts along the shore
- Additional sand will be trucked in and spread

Preferred alternative – ii. Improve accessibility at guarded swim amenity.

This alternative was selected by the planning team because it is consistent with the master plan goals for the park. The improved accessibility at the guarded swim amenity will create more useable space for more patrons to enjoy waterfront activities.

Fishing Access

Background

Fishing can connect people to the outdoors and foster an appreciation for the natural environment for years to come. Fishing is a very popular activity with people of all ages at Sampson. The park is one of several public access sites available along the shores of Seneca Lake where the public can fish from shore. The Recreational Index of Need (RIN) for fishing in the service area of the park is 4.2, which is below the state average. A value of four or greater indicates a need for additional recreation sites within a county.

Seneca Lake is a popular freshwater fishing destination within the Finger Lakes region. The lake is reported to have a healthy fishery consisting of brown and lake trout, smallmouth bass, yellow perch, and landlocked salmon. Northern pike, largemouth bass, and landlocked Atlantic salmon are also present.

A recent survey of campers at Sampson indicated that use of the fishing pier/wall is a favorite activity among patrons. When asked about other amenities they would like to see at Sampson, 11 percent of those surveyed responded that a fish cleaning station would be a welcome amenity for the fishing pier/wall.

Action #3: Fishing Access alternatives considered

i. Status Quo – No change in access to fishing in Seneca Lake.

Considerations:

- Does not meet the master plan goal of providing and expanding recreational opportunities at the park
- Does not meet the master plan goal of improving the connection of the park with the lake waterfront
- No additional construction within the waterfront area required

ii. Upgrade the existing fishing pier (resurface concrete/replace railings).

The boat launch provides access for those wanting to fish by boat, and the marina and lakeshore wall provides access for those wanting to fish from shore. Under this alternative, lake shore access to fishing is improved. The development of this waterfront facility will provide a better service to park patrons.

Pier upgrades would include universal access so that people of all abilities may access and enjoy Seneca Lake from the lakeshore. The updated pier would provide additional opportunities for patrons looking to fish or simply relax by the lake.

Considerations:

- Meets the master plan goal of providing and expanding recreational opportunities at the park
- Meets the statewide goal of reconnecting children and adults with nature and recreation by improving access to outdoor recreational opportunities (NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, 2020)
- The fishing pier will be designed for universal accessibility
- Potential for visual impacts from the lake; a visually appealing design is important

Preferred alternative – ii. Upgrade the existing fishing pier.

This alternative was chosen because the planning team determined that waterfront development will increase demand for recreation activities at the park. The fishing pier is deteriorated and requires upgrades.

Park Amenities

Day-Use Facilities

Background

While Sampson does not have day use numbers comparable to the surrounding parks near urban populations in the Finger Lakes Region, there is some demand for improved facilities generated by campground patrons, special events, and local organizations.

The Sampson shoreline is approximately 4.7 miles long and is an important feature of the park. Providing and expanding the recreational and scenic opportunities associated with this resource and improving access are critical strategies for realizing the vision for the park. In addition to the marina, the developed portion of the shoreline offers a wonderful waterfront with a playground, guarded swimming amenity and parking areas. A concrete wall connects the northern breakwater with the marina except at the guarded swimming amenity area, where a fishing pier is available. The remainder of the park's shoreline has mature mixed hardwoods with a thick understory in the upland areas, and a locally significant cobble shoreline.

The park's original pavilion and picnic areas with tables and hibachi grills are within the concessionaire contract area. A critique of these facilities has been that trees or other facilities obstruct views of the lake. The vision for this park, and therefore a primary goal of the master plan, is to connect more areas of the park to views of the lake. One or more new pavilions sited outside the concessionaire contract area will help meet patron demand for facilities for special events and larger groups gathering at the park.



Actions #4-5: Day-Use Facilities alternatives considered

i. Status Quo – No changes to day-use amenities.

Considerations:

- Does not meet the master plan goal of providing and expanding recreational opportunities for relaxing in the park
- Does not improve patron satisfaction with day-use facilities
- Does not connect patrons to the waterfront
- Does not meet current demand for facilities
- Does not attract users
- No environmental impacts
- Current use patterns may be a factor of facility condition, size, or location
- Current facilities are not accessible

ii. Provide a pavilion.

The waterfront area of Sampson is an important feature of the park. Developing facilities for patrons to enjoy the waterfront is central to realizing the vision for the park. The park's original waterfront pavilion is located within the concessionaire contract area, and its use has not yet been established. This alternative proposes, according to need, at least one new pavilion with running water, electric, and an area for light preparation or warming of food would be provided.

Under this alternative, a new pavilion(s) will be located and designed to meet current universal design guidelines and be sized to accommodate 200 people. Electric and water service will be supplied at the pavilion(s). These improvements will cater to special events and larger groups gathering at the park. Location of pavilion(s) is to be determined in future.

Considerations:

- Meets master plan goal of expanding recreational opportunities for relaxing in the park
- Likely positive change on use patterns with new facilities
- Meets demand for day-use facilities in the park
- Pavilion(s) could be rented for special events
- Some temporary ground disturbances during utility line trenching and construction activities

iii. Provide an accessible picnic area.

The park's picnic areas are currently located within the concessionaire contract area. Relocating the park's picnic area will provide further opportunities for patrons to connect to the park's waterfront. Eating areas would link to other park elements using accessible pathways. A new picnic area will have grills and picnic tables and serve patrons of all abilities. The picnic area would offer views of Seneca Lake. Work would include managing vegetation to allow for vistas of the lake. Location of picnic area is to be determined in the future.

Considerations:

- Meets the master plan goal of providing and expanding recreational opportunities for relaxing in the park
- New plantings may be necessary based on location
- Picnic area would be accessible to people of all abilities
- Connects to other areas in the park using accessible pathways

iv. Provide a special events area with support amenities (e.g., electric & water).

There is an ongoing need at the park for areas that support special events. The park has hosted many large-scale events through the years; for example, the park hosts an American Kennel Club-sponsored dog show that attracts nearly two thousand dogs and their owners. During the event the open fields surrounding the military museum are populated with tents and used as the competition grounds.

An area dedicated to large and special events will be developed to provide water and electric hookups.

Considerations:

- Aligns with the vision for the park
- Meets master plan goal of expanding recreational opportunities
- Supports regional tourism initiatives for current and future events
- Increases the park's capacity to host additional significant events
- Connecting other areas of the park to the waterfront is an important component needed to realize the vision for the park. The space would connect to other areas of the waterfront using accessible pathways.

Preferred alternatives – (ii) Provide a pavilion; (iii) Provide an accessible picnic area.

The planning team selected these alternatives because providing a new full-service pavilion and a new picnic area enables the park to meet the vision for this master plan. Redesigned day-use amenities will further connect the community and other visitors. The space will provide additional opportunities for patrons to relax in the park. Final locations will be determined in the future as the concessionaire's plans move forward.

Recreation Building

Background

The recreation space at Sampson is in a building shared with the park office. This facility made use of an existing building present when the park was a base. Recreational offerings include indoor mini-golf, table tennis, and an assortment of video games.

A recent survey of campers at Sampson indicated the use of the recreation building as a favorite activity enjoyed by patrons. About a quarter of respondents reported that they used the recreation building during their most recent visit. Several more of those surveyed, 29 percent in all, indicated that they planned to use the recreation building on a return visit.

Action #6: Recreation Building alternatives considered

i. Status Quo – No changes to the Recreation Building.

Considerations:

- Does not meet master plan goal of providing and expanding recreational opportunities at the park.
- Does not require new construction or changes to the existing facility.

ii. Improve and expand opportunities within the current Recreation Building.

The footprint of the existing recreation building would remain the same, and the building would continue to share space with the park office. The recreation space would be updated to facilitate hosting regional events such as wine and cheese tastings and would be updated with new indoor recreation amenities like foosball and pool tables. Additional video games could be brought in by a concessionaire. The space would be updated with energy-efficient lighting, additional insulation, and energy-efficient windows. The painted concrete flooring would be updated to clean up the interior space and provide a nicer venue for hosting regional events. Wi-Fi or internet connections could be made available.

Additional updates would occur to the park office, described in a later section.

Considerations:

- Utilizes the existing park office and recreation building
- New indoor recreation amenities would provide entertainment for patrons during inclement weather
- Open year-round
- Could be used as a warming hut for winter outdoor activities

iii. Construct a new indoor recreation building.

Current reports suggest that RV park patrons expect facilities to have certain amenities to meet their needs. These amenities include laundry facilities, fitness centers, and business centers with Wi-Fi or public computers with internet connections. These types of services are more common in a private RV campground setting, but the public may increasingly look for the same facilities in a state park.

Sampson is a very popular park among the RVing community. These types of improvements and seasonal stay opportunities will draw additional visitors to the park and surrounding community as well as provide more satisfaction for the camping experience. A new recreation building would be sited in a location that will connect with the rest of the park and provide a place to begin exploration of the park. The concept includes a fitness center and indoor climbing wall. There would be other amenities such as table tennis, foosball, and pool tables.

Considerations:

- Meets the master plan goal of providing and expanding recreational opportunities at the park.
- New indoor recreation amenities would provide entertainment for patrons during inclement weather.
- The new facility would provide additional amenities to service the needs of extended-stay patrons.
- Encourages activity among kids and adults
- Open year-round
- Can be used as a warming hut for winter outdoor activities

Preferred alternative – (ii) Improve and expand opportunities within the existing recreation building.

This alternative was selected by the planning team because the team determined that the current recreation building's size and location meet the needs of the park. The current recreation building location is convenient to other areas in the park, especially the campground.

Field Games

Background

Field sports are a favorite outdoor activity in many parks throughout the state. Baseball, soccer, and football fields are common fixtures in many parks. Sampson has many open areas that could be utilized for these activities. Currently, there is only one baseball field in the park.

Sampson is located in a rural area with small towns within a short drive where demand for these facilities is met by local schools or small municipal parks. Demand for field sports in the park is generated by park patrons. In a survey of campground users, only 16 percent said that they used playfields in the park during their last visit. The same percentage responded that they planned to use the playfields on a future visit.

Action #7: Field Games alternatives considered

i. Status quo – No improvements to existing field game facilities or new field game facilities.

Considerations:

- Does not meet the master plan goal of providing and expanding recreational opportunities in the park
- Does not encourage physical activity among kids and adults
- Responds to the low number of park patrons who indicated their use of playfields in the park.

ii. Provide a disc golf course.

Considerations:

- Meets the master plan goal of providing and expanding recreational opportunities at the park
- The course would be 9-holes

- Course would utilize field and wooded areas
- Discs would be provided at the park office

iii. Provide new game fields.

Considerations:

- Meets the master plan goal of providing and expanding recreational opportunities in the park
- Meets the need in the park's service area
- Exceeds the estimated demand
- May duplicate locally available resources
- Encourages physical activity among kids and adults
- One baseball field would be provided
- Requires continual maintenance

Preferred alternative – (i) Status quo – No improvements to existing field game facilities or new field game facilities.

This alternative was chosen by the planning team because there is not enough demand for improved or new field game facilities. The park receives very little day use. The current facilities and open spaces meet the internal demand created by campground patrons. It is highly likely that facilities found at local schools meet the demand created by the communities surrounding the park.

Court Games

Background

Sampson has very few court games available for day-use or campground patrons. The park has one basketball court and two tennis courts. Most of the use is from campground patrons.

The Relative Index of Need (RIN) for court games in Seneca County is below the statewide average at 4. The weighted average RIN in this category for the service area of Sampson is above the statewide average at 6.2.

Action #8: Court Games alternatives considered

i. Status Quo – No change to court games.

Considerations:

- Current mix and condition of court games at the park will not change

ii. Improve existing tennis courts.

Considerations:

- Court surface would be improved
- Fence would be maintained
- Seating will be added
- A water fountain would be added nearby
- Pathways would connect all court games
- Tennis racquets and balls would be available at the park office

iii. Improve existing basketball court.

Considerations:

- Court surface would be improved
- Basketball hoops would be replaced
- Fencing would be added to the court

- Seating would be added
- A water fountain would be added nearby
- Pathways would connect all court games
- Basketballs would be available at the park office

iv. Provide outdoor handball/racquetball courts.

Considerations:

- Meets the master plan goal of providing and expanding recreational opportunities at the park
- A single wall for two courts would be provided
- Fencing would be added to the court
- Seating would be provided
- A water fountain would be nearby
- Pathways would connect all court games
- Racquets and balls would be available at the park office

v. Provide outdoor shuffleboard courts.

Considerations:

- Meets the master plan goal of providing and expanding recreational opportunities at the park
- Two courts would be provided
- Seating would be provided
- A water fountain would be nearby
- Pathways would connect all court games
- Cues and disks would be available at the park office

vi. Provide outdoor bocce ball courts.

Considerations:

- Meets the master plan goal of providing and expanding recreational opportunities at the park
- Bocce ball sets would be available at the park office
- Pathways would connect all court games
- Two courts would be provided

vii. Provide outdoor Pickleball courts.

Considerations:

- Meets the master plan goal of providing and expanding recreational opportunities at the park
- Two courts would be provided.
- A water fountain would be provided nearby
- Pathways would connect all court games
- Pickleballs would be available at the park office

Preferred alternative – (ii) Improve existing tennis courts; (iii) Improve existing basketball court; (vi) Provide outdoor bocce ball courts; (viii) Provide outdoor Pickleball courts

The planning team selected these as the preferred alternatives because they help meet several master plan goals. The updates will make patrons' experiences using these facilities safer and more pleasurable and may add new patrons with improved facilities and Pickleball as an added amenity.

Park Trail System

Background

The 2020 NY SCORP provides Relative Index of Need (RIN) numbers for each county, indicating supply and demand for recreation activities throughout the state. On a scale of 1 to 10, Seneca County has a RIN of 3 in the biking category, below the statewide average, and which indicates a need for more opportunities. The weighted average RIN in this category for the service area of the park is 3.4, well below the statewide average. Bicycling trails can range from wide paved pathways – great for family rides – to technical single-track trails that attract bicyclists with advanced skills. In the 2014 survey, 45 percent of campground patrons said they bicycled on trails in the park. Fifty-five percent said they planned on bicycling on trails on a future visit.

“Walking for enjoyment”—including jogging/running and day hiking—remains the top recreation activity in the state. The most recent RIN for this category in Seneca County is 3, well below the statewide average. A weighted average RIN of 4.7 in the service area of the park for this activity is close to the state average.

Bicycling is a popular activity at Sampson. Currently, there is only one designated trail in the park, the Lake Shore Trail, a paved trail approximately 1-1/2 miles in length which offers scenic lake views and is very popular with both bicyclists and walkers. The shoreline adjacent to the trail is mostly vegetated with large trees and a thick understory; however, there are several locations along the trail that offer magnificent views of Seneca Lake. The park’s many old roads also provide opportunities for individuals and families to walk and ride their bikes. The park has bike rentals available.

Comments received during public outreach events expressed interest in additional trail and interpretation opportunities for the park. Developing additional trails in Sampson was identified as a high priority. Additional bike trails were among the most requested in the public comments. The camper survey conducted for this master plan asked patrons about amenities they would like to see at the park. Of those surveyed, 31 percent said they would like to see additional trails at the park. Of this same group, 65 percent indicated they walked on the trails, and 45 percent reported they bicycled on the trails on a recent visit. When asked about activities planned for their next visit, 70 percent indicated they would walk on the trails and 55 percent said they would bicycle on trails. According to the 2017 American Camper Report, hiking is the most popular sports and leisure activity in which to participate while camping.



Lakeshore Trail

Trail riding opportunities for individuals and families are available at other locations within the service area for the park. Many of the paved pathways are in recreation areas in nearby municipalities. The Finger Lakes National Forest offers 30 miles of interconnected trails, many of which allow mountain biking.

Cell phone-guided tours are available in the park, following existing roads. These cover topics including Seneca Lake, nature, and military history. Sampson has a rich history, having been host to tens of thousands of service men and women during the naval base days, and later as an air force base. The Sampson Museum provides an enjoyable experience for patrons to learn about the history of the Sampson site; however, there are no displays or other interpretive materials about the military era outdoors in the park. There is an opportunity to connect the patron experience visiting the museum with the rest of the park.

Trails

Action #9: Park Trails alternatives considered

- i. Status Quo – Maintain one existing designated trail in the park with no additions/improvements.

Considerations:

- Does not meet the master plan goal of providing and expanding recreational opportunities at the park
- Does not address public comments
- No new environmental impacts
- Does not attract additional users
- Cycling can continue using existing trail and roadways

ii. Improve cycling facilities.

Improve road surface conditions on existing cycling routes where needed. Install signage and wayfinding systems to assist cyclists while using roads in the park. Expand cycling opportunities by designating additional existing roadways (closing to traffic) to be used as cycling paths. Paths will be designated multi-use and allow walking and biking, as well as cross-country skiing and snowshoeing in the winter.

Considerations:

- Aligns with the vision for the park
- Meets master plan goals for improving and expanding recreational resources
- Addresses public comment for cycling improvements
- Encourages physical activity among kids and adults

iii. Develop a new bike path to expand cycling

Create a new multi-use path for cyclists in the eastern section of the park, utilizing an abandoned rail bed from the park's days as a former military base.

Considerations:

- Meets the master plan goal of expanding recreational opportunities
- Aligns with the vision for the park
- Attracts new users
- Meets the need for additional multi-use trails in the park
- Encourages physical activity among kids and adults
- Utilizes previously disturbed rail alignment for new development
- Provides patrons with increased mileage for cycling at the park

iv. Develop nature and history interpretive trails

Develop interpretive amenities along existing or new trails to showcase the natural resources found in the park and historical elements and stories of the park's past. Both conventional and new technologies (kiosks, panels, cell phone tour, and mobile device applications) may be used for interpreting the park's resources and history. The new interpretive trail(s) will provide campground and day-use patrons something fun and educational to do.

Considerations:

- Aligns with the vision for the park
- Meets the statewide goal of engaging park visitors through programming at parks and historic sites
- Meets the statewide goal of providing opportunities for children and adults to reconnect with nature and recreation
- Trail system would attract additional visitors to the park and connect the museum to the park
- Impacts of trail construction and use would need to be mitigated

- Encourages physical activity among kids and adults
- Builds on the existing partnership with the museum friends' group
- Museum may receive additional visitors

v. Create multi-use natural surface trails in the park

Currently, no designated trails exist within the park that offer patrons an opportunity for a natural surface trail experience, whether through the woods or open areas. Natural surface trails would provide a different experience than the paved Lake Shore Trail.

Park visitors and public input have shown a desire for hiking paths to be constructed in the park. Areas in the park that have been identified as possible natural surface trail locations include near the campgrounds, near the northern ravine, and in the southern area of the park including near the Pioneer Cemetery. These trails would provide more of a backcountry-style hiking experience for park visitors looking for nature interpretation and scenery. They may accommodate hiking, cross-country skiing and/or snowshoeing.

Considerations:

- Meets master plan goals for creating trails in the park
- Aligns with the vision for the park
- Addresses public desire for multi-use natural surface trails
- Provides nearby activity for campers
- Encourages physical activity among kids and adults
- Some ground disturbances during construction
- Need assessments for trail locations and appropriate trail uses in regard to resources in the park

vi. Improve and designate water access along Lake Shore Trail

The Lake Shore Trail is very popular with walkers and cyclists and offers scenic views of Seneca Lake and allows patrons to access the cobbled shore. Improving access to the water was identified as a goal of the Master Plan. OPRHP staff identified multiple social paths that lead to the water from the Lake Shore Trail, and some offer an opportunity to designate water access for patrons along the trail. Staff identified one social trail that leads to the water from the Lake Shore Trail. This southernmost path is steep, unsafe and suffers from a great deal of erosion. To dissuade future use and minimize erosion, this alternative involves closing and re-vegetating this undesigned shore access point(s) using OPRHP trail closure standards and improving and designating two paths to offer sustainable access points for patrons to reach the water's edge. Designating and improving these trails for patron use will meet the goal of providing water access while limiting the potential for continued use of unwanted social trails.

Considerations:

- Provides designated and sustainable shore access to users on the Lake Shore Trail
- Takes advantage of existing access points with sustainable characteristics
- Help mitigate future erosion
- Improves safety of visitors
- Patrons may continue to use trail

Preferred alternatives – (ii) Improve cycling facilities; (iv) Develop nature and history interpretive trails; (v) Create multi-use natural surface trails in the park; and (vi) Improve and designate water access along Lake Shore Trail

Although the 2015 Draft Master Plan/EIS laid out a direction for the trails system within the park, since then OPRHP has leased a central portion of the park to a concessionaire with some existing and some future planned improvements. The planning team recognizes the need to develop a comprehensive trail system in the park but has decided to allow some time for the integration of the concessionaire's planned improvements prior to developing a

park-wide trails system. These were selected as the tentative preferred alternatives to address the desire to improve and expand trail opportunities and experiences within the park while protecting the resources of the park. Trails will be an integrated part of the park's overall vehicle/pedestrian circulation plan to be developed in the future.

Camping Loops Connector Paths

Background

Existing camping loops in the park are all within a walkable distance from popular park destinations such as the guarded swimming amenity, marina, park office, and fishing pier. Currently, campers must use existing roadways or undesignated social trails to travel from their camping loop to these locations. Creating established off-road paths for camping patrons improves their experience and eliminates potential negative interactions between vehicles and campers.

Action #10: Camping Loops Connector Paths alternatives considered

i. Status Quo – No connector paths created.

Considerations:

- Does not align with the vision for the park
- No environmental impacts
- Patrons will continue to use roadways and social trails for foot travel.

ii. Develop connector paths near camping loops.

Paths will be developed to provide campers with a route of travel from the entrance of each campground loop to the park office and to the waterfront. Paths would be a hardened surface and may be constructed to meet ADA standards where feasible.

Considerations:

- Aligns with the vision for the park
- Creates a more pleasant user experience
- Designates an off-road route of travel for patrons
- Improves safety for pedestrians in camping areas
- Locations offer sustainable grades and could be made ADA accessible

Preferred alternative: (ii) Develop connector paths near camping loops.

The planning team selected this as the preferred alternative because it will improve patrons' experience and safety while staying at the campground. The development of new connector paths will be coordinated with the park's overall vehicle/pedestrian/trails circulation plan to be developed in the future.

Winter Facilities

Background

Locally, winter activities include a number of outdoor winter activities, e.g. ice skating, sledding, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. These activities have a lower entry cost compared to other popular outdoor winter activities like snowmobiling and downhill skiing.

The weighted average Relative Index of Need (RIN) 2020 for this category for the Park is above the statewide average at 6.9 (see Table 1 in Chapter 1 of this document). However, the weighted average RIN for Seneca County, where the park is located, is below the statewide average at 3. The park remains open throughout the winter and cross-country skiing and snowshoeing on the Lake Shore Trail, unplowed roads, and natural areas are permitted. Sledding at state parks is prohibited, unless occurring in specially designated areas. Sampson is relatively flat with no suitable hills to provide this opportunity.

The Finger Lakes National Forest, also in Seneca County, offers over 30 miles of interconnected multi-use trails. During the winter, these trails provide opportunities for backcountry skiing and snowshoeing. The core of the Finger Lakes National Forest is about a 30-minute drive from Sampson.

Cross-country Ski Trail System

Background

Sampson does not have any designated groomed or backcountry cross-country ski trails. Patrons may ski on the Lake Shore Trail, unplowed roads, and within the natural areas of the park.

The average weighted RIN in this category for the Sampson service area is slightly above the statewide average at 5.8. The weighted average for Seneca County, where the park is located, is above the statewide average at 6. Other opportunities for cross-country skiing exist on designated trail systems within the Finger Lakes National Forest and other state lands in the surrounding counties.

Comments received during and after the public open house events indicated an active interest in multi-use trails. Specific comments regarding cross-country skiing opportunities were not received by the planning team.

Action #11: Cross-country Ski Trail System alternatives considered

i. Status Quo – No cross-country ski trails

Considerations:

- Does not meet the statewide goal of improving access to outdoor recreation opportunities to reconnect children and adults with nature
- Does not meet the master plan goal of providing and expanding recreational opportunities at the park
- Does not encourage activity among kids and adults
- Does not add a winter outdoor recreation activity to the park

ii. Provide an ungroomed cross-country ski trail system

Trails in the park will not have grooming machines prepare the surface for cross-country skiing. Snow surface will accumulate in a natural way, and users will follow existing pathways (trail and roads).

Considerations:

- Meets the statewide goal of improving access to outdoor recreation opportunities to reconnect children and adults with nature
- Meets the master plan goal of providing and expanding recreational opportunities at the park
- Meets expressed demand for trails
- Encourages activity among kids and adults
- Adds a winter outdoor recreation activity to the park
- May partner with local cross-country ski clubs/teams
- Trails would offer different degrees of difficulty and distances to accommodate a broad range of skiers
- Trail system could be 12-18 miles in length
- Trails would be marked and have a uniform wayfinding system
- Ski rentals would be available at the park office
- Provides additional revenue for the park

iii. Provide a groomed cross-country ski trail system

Considerations: include (ii) above and:

- Groomed trails are not available within the service area of the park

Preferred alternative – (i) Status Quo – No cross-country specific trails.

This preferred alternative was selected because the planning team determined that a multi-use trail system will be a better fit for the park based on current use and information gathered during the planning process. The Finger Lakes National Forest is nearby Sampson and has a trail system where cross-country skiing is permitted. For Sampson, cross-country skiing will be permitted on appropriate designated trails. These will be determined with the park's overall vehicle/pedestrian/trails circulation plan to be developed in the future.

Facilities and Operations

Energy Utilities

Background

Current electric service infrastructure will not support planned development in the park. Additional power is needed to increase capacity to meet future park needs.

Action #1-2: Energy Utilities alternatives considered

- i. **Status Quo – No changes to existing utilities infrastructure.**
 - Does not support the master plan goal of providing improved patron experience at the park.
 - Does not support new development at the park.
- ii. **Install a new substation.**

Considerations:

- Will meet the anticipated electrical needs for planned development in the park
- Will require dedicated space and new infrastructure
- Potential for visual impacts
- Some temporary ground disturbances during construction

- iii. **Add solar energy infrastructure to the park.**

Considerations:

- Aligns with the vision for the park
- Meets the master plan goals for sustainability within the park
- Meets the statewide goal of greening and lowering carbon emissions at state parks
- Potential for visual impacts
- Will require dedicated space and new infrastructure
- Some temporary ground disturbances during construction and utility work

Preferred alternatives – (ii) Install a new substation; (iii) Add solar energy infrastructure to the park.

The planning team selected these alternatives because they meet multiple master plan goals, including to increase sustainability at the park. The locations for these facilities will be determined in the future with further on-site assessment.

Internet Connectivity

Background

Sampson does not have an internet connection available for park patron use. The internet/network connectivity of the park office is also quite limited compared to other state park facilities.

There was a strong voice of support about providing this service heard during the public outreach events, through public comments received, and during the camper survey conducted at Sampson. An August 2014 study of campers asked about other amenities that patrons would like to see at Sampson. Of those surveyed, 66 percent would like a public internet connection/Wi-Fi provided at the park.

Action #3: Internet Connectivity alternatives considered

i. **Status Quo – No change to Internet connectivity within the Park**

Considerations:

- Does not meet master plan goal of providing and expanding amenities to increase patron satisfaction and meet the needs of special events, day users, regular camping and seasonal camping patrons.
- Lack of internet/network connectivity of the park office will continue.

ii. **Provide Internet/Wi-Fi coverage in developed areas of the Park (e.g. marina, campground, recreation building, museum, and other new facilities)**

Considerations:

- Meets master plan goal of providing and expanding amenities to increase patron satisfaction and meet the needs for special events, day users, regular camping, and seasonal camping patrons.
- Requires significant new network infrastructure.
- Internet/network connectivity of park office will be improved.

Preferred alternative – (ii) Provide Internet and Wi-Fi coverage in the park.

This was selected as the preferred alternative by the planning team because it fits with master plan goals. The planning team determined that a need exists to update the park’s current network. There is also supporting information that there is demand for these services.

Comfort Stations

Background

Sampson comfort stations are situated in each of the camp loops and near the waterfront guarded swimming amenity and marina. The comfort stations are original to the park, having been built in the 1960s at the same time as most of the rest of the infrastructure. The structures were built using concrete block with areas of brick veneer. The aging structures have energy-inefficient incandescent lighting or older fluorescent lighting. For the most part, the exterior and main structures of the comfort stations are in good condition. Interior amenities are clean and in decent repair as well, although with dated fixtures and tile.

The use of comfort stations within the concessionaire contract area is to be determined. A new comfort is available at the marina in the Ship’s Store.

Existing comfort stations are not compliant with current universal access guidelines. Access and use of each of the facilities may be difficult for persons with disabilities. An assessment of existing comfort stations (see Appendix E) and preliminary recommendations are provided in Table 3, below.

Table 3 – Preliminary Assessment and Recommendations

	Condition	Recommendation
Campground: Loop 1	Good	Modernize/Make ADA Compliant
Campground: Loop 2	Good	Modernize/Make ADA Compliant
Campground: Loop 3	Good	Modernize/Make ADA Compliant
Campground: Loop 4	Good	Modernize/Make ADA Compliant
Campground: Loop 5	Good	Modernize/Make ADA Compliant
Waterfront/ Guarded Swim Amenity	Good	Modernize/Make ADA Compliant
Picnic Shelter/Pavilion	Good	Use to be determined
Marina	Good	Use to be determined

Action #4: Comfort Stations alternatives considered

i. Status Quo – No changes to the existing comfort stations.

Considerations:

- Does not meet the statewide goal of fixing and greening aging park infrastructure
- Does not fulfill the master plan goal of protecting the natural environment by implementing sustainability actions
- Comfort stations will remain non-compliant with ADA guidelines
- Patron satisfaction will not improve
- Would not address energy inefficiencies

ii. Modernize existing comfort stations at camping loops.

Existing comfort stations will be retrofitted to comply with current universal design guidelines. Modifications to electrical and plumbing systems will increase energy efficiency and improve water conservation. More specifically, LED lighting will replace the aging fluorescent lighting, and no-touch fixtures, low-flow or waterless systems will replace existing plumbing fixtures. New interior fixtures, flooring, tile, and paint will update current interior schemes. Comfort station façades may also be updated.

Considerations:

- Meets the statewide goal of fixing and greening aging parks infrastructure
- Comfort stations would be updated to meet ADA guidelines
- Long-term patron satisfaction would likely improve
- Updated facilities may decrease maintenance-related issues
- Aligns with the mission of OPRHP to provide safe and enjoyable recreational and interpretive opportunities for all visitors
- Aligns with the vision for the park
- Meets master plan goals for access, sustainability, and operations
- Some ground disturbance (trenching, grading, etc.) with construction
- Some inconvenience for patrons as each comfort station is modernized

iii. Replace comfort stations.

Comfort stations will be replaced using updated OPRHP architectural designs. These designs include universal design elements that provide improved access for all park patrons. Comfort stations include a shower and changing facilities, family bathrooms, and low-flow or waterless toilet facilities. LED lighting complements natural lighting for increased energy efficiency. Selected comfort stations may be relocated or replaced in the same location. Replacement comfort stations will be phased in as resources permit.

Considerations:

- Meets the statewide goal of building a 21st-century green and sustainable park system
- Aligns with the mission of OPRHP to provide safe and enjoyable recreational and interpretive opportunities for all visitors
- Meets master plan goals for access, sustainability, and operations
- New locations of some comfort stations would improve the patron experience
- Fewer inconveniences for patrons (dependent on replacement in place or a new location)
- There would be ground disturbances (trenching, grading, etc.) with construction

Preferred alternative – (ii) Modernize existing comfort stations at camping loops.

The planning team selected this as the preferred alternative because it meets several of the master plan goals for the park. The existing buildings are considered to be in satisfactory condition supportive of the improvement work. Additional comfort stations are available within the concessionaire contract area.

Campground Dump Station Improvement/Expansion

Background

Sampson has one dump station available to service campground patrons. Many attending the public outreach events voiced their experiences using the current dump station. Long lines and extended wait times were a common complaint. In August 2015, the planning team conducted a survey of campground patrons' experiences staying at Sampson. Of those surveyed, 38 percent of campground patrons would like to see additional dump station locations provided at the park.

alternatives considered

Action #5: Dump Station Improvement alternatives considered

i. Status Quo – No change to current dump station facility.

Considerations:

- Does not meet the statewide goal of fixing aging infrastructure within our parks
- Does not meet current demand for services
- Potential health and safety issues

ii. Improve/expand existing dump station.

A four-bay station would replace the existing dump station. Access to the station would be reconfigured to improve staging patrons in line away from main park access roads. Equipment at the station would be updated as part of the new four-bay setup.

Considerations:

- Meets the statewide goal of fixing aging infrastructure within our parks
- May only marginally meet current demand for services
- Patron satisfaction may improve slightly
- Marginally mitigates health and safety issues

iii. Provide a new four-bay dump station

A new four-bay dump station would replace the existing station located behind the park office. Access to the dump station would be convenient and more efficient for campground patrons exiting the park. Patrons would access the station one-way, and the staging area would be configured to be outside of the main park access road.

Considerations:

- Meets the statewide goal of fixing aging infrastructure within our parks and opening new facilities
- The location and design can be tailored to fit current and future demand for services
- Patron satisfaction would improve measurably
- Mitigate any potential health and safety issues
- Eases concerns over long lines and extended wait times
- Provides an improved level of convenience for campground patrons

Preferred alternative – (iii) Provide a new four-bay dump station.

The planning team selected this as the preferred alternative because it addresses health and safety concerns and patron dissatisfaction for using the current dump station. A proposed location and layout has been identified (see Figures 10 and 10a).

Park Office/Visitor Center

Background

As noted earlier, the Sampson office is housed in the same building as the recreation space. It is an old building from before the site became a state park. The structure was built in an era when green building materials were not used, and energy efficiency was not the most important factor in its construction.

Action #6: Park Office/Visitor Center alternatives considered

i. Status Quo – No change to existing park office

Considerations:

- Does not meet the statewide goal of fixing and greening the aging infrastructure of our parks to create a 21st-century green and sustainable park system
- Does not modernize park operations or increase efficiency

ii. Improve existing park office building

The existing park office would be updated to increase energy efficiency, comply with universal design guidelines, and support more efficient park operations. More specifically, LED lighting will replace aging fluorescent lighting. Energy-efficient windows will replace old, inefficient ones, and additional insulation will decrease heating costs. Low-flow or waterless fixtures along with new floor and wall treatments will replace aging bathroom fixtures. The entryway of the park office will be redesigned considering universal design guidelines. New interior flooring and wall treatments will update the old. New modest furniture will provide a small seating area, and new cases and countertop will update the existing service counter.

The park will receive a new fiber service cable. Once installed, network connectivity will be improved to support park office operations. The network may be expanded later to provide wireless connections for patrons so they can access the Internet.

Considerations:

- Improving the existing facility allows elements of sustainability and green building materials to be used, consistent with statewide and master plan goals
- Modernizes and supports park operations
- Makes the existing building compliant with ADA and Universal Design Guidelines

iii. Construct a new park office building

Considerations:

- Modernizes and makes park operations more efficient
- Creates hub of information for activities in the park
- Small business office available to the public (computer, printer, etc.) to support the needs of campground patrons
- Open year-round to welcome winter visitors
- Can serve as a waiting area for bus tours to regional attractions (e.g., casino & Resort, Waterloo Outlet Mall, Bass Pro Shops, and local Wineries)
- Some temporary ground disturbances during site work and construction

Preferred alternative – (ii) Improve existing park office building

This alternative was chosen because the current location and size of the park office meet the needs of operating the park. The improvements fit the master plan goals by making the facility ADA accessible and improving energy efficiency, water conservation, better wireless connectivity, and facility maintenance issues.

Park Water System

Background

The existing water system in the park is aging and will require full replacement before the situation becomes critical. The current system was designed and constructed independently of the water system that was used for the naval base. Routine maintenance of the system and emergency repairs are handled by park staff or, if necessary, contracted out.

Action #7: Park Water System alternatives considered

i. Status quo – No change to existing water system

Considerations:

- Does not meet statewide goal of fixing aging infrastructure in parks
- Does not meet master plan goals for operations and maintenance
- System continues to age and may require costly emergency repairs
- System could reach a point where it is unable to remain compliant with Department of Health and local government regulations

ii. Replace core water system infrastructure in the park

Considerations:

- Meets the statewide goal of fixing aging infrastructure in parks
- Updated system should minimize the amount of resources used for routine maintenance and emergency repairs
- System meets new standards if applicable
- System provides better service to patrons visiting the park
- Requires minor ground disturbances
- The existing water system in the park would be replaced in its entirety. New distribution lines, valves, filters, and service pumps would be installed as part of the replacement system.

Preferred alternative – (ii) Replace core water system infrastructure in the park.

The planning team selected this alternative because it aligns with the vision for the park and accommodate new development. It will also meet the statewide goal for repairing aging infrastructure in the park.

Park Roads

Background

Sampson was originally designed to support the function of an active Naval Base and training ground, hosting tens of thousands of service personnel in its lifetime. Subsequently, it was used by the Air Force for the same function. Because the road system was designed to accommodate its barracks, parade grounds, and accessory buildings, it is linear and grid-like and does not offer visitors a park-like experience. When the park was designed, many park elements, such as the campground and day-use area, were positioned using the existing road configuration. Many of the roads no longer address the needs of the park. Many of the park's roads need resurfacing and/or have other maintenance issues.

Action #8: Park Roads alternatives considered

i. Status quo – No change to existing park roads

Considerations:

- Condition of park roads will not change
- Configuration of park roads will continue without responding to the needs of the park

ii. Improve existing park roads

Considerations:

- Meets the statewide goal of fixing aging infrastructure in parks
- Meets the master plan goals for operations and maintenance
- Improves patron satisfaction
- Includes a new wayfinding system
- Select roads would be resurfaced

iii. Develop a uniquely designed park road system connecting existing and new facilities, improving roads that are retained and removing unneeded roads

The existing park road configuration and public vehicle access to some roads would likely change under this alternative. A newly designed main park road system will use some existing roads but may require the construction of new roads or new sections of roads.

Considerations:

- Would improve vehicle and pedestrian flow in the park
- Responds better to park needs and configuration
- Areas where roads are removed can revert to natural vegetation

Preferred alternative – (iii) Develop a uniquely designed park road system plan to connect existing and new facilities, improving roads that are retained and removing unneeded roads.

Although the 2015 Draft Master Plan/EIS laid out a direction for redesigning the road system, since then OPRHP has leased a central portion of the park to a concessionaire with some existing and some future planned improvements. The planning team recognizes the need to redesign the park road system in the park but has decided to allow some time for the integration of the concessionaire's planned improvements prior to developing a redesign plan. The core team chose this alternative because it was identified that the road system should better meet the needs of the park, as described in the vision. This alternative also likely allows reversion of some road sections to natural vegetation and meets agency goals of sustainability. OPRHP will further assess the park's vehicular/pedestrian/trails system in the future.

Parade Ground

Background

The main open space of the park is a large mowed area which formerly functioned as a parade ground. The area is used occasionally for large organized events or for visitors to play field sports. A large storage building located in the northeast corner of this area houses the tractors used in maintaining the park.

Water and electrical service are not available in the parade ground area. One concept for this space improves access and the park's capacity to host large, organized events (see Figure X). The concept includes new pathways, native plantings and pollinator gardens. Installing water and electrical service would provide more convenient access to these amenities during events.

Action #9: Parade Ground alternatives considered

i Status Quo - No changes to Parade Ground

Considerations:

- Does not align with the vision developed for the park
- Does not leverage this space toward meeting master plan goals
- Would not improve park aesthetics
- Would not add capacity for regional tourism events interested in outdoor venues
- Does not set the park up to attract new regional events held out-of-doors

ii Improve Parade Ground; provide electric and water service and create an event space in the storage building

Considerations:

- Aligns with the vision for the park
- Improved amenities would attract additional regional tourism events interested in outdoor venues
- Would provide additional indoor space to hold events in the park
- Would strengthen the park’s connection with the lake during large outdoor events

Preferred Alternative – (i) Status Quo – No changes to Parade Ground

The 2015 Draft Master Plan/EIS indicated (ii) as the preferred alternative and that moving large outdoor events closer to the lake and main developed area of the park is the preferred long-term alternative. This alternative would create a greater sense of connection with the lake at large outdoor events in the park. The redesigned space would have pathways for better access to the waterfront and campground.

The Parade Grounds are within the concessionaire’s contract area. For the 2020 season, the parade grounds will be used as they have in the past. In the future, assessments will be made to determine if this use will continue in this location or be moved elsewhere in the park.

Navy and Air Force Veterans Museum

Background

The park’s rich military history is on display in the on-site museum, which was created by World War II veterans who trained at the Sampson Naval Training Center, and Korean War veterans who trained at Sampson Air Force Base.

A proposed plan to improve pedestrian and vehicular circulation around the museum has been developed which links the museum to roadways, sidewalks and a new event parking area. The museum entry will be improved with a new plaza, seating, signage and bicycle racks.

Action #10: Veterans Museum alternatives considered

i. Status Quo – Do not make any changes to the museum or adjacent grounds.

Considerations:

- Dedicated parking for the museum and events will not be provided
- Road configuration will remain without responding to the needs of the museum or adjacent activities
- Museum entry is not welcoming to visitors
- Museum entry does not provide adequate information or amenities

ii. Implement pedestrian and vehicle circulation improvements only.

Considerations:

- Improves vehicular and pedestrian access to the museum
- Responds to museum and park needs
- Provides better service to patrons visiting the park
- The museum entry will remain without signage or other amenities

iii. Implement an improved circulation and entry plan for the museum and adjacent grounds which responds to the desired usage and needs of the park.

Considerations:

- Improves vehicular and pedestrian access to the museum
- Provides a welcoming and functional entrance plaza

- Formalizes an events area and provides dedicated parking
- Will upgrade the aesthetic appearance of the museum

Preferred alternative – (iii) Implement an improved circulation and entry plan for the museum and adjacent grounds which responds to the desired usage and needs of the park. (See Figures 11, 11a and 11b for conceptual plans).

The core team selected this alternative because implementation will meet the master plan goal of improving the visitor experience and public safety at the park.



Water Tower

Background

The water tower is one of the originally highlighted facilities remaining to be decommissioned at the park. A public water supply continues to service the park today. The location and visibility of the water tower have encouraged exploration by the public. Full removal of the water tower and accessory pump house will improve public safety.

Action #11: Water Tower alternatives considered

i. Status Quo – Do not remove the water tower and accessory building.

Considerations:

- Public safety is not improved
- Scenic quality of the park boundary along Route 96A would not improve
- Steel and other valuable materials would not be recycled

ii. Remove the water tower and accessory building.

Considerations:

- Aligns with the vision and goals for the park
- Public safety would improve
- Improved scenic quality of the park boundary along Route 96A
- Steel and other valuable materials would be recycled

Preferred alternative – (ii) Remove the water tower and accessory building.

The core team selected this alternative because implementation will meet the master plan goal of improving public safety.

Firing Range

Background

Located in the southern area of the park, the firing range is an example of the historical landscape from the era of the Sampson Air Force Base and Naval Base. In recent years, the range has been used for training by local law enforcement agencies, NYSDEC, State Police, and State Park Police. Currently, the range is used on occasion and only by Finger Lakes State Park Police for necessary trainings usually during the spring or fall. At other times, State Park Police travel extended distances to training facilities outside of the region to combine trainings with other staff.

The firing range is comprised of an open area approximately 1.6 acres in size, and an earthen-berm backstop. The area is mowed twice a year. A portion of the Lake Shore Trail is closed when the range is in use. There is currently no fencing around the range and no permanent signage. Signage to alert the public is installed temporarily during periods of range use.

Maintaining this facility for training purposes would provide a more conveniently located space for needed Police training activities in the Finger Lakes region.

Action #12: Firing Range alternatives considered

- i. Status Quo – No changes to Range; mowed twice annually and used occasionally by Park Police.

Considerations:

- Maintains a needed local training facility for Park Police
- Minimal impact to public use of the Lake Shore Trail

- iv. Decommission the Firing Range.

Considerations:

- Does not maintain a needed local training facility for Park Police
- Requires professional outdoor range decommission/reclamation services
- Reclamation would be very expensive
- Reclamation of the site would add to the park’s natural areas and meet master plan stewardship goals

Preferred alternative – (i) Status Quo – No Changes to Range; continue to mow twice annually and retain for occasional use by Park Police.

The core team selected this alternative because this will continue to fill an operational need in the region. A gate along the park road, signage and fencing may be installed to further enhance public safety.

Sustainability and Green Infrastructure

Background

Sampson is committed to sustainable and ecologically sensitive operations, including renewable energy sourcing and use, water conservation, recycling, reduced mowing, protecting rare/endangered species, native plant selection for revegetation, and green stormwater management.

Additional sustainability improvements will be incorporated as technology, resources, and opportunities arise. Going forward, Sampson is committed to exploring all sustainability features available to its facility and implementing sustainable infrastructure upgrades when practicable.

Action #13: Sustainability and Green Infrastructure alternatives considered

- i. Status Quo – No changes to sustainability efforts.

Considerations:

- Does not meet the statewide goal of greening state Parks
- Does not align with the vision for the Park
- Does not meet stewardship goals for the Park

- ii. Alternative 2 – Explore and incorporate new green infrastructure and sustainable practices at the facility.

Considerations:

- Aligns with the Park’s vision for sustainability within the Park
- Meets the statewide goal of greening state parks

Energy:

- Conduct energy audit.
- Improve energy-efficiency of buildings

- May require some new infrastructure
- Work with OPRHP staff trained in sustainability, solar, and green infrastructure installation

Water:

- Consult with OPRHP sustainability staff to assess water bills
- Identify and repair leaky infrastructure

Recycling:

- Consider limiting the use of Styrofoam, plastic cutlery, and other non-compostable materials by concessionaires and vendors

Preferred Alternative – The preferred alternative is (ii) Explore and incorporate new green infrastructure and sustainable practices at the facility.

The planning team selected this alternative because it directs the Park to strive for energy efficiency and explore new sustainability practices that can reasonably be incorporated into its operations. Training in-house sustainability staff, utilizing OPRHP support, exploring emergent technologies and potential funding opportunities will serve to make green infrastructure and practices increasingly accessible.



Chapter 3 – Selection of the Preferred Alternative

Selecting the Preferred Alternative

Two alternatives are considered in this EIS for the further development of the park.

The first alternative is the Status Quo, where the park will continue as it is with existing natural resource protection, recreational facilities and management and operation. In this alternative, no changes would be made to the park to meet current needs of the agency or the park patrons.

The numbered alternatives are the alternatives considered by the core team for the master plan. The master plan is the plan of changes in the park which is made up of the combination of all the preferred alternatives for the elements analyzed in Chapter 2. These changes encompass all park aspects, including natural resources, recreational resources, and management and operations.

The preferred plan alternative for the park is the master plan alternative as described in the accompanying document.

Rationale for Selection

The core team analyzed the status quo and other alternatives with respect to the park vision and goals that guide changes in the park. Although management and operation of the park continue to a high degree of excellence, some changes are necessary because the park no longer fully serves the original intention of its formation, nor does it meet current recreational needs as completely as it could with some changes, reconfigurations or additions. Staff and patrons have indicated areas where changes and improvements could be made that will enhance the user experience and the variety of recreation options available at the park.

The preferred master plan alternative was chosen because the changes it suggests improve natural resource protection, expand recreational opportunities, and enhance management and operation in ways that support the realization of the park's vision and goals.

In choosing the master plan over the status quo, OPRHP is making a commitment to improvements and changes in the park over the next decade and perhaps longer, which will be in the interest of users and staff and will have a positive impact on recreation and the facility's natural and cultural resources.



Chapter 4 – Environmental Impacts & Mitigation

This chapter focuses on the environmental impacts and mitigation of potential adverse impacts resulting from the implementation of the master plan. For the purposes of SEQR compliance, the two documents together – Master Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) – satisfy the requirements for an environmental impact statement as specified in the rules and regulations implementing SEQR (NYCRR §617). A description of the preferred alternative can be found in the Master Plan document. The environmental setting is discussed in the EIS Chapter 1. Chapters 2 and 3 of this document contain the alternatives analysis and the selection of the preferred alternative.

Environmental Impacts of Alternatives

This chapter has two primary parts: a summary of environmental impacts associated with the alternatives considered, and a more detailed analysis of impacts associated with implementation of the Master Plan, including a discussion of mitigation measures. Alternatives were analyzed and developed in Chapter 2 for natural resource protection strategies, recreation development and management support for the park.

The analyses and choice of preferred alternatives are based on:

- Information about existing conditions (Chapter 1)
- Vision and goals of the master plan
- Consideration of demand for various activities
- Site constraints
- Other considerations: as specific to each element's resource analyses.

The Master Plan consists of the combined preferred alternatives for each identified activity.

Status Quo Alternative

This alternative consists of the current facilities, programs and practices at the park as described in Chapter 1. Under this alternative, current resource protection, operations, and facility management practices would continue. The increasing and changing recreational demands on the park would not be addressed, nor would existing impacts be mitigated. There would be no opportunity to address conservation of the resources under recent changes to Environmental Conservation Law or Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Law.

Although the Status Quo Alternative may not result in any immediate adverse environmental impacts due to the construction of new facilities or changes to existing ones, the potential exists for long-term indirect adverse environmental impacts. This is because there would be no plan to guide use, protection or development of the park. If more park visitors seek to use the park and use it in new or unforeseen ways, additional demands will be placed on the natural, cultural and recreational resources. Without the guidance provided by the Master Plan, which directs more intensive use and development toward areas with capacity for such use and away from the most sensitive areas of the park, the potential for adverse impacts on environmental resources increases.

Preferred Alternative and the Final Master Plan

The master plan is the compilation of all the preferred alternatives for natural resource protection, recreation development and support facility development elements identified in Chapter 2 of the EIS. This compilation was subject to a final evaluation and synthesis to assure that there was consistency among the various alternatives. This assessment resulted in the Final Master Plan. The Plan will provide

considerable resource protection and recreational benefits. The Plan/EIS identifies potential adverse impacts, both short and long term, and ways to, if not eliminate them, minimize them to the fullest extent possible through appropriate mitigation measures. From a long-term perspective, implementation of the park master plan will result in a beneficial environmental impact by ensuring that the most sensitive areas of the park will be identified, monitored and provided appropriate stewardship and that the various systems and services are maintained, preserved and protected. Environmental impacts of the master plan are discussed more fully in the rest of this chapter.

Environmental Impacts Associated with Implementation of the Master Plan and Proposed Mitigation

The master plan for Sampson seeks to provide improvements to existing natural resource protection strategies and recreation development while providing additional protection for sensitive natural resources within the park. Planning for new and expanded recreational facilities in the park reflects this and the proposed locations of new or expanded facilities avoid sensitive resources to the extent practicable.

Concessionaire Lease Area

As noted earlier, in 2018, OPRHP entered into a long-term contract (40-year lease) with a concessionaire to redevelop and operate the marina, waterfront, and adjacent upland areas with additional camping, recreation activities, and services. Part of this was discussed as an alternative in the Draft Master Plan/DEIS. Marina rehabilitation was completed in 2019. Installation of some new cabins, RV campsites, and a ship's store, was completed for the 2020 season. Additional marina and waterfront amenities include waterfront green space, more parking, and a new concession building. These upgrades were reviewed separately under SEQR and are not covered in this EIS; they are considered existing conditions. All other facilities proposed as part of the concessionaire contract are being reviewed under this Final Master Plan/EIS and are incorporated into the discussions below.

The planning and analysis process involved review of the park's natural and cultural resources, in respect to the proposed development locations, and discussions with the concessionaire, OPRHP staff, and New York Natural Heritage Program and OPRHP Division for Historic Preservation (DHP) staff.

Although designs offered by the concessionaire are conceptual in nature, modifications were made to potential new facility locations and design parameters for future development to avoid, minimize, and mitigate potential adverse environmental impacts. These include: reducing the overall footprint for improvements; using existing infrastructure (i.e. roads) to the extent practicable; maintaining vegetated buffer areas along the ravines/streams to help protect water quality, riparian habitat, locally significant forested habitat, and sensitive species; maintaining a vegetated buffer along the lake shoreline to also reduce potential visual impacts; other water quality considerations including minimizing impervious surfaces as feasible and including appropriate stormwater treatment measures; design considerations for any new buildings to consider height and exterior façade to reduce visual impacts and keep a park-like aesthetic; use of BMPs for invasive species management during construction, and on-going monitoring and management in conjunction with Parks staff; and working with Parks staff on management of open areas not to be developed for mowing regimes (number and time of year) to help protect grassland bird species.

As with all proposed development, any project or activity proposed in the lease area that may impact historic resources or landscapes at the park will undergo Section 14.09 review by OPRHP's DHP staff, in accordance with the State Historic Preservation Act. Any routine operation or maintenance that requires ground disturbance also requires review by DHP.

Land (Topography, Geology, and Soils)

The master plan provides a framework for improvements to existing recreational facilities and programs. Implementation of these improvements will result in some physical changes to the land. Consideration for the additional protection of the park's sensitive natural resources is reflected in the planning and proposed actions (see Figures 14-14a, Resource Protection Areas). The plan proposes several larger projects that will have a greater degree of impact on the landscape than smaller projects. Most of the project proposals are centered within the core area of the park that is already developed with other facilities. Most of the park will remain in its current condition.

The following is a discussion of major master plan projects and their potential impact on the land. A discussion of smaller projects that will have minor physical changes to the land follows this section.

Concessionaire Lease Area – The full build-out scenario for the leased area includes development of:

- Full-service RV camping sites east (uphill) of the marina and RV sites currently being installed; generally located in the open mowed fields;
- Additional cabins to the south of this area on the south side of the park road (previous location of cabins recently moved to Cayuga Lake and adjacent successional shrubland);
- Full-service RV camping sites and cabins in successional shrubland areas in the southern third of the lease area;
- Associated amenities including playgrounds, small pools, picnic areas, comfort stations, open areas for events/gatherings, gazebos, a small band shell, and pedestrian pathways/trails; and a hotel and event center with associated parking.

The majority of the planned improvements are located in open mowed areas, along park roads, and in successional shrubland habitat, all of which had been cleared and utilized for the air force base in the 1950s. Development of these facilities will require soil disturbance during site work and construction. New RV camping facilities, cabins, and buildings will include electric, water, and sewer lines. Often upgraded or new underground utilities are aligned in existing utility trenches and/or along existing roads or other corridors, both to minimize disturbance in new areas and to keep utility infrastructure easily accessible.

There will be permanent changes to landform for the creation of any new parking areas and roads, walkways, campsite pads, and buildings. Existing infrastructure, such as roads and utilities, will be utilized to the extent practicable. The majority of the proposed areas are generally flat requiring only minor grading. Any buildings and pools will likely require some excavation.

Some trees and shrubland vegetation would need to be removed for new facilities. There would be an increase of impervious surfaces related to asphalt parking areas, new road connections, RV pads (may be gravel), any paved pathways, and buildings (roofs). Cabins will likely be placed on concrete pads. Impervious surfaces will be minimized to the extent practicable; porous pavement or other pervious material will be used where feasible. Stormwater runoff from the additional impervious surfaces is expected to be minor. Mitigation such as porous paving and rain gardens will be considered to reduce potential impacts from stormwater runoff. BMPs will be used to mitigate movement of sediment from the site during construction.

New Solar Array – The master plan proposes the addition of solar energy infrastructure in the park; location is still to be determined. Ideally, this would be constructed in an open field with unobstructed access to southern aspect sunshine and within close proximity to existing electric utility lines. Panels would likely be installed on pedestals that are anchored to concrete spread footings to reduce ground

disturbance and new impervious surfaces. Minor excavation would take place when establishing the spread footings and utility service trenches used to connect the system to the park's current electrical infrastructure. Location(s) will be assessed, and environmental review completed as needed when final location is selected.

New Four-bay Dump Station & Removal of Current Dump Station – The master plan proposes the removal of the current dump station located behind the park office. The decommissioning of the current dump station will include removal of the holding tank, pavement, and rinsing equipment. The excavation of the holding tank will cause minor disturbances to the surrounding grassy areas and will expose soil. The total disturbance is not expected to be greater than one acre. BMPs, including silt fencing and erosion control plantings, will be used to minimize any movement of sediment from the site during construction. Excavated soils will remain onsite to be used when backfilling the holding tank location.

A new four-bay dump station will be constructed (for proposed location and layout, see Figures 10 and 10a). The new location and larger facility will improve circulation and help shorten wait times for patrons. The new dump station will have four pull-through bays. The facility will have a short, paved access road leading to four asphalt lanes with concrete islands for rinsing equipment near each drain. Tree and shrub removal, grubbing, excavation for the holding tanks, and grading of the preferred site are expected to be part of the required work. The total disturbance associated with building the facility is not expected to be greater than one acre. BMPs will be used to minimize movement of sediment from the site during construction. Increased stormwater runoff from additional impervious surfaces is not expected to impact the land, local streams, or Seneca Lake. This project may move forward with a separate SEQR review due to its urgent need to address operational issues and timing constrictions of a likely funding source.

Park-wide Water Distribution System – The master plan proposes replacement of the water distribution system in the park. Replacement of this infrastructure will require ground disturbance of existing utility trenches that are in the developed area of the park. Excavation of the utility trenches for the new water distribution system will disturb greater than one acre but no more than five acres of previously disturbed and developed areas in the park. All construction documents will include appropriate erosion and sediment controls; controls will be implemented and monitored in the field. State and local permits will be acquired as needed.

Vehicular/Pedestrian/Trails Plan – A plan will be developed to improve and possibly reconfigure the park road system. A new roadway system would utilize some existing park roads and may construct new sections of road in the park. Some existing segments to be reused may receive improvements to drainage features and new culverts as needed. These types of projects will require excavation to regrade banks and will incorporate erosion and sediment controls and restore disturbed areas with native vegetation. Reused sections may also be repaved. New sections of roadway would require removal of vegetation, grading, drainage work, and paving. Road design and construction must follow all appropriate guidelines applicable to public access in state parks. The use of green infrastructure (e.g., permeable surfaces, bioswales and other infiltrating practices) to manage stormwater will be considered when practicable. The potential impacts on the land would be minimal. Proposed routes will not cross areas of regulated wetland, significant ecological communities, or critical habitats. All road construction activities will follow site-specific BMPs to minimize the impacts of all ground disturbances.

Pedestrian circulation paths and the trail system will be further assessed in the future as well. Some pathway and trail development may occur through or close to ravine areas to allow patrons to move north/south through the park (ravines run east/west). There may be some impact to sensitive ravine areas due to this development. To help mitigate these potential impacts, pathway and trail alignments will be

planned very carefully for grades, accessibility, surfacing, minimum required width to the extent practicable, and providing appropriate viewpoints and access to park resources while protecting highly sensitive areas. Signage may be installed to help educate patrons about the need for protection of resources. Coordination with the region's trail crew for trail design will assist in minimizing potential impacts as well. Parts of existing roads that are not used for trails or new road configurations may either be removed and/or allowed to revert to a natural state.

Smaller Projects

Upgrade existing camping loops – This will require some ground disturbance from site work, including trenching for electric and water service. This would generally occur along existing roads or other cleared pathways. Design will include a planting plan for native shade trees and vegetative buffers. The modernization of existing comfort stations will retrofit existing buildings to comply with current universal design guidelines. Modifications to electrical and plumbing systems will increase energy efficiency and improve water conservation. More specifically, LED lighting will replace the aging fluorescent lighting, and low-flow or waterless systems will replace existing plumbing fixtures. New interior fixtures, flooring, tile, and paint will update current interior schemes. Comfort station façades may also be updated to enhance their visual appearance in the park setting. New connector pathways in the camping loops may require some ground disturbance along existing corridors to provide accessible walkways. These may be designed in conjunction with the vehicular/pedestrian/trail circulation plan in the future.

Guarded Swimming Amenity Area and Fishing Pier improvements – These improvements will entail minor ground disturbance in already developed areas to improve guarded swimming amenity area and pier accessibility (see Figure 13, ADA Access Plan at Guarded Swimming Amenity). Pathways will be improved, and the pier will be resurfaced with concrete. BMPs will be used to minimize movement of disturbed soils and to protect the adjacent waterbody.

New Pavilion and Picnic Area - The full-service pavilion may be sized to accommodate up to 200 people. Pavilions that can accommodate such use are generally ~3,500 to 4,500 square feet, or around 50' x 75'. A new pavilion may require a new parking lot depending on the final location. A new picnic area would likely entail installing grills and picnic tables in an open area. These facilities are very likely to be sited in or near previously developed areas.

Recreation Building/Park Office – upgrades to these facilities will be to the existing building. No new building or expansion is proposed for this facility. Upgrades will include ADA accessibility, energy-efficient lighting and windows, additional insulation, and updated indoor games and event space.

Court Games – The court games area will be updated in place with minor expansion for bocce ball courts. This area is surrounded by open mowed fields.

Substation – A new substation would likely be located in the developed area of the park and be expected to have minimal physical disturbance.

Internet and Wi-Fi Coverage – Providing internet and Wi-Fi coverage in developed areas of the park may require some ground disturbance for trenching cables. Directional drilling will be used when practicable to reduce ground disturbance. The majority of cables will likely be placed along existing corridors, such as, along roads and in open areas.



Navy and Air Force Veterans Museum – The improved circulation and entry plan for the museum and adjacent grounds will require some paving for parking areas and walkways in existing mowed areas (see Figures 11-11b, Military Museum Conceptual Site Plan). Pervious surfacing will be used as practicable, but there will be a minor increase in impervious surfaces.

Remove Water Tower and Accessory Building – Removal of the building will reduce some impervious surfacing. Materials will be recycled or discarded at an appropriate facility. The removal of these facilities will improve the scenic quality of the park and enhance public safety.

Firing Range – Signage and a gate will be installed at the range; fencing may be installed requiring minimal ground disturbance.

General Project Considerations

Most of the area proposed for development consists of moderately well drained and well drained soils and is located outside of the floodplain. Proposed development will take place away from steep slopes, which are found along multiple ravines running east-west in the park. Vegetated buffers will remain along the ravines.

Stormwater runoff will be increased by the addition of impervious surfaces, such as, building roofs, campsite pads, roadways, paved pathways, and parking areas. There will be some removal of impervious surfaces with the removal of the water tower building and potentially some sections of roadways. Green design will be used, where feasible, for any new construction to minimize the effects of stormwater runoff. Porous pavement, vegetated drainage swales, and proper drainage design will be used where applicable to help mitigate water quality impacts from runoff following storm events. These elements slow the rate by which stormwater is conveyed to local streams, rivers, and lakes. Pollutants are filtered by local vegetation and by percolating through the ground before entering groundwater. Careful planning and site-specific design will be applied to all new facilities to minimize the potential for erosion.

An erosion control plan will be prepared for all construction projects proposed in the Master Plan that have the potential to disturb park soils or result in erosion. Any projects that will disturb one acre or more will be subject to the State Pollution Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) General Permit

process. This process includes the development of a site-specific Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and sedimentation and erosion control plans. Best Management Practices (BMPs), as described in the New York State Standards and Specifications (NYS DEC, 2016) (DEC, 2016), will be used to reduce impacts to soils on the project sites. Some measures which will be used include minimizing soil disturbance and vegetation removal, the use of silt fencing and straw bales where needed, preservation of vegetated buffers, and seeding and mulching of disturbed areas as soon as possible following work. New plantings of native species may also be used for aesthetics, shade and soil stabilization.

Renovation projects for existing buildings or new building projects will meet or exceed the state energy code by 20%. Reduced energy use in the park contributes to the overall reduction of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions from park operations statewide. The use of renewables (e.g. the proposed solar array) further reduces the amount of non-renewable energy used for park operations also decreasing GHG emissions.

Water

Impact on Lake and Stream Water Quality

It is not anticipated that the implementation of the master plan will have significant adverse environmental impacts on the water quality of Seneca Lake or local streams in or near the park.

Projects proposed within the Master Plan with the potential to impact water quality include: new RV campsites and cabins; new comfort stations; small pools; gazebos; a small band shell; pedestrian pathways/trails; hotel and event center with associated parking; new pavilion; solar installation; new dump station; museum parking/pathways, and changes to the road system.

These potential impacts can come from construction activities and from the installation of new impervious surfaces. The “Land” impacts section above included discussion of how construction of new park facilities will minimize impacts from sedimentation and erosion to protect water quality. Green design will be used, where feasible considering site conditions, cost, and operations, for any new construction to minimize the effects of stormwater runoff. Porous pavement, vegetated drainage swales, and proper drainage design will be used where applicable to help mitigate water quality impacts from runoff following storm events. All new pathways will be designed to control stormwater and minimize erosion. All construction activities will incorporate mitigation in the form of appropriate sediment and erosion control BMPs to minimize impacts to water quality from runoff. Vegetated buffers between any new construction and water resources, including the streams in the ravines and the lake shoreline, will be retained to protect these sensitive areas and maintain water quality. Additional buffer areas will be planted with native plants as needed.

Additional information about aquatic invasive species will be posted at the boat launch and in the marina. The additional signage and aquatic weed disposal station will have some beneficial impacts on Seneca Lake by covering the importance of Clean, Drain, and Dry (Appendix B).

Impacts on Ground Water

The park is connected to municipal water and sewer systems. Prior to any new development that involves increased water usage and sewer capacity, such as, cabins, RV sites, comfort stations, other buildings, and RV dump stations, appropriate permits/approvals will be sought to assure demand and capacity can be accommodated. No impacts to groundwater quality are anticipated from projects proposed in the master plan.

Wetlands

There will be no impacts to wetlands. There are no known State-regulated wetlands located in the park; however, there are several small National Wetland Inventory (NWI) wetlands in the park. A recent survey by the New York Natural Heritage Program (NYNHP) identified some of the federal wetlands in the northeast portion of the park as Red-maple-hardwood Swamp (Lundgren, 2014-A). Although none is proposed currently, any new development proposed near these locations in the future will be done in consultation with regional natural resource stewardship biologists and staff from NYNHP to avoid or minimize potential impacts to these sensitive areas.

Air

Full implementation of the master plan will result in increased use of the park. The increased travel to the park to use the camping facilities, waterfront area or other new park amenities will have minor impacts on overall air quality. There is the potential for an impact on local air quality on a seasonal basis due to the increased use of campfires in the expanded camping area. The new seasonal campsite option may encourage fewer trips for large RVs or large vehicles towing recreational trailers. The new solar arrangements and park-wide energy efficient upgrades will help to mitigate any additional energy consumption from improvements. Increasing the share of renewables at the park like this will benefit overall air quality both within the state and regionally.

Other potential air quality impacts as a result of master plan implementation will be minimal. Short term temporary impacts that may occur as a result of master plan implementation could include minor temporary increases in construction vehicle exhaust and some generation of dust during construction. Construction of projects proposed in the master plan will take place over several years, however, so impacts would be widely spread out both in space and time. Air quality impacts from construction vehicles will be mitigated by assuring that these vehicles are in good running condition and are not producing excessive exhaust.

Biological Resources

The NYNHP and other partners have documented multiple significant biological resources within the park. These vary from locally significant forested ravines with maple-basswood rich mesic forests, rare plant and animal species, and fourteen distinct ecological community types including a long intact cobble shoreline. The importance of these resources is recognized in this plan starting with the overall vision statement and strategies and carrying through with the specific recommendations that recognize the significance of the resources. Overall, this plan is expected to have a net positive impact on these resources by developing a stewardship plan, invasive species management plan, siting most of the development in previously disturbed areas, and having design implementation that will reduce impacts to sensitive areas (see Figures 14-14a, Resource Protection Areas).

Ecological Communities and Flora

Master Plan implementation will result in impacts to some of the natural communities in the park. Most of the planned improvements are located in open mowed areas and along park roads, though some are in successional shrubland habitat. Projects have been sited primarily in areas with previous and recent development and general accessibility to, and use of, existing infrastructure and structures.

Most planned improvements are located in the developed areas of the park to reduce the need and impacts of removing vegetation. The main exception is for proposed camping facilities in the southern portion of the concessionaire lease area. The southern portion is proposed as additional full-service RV camping sites and cabins with associated amenities such as a playground, comfort stations, a small pool,

and pedestrian pathways (see Figure 12, Marina, RV and Cabin Camping Layout). The proposed development area is mostly successional shrubland with remnant paved roads and is bounded by successional southern hardwood forest and ravines. Successional shrubland habitat covers 160 acres of the 2,070-acre park with approximately 30 acres of potential disturbance to shrubland habitat.

Through conceptual design and planning discussions, the footprint of the original proposal was reduced for new development to remain within some of the existing park road boundaries to help maintain a wider vegetative buffer for sensitive ravine areas. Additionally, the existing road infrastructure will be used to the extent practicable to reduce the area of new disturbance. A forested buffer area along the lake shoreline will be maintained to help protect the shoreline habitat. There may be some selective removal of vegetation including limbing to provide lake views from camp sites. No large or mature trees will be selected for removal. Any new proposed pedestrian pathway alignments accommodating the new camping facilities or trails will be assessed and use sustainable design during layout and construction to minimize impacts to sensitive areas, such as, if needed to cross ravines to connect to the main use area of the park.

None of the natural communities in the park are considered to be significant from a statewide perspective, but the maple-basswood rich mesic forests located in the ravines and the intact cobble shoreline are of local importance. Master Plan implementation will result in some impacts to environmentally sensitive areas, specifically the locally significant ravine areas, due to new camping facilities and amenities. Protection of these areas has been enhanced by previous planning and will be attained by careful placement and design of new park facilities and implementing additional protection measures, such as, enhancing vegetative buffers, installing signage and identifying priorities for invasive species management to abate key threats to native flora and fauna. Protection of the cobble shoreline will involve maintaining an upland forested buffer where it currently exists and limiting vehicle use, grading and raking to clear trash and wrack along the beach, except at the guarded swimming amenity. Wrack provides habitat for invertebrates and plants and can be a food supply for birds and other animals that feed along the shoreline.

Management of the remaining successional shrubland and grassland habitat, as well as, other natural communities in the park, will be implemented according to a stewardship plan. The stewardship plan, proposed by this master plan, will identify science-based natural resource projects that promote healthy forests and habitats for DEC's Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) listed species, migratory and breeding birds, and game species, such as wild turkey and ruffed grouse. Measures to maintain open habitat for birds can also support native pollinators so the plan will also attempt to identify and acknowledge this role. Maintaining and improving wildlife habitat—particularly for birds—in the park is a key strategy of this master plan based on species currently in the park and regional goals identified by Audubon New York for protecting early successional habitat and species. Enhancing wildlife in the area provides additional recreation opportunities for patrons.

Project components that will be sited and designed in the future include a solar installation, substation, pavilion, and a vehicular/pedestrian/trails circulation plan. Ideally, the solar installation would be constructed in an open field with unobstructed access to southern aspect sunshine and in close proximity to existing electric utility lines. A pavilion would be located in or near an already developed area for easy accessibility for patrons. The future proposed roadway configuration would likely use existing road sections to the extent practicable while also meeting vehicular circulation needs of a growing number of park visitors. There will be some vegetation removal for new road sections; some sections of existing road will likely be removed or allowed to revert back to nature. Impacts associated with new trail construction will be mitigated by carefully selecting the most appropriate route, following established guidelines in

sustainable trail design during layout and construction and installing signs or blazes to mark the trail corridor for trail users. Consideration for the protection of the park's rare species and sensitive areas will be part of the final planning process when selecting preferred locations of new trail development. Well-designed trails to provide access to a variety of natural features will enhance the visitor experience and help to reduce potential impacts from off-trail and social trail development.

The plan has located facilities to help control conflicts with or impacts to rare species and sensitive natural resources, thereby reducing potential impacts of development. This includes providing buffers to ensure protection of known rare plants and animals (see Figures 14-14a, Resource Protection Areas). Positive impacts on the natural communities are expected through targeted control and prevention of non-native invasive species and through measures implemented as part of the stewardship and invasive species management plans.

Fauna

Implementation of the master plan will have some minor impacts on the fauna of the park due to some habitat loss. The southern portion of the lease area is the most notable change for habitat and potential impacts to fauna. This area is proposed for RV camping and cabins. Most of this area is mapped as successional shrubland which may be used by a variety of fauna. Although there may be a loss of up to 30 acres of shrubland, there are many more acres of successional shrubland habitat located throughout the park that will experience no adverse impacts from implementation of the master plan.

There will be temporary disruptions to wildlife during construction. The timing of construction activities will be planned to minimize impacts to specific wildlife species, particularly bat species and ground nesting birds, and will be conducted in accordance with current agency guidance. Newly developed mowing regimes will be scheduled (number and time of year) to help protect grassland bird species.

Consideration of potential impacts on the fauna of the park was part of the planning process when selecting preferred locations for camping facility expansion and associated amenities. This will also be considered during future planning efforts for a vehicular/pedestrian/trails circulation plan. The proposed development of a stewardship plan will benefit a variety of wildlife in the park especially birds like American woodcock, turkey, and others, as well as native bees, butterflies, and other pollinators.

Invasive Species

Trails, boats, and camping practices can facilitate the spread of invasive species. Invasive plant seeds can be inadvertently introduced with construction equipment and through the use of mulch, imported soil, gravel, and sod. Firewood also poses a risk of introduction of invasive forest pests when campers bring it into the park.

Forest pests pose important invasive species threats to the park and region. The Emerald Ash Borer and Asian Long-Horned Beetle have the potential to cause major damage to the forests if they are introduced into the park. The park contains a large number of young ash trees, primarily in the area mapped as successional northern hardwoods (Lundgren, 2014-A) (Lundgren, 2014-B) and emerald ash borer has been previously recorded in the park. Asian long-horned beetle moves more slowly but could be more devastating to the region. Precautions such as surveying and monitoring for such species should be included as part of the invasive species strategy in order to allow for a rapid response. Since camping is a long-standing recreation element in the park and will be expanded, it is critical to enforce DEC and OPRHP firewood regulations and continue to provide locally sourced firewood from preferred vendors to campers. Educational information should be supplied to campers, including brochures, posters, bookmarks and other materials as available.

Firewood from sources outside the park must meet the requirements listed in the *Camping Procedures & Reference Manual* (see <https://www.parks.ny.gov/documents/inside-our-agency/PublicDocuments/GuidancePolicies/CampingManualAug192016.pdf>) which states: “Patrons should not be bringing firewood from home. Only firewood labeled as meeting New York’s heat treatment standards (kiln-dried) may be transported into the state and further than 50 miles from the firewood’s source. They should use only firewood from local sources *usually provided by the campground* [emphasis added]. If the patron brings firewood, ALL must be burned before leaving their campsite. For more information see: www.dec.ny.gov/animals/28722.html.

The master plan lists nearly two dozen invasive species in the park. A focused approach to management is recommended, with an invasive species plan that outlines various methods for identification, removal, and prevention. It should identify priorities and highest threats. For example, control efforts for pale swallowwort and garlic mustard are already in place to help protect a rare species in the park. Other priorities and actions should be identified and updated as new problems arise. The invasive species management plan could be a component of the proposed stewardship plan, and issues of patron safety and impacts could also be included.

Two important measures are utilized to minimize the spread of invasive species. First is the education of park patrons through various means of communication including leaflets, environmental education, and interpretive signage. The other is reducing the spread of invasives by equipment and transport of materials. Best Management Practices (BMPs) will be implemented during construction to minimize the spread of invasive species. Practices such as proper material disposal and equipment sanitizing methods limit the potential of invasives to establish in new locations within and beyond the park. OPRHP has drafted BMPs for invasive species control for park projects and operations.

Historic and Archeological Resources

With the recent comprehensive survey of the park’s built features, and the reclassification of the park’s status as ‘Undetermined’ for eligibility for listing on the State and National Register of Historic Places (S/NRHP eligibility), to assure protection of historic resources, any project or activity proposed in the Master Plan that may impact historic resources or landscapes at the park will undergo Section 14.09 review by OPRHP’s Division for Historic Preservation (DHP), in accordance with the State Historic Preservation Act.

Additionally, education materials, including exhibits at the Sampson Navy and Air Force Veteran’s Museum and interpretative signage related to the park’s history, will be integrated into existing and future trail plans to interpret the historic and cultural resources in the park. (Adams, 2015)

The park contains areas of archeological sensitivity. To assure that there are no adverse impacts, any project, including routine operation or maintenance, that could result in ground disturbance and potentially affect cultural resources of the park, may require consultation with the Field Services Bureau to determine if a site-specific archeological survey is needed. All projects will follow the OPRHP Intra-Agency Protocol for the Application of Section 14.09 of the NYS Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Law.

Master Plan proposals that may require DHP review include: new camping facilities and associated amenities; hotel and event center and associated parking; new pedestrian connections; new pavilion; solar installation; new substation; new utility installations including water system replacement, if not in kind; dump station; new road sections; and museum parking and pathways.

Scenic Resources

Implementation of the Master Plan may result in minor adverse impacts on scenic resources in the park. All new development along or visible from the lakeshore will be designed to complement the surroundings and not be visually intrusive. The proposed RV camping and cabins are consistent with existing recreational uses at the park and are not in sharp contrast to the land use patterns in the park. RV campsites will be open seasonally so for a portion of the year RVs will not be present. Additional landscaping in the form of tree and other vegetation plantings will enhance the park like atmosphere in the new camping areas.

There may be some limbing/vegetation removal in front of new camp sites in the southern portion of the lease area to provide visual corridors to Seneca Lake. No large or mature trees will be selected for removal. Impacts caused by the proposed solar arrangements will be minimized by careful siting using existing topography and vegetation to screen their view from other areas of the park where practicable. This development and other projects proposed in the park will not have a significant effect on the view of the park from the surrounding landscape.

The removal of the unused and outdated water tower and associated building will enhance the aesthetics in this area of the park and along Route 96A.

Recreation

Implementation of the Master Plan will result in significant beneficial impacts on existing recreational facilities, providing new recreational facilities and opportunities, and therefore on the patron experience while visiting the park.

The plan provides for a wide variety of new and improved recreation facilities and visitor amenities including: enhancing camping opportunities with updates to utilities and pads in existing loops and a new expanded dump station; new camping facilities and amenities; a new hotel and event center; improving guarded swimming amenity and fishing pier facilities; and improving the recreation building, court games, pedestrian connections, and comfort stations. Although not detailed in this Plan, upgrading the vehicle/pedestrian/trails circulation system throughout the park is expected to enhance the patron experience. Construction projects are generally scheduled in the winter off-season to help reduce impacts to patrons visiting and enjoying the park during the busy summer season.

Open Space

The 2,070 acres of public parkland in the park complex adds tremendous value to the Finger Lakes region and Seneca Lake in particular. The park complex provides a significant open space that will continue to be protected under the master plan. OPRHP will evaluate and consider the acquisition of fee title or easements on adjacent open space areas as they become available.

The park has received funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), administered by the National Park Service. Acceptance of this federal funding includes a requirement that these facilities remain in public outdoor recreational use in perpetuity. Any proposals for uses other than public outdoor recreation require prior approval of the National Park Service to lift the use restriction through a process known as “conversion.” The concessionaire proposal for a hotel and event center will require further consideration for a conversion were this to move forward. Development of a hotel and event center will be assessed in the future and will only be progressed if deemed viable through market analysis for the lease period. If a conversion were to be required, replacement property would be identified to assure the substitution of the converted property with at least equal fair market value and of reasonably equivalent usefulness and location.

Transportation, Access and Traffic

The existing park road system, except for the existing campground loops, was developed during the construction of the navy base and responded to those needs. It is generally linear and grid-like and does not provide visitors a park-like experience. Access and traffic flow do not necessarily meet the needs of the park. They are not always intuitive for patrons and not always compatible with a park setting. The road system will be further assessed, and a comprehensive vehicle/pedestrian/trails circulation plan will be developed to improve access to and within existing areas of the park as well as to new facilities.

With the proposed expansion of camping facilities, there is an anticipated increase in RV and car traffic to the park during the summer months. With further assessment, the park will enhance the vehicle and pedestrian circulation to meet this future expected increase. It is felt that the existing park roads have the capacity to handle some of this increase, but there is the opportunity to improve the situation, especially in regard to increased future visitation. A comprehensive vehicle/pedestrian/trails circulation plan will improve the flow of traffic and pedestrians throughout the park. Campers will generally be limited to two vehicles per site and will be strongly encouraged to walk or bicycle to the guarded swimming amenity and day use areas to reduce vehicle use within the park.

Public Health and Safety

Public health and safety are important elements in park operations. New or substantially rehabilitated facilities will be designed and constructed to meet all applicable health and safety codes including compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Design and rehabilitation of infrastructure systems such as electric, water, and sewer where needed will ensure public health protection.

The expansion of camping in the lease area of the park will necessarily increase the potential for incidents affecting public health and safety. An increased presence of staff and park police or rangers will be needed to ensure compliance with park rules and protect public safety, especially at night.

To assure patron safety, signage and a gate will be installed at the firing range; fencing may be installed. Removal of the water tower and associated building will also improve patron safety.

Energy, Noise, and Odor

Sustainability principles and energy efficiency will be incorporated into the design of all proposed construction. Master Plan implementation may result in some minor temporary increases in noise and vehicle exhaust (odor) during construction projects. The expansion of camping in a park may result in increased noise at night from campers. No significant adverse impacts to the local community are anticipated as the proposed location of camping is a considerable distance away from neighboring residences. Standard park rules and regulations with respect to quiet times will be applied and enforced in all camping and cabin areas.

Unavoidable Adverse Impacts

Implementation of the master plan will result in some unavoidable adverse impacts. There will be some minor permanent loss of pervious soil surface and vegetative cover as a consequence of the construction of new camping facilities and associated amenities, hotel and event center and parking, new pavilion, new connector pathways, solar installation, new dump station, and any changes to the road system. This will be monitored by park staff and action will be taken, if necessary, to prevent any significant impacts from occurring.

In addition to the impacts outlined above, there will also be temporary adverse air and noise impacts (e.g. fugitive dust, noise from construction equipment and vehicles, etc.) associated with construction of proposed improvements.

Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources

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

Growth Inducement

It is anticipated that implementation of the master plan will result in increased recreational use of the park. All increases of recreational use will be managed to ensure continued stewardship of the parks' natural, scenic and historic resources. The increased visitation is expected to have a positive impact on local businesses in communities nearby. Local restaurants, convenience stores, and gas stations are expected to see an increase in patronage. Tourism-related expenditures for activities like overnight cabin rentals and seasonal camping at the park will also support the local economy. The location of the Park on Seneca Lake and its proximity to other regional tourist attractions will be enhanced by implementing the master plan, making Sampson an excellent resource for anyone interested in exploring the Finger Lakes region.

Supplemental Environmental Review

As part of the Agency's responsibility under the State Environmental Quality Review Act, OPRHP will review proposed implementation projects with respect to consistency with this EIS. Projects found by OPRHP to be consistent with the master plan and impacts were adequately addressed in the EIS and Findings Statement can go forward without any additional examination.

However, portions of the Master Plan and Environmental Impact Statement are somewhat general or conceptual. Decisions regarding the type and extent of certain actions will be dependent on the findings from site-specific studies or analysis in the field. Any proposed additional development will be subject to additional review. The findings from these site-specific evaluations may identify impacts that were not adequately addressed in this EIS. Under such a circumstance, an additional or supplemental environmental review will be required.

To assist in this consistency evaluation, the following types of actions have been identified in 6 NYCRR Part 617 as likely to require additional review under SEQRA:

- Any new development proposed by the concessionaire
- Any new actions not addressed within this EIS that do not meet the Type II categories identified in part 617
- Any change from the preferred alternatives for natural resource protection, recreational and facility development (including trails) or other elements of the plan that would result in significant environmental impacts
- Any leases, easements, memoranda of understanding, or other agreements between OPRHP and private entities or other agencies that affect resources in a manner that is not sufficiently addressed in this plan
- Any project determined through review to have the potential for an adverse impact on resources at the Park.

The following actions may require additional review if, upon final planning and design, potential impacts were not adequately addressed in this EIS:

- Hotel, event center and associated parking
- Vehicular/pedestrian/trails plan
- Solar installation



Chapter 5 – Comments and Responses

This chapter contains the responses to the comments received by OPRHP on the Revised Draft Master Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for Sampson during the public meeting and comment period.

Background

A public meeting to discuss a draft plan was held August 16, 2014 at the park office (6096 Route 96A in Romulus, NY) to gain public input on direction for the plan. An initial Draft Master Plan/DEIS for Sampson was issued on October 13, 2015. On October 27, 2015 a public hearing on the Draft Master Plan/Draft EIS for Sampson State Park was held in the same location. The comment period for the first draft plan ended on December 4, 2015. Comments from the public hearing can be found in Appendix G.

Public Outreach for Final Documents

A public meeting was held on August 19, 2020 on the Revised Draft Master Plan and DEIS. OPRHP staff made a presentation about new developments that occurred at the park after the initial public outreach had been completed. The meeting was held online and was recorded. There were 13 participants. During the comment period for the Revised Draft Master Plan and Revised DEIS, the Agency received 7 written comments by letter and email. A list of all persons providing comments is included at the end of this chapter.

Public Comments

OPRHP appreciates the time and effort that those interested in the future of Sampson State Park have invested in their review and comments on the Revised Draft Master Plan and Revised DEIS, as well as their participation in the public outreach efforts. The types of comments received included requests for specific recreation amenities and comments related to specific aspects of the plan.

All comments were reviewed and organized by categories. Responses to these comments are found in this section and were considered as revisions to this Final Master Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS).

Responses to Comments

Natural Resource Protection

Comment – Reduce mowing in some lawn areas to create more beneficial habitat at the park. The large areas of mowed lawn at the park are biological deserts. They cost a lot of money to maintain and do nothing to benefit wildlife or birdlife. We would suggest working with the Seneca White Deer, Inc. or some other credible conservation group on reducing cost and making the park more attractive for animals.

Response – Thank you for your comment. OPRHP is committed to improving biodiversity and has reduced mowed lawn areas in many of its facilities. Maintaining lawn in some areas is important for some uses and to maintain a safe recreational environment. Sampson staff will continue to evaluate opportunities for reducing mowing in select areas of the park.

Recreational Resources

Comment – Work with local organizations to develop a nature trail with self-directed educational stations along the way. Sampson offers many activities but lacks nature trails. According to the park's master plan, an important goal is to create a variety of opportunities for patrons to experience SSP's landscape for exercise, etc. A nature trail would meet that goal and attract additional patrons of all generations to the park. Walking paths/trails are associated with the greatest amount of physical activities in parks. In spring and summer 2020, members of Seneca White Deer, Inc. and the Friends of SSP visited the park to look at potential sites for a trail, and the park manager walked us through three potential areas. Each has excellent possibilities. Activities for individuals, school groups, and families could include exercising, bat and bird houses, bird-watching (with potential connections with Cornell's Lab of Ornithology and its Citizen Science program), photography, and partnerships with schools for environmental STEM learning.

Response – Thank you for your comment. On page 41 of this plan, the preferred alternative selected by the planning team states that trails will be an integrated part of the park's overall vehicle/pedestrian circulation plan to be

developed in the future. Nature trails with interpretive/educational opportunities will be considered as a component of this plan. As the circulation plan is developed park staff will coordinate with local groups for possible opportunities for collaboration.

Comment – Please expand on how large a hotel is proposed, and when that would be built.

Response – Thank you for your comment. The concessionaire’s idea for a hotel is purely conceptual at this time. The decision for building a hotel and the details for size and types of amenities will be based on the concessionaire’s analysis of local market conditions and determination of economic feasibility.

Comment – Please elaborate on the bistro proposed by concessionaire.

Response – Thank you for your comment. The concessionaire is interested in developing a snack bar more than a “bistro” as referred to in the comment. A snack bar will likely focus on offering locally sourced food and drink from the region.

Comment – Partner with Friends of Sampson and other interested volunteer groups to develop new projects when possible. The park could maintain a list of volunteer projects including trail work, habitat improvement, or educational programs that are ready for implementation, and groups could sign up for them. This could reinforce the mission of the “Friends” and provide a means to engage others and help to improve the park.

Response – Thank you for your comment. Volunteers continue to be important to park maintenance and resource protection, and OPRHP encourages such partnerships. Successful programs require leadership, a focused plan, and ongoing commitment on the part of the volunteers under the guidance from State Parks in order to be effective. Viable groups interested in organizing volunteer efforts for Sampson should contact the park office.

Comment – Install multi-purpose courts where feasible instead of a small number of dedicated courts. Pickleball is a rapidly growing sport. Pickleball groups strongly recommend against installing only one pickleball court as popularity increases quickly and a single court becomes overwhelmed, discouraging players.

Response – Thank you for your comment. On page 38 of this plan, a preferred alternative (viii) selected by the planning team was to install pickleball courts. When existing ball courts are resurfaced, two pickleball courts will be included. In 2020, with OPRHP approval, pickleball court lines were painted on existing tennis courts by volunteers.

Comment – Develop more court game opportunities in a central consolidated area so family members may play different sports in one location, where they could be within sight of other family members. Currently, volleyball, tennis, pickleball, basketball and horseshoes are in different areas. A more centralized location could be beneficial.

Response – Thank you for your comment. The planning team discussed this idea and determined that the current layout of outdoor recreational opportunities provides the preferred access from different areas of the park, is the best use of available space, and is maintainable with current park resources.

Comment – Expedite the resurfacing of existing tennis courts as they are unsafe. Pickleball is America’s fastest growing sport so please expedite the resurfacing of courts. The Pickleball club and the Friends of Sampson received permission from the Park Manager to repair cracks in the asphalt and paint lines on the courts for Pickleball.

Response – Thank you for your comment. Page 38 of this plan includes resurfacing of the ball courts as a preferred alternative and implementation will be dependent on availability of funding.

Comment – Add more showers in each camping loop. Sufficient land is available, so space should not be an issue. Also, with the fees and taxes we, as New Yorkers, pay, we need to keep people in NYS. This would encourage people to use the sites.

Response – Thank you for your comment. The existing bathhouses are appropriately sized for the projected level of use in each camping loop. Plans for improving the bathhouses include upgrading toilet and shower facilities. The capacity of each bathhouse will be an important consideration during the design phase of these renovations. The new design will look to maximize space, accessibility, and increase capacity and convenience whenever possible.

Comment – Develop trails in the Park. Seneca White Deer, Inc. and Friends of Sampson are willing to help and to work with the Park personnel to achieve success on this plan.

Response – Thank you for your comment. On page 41 of this plan, the preferred alternative selected by the planning team states that trails will be an integrated part of the park’s overall vehicle/pedestrian circulation plan, to be developed in the future. As the circulation plan is developed park staff will consider possible opportunities for collaboration with groups who make their interest known to park staff.

Comment – Improve pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Many campers and day use patrons use the roads and paths for walking and bike riding so improving these facilities would be appreciated.

Response – Thank you for your comment. On page 41 of this plan, the preferred alternative selected by the planning team states that trails for walking and biking will be an integrated part of the park’s overall vehicle/ pedestrian circulation plan, to be developed in the future.

Comment – Add a bocce court to the park.

Response – Thank you for your comment. The planning team discussed the idea of adding a bocce court to the park and agreed that it would be an excellent addition to the recreational facilities available at the park. Park staff will see if there are local volunteers interested in helping with this project as resources allow.

Comment – Make the new pavilion a winterized year-round facility. This would add a great accommodation for the winter months, both for groups wanting to conduct meetings as well as for cross country skiers or other winter visitors.

Response – Thank you for your comment. The master plan included improvements to the current indoor recreation wing of the park office for the purposes mentioned above. There is a need for an open-air pavilion at the park due to some of the changes near the revitalized marina and seasonal camping loops.

Facility and Operations Development

Comment – Sampson should address the inadequate sewer/water clean out station. There are lines of campers waiting to use the clean-out station, with a backup every week and it’s frustrating for the campers. It’s also a safety issue because some vehicles that don’t need to clean out pass those waiting, and children and bikers are navigating around the congestion.

Response – Thank you for your comment. On page 47 of this plan, the preferred alternative chosen is to install a new four-bay dump station to replace the existing station. This will address health and safety concerns and patron dissatisfaction for using the current dump station. A proposed location has been identified (see Figure 10, New Four-Bay Dump Station Proposed Location).

Comment – Resurface the main entrance road from the traffic circle to the stop sign past the museum and the road leading to the main campgrounds. The surface is very bumpy and hard on campers and boat trailers.

Response – Thank you for your comment. OPRHP successfully partnered with NYSDOT and resurfaced the main entrance road to the traffic circle and the campground loops. Plans for other resurfacing in the park are in discussion and will be implemented as soon as the necessary resources are available. All road conditions at the park will be assessed and addressed as an integrated part of an overall vehicle/pedestrian circulation plan to be developed and implemented in the future.

Comment – Does improved cellular connectivity in the park mean building a cell tower?

Response – Thank you for your comment. There are no plans for permitting a cellular tower at the park. Future connectivity may include Wi-Fi hotspots in some areas of the park.

Comment – Consider adding solar panels at each campsite. Adding solar to the infrastructure of the park is a great idea as the park has excellent southern exposure. Properly placed, the entire park could be essentially energy-independent with solar power.

Response – Thank you for your comment. On page 44 of this plan, staff selected Alternative iii – Add solar energy infrastructure to the park, as a preferred alternative. Siting, design, and extents of a solar array will be determined and integrated into the park utility system as resources for implementation become available.

Comment – Recommend that Sampson become a member of the Seneca County Chamber of Commerce Tourism Committee. The Park is likely the biggest tourism attraction in Seneca County and the draft plan has indicated that it plans to host tourism events. The Chamber can help in that regard.

Response – Thank you for your comment. Regional administration is always open to discussing how state parks can better serve local communities and happy to form new partnerships with local economic development and tourism organizations. Regional administration has ongoing good communication with the Seneca County Chamber of Commerce and has successfully partnered with them for events in the past.

Comment – There is no mention of any forest management for the park. The southeast part of the park has a large area of black walnut trees that if properly managed could be a source of income to fulfill some of the projects, especially the conservation aspects.

Response – Thank you for your comment. As a general rule, OPRHP follows a “passive management” approach in undeveloped forestlands, allowing natural processes to govern the development of forest ecosystems. This recognizes that aging mature trees, standing dead snags, downed trees, and forest openings provide important habitat for birds, wildlife, and other organisms. Additionally, OPRHP’s mission and policy do not include the management of forestlands for commercial forest products. Commercial logging activities are prohibited on lands under OPRHP jurisdiction.

Comment – Establish a consistent name for the historic cemetery (Pioneer vs. Settler’s Cemetery). Which name do you use? We would recommend that the location be placed on the map of the park as it could be another tourist attraction.

Response – Thank you for your comment. – The cemetery is named as the Pioneer Cemetery in OPRHP park files, and this name will be consistently used in future references to the cemetery. The cemetery location is indicated on the Park’s trail guide.

Comment – Establish an annual Conservation Festival similar to the annual dog show event. Seneca White Deer, Inc. would be glad to assist in that regard.

Response – Thank you for your comment. Events at Sampson are produced in partnership with a variety of organizations. The park considers ideas for group events to determine appropriateness and feasibility on an ongoing basis. There may be opportunities to partner with the local Soil & Water Conservation Districts and host the Envirothon or other conservation events.

Comment – Add a “self-service” / looping or attendant-initiated audio/visual program on the history, natural resources, flora, fauna and amenities of Sampson. This could add significantly to the patron experience and provide multiple benefits including education, an increased awareness of park amenities and appreciation of the Sampson’s history, and could be instrumental in encouraging others to volunteer their efforts to improve the “Sampson Experience”. This could possibly be broken into manageable sections that interested parties could contribute to and take on.

Response – Thank you for your comment. A cell phone tour is currently available at Sampson with a series of self-guided tours on flora, fauna and military history. Information and maps on the cell phone tour are available at the park office. This tour could be expanded upon as part of the trail planning process. The museum offers history and background on the site as well.

Persons/Organizations Who Provided Comments

(alphabetically by last name)

Steve Bromka, Lakeshore Landing Pickleball Club member
Francis Caraccilo, President, Friends of Sampson
Cindy Harris, West Seneca, NY resident
Anne Jardine, Resident adjacent to Sampson
Donald Kloeber, Friends of Sampson member & former board member
Vince Lalli, Board Member, Seneca White Deer Inc.
Dennis Money, President, Seneca White Deer Inc.
Jeanine Peters-Kennedy



Waterfront, Sampson SP (Photo: Heather Ainsworth)

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Endnotes

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