



ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

**Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation**

ERIK KULLESEID
Commissioner

**AGENCY DECISION
AND
STATEMENT OF FINDINGS**

**Adoption and Implementation of the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor
Recreation Plan (SCORP) 2020-2025**

The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation has prepared a Final Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2020-2025 and Environmental Impact Statement (SCORP/FEIS), dated August 28, 2019.

By the authority vested in me by State Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation Law, I do hereby adopt the Final SCORP/FEIS.

My decision represents certification of the attached Findings Statement prepared in accordance with the requirements of 6 NYCRR Part 617.11, the regulations implementing Article 8 of Environmental Conservation Law - the State Environmental Quality Review Act. My decision is based on the Findings Statement and the content of the 2020-2025 SCORP/FEIS.

Erik Kulleseid
Commissioner
NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and
Historic Preservation

9.17.19

Date

**STATE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY REVIEW
FINDINGS STATEMENT**

September 9, 2019

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

Name of Action: Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) 2020-2025

Description of Action: Adoption and Implementation of the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) 2020-2025

Location: Statewide

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

Final SCORP/Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement (FGEIS) Filed: August 28, 2019

Findings:

1. The SCORP 2020-2025 was subject to a Generic Environmental Impact Statement process including a public webinar and comment period.
2. Chapter 8 of the Final SCORP/FGEIS contains the agency's responses to comments received on the Draft SCORP/DGEIS. This chapter includes clarification of issues raised during the review of the Draft SCORP/DGEIS.
3. The updated Final SCORP will guide future recreation planning, activities, and development in the State. The final SCORP may be found on the OPRHP website page <https://parks.ny.gov/inside-our-agency/master-plans.aspx>.
4. The State Outdoor Recreation System consists of all lands directly owned by the government and its municipal subdivisions that are intended for, or in direct support of, public outdoor recreation. The bulk of the system is managed by OPRHP and DEC, with other state land managers including the NYS Canal Corporation, Department of Transportation and Office of General Services.
5. The new direction for recreation in New York State is guided by several themes, which help focus and shape plans for our future outdoor recreation system. These themes are: 1. Keep the outdoor recreation system welcoming, safe, affordable, and accessible; 2. Improve the visitor experience; 3. Restore and enhance the State Outdoor Recreation System with an emphasis on conservation and resiliency; and 4. Celebrate and teach history while promoting historic preservation efforts across the State.

6. The resources potentially affected by SCORP include recreational areas, lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands, coastal and estuarine waters, significant natural habitats, fish and wildlife, rare species of plants and animals as well as common species, forests, agricultural areas, parklands, historic sites, archeological areas, scenic areas, and communities. The environmental setting also includes the general public (residents and nonresidents) and outdoor recreation service providers.
7. The Relative Index of Need (RIN) provides an important basis for determining the types and location of future recreational facilities. The RIN is a valuable tool to determine need for facilities at geographic areas over the next five to ten years.
8. By continuing to improve communication and coordination among public and private recreation providers, the information network on recreation supply can continue to develop. Inventories and analyses will be refined by the use of GIS and other technologies. Information generated on supply and demand can also be used in evaluating the impact of recreational use on the environment—particularly whether a facility is being used within its capacity or exceeding acceptable use levels.
9. Due to the myriad effects of climate change on outdoor recreation activities and areas where recreation occurs, a resiliency focus has been included in the SCORP. The goal for resiliency is to protect resources, minimize adverse long-term impacts, and, in many cases, benefit the natural and cultural resources that improve the visitors' experience.
10. The themes, goals and recommended actions in the SCORP are comprehensive and are consistent with the State's desire to conserve and protect its natural and cultural resources and environment, and provide enjoyable recreational and interpretive opportunities, while enhancing the public's safety and welfare. Resource protection is balanced with other goals to achieve optimal levels of recreational facilities and programs, in view of the capability of resources to support use.
11. Responding to the highest levels of recreational needs within the State will have cost and environmental implications. Some types of recreation facilities have greater impacts on the environment than others. Trails and informal picnic areas will have less of an impact than swimming pools and RV camping. However, for some sites, such as brownfields, any recreation development will be an environmental improvement.
12. SCORP helps to inform the allocation of state and federal funds for recreation and open space projects in the state. The policies, needs assessment, initiatives and goals described throughout the SCORP are translated into criteria for evaluating projects in an objective manner. The SCORP is also used to develop the rating system for the Open Project Selection Process for Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) projects and contributes to the development of rating systems for Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) grants for municipal and nonprofit projects, Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grants, and various acquisition categories consistent with the Open Space Plan. SCORP guides the allocation of funds to areas and facilities in greatest need.
13. The no action alternative was examined in the FGEIS. The state is required to prepare SCORP, both pursuant to State law and to maintain eligibility of federal funds under the LWCF therefore this alternative is not a viable option. Other adverse impacts were identified in the FGEIS that would occur as a result of not updating SCORP.
14. Continually reevaluating assumptions, methods and objectives throughout the planning process helps assure that natural and cultural resources are protected when conditions change, or new information is available. Additional planning and sustainability recommendations will facilitate proper balancing of the SCORP and advance environmentally sensitive recreational development and use.

15. The objectives of the planning process continue to support SCORP goals and planning principles. These objectives further the protection of resources by guiding agencies in formulating priorities. Adequate information and analysis, coordination and citizens' participation are key to implementation of actions that protect resources and enhance recreation.
16. Protection of open space, natural and cultural resources, and interests and priorities of the public are reflected in SCORP as well as in specific programs and projects implemented pursuant to SCORP.
17. Including goals which describe processes to protect, conserve and maintain the environment—such as restore, conserve, and protect the State's biodiversity and enhancing resiliency—brings natural resource stewardship on par with development activities and recognizes that healthy ecosystems mean healthy communities. These goals recognize that species and their habitats need to be protected. This protection may not always require management, such as the siting of projects to avoid negative impacts on biodiversity. In some cases, projects may have the primary goal of preserving or restoring biodiversity. Habitat restoration or invasive species removal projects have beneficial impacts on the environment and can enhance recreational opportunities.
18. Since SCORP is a broad framework within which more detailed planning will take place, it is not possible to definitively identify adverse effects. It is consequently infeasible to suggest specific mitigation measures. The State's review processes, including SEQRA, assure that due consideration is given to protection of the State's natural and cultural heritage. These processes by which more detailed plans and projects are developed and evaluated should serve to minimize, if not eliminate, adverse effects possibly associated with development of recreational facilities.
19. Providing recreational opportunities at the local level will be subject to local review processes, including SEQRA if applicable.
20. SCORP will not result in any significant increase in energy consumption associated with recreation activities. On the contrary, several of the recommended actions defined in SCORP will promote reduction in energy consumption by recreation providers and users.
21. The facilities and programs flowing from SCORP are an important adjunct to factors leading to economic recovery and development. Existing and recognized centers of growth generally stabilize existing investments and services. Enhancing the quality and quantity of recreational services and programs has substantial beneficial effects on economic activity.
22. Environmental justice is an overarching goal in providing recreational facilities and services. Environmental justice responds to the need to reach underserved communities. Public health and safety considerations must also be incorporated into planning for recreational opportunities.
23. Suggestions for additions or revisions to SCORP were sought from OPRHP staff, the SCORP working group which includes cooperating agencies, State Council of Parks and regional councils, as well as the public through the public participation process. This process assures that the goals and recommended actions continue to be responsive to recreational needs and resource protection.
24. The cumulative effects of applying the goals and recommendations of the SCORP in a systematic manner will be substantially beneficial. Existing recreational services to the public will be maintained, and likely enhanced and expanded, while protection of natural and cultural resources will be ensured. Additionally, the implementation of recreational and resource protection programs through the SCORP initiative substantially enhances the physical and psychological wellbeing—the quality of life—of the State's residents and visitors.
25. SCORP was reviewed for consistency with Coastal policies under the NY Coastal Management Program (CMP). Overall, the recommendations within SCORP are consistent with and may

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

Certification To Approve/Fund/Undertake:

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

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

Erik Kulleseid

Commissioner

Print or Type Name of Responsible Officer in Lead Agency

Title of Responsible Officer



Signature of Responsible Officer in Lead Agency

9.17.19

Date