



New York State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR)

FINAL SCOPING DOCUMENT

CLERMONT STATE HISTORIC SITE

**Draft Master Plan and
Draft Environmental Impact
Statement**

September 2022



New York State
Parks, Recreation and
Historic Preservation

New York State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR)

FINAL SCOPING DOCUMENT

for the Draft Master Plan and
Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)
CLERMONT STATE HISTORIC SITE

Project Location

1 Clermont Ave, Germantown, NY 12526

September 12, 2022

SEQR CLASSIFICATION: TYPE I

LEAD AGENCY:

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP)
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I. Introduction

The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) is seeking to develop a Master Plan for the Clermont State Historic Site (The Master Plan). The Plan will describe and implement the community and agency vision, values, and objectives, and consider key issues of public benefit, including equity and inclusion, accessibility, education, resiliency, and sustainability. The Plan will also ensure future development consistent with the State's historic preservation, natural resource stewardship, and planning policies and requirements.

II. The State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR) Scoping Process

The OPRHP is the Lead Agency for the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR) review of the Proposed Action, which is the Adoption and Implementation of a Master Plan for Clermont State Historic Site. This Final Scope has been prepared in accordance with Article 8 of the New York State Environmental Conservation Law (ECL § 8-0101 et seq.) and its implementing regulations found in Part 617 of Title 6 of the Official Compilation of Codes, Rules and Regulations of the State of New York (6 NYCRR Part 617).

- What is SEQR Scoping?

Scoping is a process that develops a written document ("scope") that outlines topics and analyzes potential environmental impacts of the Proposed Action (The Master Plan) that will be addressed in the draft environmental impact statement (DEIS). As the first opportunity in the planning process for public participation, scoping also allows the community and interested stakeholders to be made aware of the development of a Draft Master Plan/DEIS and to identify topics and concerns of interest for potential inclusion in the document.

This Scope is intended to provide information to the public on the benefits and potential adverse impacts of The Plan. Scoping is a process for obtaining input from the community on what topics will be included in the DEIS. A primary goal of scoping is to focus the DEIS on potentially significant impacts to the Site that may arise from proposed actions in The Plan, and to minimize or eliminate consideration of impacts that are irrelevant or not significant. The DEIS will address all potentially significant impacts identified in the Scope.

The scoping document describes the types of actions that will be addressed in The Plan related to Clermont State Historic Site as regards the following:

- Natural environment (landscape, water, plants, and animals)
- Cultural and historic elements
- Circulation (pedestrian and vehicular)
- Infrastructure (utilities, sewer, stormwater, water, built elements)
- Maintenance, management, and operations
- Education, programming, and outreach

Public involvement will occur again after development and release of the **Draft Clermont State Historic Site Master Plan and Draft EIS**. At that time, OPRHP, as the Lead Agency, will hold a public meeting and solicit public comments. OPRHP will consider and respond to the comments in the Final Master Plan and Final EIS.

III. Proposed Action

The proposed action is the adoption and implementation of a Master Plan for Clermont State Historic Site (Clermont). An analysis of alternatives will be included as a separate chapter in the

DEIS portion of The Plan. This section will investigate reasonable options to help realize the vision and goals for the Site and offer considerations regarding the potential outcome of each proposed action. The description and evaluation of each alternative will be at a level of detail sufficient to allow for a comparative assessment of the alternatives discussed.

The range of alternatives for each individual action will also include a no-action alternative (“Status Quo”), which will evaluate reasonably foreseeable adverse or beneficial site changes that are likely to occur in the absence of the proposed action and serve as a baseline for assessing impacts of the proposed action. The Master Plan will include a map showing all actions selected for implementation at the site; the map will show the preferred alternatives identified in the DEIS.

IV. Project Description

Located on the bank of the Hudson River in Columbia and Dutchess Counties in a [NYS Scenic Area of Statewide Significance \(SASS\)](#), Clermont has important natural, cultural, and historic resources. The draft Master Plan for the Site is being developed to consider the future direction and viable alternatives for revitalizing and enhancing its important cultural, recreational, and environmental resources, as well as improving the operational infrastructure at the Site. The Master Plan will propose actions that will ensure public enjoyment of the facility for the future while protecting the Site’s invaluable resources.

- What is the Project’s Purpose?

The purpose of The Plan is to provide a comprehensive document that will guide the development of a high-quality, up-to-date facility for public recreation and learning experiences at Clermont. Goals and recommendations are developed through the master planning process. When completed, the final Plan will help facilitate the work of regional OPRHP staff and guide upgrades to site infrastructure.

The Plan proposes and analyzes actions for implementation at the Site. When developing proposed changes and upgrades, the planning team considers current and anticipated recreation trends, shifts in visitor demographics, outreach and education, improved technologies for preservation, as well as environmental issues that may impact the Site, such as climate change impacts, invasive species management, and Site accessibility.

The Plan offers a vision for the Site, with renewed focus on accessibility and inclusion, pedestrian and vehicular circulation, and up-to-date education, programming, and event spaces. Once implemented, the actions proposed by this plan will result in a more cohesive and inclusive site that welcomes visitors on foot, by car or bicycle, and creates a welcoming destination for activities, learning, exercise, and relaxation for the community and beyond.

The plan will work to achieve the following major goals:

1. **Protect and enhance the Site’s natural resources:** With its woodlands, meadows, wetlands, and acreage along the Hudson River shoreline, Clermont’s landscape has significant natural resources. Recommendations in The Plan will ensure appropriate stewardship of these elements for future generations.
2. **Revitalize the Site’s recreation resources:** Visitors come to Clermont for a range of reasons. Interest in the Site’s history, enjoyment of the physical setting, to attend special events, and exercise outdoors are all common recreational uses seen throughout the year. The Plan will consider how the public uses the site and evaluate trends and

preferences to determine appropriate enhancements to Clermont's recreational offerings.

3. **Improve sitewide access and circulation:** The Plan will evaluate the pedestrian, hiker, automobile, and cyclist experience at the Site and make recommendations to improve ease of access, wayfinding and signage, and ensure the comfort and safety of all visitors.
4. **Upgrade the Site's infrastructure and operations:** Improve overall site functioning by improving the efficiency and aesthetics of existing parking areas and entrances; refurbishing/repurposing existing buildings, upgrading utilities, and integrating environmentally friendly and sustainable features where practicable.

The DEIS will examine how these goals are being addressed and met by the preferred alternatives.

V. The Environmental Setting

Located in the Town of Germantown one mile north of the Village of Tivoli, the Clermont State Historic Site is a 592-acre facility along the banks of the Hudson River, largely within southwestern Columbia County, with a small portion of the Site in northern Dutchess County. The facility is accessed from County Route 6 West, off Route 9G.

The DEIS will describe the Site's existing conditions with sufficient detail about current condition and existing elements to guide planning, analysis, and design for proposed new and/or updated facilities. Information will be presented in a user-friendly format with maps, photographs, tables, and plain language. Existing environmental conditions at the Site and regional context will be described, including natural and cultural landscape features and elements of the built environment. Information provided in The Plan will include:

- Location, access, and Site boundaries
- Regional land use and socioeconomic characteristics
- Geology, topography, and soil characteristics
- Water, watersheds, and wetlands
- Flora, fauna, and ecological communities
- Scenic resources
- Archeological, historic, and cultural resources
- Recreational resources, and activities
- Infrastructure, sustainability, accessibility, and operations
- Transportation

VI. Analysis of Environmental Impacts and Alternatives

A section of the DEIS will identify selected actions proposed for implementation at the Site that will improve and enhance recreational, cultural, historic, and natural resources and operational infrastructure. The DEIS will identify a range of considered alternatives, including the Status Quo alternative. It will develop and analyze alternatives and their potential impacts in a comprehensive and detailed discussion and will describe preferred alternatives for actions to be undertaken at the Site, including where any proposed new development will occur. It will include new uses and/or improvements to the Site's amenities, circulation, parking, signage, utilities, and other site infrastructure.

Ultimately, there are two Master Plan alternatives that will be considered. The first is the Status

Quo Alternative, which is a compilation of all the Status Quo element alternatives discussed in the DEIS. Under this alternative, the Site would continue to operate as it does now. The Status Quo alternative proposes no changes to natural resources protection strategies, recreation resource development, operations and management, cultural or historic resource protection and infrastructure improvements. The second alternative is the Preferred Alternative: to adopt and implement the Master Plan. This alternative is a compilation of the preferred alternatives identified for each element discussed in the DEIS.

Potential environmental impacts will be described for each proposed action, as well as the degree to which each alternative successfully achieves stated project goals. In this way, the document will provide a road map for future development and enable the facility to appropriately meet anticipated needs and demand for these resources and activities over the next ten to fifteen years.

VII. Potential Impacts of Master Plan Implementation

The section below discusses potential impacts that may occur because of actions proposed in the Draft Master Plan. The DEIS evaluates alternatives for each of these categories. Avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures for potential adverse impacts will be considered. The following are to be discussed in the DEIS:

- **Impact on Land**

The Proposed Action includes construction projects that will require ground disturbance, including refurbishing or retrofitting existing structures, upgrading or installing new utilities, repairing trails and constructing pathways, and improving site drainage. Some projects may take significant time to complete and may result in increased erosional potential. Adequate erosion controls will be used, as needed, during all projects.

Construction projects will be in areas of least potential impact to natural and cultural resources. Projects will consider the reuse of existing structures, such as the retrofitting of structures and reuse of previously disturbed areas. By repurposing existing structures and using disturbed land, OPRHP attempts to minimize impacts and disturbance to Clermont's historically and archaeologically sensitive land resources and natural resources.

- **Impact on Surface Waters**

Most projects will be located away from wetlands and water bodies. However, the Proposed Action includes construction projects in the vicinity of surface waters. Some work proposed in The Plan may cause turbidity, erosion, or downstream impacts. All construction projects may potentially impact surface waters if they involve the presence of loose soils due to excavation, grading, or other actions. Rainfall and high winds may move loose soil into streams. Stormwater carrying heavy sediment loads may scour and cause erosion on slopes and at streambanks. Stormwater may have impacts downstream from the project site. Mitigation measures, including sediment and erosion control during construction and long-term stormwater management practices, will be used as required.

- **Impact on Ground Water**

Siting of projects is important to minimizing potential adverse impacts. The Proposed Action includes new construction and may include new subsurface systems. Discharges from those systems may eventually reach ground water, potentially carrying

contaminants. Invasive species management projects may require the use of pesticides. Only certified applicators will apply pesticides if required.

- Impact to Flood Risk

Some portions of the Site are subject to flooding. In past years flooding has been related to the Site's roadways and within wetlands and streams. Proposed construction projects will be located outside of the 100-year flood plain. Flooding events are not anticipated to have any impact on the capacity of the 100-year floodplain to handle and store flood waters. Proper siting and design of any structures, roadways, trails or other supporting facilities will be key to minimizing potential future impacts and will be considered during all planning and design activities.

- Impact on Plants and Animals

The Site has significant natural communities as well as wetlands, waterbodies, and other sensitive areas. To minimize potential impacts to natural resources, including wildlife habitat, the regional biologist will be consulted before final locations are selected for all projects.

Management of invasive species projects will utilize best management practices to minimize impacts to all non-target species. No significant impacts to non-target species are anticipated. Only certified applicators will apply pesticides.

- Impact on Historic and Archaeological Resources

There are historic and archeological resources within the Site. The buildings, grounds, and many accompanying landscape elements are important cultural and historic resources in the State. Construction projects will be located away from known historically significant portions of the Site and will be chosen to avoid both above-ground and subsurface resources.

Projects undertaken on identified historic buildings and structures will be for refurbishment and reuse purposes to meet current needs and codes while maintaining their historic character and context. All changes to historic elements will follow the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (<https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/treatment-guidelines-2017.pdf>). Any project or activity proposed in the Master Plan that may impact historic resources or landscapes at the Site will undergo Section 14.09 review by OPRHP's Division for Historic Preservation (DHP), in accordance with the State Historic Preservation Act (1980).

- Impact on Energy

Construction of new facilities and improvements to existing facilities are likely to require increases in energy use. Those increases are anticipated to be minor and represent an insignificant increase in energy use. Proposed sustainable practices will be implemented to include upgraded utilities to improve energy efficiency, green stormwater infrastructure and LED lights. The Agency will consider the selective use of solar during the design and planning for facilities and energy use within the Site.

- Impacts on Noise, Odor and Light

New construction or maintenance activities resulting from the Proposed Action may temporarily increase noise at the Site and surrounding area. During construction, there may be an increase in vehicular traffic levels and related emissions. Construction and

maintenance activities may also be associated with related odors such as fuel and exhaust odors.

The Proposed Action may impact the use of lighting at the Site, including outdoor lighting associated with site programming, safety, and pathway lighting. The DEIS will propose strategies for mitigating impacts of noise, odor, and light during and after construction associated with the Proposed Action. One example is using night-sky compliant lighting where practicable.

VIII. **Resources Unlikely to be Significantly Impacted by Proposed Action**

This section addresses areas that are not likely to be impacted by actions proposed in the Draft Master Plan and will not be discussed further in the DEIS.

- **Impacts on Geological Features** – Site geological features will be documented in the Environmental Setting chapter of the DEIS. The Proposed Action will not result in modifications or destruction of cliffs, caves, minerals, fossils, or other unique landforms.
- **Impacts on Air** – Air quality will be documented in the Environmental Setting chapter of the DEIS. The Proposed Action will not result in adverse impacts on air quality; however, minor, temporary increases in emissions from construction equipment on site may occur.
- **Impact on Open Space and Recreation** – Site recreational and open space resources will be documented in the Environmental Setting chapter of the DEIS. The Proposed Action will not result in a reduction of open space or recreation resources. Rather, the Proposed Action will enhance recreational and open space resources and opportunities.
- **Impact on Critical Environmental Areas** – The Proposed Action would not have an adverse impact on any Critical Environmental Areas.
- **Impacts on Human Health** – The Proposed Action will not result in the creation of a hazard to human health.
- **Consistency with Community Plans and Community Character** – The Proposed Action is not anticipated to have any adverse impacts on community character. Clermont State Historic Site is located on land under the jurisdiction of OPRHP. Local zoning requirements are preempted by the State, thus precluding compliance with local zoning code. The Master Plan intends to maintain the character of the Site and the surrounding area.
- **Impacts on Aesthetic Resources** – The Environmental Setting chapter of the DEIS documents the aesthetic and scenic resources. The Proposed Action will not adversely impact any officially designated aesthetic or scenic resources. The Master Plan intends to maintain the character of the Site and the surrounding area and where feasible, improve the aesthetics.
- **Impacts on Transportation** – Transportation and site circulation patterns will be documented in the Environmental Setting chapter of the DEIS. Shifting the park entrance back to its original location and the potential for additional parking may be considered to facilitate a safe and efficient patron experience.

IX. **Unavoidable Adverse Impacts**

The Master Plan may result in some unavoidable adverse impacts. There will be some minimal permanent loss of pervious soil surface and vegetative cover as a result of construction of new facilities, such as buildings, roads or trails. Construction will be monitored by Site staff, and actions will be taken, if necessary, to prevent any significant impacts from occurring.

In addition, there may also be temporary air and noise impacts (e.g., fugitive dust, noise from construction equipment and vehicles, etc.) associated with construction of proposed improvements. Construction is generally scheduled for periods of low park use to minimize impacts to park visitors.

X. Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources

The planning, development and implementation of this Master Plan including rehabilitation of facilities, improvements to infrastructure, construction of new pathways, buildings or landscaping 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 for the Site.

XI. Supplemental Environmental Review

The DEIS will establish thresholds and describe the types of future actions that may require supplemental environmental review. OPRHP staff conduct Master Plan consistency reviews for projects to determine if the proposed projects as designed are consistent with the intent of the Plan.

XII. References

The DEIS will include a list of references and sources utilized throughout the DEIS development process.

XIII Public Comment

When planning for improvements, please take into consideration the the existing conditions including scenery and natural elements. Do not over develop the park to increase tourism to a level that will negatively impact the experience visitors currently enjoy.

Appendix A

Positive Declaration
Notice of Intent to Prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement
Determination of Significance
Notice of Public scoping

State Environmental Quality Review
POSITIVE DECLARATION
Notice of Intent to Prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement
Determination of Significance
Notice of Public scoping

August 3, 2022

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

The Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) is lead agency for the proposed action described below and has determined that the action may have a significant impact on the environment and that a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) will be prepared.

Name of Action: Adoption and Implementation of a Master Plan for Clermont State Historic Site

SEQR Status: Type 1

Location of Action: Clermont State Historic Site, 14 Maintenance Ln, Pleasant Valley, NY 12569

Public Scoping: Public scoping will be conducted. The purpose of scoping is to narrow issues and ensure that the DEIS will be a concise, accurate, and complete document and to ensure public participation in the DEIS development process. OPRHP has prepared a Final Scoping Document that will be forwarded to all interested agencies. The document will also be available on the agency website at <http://nysparks.com/inside-our-agency/master-plans.aspx>.

Written comments will be accepted by US mail or email until September 3, 2022. Following the public scoping comment period, OPRHP will prepare and distribute a Final scoping Document.

Description of Action: The Proposed Action is the Adoption and Implementation of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for Clermont State Historic Site. The Plan proposes improvements to upgrade and modernize the facility and its operations. Proposed elements in the DEIS include rehabilitation and repurposing of existing site structures; new recreation amenities including accessible and multipurpose trails; improvements to utility infrastructure, improvements to site circulation and parking lots, and signage improvements; additional habitat protections and enhancement, and upgrades to the existing regional maintenance center.

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to provide a comprehensive, high-quality and updated facility that meets the needs of the public and OPRHP while protecting the Site's natural, cultural and operational resources.

Reasons Supporting This Determination:

OPRHP has determined that the Adoption and Implementation of a Master Plan for Clermont State Historic Site may have a potentially significant adverse impact on the environment, based on the following list of issues and concerns:

Impacts on Land

Construction projects are proposed that will require disturbance to land, including construction of multi-use trails and other pathways, construction of new buildings and refurbishment of existing structures, installation of new and upgrading of existing utilities, and modifying or expanding existing parking. Some trail connection segments may potentially be planned on slopes exceeding 15%. Projects may take considerable time to complete and may result in increased erosional potential.

Impacts on Surface Water

Construction projects are proposed, and most projects will be located away from wetlands and water bodies. Construction of the multiuse trail may take place in proximity to surface waters. The proposed action may cause turbidity, erosion or downstream impacts and may potentially impact surface waters if they involve the presence of loose soils due to excavation, grading or other actions. Rainfall and strong wind events may move loose soil into streams causing turbidity.

Stormwater carrying heavy sediment loads may scour and cause erosion on slopes and at stream banks. Stormwater containing soils or causing erosion may have impacts downstream away from the project site.

Impacts to Groundwater

New facilities may include new wastewater systems. Discharges from those systems may eventually reach ground water, potentially carrying contaminants. New invasive species management projects may require the use of pesticides.

Impacts on Noise, Odor and Light

New construction or maintenance activities resulting from the Proposed Action may temporarily increase noise at the Site and surrounding area. During construction, there may be an increase in vehicular traffic levels and related emissions. Construction and maintenance activities may also be associated with related odors such as fuel and exhaust odors. The Proposed Action may impact the use of lighting at the Site including outdoor lighting associated with site programming, safety and pathway lighting. Scenic vistas and visitor experience will be considered during the planning and design of all aspects. Light, noise and odors will be minimized to preserve the experience and current nature of the site.

Impact on Flooding

The Site is not within the 100-year floodplain. Stormwater run-off follows natural stream corridors and roadways leading to wetlands. All facilities, including parking lots and roadways will consider stormwater management strategies as part of the design to reduce velocity and subsequent erosion as well as passively filter any contaminants from vehicles. The implementation of the plan does not have a significant impact on flooding.

Impact on Plants and Animals

Significant natural communities and rare, threatened and endangered animals use portions of the Site. Of specific concern are populations of Blanding's turtle, which use the wetlands and water bodies within and adjacent to the Site. Construction projects are planned. The multiuse trail may be in proximity to wetlands or waterbodies and within portions of the site that may contain habitat for those species.

Impact on Historic and Archeological Resources

There are historic and archeological resources within the Site, including multiple buildings, structures and other features that have been determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, and areas designated as sensitive archeological sites. Projects undertaken on historic features will be for refurbishment and re-use purposes to meet current needs while maintaining historic character and context.

Impact on Energy

Construction of new facilities and improvements to existing facilities are likely to require increases in energy use.

For further information:

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A copy of this notice has been sent to:

Supervisor, Town of Germantown
Environmental Notice Bulletin
NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, Region 4