

INFORMATION PACKET for
ALLEGANY STATE PARK DRAFT MASTER PLAN and
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING

July 8, 2009
Salamanca, NY

July 9, 2009
Buffalo, NY



David A. Paterson
Governor

Carol Ash
Commissioner

Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Information Packet
Allegany State Park Master Plan Public Information Meeting
July 8, 2009 Salamanca, New York
July 9, 2009 Buffalo, New York

Agenda for Public Information Meeting

1. Introductions and Welcoming Remarks
2. Overview of the Planning Process
3. Overview of the Park
4. Public Input
5. Next Steps

Introduction

The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) has developed new Priority Themes and Initiatives that will help guide the agency's activities. These new priorities are:

- Revitalizing our Parks and Historic Sites
- Natural Resource Stewardship and Interpretation
- Creating Connections
- Sustainability

The master plan for Allegany State Park is part of an accelerated planning initiative that will advance these themes, and determine the best course of action to preserve and utilize park resources for this and future generations.

Allegany State Park, distinguished by its abundance of recreation resources, spectacular views, extensive and sensitive natural areas, water resources and historic areas, is one of New York States finest state parks.

The purpose of this public information meeting is to actively invite public participation and involvement in the planning process. Public participation will help OPRHP in identifying issues, concerns and alternatives as well as determining the depth to which each of the topics is explored within the Draft Master Plan/Draft Environmental Impact Statement(DEIS

This information packet and the public information meeting are intended to provide the public with a concise overview of Allegany State Park, the setting, the resources and the issues identified to this point. Additionally the meeting is designed to provide an opportunity for public input at an early stage in the master planning process.

Additional information can be obtained from OPRHP at:

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Master Plan Timeline

Public Information Meeting – July 2009

Draft Plan/DEIS – June 2010

Hearing – August 2010

Final Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) – October 2010

Findings and Adoption – December 2010

Overview of the Park

On July 30, 1921, over 5,000 people gathered in the Quaker Area (known as the Frecks Area) for the formal dedication of the opening of Allegany State Park. This 7,000+ acre site was the initial acquisition and development of what has today become the over 67,000 acre Allegany State Park.

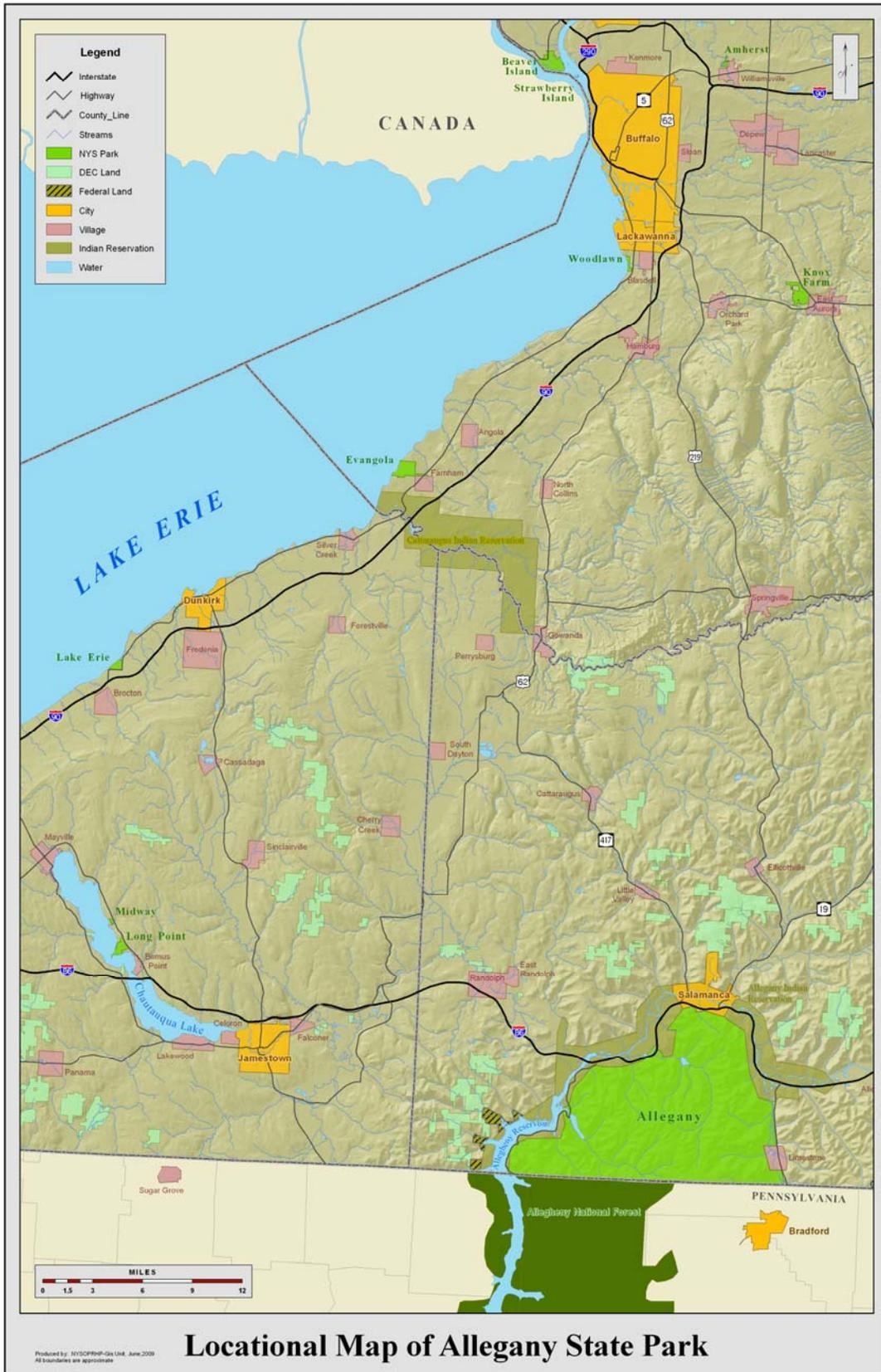
The 1924 State Park Bond Act provided much of the funding for the early development of Allegany State Park. From 1925 into the 1930s, camping facilities received major attention as tents on platforms were replaced with wood frame cabin structures. From this early development Allegany State Park has evolved into the largest New York State Park.

Allegany State Park is significant from both a regional and park perspective. Today, Allegany State Park occupies approximately 100 square miles of Cattaraugus County in southwestern New York.

Approximately 96% (64,800 acres) of the 67,000+ acres within the park's boundary is State owned. It is important to protect the park's natural treasures and to provide for diverse and high quality recreation (and associated economic advantages) consistent with sound environmental direction. To the south the Park is adjacent to the 500,000 acre Alleghany National Forest. The park is also adjacent to the lands of the Seneca Nation. Municipalities in close proximity to the park are Salamanca to the north, Limestone to the east and Bradford, PA to the south.

There is a need to provide long-term direction to guide the park through the 21st Century for recreational and environmental education opportunities while protecting the character and integrity of its natural and cultural resources. Adoption of a Master Plan signifies agency approval of and commitment to a plan for development of facilities and programs and agency recognition of the character and need for protection of the park's resources.

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Environmental Setting

Recreation Resources

Allegheny State Park has been providing a variety of high quality recreational opportunities for the public since the 1920's. It is a very popular park for both day users and overnight recreationists. It is a year-round facility. Recreation opportunities at the park include:

- camping (395 cabins, 323 tent and trailer sites and 5 group camps with a total capacity of 528 people)
- swimming (total capacity of approximately 1500 people)
- boating especially access to the Allegheny Reservoir via Friends BLS
- picnicking (3000 person capacity)
- playgrounds
- trails (hiking, equestrian, nature, bicycling, snowmobile, cross country skiing and snowshoeing)
- educational and interpretive programs
- fishing and ice fishing
- hunting
- court and field games (tennis, basketball, baseball and miniature golf)

Cultural Resources

Allegheny State Park has potential for containing prehistoric and historic archeological sites. In addition, many of the park buildings are eligible for nomination to the State and National Registers of Historic Places. It is important that these cultural resources are not compromised for future generations. A comprehensive multi-year approach will be taken to develop sound management directions.

Environmental Resources

Flora and Fauna and Ecological Communities

Allegheny State Park contains eighteen significant natural communities as identified by the NY Natural Heritage Program. They include Allegheny oak forest, beech-maple mesic forest, maple-basswood rich mesic forest and a large floodplain forest. In spite of the historical logging and resource extraction that has occurred in the area, the second growth forests of the park are of exceptional size and quality. Exemplary natural communities in the park include the rich mesophytic forest that blankets the moderately sloping hills of the area and a large outstanding occurrence of hemlock-hardwood forest that occupies ravines, lower slopes and stream hollows. The park also contains at least two outstanding examples of rocky headwater stream. Eight separate sites containing old-growth forests and totaling 5320 acres have also been documented within the park by the Natural Heritage Program. The old-growth hemlock-hardwood forest in the park totals 3535 acres and is the second largest documented occurrence of old-growth hemlock northern hardwoods in the state.

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The park includes several rare, threatened and endangered species of plants and wildlife. Pristine cold and shaded spring seeps in the park also support several species of amphibians which are dependent on this type of habitat.

It is estimated that 361 species of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and fish may occur in Allegany State Park. Information on abundance and distribution is limited. A variety of insects and other invertebrates also inhabit the park's lands and waters.

Wildlife management programs currently in place at Allegany State Park are limited to deer, raccoon, trout and beaver.

The overall character of today's forest at Allegany State Park is primarily a result of logging activities which occurred prior to park acquisition which was authorized in 1921. Today's forest is predominantly mature second growth. Some areas of the park are considered old-growth. Less than 2 percent of the forest consists of plantations. State Parks has issued a policy on management of trees and other vegetation which states that commercial logging is prohibited within the State Park System.

Wetlands

Four wetlands located entirely or partly in the park have been mapped by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). Three of these are along the Tunungwant Creek on the eastern boundary of the park and the fourth is located on the Red House Creek below the dam for Red House Lake.

National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) maps of Allegany State Park indicate many small areas considered to be wetlands according to federal guidelines.

Physical Resources

Geology, Topography and Soils

The park's location is geologically unique since it was not covered by the last Continental Ice Sheet. Hence, the primary features of the park were not modified by ice erosion or morainal deposition. The region's valleys, wooded slopes and meandering streams it's striking beauty. This beauty needs to be preserved so future generations can enjoy the splendors that current and past generations have enjoyed.

Allegany State Park lies entirely on the northern edge of the Allegheny Plateau which is characterized by high, steep, ridge-like hills and deep valleys with narrow bottoms.

The vast majority of the Park's soils are residual except in the valley bottoms and on the steepest slopes. The predominance of sandstones and conglomerates as parent material for the Park soils has resulted in relatively stony, coarse-textured, moderately deep, well-drained soils of moderate to low fertility.

Water

The Allegheny River is the major drainage in the region. Approximately 45 miles of fresh water streams from the major drainage courses in the park flow into the Allegheny River with many small and intermittent creeks feeding the major streams.

The park's three man-made lakes, Red House, Quaker and Science Lakes, total more than 400 acres and offer a variety of water oriented activities. The park is connected by water to the Allegheny Reservoir through the outflows from Quaker and Red House Lakes.

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Mineral Resources (Oil and Gas)

It is estimated that approximately 50% of the mineral rights beneath the public lands are held by private interests. Proposals for accessing privately owned mineral rights are considered on a case by case basis and subject to title verification, environmental review and permit application processes overseen by both the Department of Environmental Conservation and State Parks.

Over 9,000 acres near the center of the park are leased for underground gas storage. The park also contains many abandoned wells. The abandoned well assessment and plugging program in the park is done in consultation with the Department of Environmental Conservation.

Scenic Resources

The hills, water, and forests create a natural setting and scenic backdrop which enhances the quality of the recreation experience at Allegany State Park. Numerous scenic vistas have been strategically located throughout the park along roads and trails to provide panoramic views of the forest, water, and wildlife. Periodic maintenance of these scenic access points is an important element of the Parks operation and stewardship.

Next Steps

- The suggestions, issues, concerns and alternatives identified at the public information meeting and through written comments will be summarized and made available. The Draft Master Plan/Draft Environmental Impact Statement (the draft plan) will address these issues.
- Further opportunities for public input may take place during the preparation of the draft plan.
- Public review of the draft plan will include a public hearing and public comment/review period. Comments made during this time will be considered in the preparation of the Final Master Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement (the final plan).
- After the issuance of the final plan and a public consideration period, a findings statement will be issued along with the Commissioner's decision regarding adoption of the plan.

Written comments will be accepted until August 7, 2009. Please send them to:

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