

INFORMATION PACKET for
DRAFT MASTER PLAN and
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING
Saratoga Spa State Park
June 16, 2008 6:30 pm
Gideon Putnam Hotel Ballroom



David A. Paterson
Governor

Carol Ash
Commissioner

Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Agenda for Public Information Meeting

1. Introductions and Welcoming Remarks
2. Overview and Timeline 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, and Creating Connections and Sustainability. The master plan for Saratoga Spa 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.

Saratoga Spa State Park, distinguished by its classical architecture and listed as a National Historic Landmark, is noted for its diverse cultural, aesthetic and recreational resources. The park offers a multitude of traditional recreation opportunities such as golf, swimming, picnicking, canoeing, walking, field sports, cross country skiing and ice skating. In addition, the nationally-known Saratoga Performing Arts Center, the Spa Little Theater, the National Museum of Dance, the Saratoga Automobile Museum, the Gideon Putnam Resort and Spa and the Roosevelt mineral baths offer unique cultural and recreational opportunities.

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). It is important to provide public input opportunities now and throughout the planning process to encourage identification of the compelling issues to be addressed within this planning effort.

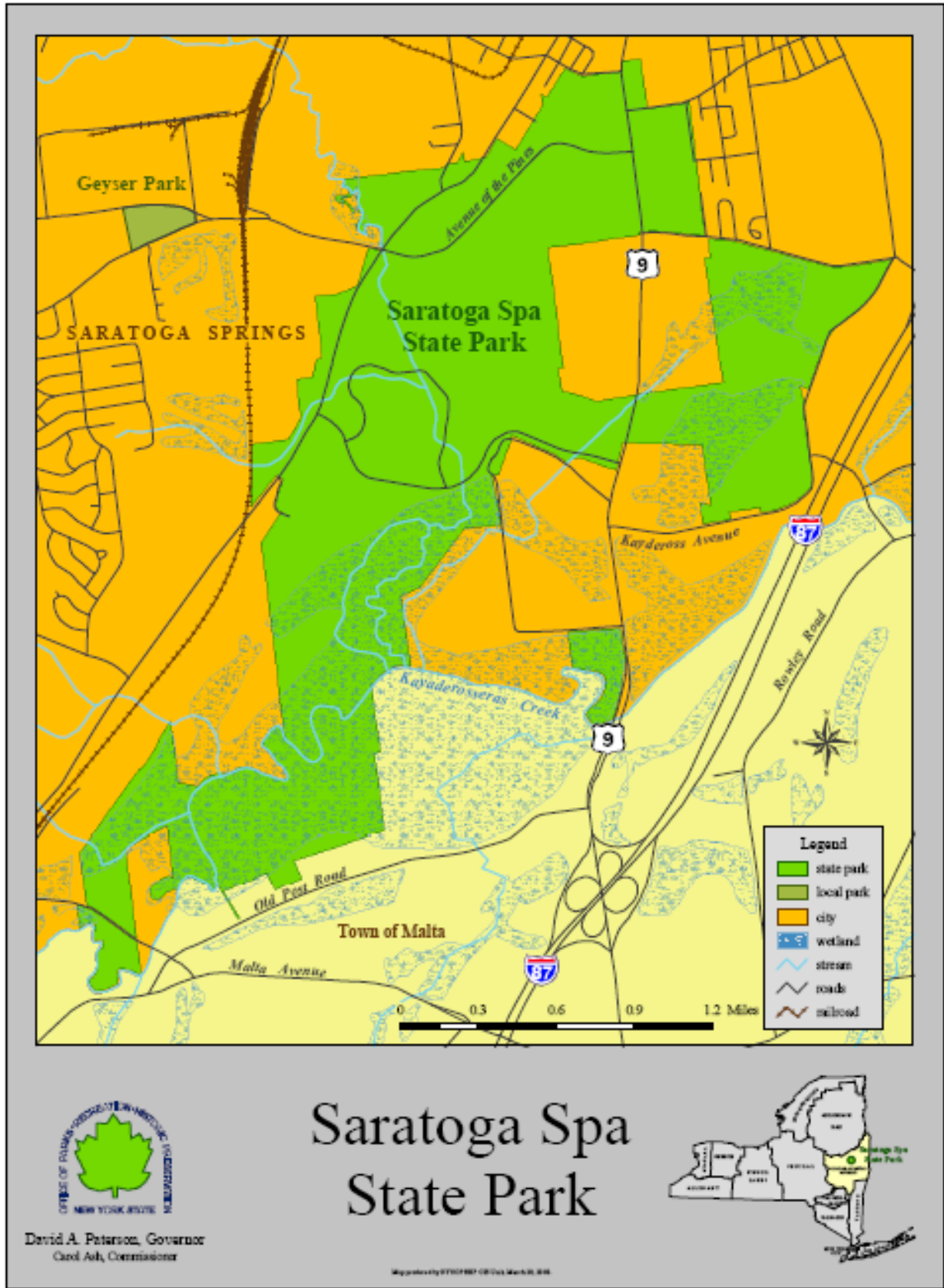
This information packet and the public information meeting are intended to provide the public with a concise overview of Saratoga Spa State Park, the setting, the resources and the issues identified to this point. Additionally the meeting is designed to provide an opportunity for public input at an early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

Additional information can be obtained from OPRHP at:

Saratoga/Capital District Region
19 Roosevelt Dr
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866-6214

518-584-2000

Planning Bureau
Agency Building 1
Empire State Plaza
Albany, NY 12238
518-474-6722



Overview

It is safe to say that Saratoga Spa State Park would not exist today if not for the presence of the mineral waters.

Saratoga Spa State Park, distinguished by its classical architecture and listed as a National Historic Landmark, is noted for its diverse cultural, aesthetic and recreational resources. In addition to the nationally-known Saratoga Performing Arts Center, the Spa Little Theater, the National Museum of Dance, the Saratoga Automobile Museum, the Gideon Putnam Resort and Spa and the Lincoln mineral baths, the park offers a multitude of traditional recreation opportunities.

Timeline

- Pre 1800's. Native Americans use the mineral springs in this area for their healing properties. In the late 1700's Sir William Johnson was brought to the springs for healing.
- 1800's. The springs in the area were an attraction where people came to partake of the waters.
 - In the mid 1800's bathing in the waters had become popular and several bathhouses were in operation in Saratoga Springs. Additionally, the water was being shipped around the world.
 - By 1880 over 200 mineral wells were in operation, most were used for extraction of the carbon dioxide from the water.
- 1900s. Saratoga Spa Reservation came into being by legislative action in 1912 after a 1908 ban on pumping failed to protect the mineral water resources. At that time, New York State also took over ownership of the wells and capped most of them. An important part of this legislation gave the public was free access to the mineral waters.
 - 1915 - work was completed on the original Lincoln Bathhouse. The Lincoln Bathhouse was expanded in 1922-23.
 - 1920 - Washington Bathhouse opened.
 - 1928-1930 - Lincoln Bathhouse destroyed by fire and rebuilt.
 - 1920's – 1930's - Simon Baruch (died 1921) was a hydro-therapist, a medical doctor who believed in the healing powers of the mineral waters. He and others advocated the development of the springs in Saratoga into a health spa. When Franklin D. Roosevelt was Governor of New York State (1929-1932), he hired an architect to study the spas in Europe and to design the grandest spa in the world at Saratoga.
 - 1930's. Saratoga Springs Commission formed in to take control of the Saratoga Reservation, later replaced by the Saratoga Springs Authority Roosevelt Bathhouses 1 & 2 which opened in 1935.

- In 1930, construction began on the “New Spa” including the Roosevelt Bathhouses, Hall of Springs, Simon Baruch Building (now the administration building), Victoria Pool complex, and the Gideon Putnam Hotel. Franklin D. Roosevelt became president in 1933 and instituted programs under which the Spa was built.
- 1935 - The complex of buildings and landscape malls, as they are seen today, were dedicated by President Roosevelt, and opened to the public.
- 1940’s. – Peak usage of the spa was 1946-47.
- 1942-1951 – Roosevelt Bathhouse #1 used as Veterans Administration Hospital.
- 1950’s – Roosevelt Bathhouse #2 used to store Civil Defense medical supplies. Spa treatments decline through the decade.
- 1960’s – Conference center added to Gideon Putnam Hotel, golf courses expanded. In 1962 Roosevelt #1 was rehabilitated as a health club.
- 1964 – Comptroller’s report recommends closing Washington or Lincoln baths.
- 1966 - SPAC Amphitheatre constructed, housing the New York City Ballet and the Philadelphia Orchestra in the summer months. Other concerts and local events, such as high school graduations, also take place at the amphitheatre.
- 1971 – Legislature closes Lincoln Bathhouse.
- 1987 - Saratoga Spa State Park designated as a National Landmark
- 1999 – Friends of Saratoga Spa State Park formed.

Most of the buildings in the upper park, the original Saratoga Reservation, are listed on the National and State Registers of Historic Places.

Since the original reservation, other acquisitions have been made, including the most recent at the southern end of the park, increasing the present acreage to 2500 acres. The Park now extends south of the Kayaderosseras Creek and has holdings in the in the Town of Malta as well as the City of Saratoga Springs.

Many of the buildings at Saratoga Spa State Park have been re-used for present day purposes such as museums and office space. This includes the Hall of Springs which houses the administrative offices of SPAC and the Simon Baruch Building which serves as the park administration offices, the auditorium, which is now the Spa Little Theatre and houses Home Made Theatre, an opera festival and the Saratoga Chamber Music Festival. The bottling plant now serves as the home of the Saratoga Automobile Museum; the Washington Baths building is now the home of the National Museum of Dance

Master Plan Timeline

Public Information Meeting – June 16, 2008

Draft Plan/DEIS – January 2009

Hearing – February 2009

Final Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) - May 2009

Findings and Adoption – May 2009

Environmental Setting

Saratoga Spa State Park is a varied and complex park with both natural and developed areas. The natural areas include part of the watersheds of Geysers Brook and the Kayaderosseras Creek, acres of wetland, Hemlock stands, Karner Blue Butterfly Habitat and diverse ecological communities.

The developed areas consist of the northern part of the park which includes a hotel, 2 bathhouses, an administration and research building, the Hall of Springs, extensive picnic facilities, two pool facilities, two golf courses, tennis courts, SPAC and numerous facilities for the public to enjoy the spring water.

Cultural Resources

Historical

The northern part of the park is listed as a National Landmark and most of the buildings therein are on the National and State Historic Registers. The modern cultural resources stem from the development of the park as a health spa in the 1930's.

Archaeological

According to OPHRP Historic Preservation records, some areas of the park are considered archeologically sensitive. The newly acquired areas will require further investigation.

Environmental Resources

Ecological Communities

The ecological communities in the undeveloped areas of Saratoga Spa State Park are generally characteristic of those found in this part of the Mohawk Lowlands and on these soil types. These include Appalachian Oak-Pine Forest (mature and successional), Floodplain Forest, Hemlock-Hardwood Swamp, Hemlock-Northern Hardwood Forest, Red-Maple Hardwood Swamp, Emergent Marsh and various other successional hardwood forests and fields. Inventories of the ecological communities in the newly acquired areas are being conducted this summer.

Flora and Fauna

There are five basic vegetative community types that are found at Saratoga Spa State Park. They are cultured landscapes, old fields, wetlands, pine plantations and forests.

The dominant feature of the vegetation in Saratoga Spa State Park is the significant alteration resulting from man's activities. This influence is most noticeable in the cultured landscapes and golf courses but is also evident in the successional stages of the old fields and the rows of red pine.

The park supports a broad community of fauna. More commonly visible species include Whitetail Deer, Turkey and small mammals including Raccoon, Squirrels, Chipmunk, and Muskrat. Numerous bird species are found in the park, both year round residents and seasonal migrants. The insects of the park are as diverse as the ecological communities. Both the Karner Blue Butterfly, listed as endangered by New York State and the Federal Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Frosted Elfin Butterfly, listed as threatened by New York State, are found within Saratoga Spa State Park.

Topography and Soils

Saratoga Spa State Park is located within the Mohawk Lowlands physiographic region and is bordered on the north by the Adirondack Mountains. The Allegheny Plateau lies to the west and the Taconic Mountains to the east.

The park varies in elevation from 220 feet (above mean sea level) in the southern portions to a high of 350 feet in the west. A prominent sand plain exists at the 300 foot contour which is cut by a ravine formed by Geysers Creek.

The main soil component of Saratoga Spa State Park is sand at the surface with coarser more mixed components in the subsoil. Some small rounded gravel may occur on the surface and throughout the subsoil. Patches of light sandy loam soils are also found at the park and some muck soils in the wetland areas. Generally the soils are suitable for recreation purposes except for the muck soils which should remain undisturbed. Some of the soils are corrosive to concrete.

Wetlands

There are three mapped freshwater wetland areas within the boundaries of the park. Two are in the parcel east of Route 9, and the third is in the southwest quadrant of the park.

Water Resources

Two creeks, Geyser Brook and Kayaderosseras Creek, run through Saratoga Spa State Park. Both are classified "C" by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation with the addition of a standard (T) for Geyser Brook to indicate its suitability for trout. The "C" classification indicates that these creeks are best suited for activities such as canoeing and fishing. Geyser Brook flows into Kayaderosseras Creek within the park boundary and Kayaderosseras Creek flows into Saratoga Lake.

A small dam and impoundment exist on Geyser Brook in the North West corner of the park. The impoundment is used for golf course irrigation. Several other small ponds exist in the park, which are used for irrigation.

Mineral Waters and Spouters

The mineral waters at Saratoga Spa State Park all originate in the layer of dolomitic limestone that underlies the shale and glacial drift of the area. The natural springs appear at the surface through faults or cracks in the shale, forming spouters. The mineral waters available at the park come from artesian wells varying from 100 to 1000 feet in depth.

The spouter is an example of how the waters flowing beneath the earth through cavities and channels of limestone and dolomite have found their way through a fault that connects with the surface. Naturally formed carbon dioxide gas pushes its way to the surface with the water, thus forming a pulsating spouter.

Scenic Resources

Classic Landscape Architecture and near ground natural views make up the scenic resources at Saratoga Spa State Park. The symmetry, scale and spatial relationships of the lawns, walkways, buildings and arcades in the developed parts of the park are the product of a particular Landscape Architectural vernacular. This classic design offers a human scale view that is beautiful and easy to appreciate.

The natural views at the park are not of long range vistas to far off horizons but rather the close up views of creek sides and flowing water, flowering fields, and shady forests. These natural scenes offer the close observer a look at the beauty of the natural world.

Current Recreation Uses

Saratoga Spa State Park provides numerous recreational opportunities among these are picnicking, swimming, canoeing, fishing, hiking, winter activities, nature study and bird watching, day-use, cross-country skiing, ice skating, golf, tennis, bicycling, running and softball.

- Interpretive/Education Programs – Many programs, such as the annual stocking of Geysers Brook, bring the resources of the park right to the patrons.
- Pools – Two pools provide public swimming facilities at the park. The Victoria Pool is a more “spa-like” atmosphere, contained within its surrounding buildings. The Peerless Pool area is larger and has more of a community pool atmosphere.
- Golf – There are two golf courses within the park, an eighteen hole Championship and a nine hole par 29.
- Multiple-use Trails – A system of hiking, running, walking and cross-country skiing trails is available in the park.
- Picnic Areas - Day picnic facilities are provided on both reservation and first come-first served basis.
- Tennis – There are eight tennis courts at the park, four clay and four hard surfaces. The clay courts are the only ones of this type in the area.
- Fishing
- Canoeing/Kayaking
- Ice Skating, snowshoeing and other Winter Activities

Current Cultural Resources

- Saratoga Automobile Museum
- National Museum of Dance
- SPAC
- Spa Little Theater
- Gideon Putnam Hotel
- Roosevelt Baths and Spa
- Hall of Springs

Infrastructure

- Buildings

There are many buildings in Saratoga Spa State Park, with a wide range of size, significance, style, uses, and conditions.

- Utilities

Saratoga Spa State Park is served by the following utilities:

Water: City of Saratoga Springs
Sewer: Saratoga County Sewer District #1
Electric: National Grid
Natural Gas: National Grid
Telephone: Verizon
Cable TV: Time Warner
Stormwater: OPRHP
Mineral Water: OPRHP
Irrigation Water: OPRHP and DEC

Ownership of the utility lines within the Park varies, with some lines owned by the utility or municipality, and some lines owned by New York State.

- Bridges

There are three reinforced-concrete vehicular bridges on the East-West Road and Geyser Loop Road crossing Geyser Creek. There are two steel-girder pedestrian bridges which service SPAC, one over Route 50 and one over Geyser Creek. There are also numerous small pedestrian bridges and culverts.

- Chemical Bulk Storage & Petroleum Bulk Storage

Infrastructure within the Park for storing petroleum products and sodium hypochlorite is in compliance with DEC regulations.

- Dams

There are three dams within Saratoga Spa owned and operated by OPRHP: Geyser Pond Dam, Coesa Pond Dam, Third Hole Dam (Golf Course).

Operations

- Park Staff
- Park and Regional Offices
- Facility and Vehicle Maintenance for the Park and Region
- Regional State Park Police
- Sustainability

Preliminary List of Potential Issues and Concerns

- ADA Compliance
- Additional Real Property Acquisitions
- Archaeology Resources
- Avenue of the Pines
- Centennial
- Creek Access
- Dog Park
- Education and Interpretive Programs
- External
- Gideon-Putnam/Roosevelt Management
- Golf Courses
- Historic Structures
- Horses in the park
- Infrastructure Needs
- Internal
- Karner Blue Butterfly Management
- Landscape Restoration
- Mineral Baths
- Nature/Visitor's Center
- Pools
- Public Safety and Security
- Signage
- SPAC
- Stream Erosion
- Sustainability
- Traffic and Parking
- Trails
- Trees
- Underutilized Structures

Next Steps

The 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 EIS will address these issues. Further opportunities for public input may take place during the preparation of the Draft EIS/Draft Master Plan. Public review of this document will include a public hearing and public comment/review period. Comments made during this time will be considered in the preparation of the Final EIS/Final Master 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 may be sent to:

Salim Adler
Planning Bureau
Agency Building One
Empire State Plaza
Albany, NY 12238
Salim.Adler@oprhp.state.ny.us