

Information Packet for
Mine Kill State Park, Max V. Shaul State Park
and John Burroughs Memorial State Historic Site
Draft Strategic Plan
Public Open House
October 15, 2016 Mine Kill State Park Office



**Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation**

Agenda

OPRHP staff will be available from 10:00AM-2:00PM to chat, answer questions and take comments about the draft strategic plan.

Introduction

Purpose of the Strategic Plan

The plan under development by OPRHP sets forth strategies for the continued provision of recreational facilities and activities at Mine Kill and Max V. Shaul State Parks and John Burroughs Memorial State Historic Site for the next 10-15 years. For Mine Kill State Park the plan is being coordinated with New York Power Authorities' (NYPA) relicensing application for the *Blenheim-Gilboa Pumped Storage Power Project* (The Project). The current license expires on April 30, 2019. Information about NYPA's relicensing application can be found on their website

<http://www.bg.nypa.gov/pages/home.aspx>.

For all three facilities, the plan also seeks to provide approaches to issues of aging infrastructure, deficient facilities, desires for new recreation activities/facilities, patron wishes and expectations and natural resource protection strategies.

The plan will propose strategies for improvements to marketing and tourism promotion for each of the individual facilities and the greater surrounding area.

The plan will also provide strategies for the continued viability, maintenance and operation of the John Burroughs Memorial State Historic Site. Opportunities for partnering with several non-profit organizations, site improvements and scenic viewshed protection are presented.

Purpose of the Public Open House

The purpose of this public open house is to actively invite public participation and involvement in the strategic 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 Strategic Plan. It is important to provide public input opportunities and to encourage identification of the compelling issues to be addressed within this planning effort.

Mission of the Office of Parks Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP)

The mission of OPRHP is to provide safe and enjoyable recreational and interpretive opportunities for all New York State residents and visitors and to be responsible stewards of our valuable natural, historic and cultural resources.

Fundamental to the successful achievement of our mission is the adherence to a set of guiding principles. These guiding principles serve as a pledge to the people we serve and a commitment to ourselves and to each other.

- **A Commitment to People.**

- **A Commitment to Preservation.**
- **A Commitment to Service.**
- **A Commitment to Leadership.**

This strategic plan will advance these principles, and determine the best course of action to preserve and utilize park resources for this and future generations.

These State Parks and State Historic Site, distinguished by the abundance of recreation resources, spectacular views, water resources and historic significance, are resources well used by the public.

Proposed Strategic Plan Timeline

Open House – October 1, 2016

Draft Strategic Plan – November, 2016

Final Plan – December 2016

Additional information can be obtained from OPRHP at:

Saratoga-Capital District Park Region
19 Roosevelt Drive
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866

518-584-2000

Planning Bureau
Office of Parks, Recreation and
Historic Preservation
Albany, NY 12238
518-486-2909

Overview

Mine Kill State Park (Mine Kill) is part of the land owned by the New York Power Authority (NYPA) as the Blenheim-Gilboa Pumped Storage Project. As part of the original licensing of the Project, NYPA made approximately 395 acres in the Towns of Blenheim and Gilboa (Schoharie County) available for the purpose of providing public recreation.

Mine Kill is operated and managed by New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) through an operating agreement with NYPA.

Max V. Shaul State Park (MVS) is a 70 acre recreation park established in 1959. New York State made the initial purchase of land that was to become the park in 1958. Originally named Toepath Mountain Picnic Area and Campsite, the park opened on May 28, 1959 and was subsequently named after the former owner of the property.

Today MVS is a quiet camping area with 30 wooded tent and trailer sites. The park has shady picnic grounds, as well as playing fields and a playground. There is a nature and hiking trail, and winter visitors can cross-country ski. A car top boat/fishing access trail to the Schoharie Creek was established in 2011.

John Burroughs Memorial State Historic Site, although located in Delaware county and part of the Central State Park Region, it is managed as part of the Saratoga/Capital Region by the staff at Mine Kill State Park. It is the site of the grave of John Burroughs, a prolific, influential natural history author and native son of the Catskills. The 3 acre site

contains his “boyhood rock” as well the grave, an interpretive kiosk and picnic area. The site affords superb scenic views of the northern Catskill Mountains and is about ¼ mile up the road from Woodchuck Lodge, where he lived summers late in life until his passing.

Existing Conditions

In the development of the strategic plan the existing conditions of the following resources will be considered:

- Surface and Bedrock Geology.
- Site soil conditions
- Site topography
- Flora and Ecological Communities
- Fauna and Habitats
- Rare, Threatened and Endangered Species of Plants and Animals
- Invasive Species of Plants and Animals
- Scenic Resources
- Recreational Resources
- Cultural Resources

Information Packet
Mine Kill and Max V. Shaul State Parks and John Burroughs State Historic Site Draft Strategic Plan
Open House – October 15, 2016, Mine Kill State Park Office

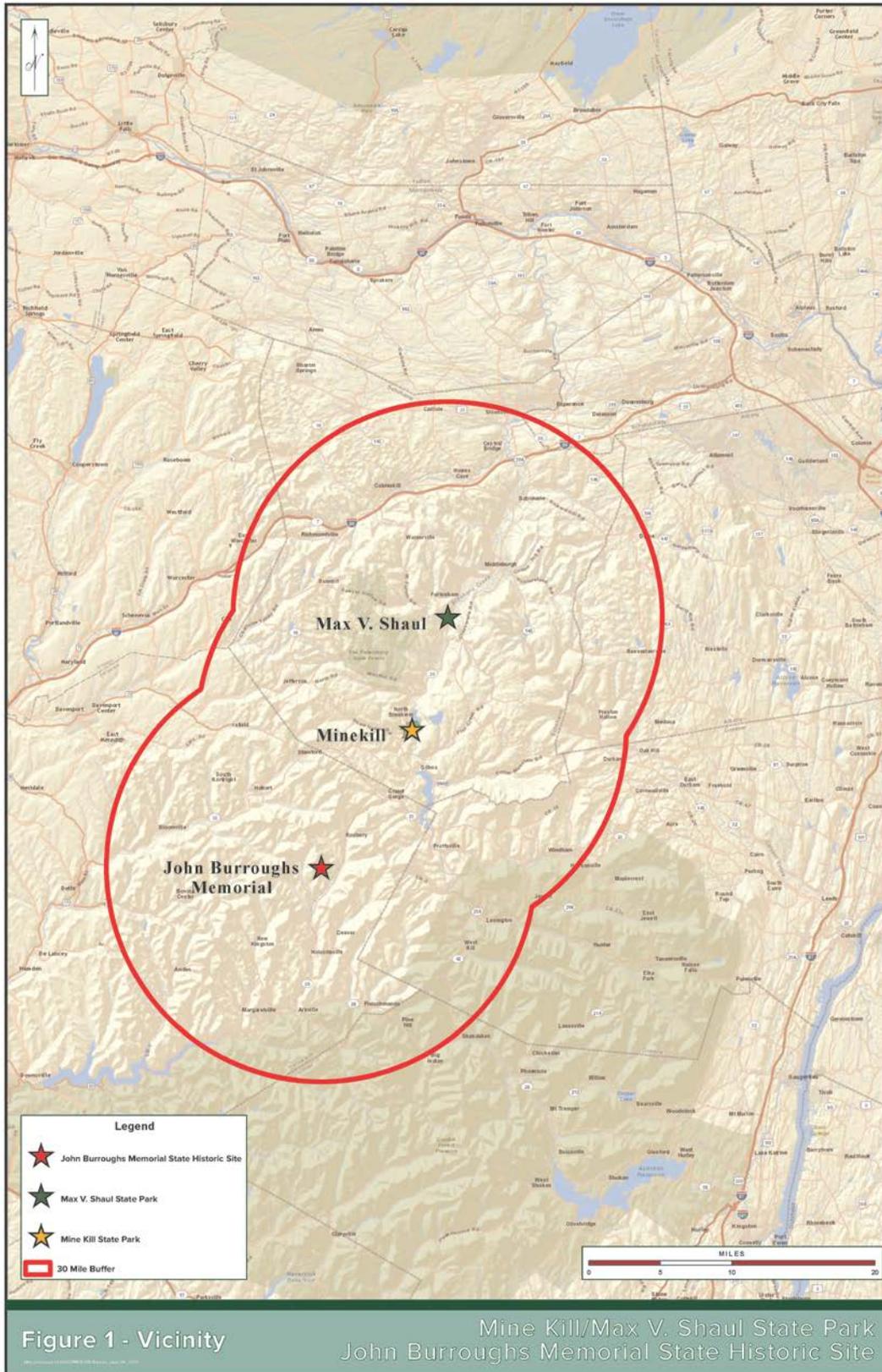


Figure 1 Vicinity

Information Packet
 Mine Kill and Max V. Shaul State Parks and John Burroughs State Historic Site Draft Strategic Plan
 Open House – October 15, 2016, Mine Kill State Park Office

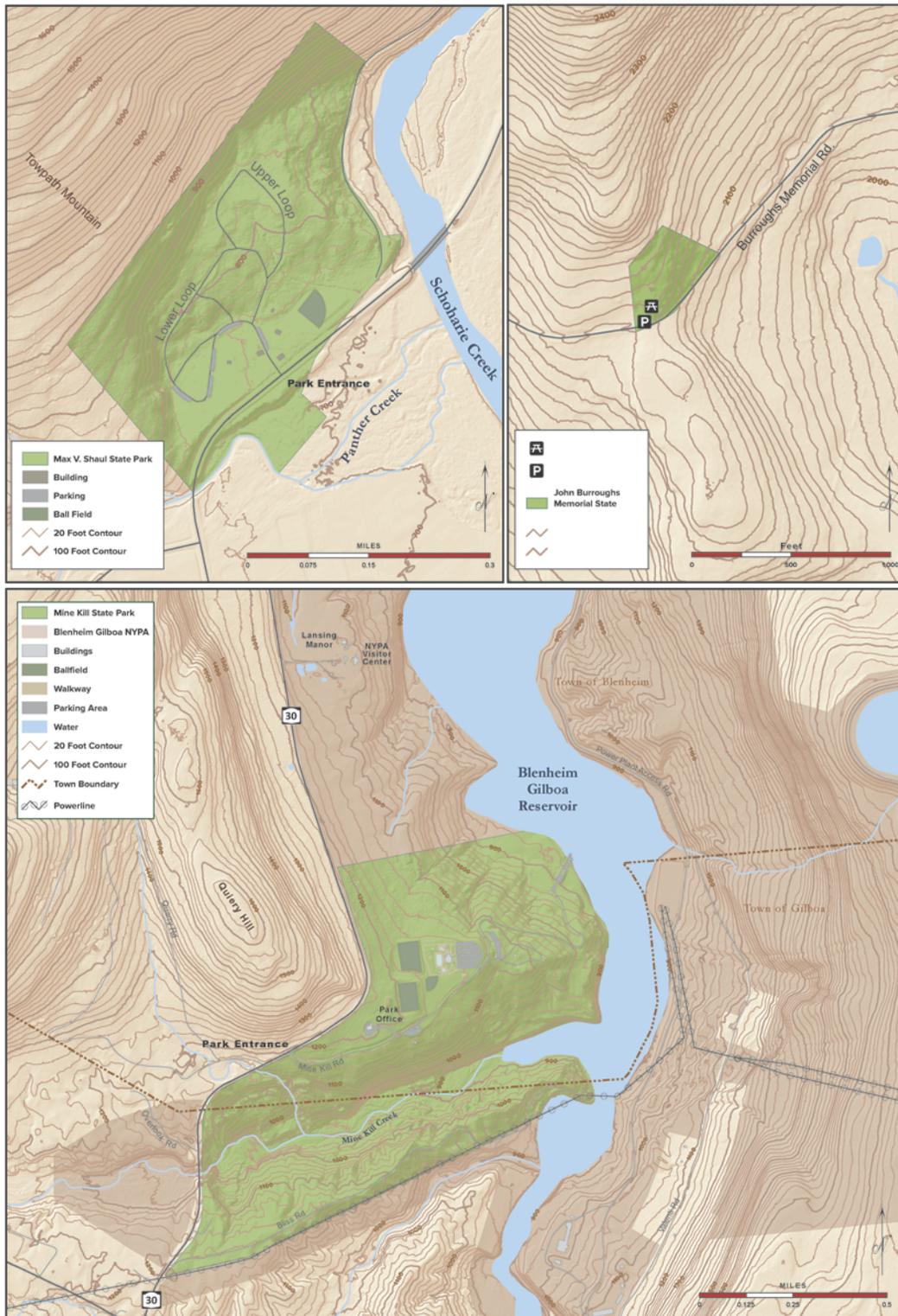


Figure 2 - Park Boundary Topography
 Mine Kill/Max V. Shaul State Park
 John Burroughs Memorial State Historic Site

Figure 2 Boundaries and Topography

Preliminary Proposals for the Strategic Plan

Although no definitive plan has been developed yet, several preliminary ideas have been discussed by OPRHP staff. These proposals are listed below and are shown on the park maps that are on display in the meeting room. Please feel free to comment on and discuss these ideas, contribute your own and offer alternatives. The staff is at the open house to gather your impressions and comments.

Mine Kill State Park

Recreation Resources

- Add a new picnic pavilion with a seating capacity of 60-80 below the south soccer field with bathrooms electricity and grills.
- Rehab comfort station at lower picnic area
- Inspect all pool complex structures and pools and make repairs as needed to assure viability on a long term basis.
- Provide ADA access to the Kiddie Pool.
- Long term – assess life expectancy of pool complex and plan for future replacement
- Playgrounds for at least two age ranges will be available in the park with toddler areas near family style picnic areas and accessible play equipment in each playground to encourage integrated play
- The sports fields will primarily serve the soccer clubs and organizations currently using them with additional uses, to be explored
- Storage for the soccer clubs will be provided
- Offer opportunity for beginners and families by creating beginner disc golf holes

Boat Access to Reservoir

- Replace or rehabilitate existing boat launch
- Consideration will be given to developing two launch lanes.
- Develop car top boat launch close to the existing parking lot and boat launch
- Consider kayak rentals with kayak boat house or moveable racks

Trails

- Consider feasibility of constructing a trail bridge over Mine Kill Creek
- Install trail map kiosks at critical locations in the park and on the trails
- Produce a new trail map that can be given to visitors and available on the web page
- Assess all trails for drainage, erosion, repair, and improvements.
- Close, re-route, or improve existing trails where necessary
- Keep use designations as is
- Explore additional single-track trail opportunities to create loops in main section of park
- Explore construction of lean-to on southern section of Long Path for thru-hikers
- Explore opportunities for trail access to reservoir/water
- Promote integration with larger trail networks

Sustainability

- Assess building energy usage and make changes where possible
- Switch to LED lighting where feasible
- Assess the park and park buildings for installation of solar power generation
- Use low water or no water type when new fixtures are installed
- Use no water urinals and low flush toilets where feasible
- Maintain current reduced mowing areas and increase where feasible
- Consider livestock grazing as an alternative to mowing
- Install green infrastructure stormwater controls where feasible

Natural, Cultural and Scenic Resources

- Develop and implement an invasive species plan for the park (combine with invasive species plan at Max V. Shaul)
- Continue bluebird nest box program
- Install interpretive signage along Mine Kill, on overlook and creek
- Conduct environmental education tours in Mine Kill gorge area
- Preserve trees and habitat along reservoir shoreline where feasible
- Interpret presence of Bald Eagles
- Allow fields at north end of the park to revert to shrubby woodlands and eventually forest
- Consider livestock grazing around red junipers and other places as an alternative to mowing
- Continue to maintain existing vistas from the park and from trails.
- Points along the Mine Kill may provide interesting observation opportunities for Geology and plant communities

Promoting the Park and Surrounding Area

- Develop relationships with outside entities with both a wide area focus and local resources
- Publish park newsletter
- Partner with NYPA for communications
- Partner with I Love NY
- Work with and through the Friends' group and invite continuing dialogue with volunteer groups, user groups, town councils, sporting groups and other interest groups
- Develop events and other park activities such as the current Sno Fest and Summer Fest

Buildings, Facilities and Infrastructure

- Renovate the boat launch
- Increase the space at the park office to better accommodate administrative functions and provide new space for meetings, environmental education and support services for recreation (construction is expected to be completed in 2017)

- Drill a secondary well closer to the concrete storage tank with better accessibility
- Re-pave all park roads and parking lots that have not already been re-paved
- Consider improvements to wayfinding signage on park roads and walkways
- Improve bicycle circulation in the park
- Assess walkways in and around all areas and repairs and prioritize and schedule repairs
- Build new pole barn to increase storage capacity for equipment, supplies etc.
- Improve signage indicating shared roadways
- Consider improvements to information signs in areas of high use such as the pool complex and boat launch.
- Inspect sewage lines by camera to assess infiltration and other problems – repairs or maintenance needed should be prioritized and scheduled
- Inspect water lines for sedimentation – repairs as needed

Max V. Shaul State Park

Recreation Resources

- Expand camping opportunities where feasible
- Install new comfort stations with showers
- Install electric service at selected campsites
- Lower camping fees on weekdays
- Consider installing dump station for RVs
- Develop group camping area
- Expand types of events at new pavilion and stage
- Develop campfire ring/amphitheater
- Consider tennis and/or basketball courts in field
- Improve drainage on trail to fishing access on Schoharie Creek

Trails

- Install trail map kiosk near the park office and parking area
- Assess all trails for drainage, erosion, repair, and improvements.
- Close, re-route, or improve existing trails where necessary.
- Create short loop nature trail near park entrance and field to provide additional activity for campers and park visitors and opportunity for nature interpretation

Natural, Cultural and Scenic Resources

- Develop and implement an invasive species plan for the park (combine with invasive species plan at Mine Kill)
- Implement an environmental education program at the park
 - Develop lectures and demonstrations
 - Install interpretive signage

Buildings, Facilities and Infrastructure

- Complete repaving of main park road and camping loop roads

- Install shared roadway signs
- Develop overflow parking area in activity field
- Inspect, replace or repair all park culverts
 - If possible use open bottom culverts to improve wildlife access
- Improve drainage in and around camping loops
- Consider green infrastructure methods of stormwater management
- Improve the reliability of the potable water system by installing a pressure switch to operate pump

John Burroughs Memorial State Historic Site

In addition to the action items listed below, the OPRHP Field Services Bureau (FSB) has begun to design several interpretive signs to be placed at the memorial. The interpretive signs will be used at the site to more fully explain the importance and historical context of the site and to provide some wayfinding.

Increase Public Awareness

- Identify and develop working relationships with outside organizations such as Woodchuck Lodge, for partnering on various tasks
 - Trail development and maintenance
 - Interpretation of historic and natural features
 - Event planning
- Develop a marketing plan for the historic site (may combine with promotion and marketing plans of Mine Kill and Max V. Shaul State Parks)

Improve Access

- Develop a trail system that connects to Woodchuck Lodge
- Improve the walkway from the entrance to the grave site and include ADA accessibility

Scenic Resources

- Identify viewshed and develop plan for preservation of bucolic scenery
- This area falls within a priority area for open space protection in the 2009 NYS Open Space Conservation Plan
- Work on removal of invasive plant species in the field below the gravesite
- Consider using livestock grazing in the field

Next Steps

The issues, concerns and alternatives identified at the open house and through written comments will be summarized and made available. The Draft Strategic Plan will consider these issues.

- There will be an opportunity for the public to review the Draft Strategic Plan. If you are interested please make sure you are on our mailing list.
- A final plan will be issued and adopted by the Saratoga/Capital District State Park Region.

Written comments will be accepted until Monday, November 14, 2016. Please send them to:

Salim Chishti, Planning Bureau, Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation,
Albany, NY 12238

Or email at: minekill.plan@parks.ny.gov