

Catskill Park Advisory Committee

Meeting Notes

March 16, 2023 at 10:30am

Meeting held via Zoom

The Chair (Jeff Senterman) welcomed all present. He went over a few housekeeping and technical details for the zoom meeting and urged everyone to introduce themselves through the chat function.

FPAC Updates: Peter Frank noted that there is a new Chair and Vice Chair for the Forest Preserve Advisory Committee. Bill Farber is the Chair and Jeff Senterman is the Vice Chair. He also noted that Bill is working with DEC to update meeting structure and changes will be coming for meetings this year to increase stakeholder participation and deliberation.

Catskill Advisory Group: Jeff noted that the [CAG has released their final report](#), which makes a series of recommendations on how to address high use in the Catskill Park and better manage the park cohesively. Jeff noted that there were several members of the CAG present and they would all be available to answer questions as well. At that point Jeff presented a powerpoint that is attached to these meeting notes.

Following the presentation, Shannon Ryan, representing the Ulster County Sportsmen, asked for a moment to voice some concerns from his group about several Catskill Park issues. Shannon explained that the Sportsmen have significant concerns about the high use in the Catskill Park that were not addressed in the Catskill Advisory Group's (CAG) final report. He also noted that the Sportsmen would like to see the reconsideration of the return of rail service in the Catskills to reduce vehicle trips. A document outlining their concerns is attached to these meeting notes.

Sean Mahoney, representing the Town of Hunter expressed that there is a very strong desire to see the recommendations in the CAG report implemented, especially the ones related to the Town of Hunter and Kaaterskill Clove. He said that it's important to find ways to help Towns cover the costs related to their portions of recommendations implementation.

NYSDEC Central Office: Peter Frank introduced Fionna Watt, the DEC's new Director of the Division of Lands and Forests. Fionna introduced herself and looks forward to working with all stakeholders across the Catskill Park.

McCrea provided an overview of items that DEC is currently working on across the Catskills. That work includes:

- Working with the Town of Hunter on immediate Kaaterskill Clove issues and the longer term VUM work
- Establishing the VUM process for Kaaterskill Clove with the consultant that was selected
- Addressing trailless peaks natural resource degradation through an internally driven VUM process
- Bidding the Trail Building and Front Country Steward contracts
- Developing trail standards and work plan standards - public comment on the drafts is being reviewed and addressed

McCrea noted that there are serious DEC seasonal staffing needs for lifeguards, campground workers, and more.

NYSDEC Region 3: Ian noted that the [DEC has released a draft UMP Amendment for the Sundown Wild Forest](#) that includes improvements to the Peekamoose Blue Hole area. Public comment is being accepted until April 21, 2023.

New regulations for the Neversink Riparian Area begin on March 22, 2023 and cover the Camp Pine Parcel with fishing access that has turned into a popular swimming area.

The DEC is hiring Natural Resource Stewards through the SCA (formerly Backcountry Stewards).

Coordinator Stewards training for Catskill Stewards (Catskill Center and Catskill Mountainkeeper), Summit Stewards (NYNJTC), and other DEC Stewards will take place in May.

The DEC is updating their Catskill Park map and brochure and welcome any suggestions to help with the updating.

NYSDEC Region 4: Sean Reynolds noted that a SUNY ESF Intern will be working with the DEC, the region is gearing up for seasonal increases of visitors at Kaaterskill Falls, and working to hire the SCA stewards. He noted that there has been and will be trail

work throughout the region, including work on the Diamond Notch Parking area. Several members noted that if DEC was working on the parking lot, the access road to the parking lot also needed to be improved, as it has been washed out several times and can only be driven by high clearance vehicles now.

NYSDEC Rangers: There was no one present to give a report.

NYCDEP: Tom Davidock noted that DEP continues to recover from COVID related challenges, including new hires and backfills of previously empty positions. He noted that deer management efforts are ongoing and that the Recreational Boating Program on the reservoirs will begin on May 1st. He's currently working with the CWC on the boating program.

Tom said that the DEP has developed a new "letter of permission" process to simplify some requests on DEP lands. The new letter replaces needing to get a Land Use Permit for some activities.

The Ashokan Rail is gearing up for a busy season. There will be a focus on getting folks to clean up after their dogs. Shannon asked if the DEP was studying dog waste impacts to water quality on the rail trail, and the reduction in access to sportsmen from trail use. Tom said that there were no specific studies, but he always welcomes feedback and information.

The construction activity in Boiceville is scheduled to be complete by November of 2025, but there is a possibility for an early finish of the bridge and intersection. Peter Manning asked if the project includes a pedestrian connection to Boiceville and Tom said yes. Kathy Nolan added that it would provide better pedestrian connections to existing sidewalks.

The Rondout-Neversink Tunnel is scheduled for shutdown in October with some possible recreational impacts - information will be going out soon.

Sean Mahoney noted that there is a [Streamside Acquisition Program \(SAP\)](#) conversation beginning with the MOA Stakeholders. He hopes that the group will find ways for SAP to meet big picture Park goals.

NYSDOT: Peter Dunleavy noted that they are meeting with the DOT regions to develop annual reports for 2022. Work that is upcoming for this season include:

- Culvert replacements in Hunter and Lexington
- Hazard tree removal on Miller Hollow and Beech Hill Roads

- Pollinator garden work
- Invasive species management
- Milkweed plantings

He noted that the American Bumblee, a protected species, has been found in Greene County and that the DOT is monitoring the status of the federal scenic byways grant application that DOT submitted.

Catskill Mountainkeeper: Kathy Nolan noted that there are two upcoming presentations that CMK is sponsoring in the Catskills, including “Hidden Gems in the Bluestone Wild Forest,” and “Cosmos in the Catskills.”

Friends of Bramley Mountain Fire Tower: Wendell George reported that there have been challenges with the Town of Delhi approving the DEP’s Land Use Permit for the installation of the Fire Tower on Bramley Mountain. He noted that at their most recent meeting, the Town Board voted down the proposal to move forward. Wendell noted that the FoBMFT are now working with the County to move forward on the project.

Hunter Area Trails Coalition: There’s a new section of the Hunter Area Trails that is opening on April 22, 2023 at 1pm. A variety of folks will be present to open trail. Overall they are working to connect Hunter to Kaaterskill Falls via the Hunter Area Rail Trail (new name for the Kaaterskill Rail Trail).

NYNJ Trail Conference: The Summit stewards are getting up and running for 2023 and trail and lean-to crews are planning out their work across the Park for 2023.

NYSFFLA: The Leonard Hill Fire Tower restoration is ongoing. There’s potential for the Rock Rift Fire Tower to be restored. Thankful for DEC work scheduled for Balsam Lake Mountain Fire Tower in 2023.

Sportsment: Shannon noted that he will follow up with additional information, but that he wanted to state that the Sportsmen believe that the CAG’s final report pushes development in the Catskill Park and that members of their constituency are not happy about the report.

Sean Mahoney noted that the CAG’s final report is recommending active management of the Catskill Park.

Seasonal Job Links:

NYNJTC: <https://www.nynjtc.org/corps-positions>

Catskill Center: <https://catskillcenter.org/opportunities>

NYSDEC: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/about/38596.html>

Catskill Advisory Group

Final Report

Catskill Advisory Group Report 2022



Report overview

- Report was informed by interviews, research, previous planning documents, a public survey, input from the state and deliberations among the CAG members
- Recommendations were guided by a few principles
 - Challenges and opportunities – increased visitation provides us with both, and each deserve adequate attention
 - Natural resources – protection of the resource is a top priority
 - Diversity and inclusion – imperative to make the park accessible and welcoming to all visitors
 - Climate change – management strategies must account for the changing climate

“Successful parks meet intensive use with intensive management.”



Report overview

- Report contains 61 recommendations, each with its own detailed elements
- Immediate action items / Strategic investments and priorities
- These are organized in six categories
 - Whole-Park Management
 - Natural Resources
 - Marketing, Communication and Education
 - Traffic and Parking
 - Benefits to Catskill Park Communities
 - Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice
- A few narratives that explain key terms or present innovative ideas



Whole-Park Management

- The Catskill Park Coordinator
- Implement CAG recommendations
- Ample funding from New York State
- Adopt the Visitor Use Management Framework
- Adequate staffing for park management agencies
- Data collection, monitoring, surveying



“With more than 12 million people visiting the Catskill each year, it is past time that New York begin to manage the Catskill park as a whole park instead of a patchwork of lands that stretch across invisible boundaries that are unseen to visitors.”

Natural Resources

- Data collection and monitoring
- Natural-resource protection as a driver for decision making

“As the State considers how to accommodate more visitors in the Catskill Park, it must also spend time, energy and funding on efforts to protect our natural resources.”



Marketing, Communication and Education

- Immediate actions along Route 23a / Kaaterskill Clove
- Market research to drive messaging
- Tourism task force and unified social media messaging
- Expand opportunities for in-person interactions between visitors and stewards
- Equity and inclusion in communication

“Marketing and communication present an interesting tug-of-war for the Catskill park, especially in the age of social media, smartphone apps, and other forms of digital communication. On one hand, these broad avenues for communication have brought additional visitors to a region that relies on tourism...but digital communication has also directed huge numbers of people to trails that are behind their carrying capacity, creating problems like illegal parking, litter....”



Marketing, Communication and Education



A Mobile Visitor Center for the Catskills

The Catskills Visitor Center in Mount Tremper was constructed at one of the major gateways to the Catskill Park to provide visitors with information about outdoor recreation, events, park communities, and education about good outdoor ethics. This center is complemented by the county tourism promotion agencies, which provide information at their physical locations and on their websites.

Information delivery in the Catskill Park, however, is challenged by the fact that our park does not have a single point of entry. Visitors to the park enter through multiple highways, counties, and gateways at every corner of the Catskills.

That is why the Catskill Park would benefit greatly from having a mobile Catskills Visitor Center to complement the brick-and-mortar locations. The mobile visitor center could move around the park to provide information at hot spots, popular trailheads, events that attract tourists, and other locations.

From Long Island to Toronto and Texas, mobile visitor centers are becoming more common at parks, beaches, and tourist towns. Many of them are constructed by modifying a trailer or box truck, which is often wrapped in an iconic image of the location. The insides of these mobile centers are outfitted with TVs that broadcast a list of local events and promotional videos of the region, maps that guide people to outdoor destinations and local communities, and kiosks that carry brochures for local businesses and tourism attractions. The mobile visitor centers are staffed by trained employees who provide information about hiking, campsites, outdoor ethics, and more.

A mobile presence throughout the Catskill Park would help to achieve many of the goals outlined in this CAG report. It would provide a visible presence to educate more visitors at hot spots across the park. It would also help connect visitors to local restaurants, guide services, and other businesses in park communities that rely on tourism.

That is exactly how officials from the Missouri National Recreational River use their mobile ranger station when it was developed in 2013. The station—equipped with TVs, photos, and maps—was stationed at popular tourism areas around the river to encourage more visitation to the river and local businesses. Officials from the National Park Service brought the trailer to state fairs, outdoor festivals, sporting events, and even Mount Rushmore to educate more people within the region about recreational opportunities along the Missouri River. Staff also used the trailer to offer educational programming for children. The trailer cost \$20,000 to purchase and equip.

Benefits to Catskill Park Communities

- Increase park and community connectivity
 - Establish new parking in underutilized lots in villages or hamlets
 - Hut-to-hut or place-to-place hikes
 - Parks towns and trail towns
 - “Open Street” festivals in towns close to trailheads
 - New trail links to connect central business districts with outdoor recreation opportunities

“A steady flow of visitors into the Catskills supports communities, businesses and families through the retention and creation of jobs. It also supports local governments by generating sales tax revenue...we cannot ignore the economic opportunities and pride of place created by tourism.”



Benefits to Catskill Park Communities

A Local Benefits Corporation for Parking and Community Opportunities

Through its discussions with other parks across the country and the globe, the CAG found some innovative models that were deployed to meet the challenges of high use, while also seizing on its opportunities.

One model came from Wales, in the United Kingdom. Its Brecon Beacons National Park is similar in scale, size, and scope to the Catskill Park. Its challenges were also similar, with the pandemic driving thousands of new visitors to its waterfalls, hiking areas, and caves. The increased visitation filled parking areas beyond capacity, caused litter at hot spots, and contributed to erosion at popular destinations.

The Brecon Beacons have begun to employ an innovative model to solve its parking challenges, while also connecting visitors with more communities that are located within its national park.

The park began by identifying existing parking areas, within park communities, that were underutilized during the peak days and seasons. Managers found that existing parking lots at churches, community centers, grocery stores, and other locations were underutilized, with dozens or hundreds of parking spots going unused.

With help from non-governmental organizations, park managers created a local benefits corporation (LBC) that would pay a fee to rent a portion of these parking lots from their owners. Park visitors were then encouraged to park at these locations through the use of a reservation system, and the LBC established transportation from the parking lot to the trailheads of nearby trails or waterfalls.

Similar to the Catskill Park, much of the increase in visitation to the Brecon Beacons came from nearby urban areas in Wales. Park managers said that these visitors had different expectations when they arrived at the park, including bathroom facilities, refreshment stations, and a place to leave their garbage.

The LBC provided those facilities at the rented parking lots. Mobile bathrooms were set up. The LBC allowed local companies to provide refreshments, and food trucks could rent space to sell fresh meals. The revenue into the LBC from these local businesses and the parking fees were used to rent the parking lot from the property owner, and for the salaries of staff who managed the parking area. Trash cans were set up. And the LBC even established a concierge service at the site to funnel visitors into local towns, restaurants, overnight facilities, and guide services.

Managers of the Brecon Beacons National Park report that many challenges, such as litter, were significantly reduced once these parking areas were set up. For example, people did not bring disposable food containers to the park as often because they knew food would be available from vendors in the parking lot. Visitors stopped parking and peeing on the side of the road, because they knew parking and toilets would be available at the lots operated by the LBC.

This innovative model, which solved challenges and capitalized on opportunities, could be replicated in the Catskill Park. The Catskill Park Coordinator should survey existing parking lots that are within a reasonable distance of popular hiking and swimming areas. Existing nonprofits or benefits corporations could be utilized to provide the services in a similar fashion to the Brecon Beacons.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice

- Ensure public-facing park resource are inclusive
- Update facilities to meet accessibility standards
- Ensure DEC promotes diversity among staff
- NYS should examine the diversity of park visitors and study economic and other benefits.
- Highlight the benefits of diversity and embrace diversity by creating a safe and welcoming environment throughout the park.
- Align strategies with Open Spaces for All

“...the Catskill Park is well-positioned to become a model that incorporates DEIJ initiatives in its plans, practices and policies. That is especially true because many of the park’s visitors come from one of the most ethically and culturally diverse metropolitan areas in the country.”



For More Information

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CATSKILLCENTER
conservation creates opportunity



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| Region | Travel Corridor # | Project/Activity | PIN | Summary |
|--------|-------------------|--|---------|---|
| R1 | 42 | Culvert Repair/Replacement SFY 22 | 1810.88 | Planned for 2023 season: Replacement of several culverts according to Corps of Engineers standards to increase resilience, and enhance aquatic and terrestrial connectivity. Two in Lexington on Route 42 and one in Hunter on Route 23A. Habitat connectivity will be taken into account for terrestrial and aquatic connectivity. |
| R9 | 30 | Hazard Tree Removal | N/A | Route 30, roughly Miller Hollow Road to Beech Hill Road: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Removing ash trees impacted by EAB and other hazardous trees along the roadside using the Statewide Hazardous Tree Removal Contract with funds budgeted for hazardous tree removals. Residency (9-4) had received several requests from NYCDEP to address the hazardous ash tree conditions along this corridor. · All work is occurring within NYSDOT ROW. Anticipate completion by approximately 3/17/2023. Additional work to remove hazardous trees along the Route 30 corridor from the intersection of NYS Route 30/Beech Hill Road to NYS Route 2 intersection is anticipated in FY23/24 depending on available funds. Habitat promotion for pollinators, namely the American bumble bee - Greene County, NY. Project is a partnership w/ Greene County SWCD & DEC. |
| R1 | 23A | Pollinator Garden, Route 23A; Jewett | | Prepared and planted in 2022 with native wildflower mix. Conservation mowing planned for every two years in late fall. Bumble bee conservation sign installed. Late summer/fall monitoring in 2022, additional monitoring planned for 2023. |
| R8 | 28 | Pollinator Garden, Route 28, Mount Tremper | | Established 100' by 100' pollinator garden at the entrance to the Mount Tremper subresidency. In 2023, monitoring. |
| R1 | 23A | Pollinator Garden, Route 23A, Prattsville | | 2023- tentative approval for additional pollinator plantings at pull offs on 23A. Building off the momentum of the Jewett Pollinator garden established in 2022. |
| R8 | 209 | Reduced Mowing Route 209 Town of Ulster | | Following reduced mowing of the Route 209 median from Route 28 interchange to Sawkill Road in the Town of Ulster. In 2022, milkweed seeds were collected for use in future projects. Seeds are stored and are going to be planted in maintenance pollinator gardens in 2023. Once germinated, milkweed will be incorporated into gardens around the region. |
| R8 | 28 | Rock Scaling | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Work order is in place with our maintenance forces to clear the rock fall and perform some scaling of the ledge in an effort to make this safer and re-establish a ditch line that would better protect the highway from future rockfalls that may occur. · Work will likely occur sometime this spring and it is not anticipated that any additional protections (fencing, netting, rock pins) will be |
| R9 | | 906780 Rt 17 over Willowemoc & Debruce Scour Repair | 906780 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Construction started in late summer 2022. Scour protection included a roughened bottom design (grouted riprap) to retain natural streambed material. Included a plunge pool on the downstream side for fish habitat. Existing terrestrial passage maintained. Completed per plan. · 11,539 SF treatment of invasives was done under Construction contract. Tree planting and wildflower seeding mix planned for pollinator habitat post-construction, along with mowing limits markers. In-house monitoring planned. · Contractor is using nearby fishing access point parking area during construction. Kiosk protected with temporary plastic fencing. |
| MO | parkwide | Annual Reporting | | Finalizing 2022 Annual Report on NYSDOT projects and activities in the Adirondack and Catskill Parks. Will be posted to our website. 2023 reporting is underway. |
| MO | parkwide | Catskill Park Viewer | | New ESRI System of Engagement - meeting with our NYSDOT Maps & Apps developers this spring to update ADK viewer, hope to discuss expanding that viewer to include Catskills or to strategize on development of a separate Catskill Viewer. Goal is for both public and private facing layers. |
| MO | | Catskill Mountain Scenic Byway | | Attended the monthly meetings of the Catskill Collaborative. This group is working on the Catskill Park Corridor Management Plan. LAB staff are working on mapping for that CMP and NYSDOT will do the chapter on Transportation Safety. |
| MO | | National Scenic Byways Program Grant Funding | | NYSDOT submitted two statewide applications for National Scenic Byway Program grant funding. One for Sign Replacement System Wide and the other for Corridor Management Plan (CMP) updates. Anticipate NOFO for 2023 grants and funding decisions from FHWA for 2022 grants in Spring 2023. |
| Mo | | Scenic Byways Program - General | | NYSDOT continues to attend FHWA NSBP Byway Coordinator meetings and distribute notes and recording link to NYS byways. |



Catskill Center for Conservation and Development

Catskill Park Advisory Committee Update For March 16, 2022 Meeting

Catskill Stewards Program: The Catskill Center is currently hiring seasonal workers to staff the Catskill Stewards Program. Available positions include Front Country Stewards, Ridgerunner, and Fire Tower Stewards. [Applications are available on our website](#) and we welcome all applicants.

Catskills Visitor Center: The Catskill Center is hiring seasonal workers to staff the visitor center 7 days a week between April and October this year. [Applications are available on our website](#) and we welcome all applicants.

Catskill Center Request for Proposals: The Catskill Center is seeking proposals for professional grant writing services. [The full RFP is available on our website](#) and we urge all eligible individuals and companies to submit a proposal.

Catskill Park Coalition: Work has begun for the next budget year, with advocacy work for Catskill Park priorities ongoing (see attached priorities).

Catskills Visitor Center Funding: Advocacy work is ongoing to ensure continued state funding of a portion of the overall costs of the Catskills Visitor Center (see attached letter). The Governor has included [\\$200,000 in her budget for the CVC](#).

Catskills Great Outdoor Expo: The Outdoor Expo is returning this year at the Catskills Visitor Center on Saturday, June 10, 2023. [Vendor Registration info and more available on website](#).

Catskill Center Statement on CAG Final Report: [Catskill Center Issues Statements on Recommended Long-Term Catskill Park Management](#).



Fire Tower Project 2022 Annual Report

Fire Tower Challenge:

- 1043 finishers
- ~39 repeat finishers (97% of people had never done the challenge before)
- Now incentivizing repeating finishers this year with mugs
- Had an increase of 538 submissions
- There were 12 other states, Canada, and even a UK submission this year.



Catskill Fire Tower Totals:

- Number of volunteers: 120
- Number of visitors: 20,806
- Amount donated:~\$4,350
- Staffed days at summit: 151

Balsam Lake:

- Number of volunteers: 30
- Number of visitors: 1,534
- Amount donated:\$1,073.50
- Staffed days at summit: 34

Overlook:

- Number of volunteers: 30
- Number of visitors: 14,000
- Amount donated:
- Staffed days at summit: 47

Red Hill:

- Number of volunteers: 40 Active, 21 served as guides
- Number of visitors: 1,947

- Amount donated: \$1065.51
- Staffed days at summit: 35

Hunter:

- Number of volunteers: 15
- Number of visitors: 3,325
- Amount donated: \$2,211
- Staffed days at summit: 35

We don't have metrics available for our remaining two Fire Towers

Catskill Mountain Club
Report for Catskill Park Advisory Committee
March 10, 2023

CMC hired Peter Manning as the Executive Director in December 2022. Former Executive Director Wendell George now serves as President of the Board of Directors. Peter is becoming familiar with all aspects of the position, including communications, advocacy, fundraising, and grant writing.

Advocacy

- Participated in several Zoom meetings with Catskill Park Coalition members, state senators, and state assemblymembers. Topics included Catskill Park priorities, stewardship, aid to localities, cell phone service, and affordable housing.
- Helped promote and participated in Catskill Park Day, which included several state representative and Catskill stakeholders.
- Followed up on Catskill priorities and stewardship needs with letters to the governor and state elected officials.
- Supported the efforts to retain non-motorized use (except snowmobiles) on the Catskill Scenic Trail in Delaware County. The Catskill Revitalization Corporation, manager of the trail, considered all the information (surveys, letters, current policy, safety concerns) and determined that the current policy will remain in effect.

Events

- Lark in the Park 2022 - 24 in-person events were held (hikes, walks, paddles, bike rides, and art and education) with an estimated 250 participants. In addition, there were self-guided tours, podcasts, and online presentations, also with strong participation.
- CMC led a First Day Hike to Panther Mountain in coordination with NYSDEC
- CMC is looking for event leaders and will be scheduling a hike soon for those interested in leading events. Please contact Peter@catskillmountainclub.org if you're interested in leading events.

Trails

- Progress will continue in 2023 on the planning and implementation of the Morris Hill Trail in Arkville. Primarily on a DEP-owned parcel, the trail will contribute to the Arkville Recreation Hub, identified in the East Branch Recreational Access Plan. Hub resources include the hamlet of Arkville, the Delaware and Ulster Railroad, the Water Discovery Center, the Catskill Recreation Center, and the CWC/ DEP offices.
- CMC is working with DEP to reroute the Shavertown Trail so it begins/ ends at the roadside parking area above the boat launch and eliminates the paved road section.
- CMC continues to support the Friends of Bramley Mountain Fire Tower in efforts to place the historic fire tower to its original location on the summit of Bramley Mountain, which is the halfway point on the four-mile Bramley Mountain Trail.

Other

- CMC continues efforts to redesign the Club's website. Technical assistance continues from a skilled volunteer, and a grant application was recently submitted.



Catskill Regional Invasive Species Partnership Updates

3/16/23

CRISP staff is finalizing the CRISP 2022 Annual Report. The completed report will be posted on the CRISP website (<https://www.catskillinvasives.com/annual-reports>) and will be shared with CRISP Partners. In 2022, CRISP expanded its capacity to perform surveys, rapid response, control, outreach and volunteer management with additional year-round (Sarah Coney and Kate Cooper, half-time CRISP) and seasonal invasive species staff. In 2022, CRISP staff surveyed 3,694 acres of uplands and water bodies (an area larger than the combined size of the Rondout and Schoharie Reservoirs) nearly 8X the area surveyed in 2021. The area managed expanded to 130.4 acres, more than 10X the area CRISP managed in 2021.

Rapid response was performed on giant hogweed, mile-a-minute vine, black jetbead, Japanese angelica tree, Japanese hop, hardy kiwi and European frogbit. Hardy kiwi was found to be spreading in CRISP for the first time (an escaped planting) and was pulled by our staff. All but one of CRISP's 7 assigned giant hogweed sites for the year showed no plant growth, with the lone site showing a 64% reduction in stem count since the initial survey. Beech leaf disease was found in CRISP for the first time at two sites in Sullivan County. Find out how to identify and report beech leaf disease here: <https://www.catskillinvasives.com/updates>

CRISP led a total of 45 outreach and training events for 1097 participants. Trainings were offered for identification, reporting, early detection, control, and prevention of invasive species and for community science projects.

During nine workdays at the Ashokan Rail Trail, 40 volunteers contribute 160 hours of volunteer time. Seven different invasive species have been pulled at 18 scenic vistas, over about ¼ acre. John submitted a proposal to NYC DEP to continue to support funding of invasive species management at the Ashokan Rail Trail in 2023.

CRISP collaborated with DEP on strategic planning for invasive species management. The 2022 Stakeholder Input Report identified priorities for management in the CRISP region and identified the primary organizations that are responsible for implementing management actions. The report is available here: <https://www.catskillinvasives.com/what-we-do>

We are currently hiring four CRISP Strike Team positions for the summer and have begun interviews. Application deadline is March 31, <https://www.catskillinvasives.com/job-openings>. We're working with the Sullivan County Planning Department and will develop an invasive species management plan and perform outreach and management at the Callicoon Riverside Park.



**Forest Fire Lookout Association
New York State Chapter
CPAC Meeting Report
March 16, 2023**

The NYS Chapter of the FFLA cares for numerous towers in NYS through Volunteer Service Agreements and supports the work of many other towers as well. In the Catskills we have supported the work of several local groups and the CFTP.

In Region 4, A VSA application for Leonard Hill Fire Tower is still pending. We continue to await the results of a request for an engineering evaluation from September of 2018 but have been told the engineer is actively working on it. Funding for restoration work at the fire tower is approved and NYSDEC will be developing a work plan when the engineers report is completed. They have already made some significant improvements in the area. We are looking forward to the opportunity to work on this project.

In Region 3, we are very grateful for the support of Natural Resources Supervisor Jeff Rider for the much needed work at Balsam Lake Mt Fire Tower. Much needed repairs have led to significant safety concerns for both visitors and volunteers alike at both the fire tower and the Observers cabin. Jeff has assured us those repairs will be a priority in 2023. We appreciate that they will be done in a timely manner so that the very successful volunteer steward program at Balsam Lake can continue. We also thank the NYSDEC Forest Rangers who assisted the volunteers with replacement of landing boards on 2 landings of the fire tower in the fall.

The Rock Rift Fire Tower owned by the Town of Tompkins is also a project we hope to assist with. In a recent discussion with Supervisor Bill Layton he was feeling very positive that restoration will be able to move forward soon.

Bramley Mountain Fire Tower – Local community support in the Town of Delhi is strong, despite the the Town Council who voted 3 to 2 to not sign an agreement with the NYSDEP to allow the fire tower project to proceed. The Friends of Bramley Mt who have done all of the work for the project to date is continuing to work toward a resolution with hundreds of signatures from a petition given to the Town Council at the last board meeting this week.

Once Bramley Mt is returned to its original home, the Utsyantha Fire Tower which is owned by the Village of Stamford will be the 3rd fire tower along the Delaware River/Route 10 corridor and will certainly be a boost to outdoor recreation options in Delaware County.

Respectfully submitted,

Laurie Rankin, Director
New York State Chapter
Forest Fire Lookout Association
www.nysffla.org



THE FEDERATED SPORTSMEN'S CLUBS OF ULSTER COUNTY

Mailing: PO Box 3134, Kingston, NY 12402

Physical: 710 Springtown Road, New Paltz

www.fscuc.org - <https://www.facebook.com/fscuc.org/>

March 18, 2022

As CPAC delegate for the Federated Sportsmen's Clubs of Ulster County I represent 32 outdoor sporting clubs and other outdoor related organizations located in Ulster County.

The Federation's 32 member organizations have a combined total of about 5,000 individual members in addition to other household family members, neighbors and community partners.

There is growing concern among these members as to the future uses, development and possible reclassification of State Lands within the Catskill Park.

The Wilderness areas of the Catskill Park have been protected under New York State's Constitution from the kind of encroachment and development that is being outlined in the Catskill Strategic Planning Advisory Group's Interim Recommendation Report.

The public comment period was short and that has not been received well.

The loss of habitat proposed, coupled with Wild Forest Land redesignation, and the use of Environmental Protection Funds and Conservation Funds for development is alarming.

We ask that the Interim Recommendation Report be withheld until Sportsmen's Federations from the counties within the Catskill Park can meet with CPAC officials to discuss our concerns.

Thank You,

**Shannon Ryan,
CPAC Delegate For FSCUC
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845.657.7125**

**cc: Mike Leone – FSCUC President
cc: FSCUC Recording Secretary
cc: FSCUC Board Members**