

## **Appendix B - Hudson Highlands Scenic Area of Statewide Significance**

### **I. Location**

The Hudson Highlands Scenic Area of Statewide Significance (SASS) encompasses a twenty mile stretch of the Hudson River and its shorelands and varies in width from approximately 1 to 6 miles. The SASS includes the Hudson River and its east and west shorelands. It extends from its northern boundary, which runs from the northern tip of Scofield Ridge, Denning's Point and the base of Storm King Mountain to its southern boundary at Red Hook and the southern limits of the Bear Mountain State Park. At the SASS's northern and southern extremes, the SASS extends across the Hudson River to the mean high tide line on the opposite shoreline.

The Hudson Highlands SASS is located within the City of Newburgh, the Town of New Windsor, the Town of Cornwall, the Town of Highlands, the Village of Cornwall-on-the-Hudson and the Village of Highland Falls, Orange County; the Town of Stony Point, Rockland County; the City of Peekskill, the Town of Cortlandt and the Village of Buchanan, Westchester County; the Town of Philipstown, the Village of Nelsonville and the Village of Cold Spring, Putnam County; and the Town of Fishkill and the City of Beacon, Dutchess County.

The Hudson Highlands SASS is comprised of 28 subunits:

HH-1 Cornwall Hillside Estates; HH-2 Storm King; HH-3 Contemporary West Point Military Academy; HH-4 West Point Military Academy; HH-5 Highlands; HH-6 Highland Falls; HH-7 Con Hook; HH-8 Fort Montgomery; HH-9 Brooks Lake; HH-10 Hessian Lake; HH-11 Bear Mountain State Park; HH-12 Iona Island Marsh; HH-13 Iona Island; HH-14 Jones Point; HH-15 Wallace Pond; HH-16 Anthony's Nose; HH-17 Manitou; HH-18 Manitou Marsh; HH-19 Garrison Landing; HH-20 Garrison Four Corners; HH-21 Fort Hill; HH-22 Nelson Corners; HH-23 Constitution Marsh; HH-24 Constitution Island; HH-25 Cold Spring; HH-26 Hudson Highlands State Park; HH-27 Dutchess Junction; HH-28 Pollepel Island.

Refer to the Hudson Highlands SASS Map for the SASS boundary.

### **II. Description**

The Hudson Highlands SASS is a highly scenic and valued region of the Hudson River Valley, rich in natural beauty, cultural and historical features.

The Hudson Highlands are part of the Reading Prong of the New England Upland, a division of the Appalachian Highlands. This is composed almost entirely of Precambrian igneous and metamorphic rocks and forms a low, rugged mountain range, underlain by some of the oldest rocks in the eastern United States, over one billion years old. The area exhibits a very complex geological record, with several

cycles of crustal movement, metamorphism, igneous intrusion, folding and faulting, sedimentation and erosion.

The highest elevation and the most spectacular relief in the SASS occur at the northern gateway to the Hudson Highlands. This comprises Storm King and Crows Nest to the west and Breakneck Ridge, the Beacons and Bull Hill to the east. The southern gateway is formed by the peaks of the Bear Mountain State Park to the west, including Dunderberg and Bear Mountain, and Manitou Mountain and Anthony's Nose to the east.

The Hudson River has carved a spectacular gorge through the Hudson Highlands. The river seems to have followed three distinct fault lines, exploited structurally weak zones and the general north-east trend of the rock formations and has been modified by glacial action to arrive at its current course, one that shows a high degree of integration into the geological structure of the area.

Between Storm King and Breakneck Ridge, where the high peaks drop straight to the water, the Hudson River corridor is a fjord, deepened by glacial action and filled by the rising sea as the ice melted. This landscape feature is unique in New York State and very rare in the eastern United States. Off Gees Point at West Point, the Hudson River is 202 feet deep. This part of the Hudson is known as World's End and is the deepest point on the river.

The present shoreline configuration includes steep cliffs, bluffs, and gently sloping banks. Several promontories jut into the Hudson, forming bends in the river which mirror the underlying topography. The original channel of the Hudson River, following a fault zone, was established east of Constitution Island and west of Iona Island. Later, glacial ice, unable to follow the sharp turns, carved new channels, leaving the two islands as topographic features in the river. There are a number of coves and tributaries where streams such as Indian Brook, Doodletown Brook, Popolopen Brook and the Fishkill Creek converge with the Hudson River. At these locations the shoreline features an estuary rich in wetlands, tidal mudflats and shallows.

Variations in bedrock composition exist between the east and west shorelands of the SASS, resulting in differential erosion, varying weathering patterns and discoloration of the rock surface. The roundness of many of the Highland summits is due to erosion. The flanks of the mountains are buried beneath sedimentary deposits, while the clefts and valleys have been filled with glacial till. The rolling upland valleys contain numerous wetlands, mountain streams, ponds and lakes, such as Wallace Pond, Lake Alice, the Melzingah and Beacon Reservoirs and Gordon's Brook.

An extensive vegetative cover of mature woodlands of mixed deciduous and coniferous trees dominates all but the steepest of mountain slopes. On the lower slopes and lowland plateaus the dense woodland coverage gives way to a combination of mixed woodlands and clearings comprised of farmsteads, open pasture and meadows and landscaped estates with formal gardens and sweeping lawns. Small hamlets and villages are situated in the lowland valleys and plateaus, nestling into the woodlands and featuring mature street landscaping. The shoreline vegetation includes wooded banks, bluffs and cliffs and the wetland vegetation of Constitution Marsh, Manitou Marsh and Iona Marsh.

The settlement and transportation patterns of the Highlands are heavily influenced by the area's topography, respecting the natural features in their layout and location. Settlements are limited to the

lowland plateaus and lower hillsides and appear tightly clustered within the landscape. Large historic estates are located throughout the SASS, taking advantage of the spectacular views from the hillsides above the hamlets. More recent residential and commercial development shows less respect for the topography of the area. Subdivision of farmsteads and estates and commercial strip development along major highways has resulted in a dispersal of the settlement pattern, leading to an increasing suburbanization of the Hudson Highlands.

Railroads hug the shoreline of the Hudson River and roads follow the hillside contours and inland valleys. There are two military sites within the SASS, the undeveloped parts of the Camp Smith Military Reservation and the United States Military Academy at West Point, both with extensive areas of open space. The present-day land use pattern of the Hudson Highlands is dominated by State parkland, preserving much of the open space of the SASS for its aesthetic, recreational and natural resource values. This has resulted in a land use pattern of formal and informal recreational facilities, nature reserves and "wilderness".

The Hudson Highlands have long been significant in the culture and history of both the State of New York and the United States. The area came to prominence when Henry Hudson explored the region in 1609, and the ship's log describes the spectacular landscape. Since that time the area has been perceived as a unique environment with outstanding scenic, cultural and historic resources. The present day landscape of the Hudson Highlands SASS owes a great deal to its cultural and historical development since the 17th century. This is particularly evident in the land use and settlement pattern and in the development of the State park system in the area.

Early settlement and economic development of the Hudson Valley during the pre-Revolutionary War period bypassed the rugged mountainous landscape of the Hudson Highlands for the more attractive and easily developable fertile land located to the north and west. During this period the development of settlements in the Highlands was affected by the political and administrative system of Dutch and English colonial government, the series of manorial grants and patents, difficulties in transportation and the rugged, forested topography and narrow marsh-bounded shoreline. These factors combined to hold in check the spread of small settlements and occupation of land by all but a few lords of the manor and hardy yeoman farmers.

By the time of the Revolutionary War there were some family farms in the uplands and small settlements based around sawmill operations at Highland Falls and Cornwall. Development of military facilities led to a clearing of the woodlands. The decision to fortify the Hudson Highlands, taken in 1775, resulted in the eventual construction of forts on Constitution Island, at Fort Montgomery and Fort Clinton on either side of the Popolopen Creek and at Fort Putnam above West Point; numerous roundouts; chains and chevaux-de-frises across the Hudson River; and improved transportation and communication facilities.

The strategic value of the Hudson Highlands was the main reason for the development of the military facilities and its key role as a theater of battle during the Revolutionary War. The landscape offered natural opportunities for protection of the increasingly important commercial use of the Hudson River as a transportation corridor to the interior of the north- eastern United States. Two major campaigns for control of the Hudson River were centered on the Hudson Highlands during the war.

The American Revolution and the immediate succeeding years provided a stimulus to settlement and trade in the Highlands. Gradually a pattern of rural activity was established, based around the expansion of the United States Military Academy at West Point, quarrying, shipbuilding and iron manufacturing. The lowlands alongside the Hudson proved viable for fanning, and clearing of the landscape continued. Growth concentrated on the lower plains, associated with road connections and ferry crossings, while the uplands remained free of settlement. Cold Spring grew around the West Point Foundry into a thriving industrial village.

By the mid-19th century transportation improvements opened up more of the Hudson Valley through steamboat, railroad and improved turnpikes. With increased accessibility the Highlands became attractive to the wealthy and opulent estates and large hotels and resorts were developed on the hillsides overlooking the Hudson River. Agricultural land became more a part of a designed landscape than a working landscape as "gentlemen farmers" moved in, while the pastoral landscape provided a backdrop for recreation to both the rich and the urban masses. Recreational facilities varied from picnic grounds, public beaches and pleasure grounds for day-trippers to hotels and resorts for the wealthy. These trends capitalized on the taste for picturesque environments which ran through the 19th century.

As development pressure intensified at the turn of the 20th century, a preservation movement became established in the lower Hudson Valley. Starting with the concern over the impacts of quarrying on the Palisades, this movement culminated with the establishment of the Palisades Interstate Park Commission (PIPC) in 1900 and the designation and acquisition of much of the western shore of the lower Hudson for recreation.

In 1909 the Highlands west of the Hudson were brought into the jurisdiction of the PIPC. Their inclusion came about as a result of a move by the New York State Prison Authority to develop facilities near Bear Mountain and the accompanying public outcry at the inappropriateness of such a use in a scenic area with great recreational potential. At this time the State received a gift of 10,000 acres of land from the Harrimans, who owned the southwestern part of the Hudson Highlands, with the condition that the prison proposal be abandoned, and that the area between the Harriman property and the Hudson River, be secured for park land. In 1910 the prison proposal was abandoned, and over the next decades further acquisition by the State filled in the gaps of the Harriman and Bear Mountain State Parks and moved northward to Storm King.

Further action by conservation groups, again opposed to the impact of quarrying, led to the protection of the eastern Highlands through the creation of the Hudson Highlands State Park. More recently the Hudson Highlands became a landmark of the environmental movement of the late 1960's when Storm King became the proposed site for a pump storage electric generation station. This was defeated after a long battle because of potential impacts on the scenic and ecological values of the area, resulting in the proposed 500 acre site being donated for park use as the Storm King State Park.

As the 20th century progressed, many of the farms, resorts and estates have succumbed to development pressure and have been abandoned to natural regeneration, replaced with institutional use or developed through subdivision. Much of the development pressure has been related to the proximity of the area to New York City, direct rail access and to the major improvements in road accessibility with the opening of the Bear Mountain Bridge, the Storm King Highway, the Bear Mountain-

Beacon Highway, the Bear Mountain Bridge Road and the Palisades Interstate Parkway. These roads also increased the accessibility of the area for recreation visitors.

The physical character and cultural and historical development of the Hudson Highlands has resulted in the current settlement and land use patterns, and led to the present day landscape and architectural character. This includes historic settlements on the low coastal plain, dispersed estates and new development on the hillsides above the coastal plain, and a patchwork of public and private open spaces including agricultural land, forest and woodland, and formal and informal recreation areas at the Hudson Highlands, Bear Mountain, and Storm King State Parks. The New York State Military Reservation, known as Camp Smith, occupies most of the SASS located in Westchester County, generally preserving the wooded landscape character.

In the eastern Highlands the Town of Philipstown contains numerous historic estates, farmsteads, the hamlet of Garrison and the well-preserved historic waterfront of the Village of Cold Spring. On the western side two historic communities, Highland Falls and Fort Montgomery, have generally maintained their historic pattern of tightly clustered structures surrounded by dramatic wooded hillsides. The SASS also includes numerous historic structures including Castle Rock, Eagle's Rest, Dick's Castle, and Boscobel. The Bear Mountain Bridge, Popolopen Bridge, Palisades Parkway, and Storm King Highway are all examples of engineering design which complement the natural formation of the landscape.

At the United States Military Academy at West Point, the landform creates a natural strategic fortress for controlling passage and protecting commercial traffic on the Hudson River, a major water transportation corridor. The granite structures of the military academy appear to grow directly from and reflect the character of the rocky cliffs. The restored remains of the historic Fort Putnam overlook West Point.

The Hudson Highlands SASS is a landscape rich in symbolic value and meaning, resulting from historic events, folklore, art and literature, and influencing public perception of the area. The area was at the center of the Romantic Movement that began before the Civil War and became a pervasive movement that affected all aspects of art and society in the region, including architecture, literature, painting, recreation and tourism. This has led to a continuum of environmental and scenic appreciation concerned with the Hudson Highlands that runs through the last two centuries.

The history and nostalgia associated with the Revolutionary War and the role of the Hudson Highlands as a central theater of battle has given the area prominence, with many writers documenting the events of the war. Early writers described the development and landscape of the area through historical and geological association, with an overriding romantic and picturesque feel for the scenery of the Highlands. This often created an historical-romantic landscape, drawing on the folklore of the lower Hudson Valley and exaggerating the aesthetic drama of the natural landscape. This romanticism can be seen in the design of many of the remaining historic structures and the formal landscapes of the estates that dot the slopes of the eastern Highlands, taking advantage of views of the dramatic and wild western shore.

The ultimate expression of this romanticism over the Hudson Highlands came through the Hudson River School of landscape painters and the Knickerbocker writers. The area was interpreted for the nation

with a sense of wildness balanced with a more subdued pastoral feel by the likes of artists Thomas Cole, Frederic Church, Asher B. Durand and David Johnson and writers Washington Irving, James Fennimore Cooper and N.P. Willis Storm King Mountain was a favorite subject. The work of these painters and writers instilled a sense of pride and an understanding of the value of landscape aesthetics associated with the features of the entire Hudson Valley, including the Highlands. This appreciation for the scenic value of the Hudson Highlands continues to this day and can be seen in the continued presence of a conservation and recreation ethic in the Hudson Valley.

### **III. Aesthetic Significance**

The Hudson Highlands SASS is of statewide aesthetic significance by virtue of the combined aesthetic values of landscape character, uniqueness, public accessibility and public recognition.

There exist in the SASS unusual variety as well as unity of major components and striking contrasts between scenic elements. The SASS is generally free of discordant features. The scenic quality of the Hudson Highlands SASS is significant based on the existence of the following physical and cultural characteristics.

#### **A. Landscape Character**

##### **1. Variety**

The Hudson Highlands SASS exhibits an unusual variety of major components. The main variety lies in the topography. The SASS is dominated by a low, rugged mountain range, split by the narrow and deep fjord-like passage of the Hudson River. Within the mountain range are numerous individual peaks of various heights, separated by rolling, upland valleys which feature mountain lakes, ponds, wetlands and streams. The shoreline configuration in the Highlands varies from steep cliffs and bluffs that plunge from peak to shore to gently sloping banks and low, narrow coastal plains. Coves, creeks, wetlands, tidal flats and shallows found where tributaries converge on the Hudson further shape the shoreline.

Variety also exists in vegetation coverage. Dense and mature mixed woodlands on the uplands give way to a combination of mixed woodlands, farmsteads, pastures and meadows and landscaped estates on the lower slopes and lowlands. Rich and varied wetland vegetation is found along the shoreline of the Hudson River and its coves and creeks.

The land use pattern varies considerably within the SASS. There are a number of compact historic settlements located on the lowland coastal plains, surrounded by a mix of woodlands, farmsteads, landscaped estates and more recent development on the lower slopes. A mixture of private estates, recreation facilities and State and federal military reservations are scattered through the wooded uplands. The architectural style of the many historic estates and buildings varies considerably throughout the scenic area. This reflects the tastes of individual landowners, the long history of development in the region and the longstanding picturesque movement in the Hudson Highlands.

### **2. Unity**

The Hudson Highlands SASS is unified by its topography. While internally the individual landform components vary, the SASS is a coherent geological feature, part of the Reading Prong of the New England Upland, a division of the Appalachian Highlands. This upland landform creates a distinctive low mountain range running northeast-southwest across the coastal area of the Hudson River. The vegetation, dominated by mature, mixed woodland, unifies the various landforms from the mountain peaks, through the lower slopes and lowland plains to the shoreline. The presence of the Hudson River is a unifying theme, shaping the physical topography, influencing cultural patterns and constituting a common scenic element central to the Hudson Highlands.

### **3. Contrast**

There are many striking contrasts among the basic scenic elements in the Hudson Highlands SASS. The contrast in topography and landform consists mainly of contrast in line and form. The rolling peaks contrast with the steep rugged rock faces of the bluffs and cliffs. The shoreline configuration of these bluffs and cliffs contrasts with the gentle banks and lowland plains and with the creeks and coves. The Hudson River varies in width and depth, and its currents create varying patterns, contrasting with the surrounding uplands.

There are many textural and color contrasts within the SASS, mostly associated with vegetation and geology. The dense wooded areas contrast with the open meadows and the formal landscape estates which in turn contrast with the wetland vegetation of the coves and creeks. This provides contrasting textures in the landscape composition and rich color contrasts both between vegetation types and, over time, color changes within the seasons. The rock composition varies within the SASS, resulting in many contrasts in surface features, textures and colors, as the natural form is impacted by geomorphologic processes such as metamorphism, erosion and weathering and deposition. The contrast between the colors and texture of the water surface of the Hudson River and the surrounding vegetation and rock composition creates many and varied effects.

Certain contrasts of a more ephemeral nature are to be found in the SASS. The dramatic effects of varying weather conditions enhance the aesthetic character of the landscape composition as storms, cloud formations, snow, mists, fog and the varying level and direction of sunlight all provide contrasts in line, shape, texture and color, enhancing the contrasts to be found in the area. The speed and pattern of flow of the Hudson contrast with the creeks and coves and vary with the seasons and weather conditions, providing contrasts in texture and color.

### **4. Freedom from Discordant Features**

The Hudson Highlands SASS is generally well-preserved and free of discordant features. The settlement and transportation patterns are heavily influenced by and respect the topography of the Highlands. The settlements are limited to the lowland plateaus and lower hillsides and are



tightly clustered within the landscape. More recent residential and commercial development has taken place through subdivision of farmsteads and estates and along major highways with less respect for the topography of the area, resulting in a dispersal of the settlement pattern and leading to an increasing suburbanization of the Highlands. Railroads hug the shoreline, and roads follow the contours of the Highlands. The Bear Mountain Bridge, Popolopen Bridge, Palisades Parkway, and Storm King Highway are examples of engineering design which complement the natural formation of the landscape, adding to the value of the landscape rather than being discordant features. The physical and cultural components of the SASS are generally well maintained.

### **B. Uniqueness**

The Hudson Highlands SASS is unique in New York State. The Hudson Highlands are composed of some of the oldest rocks in New York State, dating from the Pre-Cambrian era. Between Storm King and Breakneck Ridge, where the high peaks drop straight to the water, the Hudson River corridor is a fjord, deepened by glacial action and filled by the sea as the ice melted. This low, rugged mountain range split by the Hudson River corridor is a landscape feature not found anywhere else in New York's coastal area and is very rare in the eastern United States. The significant strategic role of the area during the American Revolution gives the Hudson Highlands a unique place in the nation's history.

### **C. Public Accessibility**

The Hudson Highlands SASS has a high degree of public access. Much of the riverside land on the western banks of the Hudson River is in public ownership and provides physical and visual access to the Hudson River, its shoreline and the inland mountain peaks. Public access areas include Storm King State Park, Harriman State Park and Bear Mountain State Park. Public access is available in limited areas of the United States Military Academy at West Point. Similarly there is a considerable amount of public access on the eastern shore in the Hudson Highlands State Park. This park is a combination of many separate parcels and includes riverfront land and dramatic and undeveloped mountain peaks reaching elevations of 1500 feet.

Three recent purchases in the Hudson Highlands SASS by two regional not-for-profit organizations concerned with open space preservation and the promotion of public access may increase public access in the near future. Scenic Hudson and the Open Space Institute combined to purchase Mystery Point, located in the viewshed of the Bear Mountain Bridge, while the Open Space Institute has purchased land at North Redout and Arden Point in Garrison. Part of the latter site has been acquired from the Open Space Institute by the State of New York and will be added to the Hudson Highlands State Park and opened for passive public recreation.

The land ownership pattern outside the public land is that of low density residential development. This results in few opportunities for public access. In these areas public access is limited to local roads and to views from the Hudson River and the passenger trains that run along the east shore of the Hudson River. Views within the Hudson Highlands SASS are extensive



and significant. The many peaks and hillsides offer long and broad views of the Hudson River and its surrounding rugged landscape. Cross-river views include many dramatic peaks, hamlets, mansions and estates and the impressive structures and ramparts of the United States Military Academy at West Point. Viewed from the Hudson River, the wooded shorelands and cliffs of the SASS rise abruptly from the Hudson River to the mountain peaks and ridges. Views are confined in the narrow corridor, only to open at the bends in the Hudson and in views out of the SASS at the north and south gateways of the Hudson Highlands.

The composition of the SASS is well balanced with several positive focal points including the Bear Mountain Bridge, the mansions and hamlets. The steep wooded peaks of the Highlands provide a striking setting for the numerous historic structures. NY Route 9D provides views of the river and the western shore from northern Westchester to southern Dutchess counties. Striking views are available from the railroad, the Hudson River, and many local roads. The variety of length of views, composition, backgrounds and significant focal points combine to enhance the scenic quality of the views available in the Hudson Highlands

### **D. Public Recognition**

The scenic and aesthetic quality of the Hudson Highlands has achieved a high degree of public recognition. Many writers and artists have focused on the area, culminating with the work of the Hudson River School of painters, whose work has brought national and international recognition to the area and its landscape components. The value of the area's scenic and recreational resources has been recognized through the development of the State Parks system and in the involvement of the environmental movement in major land use issues impacting on the Highlands for the purpose of protecting and preserving their scenic character. The successes of the environmental movement have had national significance.

Sections of the Old Storm King Highway, NY Route 9W, NY Route 202, the Bear Mountain Bridge, Bear Mountain Bridge Road, the Bear Mountain-Beacon Highway and local roads within the Bear Mountain State Park are all designated as Scenic Roads under Article 49 of the Environmental Conservation Law.

The historical and architectural significance of the Hudson Highlands is recognized by the large number of structures listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. The Hudson Highlands Multiple Resource Area, with boundaries similar to the Hudson Highlands SASS, includes 56 individual properties and three historic districts, at Cold Spring, Garrison Landing and the Bear Mountain State Park. In addition, there are three other listed properties in the Town of Philipstown Boscobel, Castle Rock and the deRham Farm. There are also two National Historic Landmarks in the SASS -- Fort Montgomery and the United States Military Academy at West Point.

The scenic and aesthetic quality of the SASS has received long-standing public recognition through the actions of the State and environmental not-for-profit organizations who have sought to protect individual parcels of land from development. This has resulted in the extensive areas of State parkland in the SASS.

## IV. Impact Assessment

Whether within or outside a designated SASS all proposed actions subject to review under federal and State coastal acts or a Local Waterfront Revitalization Program must be assessed to determine whether the action could affect a scenic resource and whether the action would be likely to impair the scenic beauty of the scenic resource.

Policy 24 provides that when considering a proposed action, agencies shall first determine whether the action could affect a scenic resource of statewide significance. The determination would involve:

- (1) a review of the coastal area map to ascertain if it shows an identified scenic resource which could be affected by the proposed action, and
- (2) a review of the types of activities proposed to determine if they would be likely to impair the scenic beauty of an identified resource.

Impairment includes:

- (i) the irreversible modification of geologic forms; the destruction or removal of vegetation; the modification, destruction, or removal of structures, whenever the geologic forms, vegetation or structures are significant to the scenic quality of an identified resource;
- (ii) the addition of structures which because of siting or scale will reduce identified views or which because of scale, form, or materials will diminish the scenic quality of an identified resource.

Policy 24 sets forth certain siting and facility-related guidelines to be used to achieve the policy, recognizing that each development situation is unique and that the guidelines will have to be applied accordingly. The guidelines are set forth below, together with comments regarding their particular applicability to this Scenic Area of Statewide Significance. In applying these guidelines to agricultural land it must be recognized that the overall scenic quality of the landscape is reliant on an active and viable agricultural industry. This requires that farmers be allowed the flexibility to farm the land in an economically viable fashion, incorporating modern techniques, changes in farm operation and resultant changes in farm structures. Policy 24 guidelines include:

***Siting structures and other development such as highways, power lines, and signs, back from shorelines or in other inconspicuous locations to maintain the attractive quality of the shoreline and to retain views to and from the shore;***

**COMMENT** For much of the length of the Hudson Highlands SASS, the Hudson River is bounded by steep, undeveloped wooded bluffs that figure prominently in views within the SASS, notably from and across the Hudson River. Siting of structures on the slopes or crests of these bluffs, on the immediate shoreline of the Hudson River or over the water surface of the Hudson River would introduce discordant elements into the landscape and impair the scenic quality of the SASS.

The siting of new residential development has the potential to threaten the future visual quality of the SASS. Areas which afford views, such as ridgelines, hilltops, and hillsides overlooking the Hudson River, are most attractive to new development, but also the most vulnerable to impairment from inappropriate development. The siting of residential development, structures and other discordant features such as large buildings, highways, power lines and signs on ridgelines, hilltops and exposed hillsides and in the direct viewshed of the Hudson River would introduce discordant elements into the landscape and impair the scenic quality of the SASS.

Iona Island Marsh, Manitou Marsh and Constitution Marsh are particularly critical scenic components in the SASS. Activities that would subdivide the large undisturbed appearance of these areas into smaller fragments, introduce structures into the low-lying landscape and eliminate wetland or shallow areas through dredging, filling or bulkheading would result in a direct impact on the shoreline, changing the character of the relationship between the Hudson River and its shorelands, and impairing the scenic quality of the SASS.

***Clustering or orienting structures to retain views, save open space and provide visual organization to a development;***

**COMMENT:** The Hudson Highlands SASS features a low intensity pattern of development that includes a large amount of functional open space. Historic estate houses punctuate the landscape of rolling upland pastures, landscaped estates and woodland. Recent poorly sited residential development has not respected the traditional patterns of development within the SASS and has disturbed the visual organization established through this traditional development pattern. Further expansion of new development into the open areas of the SASS would replace the varied vegetation types. The textures, colors, contrast and expansiveness of the natural landscape character and their interrelationship would be lost, impairing the scenic quality of the SASS. Failure to use topography, existing vegetation and the clustering of new development to blend new development into the landscape would impair the scenic quality of this SASS. Failure to continue the current pattern of preserved open space through the State Park network and respect the balance between formal recreation areas and wilderness would also impair the scenic quality of the SASS.

***Incorporating sound, existing structures (especially historic buildings) into the overall development scheme;***

**COMMENT:** The Hudson Highlands SASS is a unique natural and cultural landscape. The loss of historic structures would alter the cultural character of the landscape, remove focal points from views and diminish the level of contrast between the natural landscape and the cultural landscape, thus impairing the scenic quality of the SASS.

***Removing deteriorated and/or degrading elements;***

**COMMENT:** The Hudson Highlands SASS is generally free of discordant features, and structures are generally well maintained.

***Maintaining or restoring the original land form, except when changes screen unattractive elements and/or add appropriate interest;***

**COMMENT:** The landform of the Hudson Highlands SASS is primarily in an undisturbed state and is the unifying factor in the SASS. The contrast in elevation and the juxtaposition of water and land contributes to the scenic quality of the SASS. The failure to maintain existing landforms and their interrelationships would reduce the unity and contrast of the SASS and impair its scenic quality.

***Maintaining or adding vegetation to provide interest, encourage the presence of wildlife, blend structures into the site, and obscure unattractive elements, except when selective clearing removes unsightly, diseased or hazardous vegetation and when selective clearing creates views of coastal waters;***

**COMMENT:** The variety of vegetation and the unifying-continuous vegetative cover of the Hudson Highlands SASS make a significant contribution to the scenic quality of the SASS. The tidal marshes of Iona Island Marsh, Manitou Marsh and Constitution Marsh, and pastures, woodlands, and landscaped estates provide variety, unity and contrast to the landscape. The wildlife supported by this vegetation adds ephemeral effects and increases the scenic quality of the SASS. Vegetation helps structures blend into the predominantly natural landscape and plays a critical role in screening facilities and sites which would otherwise be discordant elements and impair the scenic quality of the SASS.

Clearcutting or removal of vegetation on the wooded bluffs along the Hudson River and in the upland areas would change the character of the river corridor and impair its scenic quality. Iona Island Marsh, Manitou Marsh and Constitution Marsh, are particularly critical scenic components in the SASS. Activities that would subdivide the large undisturbed appearance of these areas into smaller fragments, the introduction of structures into the low-lying landscape and the elimination of wetland or shallow areas through dredging, filling or bulkheading would result in a direct impact on the shoreline, changing the character of the relationship between the Hudson River and its shorelands and impairing the scenic quality of the SASS.

***Using appropriate materials, in addition to vegetation, to screen unattractive elements;***

**COMMENT:** The Hudson Highlands SASS is generally free of discordant elements. The failure to blend new structures into the natural setting, both within the SASS boundaries and in the viewshed of the SASS, would impair the scenic quality of the SASS.

***Using appropriate scale, form and materials to ensure buildings and other structures are compatible with and add interest to the landscape.***

**COMMENT:** The existing structures located within the Hudson Highlands SASS generally are compatible with and add interest to the landscape because they are of a scale, design and materials that are compatible with the predominantly natural landscape. New development or alterations to existing structures can also be designed to complement the scenic quality of the SASS through use of a scale, form, color and materials which are compatible with the existing land use and architectural styles of the area and can be absorbed into the landscape composition. Failure to construct new buildings which are compatible with the cultural fabric of the SASS as represented in these historic structures would impair the scenic quality of the SASS.

Failure to use appropriate scale, form, and materials to ensure that new development is compatible with the surrounding landscape and does not distract from the landscape composition of a designated area would impair the scenic quality of the SASS. In addition, failure to mitigate the effects associated with development such as lighting, horizontal or vertical interruption of form, incongruous colors, or plume discharge would impair the quality of the landscape and the scenic quality of the SASS.

Parts of the Dutchess Junction subunit of the Hudson Highlands SASS are located within the City of Beacon. The scenic quality of this subunit is described below.

### **HH-27 Dutchess Junction Subunit**

#### **I. Location**

The Dutchess Junction subunit is located on the east side of the Hudson River, south of the City of Beacon. The eastern boundary of the subunit follows NY Route 9D north from benchmark 14 to its intersection with Grandview Avenue, for the most part a common boundary with the HH-26 Hudson Highlands State Park subunit. The northern boundary of the subunit runs from the northern shorelands of Denning Point to the Conrail tracks and along the Conrail tracks adjacent to the Fishkill Creek, following the coastal area boundary as amended by the City of Beacon, to the intersection of the tracks with Wolcott Avenue. The boundary then follows Wolcott Avenue to its intersection with Simmons Lane, which it follows to the property line of Lot #6054-13-036494 and onto the Craig House property. The boundary then follows an imaginary line through the Craig House property at a distance of 400 feet from the Fishkill Creek to South Avenue and along South Avenue to Grandview Avenue. The subunit includes

the Hudson River, sharing a common boundary with the HH-28 Pollepel Island subunit adjacent to the eastern shorelands and extends across to high water mark on the western shorelands of the Hudson River. The subunit is approximately 3.5 miles long and between 0.25 and 1 mile wide. It is located in the City of Beacon and the Town of Fishkill, Dutchess County and in the City of Newburgh, the Towns of New Windsor and Cornwall and the Village of Cornwall-on-the-Hudson, Orange County. Consult the Hudson Highlands SASS map sheets, numbers 1 and 2 for subunit boundaries.

## II. Scenic Components

### A. Physical Character

This subunit is comprised of the flat and gently sloping shorelands of the Hudson River which give way to the gently rolling hillside below the steep mountains of the Scofield and Breakneck Ridges in the Hudson Highlands State Park subunit. The vegetation is a mix of wetlands, woodlands, meadows and orchards. The shoreline curves gently with a moderate variety of shoreline indentation and elevation. There is one large cove created by Denning Point, a low, wooded, sand peninsula. The Fishkill Creek, which features a short section of rapids, meets the Hudson River at the cove, creating a rich estuary of marsh, tidal flats, and shallows. Wade Brook and Gordon Brook cross the subunit.

### B. Cultural Character

The subunit includes a largely undisturbed bank of the Hudson River, separated from the upland by the railroad. NY Route 9D, the Bear Mountain-Beacon 'Highway, runs along the eastern boundary of the subunit. The subunit features several parcels of the Hudson Highlands State Park, a scattering of residential development, a trailer park and one small hamlet center, Dutchess Junction. Located around the hamlet during the mid to late 19th century were a number of active brickworks. Denning Point was the site of successful brickyards, and a derelict industrial building is a reminder of the point's industrial past. The former Hammond Brickyard lies between the railroad and the river, to the south of Denning Point.

The hamlet was once the junction of the Hudson River Railroad with the Dutchess and Columbia Railroad. The hamlet's historic settlement pattern can be seen in the farmland/woodland relationship, although the recent sprawling pattern of residential construction has modified this and detracts from the overall scenic quality of the area.

Dutchess Manor, a residence and carriage house, built in 1889 and converted to a restaurant and residence, is listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. The two story Second Empire style brick house was part of the estate of Francis Timoney who owned the complex of brickworks in the area. Dutchess Manor is significant for its picturesque details and is one of the most architecturally distinguished residences of its type and period in the Hudson Highlands. Its association with one of the area's most prominent brick manufacturers, a significant local industry, adds further importance to Dutchess Manor.

Another significant building within the subunit is Tioronda, an impressive Gothic Revival villa. Originally built in 1859 as a residence, the building is now a sanatorium. Tioronda is eligible for listing on the State and National and State Registers of Historic Places. The building is significant for its mid-19th century estate architecture and as an example of the work of Frederick Clarke Withers.

The presence of wildlife provides ephemeral characteristics. Contrasts of an ephemeral nature are to be found in the subunit. The dramatic effects of varying weather conditions enhance the aesthetic character of the landscape composition as storms, cloud formations, snow, mists, fog and the varying level and direction of sunlight all provide contrasts in line, shape, texture and color, enhancing the contrasts to be found in the area.

The subunit is generally well maintained. Recent urban development and the railroad tracks are minor discordant features, although they are mostly screened within the landscape and do not detract from the scenic quality of the subunit.

### **C. Views**

The subunit offers unobstructed views of the Hudson River and Fishkill Creek. Interior views are limited by vegetation and topography. Views from the Hudson River are of the low, wooded coastal shorelands; the gently rising uplands; Denning Point and the mouth of the Fishkill Creek. These features are set against the dramatic backdrop of the Hudson Highlands, notably the North and South Beacon Mountains, Sugarloaf Mountain and Breakneck Ridge in the adjacent HH-26 Hudson Highlands State Park subunit. Positive focal points include Denning Point, Bannerman's Castle on Pollepel Island, and distant views of the Newburgh-Beacon Bridge and Sugarloaf and Storm King Mountains. Views of the large, sprawling communities of Newburgh, New Windsor and Cornwall detract from the visual quality of views across the Hudson River.

### **III. Uniqueness**

The subunit is not unique.

### **IV. Public Accessibility**

The land ownership pattern of large land holdings and low density development scattered throughout the subunit restricts public accessibility to the Dutchess Junction subunit. The subunit is accessible from NY Route 9D, local roads, and the Hudson River and is visible from the passenger trains that run along the shoreline. The subunit is also visible from the uplands of the adjacent HH-26 Hudson Highlands State Park subunit; the Newburgh-Beacon Bridge to the north; from Newburgh, New Windsor and Cornwall; and from subunits on the western shorelands of the Hudson Highlands SASS, notably from the scenic overlook on NY Route 218, the Old Storm King Highway. Denning Point and the Hammond Brickyard site are part of the Hudson Highlands State Park and offer potential for informal access to the Hudson River.



### **V. Public Recognition**

The Dutchess Junction subunit is recognized by the public as part of the northern gateway to the Hudson Highlands. The historical and architectural value of Dutchess Manor has been recognized through its listing on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. Denning Point has recently been acquired by New York State for its scenic and habitat values.

### **VI. Reason for Inclusion**

The Dutchess Junction subunit has high scenic quality. It features a variety in, and contrast between many positive landscape components including rolling wooded upland, a low wooded point, the Fishkill Creek and its confluence with the Hudson River and a mix of vegetative cover. The subunit is unified by topography and woodland coverage. The subunit is accessible from local roads and the Hudson River, and is visible from surrounding subunits on both shores of the Hudson River. The subunit is recognized as part of the northern gateway to the Hudson Highlands SASS. The historical and architectural value of Dutchess Manor has been recognized through listing on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. Denning Point has recently been acquired by New York State in recognition of its access, scenic and habitat values. There are some minor discordant features in the subunit, but these are screened from view and do not impair the scenic quality of the subunit.

## City of Beacon Local Waterfront Revitalization Program













