

SECTION II
INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

II. INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

A. Overview and Summary

The Village of Saugerties has a little over four miles of waterfront - 1.5 miles on the Hudson River and about 1.3 miles on either side of the Esopus Creek (from the lighthouse to the dam). The proposed Coastal Area Boundary extends an average of some 2,000 feet inland from the shoreline, although the depth of the area varies widely. The land area within the coastal boundary, including the Esopus Creek and the wetlands at its mouth, totals approximately 500 acres.

This relatively small coastal area includes a wide variety of land uses and physical features (see Map No. 3 - Reconnaissance). The Hudson River waterfront and the mouth of the Esopus Creek contain low density "estate type" residential areas and several large freshwater wetlands. The long straight channel starting at the abandoned lighthouse, where the Creek empties into the Hudson (see Photo No. 2), is lined with relatively new, single family homes in addition to the few water dependent uses on the creek - a boat club, two commercial marinas and a U.S. Coast Guard Station (see Photo Nos. 3 and 4).

The Creek then takes a large horseshoe curve before the navigable portion ends at the dam (see Photo No. 5). On the south, inside shore, are the ruins and vestiges of the Village's extensive industrial past (see Photo No. 6) including a raceway which once carried water to power the substantial industrial complex. On the north side are steep, rocky slopes, except for one gap which contains several houses and the Village's sewage treatment plant (see Photo No. 7).

The only large residential neighborhood within the coastal area is the Southside neighborhood which extends up the slope from the Creek to the ridge line traversed by Route 9W. This neighborhood developed in direct relation to the waterfront industry of the 19th century. It includes a variety of housing types - from modest workers homes to large mansions (see Photo No. 8) - as well as several public buildings and the one remaining vacant industrial structure (see Photo No. 9).

B. Inventory and Analysis

During the summer of 1983, field surveys were undertaken of land and water use, building conditions, circulation patterns, views and aesthetic features. Maps, published data and public records were reviewed to determine property ownership, utility locations, topography, soil conditions and environmental features. A series of maps were made depicting the findings of this inventory (see Map Nos. 4, 5 and 6). The three maps which comprise the State's Coastal Area Atlas were revised to reflect the findings made during the inventory.

In addition many photographs of existing conditions were taken.

The results of the inventory and analysis are as follows:

1. Soils and Topography

Virtually all of the soils in the coastal area have some characteristics that impose limitations on development or use of the land (see Map No. 6 and Table 1). The Bath and Bath-Nassau series, located most prominently on the slopes to the creek below the dam, have a moderately high water table, moderately shallow depth to bedrock, are steep and fairly poorly drained. The Hudson series, located on the slopes above the Hudson have a very high water table, include many steep areas and are fairly poorly drained. Wayland soils, flats adjacent to the river, are subject to frequent flooding, have a very high water table and are very poorly drained. These three series, plus the freshwater wetlands at the mouth of the creek comprise most of the coastal area. In addition, there is "made land" along Ferry Street and Lighthouse Drive and several other soil series of small area. Of the latter, the Riverhead series on the plateaus above the creek and river have the least limitation and are the sites of the most intensive development in and adjacent to the coastal area.

2. Wildlife, Vegetation and Water Quality

The Esopus Creek, Hudson River and the wetlands at their juncture are the primary locale of natural environmental features in the coastal area; the remainder of the area has been subject to varying degrees of urbanization.

The wildlife resources in this area are important. The Esopus Creek has been identified by the Department of Environmental Conservation as a significant fisheries resource as a spawning ground, nursery and feeding ground for a variety of freshwater species. The littoral zone and mud flats in the Hudson, north and south of the Creek, serve as a spawning ground for shad. The wetlands at the mouth of the Creek support small numbers of migratory waterfowl. The deep water at the center of the Hudson, opposite the mouth of the Creek, may serve as a wintering habitat for the shortnose sturgeon, an endangered species.

A variety of freshwater wetlands are situated at the mouth of the creek including the following cover types: wet meadows, flooded dead trees, flooded shrubs and emergents. These same areas, plus the eastern end of Lighthouse Drive, are situated in the 100 year flood hazard area.

Water quality in the Esopus Creek from the dam to the Hudson, is classified as C - suitable for growth and survival of fish and aquatic life but unsuitable for primary contact recreation or human consumption. Continued separation of storm runoff and correction of localized problems will improve water quality in the creek. The Hudson is classified as A - suitable for all uses including human consumption.

3. Land use

The predominant land use in the coastal area is residential. Older homes on small lots, some converted to multi-family use, predominate on either side of the Esopus Creek just below the dam. Further towards the Hudson, newer single family homes line the Creek on filled land. North and south of the Creek is lower density development, including several large estates, and some new subdivisions including "the Knolls" off Lighthouse Drive. One of the few houseboats on the river is docked on the south side of the Creek.

The only commercial uses are several small businesses on Route 9W just north of the bridge.

Although the area called "the island," just below the dam on the south side of the Creek, was once an intensive industrial complex using water for power and transport, it has long been abandoned. Only industrial ruins and one building on East Bridge Street, "the Bindery," remain.

A number of public and quasi-public uses are scattered throughout the coastal area, including several churches, the Lynch Fire House and the sewage treatment plant and several sub-stations.

Significant portions of the coastal area are vacant. Some land is unused due to its physical characteristics, such as the wetlands or the steep escarpments on the north side of the Creek. Other property has been abandoned due to changing economic trends, particularly the large parcels on either side of the Creek just below the dam - the Cantine Mill site on Partition Street and "the island." Also undeveloped is part of the Knolls subdivision, just north of Lighthouse Drive, one of the newest developments in the coastal area.

4. Recreation

There are few formal areas for recreation in the coastal area. The only public park on the water is the Village Beach above the dam; it provides no access to the lower creek or the Hudson River. Seamon Park on Route 9W at the northern Village boundary is an attractive facility for passive recreation, but has no relation to the waterfront. There are two private marinas and a boat club on the south side of the creek. Fishing, boating or other recreation activity on the water takes place from private property or via access outside the Village.

5. Visual Resources

The coastal area includes a variety of scenic views of the two waterways (the Hudson River and the Esopus Creek), the Catskill Mountains, and a number of landmark buildings as well as being

the foreground of views from the eastern shore of the Hudson to the Catskills; the eastern shore is part of the Shorelands Historic District.

Views at the several right angle turns of Route 9W south of the bridge are particularly prominent and attractive, alternating between river and mountain vistas within several hundred feet, and provide a pleasing entrance to the Village and its waterfront. Other, less accessible, vantage points also provide waterfront views while, from the Creek's edge, views back toward the shore are enhanced by the steeple of St. Mary's Church, several historic structures and the last chimney from the Village's industrial past. From both the river and the shore, the historic Saugerties Lighthouse is a prominent landmark.

The new sewage treatment plant is the most discordant visual element on the shoreline.

6. Cultural and Historic Resources

The coastal area includes many cultural and historic features of the Village of Saugerties. Although abandoned and mostly destroyed, vestiges of the Village's waterfront industrial complex still remain on the south side of the Esopus Creek.* The dam and abandoned raceway that generated power for the industry still remain. The Southside neighborhood, extending from the creek to Barclay Street at the top of the slope, was developed at the same time as the industrial area and includes many buildings of historic and architectural interest, including large mansions, workers houses and public and religious structures. Although the State Office of Historic Preservation is of the opinion that the area does not have sufficient remaining integrity to qualify for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, it does contain a number of buildings worthy of such designation and, perhaps, a portion of the area may also qualify as a historic district (see Appendix A).

On the north side of the Creek, between Mynderse Street-Malden Avenue and the river are a number of large estates with extensive grounds. At the mouth of the Creek is perhaps the most symbolic historic resource - the Saugerties Light - reputed to be the oldest standing lighthouse on the river, despite its deteriorated state, and listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Other buildings worthy of note are the Lynch Firehouse, Hill Street School, the Bindery, the Presbyterian Church and Lynch Marina on the south side of the Creek and St. Mary's Church and cemetery on the north.

* Two designated archeological sites are located in the coastal area. On the north side of the Esopus Creek, a site near the sewage treatment plant contains evidence of both prehistoric and nineteenth century occupation. On the south side of the Creek are remains of an industrial complex including foundations of worker housing, a stone tramway and portions of a former iron works.

7. Traffic and Transportation

The major traffic artery in the coastal area is Route 9W which traverses the Village roughly parallel to the Hudson. Although replaced by the New York State Thruway as the major highway on the west shore of the river, this route still carries much local as well as through traffic. Its route through the Village traverses existing surface streets through business and residential areas. On the south side of the creek, it includes three right angle turns which are particularly restricted for trucks and other heavy vehicles.

Vehicular access to the shoreline itself, with one exception, is via narrow dead-end streets - Lighthouse Drive, Ferry Street and Dock Street. The only area with dual access is the former industrial area on the south side of the Creek which can be reached by both Burt and East Bridge Streets.

There is no rail service in the coastal area. Bus service is via the Ulster County system or private long distance carriers. Private pleasure vessels are the only water borne transportation, although the Sloop Clearwater winters on the Esopus Creek (see Photo No. 15).

8. Public Utilities

The entire coastal area is served by the Village's public water supply system whose source is a reservoir in the Catskill Mountains. The supply is sufficient for the Village to provide service to neighboring sections of the surrounding Town.

Almost all of the coastal area is served by the public sewage disposal system. The major exception is development on Lighthouse Drive and Ferry Street on either side of the Esopus Creek. Sewer lines were not extended to these areas because of difficulty of construction and the relatively low density of development. However, the on-site systems in these areas are a periodic problem due to the high water table and occasional flooding.

A new sewage treatment plant was constructed on the north side of the Creek four years ago with sufficient capacity to meet the Village's sanitary sewage disposal needs. However, since most of the Village's sewer lines are of the "combined" type, they also carry storm water runoff. At times of heavy runoff the plant's capacity is exceeded and all sewage cannot be fully treated (see Chart I).

The Village's gas and electric needs are met by Central Hudson Gas and Electric Corp. Recently an application has been made to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for a permit to study the establishment of a hydroelectric plant at the dam. Water power was generated from this same source during the "hay-days"

of the Village's industrial growth. The raceway which still exists roughly parallel to Bridge Street is a remnant of this power supply system.

C. Major Waterfront Issues

Analysis of the existing characteristics of the waterfront and discussion with local officials and citizens identified a number of major concerns for waterfront use and revitalization. In particular, the following issues, which relate to important resources or opportunities, are of significance (see Map No. 7):

1. Scenic Low Density Areas with Significant Development Potential

The areas north and south of the Esopus Creek, overlooking the Hudson, are characterized by low density, estate-type development. They provide an attractive, scenic contrast to the more urban character of the remainder of the Village and also contribute to the attractiveness of the shoreline as viewed from the river and the Shorelands Historic District on the eastern shore. Under current Village zoning, however, these areas could be developed at a far greater density than presently exists. While such development might increase the tax return from these properties, it would also substantially alter the character of these significant areas.

2. Waterfront Residential Areas with Limited Access and Lack of Sanitary Sewers

On either side of the Esopus Creek, a deadend street provides access to most of the usable waterfront property (see Photo No. 10). In addition, neither of these residential streets, Lighthouse Drive and Ferry Street, is served by the Village's sanitary sewer system. Therefore, both of these critical waterfront areas are subject to distinct limitations on the type and intensity of use they can accommodate.

3. Historic Lighthouse in Critical Condition

The lighthouse at the mouth of the Esopus Creek (see Photo No. 11), the oldest such structure on the Hudson, has been vacant for thirty years. Although badly neglected and deteriorated, this structure, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is of significance to the region and has great symbolic value to many Village residents and river buffs. Its present condition, however, is on the verge of collapse. Any possible future use of the structure depends on immediate steps to stabilize it now. Further complicating restoration and reuse of the lighthouse is the lack of land access. Such access would require crossing protected wetlands and solving traffic problems related to steep and narrow Lighthouse Drive.

4. Lack of Public Access to the Water

No place along the Village's more than four miles of waterfront is the public entitled to gain access to the water. The only publicly owned land is the wetlands owned by the State of New York at the mouth of the Esopus Creek (see Photo No. 12). These are fragile, ecologically important areas which are only accessible by water. Thus most of the Village's residents are deprived of the use of one of its most important assets.

5. Future Use of Large, Vacant, Industrially Zoned Parcels

The only substantial area of vacant land on the waterfront is approximately 17 acres on the south side of the Esopus Creek, on the inside of the horse shoe bend. This land was formerly the hub of the Village's waterfront industrial development. Although long abandoned - all but one of the industrial buildings has been demolished - the entire area is zoned for industry with few limitations on type or intensity of use. It is important that the development of this unique area be carefully planned.

6. Preservation of South Side Neighborhood

The neighborhood south of the Creek, north of Barclay Street, has the closest historical and physical ties to the waterfront of any of the Village's older urban areas. Loss of industry and declining commercial activity are reflected in deterioration, abandonment and demolition of some of the historic structures in the neighborhood. Nevertheless, many fine structures remain as does the historic character of the area. However, a strategy for neighborhood preservation is needed to ensure the long term viability of the south side.

7. Protection of the Wetlands

The two major freshwater wetlands located either side of the mouth of the Esopus Creek are both designated Class II Wetlands, under the Freshwater Wetlands Act of the Environmental Conservation Law, the second most important category. Because of the importance of these wetlands, the type and intensity of uses permitted within them is severely limited. Such areas are and must continue to be protected by appropriate regulations. However, possible use for some compatible public purpose should also be considered.

8. Eliminate Pollution Sources

A new sewage treatment plant was built four years ago with sufficient capacity to treat all normal waste discharge in the Village. However, several sources of existing, potential or periodic pollution entering the Esopus Creek still remain. These

conditions must be corrected to fully protect the Creek and river.

Many of the Village's sewers are still of the combined type which also receive stormwater run-off. At times of heavy rain or spring thaws, the combined flow exceeds the capacity of the plant to fully treat the effluent.

Residences on Lighthouse Drive and Ferry Street are not served by sanitary sewers. In some cases, on-site septic systems are inadequate or periodically do not function properly due to high water in the Creek. Several residences on Hill Street are connected to a holding tank which, if not pumped out regularly, is subject to overflow.

PHOTO #1: St. Mary's Church
as seen from the
Esopus Creek



PHOTO #2: View of the Esopus
from the lighthouse

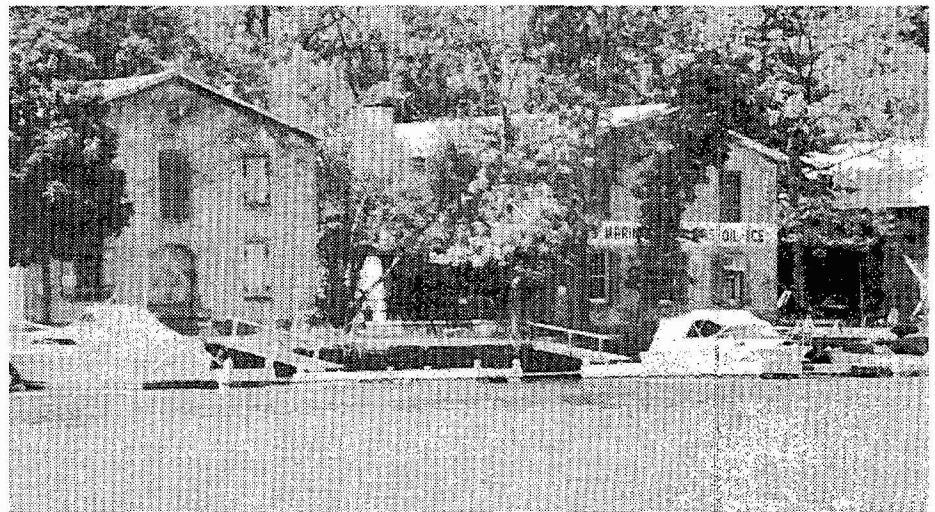
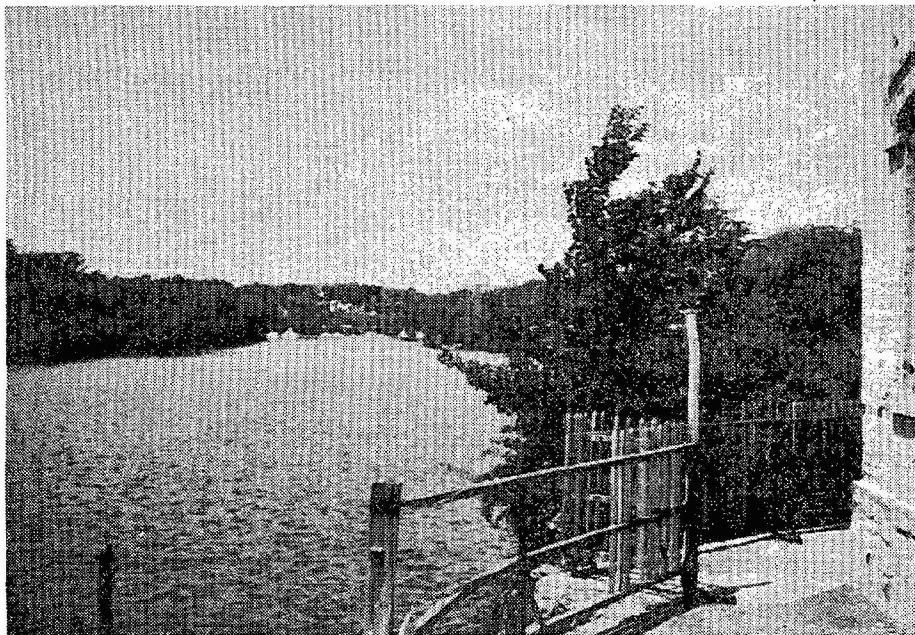


PHOTO #3: Lynch's Marina

PHOTO #4: Coast Guard Station

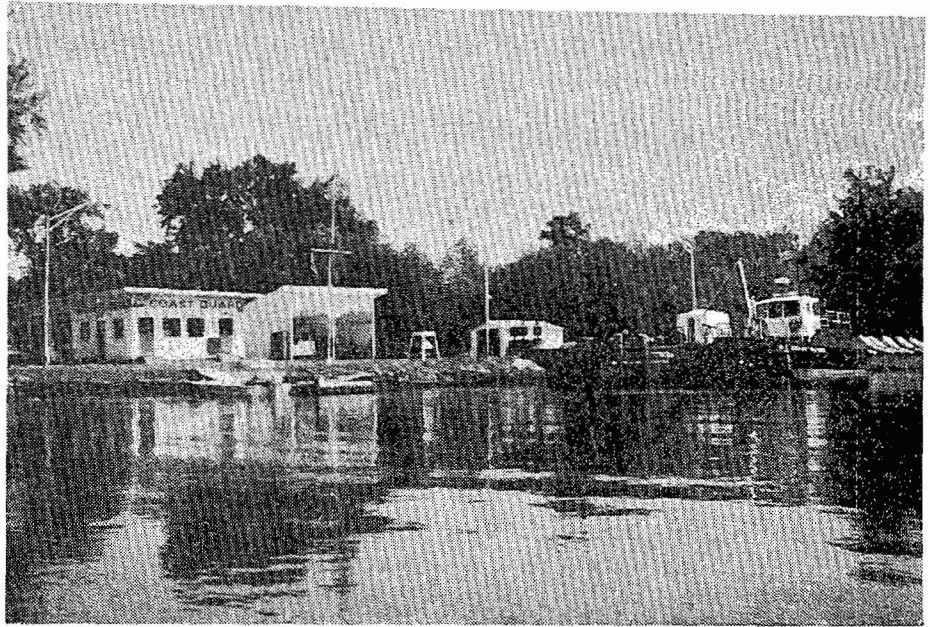


PHOTO #5: Dam at the Upper Creek

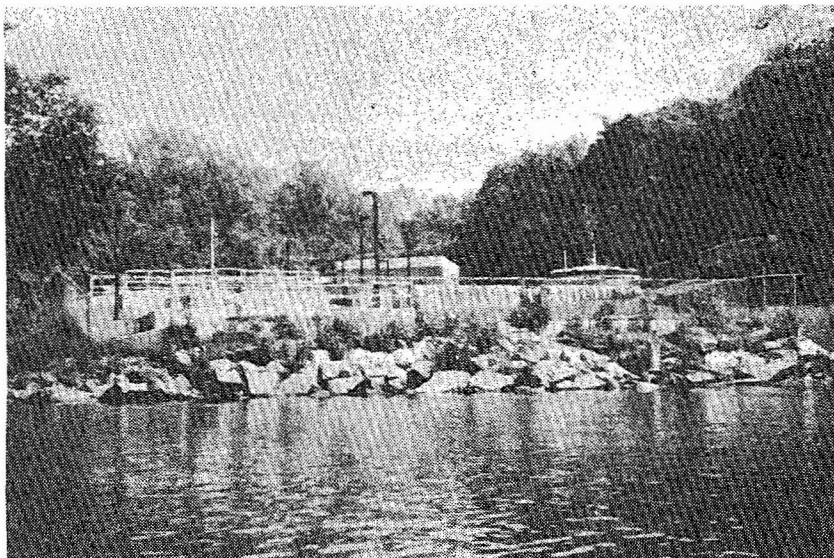
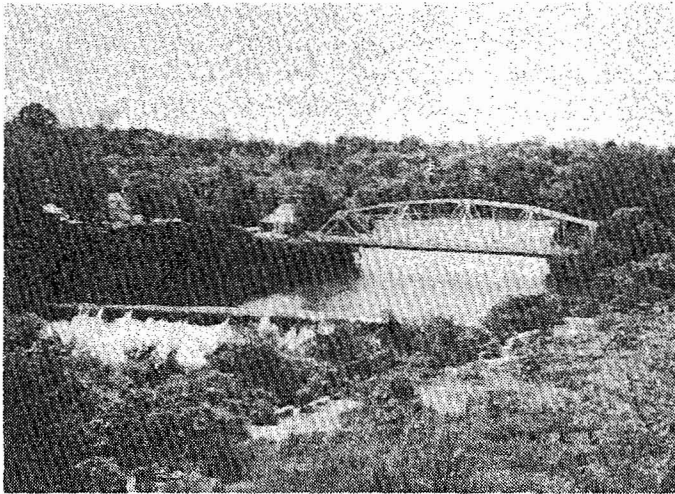


PHOTO #6: Industrial ruins

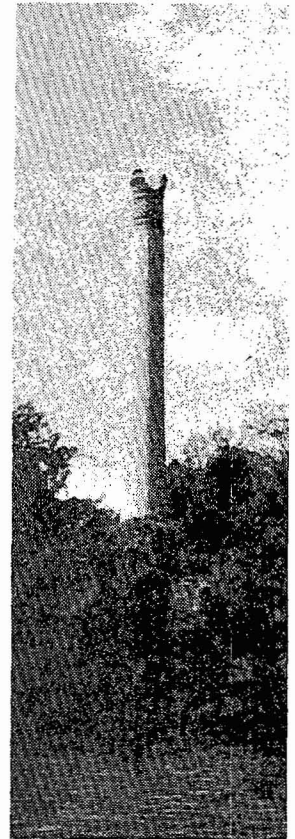


PHOTO #7: Sewage Treatment Plant

PHOTO #8: Barclay Street mansion ↗

PHOTO #9: The "Bindery",
the last industrial
building ↘

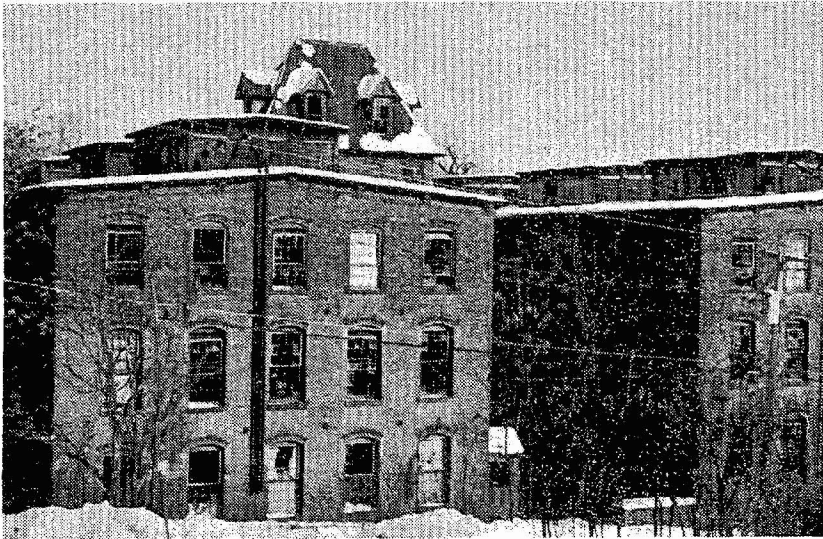


PHOTO #10: Lighthouse Drive
residences ↘

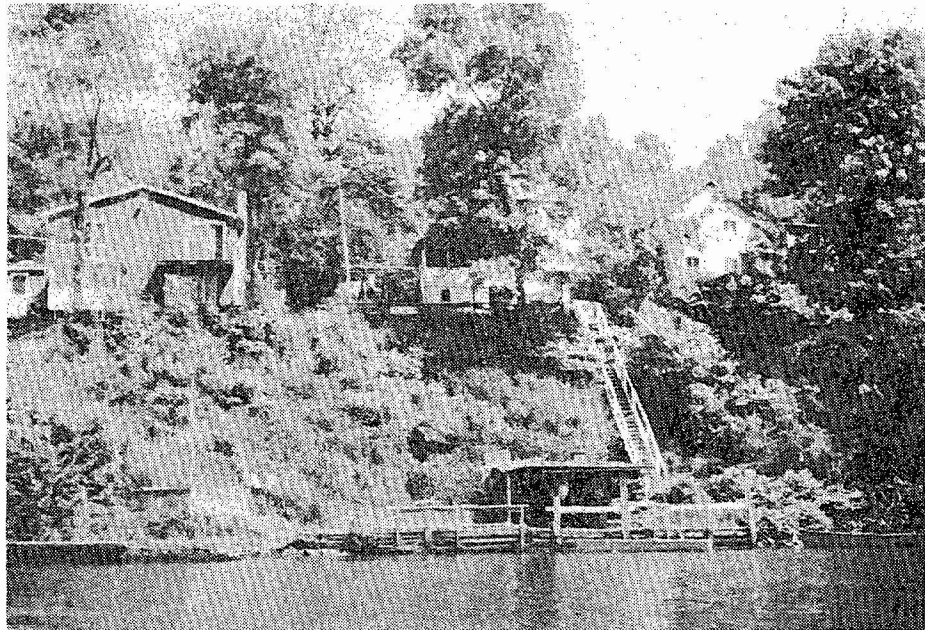


PHOTO #11: Saugerties
Lighthouse ↗

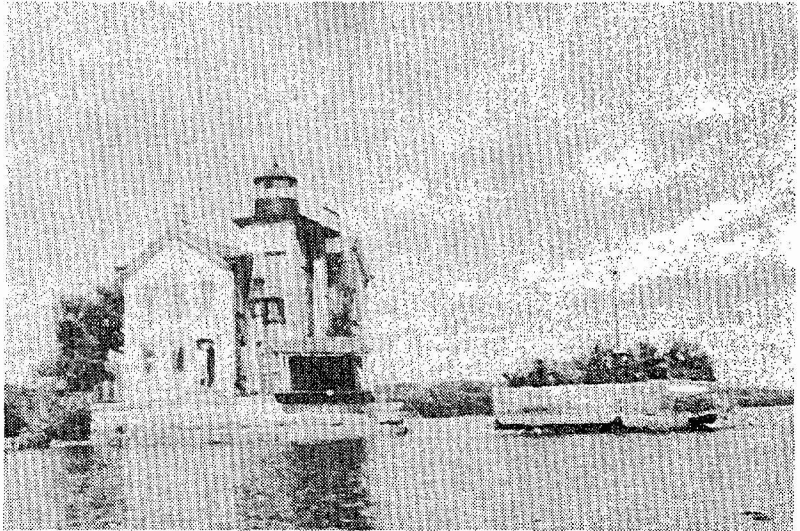


PHOTO #12: State-owned
wetlands at the
mouth of the Creek
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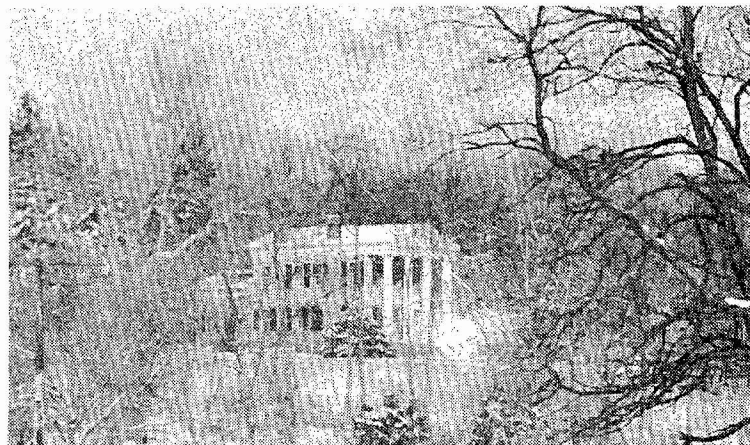


PHOTO #13: The historic Field
House overlooking
the Hudson River ↗

PHOTO #14: Houseboat living on the Esopus

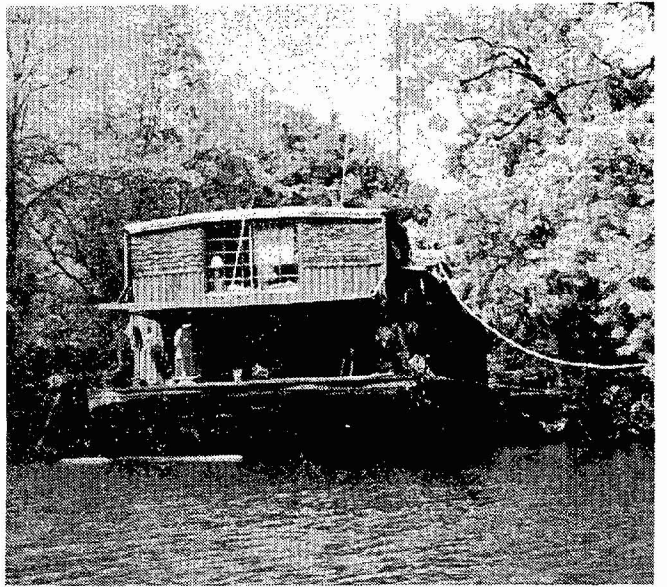
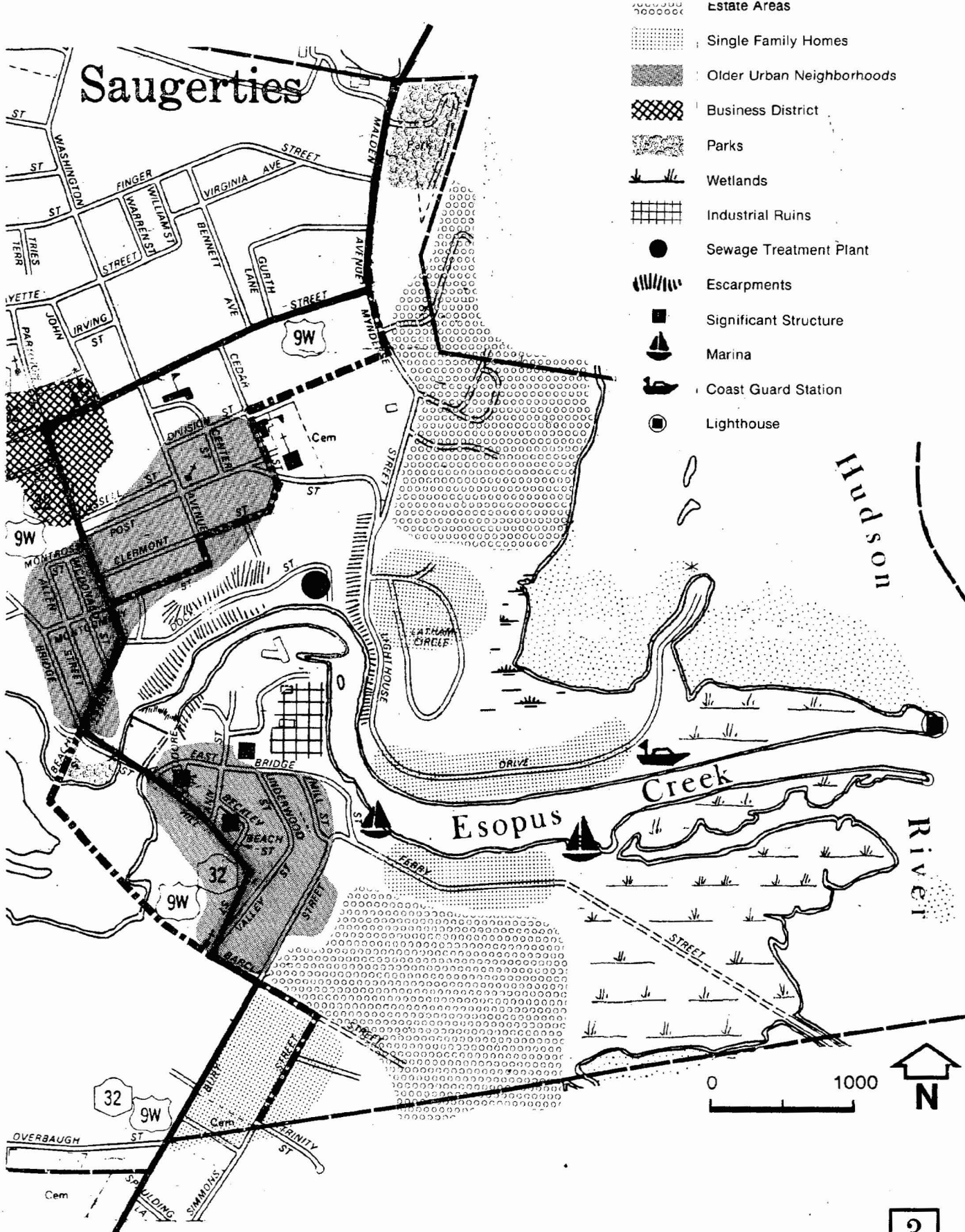


PHOTO #15: The winter home of the Sloop Clearwater on the Esopus



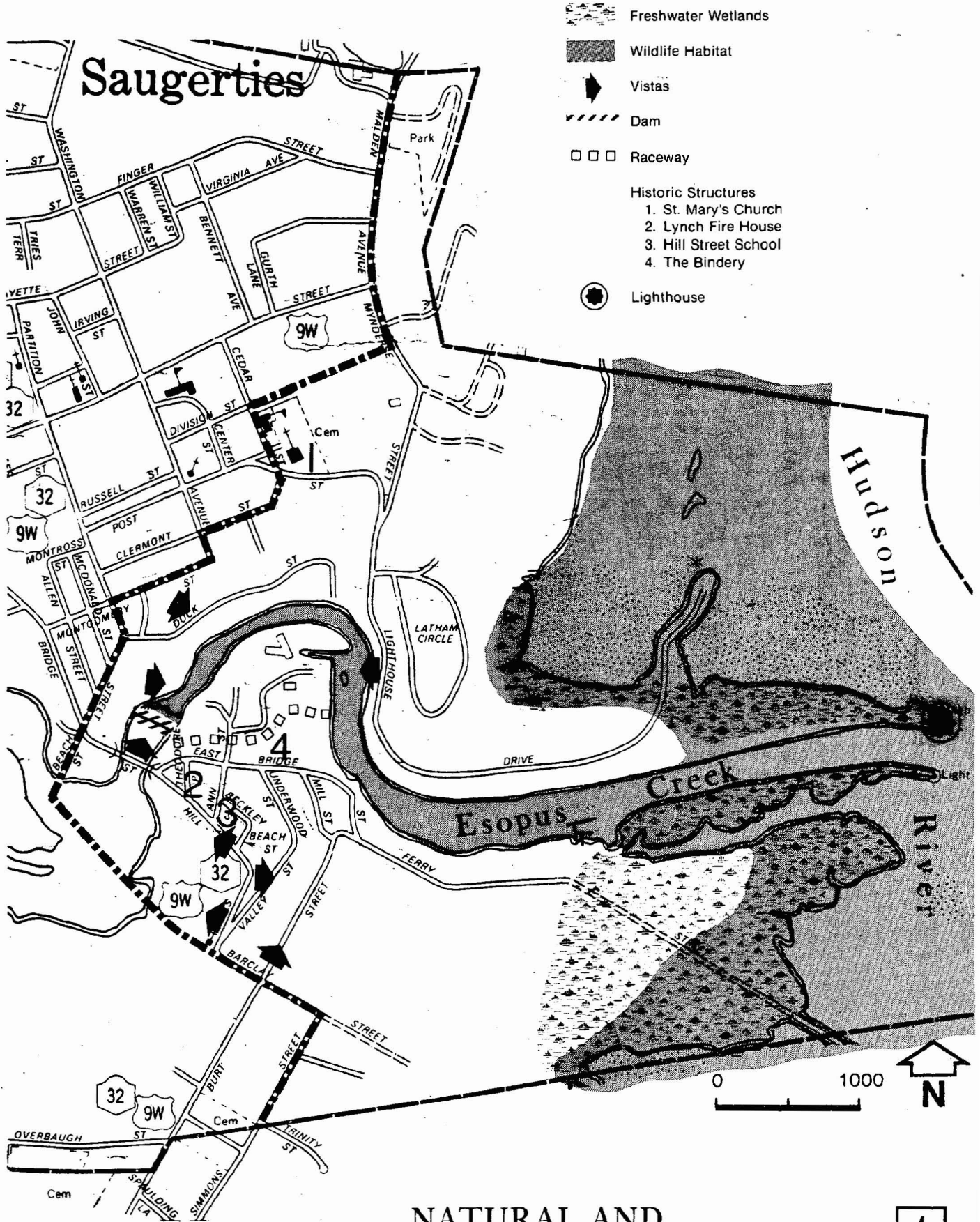
PHOTO #16: Steel bridge above the dam





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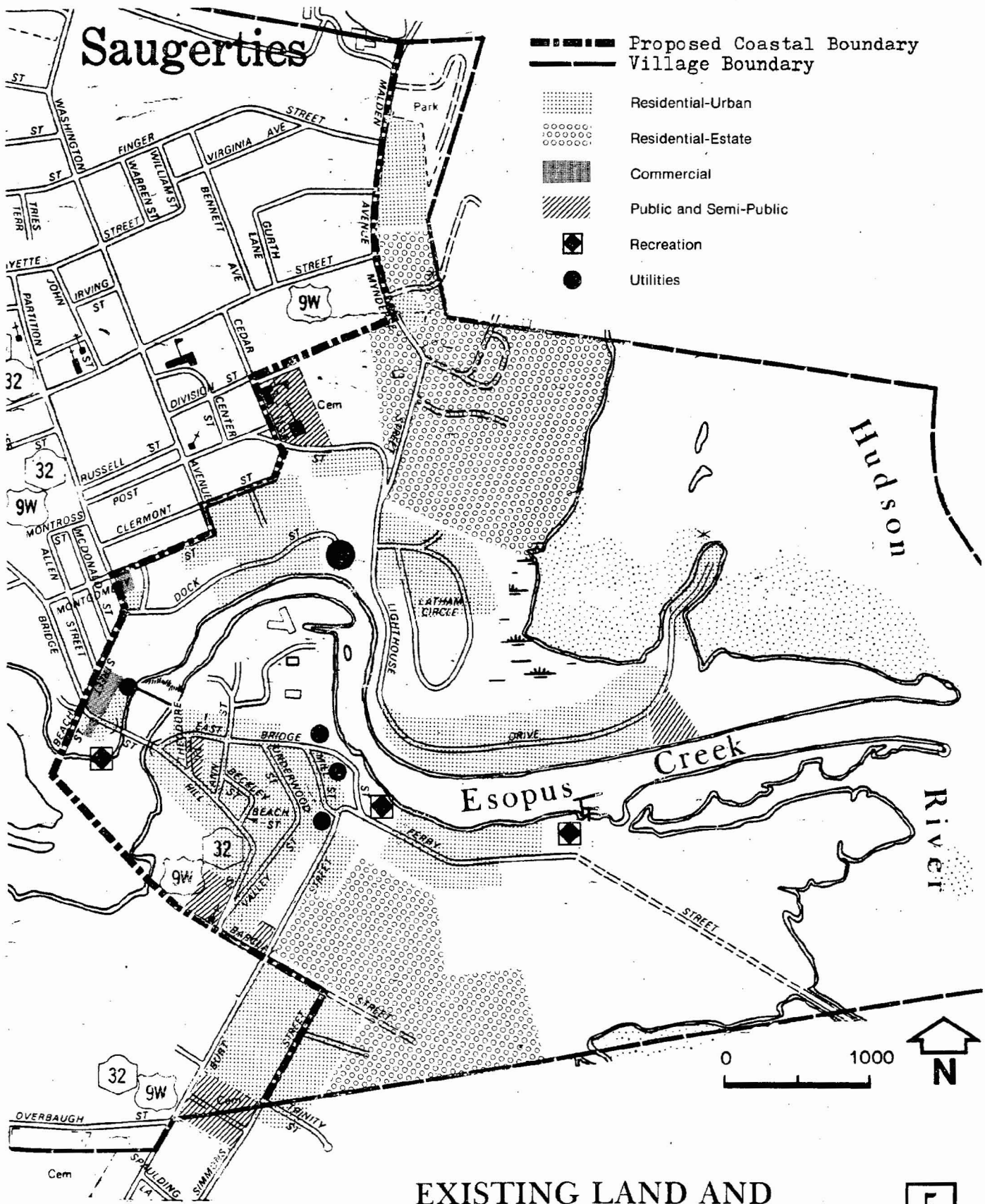
RECONNAISSANCE
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NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

4

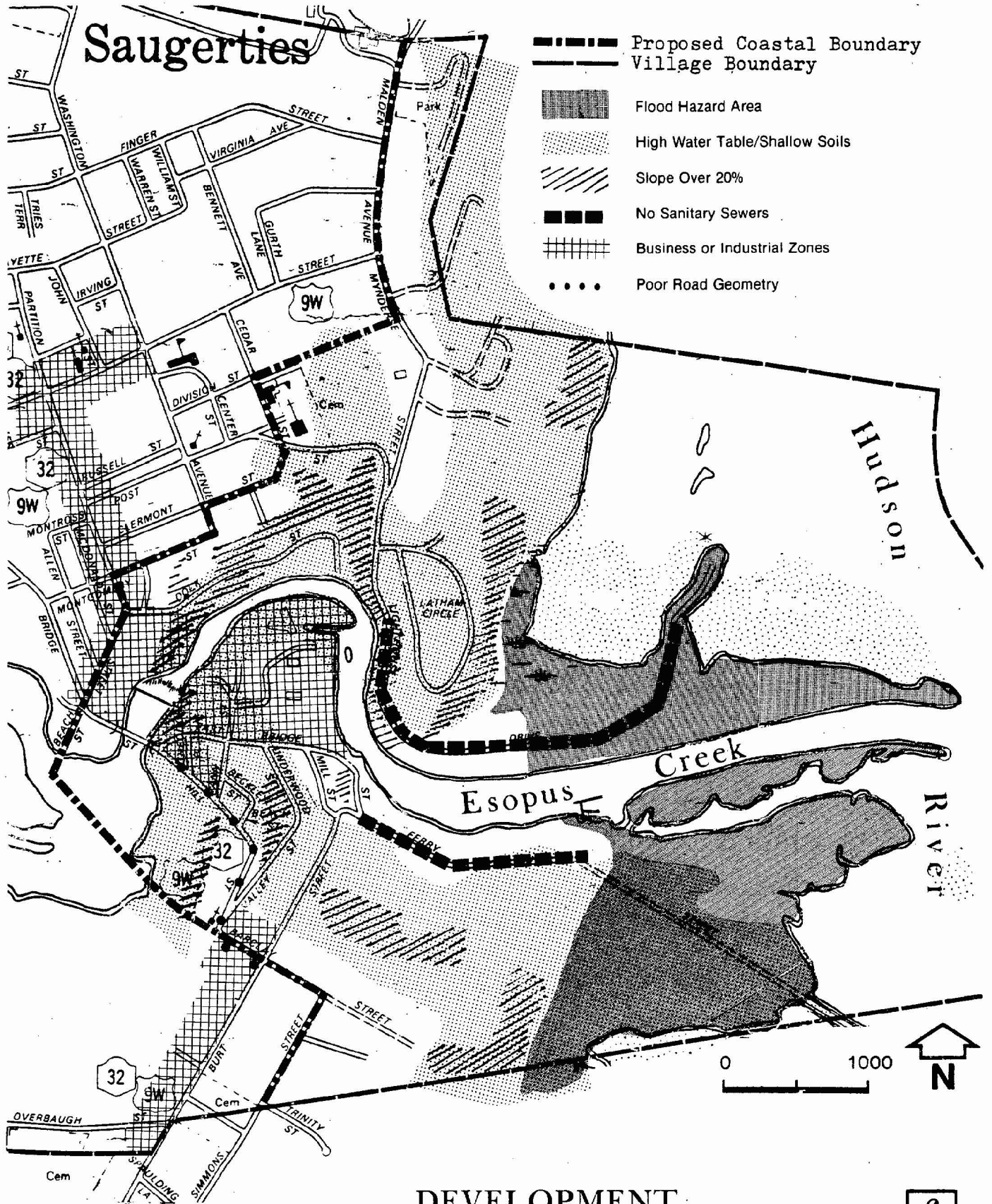
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EXISTING LAND AND WATER USE

5

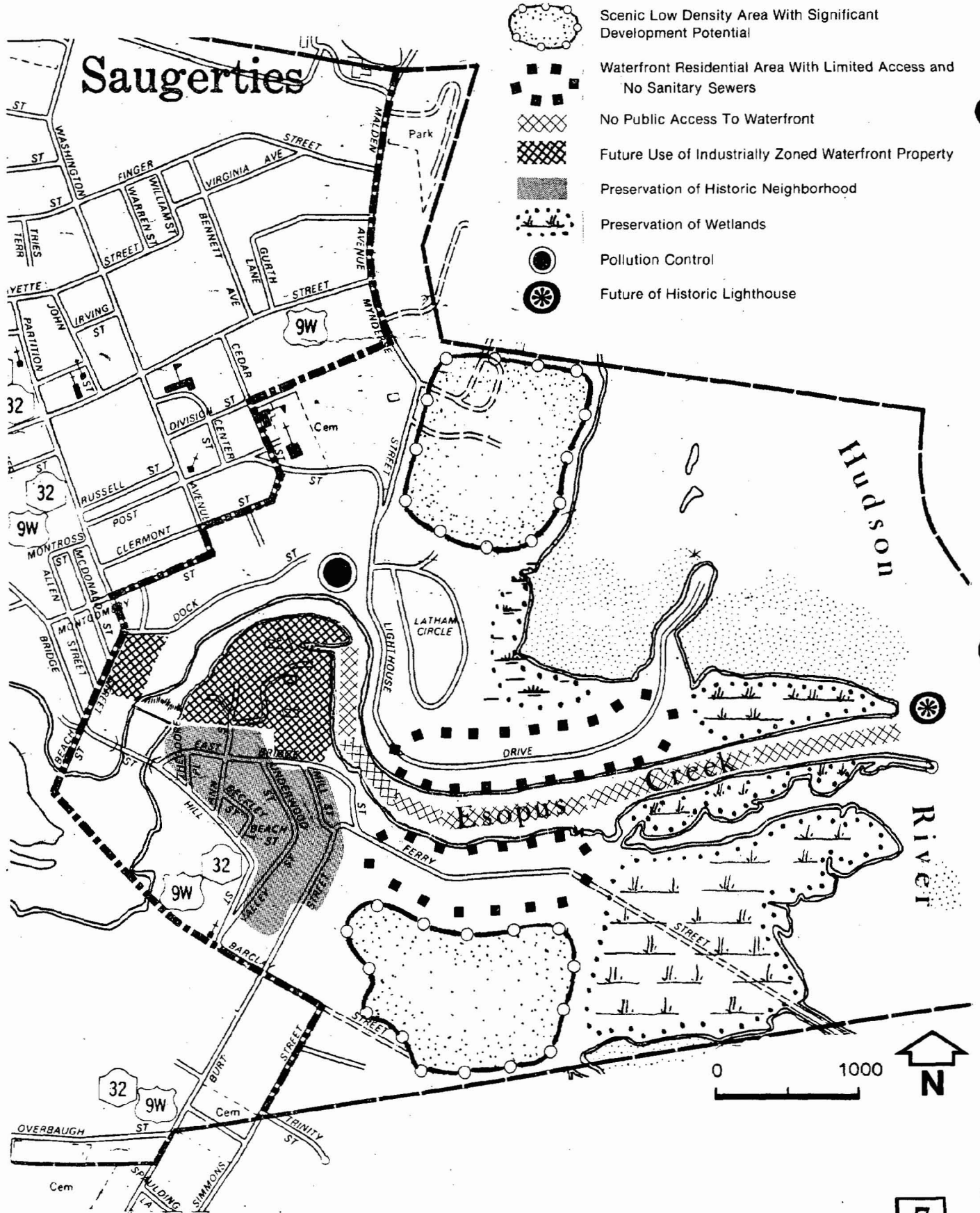
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**DEVELOPMENT
CONSIDERATIONS**

6

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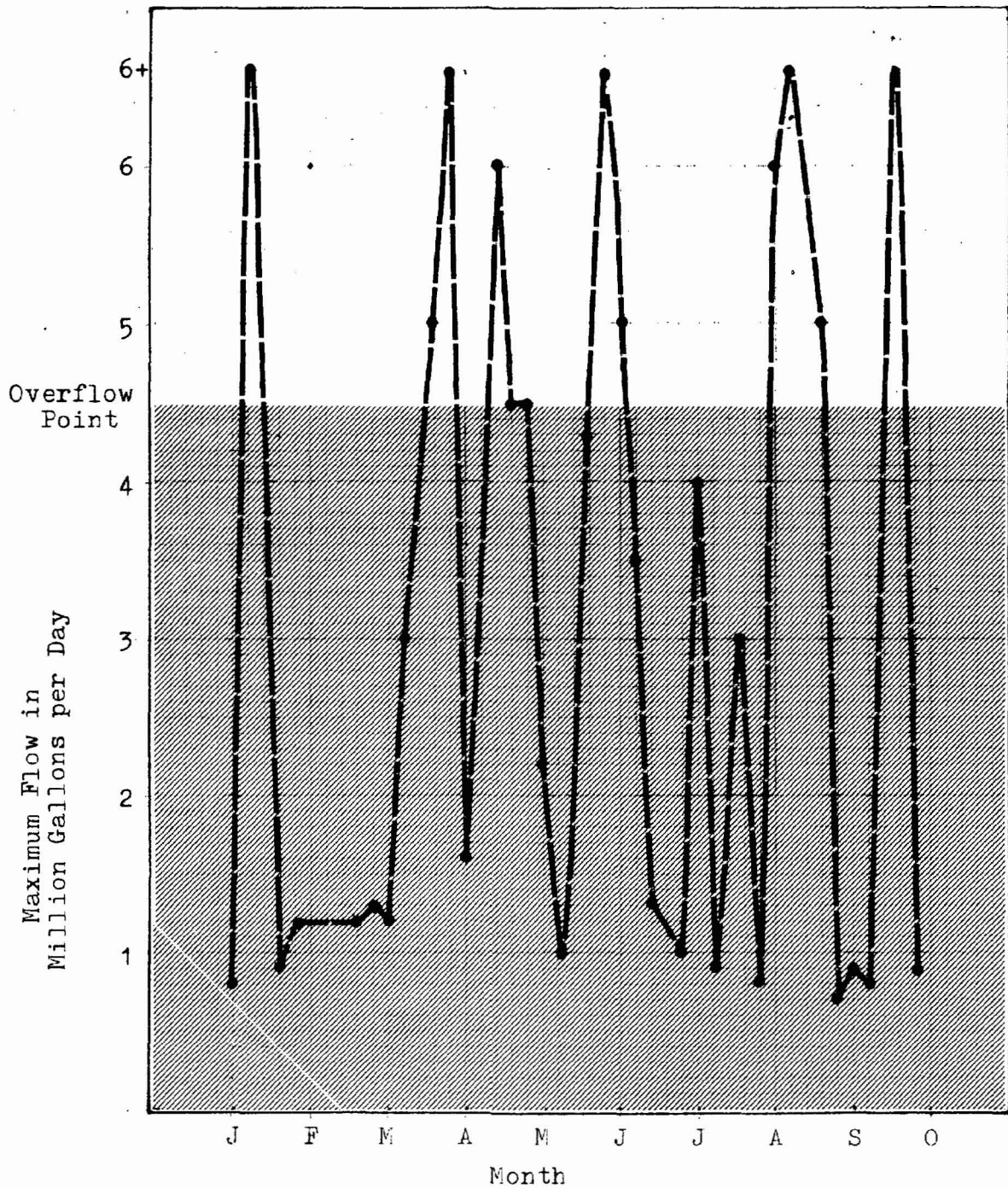
POLICY ISSUES
VILLAGE OF SAUGERTIES, NEW YORK
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7

CHART I

SEWER PLANT OVERFLOW - 1983

Village of Saugerties



Source: Sewer Plant Engineer

Note: Overflows occur during periods of heavy rain or snow melt entering combined sewer system.

TABLE 1SOIL CHARACTERISTICS

Village of Saugerties, New York

Symbol	Name	Hydro- logic Group	Flood Freq.	Depth to Water Table	Depth to Bedrock	Slope
BOD	Bath	C	0	2.0-4.0	40"	hilly
FW	Fresh Water Marsh					
HuB	Hudson	C	0	1.5-3.0	>60	3-8%
HuC	Hudson	C	0	1.5-3.0	>60	8-15%
HwD	Hudson and Schoharie	C	0	1.5-3.0	>60	15-25%
HXE	Hudson and Schoharie	C	0	1.5-3.0	>60	steep
NBF	Nassau	C	0	>6.0	10-20	very st.
	Bath	C	0	2.0-4.0	>40	" "
RhB	Rhinebeck	D	0	0.5-1.5	>60	3-8%
RvA	Riverhead	B	0	>6.0	>60	0-3%
RvB	Riverhead	B	0	>6.0	>60	3-8%
RvC	Riverhead	B	0	>6.0	>60	8-15%
Wc	Wayland	D	freq.	0.0-0.5	>60	-
WsB	Williamson	C	0	1.5-2.0	>60	3-8%

Source: Soil Survey of Ulster County New York
 U.S. Department of Agriculture
 Soil Conservation Service