

# COLUMBIA/GREENE NORTH SCENIC AREA OF STATEWIDE SIGNIFICANCE



Scenic Area

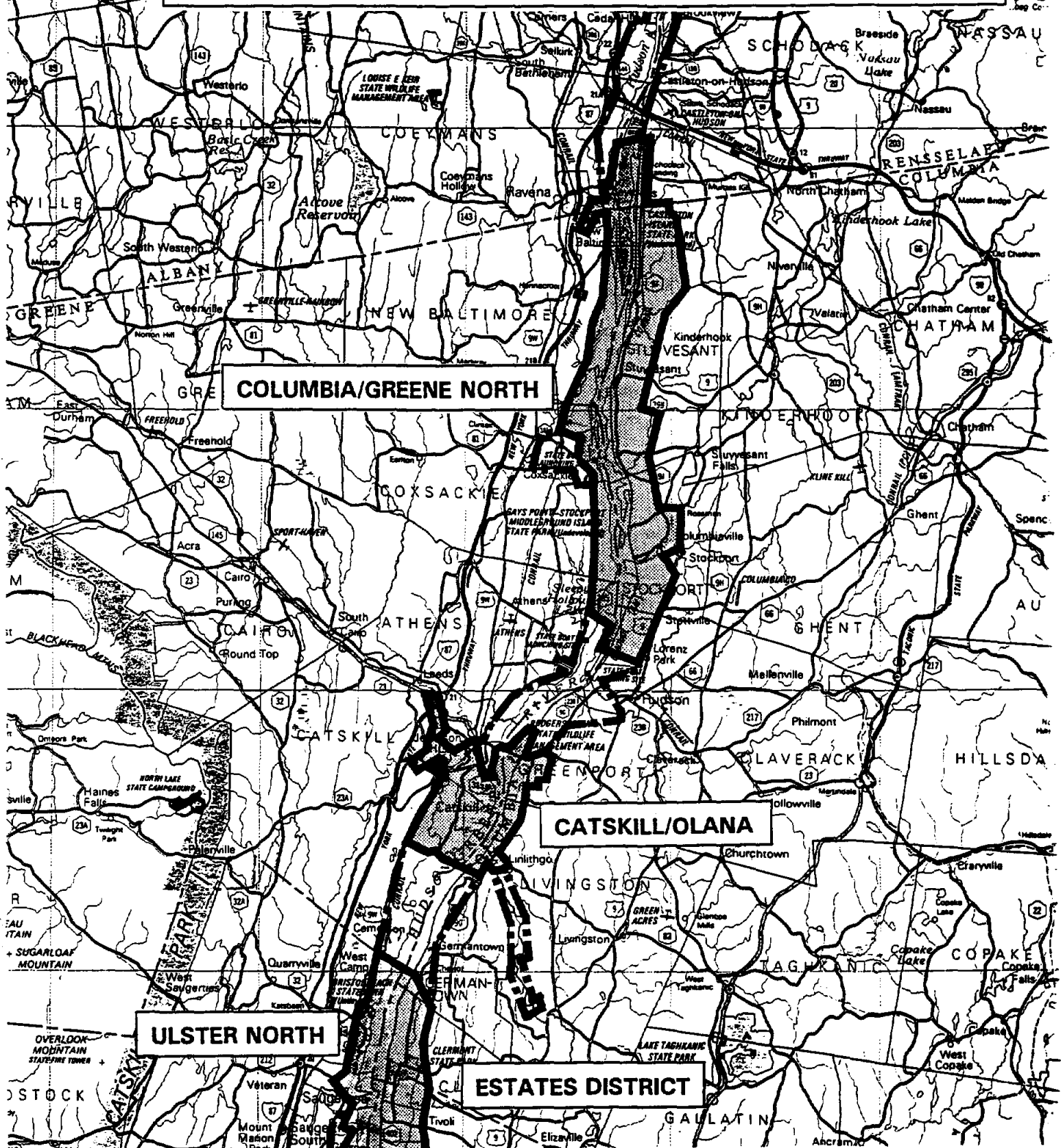
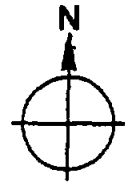


Coastal Area Boundary

SCALE: 1:250,000

STATE OF NEW YORK DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
DIVISION OF COASTAL RESOURCES AND WATERFRONT REVITALIZATION

NOVEMBER 1992



## **COLUMBIA-GREENE NORTH SCENIC AREA OF STATEWIDE SIGNIFICANCE**

### **I. LOCATION**

The Columbia-Greene North Scenic Area of Statewide Significance (SASS) extends about 15 miles along the Hudson River from the vicinity of Schodack Landing in southern Rensselaer County and Coeymans hamlet in southern Albany County southward to just north of the City of Hudson in Columbia County and to the northern boundary of the Village of Athens in Greene County. The scenic area's east and west boundaries generally follow the State coastal boundary with some variations.

On the western shore of the Hudson River the northern boundary of the SASS begins at the mouth of the Coeymans Creek in the Town of Coeymans and follows Stone House Road on the north side of the creek to the intersection with the coastal boundary, NY Route 144. The northern boundary extends east across the Hudson to the Albany-Rensselaer County line, follows the county line north before turning northeast to encompass the northern portion of Lower Schodack Island, then continues across Upper Schodack Island to join the coastal boundary on the eastern bank of the Hudson at the intersection of NY Route 9J and Knickerbocker Road.

The western boundary of the SASS generally follows the coastal boundary along NY Routes 144, 61 and 385, except where the coastal boundary reaches west of Route 61 in the Town and Village of Coxsackie.

The southern boundary in Greene County is the northern boundary of the Village of Athens. The boundary then follows the eastern shoreline of Middle Ground Flats until it is across the Hudson from the North Bay outlet under the railroad tracks on the eastern shore. The boundary then crosses the river and runs through the outlet, continuing up the east bank of the Hudson to Gifford Parkway in the Town of Greenport, just north of the City of Hudson's northern boundary.

The eastern boundary follows the coastal boundary along NY Routes 9J and 9 beginning in the north at Knickerbocker Road north of Schodack Landing. In the south the SASS boundary follows the coastal boundary along Joslen Boulevard in the Town of Greenport to its intersection with Cedar Parkway, follows Cedar Parkway to the intersection with Riverview Boulevard, then follows Riverview Boulevard to Gifford Parkway, the southern boundary of the SASS.

The Columbia-Greene North SASS is located in the following municipalities: the Town of Coeymans, Albany County; the Town of Schodack, Rensselaer County; the Towns of New Baltimore, Coxsackie and Athens and the Village of Coxsackie, Greene County; and in the Towns of Stuyvesant, Stockport and Greenport, Columbia County. Consult the Columbia-Greene North SASS Map for the SASS boundaries.

### **II. DESCRIPTION**

The Columbia-Greene North SASS is comprised of 29 subunits:

CGN-1 Coeymans Hamlet Waterfront, CGN-2 Hannacrois Creek Outlet, CGN-3 New Baltimore Hamlet, CGN-4 Islands, CGN-5 Otter Hook, CGN-6 Coxsackie Creek, CGN-

7 Cocksackie Island, CGN-8 Cocksackie Farmland, CGN-9 Cocksackie Village, CGN-10 Lampman Hill, CGN-11 Vosburgh Swamp, CGN-12 Athens-Cocksackie Farmland, CGN-13 Schodack Landing, CGN-14 Stuyvesant Farms, CGN-15 Poolsburg, CGN-16 Stuyvesant Woods, CGN-17 Mill Creek Marsh, CGN-18 Stuyvesant Landing, CGN-19 Sheffer, CGN-20 Stuyvesant Hamlet, CGN-21 Stuyvesant Ravine, CGN-22 Nutten Hook Farms, CGN-23 Nutten Hook, CGN-24 Stockport Flats, CGN-25 Newton Hook Ravine, CGN-26 Judson Farms, CGN-27 Columbiaville, CGN-28 Stottville Farms, and CGN-29 Stockport Creek.

The SASS constitutes a predominantly rural area of low bluffs and ravines, flanked on the west shore by narrow alluvial plains and on the east shore, by a broader plateau. It is a quiet, pastoral area of working farms and river landings which has changed little since the 19th century. Because most of the land visible from the Hudson River is either inaccessible, too steep or too wet to build upon, the river corridor remains in a predominantly natural state. Early European settlers of the area were primarily Dutch immigrants who migrated south from Rensselaerwyck manor because they wanted to own property rather than be tenant farmers on the manor which spanned both sides of the Hudson River to the north. The Dutch purchased land from the resident Indians and laid out their farms quite isolated from each other. Landings along the Hudson River were the only clustered settlements initially, their commerce being the transfer of lumber, furs and farm produce from land to water. The Hudson River was the main transportation artery to the cities now called Albany and New York. Grist mills and lumber mills were constructed on the tributaries where the water tumbled over falls and plunged through steep ravines to the Hudson River.

The Dutch were later joined by migrating New Englanders and British soldiers who chose to remain in the New World. Although several industries primarily related to the Hudson River and water transport were established along the shores, farming was the primary occupation. When ice harvesting flourished in the 19th century, it provided winter employment for the farmers and their farmhands. Later industries took advantage of the abundant water power of the creeks, then were abandoned as larger industrial centers developed, leaving the landscape primarily rural again.

The development pattern of the Columbia-Greene North SASS is essentially the same today, comprising large stretches of pastoral landscape broken by river landings which have grown to hamlets or incorporated villages. There is a stimulating mix of land uses: the historic hamlets of New Baltimore and Stuyvesant and the village of Cocksackie; semi-wild regions of dense forest and marsh; and an intervening farm landscape of pasture, orchards and fields. A strong contrast remains between the tight village centers and adjoining woods and fields, with little blurring of the edges. The traditional close relationship of the settlements to the Hudson is also intact. Areas and individual structures of particular historic and cultural interest exist, but most must yet be surveyed to determine their eligibility for the National and State Registers of Historic Places.

The SASS is a unified landscape, its visual integrity resulting from development closely tied to specific characteristics of the land. The landscape exhibits great visual variety and contrast in landform and vegetation, unified by an underlying cultural pattern which provides a visible logic to the organization, location and design of scenic elements.

Along with the internal cultural unity of the area, the setting unifies this distinctive landscape. The Hudson River is the dominant element on the landscape and can be seen from many locations. It ranges from 1,000 to 4,000 feet wide. In the northern portion of the SASS, islands divide the Hudson into narrow sections of a friendlier, less imposing character.

Once tied to each other by ferries, each shore of the river now appears unattainable from the opposite bank, intriguing viewers with what may lie in the distant landscape. In panoramic views where the Hudson is not visible, landscapes of similar quality and character on each bank of the river appear as a single expanse. The distant Taconic Hills and Catskill Mountains provide dramatic backdrops to the open fields and orchards. Along with the traditional development patterns, these background elements give a strong sense of place to this portion of the Hudson River corridor. In addition, many intimate compositions abound which focus on clusters of historic farm buildings, streams folded in ravines and deep woodland landscapes.

### III. AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE

The Columbia-Greene North SASS is of statewide aesthetic significance by virtue of the combined aesthetic values of landscape character, uniqueness, public accessibility and public recognition. There exists in the SASS unusual variety as well as unity of major components and striking contrasts between line, forms, textures and colors. The SASS is generally free from discordant features. It is both visually and physically accessible to the general public, but public recognition is limited primarily to local residents and travelers on the State and local highways. Perhaps because development pressures have not been present to the extent experienced in the rest of the Hudson Valley, most of the historic and natural resources have not been subject to the types of survey and evaluation which leads to recognition through government designations.

#### A. Landscape Character

##### 1. Variety

The Columbia-Greene North SASS exhibits an unusual variety of major components. The landform is composed of alluvial plains and steep bluffs along the Hudson River, especially around several small drumlin-like hills along the east shore. Behind the bluffs lie expansive level plains cut by ravines through which several creeks flow before emptying into the Hudson River. The shoreline of the Hudson is extremely varied, incorporating a number of large and small islands, coves, mud flats and creek mouths.

Vegetation ranges from dense hardwood forest along the bluffs and ravines to tilled fields, orchards and meadows of the working farms. Wetland species cover the river flats, and street trees and gardens decorate the river landings. Lawns line the river in the settled areas.

There is a wide variety of water elements. The Hudson River ranges in width from 1000 to 4000 feet, in some locations appearing as a formidable body of water and in others as a manageable stream where it divides to flow around large islands. Creeks contain placid pools as well as waterfalls tumbling off bluffs and over piles of rocks.

Views include panoramic vistas 180 degrees in breadth that unite both shores into a single landscape and reach to the Catskill Mountains and Taconic Hills. Clusters of farm buildings and

significant trees provide focal points in these broad sweeps of pastoral countryside. More intimate views vary from narrow compositions of stream corridors lined with rock walls to tunnel views through dense woodland with the Hudson River glistening in the distance. Other glimpses of the Hudson are framed by the street trees and historic buildings of the river landings.

Of interest in the views are the varied ephemeral effects of wildlife in the marshlands and forests, the operations and livestock of the working farms and the variety of vessels which pass along the Hudson. Occasional trains travel the eastern shore, bringing a fleeting mechanistic touch of technology to the scene.

## **2. Unity**

The variety of components is unified by the predominantly rural landscape, the dominant presence of the Hudson River and the development pattern which creates edges between clustered settlements and the adjacent rolling open lands. The cultural character of the landscape still reflects its historic development which was centered first on the commerce of the river and the use of waterpower for early industries. In the hamlets the historic structures are compatible with each other and their setting. In the working landscape the farm operations respect the natural contours of the topography.

Along the river corridor the bluffs, marshes and flood plains remain generally undeveloped, giving a consistent natural character to the corridor. Where once ferries tied the two shores of the Hudson together, they are now connected by the common viewshed and similar landform of vistas to both the east and the west.

## **3. Contrast**

Contrast is provided among the colors and textures of the varied vegetation, by the drama of the steep bluffs contrasting with the expansive plateau and Hudson River, and between the hard, rugged rock faces of ravines and the placid pools and shimmering waterfalls of the creeks which they line. Clusters of farm buildings and significant trees provide vertical elements in areas of broad, flat expanses. Sharp edges exist between the settled river landings and the adjacent farm fields and forests. The Catskill Mountains and Taconic Hills stand as distant sentinels, marking the edge of the generally level valley and providing a dramatic backdrop for the panoramic views.

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

The SASS as a whole is generally free from discordant features. Although there are some instances of structural blight in the river landings, many historic houses have been restored and the landscape is well maintained overall. The railroad tracks along the east bank of the Hudson are discordant in certain perspectives, for instance when they appear in the foreground of views, but they blend into the landscape where they closely follow the shoreline or when seen from locations removed from the right-of-way.

## **B. Uniqueness**

The river landings are unique in their strong sense of place and orientation to the Hudson River.

The remains of the R. and W. Scott Ice Company Powerhouse and Ice House at Nutten Hook are unique as the most complete industrial ruins of the Hudson River ice industry in the region. They remain as a reminder that the Hudson's northern corridor once was lined with icehouses, power generating stations and shipping terminals.

The landscapes in the CGN-9 Cossackie Village, CGN-13 Schodack, CGN-14 Stuyvesant Farms, CGN-22 Nutten Hook Farms, CGN-23 Nutten Hook, CGN-29 Lampman Hill and CGN-13 Schodack Landing subunits of the SASS are unique landscapes.

#### **C. Public Accessibility**

The SASS is visible to the general public from the Hudson River and the railroad trains which run along the Hudson's eastern shore; from NY Routes 144, 61, 385, 9J and 9; and from a network of local roads. Municipal parks and State-owned shorelands allow the public to reach the shore in some places, although the railroad tracks constitute a formidable barrier on the eastern shore. Boat launches are more plentiful on the western shore, but the Stockport Flats portion of the National Estuarine Sanctuary and Research Reserve on the eastern shore provides significant access for launching small boats and observing Hudson River wildlife.

#### **D. Public Recognition**

Public recognition is limited for the most part to local residents and travelers along the State and local highways. There is, however, evidence of the growing public awareness of the value of this landscape. The following highway segments are designated Scenic Roads under Article 49 of the Environmental Conservation Law: NY Route 61 from the Village of Cossackie north 5.03 miles; NY Route 385 from the Village of Cossackie south 3.48 miles; and NY Route 9J from its junction with Brickyard Road in Stockport south .38 mile and in Stuyvesant, from its junction with County Route 23A north 1.67 miles.

The following properties and districts are listed on the National and State Registers of Historic Places: the Ariaanje Coeymans House in Coeymans, the Reed Street Historic District in the Village of Cossackie, the Schodack Landing Historic District in Schodack Landing and the R. and W. Scott Ice Company Powerhouse and Ice House Site in Nutten Hook.

The following lands are in public ownership: the municipal parks in Coeymans, New Baltimore and Cossackie; an 85 acre forest preserve detached parcel bordering Cossackie Creek in New Baltimore; the State boat launch in the Village of Cossackie; Nutten Hook and a portion of Stockport Flats in Stockport; Houghtaling Island in New Baltimore; and the Lower and Upper Schodack Islands in Stuyvesant.

#### **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; and
- (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, POWERLINES, 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:** The Columbia-Greene North SASS is unified by the predominantly natural character of the Hudson River corridor which consists of forested bluffs, extensive wetlands and clustered river landings. The upland is a predominantly rural landscape of working farms and forested areas. The introduction of structures and other development such as highways, power lines, and signs within the river corridor, in the open farm landscape, in the river landings or in other conspicuous places would alter the unifying elements of the landscape and impair the aesthetic quality of the SASS.

The shoreline of the Hudson provides variety and interest to the SASS through its undulating shoreline composed of creek mouths, coves, wetlands and islands. The juxtaposition of the steep bluffs with the level expanse of the river's water surface also provides contrast. The alteration or interruption of these natural linear features and

essential relationships through introduction of manufactured elements would disrupt the relationships and reduce contrast, impairing the scenic quality of the shoreline.

Views from one side of the river to the other unify the landscape and often make the two shores of the Hudson appear as one, since their nature is essentially the same. The SASS is generally free of discordant features. Interruption of these views or blocking these views with highways, power lines, signs and other structures in conspicuous locations would introduce manufactured elements into a predominantly natural landscape. Such structures would constitute discordant features and would reduce the unity of the landscape, impairing the scenic quality of the views. In certain circumstances and from certain perspectives, such structures could block views, particularly the intimate interior views and tunnel views to the Hudson along the bluffs on the eastern shore, destroying some of the contributing scenic components of the SASS.

#### **CLUSTERING OR ORIENTING STRUCTURES TO RETAIN VIEWS, SAVE OPEN SPACE AND PROVIDE VISUAL ORGANIZATION TO A DEVELOPMENT;**

COMMENT: The SASS is predominantly a rural landscape of working farms; pastures, fields and forests. Its aesthetic significance involves in part the continuation of this historic land use in a relatively unchanged condition. Because of this open nature of the landscape, panoramic vistas 180 degrees in breadth are common. In addition, the historic settlement pattern is one of tightly clustered hamlets surrounded by the open rural landscape and a visual organization of clear edges between developed centers and adjacent undeveloped spaces.

Introduction of new structures unrelated to farming operations into the farm landscape would alter the pastoral nature of the landscape and impair the aesthetic significance of the SASS. They could also reduce the amount of open space and reduce the breadth of the views which contribute significantly to the scenic quality of the SASS. The spread of new development in an unclustered, sprawling manner would obliterate the edge between clustered development centers and the surrounding open landscape and change the cultural pattern of development, reducing unity and contrast in the landscape composition and thus reducing the scenic quality of the landscape.

#### **INCORPORATING SOUND, EXISTING STRUCTURES (ESPECIALLY HISTORIC BUILDINGS) INTO THE OVERALL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME;**

COMMENT: Some of the historic structures in the SASS have been recognized through listing on the National and State Registers of Historic Places. There are many historic structures which are not listed but which may be eligible for listing. Surveys have yet to be done regarding their historic significance. Farm complexes are of particular importance to the SASS. They provide focal points in the panoramic views across the fields and provide a sense of scale for the views. The river landings contain important groupings of structures which are well related to one another and to the topography.

Failure to incorporate sound, existing structures into the overall development scheme could lead to the loss of historic structures and groupings of structures which contribute to the scenic quality and aesthetic significance of the SASS. Such structures and



groupings of structures are focal points in views or frame views of the SASS. Failure to design and site new structures in the development in a manner compatible with the existing structures could destroy the unity of SASS composition and introduce discordant features in a landscape generally free of discordant features, thus impairing the scenic quality of the SASS.

#### **REMOVING DETERIORATED AND/OR DEGRADING ELEMENTS;**

**COMMENT:** The SASS is generally free of discordant features. However, some structures are in a deteriorated condition. Rehabilitation of salvageable historic structures could enhance the scenic quality of the SASS. Removal or screening of degrading elements which cannot be rehabilitated would also enhance the SASS. However, a determination of the historic value of a structure or remains of a structure should be determined before a course of action is chosen, however.

#### **MAINTAINING OR RESTORING THE ORIGINAL LAND FORM, EXCEPT WHEN CHANGES SCREEN UNATTRACTIVE ELEMENTS AND/OR ADD APPROPRIATE INTEREST;**

**COMMENT:** The Columbia-Greene North SASS contains four dominant topographical characteristics: steep bluffs along the Hudson River, drumlin-like hills along the east shore of the Hudson, broad alluvial plains behind the bluffs and steep ravines traversing the plains. Most remain undisturbed. Maintenance of these major land forms will contribute to preserving the scenic quality and aesthetic significance of the SASS.

#### **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:** Vegetation in the Columbia-Greene North SASS ranges from dense hardwood forest along the bluffs and ravines to tilled fields, orchards and meadows of the working farms. Wetland species cover the river flats, and street trees and gardens decorate the river landings. Lawns line the river in the settled areas. The forested bluffs create a verdant corridor for the Hudson River. Tunnel views down the roads through these forests focus on the Hudson River glistening at the end like a distant light. These are important intimate interior views. Although clearing of vegetation in these areas would open broader views to the Hudson, the peculiar intriguing nature of these enclosed views, a unique element of the SASS, would be lost.

The forests in the ravines provide a contrast to the surrounding open fields and pastures, contributing to the textural variety of the SASS. Specimen trees in the fields provide focal points in panoramic views. Loss of these trees would reduce the degree of contrast and variety of the SASS, impairing its scenic quality.

Retention of the forests presents opportunities for screening new structures and blending them into the landscape, thus retaining the open, rural character of the SASS which is a significant contributor to its scenic quality.

The orderly plantings of street trees and gardens and the manicured lawns are contributing elements to the distinctive scenic character of the river landings. They frame views, unite the varied architectural styles and soften the developed nature of the hamlets. Failure to maintain existing and replace lost vegetation would impair the unique character of these settled population centers.

Since the State and local road network is an important means of access to the SASS, failure to maintain views from the rights-of-way through selective clearing would reduce this visual access.

The presence of wildlife and farm animals is an ephemeral characteristic which enhances the scenic quality of the SASS. Loss of the wetland vegetation, forests and pasture which sustain them would lead to the loss of the ephemeral elements, reducing the visual interest and, consequently, the scenic quality of the SASS.

**USING APPROPRIATE MATERIALS, IN ADDITION TO VEGETATION, TO SCREEN UNATTRACTIVE ELEMENTS;**

**COMMENT:** The SASS is generally free of discordant features. Failure to use colors, materials and textures which blend into the landscape could contribute discordant features to the landscape, alter the composition of views through introduction of discordant focal points and change the rural character of the landscape to the extent that the aesthetic significance of the SASS would be impaired.

**USING APPROPRIATE SCALES, FORMS AND MATERIALS TO ENSURE THAT BUILDINGS AND OTHER STRUCTURES ARE COMPATIBLE WITH AND ADD INTEREST TO THE LANDSCAPE.**

**COMMENT:** The SASS is predominantly horizontal in nature, yielding views 180 degrees in breadth. Historic structures in the subunit are generally low-rise domestic and farm buildings. Introduction of large scale or bulky structures or structures made of materials that are reflective or of a color that stands out in the landscape would disrupt the horizontal nature of the landscape, add new focal points to views which would distract from the historic focal points and change the composition of views. This would reduce the unity of the landscape and introduce discordant features, impairing the scenic quality of the SASS.

## **COLUMBIA-GREENE NORTH SCENIC AREA STATEWIDE SIGNIFICANCE**

### **CGN-4 Islands Subunit**

#### **I. Location**

The Islands subunit encompasses four large islands in the Hudson River that stretch for approximately five miles, from just south of the Thruway bridge over the Hudson River to just north of the Cocksackie Creek mouth. It encompasses approximately the northern half of the river's water surface and islands located in the SASS. The islands are located in the Towns of New Baltimore, Greene County; Schodack, Rensselaer County; and Stuyvesant, Columbia County. The subunit's western and eastern boundaries are coterminous with the subunits to the west and east, namely CGN-1 Coeymans Hamlet Waterfront, CGN-2 Hannacrois Creek Outlet, CGN-3 New Baltimore Hamlet, CGN-5 Otter Hook, CGN-18 Stuyvesant Landing, CGN-17 Mill Creek Marsh, CGN-16 Stuyvesant Woods, CGN-15 Poolsburg, and CGN-13 Schodack Landing. See the Columbia-Greene North SASS map sheets, numbers 1 and 2, for subunit boundaries.

#### **II. Scenic Components**

##### **A. Physical Character**

The subunit is comprised of flat islands, alluvial plain and fill. The higher land is forested, while the alluvial plain is covered with dense, successional riparian vegetation, primarily scrub trees and wet meadows. While the islands display little topographic variety, the vegetative cover is reasonably diverse. An undulating shoreline of coves and marshes borders the islands. Water is a dominant element in the landscape, as the Hudson River and the Schodack Creek define the edges of the islands. The islands are not as separate as they once were. Bronck Island is now joined to the western shore; and Houghtaling Island is connected to the Lower Schodack Island to its north. A narrow, shallow channel separates the latter three islands from the eastern shore.

##### **B. Cultural Character**

The islands in the subunit from north to south are Upper and Lower Schodack Islands, Houghtaling Island and Bronck Island. They are used for recreation such as hunting and informal wildlife viewing. Passing boaters may moor off the islands and explore the inland area. The southern portion of Houghtaling Island is owned by the federal government and used for dredge spoil disposal.

The subunit is generally well maintained with no discordant features. The formerly open areas are reverting to wilderness, and the activities of wildlife provide ephemeral effects.

##### **C. Views**

The subunit's scenic quality is based on its unspoiled, natural appearance. The subunit offers screened, relatively short and narrow views over the Hudson River and Schodack Creek to the dramatic background elements of bluffs, hills and historic villages on the shorelands in the adjacent subunits. The depth of views from the interior of the islands is limited by the flatness

of the topography and thickness of vegetation. Long views up and down the predominantly natural river corridor are available from the coves and marshes.

### III. Uniqueness

Although extensive, the islands are not unique.

### IV. Public Accessibility

Most of the islands are in public ownership and accessible from the Hudson River, although they are not managed for recreation. They are visible from the subunits on both banks of the Hudson River, from the trains which run along the east shore of the Hudson and from NY Route 61 in New Baltimore and NY Route 9J in Stuyvesant.

### V. Public Recognition

Public recognition is generally limited to travelers on the Hudson and on the railroad trains and to the hunters and fishermen who visit the area. Most of the islands are publicly owned and used informally by the boating public for recreational purposes.

### VI. Reason for Inclusion

Although not distinctive in itself, the Islands subunit is included in the Columbia-Greene North SASS because it links distinctive subunits. The subunit constitutes the middleground and background of views to the Hudson River from distinctive subunits on both the west and east banks of the Hudson, including views from the trains on the eastern shore and from NY Routes 61 and 9J, portions of which are Scenic Roads designated under Article 49 of the Environmental Conservation Law. The subunit exhibits contrast between the lines of its undulating shores and the texture of the diverse vegetative cover and is unified by the river setting. Much of the subunit is in public ownership and accessible from the Hudson River. The subunit is generally free of discordant features.

## **COLUMBIA-GREENE NORTH SCENIC AREA OF STATEWIDE SIGNIFICANCE**

### **CGN-13 Schodack Landing Subunit**

#### **I. Location**

The Schodack Landing subunit constitutes the northeastern portion of the SASS. Its northern boundary lies along Knickerbocker Road, approximately two miles north of the Columbia/Rensselaer County line. Its eastern boundary follows the coastal boundary which in the southern portion of the subunit lies along a railroad spur inland from the Hudson River. The southern boundary is a common boundary with the CGN-15 Poolsburg subunit, and the western boundary is a common boundary with the CGN-4 Islands subunit. The subunit is located in the Town of Schodack, Rensselaer County and the Town of Stryvesant, Columbia County. Consult the Columbia-Greene North SASS map sheet number 1 for subunit boundaries.

#### **II. Scenic Components**

##### **A. Physical Character**

The landform consists of heavily wooded bluffs and terraces paralleling the Hudson River. The vegetative cover is diverse, ranging from lawns and individual trees in the hamlet of Schodack Landing to mature woodlands, orchards and open meadows in the surrounding countryside. Water, in the form of the Hudson River and the Schodack Creek, is a dominant element in the subunit. Streams cut through the bluffs in several locations. Some wetlands line the shore which includes headlands and small coves.

##### **B. Cultural Character**

The predominant land use in the subunit is residential, consisting of a cluster of historic homes located along NY Route 9J and parallel secondary roads in the hamlet of Schodack Landing. The historic structures are of many architectural periods, some dating to the 18th century. They are generally well maintained and set in a village landscape of yards and gardens. To the north of the hamlet, older houses are scattered along the highway corridor, creating more of a strip development pattern.

The hamlet still exhibits a close relationship with the Hudson River. Originally settled by the Dutch in the early 1700s, Schodack Landing was an important commercial center in the 18th and 19th centuries used by the settlers to ship their farm produce and other products such as furs and tanned hides to the cities to the north and south. In the late 1800s river ice was a major commodity. As with other landings on the Hudson, the advent of the railroad changed the transportation patterns, and Schodack Landing became a small local stop along the line. No trains stop in the hamlet today.

The railroad tracks still parallel the Hudson and detract slightly from the settlement's visual and physical connection with the river. Other than the railroad, there are no discordant features to mar the landscape. The subunit is very well maintained.

### C. Views

The subunit provides full views, 90 to 180 degrees in width and two to three miles long, of the Hudson River and Lower Schodack Island, which divides the Hudson in this area. The bridges which carry the railroad and the New York State Thruway over the Hudson are visible in the background to the north, outside of the subunit. The bridges and the islands contribute focal points to the views. Because of the wooded nature of the subunit, however, views from NY Route 9J and local roads are very limited. Within the hamlet views are oriented along the highway and are punctuated with a pleasing irregular cadence of historic structures sited at irregular distances from the corridor. The hamlet is the focus of views from the river.

### III. Uniqueness

The Schodack Landing subunit's cluster of historic homes set atop the low bluff overlooking the Hudson River and Houghtaling Island is unique.

### IV. Public Accessibility

The subunit is accessible to the public via the Hudson River and NY Route 9J. It is visible to passing motorists, boaters and rail passengers.

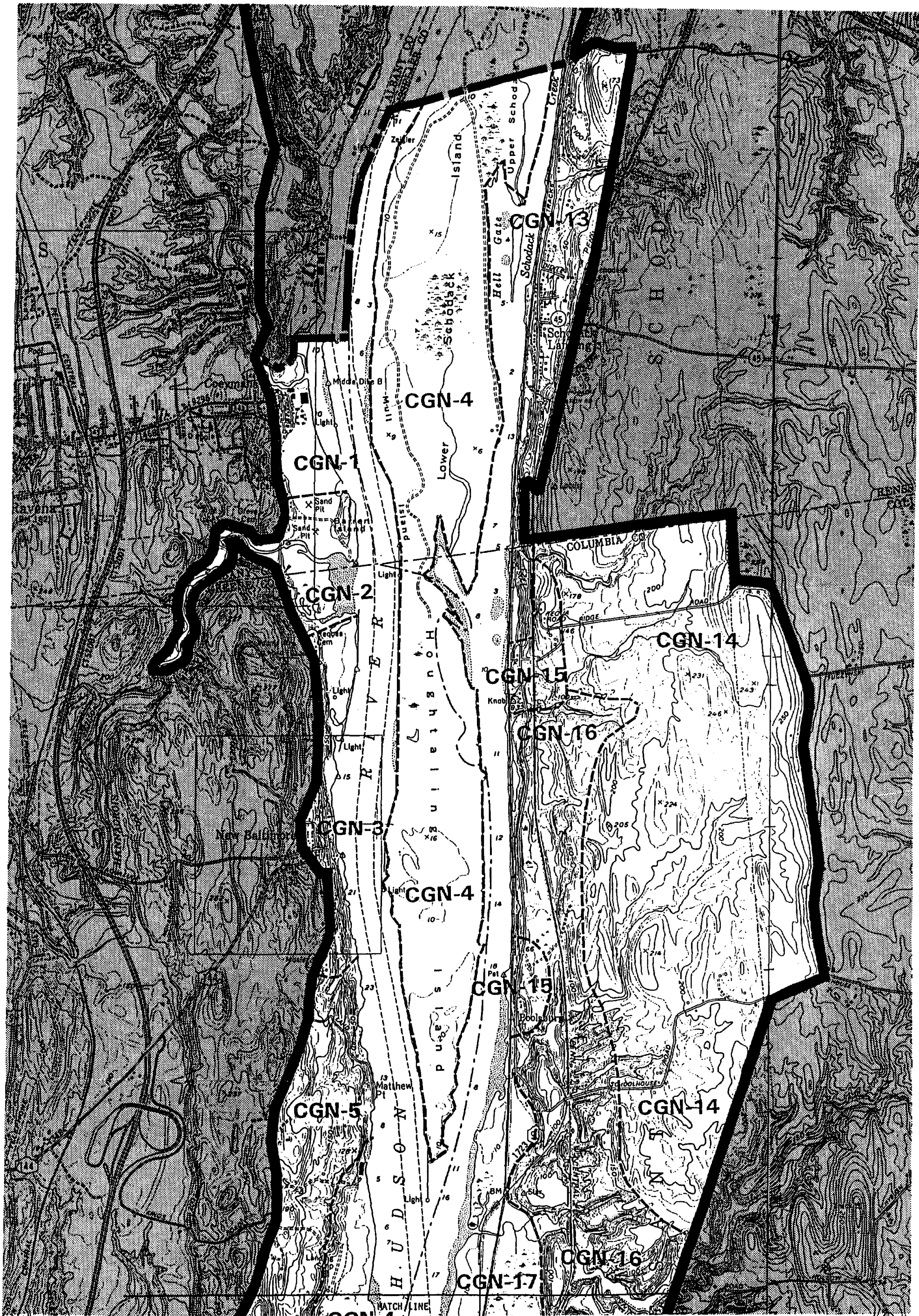
### V. Public Recognition

The subunit is part of the Schodack Landing Historic District listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

### VI. Reasons for Inclusion

The Schodack Landing subunit is included in the Columbia-Greene North SASS because it exhibits an unusual variety of historic structures set in a landscape of moderate topographic variety. The subunit is highly unified by the hamlet theme and the colors of both the natural and cultural components. There exist striking contrasts between the natural and man-made forms. The subunit is generally free from discordant features. It is accessible to the general public via the Hudson River and NY Route 9J and is visible to passing motorists, boaters and rail passengers. The subunit is publicly recognized through the Schodack Landing Historic District listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places.





**COLUMBIA/GREENE NORTH SCENIC AREA OF STATEWIDE SIGNIFICANCE: SHEET NO. 1**

**KEY:**

- Coastal Area boundary
- Scenic Area boundary
- Subunit boundary
- Subunit Identifier

**SCALE:**

