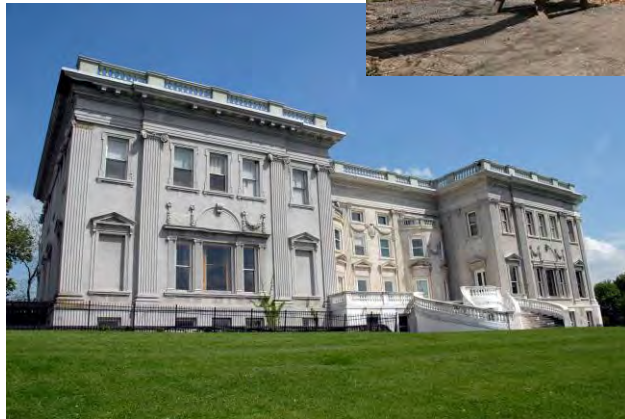


INFORMATION PACKET for
Margaret Lewis Norrie State Park,
Ogden Mills & Ruth Livingston Mills Memorial State Park
and
Staatsburgh State Historic Site
DRAFT MASTER PLAN and
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT



PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING

June 2, 2011—7:00pm
Taconic Regional Office
Staatsburg, NY



Andrew Cuomo
Governor

Rose Harvey
Commissioner

Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Agenda for Public Information Meeting

1. Introductions and Welcoming Remarks
2. Overview and Timeline of the Planning Process
3. Overview of the Parks and Historic Site
4. Public Input
5. Next Steps

Introduction

The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) has developed Priority Themes and Initiatives that will help guide the agency's activities. These priorities are:

- Revitalizing our Parks and Historic Sites
- Natural Resource Stewardship and Interpretation
- Creating Connections
- Sustainability

The master plan for Margaret Lewis Norrie State Park, Ogden Mills & Ruth Livingston Mills Memorial State Park and Staatsburgh State Historic Site (Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh) is part of an accelerated planning initiative that will advance these themes, and determine the best course of action to preserve and utilize park resources for this and future generations.

Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh is distinguished by its abundance of recreation and cultural resources, spectacular views, extensive natural areas, and water resources. It represents popular and important parklands and historic resources in the Hudson Valley.

The purpose of this public information meeting is to actively invite public participation and involvement in the planning process. Public participation will help OPRHP in identifying issues, concerns and alternatives as well as determining the depth to which each of the topics is explored within the Draft Master Plan/Draft Environmental Impact Statement(DEIS).

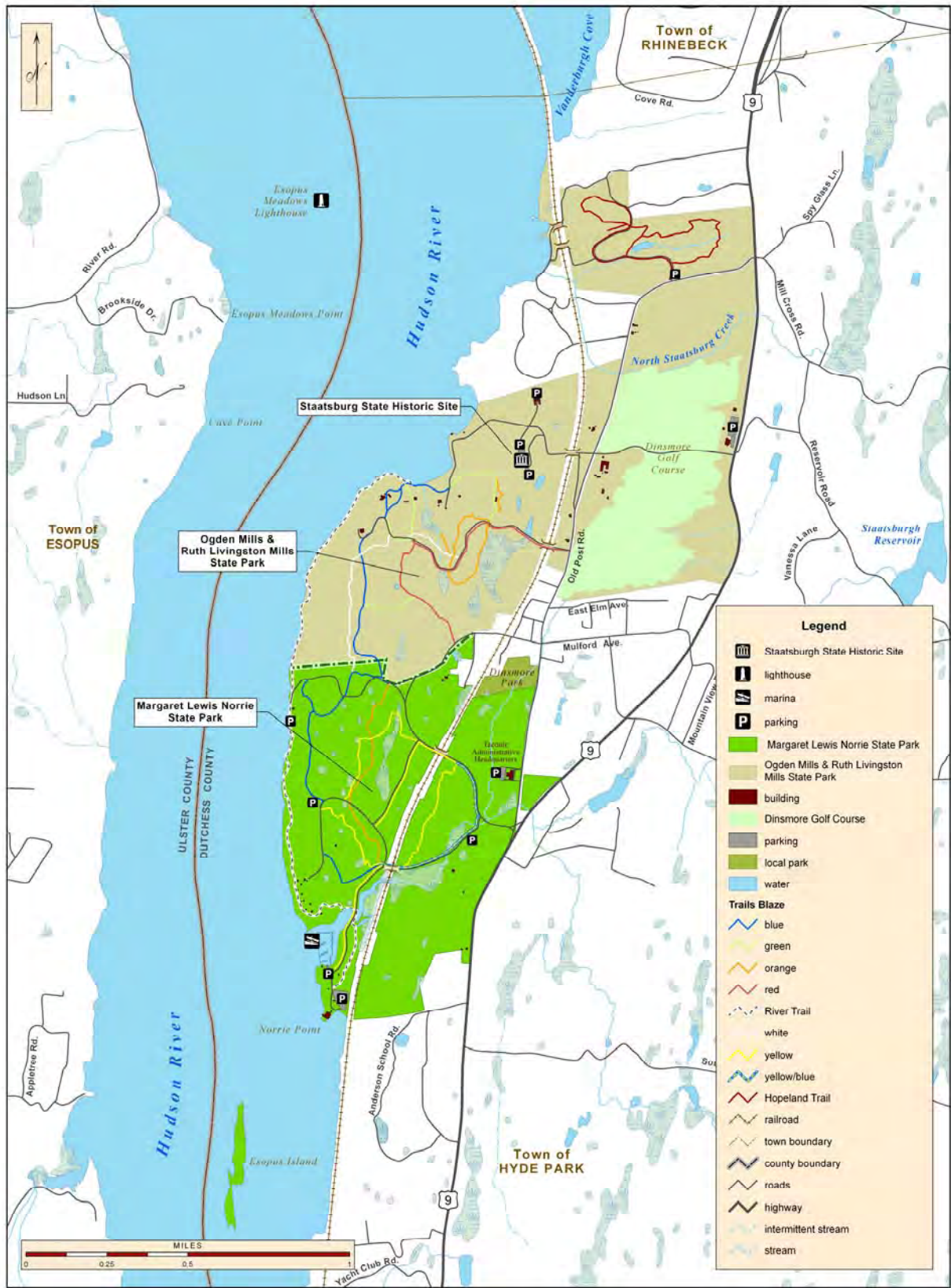
This information packet and the public information meeting are intended to provide the public with a concise overview of, the setting, the resources and the issues identified to this point. Additionally the meeting is designed to provide an opportunity for public input at an early stage in the master planning process.

Additional information can be obtained from OPRHP at:

Garrett Jobson, Acting Regional Director
Taconic Regional Office
PO Box 308- 9 Old Post Road
Staatsburg, NY12580
845-889-4100

Elisabeth Draper, Park Planner
Agency Building 1
Empire State Plaza
Albany, NY 12238
518-486-2909

Email: Mills-Norrie.Plan@oprhp.state.ny.us



Master Plan Timeline

Public Information Meeting – June 2, 2011

Draft Plan/DEIS – October 2011

Hearing – November 2011

Final Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) – December 2011

Findings and Adoption – January 2012

Overview of the Parks/Historic Site

OPRHP Region: Taconic

Location and Physical
Characteristics:

Dutchess County, Town of Hyde Park, hamlet of Staatsburg. The Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh complex is composed of two state parks, the Ogden Mills and Ruth Livingston Mills Memorial State Park and the Margaret Lewis Norrie State Park and the Staatsburgh State Historic Site. These facilities are located on the east side of the Hudson River approximately 80 miles north of New York City. The parks extend from the Hudson River shoreline east to the Old Albany Post Road and Route 9 and encompass approximately 1,100 acres.

Operating Season: Year Round

Facility Managers: Frank Boger (Mills-Norrie), Pam Malcolm (Staatsburgh)

Established: Margaret Lewis Norrie State Park was established in 1934 through a gift of land from Geraldine Livingston Thompson and Lewis Thompson in memory of Mrs. Thompson's sister, Margaret Lewis Norrie. Shortly after, in 1938, a second gift of land was made by Gladys Mills Phipps, daughter of Ruth and Ogden Mills, given in memory of her parents.

Attendance and Access: The parks and historic site attract approximately 220,000 visitors annually. The parks and site are accessible by car, bike and by foot. Rail transportation is available from Amtrak with stops in Poughkeepsie and Rhinecliff.

Timeline for Development of the Parks and Historic Site

- 1934—Margaret Lewis Norrie State Park is created through a gift of 323 acres of land to the state. Esopus Island added to Norrie. 1934-1937 Civilian Conservation Corps camp located at Norrie built park roads, bridges, utilities, campground, cabins, picnic areas and started “Point Inn”. W.P.A. projects at Norrie continued park development from 1937 to 1941.
- 1938—Gladys Phipps donates 190 acres of land, including the 1895 mansion (Staatsburgh State Historic Site) and numerous outbuildings. Ogden Mills and Ruth Livingston Mills Memorial State Park is established.
- 1950 – Construction of the Norrie Boat Basin began and opened on May 30, 1952.
- 1952-1961—Mills State Park is expanded through the donation of land from Helen Huntington Hull. Approximately 125 acres of land were donated, including the original Staatsburg Golf Club 9-hole course (the south nine) and the land that allowed for the creation of another 9-hole course (the north nine).
- 1963 New 9 holes at Dinsmore Golf Course opened; followed by completion of the Dinsmore Golf Clubhouse in 1965.
- 1963-1971—Land Acquisition Bond Act allowed for the significant expansion of both parks. Twenty-four properties were acquired, including Hoyt, Anderson & Gage (“Morgan Hall”) and the Lewis Gordon Norrie Playground, totaling approximately 265 acres.
- 1970—Mills Mansion designated as a formal State Historic Site; later renamed as Staatsburgh State Historic Site. Gladys Mills Phipps donates the contents of the mansion, ownership of which she did not transfer with the original 1938 gift.
- 1972-1987—Small additions were made to Mills during this time, including 51 acres of the former Huntington property north of the golf course.
- 1970-1974 – Construction of the new park entrance and bridge over the railroad at Norrie completed.
- 2003—the former Staatsburg School property on Old Albany Post Road is acquired—renovated in 2009-2010 to become the new Taconic Regional Office.
- 2004— 97 acres known as the Hopeland area is acquired from Scenic Hudson Land Trust and added to the Mills Park. The area includes trails and Dragonfly Pond.

Environmental Setting

Natural Resources

Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh is composed of primarily second growth forest that has a long history of human use, particularly for agriculture. The dominant natural communities are successional northern hardwood forest, hemlock-northern hardwood forest, and Appalachian oak-hickory forest. The Appalachian oak-hickory forests represent some of the more mature forests in the park. Other natural communities present include successional red cedar woodlands, oak-tulip tree forest, acidic talus slope woodland, and successional old field.

Several rare plant species occur within the park, with three new species documented in 2009. The discovery of these new rare plant populations suggests that the forest, wetlands, and rocky outcrops within the park provide good habitat for a number of rare plant species.

While there are no known occurrences of rare animal species, the parks are home to several species of special concern, including the Eastern box turtle and wood turtle. Bald Eagle is a species that has been seen in the park and is listed as a Threatened species in New York State. The area of the Hudson River adjacent to the park supports two important animal concentration areas, an anadromous fish concentration area and a winter waterfowl concentration area.

A tributary of the Hudson, the Indian Kill, runs through the southern portion of the park and empties into the river at the park's marina. A tidal marsh and swamp border the Indian Kill and a backwater area supports a small tidal mudflat community. Wetlands are an extremely important feature of this park, with a diversity of types ranging from estuarine intertidal and tidal communities, to forested and shrub-dominated wetlands, and a number of vernal pools.

Geology and Topography

Underlain by shales and calcareous sandstones, the topography of the park is mostly rolling hills towards the river with few steep inclines. The soils of the area consist of gravelly loams with sandstone outcrops along the river, fine sandy loams on rolling hills and muddy sand in tidal portions of creek beds.

Recreation Resources

Mills-Norrie Staatsburgh has been providing a variety of high quality recreational opportunities for the public since the 1930's. It is a very popular park for Dutchess County residents, including the hamlet of Staatsburg and the Town of Hyde Park. The park is also popular with patrons from Columbia, Putnam, Ulster, and Westchester counties. The parks and historic site are year-round facilities providing passive and active recreation. Recreation opportunities include:

- **Boating** – The marina and boating/kayak rental facility at Norrie Point is open seasonally. The marina, one of the only public marinas on the Hudson River, has 150 slips, electricity, a sewage pump station, and boat launch.

- **Camping** –45 campsites at Norrie and 10 Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) style cabins. Some sites have tent platforms.
- **Golfing** – Two 9-hole courses at the Dinsmore Golf Course.
- **Picnicking** – Picnicking is allowed throughout the parks.
- **Trails** – over 12 miles of trails designated for hiking and nature.
- **Winter Activities** – Cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and snowmobiling is allowed but there are no groomed trails. Sledding is also offered.
- **Fishing** – Fishing is allowed at the Hudson River, Dragonfly Pond and various streams.
- **Scenery** – There are uninterrupted views of the Hudson River from many areas of the parks as well as managed and designed landscapes. The parks are also located within a designated Scenic Area of Statewide Significance.
- **Environmental Education and Interpretation** – The Norrie Point Environmental Center is a year-round environmental education and interpretation center located on the Hudson River at Norrie State Park. The center houses NYS DEC staff and provides facilities for the Hudson River National Estuarine Research Reserve (HRNERR).
- **Cultural Resource Education and Interpretation**— Staatsburgh State Historic Site is open for education and interpretation of the cultural resources of the mansion and grounds. Various interpretive signs are located throughout the parks.
- **Special Events**—Celtic Festival, Antique Car Show, Summer Concert Series, Holiday Whodunit, and Weddings/Private Events.

Cultural Resources

At Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh, the natural and cultural resources are intertwined and share a long history. Records indicate pre- and post-contact occupation of the site by Native Americans. The parks have many historic and scenic designations and are part of a larger National Historic Landmark District within the Hudson Valley. The park also includes property that was once part of the hamlet of Staatsburg whose origins date to the 18th century. Stone walls from these early settlements dot the landscape throughout the park.

Mills State Park includes Staatsburgh State Historic Site, the Gilded Age mansion of Ogden and Ruth Livingston Mills, furnished with its original period furniture and works of art. Before the existing mansion, this portion of the park was the country estate of a branch of the Livingston Family dating back to the Colonial period. Its location adjacent to the Hudson River, an American Heritage River, enhances the significance of the site.

Other estate buildings throughout the park include the outbuildings associated with the estate and its working farm, including the Gardener’s House, the Carriage Barn, the Power House, the Dairy Barns and Stables. Also within the park are other historic residences including Calvert Vaux’s “The Point,” also known as the Hoyt House.

In 1935 Norrie State Park benefitted from one of President Roosevelt’s WPA projects and became the location of a Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp. Work was done in an undeveloped section of the park to create buildings, roads, bridges, docking facilities, comfort stations, cabins, water systems, a campground, picnic areas, and trails.

Scenic Resources

The hills, Hudson River, forests, and historic built environment create a natural setting and scenic backdrop which enhances the quality of the visitor experience to Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh. Numerous natural vistas can be found throughout the park, especially at various points along the Hudson River shoreline.

Infrastructure

Electric Service - Electric service is provided by Central Hudson Gas and Electric via overhead and underground lines. Some lines are owned by OPRHP.

Water Supply – The water supply is from the Dutchess County Water and Wastewater Authority.

Waste water/Sewerage – Wastewater is treated using subsurface septic systems.

Buildings—There are 62 structures located within the Mills-Norrie-Staatsburgh complex.

Roads— Internal park roads (many historic) traverse both parks. Both parks are adjacent to Route 9 and Old Albany Post Road.

Bridges — There are five bridges over the railroad tracks located throughout both parks.

Parking— There are nine parking areas for the parks and two parking areas for the historic site and approximately 630 parking spaces for the entire facility.

List of Potential Topics for Master Plan to Consider

The Draft Master Plan/DEIS will consider the natural and built environment of the parks and historic site, as well as cultural, historic and recreational resources and opportunities. The following list includes some, but not all, of the topics that will be considered during the planning process:

- Campground
- Connectivity to Other Park Lands
- Education and Interpretation Opportunities
- Habitat Restoration and Management
- Historic and Cultural Resources
- Invasive Species – Threats and Management
- Public Health and Safety
- Rehabilitation/Adaptive Reuse of Existing Structures
- Research Opportunities
- Scenic Vistas
- Security
- Trails
- Water - Access, Quality and Watershed Protection

Next Steps

- The suggestions, issues, concerns and alternatives identified at this public information meeting and through written comments will be summarized and made available.
- The Draft Master Plan/Draft Environmental Impact Statement (the draft plan) will address these issues.
- Public review of the draft plan will include a public hearing and public comment/review period. Comments made during this time will be considered in the preparation of the Final Master Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement (the final plan).
- After the issuance of the final plan and a public consideration period, a findings statement will be issued along with the Commissioner's decision regarding adoption of the plan.

Written comments will be accepted until Friday, July 1, 2011. Please send them to:

Elisabeth Draper
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Agency Building One
Empire State Plaza
Albany, NY 12238

Mills-Norrie.Plan@oprhp.state.ny.us