

**COMMUNITY CHARACTER ANALYSIS:
AESTHETIC AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

**NYCDEP Catalum SPDES Permit Modification DEIS
Ashokan Reservoir Turbidity Discharges,
Esopus Creek and Town of Saugerties, New York**



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COMMUNITY CHARACTER ANALYSIS

1. Introduction

This report considers whether the continuation of the turbid water discharges to the Lower Esopus Creek from the Ashokan Reservoir, as practiced by the NYC Department of Environmental Protection, has a negative impact on the community character of the region of the creek and the Town and Village of Saugerties. To assess the impacts of turbidity on community character, I have used the theoretical and methodological approach of “cultural landscape studies.”

“The cultural landscape of an area is formed by the interaction of people and places and is imbued with the historic and cultural influences that make it special on a personal, regional, or national level.”¹ Studying an area’s cultural landscape illuminates the social, economic, historic, environmental, and cultural contexts of a geographically defined space, which over time shape a sense of place and identity—community character. Although a variety of subjects familiar to environmental impact analysts influence a region’s cultural landscape—including aesthetics, historic resources, and socio-economics—the relationship of these diverse elements to the people identified with a particular place is evolving and iterative. Community character thus is not merely the sum of those elements but rather emerges as their collective and dynamic manifestation.

To conduct my cultural landscape study, I reviewed and analyzed a wide array of relevant documents and websites—including, academic books and articles, marketing materials, municipal government publications and resolutions, and press reports—all of which illuminate the history and self-image of the regional Esopus and local Saugerties communities and their core character. I also conducted a number of personal interviews with leading community members. That research showed that the character of the Town and Village of Saugerties and the wider regional community is based on deeply felt connections to the region’s natural beauty, the role of the Esopus Creek in the history and socio-economy and pace of small-town rural life. After 50 years studying and teaching geography, including 40 as a professor at Vassar College in Poughkeepsie, New York, it is my opinion that the additional turbidity caused by the actions of flow from the Ashokan Reservoir into the Lower Esopus Creek and the resulting muddy content, siltation and change of color of the clear stream water to a chocolate visually intrusive image augers an industrialization of the character of place that will have significant adverse impacts on community character for which mitigation through alternative outflow actions is necessary.

1.1. Community Character: An Environmental Concern

“Environment,” according to the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) and its regulations, is defined as “the physical conditions which will be

¹ Katherine Ghilain, “Improving Community Character Analysis in the SEQRA Environmental Impact Review Process: A Cultural Landscape Approach to Defining the Elusive ‘Community Character,’” *NYU Environmental Law Journal*, vol. 17, no. 2 (2009), pp. 1194-1242, at 1194.

affected by a proposed action,” and an action’s environmental impacts include effects on the natural landscape or physical environment such as impacts on the land, including geology, topography and soil; atmosphere; water, both surface and subsurface; ecology, including flora and fauna; and human environmental or cultural landscape features including demographic and spatial patterns of population concentration, distribution, and growth; quality-of-life issues, including noise; visible objects of historic and aesthetic significance; and existing community or neighborhood character.

In 2020 the Committee to Review the New York City Watershed Protection Program published its report with additional “locally defined” indicators “that emphasize the **visions and priorities** of particular communities” and “process” indicators “that assess the **lived experience of community residents**.” The report presented three measures that they deemed “especially relevant” to the NYC watershed region: **(1) social capital/community cohesion**, which includes elements such as a shared sense of identity; **(2) social ecological resilience**, referring to a shared community response to an actual or perceived problem; and **(3) sense of place**, the ability to maintain certain landscape meanings in the watershed.²

As Basil Seggos, the Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) stated on the role of aesthetics and community character, “Community character relates ‘not only to **the built and natural environments** of a community, but **also to how people function and perceive**, that community.’”³

1.2. Community Character: a Cultural Landscape Approach

Community character is the sense of place formed through a people’s relationship to its environment. It is a community’s formulation of an identity through history and can be found in the landscape as a combination of visual elements, such as natural landforms, water bodies, natural vegetation, buildings or other cultural artifacts, as well as in more subjective and value-laden expressions of identification with place, as in artistic expressions such as paintings and photographs. Community character can be discerned through studying the cultural landscape as a people’s “unwitting autobiography,” that helps “to establish their identity, articulate their social relations, and derive cultural meaning.”⁴

² National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine. 2020. *Review of the New York City Watershed Program*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, 2020. <http://doi.org/10.17226/25851>, p. 20., (emphasis added)

³ Basil Seggos, “Decision of the Commissioner, Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, and SEQRA Findings Statement,” (July 12, 2018), p. 11, in Matter of Finger Lakes Storage, LLC application, DEC permit ID No. 8-4432-00085, *emphasis added*; ref. SEQRA Handbook at 87[3rd ed. 2010].

⁴ Paul Groth, “Frameworks for Cultural Landscape Study,” in *Understanding Ordinary Landscapes*, ed. Paul Groth and Todd W. Bressi (1997); and Peirce Lewis, “Axioms for Reading the Landscape,” in *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes: Geographical Essays*, ed. D.W. Meinig (NY: Oxford University Press, 1979), pp. 11-32; see also Dolores Hayden, “Forward: In Search of the American Landscape,” in *Preserving Cultural Landscapes in America*, eds. Arnold R. Alanen and Robert Z. Melnick (1997); and D.W. Meinig, “The Beholding Eye: Ten Views of the Same Scene,” in *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes*, pp. 33-50.

The scale of a community, or neighborhood of interest, relates to the history of land use and economic and social relationships among the people who inhabit the cultural landscape. New York State has recognized that the scope of the term “community” changes with the circumstances. For example, for the proposal by the St. Lawrence Cement Company, LLC to construct a cement plant in the Town of Greenport, New York, the assessment of community character included a multi-municipal group of two counties, two towns, and one city.⁵ A decade later, in the case of Finger Lakes LPG Storage, LLC, the assessment of community character included a multi-municipal group of four counties, nine towns and three cities and villages.⁶ In this analysis of community character, the scale expands from the community surrounding the Town and Village of Saugerties to a wider region that encompasses the full extent of Esopus Creek, from the Catskill Mountains to Ashokan Reservoir, to and into the Hudson River. It is a cultural landscape that is perceived by the local community as an identifiable region with similar historic, economic, and scenic values and assets.

1.3. Community Character: Aesthetic Impact Analysis of the Proposed Action

In a substantive review of the elements that dynamically interact to **impact the aesthetic and visual resources** of the region’s community character, the role of natural beauty in the waterscape and cultural landscape is central to the Town and Village of Saugerties’s sense of place. The community is consciously pursuing economic development strategies that will enable it to preserve these aesthetic and environmental values and to continue enjoying the high quality of life central to its self-image.

In the following analysis, I first explain the historic context and then examine **seven aesthetic facets of existing community character** that could be adversely affected by the Proposed Action: (1) Scenic Views; (2) Landscape Architecture – Open Space; (3) Hudson River School of Art; (4) Cultural and Architectural History; (5) Transportation; (6) Recreational Tourism; (7) Comprehensive Planning. This cultural landscape analysis of potential community character impacts associated with the actions clearly indicates that the resulting excessive turbidity to the flow of the Lower Esopus Creek will cause

⁵ Harvey K. Flad, “Community Character,” in *Visual Impact Assessment of St. Lawrence Cement Proposal, Hudson, NY* (Albany, NY: Department of State, 2005); Harvey K. Flad, “The Influence of the Hudson River School of Art in the Preservation of the River, its Natural and Cultural Landscape, and the Evolution of Environmental Law,” in *Environmental History of the Hudson River*, ed. Robert E. Henshaw (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2011), pp. 293-313; and Miriam D. Silverman, *Stopping the Plant: The St. Lawrence Cement Controversy and the Battle for Quality of Life in the Hudson Valley* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006). Ms. Silverman provides the full text of New York State Secretary of State Randy Davis’s “Objection to Consistency Certification,” which denied a permit to construct the St. Lawrence Cement plant due to its incompatibility with the area’s economic future in heritage tourism, in her book’s Appendix, pp. 119-155.

⁶ Harvey K. Flad, “Community Character Analysis,” Finger Lakes LPG Storage, LLC, Town of Reading, Schuyler County, N.Y. (Albany, NY: Department of Environmental Conservation, 2015). The decision on July 12, 2018 of the Commissioner, Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, and SEQRA Findings Statement stated: “The record demonstrates that the impacts of the project on the character of the local and regional community...are significant and adverse and the project does not avoid or minimize those impacts to the maximum extent practicable.” (emphasis added) See also Michael Fitzgerald, “In stunning victory for Finger Lakes region, controversial gas storage is halted” *Earth Justice* (7/12/18) and Mark Izeman, “Finger Lakes’ “Community Character” sinks gas storage scheme, NRDC (7/25/18).

significant and unmitigated adverse impacts on the character of the creek and Saugerties community generally and the aesthetic character of various cultural landscape features such as Esopus Bend Nature Preserve, the impoundment at the Cantine Dam and the view from Barclay Heights in particular, and the community's perception of their sense of place.

Historical Influences on Community Character

2. Landscape History

Residents of the Catskill and Delaware watershed region constitute a community of interest; their identity and sense of place incorporates a natural and cultural landscape that includes the area from the Catskill mountain peaks such as Slide Mountain to the Kensico and Ashokan reservoirs and the Delaware and Hudson Rivers. It is a landscape rich in history, with a visual texture blending rural economic activity harmoniously with natural forms. Scenic views of seemingly impenetrable forests, cascading creeks, languidly flowing streams, picturesque ruins, cultivated fields and small villages and towns. The hills and waters offer scenic views both dramatic and pastoral, a humanized landscape where community character has been shaped by a deep history and current substantial progress in recreational and cultural tourism.

Esopus Creek flows through the center of the Hudson Valley. For local residents, it is a visual thread that ties together the natural beauty and cultural history of the region. Its ecological health, scenic beauty and history of human use give substance to the community character of the villages and towns through which it flows. Its upper reaches in the mountains and forests have been described in romantic literature and Hudson River School art as the sublime, while its picturesque image as it flows towards the Hudson River has a more humanized touch. As lovingly described in *A Journey through Lower Esopus Creek*:

“The Esopus Creek is one of the jewels of the Catskill Mountains and an important tributary of the Hudson River. Formed in retreat of the last glacier, the creek today feeds into the Ashokan Reservoir, which provides drinking water to New York City. However, it's the lower Esopus Creek—the portion that drains out of the reservoir at Olive, meanders through the Hurley flats, and empties out into the Hudson at Saugerties—that's been integral to the region's history, **helping form the very character of the countryside and towns**. It was the extraordinarily fertile fields of the lowlands of the lower Esopus Creek that first brought European settlers to the area (and Native Americans thousands of years before that). Today, the valley is still primarily agricultural. Industry in the 19th century along other sections of the creek put towns like Saugerties on the map. While the mills are gone, the creek has become a magnet for recreation, attracting boaters, fishermen, and nature enthusiasts. Despite centuries of human impact, the lower Esopus Creek continues to support a rich

biodiversity. The incredible assortment of birds, fish, plants, and animals that inhabit its watershed make up a vital ecosystem.”⁷

2.1.Natural History

During North America’s last great Ice Age, approximately 15,000 years ago, areas of what is now New York State were covered with up to a mile in ice. Over the years the hunting and fishing grounds of native Americans and the productive fields would transform the economy from one based on extractive resources, such as the lumbering of hard wood forests for timber and tanning bark and bluestone quarries, to one of sustainability, including apple orchards and small farms and villages incorporating low-impact recreational tourism.

The rivers and streams that flowed from the mountains to the Hudson River served as water power for the many mills located along their courses. Along with the ponds and marshes, they provided habitat for a rich biodiversity of fish, birds and a large variety of animals. As the waters entered the Hudson River, ports were developed to ship goods downriver to New York City. The creeks and streams enter the Hudson River as estuaries of both fresh and salt water with further diversity of fauna and flora. The Hudson River itself was a major natural resource for fish, crabs, and eels, among other aquatic species.

2.2.Cultural History

The Catskills, Mohawk valley and Adirondacks were inhabited by the Haudenosaunee, or Iroquois Indian Nation, when the earliest Europeans arrived in the 17th century.⁸ They hunted and fished in the vast region as well and farmed maize, corn and beans in villages westward along the Mohawk River. South of the mountains in the Hudson Valley were the lands of the Lenape, or Esopus Indians, of the Algonquian nations.⁹ The Lenape farmed the rich bottomlands found throughout Ulster County as their ancestors had done for thousands of years. The fertility of the soils attracted the Dutch who arrived in the Hudson Valley during the mid-17th century. By the late 17th century Dutch and English settlers had established Esopus (present-day Kingston) along the Rondout and New Village (present-day Hurley) along Esopus Creek. The cultural landscape continues to reflect the early settlement by the Dutch through its place names and architecture. Buildings in the Kingston Stockade historic district and individual stone houses in Saugerties and Hurley are landmarks of Dutch. Early English and Palatine settlement. These elements of landscape history are highly valued physical manifestations of community character and form a basis for the region’s heritage tourism economy.

⁷ Quoted from “A Journey through Lower Esopus Creek,” p.2. (highlight added)

⁸ Numerous scholarly publications, e.g., see bibliography in Harvey K. Flad, *The City and the Longhouse: A Social Geography of American Indians in Syracuse, New York*, (Ph.D. Dissertation, Syracuse University Department of Geography, 1973).

⁹ John P. Hart, Hetty Jo Brumbach, Lisa Anderson, and Susan Winchell-Sweeney, “Maize and Pits: Late Prehistoric Occupation of the Hurley Site in the Esopus Creek Valley, Ulster County, New York, *Archaeology of Eastern North America* 45: 133-160.

During the 19th C an industrialized landscape image emerged along the banks of the Esopus with extensive mills and warehouses, with blocks of commercial buildings in the village center.¹⁰ Although the mills and factories are gone, the townscape remains integrated with the waterfront and commercial districts as a classic 19th C small town while 17th and 18th C. churches and residential structures present deeper historical roots of the community.

2.3.Economic History

Early economic growth focused on the use of the region's natural resources, such as the forests, waters, and rocks centered around Esopus Creek and soils in the mountains and valleys. Agricultural production flourished in the deep soils of the lowlands, along with hay fields for livestock such as dairy cows, sheep and draft horses. Early Dutch and English settlers planted apple, fruit and nut orchards, along with mills and small hamlets to create a rural and pastoral landscape in the 17th and 18th centuries. This original cultural landscape image formed the basis for the region's community character as its economic landscape would go through various changes over the next two hundred years.

In the northern Catskills the growth of the tanning industry's use of mature Eastern hemlock trees led to deforestation of the "wilderness" that the Hudson River School artists sought out. The hard and soft woods were also logged for timber, charcoal production (for iron furnaces near Millerton, NY), cooperage mills, (for butter, firkins, tubs, and barrels), and barrel hoops and chair parts from saplings. The resulting mountain landscape in the Esopus Creek watershed held 16 tanneries, 73 sawmills, 38 furniture factories, 27 cooperage mills, 19 charcoal kilns, 45 bluestone quarries or 218 total 19th C. industries.¹¹

Deforestation and the industrialization of the mountains by tanneries, mills, and human waste had a major aesthetic effect on the former perception of the forests and streams. Artists, tourists and fishermen commented on the discoloration of the formerly clear-running streams. For example, one author writing in the mid-19th C about the region's tourism noted that the industry "destroys the beauty of many a fair landscape-discolors the once pure waters-and, what is worse than all, drives the fish from the streams."¹² Indeed the Esopus Creek, already known by the late 19th C for its beauty and fishing, had been "befouled" and discolored; a mountain stream "such as the painters go to Scotland to find ... or rather it was before the forests on its banks were felled and its waters were befouled by the refuse from the tanneries, mills, and villages which, attracted by its bark and lumber, have grown up on its banks."¹³

Waters of the Lower Esopus helped drive the mills in Saugerties. The arrival of the Dutch and English spurred industrial growth. In 1826 Henry Barclay established a paper mill in Saugerties. Other mills and factories manufacturing iron and paper

¹⁰ Michael Sullivan Smith, *A Brief History of Saugerties*, 2016.

¹¹ Adapted from Kudish, 2000, p. 153, table 35.

¹² T. Addison Richards, quoted in Stradling, *Making Mountains*, 2007, p. 34.

¹³ Ernest Ingersoll, quoted in Stradling, 2007, *ibid*.

followed. By the late 19th C. a second and larger industrial landscape formed around the falls. The Sheffield paper mill and blank book factory and bindery, now transformed into an attractive Mill housing community, remains as the only mill building in the town.

Agricultural was the foremost land use in Ulster County and the Esopus watershed throughout the 18th and 19th centuries. The area was the “bread basket” for the American Revolution, while fruits and vegetables were significant. Livestock included both sheep production and dairy farming. Farms included a diversity of land uses such as orchards, dairies, commercial farms, vegetable gardens, and fields for corn and grains. The use of draft horses required hayfields. By the 20th C Ulster County became New York State’s largest producer of fresh market apples and corn, as well as a major grower of a wide variety of other fruits and vegetables. In the 21st C wine, cider and craft beer production has developed into a major economic engine as tourists follow “trails” to the wineries and orchards, where they enjoy local farm products and scenic views.

National economic development during the nineteenth century entered the industrial era. Mining and forestry used local natural resources that began to change the character of the landscape. For example, during the same decades of the early and mid-nineteenth century that saw the rise of the Hudson River School of Art, where painters ventured into the Catskill Mountains for views of wild nature, quarrymen were mining bluestone for growing villages and cities in the Hudson River Valley.

In the 1820s, Saugerties became a leading center of economic development in the early stages of the Industrial Revolution when Henry Barclay dammed Esopus Creek and created the first iron puddling manufactory in America and the first use of the endless wire web paper making process in America. Barclay also established the village, then called Ulster, and was its first president. The Second Industrial Revolution expansion following the Civil War engendered the rise of a vigorous merchant class. Following Barclay, William Sheffield and other entrepreneurs built mills on and around the Cantine Dam. Sheffield’s mill made pulp from wood fiber and manufacture paper, envelopes, a book bindery for blank books and composition books, ring binders and filler paper.

Over the course of the nineteenth century, “symbolically, in both geological and economic sense, bluestone would become the foundation of Saugerties.”¹⁴ Quarries and waste rock, or rubble, left an altered, industrial, landscape, yet one that would contribute the “romantic ruin” concept to the aesthetic landscape of the region.

“Most of the landscape that would have been familiar to its inhabitants when Saugerties was born in 1811 was completely changed ... Hills were removed, ledges were flattened to become pasture and passages were opened between valleys ... By the early twentieth century, hardly a spot between upland Saugerties and the lower fringes of the Catskill Escarpment would be unscarred by an open quarry.”¹⁵

¹⁴ Michael Sullivan Smith, *A Brief History of Saugerties* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2016), p. 47.

¹⁵ Op cit., p. 50.

Bluestone quarrying declined by the end of the century, with its landscape legacy contributing the “romantic ruins” history as documented in the tourist attraction at the Quarryman’s Museum at OPUS 40.

A rural small town landscape remains into the 21st century. The flowing creeks and kills add energy along with ponds and wetlands add to the scenic beauty and romantic interludes as the countryside develops its economy in recreational tourism, including fishing and boating on the Lower Esopus.

2.3.1. Transportation

The organization of a transportation network was crucial to the development of the local and regional economies. As the nation entered the industrial era of the early 19th C, steam powered mills and watercraft, and later railroads, transformed the spatial landscape. Mills no longer had to locate along streams and millponds. Sloops, boats and ships no longer had to rely on wind to fill their sails. Steamboats plied the Hudson River from New York City to Albany, stopping at riverside towns and cities on both eastern and western shores. They carried cargo such as bricks, bluestone and tanned leather from Saugerties, Kingston and Catskill south to New York City and passengers such as businessmen, tourists and artists would return upriver. Many would then find lodging in hotels, inns and boarding houses in these towns as well as into the mountains and in villages along the Rombout and Esopus creeks where they would enjoy the scenery, hike and fish.

Originally, travel was by wagon and carriage, as reflected in some of the roads and place-names. For example, Old Stage Road that follows the Lower Esopus from Glererie north by route 9W to Saugerties recalls local cultural history, while Esopus Creek road in Saugerties identifies the importance of the creek and natural history to the community.

Railroads emerged during the late 19th C that followed the valley roads as well as new routes into the mountains. The Catskill Mountain Railway (1880-1918) originated at the steamboat landing and New York Central West Shore Line station in Catskill, NY. It travelled along the base of the escarpment, then turned west, ending in Tannersville, New York. The Ulster & Delaware Railroad (1866-1932) originated in Kingston, New York. It followed the Esopus Creek valley, then passed over the watershed divide into Delaware County, connecting to Oneonta, New York, in 1900. Both railroads carried tourists to and from the Catskill mountain houses, while the new stations in small towns fostered the growth of inns and boarding houses.

The economic functions and the social perceptions of the region, by the local communities and visitors alike began to change. “In one generation, the railroads ended the relative isolation of the region and ushered in a period of sustained prosperity based on a diverse economy of tourism, agriculture, manufacturing, and natural resources. This

prosperity also generated popular support for restoring and protecting the scenic and ecological values of the Catskills.”¹⁶

2.3.2. Tourism

The 19th century artists of the Hudson River School opened the Catskills to thousands of tourists who stayed at the many hotels and boarding houses that sprang up to accommodate them.¹⁷ The Catskill Mountain House opened in 1824 and was an immediate success, eventually becoming “a monolithic 315-room palace with miles of trails and carriage roads, two lakes, a 3,000 acre park, its own railroad and cable-cars from the Hudson River to its very doorstep ... a famous landmark in the American landscape ... a national treasure.”¹⁸ Mohonk Mountain House, established in 1869, and the Mohonk Preserve continue the regional legacy.¹⁹

On their trips into the Catskill and Shawangunk mountains Hudson River School artists stayed and painted picturesque and sublime scenes at these mountain houses. Thomas Cole painted Catskill Mountain House as well as Lake Mohonk, and Asher B. Durand, Sanford R. Gifford, Worthington Whittredge and William Hart followed to paint views from the Ridge, while Jervis McEntee was a constant visitor at the Mohonk Mountain House.²⁰

In the 20th C. tourists sought not only the romantic pleasures of the picturesque, including the sublime views associated with grand vistas or the intimate and mysterious passageways of dark wilderness footpaths or tumbling streams in gorges and glens. Rather, recreational activity focused on outdoor activities such as boating, fishing, and swimming in lakes and streams, and after the completion of the Ashokan Reservoir the Esopus Creek watershed became a destination and included camping and traveling through the more pastoral and bucolic landscape in the countryside. The culture of tourism was changing and the economic landscape adapted; small family-owned businesses emerged in the form of B&Bs, shops along the Saugerties waterfront rented kayaks and fishing boats and gear, and village bookstores sold guidebooks, maps and local histories.

The economic landscape of the 21st C was of a rural, agricultural and small town cultural landscape as well as of village and town historic districts, museums, art galleries, restaurants and recreational and music venues from Woodstock to Kingston all within the

¹⁶ National Academy of Sciences, *Review of the New York Watershed Protection Program*, p. 44.

¹⁷ *Van Loan's Catskill Mountain Guide* (NY: The Aldine Publishing co., 1879)

¹⁸ Roland Van Zandt, “When Nature Met Art: The Hudson River School,” in *Kaaterskill: From the Catskill Mountain House to the Hudson River School*, Mountain Top Historical Society (Black Dome Press, 1993), pp. 14-15; see also Van Zandt, *The Catskill Mountain House* (Rutgers University Press, 1966) and the extensive bibliography on the “Hudson River School” and “Tourism and the Grand Hotels” in David Stradling, *Making Mountains: New York City and the Catskills* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007)

¹⁹ Harvey K. Flad, “The Parlor in the Wilderness: Domesticating an American Landscape,” *The Geographical Review*, 99, 3, (July 2009), pp. 356-376.

²⁰ Harvey K. Flad, “‘Scenes Most Impressive and Delightful,’ Nineteenth Century Artists in the Shawangunks,” *The Hudson River Valley Review*, vol. 31, no. 1 (Autumn 2014), pp. 95-120.

Esopus Creek watershed. Remaining resource extraction or other industrial activities were vestiges of the past, rejected in favor of a more sustainable future. Tourism has become a main driver of the Ulster County and Esopus watershed economy. The tourism sector grew every year for the last decade. In 2019 direct spending in tourism consisted of 43 percent of the county’s budget with direct spending in 2019 of \$685,000,000 along with multiplier effects.

2.4 Ashokan Reservoir

In 1916 the Ashokan Reservoir divided the Esopus Creek into two sections, the upper and lower Esopus. Nearly 13-mile-long, its 128 billion gallons of water supplies 40 per cent of New York City’s drinking water. The massive dam of cement and bluestone is 1,000 feet long and 190 feet wide at its bases, took nine years to build and employed up to 4,000 workers at a time. Eight villages in the valley were lost as more than 2,000 people were displaced. “Reflecting their deep connection to the land, eighty percent of that population relocated within 25 miles of their former homes.”²¹ The historical memory of the trauma of losing their homes, churches and villages remains as an important element in the region’s sense of place.

Meanwhile, the role of the reservoir as a central landscape feature in the cultural landscape remains problematic. Its natural beauty, use for recreation, and preservation of “both open space and the rural quality of the area,”²² can conflict with its management as a source of fresh clean water for New York City and the resulting effects of those policies on the ecology and aesthetics of Lower Esopus Creek and its economic landscape.

Constructing Community Character

3. Elements of Community Character

Communities can express aspects of their historical and cultural identity with observable features in the landscape. A combination of such elements can provide a framework useful in assessing community character, especially if these assets have been recognized and officially designated for their value to the community. For the Town and Village of Saugerties and all neighboring communities along Esopus Creek the following have been officially recognized:

3.1 Scenic Views and Aesthetic Resources

3.2 Landscape Architecture, Open Space, Parks, Nature Preserves

3.3 Hudson River School Artists

²¹ Lynn Woods, “The Big Divide: The Ashokan Reservoir,” in “A Journey through the Lower Esopus,” p. 26.

²² Bob Steuding, *The Last of the Handmade Dams: The Story of the Ashokan Reservoir*, (Fleischmanns, NY: Purple Mountain Press, 1985), p. 112; Steuding discusses the land acquisition, construction, and social debates.

3.4 Architectural History, Historic Sites, Historic Districts

3.5 Scenic Roads and Transportation Corridors

3.6 Recreational Tourism

3.7 Comprehensive Planning

The analysis below discusses the community character of the Town of Saugerties region in the context of the wider Catskill region with primary focus on Lower Esopus Creek and its surrounding area from the Ashokan Reservoir to the Hudson River with regard to the seven inter-related historic, cultural, and economic components presented above.

3.1 Scenic Views and Aesthetic Resources

The Catskill region as a whole and the landscape in close proximity to and including Lower Esopus Creek has been recognized for over a century for its beauty, natural wonders and cultural historical and aesthetic resources.

Natural features such as forests, streams and creeks, meadows, and waterfalls are equally picturesque. Nineteenth-century artists and tourists with “pencil” and camera sought out such natural wonders throughout New York State, including iconic Niagara Falls, Kaaterskill Falls in the Catskill Mountains, and the wilderness in the Adirondacks.²³ Scenes and views of America’s natural landscape became the source of the new nation’s identity. The forests, peaks and valleys of the Catskill Mountains and streams such as Esopus Creek were painted for their sublime and picturesque scenes. Parks and nature preserves were established to preserve many of the natural features, the Hudson River watershed, and scenic views.

3.1.1 Adirondack and Catskill Forest Preserves

In 1885, the New York State Legislature created the Adirondack and Catskill Forest Preserves. The Catskill Forest Preserve consisted of 33,894 acres in the counties of Ulster, Greene and Sullivan with Delaware added later. A decade later, during the New York State Constitutional Convention, an article was added into the constitution, largely based on the value of forest lands for water protection as “our great natural reservoirs.” As David McClure opined:

“Heretofore the Adirondacks have stood as a symbol of sport, or recreation and pleasure-seeking, but the time will come when every man, woman and child in [New York city], as they quench their thirst with the soft, pure water that has come to them fresh and cool from the lakes and rills of the far-away

²³ Harvey K. Flad, “Following ‘the pleasant paths of Taste’: The Traveler’s Eye and New World Landscapes,” in *Humanizing Landscapes: Geography, Culture and the Magoon Collection*, exhibit catalogue (Poughkeepsie, NY: Vassar College Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, 2000), pp. 69-102.

woods, will recognize the higher use of the great wilderness, and that God for it as His choicest gift to them.”²⁴

In 1892 the state created the Adirondack State Park and enclosed it with a blue line, inside of which the state would manage its lands, and later all lands. Article VII of 1894 became Article XIV in 1938 as the “forever wild clause.”²⁵ The citizens of New York State had preserved the lands and waters of the Catskill and Adirondacks for their ecological and aesthetic as well as utilitarian uses. Over the following decades the conservation ethic focused on both ecological and aesthetic values continued.²⁶

3.1.2 Catskill Park

Twelve years after the state created the Adirondack Park from the Adirondack and Catskill Forest Preserves, Catskill Park, also designated by a blue line, emerged from the Forest Preserve.²⁷ Designated as a State Park for recreational and scenic enjoyment in 1904, later amendments to Article XIV allowed for the construction of reservoirs to supply fresh water to the New York City water supply system. The Ashokan Reservoir was developed in 1906 by damming the Esopus Creek in 1913 and began to deliver water to the city in 1915. Later amendments allowed for the development of recreational centers such as Belleayre Mountain ski Center in 1948 and numerous hiking trails and campgrounds. Public perceptions of the values attached to the Catskills changed over time to include both aesthetic and ecological conservation as well as functional values such as recreation.

Non-governmental conservation organizations arose to encourage better management of the Forest Preserves by the state. The Catskill Center for Conservation and Development has worked to oversee developments in the Catskills since 1969.²⁸

The Congressman Maurice D. Hinchey Catskills Visitor Center, developed by the Catskill Center nonprofit organization and NYS DEC in 1969, was named after Congressman Maurice Hinchey for his untiring efforts in both the NYS Assembly from 1978-1992 and US Congress from 1993-2013 to protect the environment in the Catskills, Hudson River Valley, and throughout the nation. His legacy in the region includes the Hudson River National Heritage Area, Greenway, and Walkway Over the Hudson.

3.1.3 Hudson River American Heritage River

²⁴ W. Steele, “Revised Record of the Constitutional Convention of the State of New York, May 8, 1894 to September 29, 1894,” p. 133.

²⁵ Frank Graham, Jr., *The Adirondack Park: A Political History*. (NY: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1978), pp. 131-2

²⁶ Philip G. Terrie, *Forever Wild: A Cultural History of Wilderness in the Adirondacks*, (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1994).

²⁷ Norman J. Van Valkenburgh and Christopher W. Olney, *The Catskill Park: inside the blue line, the forest preserve & mountain communities of America's first wilderness*, (Hensonville, NY: Black Dome Press, 2004).

²⁸ Barbara McMartin, *Perspectives on the Adirondacks: a thirty-year struggle by people protecting their treasure*, (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2002).; DEC newsletter March 19, 2021.

The Hudson River is a designated American Heritage River. American Heritage Rivers were designated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in the 1990s to protect natural resources and the environment, support economic revitalization, and to preserve historic and cultural resources. The Hudson River was one of the original 14 designated in 1997. The river and the valley constitute a nationally recognized natural and cultural landscape that forms a physical and emotional base for local and regional community character. Lower Esopus Creek lies in the middle of this landscape.

3.1.4 Maurice D. Hinchey Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area

In October 1996 the U.S. Congress passed legislation to enact the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area. Congressman Maurice D. Hinchey, environmentalist and a resident of Saugerties, created the Greenway while a NYS Assemblyman in 1991, wrote the legislation for the NHA. The NHA was officially renamed for Hinchey in March 2019. The Act designated over 4,000,000 acres of the Hudson River Valley for protection and authorized over \$10 million in federal funds over the next ten years to enable both New York State agencies and local municipalities to study its history, culture, nature and aesthetic resources. The comprehensive plans that emerged explored both natural and cultural landscapes, regional and local social and economic histories, and development plans that promoted the area's quality of life through a sense of place. These comprehensive, town and municipal plans became important markers of community character.

3.1.5 Ulster North Scenic Area of Statewide Significance

In 1993 New York State's Department of State (DOS) established the program Hudson River Valley Scenic Areas of Statewide Significance that would "... encompass unique, highly scenic landscapes accessible to the public and recognized for their outstanding quality." The Ulster North SASS encompasses a ten-mile stretch of the Hudson River and its western shorelands from the northern boundary at the Ulster/Greene County line to its southern boundary at Ulster Landing Park. The SASS is located almost entirely within the Town and Village of Saugerties and extends to the eastern shore Estates Historic District in the Towns of Germantown and Clermont, Columbia County and the Town of Red Hook and the Village of Tivoli, Dutchess County. The Ulster County SASS is described by the DOS Office of Planning and Development as: "a highly scenic and valued portion of the Hudson River Valley, rich in natural beauty, cultural and historical features." Further: "The Ulster North SASS is of statewide aesthetic significance by virtue of the combined aesthetic values of landscape character, uniqueness, public accessibility and public recognition."

Within the Ulster North SASS is the Esopus Creek Subunit. It is based around the confluence of the Esopus Creek and the Hudson River and extends upstream from the mouth of the Creek for approximately one mile, east across the Hudson to the Estates District in Dutchess County, and west to include tidal Esopus Creek, and a portion of the Barclay Cove impoundment to, and including, the Route 9W Esopus creek crossing. As a

natural landscape feature it is described by the State as “a dramatic landform of steep creek banks giving way to a delta of extensive tidal flats.” As a cultural landscape, “the subunit exhibits a predominately urbanized land use and is a mix of residential and waterfront commercial development, interspersed with the ruins and vestiges of a rich industrial heritage.” The natural and cultural landscape of the subunit is an aesthetic landscape for the community, where “Boating activity on the Esopus Creek, the diversity and abundance of wildlife and the changing patterns, colors and textures associated with the tidal flats provide ephemeral characteristics which enhance scenic qualities of the Esopus Creek subunit.”

In sum, New York State DOS posits the virtues of the Esopus Creek Subunit of the Ulster North Scenic Area of Statewide Significance as “unique.” “The winding course and steep banks of the Esopus Creek, the human modification of its confluence with the Hudson River, and the resulting point of land protruding into the Hudson River with an historic lighthouse at the end are unique features in the Hudson River.”²⁹ In particular, its scenic quality is highly valued and well recognized as a significant component of the Town and Village of Saugerties’ community character.

3.2 Landscape Architecture

3.2.1 Nature Preserves

A number of natural areas along the banks of the Lower Esopus Creek in Saugerties have been publicly designated as nature preserves. These locally designated eco-scapes show the importance of the preservation of the local and regional natural landscape to the citizens of the Town of Saugerties.

3.2.1.1 Esopus Bend Nature Preserve

The 161-acre Esopus Bend Nature Preserve is elbow-shaped, folded within two right-angle turns on the Lower Esopus Creek large water impoundment behind Cantine Dam in Saugerties. The property lies across the Saugerties public beach and includes a wetlands and Barclay Cove, a popular fishing area. Located so close to the Village and the Town’s largest housing district, the Bend is quite popular and functions as a valued landscape feature for the community.

²⁹ Scenic Areas of Statewide significance, “UN-5 Esopus Creek Subunit,” <https://dos.ny.gov/scenic-areas-statewide-significance-sass>



Esopus Bend, Lower Esopus Creek – credit Mike Nelson

The area has a rich history of human use from Native Americans from fishing to growing bountiful fields of maize to 19th and 20th C. vineyards and fruit trees and farms such as the Schoeder farm’s tomato, corn and wheat fields. Agriculture is over and nature has taken back the fields, forests and wetlands and the farm lanes form the trails in the preserve.

The property was saved from a proposed development in 1990 when the DEC designated 12 acres abutting and including Barclay Cove as a New York State wetlands. The preservation of the preserve’s wetlands by the state are a legacy of the former State Assemblyman and U. S. Congressman Maurice D. Hinchey, author of the Hudson River Valley Heritage Act.

Twelve years later, the entire property was preserved through the efforts of local citizens, businessmen and the town, so that in 2004 The Catskill Center for Conservation and Development donated an easement to the Esopus Creek Conservancy, a local nonprofit founded in 2003, to manage the property under the oversight of The Catskill Center. The Conservancy works with the Saugerties Central School district to offer nature education for children in the district.

The Esopus Bend Mission Statement is “to conserve significant natural landscapes in the Lower Esopus Creek watershed and in the Saugerties area, by protecting the rural character of the environment; by conserving and protecting natural habitats; by promoting biodiversity; and by sharing an appreciation of our natural resources with the community through public outreach, education and advocacy.” The Preserve embodies the community’s sense of place.

3.2.1.2 Ruth Reynolds Glunt Nature Conservancy

The Ruth Reynolds Glunt Nature Preserve is a 15-acre natural area with a trail from Lighthouse Drive to the Saugerties Lighthouse, the only overland access to the historic Lighthouse. Located at the mouth of Esopus Creek as it enters the Hudson River, it has physical access to the creek, and both the trail and visual access to the lighthouse. The Conservancy was named for Ruth Reynolds Glunt in honor of her efforts in saving the lighthouse and serving on Governor Nelson Rockefeller's Hudson River Commission in the 1960's.

3.2.1.3 Falling Waters Preserve

Falling Waters Preserve in Glasco, Town of Saugerties, is a 194-acre nature preserve with riverfront access on the Hudson River, picturesque waterfalls and rock ledges, and a mix of natural vegetation, including wetlands and hardwood forest. The preserve was created in June 2010 by a unique partnership between the Dominican Sisters, Sparkill, Esopus Creek Conservancy and Scenic Hudson on the site of the former Mulford Ice House and is managed by Scenic Hudson. Ice harvesting was a major employer of seasonal labor in the Hudson River villages of Ulster, Greene and Albany counties.³⁰

3.2.2 DEC Management Areas

3.2.2.1 Turkey Point DEC Management Area

DEC Management areas are particularly noteworthy environments recognized by NYSDEC for multiple uses usually associated with hunting as well as for environmental and recreational reasons. Turkey Point was expropriated by the U.S. Coast Guard in the early 1990s and taken by DEC for its presence on the Hudson River and history as a river access port for early industry as well as a storage area for Coast Guard buoys not in use on the river. Hudson River canoe and kayak travelers often use the riverfront part of the Management Area as a campsite.

The park is located immediately north of and connected to a trail to Ulster County's Sojourner Truth Park. The site is also accessed by a trail from an access road off Route 32 south of Glasco and is accessible year-round, although cautions are provided during small game hunting seasons.

Turkey Point is a prominent outcrop on the Hudson River north of the Kingston-Rhinecliff Bridge. It is the only location where Henry Hudson likely tarried in Saugerties while enroute south after sailing to the vicinity of Albany in 1609. He was visited on ship and given gifts of food and hides by the Esopus Indian chief, who invited

³⁰ <http://www.destination-saugerties.org/outdoor-activities/falling-waters-preserve>; see also: Wendy E. Harris and Arnold Pickman, "The Rise and Demise of the Hudson River Ice Harvesting Industry," *Environmental History of the Hudson River*, ed. Robert E. Henshaw (Albany: SUNY Press, 2011), pp. 201-18.

Hudson to shore to dine with him; the explorer decline, however, and after a good day fishing by his crew departed south the next day.

3.2.2.2 The Great Vly DEC Management Area

The Great Vly is a large swamp of several hundred acres partly in Saugerties and partly in Catskill adjoining the limestone quarry area for the Smith's Landing (formerly Cementon) cement industry. The Vly is a major spring and fall migratory bird stopping area, often populated with thousands of birds as the seasonal migrations take place. The Vly is accessible by kayak in season, with large populations of dragonflies, home to beavers, and a carp and bass fishing area on the winter ice.

The Great Vly is perhaps the most bounteous area in Saugerties, its admixture of wetland growth and open waters proving a rich experience for visitors. The parking area accesses a small ridge where special views of the Vly and array of birds and animals in season are viewed. Wetlands of the Vly adjoin the West Camp road from which access to the Management Area is provided. The Sawyerkill includes a vast wetlands area stretching south almost to the Village itself.

The Sawyerkill watershed is wholly within Saugerties, and rises in the Vly at a location the Dutch called the "steene hart fontayne," a rock formation in the appearance of a heart that can still be seen today. The Sawyerkill is a small watershed that drains the northeast area of the town and enters the Hudson River through Valley Farm (the home of HITS) and after crossing the Route 9W at Seamon Park at the northern boundary of the Village. The stream's dramatic (at the time) outfall via a waterfalls to the Hudson River was a noteworthy river site in the 17th C. and became related to the earliest European history of the area when a sawmill operator known colloquially as "the little Sawyer" harvested ship timbers for Rensselaerwijck, the patroonship at Albany, formerly Fort Orange, in the 1650s.³¹

A large folk history grew around the Little Sawyer history as a result of the writings of Pauline Hommel, a Saugerties folklorist celebrated in the statewide folk community in the 1950s. The community's character was partly written by this history and still retains a significant niche as part of the Dutch character that defines early Saugerties.

3.2.3 Open Spaces and Parks

Designated open spaces and public parks are important designed landscapes for public benefit. Physical and visual access to Esopus Creek is provided for and enhanced by formal and informal, or social, open spaces and natural sites.

Parks and open space areas that have both visual and physical public access to Lower Esopus creek include: Esopus Bend Nature Preserve; village of Saugerties Beach

³¹ Vernon Benjamin, *The History of the Hudson Valley: From Wilderness to the Civil War* (NY: The Overlook Press, 2014).

and Esopus Creek Fishing Access; Tina Chorvas Waterfront Park and the Ruth Reynolds Glunt Nature Preserve whose trail has been described as “like falling down the rabbit hole in any season of the year,” an enchanting passageway that leads abruptly to the Lighthouse standing alone in what appears to be the middle of the Hudson River. Local roads such as Lighthouse Drive and Route 9W at Barclay Heights offer exceptional views.

3.2.3.1 Tina Chorvas Waterfront Park

Tina Chorvas Waterfront Park is located along the tidal Lower Esopus adjacent to the Mill, an affordable income housing project in the former historical Book Bindery building. Chorvas Park is named for a popular village mayor from the 1970s-80s. It serves as the setting for productions of the Arm-of-the-Sea Theater, which is currently creating a performance center on former industrial property along the creek next to the park. Planning is currently underway by the Village of Saugerties to extend the park’s open grassy area.

3.2.3.2 Seamon Park

The gift of Henrietta Seamon in the 1920s, Seamon Park is a small, idyllic and beautiful park along Malden Avenue (Route 9W) on the eastern side of the village. Maintained by the Village Public Works Department and occupied by a custodian year-round, Seamon Park is home to the fall Mum festival when the grounds are decorated with hundreds of chrysanthemum plants for a festival, art events, and the crowning of the Mum Queen.

The setting includes a children’s playground with a formal campfire setting created by the Girl Scouts in the 1920s and adorned with a brass plaque with the words: “We live only to discover beauty/All else is a form of waiting.” The crest of the Seamon Park Hill holds a commanding view of the Catskill Mountains to the west, and includes a Greek-style performance area in which annual performances by the Catskill Glee Club highlighted the Mum Festival event. The beautiful setting of the mum plantings in the rolling terrain that includes uniquely attractive trees was featured every year on the front page of the *New York Daily News* Sunday section during the festival which is a boost to local tourism.

3.2.3.3 Local public access sites

The Village of Saugerties includes a public beach used by local citizens for swimming and for kayak and small boat access to the “upper creek.” There is also a private boat dock adjoining the Saugerties Power Boat Association often used by locals to launch their river craft. The Village manages the Lower Esopus Creek Fishing Access and boat launch at the beach.

3.2.3.4 The Ashokan Center (formerly Ashokan Field Campus)

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places as the Ashokan Field Campus Historic district, The Ashokan Center is an outdoor education, conference, and retreat center in Olivebridge, NY, with access to Esopus Creek. It is listed as the “oldest outdoor environmental education center in New York State, built on property first developed for farming in the 18th century.” The State University of New York at New Paltz managed the campus from 1967-2008. In 2008 the Open Space Institute purchased the property and turned it over to the DEP to be managed by the non-profit Ashokan Foundation. The property’s natural landscape serves numerous educational institutions as “classes” of forests, waterfalls, stream-fed ponds, and open meadows, while the cultural landscape offers musical classes and performances. The Lower Esopus Creek Release Channel begins at the confluence of the Ashokan Center with the DEP Ashokan property.

3.3 Hudson River School Artists

In the nineteenth century, writers and artists forged America’s national identity. They sought to uncover the new nation’s character through depictions of the natural and emerging cultural landscape. “Their mission, as they saw it, was to create an ‘American’ landscape vision and literary voice based on the exploration of Nature, the natural world defined as a resource for spiritual renewal and an expression of cultural and national identity.”³²

A number of the artists of the Hudson River School have painted landscapes that have become important images that local communities have incorporated into their sense of place. Paintings of scenic beauty in the Esopus Creek watershed have special meaning in the perception of Saugerties’ community character.

3.3.1 Thomas Cole (1801-1848)

From the 1820’s through the 1890s, visual artists known collectively as the Hudson River School painted the sublime wilderness of forests, mountains, lakes and waterfalls of the Adirondacks and Catskills as well as the cultivated valleys and picturesque streams of domesticated farms and villages. Considered the founder of the “school,” Thomas Cole’s paintings included both sublime natural features, such as the iconic “Falls of the Kaaterskill” (1826) and “The Clove” (ca. 1827), as well as more picturesque views on its lower meandering reaches as in “Sunset, View on the Catskill” (1833) and “View on the Catskill – Early Autumn” (1837).³³ Cole’s sojourns into the Catskills included stays at a rustic West Saugerties boarding house while on fishing excursions into the mountains.

In his essay “American Scenery” (1825) Cole noted the importance of water in the scenic view. In an 1835 *Essay on American Scenery* Cole set forth components he

³² Linda S. Ferber, “‘The Geography of the Ideal’: The Hudson River and the Hudson River School,” *The Hudson River Valley Review*, vol. 31, no. 1, (Autumn 2014), p. 3.

³³ H. Daniel Peck, *Thomas Cole’s Refrain: The Paintings of Catskill Creek*, (Ithaca, NY: Three Hills, Cornell University Press, 2019).

considered essential to the painting of landscapes. Mountains, as the “most conspicuous objects” took precedence. Water was listed next, “without which every landscape is defective ... Like the eye in the human countenance, it is a most expressive feature ...” The third element was the waterfall, “...the voice of the landscape, for [it] strikes its own chords, and rocks and mountains re-echo in rich unison.” The forest was fourth for its great variety, while the sky, “the soul of all scenery,” completed his list. These five elements would become the natural landscape features painted by artists in his wake.³⁴

“Sunny Morning on the Hudson”, 1827, offers a view from the wilderness with its forest in mist, towards the Hudson River, a view in which mountain, forest, water and sky all intersect. In “View from Mount Holyoke, Northampton, Massachusetts after a Thunderstorm (The Oxbow),” Cole depicts both the cultivated, domesticated landscape of farmlands and villages towards the east, as well as the wild forests to the west, both separated by the curving oxbow of the majestic Connecticut River in the center. For Cole, water, as the “expressive feature,” humanizes the cultural landscape.

Cole’s house and studio in Catskill, New York, known as Cedar Grove, overlooks the Hudson to the east while to the west the house’s porch frames a full view of the Catskill Mountains. He and his wife lived on the property from 1832 to his death in 1848. Their son, Thomas Cole, Jr., would continue an interest in the arts as the rector of Trinity Church Saugerties, in the Barclay Heights neighborhood overlooking the dam, impoundment of Barclay’s Pond and view of the Catskills. During his 40-year tenure, a window by William Morris was installed in the church in Saugerties, in an Arts & Crafts design that followed the natural aesthetic of the Hudson River School into the latter part of the nineteenth century.

3.3.2 Frederic Edwin Church (1826-1900)

Frederic E. Church was Cole’s only pupil and became the most honored artist of the Hudson River School by virtue of major compositions such as “Niagara” (1857), often considered the most compelling image of the iconic American natural landmark. In it Cole’s “voice of the landscape” declares the power of the new nation. Church often sketched the Catskills from his studio at his home “Olana,” built by him on a hill on the east bank of the Hudson overlooking Cole’s house in Catskill. In these 1860-70 sketches and oils, such as “Landscape with Sunset” and “Sunset across the Hudson Valley” the sky and its many colors and dynamics, as in “Clouds over Olana,” (1872) dominate the canvas. Church’s views from Olana have been of particular significance in understanding the role that Hudson River School artists have played in creating an aesthetic language to describe the regional communities perception of their sense of place.

In 1979 Church’s painting “Winter Scene” (ca. 1870) the view looking southwest towards Cementon was instrumental in defeating the Greene County Nuclear Power Plant proposal. The decision by the NRC and PASNY to deny the plant led to the creation of

³⁴ Thomas Cole, “Essay on American Scenery,” a lecture given in 1835 and published in *The American Monthly Magazine*, n.s. 1 (January, 1836); excerpts from John K. Howat, *The Hudson and its Painters*, (NY:Viking Press, 1972), p. 177.

Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) in SEQRA. Viewscapes from both Olana and the Thomas Cole House in Catskill were similarly fundamental in the DEC Commissioner’s denial of the St. Lawrence Cement Plant proposal to construct a massive cement plant in Hudson, NY that would have changed its public parkland into an industrialized space against the aesthetic of Hudson’s community character.³⁵

Designing a landscape was as important to Church as painting the scene. At Olana, Church created miles of carriage roads with specific openings in the vegetation to offer viewscapes of the Hudson River, Catskills, or local farm fields. His design for the Olana landscape followed the work of Andrew Jackson Downing, Calvert Vaux and Frederick Law Olmsted in their mid-19th C. plans for country estates and urban parks. Native and exotic trees were planted singly and in copses to add variety to views of sweeping lawns and ponds and other water elements.

This year, 2021, one of the hemlock trees that he planted 140 years ago died. Contemporary artist Jean Shin has “transformed the once-majestic conifer into a site-specific sculpture.”³⁶ The “fallen” tree is covered with leather that historically refers to the tanning industry that decimated the hemlock forests of the Catskills. It is an artist’s statement that continues Church’s landscape aesthetic into the 21st C.

Frederic Church and Thomas Cole promoted American nationalism through their majestic paintings of the sublime: the wilderness of majestic mountains and deep forests, cascading waterfalls, brilliantly hued sunsets and expansive rivers and mighty icebergs. Many other Hudson River School painters sought out the picturesque in intimate streams and creeks, pleasant valleys, pastoral fields and farmsteads, and human-scale villages and townscapes. Like Cole and Church, these artists also exhibited their work at the National Academy of Design. Scenic views of Esopus Creek and the local domesticated landscape by Hudson River School artists are important visual historic landmarks of the region’s sense of place.

3.3.3 Asher Brown Durand (1796-1886)

Asher B. Durand took up the mantle as the leader of the Hudson River School after Cole’s death in 1848 as the editor of the art journal *The Crayon*. In homage to both Cole and the poet William Cullen Bryant, Durand painted “Kindred Spirits” in 1849. It depicts Cole and Bryant standing on a prospect overlooking a mythical Kaaterskill Falls with a paintbrush and palette in Cole’s hands as if he were re-painting his iconic image of the gorge and falls, and Bryant as the romantic literary presence whose poetry captured the “songs” of the stream as Cole argued in his “Essay on American Scenery,” and as

³⁵ Ghilain, *op.cit.*; Harvey K. Flad, “The Influence of the Hudson River School of Art in the Preservation of the River, its Natural and Cultural Landscape, and the Evolution of Environmental Law,” *Environmental History of the Hudson River*, edited by Robert E. Henshaw, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2011), pp. 291-312.

³⁶ Meredith Mendelsohn, “Tree lives again as Art,” *The New York Times* (May 4, 2021), p.p. C1-2.

Durand would recommend as editor of *The Crayon* and paint in “Where the Streamlet Sings in Rural Joy,” (1864).³⁷

Durand and the many artists that followed Cole returned often to the Catskills, both to the mountains to paint the grandeur of the primeval forests, craggy cliffs, and tumbling creeks, but also to the romanticism and beauty of the foothills and valleys and their meandering streams, ponds, meadows and the bucolic well-husbanded cultivated fields, rustic dirt roads and quiet villages. Views of Esopus Creek and its course from Slide Mountain to the Hudson River met many of the scenic qualities that were sought by these artists.

In Durand’s “Landscape Composition (View near Saugerties)”, ca. 1838, Linda Ferber, art historian and biographer of Durand, describes the scene as a “distant panorama of the Catskills enlivened by rustic figures . . . on a country road in the foreground, a homestead in the middle distance, and a vista of gently receding open and wooded valley, all beneath the convincing canopy of a placid sky.” A small pond reflects the sky and trees on its banks. In this pastoral landscape painting Ferber notes that “the elements of Durand’s benchmark vocabulary for the domesticated landscape are already in place.”³⁸ Durand returned to Ulster County over the course of the next decades, along with a number of his fellow New York City artists such as John F. Kensett and Worthington Whittredge.³⁹

Durand’s “View of Esopus Creek, Ulster County, New York,” (1850) pictures a bucolic scene of a day on the banks of the Esopus with five cows calmly grazing next to a small pond with an expansive Esopus flowing beyond and the Catskill mountains in the background. A sunny sky with a large cloud overlooks the lazy summer day. Durand exhibited the painting to critical acclaim at the National Academy of Design 25th Annual Exhibition in 1850 and the American Art Union in New York the same year.⁴⁰

Durand’s studies and paintings of the Esopus and Catskill creeks evoked a pastoral landscape where both nature and man were in harmony even as the area began to see the beginnings of the industrial and urban economy. Durand and landscape gardener Andrew Jackson Downing were friends as both designed cultural landscapes in the Hudson Valley that offered aspects of domestication and husbandry. Durand’s painting from the east bank of the Hudson River near Rhinecliff in Dutchess County, in the Estates National Historic District, titled “Hudson River Looking Toward the Catskills,” (1847) is a tranquil scene with cows standing in shallow water, sheep on the bank and men and women about to go boating. The view west is of the west bank area near where Esopus Creek enters the Hudson while in the background are the majestic Catskill Mountains.

³⁷ Karen Lucic, “On the Nature of Place: Elias Lyman Magoon’s Transnational Geography,” in *Humanizing Landscapes: Geography, Culture and the Magoon Collection*, (Poughkeepsie, NY: Vassar College Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, 2000), pp. 34-6.

³⁸ Linda S. Ferber, *Kindred Spirits: Asher B. Durand and the American Landscape*, (NY: Brooklyn Museum, 2007), p. 136.

³⁹ Harvey K. Flad, “‘Scenes Most Impressive and Delightful’: Nineteenth Century Artists in the Shawangunks,” *The Hudson River Valley Review*, vol. 31, no. 1 (Autumn, 214), pp. 103-4.

⁴⁰ *The Albion*, vol. IX, no. 17, (April 27, 1850), p. 201.

“Landscape Composition: In the Catskills,” (1848) views the creek meandering through the mid-ground with a horse and rider and hunter and dog in the foreground, a perspective from the wilderness towards the domesticated fields in the distance, with the misty mountains far off. Painted the year of Cole’s death and Durand’s rise, it signals a landscape aesthetic combining both natural and cultural landscape scenic views as it follows upon Durand’s *plein air* realistic “Study: Trees by the Brookside, Kingston, New York,” ca. 1846. The brook is the Esopus Creek, framed by the majestic birch trees in the foreground, with the diminutive creek in the distance. In “Shandaken, Ulster County, New York,” (1854) a study of gnarled trees in a field leads to the mountains in the background.



Asher B. Durand, “View of the Shandaken Mountains,” 1853

Three other works from Ulster County indicate Durand’s continued visits to locations where mountains and sky dominate the wetlands, trees and water. In “View of the Shandaken Mountains,” (1853) the shining waters of Esopus Creek in the foreground act as a mirror to the brooding blue and purple mountains and stormy clouds that fill the background. The pair of paintings “June Shower,” (1854) and “Clearing Up,” (1854) the sky, clouds and dark mountains continue to dominate over the creek flowing in the mid-ground, but the energy of the storm and its aftermath are somewhat lowered by the human figures in each of the foregrounds, one in “June Shower” shows a farmer with his wagon, while the other in “Clearing Up,” shows a fisherman in the creek. In all three the drama is in the mountains and sky, but the central character is the water in the creek.

During one of Durand's trips up the Hudson from New York City to Ulster County and the Esopus Creek watershed, in the 1840s, he traveled through Dutchess County on the eastern shore. One of his paintings is "Hudson River Looking Towards the Catskills" (1847), painted from northern village of Rhinecliff. In eastern Dutchess County he visited the historic Stone Church, a natural rock cavern in the shape of a gothic arch, and scenic vistas in Dover Plains. His painting "Dover Plains, Dutchess County, New York" (1848) is a bucolic view of farms, fields and views of the Fishkill Hills in the distance; in the foreground is a rocky prospect from which three visitors view the pastoral scene of cows in the fields in the middle ground and the distant hills. Art historian Linda Ferber presents a detail of the prospect with the three viewers in her major catalog on Durand to illustrate the importance of the human presence in viewing the scene. It is a scene of beauty, of a cultural landscape of human stewardship of nature.

In 2010, the Town of Dover Plains Conservation Advisory Council used the Durand painting as a model for its statement on the town's sense of place.⁴¹ Durand's paintings of the environs of Esopus Creek are similarly visual images of the region's perception of its character, while Townsend's painting of the creek and village from the prospect view of Barclay Heights similarly illustrates the importance of the beauty of the scene to Saugerties' sense of place.

3.3.4 Jasper F. Cropsey (1823-1900)

Jasper F. Cropsey was one of the artists associated with the Hudson River School and painted scenes on the Hudson River as well as in the Valley and the Catskills. In "Upper Hudson" (1871) the sky has a luminous glow shining down on the river with a half dozen cows in the foreground and a view towards "the western side opposite Hyde Park, near the village of Esopus, where the Hudson River's 'Long Reach' comes to an abrupt end...[forming] the Crom Elbow...The western shore for a long distance is lined with apple orchards and vineyards, while the eastern bank for over thirty miles is a succession of villas interspersed with hamlets."⁴² Meanwhile, in "View of the Catskills across Hudson," (1877) Cropsey looks north from the eastern shore with the river in full view with cows in the foreground, sloops on the river at the river's wide bend and the Catskills in a blue mist far off in the background.

In Cropsey's "Gray Day on the Esopus", 1882 the sky takes precedence as a grey eminence over two-thirds of the painting. Esopus Creek runs along the forward edge while the painting centers on a copse of trees in autumnal shades in the center. Light and shadow on the surface of the creek mirror the grey sky above. Water and sky are two of Cole's valued landscape elements from the "Essay on American Scenery."

3.3.5 William Hart (1823-1894)

⁴¹ Harvey K. Flad, "The Natural Resources of Dutchess County in the Past, Present and Future," keynote address for the Conference on the Natural Resource Inventory of Dutchess County (Poughkeepsie, NY: Vassar College, November 6, 2010).

⁴² Howlett (1972), quoting Joel Cook, *America Picturesques & Descriptive, 1842-1910*, (NY: Appleton, 1910)

The brothers William and James Hart became well known for their paintings of bucolic scenes, often with cows standing quietly by ponds and slowly flowing streams. William's painting "On the Esopus, Meadow Groves", c. 1857-8 was displayed at the National Academy of Design in 1858 and as art historian Linda Ferber notes: "Hart's view along one of the long wandering streams that drain the Catskills portrays a bucolic interlude on its course. A limpid, still pond mirrors the sky and a dark copse of trees is visible along the banks where two children mind the watering cattle. *Meadow Groves*, as the painting was then known, drew admiration at the Academy for its luminosity. '[T]his picture,' wrote a critic for the art journal *The Crayon*, 'glows with light. The water, with the cattle standing in the margin of the stream - its clear, unruffled surface reflecting its bank and the clouds overhead - is beautifully rendered.'"⁴³



William Hart, "On the Esopus, Meadow Groves," ca. 1857-58

Hart painted Esopus Creek throughout his career. In the 1860s he painted "A View of the Esopus Creek in Autumn" and "A View of the Esopus Creek in Spring." Both are pastoral settings that center on the broad water of the creek with cows and a wetland in the foreground, all under an encompassing sky. As in "On the Esopus, Meadow Groves," the painting "New Esopus Creek, Catskills," c. 1870 centers on a broad section of the creek; the water is quiet and reflects the summer sunlight. The foreground of wild grasses and flowers leads to a copse of trees and the creek's bank on the left of the painting, while a view of fields and a rounded Catskill mountain are in the background under a luminous sky. There are no cattle or human figures depicted; rather the viewer's gaze remains on the beauty of the water and its reflection of the sky.

⁴³ Quoted in Linda S. Ferber, *The Hudson river School: Nature and the American Vision*, (NY: The New-York Historical Society, 2009), pp. 76-78.



William Hart, "Esopus Creek, Catskills," c. 1870

3.3.6 Charles Townsend (early 19th C)

Charles Townsend's view of Esopus Creek (ca. 1851) centers on the large impoundment at the Cantine Dam. In the foreground two well-dressed figures, a man and a woman, stand on a wooden platform, perhaps a dock, and look out across the expanse of water towards Saugerties. The picturesque village is seen towards the right of the painting with individual buildings drawn as well as a covered bridge. A skiff or boat is set in the middle of the ponded stream with two figures, possibly languidly fishing. A point of land assuming the shape of an island (now Esopus Bend Nature Preserve) helps to form the big bend of the creek to help give substance to the ponded water. Meanwhile, the land beyond the water contains cultivated fields and rows of trees, perhaps apple orchards. The majestic Catskills rise in the background, their grey shadows and massive rounded bulk giving comfort to the picturesque scene below. The sunlight of the cloudless sky is reflected as if in a mirror in the clear blue water. The composition of the painting follows the conventions of the 19th C Hudson River School as outlined by both Thomas Cole in his "Essay on American Scenery" and Asher Durand in his "Letters on Landscape". The view from Barclay Heights contains two trees that frame the painting on either side, with a formal prospect at water level for the scenic view. The major elements of water, mountains dominate the scene while yet producing it in a picturesque style of a domesticated cultural landscape. Along with other artists of the 1850s-1860s, Townsend exhibited his paintings at the National Academy, of which this was one.



Charles Townsend, "Saugerties, New York on the Esopus," ca. 1851

The painting hangs in the Village Hall and functions as the Town's talisman. It was given to the town by descendants of Townsend in 1926 and restored in the early 2000s. Residents perceive this landscape image as representing their self-identity. It is an image of a cultural landscape that encompasses Nature, Art and their history. The view from the prospect is of a bucolic, peaceful scene. The landscape meaning of a clear Esopus Creek reflects their sense of place.

3.3.7 19th and 20th C Views of Esopus Creek

Esopus Creek became a favorite location for scenic views of the natural and cultural landscape, from the Hudson River School painters to lesser-known artists. These artistic images of water, sky and picturesque landscape have helped construct and maintain the regional community's sense of place.

Alfred Thompson Bircher (1837-1908), "Early Autumn on Esopus Creek", Chronolithograph, ca. 1861-1897 offers a picturesque image of the Lower Esopus and the Town of Saugerties with the covered bridge in near background and village in the far background. Bircher had a successful career in both oils and watercolors and was a member of the National Academy of Design. His seascapes of the New England and Long Island coastlines were especially prized, while his landscapes espousing the aesthetic of the Hudson River School, such as his sketches and paintings in the Hudson

Valley and Catskill after his trips in the 1860s, such as of Esopus Creek were often printed for greater distribution by new printing technologies such as the chromolithograph.

3.3.8 Saugerties' Aesthetic Landscape 19th and 20th C

Interest in the art of the Hudson River School faded towards the end of the nineteenth century. In England, the Arts and Crafts Movement, led by William Morris, combined the art style promoted by Ruskin with the romantic landscape style and neo-gothic architecture of the earlier mid-century. In 1837 a fire destroyed much of Trinity Church on the ridge in Ury, as Barclay Heights was known at the time. During the restoration, a window, designed in the William Morris studios in London was installed; it was the first original William Morris piece in North America. In a link to the importance of the Hudson River School artists' renderings of the Esopus Creek and landscape, a window was installed during the tenure of Thomas Cole's son. "In the ending decades of the nineteenth century, it was Saugerties' relationship to Trinity Church's masterwork and the majestic views from Ury's tradition-encrusted estates that created the aura of attractiveness that would have the whole town known as a resort for decades into the twentieth century."⁴⁴

Along with the Townsend painting, the William Morris window helped to define an aesthetic that would reach from the 19th to the 21st century. A regional aesthetic became embedded in the landscape with the establishment of the Byrdcliffe Arts Colony just outside Woodstock, off the Saugerties-Woodstock turnpike surrounded by the Catskill mountains in 1902. The artists at Byrdcliffe have continued the natural aesthetic of the Arts & Crafts Movement into the 21st century. It is a National Historic District.

Murals on city, town and village buildings and walls present public views of the community. The images reflect contemporary perceptions of what the community values. In the mural "Let Saugerties Grow Gracefully" by Kurt and Kate Boyer and Tor Godmundson, the Winston Farm Alliance depicts the Lower Esopus with the historic Lighthouse, Hudson River and Chorvas Park in the foreground, the creek and village in the mid-ground and the rural countryside and Catskills in the background. From the 19th to the 21st centuries, the scenic beauty of the Saugerties landscape remains central to its sense of place.

⁴⁴ Smith, *A Brief History of Saugerties*, p. 84



Winston Farm Alliance Mural: "Let Saugerties Grow Gracefully" – credit Mike Saporito

3.4 Architectural History: Historic Sites and Districts

During the heyday of tourist explorations of the picturesque landscape promoted by the Hudson River School of artists in the Hudson River Valley, hotels and mountain

houses were established that brought visitors to the natural and cultural landscapes of the forested Catskills and the pastoral valley of the Esopus.⁴⁵ They followed Thomas Cole to the Catskill Mountain House and its sublime view of the wilderness and of the Hudson River in the far distance, or to the more intimate surroundings of forest, cliffs and lake at the Mohonk Mountain House in the Shawangunks.⁴⁶ Meanwhile, others enjoyed the pastoral and picturesque scenes in the valleys where small hotels and boarding houses were available. These 19th C and early 20th C tourists, painters, photographers, and fishermen began what would become the foundation for heritage tourism in the 21st century.⁴⁷

3.4.1 Hudson River Heritage Historic District

The Hudson River Heritage Historic District is the largest such district on the mainland of the contiguous United States. It consists of an area of 22,205 acres extending inland roughly a mile from the east bank of the Hudson River between Staatsburg and Germantown in Dutchess and Columbia counties in the State of NY. In 1990 the lands were designated as a National Historic Landmark District (NHLD). Views from the Saugerties Lighthouse of the eastern bank of the Hudson River and the estates historic cultural landscape, and views from the Hudson River Historic District west of the Saugerties Lighthouse and the Town of Saugerties, mouth of Esopus Creek and the Ruth Reynolds Glunt Nature Preserve all combine to recognize the scenic beauty of the Esopus-Hudson interface. Views from both the east and west of the Hudson River and its shoreland landscapes are depressed by any muddy outflow of the creek into the river.

3.4.2 Village Historic Districts

Sites of historic significance reflect the community character of local and regional communities. In the Lower Esopus Creek area, the following Historic Districts are listed on the National Register of Historic Places: (1) Hurley Historic District, (2) Kingston Stockade Historic District, and (3) Saugerties National Historic Business District; also (4) locally designated Barclay Canal Historic District.

All physical elements of the Ashokan Field Camp, Hurley and Kingston historic districts, the Saugerties village streetscape, and the Saugerties Lighthouse, Trinity Episcopal Church and the Barclay Heights neighborhood create visual coherence to the cultural-historical landscape.⁴⁸ They help to define the village's community character and are place markers of memory for all inhabitants of and visitors to the region.

⁴⁵ David Stradling, *Making Mountains: New York and the Catskills*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007); **add Evers**

⁴⁶ For a review of mountain house resorts in the Hudson Valley, see Harvey K. Flad, "The Parlor in the Wilderness: Domesticating America's First Iconic Landscape," *Geographical Review*, vol. 99, no. 3 (2009). Pp. 356-376; and Harvey K. Flad, "Scenes 'most impressive and delightful': Nineteenth-century Artists in the Shawangunks," *The Hudson River Valley Review*, vol. 31, no. 1 (2014), pp. 95-120.

⁴⁷ Kingston Chamber of Commerce and Ulster County Historical Society

⁴⁸ For landmarks in the Kingston Stockade area see GUIDEBOOK; for using place markers as visible signs of community character, see also John R. Stilgoe, *Common Landscape in America, 1580-1845* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982).

3.4.2.1 Barclay Canal Historic District

The Barclay Canal Historic District includes Trinity Church and Barclay Heights properties on the west bank of the Esopus where the raceway cut into the rock in 1826 behind Cantine Dam directed water from the Cantine impoundment, also known as Barclay Pond, to the mills that were below the dam along the tidal Esopus, the main one being the Diamond Mills Paper Company. The Cantine Dam, Mill and Chorvas Park on the east bank are also included in the historic district.

3.4.3 Saugerties Historic Sites

The Town and Village of Saugerties grew during the early years of the Industrial Revolution in America. The community's historic character is defined in part by the 84 buildings that comprise its National and State Register-listed Historic District, a 19th C mercantile architecture that arose in response to the waterfront growth of mills and factories. The National Historic business district is five blocks from the Saugerties public beach. The Diamond Mills Hotel and Tavern, Krause's Candy, and Esopus Bend Nature Preserve are in the same vicinity, key elements to the tourism growth that now characterizes the community's welfare. The Saugerties Lighthouse is one mile from the business district.

The Town and Village of Saugerties contain a number of sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places:⁴⁹ Former Sheffield Mill; Warehouse 1; Warehouse 2; Saugerties Lighthouse, 1867-1869; Du Bois-Kierstede House, ca. 1727; Reformed Church, 1892; First Congregational Church, 1853-1855; Trinity Episcopal Church, 1831-1832; and Wynkoop House (Schoentag's Colonial Tavern), c. 1740 and 1790. The Town of Saugerties Historic Preservation Commission's survey of the town includes the largest number of old stone houses of any town in New York State.

3.4.3.1 Du Bois-Kiersted House

The property was initially the home of Dr. Christopher Kiersted, the first physician in town and noted for rendering service during the Revolutionary War. Aaron Burr and Benedict Arnold were likely visitors to Kiersted House, and Robert Livingston a regular friend from across the river at Clermont. The property is noteworthy for its early Dutch architecture (ca. 1727) and its beautiful park-like setting of 270-year-old black locust trees. It was placed on the National Register in 1998 and is currently the home of the Saugerties Historical Society.

3.4.3.2 Reformed Church

Built in 1892 by James Architect, Jr. (1818-1895), one of America's foremost architects in the mid-19th century.

3.4.3.3 Trinity Episcopal Church

⁴⁹ Village DEIS "Modification" table 7.6-1, p. 7-156

Erected in 1831-1832, with a stained glass window by William Morris's London firm, 1873. Built on a prominent site on the hill on the south side of the Esopus Creek and on the Kingston-Saugerties Road, nineteenth-century worshippers could take in magnificent vistas: "The Hudson rolls majestically by in the view from the portico ... while from the grounds in the rear one of the grandest views in the locality unfolds itself ... the calm and silvery Esopus, the quiet country village, and on beyond towering heavenward rise the glorious Catskills, soul-inspiring monuments to Him who made them."⁵⁰

Henry Barclay gifted the property for the establishment of the church on the western end of Barclay's Heights; his own mansion lay towards the eastern end. Barclay's home was transformed into a mansion called Brightback in the 1850s, when Benson Lossing visited while writing his monumental "History of the Hudson Valley." Lossing adorned the book with 300 small sketches, one of which dramatically showed the view of the Hudson River and lower Esopus Creek from the site.

The view from the church and the rectory overlooks Barclay's Pond, the impoundment of Esopus Creek behind the Cantine Dam at the falls. The Hudson River School artist Thomas Cole's son, Thomas Cole, Jr., was rector of the church and lived in the rectory from 1874 into the early teens of the twentieth century, enjoying the view of the Esopus and of the Catskills that his father had painted and which had created the most important landscape aesthetic for America. Cole Jr. was a gifted amateur geologist whose discovery of fossilized starfish in the Devonian rock of Mr. Marion in Saugerties prompted state geologists to declare "stars must have fallen on Saugerties." A second of the rock was removed and is now on display in the lobby of the Cultural Education Center in Albany.

3.4.3.4 Wynkoop House (Schoentag's Colonial Tavern)

In 2003 the threatened demolition of the Wynkoop House (c. 1740 and 1790) galvanized local preservation sentiment. The house was saved, and the town established an Historic Preservation Commission.

3.4.3.5 Sheffield Mill

The mill produced paper and paper coatings from the 19th into the 20th centuries. It has been restored for affordable housing. The mill is adjacent to and overlooks Chorvas Park with extensive views of the creek and the marinas in the Lower Esopus. The Town has recently added acreage to the public park which is used for viewing performances by Arm-of-the-Sea Theater.

In the 1880s, Martin Cantine added a paper coating mill at the current site of the Diamond Mills – his product was called "the Tiffany of the Trade" – and worked with the

⁵⁰ Quoted in William R. Rhoads, *Ulster County New York: The Architectural History & Guide*, (Delmar, NY: Black Dome Press, 2011), p. 212

Sheffield Mill (called the Sheffield Diamond Mill) to build the Cantine Dam to share the hydroelectric power. Cantine became the leader of the community, a beloved philanthropist who donated “the Driving Park,” a part of his extensive Valley Farm that became the Town of Saugerties Cantine-Veteran Memorial Field Complex. Cantine financed the bleachers and baseball field, which today is considered one of the finest amateur ball diamonds in New York State and is home to the collegiate Saugerties Stallions.

It was the demise of the Cantine mill in the 1960s that led to a depression in Saugerties similar to the regional depression created by the loss of IBM in the 1990s. Until then the village was a vibrant community with both an A&P and Grand Union, eight or more butchers, and millinery, haberdashery and department stores serving the region.⁵¹

3.4.3.6 Warehouses 1 & 2 (Saugerties Steamboat Co.)

Still retaining the original sign as Lynch Marina Steamboat Landing, the two nationally historic warehouses have been completely restored for social events such as weddings and receptions. The views from the dock eastward of the Coast Guard property and the Lighthouse extend across the Hudson River to the Estates National Historic District in Dutchess County. The Hudson River Sloop wintered over at this mooring for many years until the depth of the Esopus was insufficient due to siltation.

3.4.3.7 Mynderse House

John Persen, a 1712 Patentee built a grist mill and established a ferry across Esopus Creek. The property was deeded to the daughter of Myndert Mynderse and an addition was added in 1743. The house retains its fine stone façade.

3.4.3.8 Schoonmaker Homestead

A pre-Revolutionary structure built by a member of the General Committee of Articles of Association and occupied continuously by descendants.

3.4.3.9 Post Office (former)

Built in 1934-36 as one of President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s WPA projects, the design and construction reflects local history and materials, similarly to the post offices in other Hudson Valley towns such as Poughkeepsie, Rhinebeck and Wappinger Falls. A “closer look at the walls and a reading of the design correspondence reveal that President Roosevelt and the local citizenry made an effort to tie the building to the region, especially by selecting specific types of brick and stone.”⁵²

⁵¹ Vernon Benjamin, *The History of the Hudson River Valley: From the Civil War to Modern Times* (NY: The Overlook Press, 2016)

⁵² Rhoads 2011), pp. 207-08.

3.4.3.10 Saugerties Lighthouse

Saugerties Lighthouse, the oldest remaining lighthouse in the Hudson River, is situated at the mouth of Esopus Creek in the Hudson River heritage area. Built in 1867-1869, it is described as a “Victorian brick house with segmental arched windows and multi-gabled roof of polychrome slate... [with] the cylindrical glassy lantern of its riverside tower, announcing that here lived the keeper of the light.”⁵³ Rebuilt in the 1980s by local preservationists who formed the Saugerties Lighthouse Conservancy, it was gifted to them by the Coast Guard for one dollar and in 1990 the light was restored to operation. The lighthouse is open for tours, and it is even possible to stay overnight by advance reservation with the Saugerties Lighthouse Conservancy. A trail (flooded at high tide) leads to the lighthouse from the parking lot on Lighthouse Drive and crosses a wetland named the Ruth Reynolds Nature Conservancy. The property is listed on the National Historic Register as one of the historic lighthouses of the Hudson River. The group also includes the nearby Hudson-Athens Lighthouse which has been managed by the Hudson-Athens Lighthouse Conservancy since 1982. Both historic lighthouses have panoramic views of the Catskills, the broad sweep north and south of the Hudson River and the mouth of the Esopus Creek as it flows into the Hudson, discolored at times with mud.



Lighthouse and Mouth of the Esopus – photo Mike Nelson

The Saugerties Lighthouse is also situated in the Ulster North Scenic Area of Statewide Significance. The SASS designation recognizes both the environmental and aesthetic value of the Saugerties waterfront. “The scenic designation describes how the Esopus Creek is a particularly critical scenic component. ... [From the lighthouse] views

⁵³ Ibid, p. 211; see also preservation history in Vernon Benjamin, *The History of the Hudson River Valley: From the Civil War to Modern Times* (NY: Overlook Press, 2016), p. 436.

of the water are an important component of the scenic area, and the Esopus Creek is a unifying feature, any visible degradation of water quality impairs the scenic beauty.”⁵⁴

3.4.4 OPUS 40

Opus 40 is a large-scale environmental earthwork sculpture on the National Register of Historic Places created by sculptor Harvey Fite (1903-1976). It comprises a sprawling series of dry-stone ramps, pedestals and platforms covering 6.5 acres of a bluestone quarry and includes a 13-foot-high, nine-ton monolith, museum and 50 acres of meadows and forested paths. Harvey Fite was professor and chair of the art department at Bard College in Red Hook, New York from 1933-1969. He created OPUS 40 in Saugerties over thirty years out of the bluestone left on the site of a previous quarry; the complex includes a Quarryman’s Museum of tools used by bluestone workers from the local area. Fite invited the public to visit and over time numerous musical concerts and theatrical events were staged along with hundreds of weddings. Brendan Gill, in the March 1989 edition of *Architectural Digest*, called *Opus 40* “one of the most beguiling works of art on the entire continent.” In 2021, the handcrafted earthwork of local bluestone is described as “imbued with a mythic sensibility that will inspire awe in visitors of all ages.”⁵⁵ The site is considered to be one of the first examples of Land Art in North America.

3.4.5 Archaeological Sites

The region at the confluence of the Esopus Creek and the Hudson River is known to be an important archaeological site according to the description of the Ulster North SASS. The description continues: A designated archaeological site on the Esopus Creek in the Village of Saugerties at Lighthouse Cove contains evidence of prehistoric remains. The area has been inhabited at least since the Woodland Period (100 B.C. – 1600 A.D.) and probably since Paleo-Indian times (c. 10,000 B.C.).⁵⁶ At the site along Esopus Creek in Hurley archaeologists have documented the extensive cultivation of Maize by the Esopus (Lenape) Indians from the eleventh century B.C.E. through the sixteenth centuries A.D. upon the arrival of the Dutch.⁵⁷

3.4.6 Ulster County Historic Markers in Esopus Creek Watershed

The historic landscape becomes visible through signs and maps that locate sites and routes that give substance to community identity. For example, Ulster County has recognized over 150 sites as significant properties where individuals or events tell stories about the cultural landscape that form the region’s community character. For example, in

⁵⁴ Testimony from Lighthouse Keeper Patrick Landewe, in Vernon Benjamin, “Excellent comments from Lighthouse Keeper,” (May 27, 2021)

⁵⁵ Brendan Gill quotation from OPUS 40 website; see also Nevin Martell, “The Hudson Valley’s outdoor art parks make for an alluring pandemic destination,” *Washington Post* (April 26, 2021)

⁵⁶ Christopher R. Lindner, “The Earliest Thirteen Millennia of Cultural Adaptation along the Hudson River Estuary,” in *Environmental History of the Hudson River*. Edited by Robert E. Henshaw (Albany: SUNY Press, 2011), pp. 65-76.

⁵⁷ Hart, *et. al.* (2017)

the Town of Saugerties, in addition to the sites in the Village of Saugerties listed on the National Historic Register described earlier, the county has historic markers related to the Esopus Indians, early Dutch settlers, the Revolutionary War, and 18th and 19th century industry: Indian Cave; Settlers Captured, 1780; Victory in 1777; Sawyers Mill, 1663; Brink Homestead, 1688; Persen Store site; Myer Homestead, 1724; Post Tavern Site; Tavern site, Christian Fiero; Old Zena Mill, 1750; Weat Camp, 1710; Lutheran Church, 1710; Katsbaan Church, 1732; Flatbush Reformed Church of Saugerties, 1807; Brick Church, 1827; and on the Upper Esopus the Phoenicia Station was listed on the National register of Historic Places to commemorate the centennial of the Ulster and Delaware railroad, 1899-1999. A marker at the Hudson River in Malden commemorates the point at which the British fleet advanced in support of General John Burgoyne at Saratoga and turned around upon learning that he and his army had been captured. Locals call it “the literal turning point of the American Revolution.”

3.4.6.1 Barclay Heights

An historical marker by the State of New York on Route 9W, south of Barclay Street in Saugerties is recognized as significant both for the history associated with the village’s economic development as well as its view of Esopus Creek. The sign reads: “Named for Henry Barclay 1778-1851. Early settler who founded Trinity Church, utilized local water power and greatly promoted industry.”

The properties on the ridge overlooking the Esopus form a neighborhood collectively called Barclay Heights. Henry Barclay built his own mansion on the ridge where he could see sloops on the Hudson River towards the east, while overseeing his mills and the dam that was developing the economic base of Saugerties as an industrial center of the nineteenth century. He sold properties to many of the local industrialists and entrepreneurs who also built large houses overlooking Barclay’s Pond and the village.

By the end of the 20th C the majority of the houses were gone or had become boarding houses or hotels. For example, the property next to Trinity Church, now a vacant lot, became the site of the Isle of Capri Hotel. It functioned as a tourist resort during the summer, with steps down to the Esopus at the pond, and advertised the views of the Esopus, village and Catskills. The 21st C. view from Barclay Heights presents remnants of the past industrial landscape as a framework for the current image of a village as a small town with a quiet relationship to the creek and landscape.

3.4.6.2 Sojourner Truth Memorial

Landmarks of social history significantly alter and constitute the cultural landscape of a place or region. Similar to historic markers and plaques, memorials and museums identify important events or individuals that have changed the local, regional or national culture.

The Sojourner Truth Memorial in the Town of Esopus commemorates Sojourner Truth, born a slave in 1797 and lived in northern Ulster County, including Port Ewen and

West Park on the banks of the Hudson River until 1826, after which she became one of the nation's most significant women of color as an Abolitionist, feminist and the cause of human rights in general throughout the nineteenth century until her death in 1883. The statue is the work of sculptor Trina Greene of New Paltz, and depicts her as a young girl during her years as a slave, that, according to the memorial, "serves to raise public awareness of the fact of the institution of slavery in New York State, and is a reminder that child slavery continues to exist today worldwide."⁵⁸ It is also a reminder that the cultural landscape of the region reflects the history of the Dutch settlers and slave labor that remains a part of the local community character.

Along with the importance of Sojourner Truth to understanding Black history in New York State, the nation, and its roots in Africa is the establishment of the A. J. Williams-Meyers Library in Kingston. Named after a former professor and chair of the Black Studies Department at the State University of New Paltz, the special library is a visible marker of the importance of understanding the history of the area in slavery and anti-slavery efforts from the 17th century to the 21st.

3.5 Scenic Roads and Transportation Corridors

3.5.1 Ashokan Rail Trail

Ulster County, NYC DEP, NYS DEC, and NYS OPRHP cooperated along with the Open Space Institute, Woodstock Land Conservancy and local residents to build the Ashokan Rail Trail (ART) along the scenic abandoned Ulster & Delaware Railroad corridor on the northern edge of the Ashokan Reservoir in 2019. The 11.5 mile trail has a compact surface of crushed rock for non-motorized travel such as hiking, bicycling, running, nature observation, cross-country skiing, and snow shoeing. It is open during daylight hours all year round for public enjoyment of the scenic landscape and waterscape of the reservoir and its surrounding natural lands. Its scenic and recreational character has been described as: "Gently and gracefully skirting the northern shore of thee majestic Ashokan Reservoir. The 11.5 mile long Ashokan Rail Trail (ART) fits the landscape like a well-sized crown. The trail, with its commanding views, is the jewel among Ulster County's growing number of rail trails. The ART has reportedly become a top local recreational destination, drawing 40,000 happy visitors in the first six months since its opening, and is expected to draw 100,000 people this year."⁵⁹

The creation of the Ashokan Rail Trail is a result of a coalition of local citizens, Ulster county, non-profit land preservation organization, regional land trust, two New York State agencies whose mission is to preserve scenic and ecologically healthy communities, and the New York City agency entrusted with the purity of the city's clean water supply. The formation of this multi-agency team to create public access to the recreational use and scenic beauty of the reservoir and the Esopus watershed offers an example of "social and ecological resilience" as a "shared community response" to the

⁵⁸ Town of Esopus, "Esopus's Sojourner Truth Memorial," <https://www.esopus.com/visit/sojourner-truths-time-in-esopus-ny/>, retrieved 2021-03-29, 10:51

⁵⁹ Dave Holden, Path to the Future: Ashokan Rail Trail," *Chronogram* (April 01, 2020)

destruction of local communities in the building of the reservoir and the restoration of a place of shared use and cultural understanding of sense of place. A similar coalition of involved parties would appear to be a reasonable approach to ensuring the delivery of clean water and protecting the Lower Esopus Creek from turbid water in the future.

3.5.2 O&W Rail Trail

Named after the Ontario & Western railroad that penetrated the Catskill region in the 19th C, the O&W Rail Trail runs for 27 miles from Kingston to Ellenville, NY. Although its route is in the Rondout Valley, the trail does touch on the Lower Esopus Creek in Kingston. The O&W is one of a group of neighboring trails such as the Ashokan, Wallkill Valley and Hudson Valley trails and the Kingston Greenline, that Ulster County has developed as part of the County's scenic and recreational transportation resources.

3.5.3 Carriage Road

Locally designated by the town and village historic review commission in 2010 as an historic site, the "Carriage Road," or "Trail" runs across Esopus Bend Nature Preserve, with views from the trail of the creek. It forms a linear link between histories of the town and village and of their relationship to Lower Esopus Creek.

Historically, this was the entrance into the village area prior to 1825 for travelers from the south and east of Esopus Creek. When the Village of Saugerties was incorporated in 1832, the Carriage Trail became the dividing line between town and village. It was a former Lenape (Esopus) Indian trail that terminated at Lower Esopus Creek across from Stony Point, a rocky protuberance where a wagon trail was carved into the rock (and is still visible from Esopus Bend Nature Preserve) to accommodate bluestone-laden carriages from sliding because of the weight.

3.5.4 Glasco Turnpike

Built to haul sand to Willow and return with glass products to the Hudson River, the Turnpike crosses Esopus Creek at Mt. Marion, where a gage for the Ashokan Reservoir is located. The glass was shipped from a new community mistakenly named for a misspelling of the company's name – the second "s" of Glass was missing and the community became known as Glasco. An Italian community of brick-makers formed at the Turnpike's end at the Hudson River.

3.5.5 Saugerties-Woodstock Turnpike

Turnpikes built from Saugerties into the hinterland carried tons of bluestone to the waterfront for shipment down the Hudson to cities and towns for their sidewalks and curbstones. Both the Glasco and Woodstock turnpikes converged in the center of the village and remain as major streets, such as Ulster Avenue.

3.5.6 Old Mine Road

Originally the Esopus-Minisink Native American trail, the Old Mine Road was briefly developed by the Dutch in the 17th C. in the belief that large stores of silver could be found in the Catskills near Port Jervis. The Old Mine Road begins at Hurley along the Flats where the Esopus ran.

Tourism Economy – 21st Century

3.6 Recreational Tourism

Catskill-Hudson Valley region

The 21st C. economy of the Catskill-Hudson Valley region, including the many small towns, resorts and state facilities is dependent on recreational tourism. The tourist economy that is founded on the region's natural, historic and cultural landscape is the foundation for its sense of place.

3.6.1 Catskill Visitor Center

The Congressman Maurice D. Hinchey Catskills Visitor Center, developed by the Catskill Center nonprofit organization and NYS DEC in 1969, has been named after Congressman Maurice Hinchey for his untiring efforts in both the NYS Assembly from 1978-1992 and US Congress from 1993-2013 to protect the environment in the Catskills, Hudson River Valley, and throughout the nation. His legacy in the region includes the Hudson River National Heritage area, Greenway, and Walkway Over the Hudson.

At the Catskills Center the Esopus Creek Trail extends for a quarter mile to the Upper Esopus Creek as an ADA accessible trail for tourists and fishermen. Over the past few years storms have caused damage to this portion of the creek as they have to Lower Esopus Creek and as described by the DEC the visual impact is similar to the muddy waters that flow from the Ashokan Reservoir into the lower reaches:

“The accessible trails at the Esopus Creek Fishing Access across the street from the Catskill Visitor Center has experienced damage during the recent flooding events. The trails were scoured by the overflowing Esopus Creek which also deposited several inches of thick, sandy mud over several hundred feet of the trail. Due to the damage, the trails at this location no longer meet ADA standards of accessibility.”⁶⁰

These storm events, which are expected to become more frequent and severe because of climate change, are causing damage west of the Ashokan Reservoir in the Catskills and are not anthropogenic in origin.

3.6.3 Accommodations: Lodging and Food

⁶⁰ DEC newsletter March 19, 2021

Regional growth in tourism has promoted the development of facilities that cater to a more diverse customer base. Hotels, B&Bs and new restaurants have opened that serve farm-to-table meals and other local products. Local venues host weddings and receptions for bridal parties that come from outside the area that generate jobs for the local community.

The region has benefitted from the presence of the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, whose graduates have gone into the Valley towns, including Saugerties, and purchased hotels and old restaurants and created the fine dining experience that has come to characterize elements of sophisticated community character that has enhanced the Valley generally.

3.6.3.1 Diamond Mills Hotel and Tavern

Diamond Mills Hotel is an upscale hotel located on the site of the historic Martin Cantine Paper Mill. In 2007, local resident Tom Struzzieri was awarded a grant from the Empire State Development Corporation under its Restore New York Grant Program for the revitalization of commercial spaces that encourage community growth and neighborhood development. The new, modern hotel, with an exterior designed to recall the former historic mill, opened in 2011. It celebrates its tenth anniversary in 2021.



Diamond Mills and Cantine Dam in Autumn – photo Mike Nelson

The hotel and tavern overlook the “Esopus Falls” (Cantine Falls) of the Cantine Dam. The view of the rushing water over the dam, the lake-like effect of the impoundment that mirrors the sky, and the beauty of the upper creek enhance the business as a premier wedding and fine dining location. However, the chocolate water when the turbid water rushes creates an unfortunate location for wedding photos and other events dependent upon the waters flowing over the Cantine Dam.

3.6.4 Agriculture

Agriculture has a significant impact on the tourism industry and economy of Ulster County. Ulster County boasts a strong agricultural economy. It ranks third in New York State in fruits, tree-nuts, berries, apples and sweet corn production. Tourists come to visit pick--your-own farms, farm stands, hayrides, corn mazes, harvest festivals and wine trails; harvest organic foods on community supported agriculture (CSA) farms; and enjoy farm-to-table eating at local restaurants. Conserving cultural landscapes maintains and reinforces place and community identity, as observed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation:

Our own, expanded concept of conservation...embraces the idea of *community* as a resource, from individual farms or landholdings, to social institutions, to the local economy and sustainability of the community as a whole...Rural conservation, then, includes protecting natural and scenic resources, preserving buildings and places of cultural significance, and enhancing the local economy and social institutions.⁶¹

3.6.4.1 Hudson Farm Hub

The Hudson Valley Farm Hub is a non-profit center as a resource for advances in food and farming in the Hudson Valley. It is located on 1,500 acres of prime farmland overlooking Esopus Creek in Hurley that was the Lenape Esopus maize, bean and squash grounds appropriated by the Dutch in the 17th C. The Hurley Flats became the heart of the American Revolution's "breadbasket" for the patriot armies in the 18th C.

The Farm Hub was created in 2010 as an educational center to train farmers in new technologies and supports agricultural research as it fosters an equitable and ecologically resilient food system for local communities. Among its special projects was a partnership with the Haudenosaunee Indians to revive their ancient seed stock in plantings at the site; a successful return to traditional seeds resulted. The farmlands were irrigated and the Esopus partly cleared of downed trees that had hampered agriculture by causing the land to flood in high waters, including when the turbid waters were released from the Asholkan Reservoir. Special concerns today include damages to the Hub's irrigation system caused by the turbid waters flow and standing water damaging trees in the turbid water events.

The Farm Hub brings a new, advanced sense of science to Lower Esopus agriculture that is likely to change dramatically how agriculture is considered in New York and the Northeast in the future.

⁶¹ Samuel N. Stokes, A. Elizabeth Watson and Shelley S. Mastran, *Saving America's Countryside: A Guide to Rural Conservation*, second ed. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), p. 2, emphasis in the original.

3.6.4.2 Organic Farms, CSAs and Farmers Markets

The growth of Farmer's Markets and CSAs throughout Ulster County has been a significant factor in stabilizing the agricultural industry and preserving farmlands. As existing farmers retire, young men and women interested in educating the public on food issues are taking up organic and sustainable farming methods. CSAs include families as shareholders as they learn about growing and harvesting crops that provide their food supply. Local economies also benefit, as money is not spent on food grown outside the area.

A number of farms, such as the growing number of organic farms, truck their produce to New York City once or twice a week, while farm stands dot the local roads during the harvest season. Local restaurants advertise their farm-to-table cuisine as "locavore" and "slow food" culinary arts have gained strength in the regional food culture.

The infusion of NYCDEP support for Catskill communities to offset DEP's negative impacts on those communities spurred, in part, the growth of those communities' niche-market agricultural products for the metropolitan markets, helping the Catskills to become a major player in the revival of the regional economy.

3.6.4.3 Saugerties Farm Market

Located on Main Street in the village, the Saugerties Farm Market offer "seasonal vegetables; luscious orchard fruits; dried herbs; fresh-laid eggs; tasty goat and cow cheeses; pasture-raised meats and free-range poultry; delicious maple syrup, honey, jams and sauces, pickles; artisanal breads; baked goods, including gluten-free; prepackaged foods" from May to October's harvest. The market has become a cultural institution of the local economy.

3.6.5 Fishing

During the 19th C, the waters of the Catskills became noteworthy for sport fishing in the decades before the construction of the reservoirs. Fly fishermen explored the entire Esopus Creek and other Catskill streams for their brown and rainbow trout. The streams and watersheds were close to New York City and their scenic landscapes had already become destinations for artists and writers. "In the same way that the New York art market helped elevate the Catskills as landscape painters migrated up the Hudson in search of scenery, the growth of a large cohort of sport fishermen in the city helped develop a remarkable reputation for Catskill streams. New York fishers were a particularly literate bunch, and taken together their articles and books created a vast literature on Catskills fly-fishing."⁶² Recreational tourism, especially fishing and camping, grew during the 20th C as an important segment of the regional economy. Sports clubs in the 1920s, such as the Anglers Club of New York, took their members "to the

⁶² David Stradling, *Making Mountains: New York City and the Catskills* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007), p. 126

Catskills, to the Esopus, where members stayed at the Phoenix Hotel, or the Beaver Kill, at the Trout Valley Farm, or on the Willowemoc at the DeBruce Club Inn.”⁶³

The construction of the Ashokan Reservoir eventually added an extensive new fishing resource to the region. Anglers continued to take advantage of the large populations of various species, including native trout, bass, pickerel and panfish; ones that were especially populous in the Cantine Dam impoundment before climate change and the reservoir discharge practices. Tackle shops and facilities catering to boaters as well as fishers opened in towns along the creek and throughout the area, including gas stations that also sold bait. The image of the Esopus watershed of clear, fresh water for recreational tourism of fishing and boating as well as an aesthetic landscape where its waters mirrored the blue sky has infused the region’s community character.

The economic multiplier effects from fishing activities reach many kinds of local small businesses, from tackle shops that sell fishing and camping gear to gas stations that sell gas and worms, to grocery stores that sell beer and ice, and restaurants, motels, hotels, a growing number of B&Bs, and a tourism-fueled media that championed the region’s beauty and resources.

3.6.6 Events

3.6.6.1 Hudson Valley Garlic Festival

The Hudson Valley Garlic Festival has drawn tens of thousands of visitors to Saugerties since 1990. Attendance at the two-day festival on Cantine Field reached over 50,000 by the early 2000’s, while the combined efforts of the Kiwanis Club of Saugerties, Saugerties Town Police, Saugerties Village Police, New York State Police and local volunteers manage the crowds, traffic and parking. Over 250 vendors promote their garlic and garlic-flavored products and offering attendees a glimpse into the agricultural economy of New York State. The Kiwanis Club shares the profits from the entrance and booth fees to schools and numerous community organizations and is the principal supporter for the Kiwanis Ice Arena in the Town’s recreational complex.

Attendees can also enjoy the culinary arts in local restaurants, visit nearby historic sites, including the lighthouse and parks, shop in the village for books and boots and explore nearby for antiques, locally-produced artisan crafts and sustainably grown farm produce, or spend an afternoon leisurely boating, kayaking or fishing on the Esopus. That pleasure is denied whenever the chocolate waters flow. The two-day event places Saugerties on the regional map, as it contributes to the local economy as it promotes the place identity for Saugerties.

3.6.6.2 Arm-of-the Sea’s Esopus Creek Puppet Suite

Although initially created in 1982 for a local audience and performed in Tina Chorvas Park for a weekend every summer, Arm-of-the-Sea’s Esopus Creek Puppet Suite

⁶³ Stradling, 2007, p. 127.

draws visitors to Saugerties for music dance and puppetry and has expanded into a regional cultural phenomenon well-known in towns and cities throughout the Northeast. In a description designed to encourage tourism to the region, the event is described for its aesthetic appeal:

Summer in the Mid-Hudson Valley just wouldn't be the same without that magical evening – sitting on a blanket on a sloping lawn after a picnic repast watching a performance recounting the building of the Ashokan reservoir, or a migrant's thwarted efforts to cross the border, or the chemistry of dirt through the pageantry of giant puppets. The show has the power of ancient spectacle, full of resonating symbolism and a ritualistic pacing that allows contemplation. The moving parts of the handmade set crafted from swirling fabrics, painted cardboard, and other basic materials cleverly transform a city-scape, PCB toxins, strands of DNA or the fish-filled depths of the sea, while performers in black manipulated the puppets as they dance to the percussive beats and haunting notes of the band. The glowing stage floats dream-like in the black night as crickets trill and stars twinkle overhead.⁶⁴

In 2021 the company's plans for the Tidewater Center on the Saugerties waterfront has received municipal approval. The property is located on the tidal Esopus Creek just below Cantine Falls at the original site of the Sheffield Diamond Paper Mill (estab. 1827), situated on 1 ½ acres between Tina Chorvas Park and the Arm-of-the-Sea's studios at the Cantine Island co-housing complex. It was formerly owned by Hudson River Sloop Clearwater and served as a base for the annual winter overhaul for the sloop. It is a site that matches the puppet theater's environmental and cultural messages about the Hudson River to the histories of Esopus Creek and Saugerties.

3.6.6.3 HITS

HITS-on-the Hudson is the primary home for the nation's largest horse show venue. Based in the village of Saugerties, HITS produced its first show circuit in Florida in 1962 and has grown nationwide to host circuits in California, Florida, Arizona, Virginia and Illinois as well as at its home base in Saugerties on the Sawyerkill creek. The shows draw hundreds of participants and onlookers with prize money in the thousands of dollars; for example, the HITS Championship, held each September at HITS-on-the-Hudson, hosts the HITS \$250,000 Jr/A-O/Am Jumper Priz, the Stal Hendrix Pri-Green Futurity, and the crown jewel of the hunter discipline: the \$500,000 Diamond Mills Hunter Priz Final and the \$250,000 Platinum Performance Hunter Priz final as the "Richest Weekend in Show Jumping."

HITS President and CEO Thomas G. Struzzieri is also the owner and operator of Diamond Mills Hotel and Tavern overlooking the Esopus. He transformed the 1937 Post Office on Main Street into his national headquarters and has been a major force in Ulster County United Way philanthropy. His venue has attracted numerous families to establish

⁶⁴ Lynn Woods, "Puppets-on-Hudson," *Chronogram* (April 2021), pp. 70-71.

second homes in Saugerties, contributing greatly to the tax base, and their appearance every few weeks for the four-day HITS events has revived the restaurant business and is a significant stimulus to the growth of the village economy.

3.7 Comprehensive and Town Planning

3.7.1 Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area

The U.S. Congress created the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area (NHA) in 1996. Four years later, the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area Draft Management Plan for New York State declared its mission was to “preserve and interpret the environmental and historic heritage of the Hudson River Valley, and encourage consistency between protection of the Heritage and economic development.” It proposed three program initiatives. (1) Cooperative Landscape Conservation and Stewardship, with two demonstration projects including a valley-wide exhibition of the works of the Hudson River painters and mapping of significant open space, environmental and historic landscape. (2) Heritage Interpretation with projects to include regional promotion, an American Revolution Heritage Trail, designation of a Great Estates Cultural corridor, a Capital Region Urban Cultural Park, a focus on Sleepy Hollow interpretation, six designated visitor centers, and consistent Hudson River Valley signage and literature. (3) Economic Heritage Development, including an economic transitions forum and interpretation and adaptive reuse of old industrial sites. The same year New York State passed legislation for the Hudson Valley Greenway and numerous rail trails followed through the region including Ulster County.

The 2009 management plan’s description of the Heritage Interpretation initiative centers on a comprehensive understanding of the cultural landscape with its aesthetic and historic features for the development of heritage tourism with heritage trails, scenic byways, and Greenway trails through three themes: The landscape of Beauty, The Landscape of Freedom, and The Landscape of Invention.

In 2019 the Hudson River Valley NHA was officially named for Congressman Maurice D. Hinchey who had crafted the original federal legislation as well as instrumental in creating the Hudson Valley Greenway in New York State.

3.7.2 Ulster County Open Space Plan

In 2004 the Ulster County Planning department began to update the 1972 Ulster County Open Space Plan. It is a working document and continues to be updated. The county plan incorporates the recently completed Natural Resource Inventory (NRI). The county NRI has compiled and mapped publicly protected open spaces; water resources; working landscapes; landforms, including scenic areas; cultural and historic resources; ecological communities; and recreation areas, including parks, shoreline, fishing rights and trails. It recognizes that of the 36, 236 acres in the Town of Saugerties, the Town has protected 2,307 acres, or 6 percent.

3.7.3 Hudson River Drinking Water Intermunicipal Council (“Hudson 7”)

The Hudson 7 is a coalition of seven municipalities that rely on drinking water from the Hudson River downstream of the confluence of the Esopus Creek. The communities include the City and Town of Poughkeepsie, the Village and Town of Rhinebeck, and the Towns of Esopus, Hyde Park, and Lloyd. The Hudson 7 came together in 2018 to protect their shared water source, the Hudson River. Five public water supplies (“PWS”) from five intakes in the river serve safe water for human consumption and firefighting to 106,000 residents of the seven municipalities in addition to three hospitals, three colleges, and many major regional employers.

In a resolution signed on May 20, 2021 and letter to Basil Seggos, Commissioner of DEC on March 3, 2021 and June 1, 2021, the Hudson 7 detailed their concerns about “the release of millions of gallons of water and thousands of tons of solids from the Ashmogan Reservoir” into Esopus Creek, and ask the DEC “to consider modifications” to the DEIS and the Catalum SPDES Permit. They note the additional economic costs to the municipalities for treating the high turbidity and the mud, silt and alum sludge for their drinking water, as well as the social costs associated with the water quality for swimming and fishing. The resolution further called on the DEC to “require that DEP produce a supplemental DEIS to study the impacts outlined in this resolution and to take the required ‘hard look’ at alternatives that can eliminate or reduce these impacts.”⁶⁵

3.7.4 Dutchess County

In a letter to Basil Seggos, Commissioner of DEC, signed on June 11, 2021 by Dutchess County Executive Marcus Molinaro, Dutchess County went “on record” to call into question the adequacy of the DEIS determination of the impact on the Lower Esopus “by the increasing in frequency, duration, and magnitude of extremely turbid water through the Ashokan release channel.”⁶⁶ In addition to the impacts on Ulster County, the letter describes impacts on the Hudson River, such as discoloration of the river and the siltation of small particles that settle in a number of water intakes of the seven municipalities of the Hudson River Drinking Water Intermunicipal Council (“Hudson 7”), and the costs incurred by them to remove the silt from their drinking water. The letter clearly shows the magnitude of the impact that the releases have on the scenic beauty, environment, and economy of the mid-Hudson region.

3.7.5 Lower Esopus Watershed Partnership (LEWP)

Formed in 2007, the partnership consists of seven municipalities: the towns of Hurley, Marbletown, Olive, Saugerties and Ulster, the village of Saugerties and the city of Kingston. The partnership’s mission statement is to “foster appreciation and

⁶⁵ Hudson River Drinking Water Intermunicipal Council, resolution “Authorizing the Hudson River drinking Water Intermunicipal Council to communicate concerns about impacts to Hudson River Drinking Water Quality resulting from New York City’s releases of turbid water to Esopus Creek,” May 20, 2021.

⁶⁶ Marcus Molinaro, Dutchess County Executive, letter to Basil Seggos, Commission of DEC, June 11, 2021.

stewardship of the Lower Esopus Watershed through a variety of partnerships to: enhance water quality and stream function; promote floodplain management; support ecosystem health and diversity; and encourage compatible agricultural, cultural, economic, municipal, and recreational activities.”

In 2010 the Lower Esopus Watershed Partnership (LEWP) crafted, and all seven elected leaders of the Lower Esopus Creek corridor Watershed communities signed, an official memorandum in opposition along with recommendations to change the proposed Release Protocol. These municipalities include:

- (1) Town of Hurley
- (2) Town of Marbletown
- (3) Town of Olive
- (4) Town of Saugerties
- (5) Town of Ulster
- (6) Village of Saugerties
- (7) City of Kingston

Of particular concern to LEWP, the memo notes, “is the unknown long-term impact of unprecedented releases of highly turbid water of conceivably unnaturally long duration. ... LEWP is also concerned about water quality issues associated with chronic low flows.”⁶⁷ Changes to the creek’s water quality will affect the municipalities in many ways, including visible impacts related to scenic beauty and quality of life. The economic impact on recreational tourism to all of the municipalities in the partnership is also of special concern.

3.7.6 Town of Saugerties Environmental Management Council

In March, 2021, with regard to the Catalum SPDES permit, the Town of Saugerties Environmental Council (EMC), through its Climate Change Task Force, adopted a statement “supporting clean water discharges and opposing turbid water discharges from Ashokan reservoir.” The statement reads, in part: “Further resolved that the detrimental turbid water discharges of up to 600 million gallons a day for several weeks or months at a time be discontinued and a suitable alternative among the seven or more suggested as part of this SEQRA review be adopted to ensure the protection of the water supply through other means than discharges as waste materials into the Lower Esopus Creek.”

The EMC established a Climate Smart Task Force and led the Town of Saugerties into achieving NYS certification as a Climate Smart community at the bronze level in 2019, the first Ulster County town to achieve that plateau. The EMC created a Climate Action Plan and is well on its way to silver certification later this year. The Task force has also led the effort, along with the town supervisor, in bringing Community Choice Aggregation to Saugerties, which is currently being established following Town Board approval.

⁶⁷ LEWP Memo to NYS DEC Reg 3 Director, September 2010

Saugerties is also noted for contracting with a solar company and transforming the former town landfill into a two-megawatt solar farm. Saugerties has five electric vehicle charging stations and two electric vehicles, with the Police Department recently contracting for two Tesla EVs fully equipped with the police power package; the Department expects to add an additional EV every year until a full compliment is reached.

3.7.7 Town and Village Comprehensive Plan

A community's interest in its cultural and historic character says a lot about the way a community views itself and the impression it wants to give to others. Attention to its historic and visual aspects will help restore a positive self-image. Activities such as preserving its historic and cultural resources, improving visual and physical access to the waterfront and the Lighthouse, and integrating the nature preserves, will enable Saugerties to be a center for regional tourism. The beauty and utility of Lower Esopus Creek is central to the economic aspects of the plan.

In 2007 Saugerties Town and Village Comprehensive Plan underwent a rigorous three-year analysis, including public participation, and was adopted by the Saugerties Town Board on March 17, 2021.

Goal # 1: "Every resident has a right to live in safety and in beautiful surroundings. In order to preserve the integrity, stability, health and unique beauty of the community and the value of the land, Saugerties recognizes the importance of a healthy environment, farmland and natural resources protection, open space preservation, and **a neighborly character**."⁶⁸

On March 17, 2021 the Saugerties Town Board adopted the Town and Village Comprehensive Plan. Based on its 2007 plan, the current plan presents a careful analysis and personalized presentation of the town and village's sense of place as the core to its community character. Both the natural environment, including the ecology of the creek and other natural resources, as well as the cultural landscape, its social and architectural history and aesthetic and scenic resources, combine to form the foundation for the present and future economy:

"Saugerties is a place blessed by an environment where it is possible to have the past and the present merged into a plan using the best of both worlds. Its historic character and natural setting have already brought about recognition of its attractiveness to tourists and events producers."⁶⁹

Impacts on Community Character

4. Visual Impact

⁶⁸ Saugerties town and Village Comprehensive Plan, p. 26 (emphasis added).

⁶⁹ Saugerties *Town and Village Comprehensive Plan* (2021), p. 7.

The visual impact of a facility, landscape or event is less a matter of seeing something as it is, but more a matter of understanding what is seen. The environmental impact of a polluted waterway or landfill, or devastated or abandoned industrial wasteland can be both measured within a specific view-scape, while the image may also be regarded as a subtle indicator of change to the local or regional economy and sense of place. The changed image – from beautiful to ugly, from ecological integrity to polluted - conflicts with the community’s perception of its rural or small town character and its plans for a tourism-based economy. The muddy water that follows the turbidity imposed upon the Lower Esopus by overflows from the Ashokan Reservoir changes the color of the stream from clear and blue to opaque and chocolate, that results in changing not only the perception of the beauty and ecological habitat of the creek, but also the character and economy of the locality and region.

4.1 Barclay Heights

Specific views of a landscape feature from significant historic, cultural, or natural sites are important, as they supply the context within which the feature is judged as to whether or not it contributes to the community’s economic future or emerging character.

Barclay Heights overlooks the impoundment. It is the prospect from which the Hudson River School era artist Charles Townsend painted the view of the Esopus and Village in the 1830s.

The views from the properties, including the historic houses and Trinity Church, were instrumental in the development of Barclay Heights neighborhood and form the very image that constitutes their sense of place and relationship to the village and Town of Saugerties.

4.2 Diamond Mills

The view both individually and collectively from Diamond Mills Hotel and Tavern of Cantine Falls, Cantine impoundment, and Esopus Bend Nature Preserve composes an aesthetic of the cultural and natural landscape: the flowing river, cliffs of the falling valley, and lake effect of the impoundment, sound of falling water, and large estates and historic Trinity Church on the bluff all signify the importance of the creek to Saugerties’ community character.

4.3 Saugerties Lighthouse

The view west from the National Historic Landmark Saugerties Lighthouse of Esopus Creek as it enters the Hudson River is recognized as a harmonious scene where river, creek, and picturesque town-scape and active waterfront including small watercraft offer a humanized natural and cultural landscape. This tranquil scene, functioning for the local tourism economy and symbolically perceived as representing the character of the

community, is severely impacted by the actions that create a muddy, chocolate-colored outflow.

The sight of the turbid waters leaving Esopus Creek, entering the blue waters of the Hudson River and turning south to the water intakes of the Hudson 7 turns the bucolic setting of the Lighthouse into a questionable industrial passageway.

4.4 Saugerties waterfront

Changes to the scenic beauty, including color and texture, of the water, as well as the hydrology and ecology of the Lower Esopus have a direct impact on the community's use and perception of waterfront. Businesses that rent boats and kayaks, shops that sell fishing and hiking equipment, and restaurants with views of the creek are economically impacted. The waterfront as a special place that forms community identity becomes unsettled. Muddy water changes both visual and tactile enjoyment of the creek.

4.5 Arm-of-the-Sea Theater

Plans for the new location at the mouth of the creek as it enters the Hudson River indicate that a muddy outflow will impact the views from the theater. For the puppets and their stories focused on environmental issues the scene will be relevant and offer additional energy to their advocacy and is not a desirable view in a permanent sense.

4.6 Water Quality: Turbidity

The visual impact of the turbidity on the Lower Esopus Creek has not been thoroughly examined. (See also Town of Saugerties testimony on turbidity). Views of the muddy waters in the creek as a result of turbidity events have a direct effect on viewers' appreciation of the local landscape and its ecological richness, including the fish swimming in the creek and the eagles soaring in the sky.

Expecting a scenic view of a languid creek in a bucolic setting, the rushing, brown-colored waters eroding the banks, riparian vegetation, and swimming and fishing sites, the view of the murky waters becomes instead a dramatic visual indicator of the industrializing of the locality, which will have a significant negative effect on the Saugerties community and its recreational and tourist economy. As documented in the records of the Saugerties Lighthouse of tourist reactions to the visual impact of turbidity releases on the Lower Esopus at the mouth of the Hudson, discoloration of the waters is a detriment to their enjoyment of the scenic view. Turbidity and its resulting impact on water quality and beauty has a severe impact on heritage tourism both in Saugerties and throughout the region. As the area develops its tourist economy with its emphasis on its historic, scenic and recreational qualities, any change of perception associated with water quality will lead to lower tourist interest and economic impact.

As documented in the May 20, 2021 Resolution by the Hudson River Drinking Water Intermunicipal Council and their subsequent letter to the DEC Commissioner of

June 1, 2021, the Hudson 7 comment on the impact that the turbidity and solids released into the Lower Esopus and then into the Hudson River will impact the public water supply intakes for the seven municipalities and therefore potentially pollute the drinking water supply and cause an economic burden to filter their supplies. They also reflect on the visual and economic impact of the muddy water on the recreational use of the Lower Esopus. In a June 11, 2021 Dutchess County agrees with the concerns of the Hudson 7, noting the “frequency, duration and magnitude” of the Ashokan releases and the impact of the resulting turbidity on the drinking water quality and economy of the municipalities of the mid-Hudson, and the discoloration of the Hudson River that effects the region’s tourist economy.

Residents and officials who experienced the months of turbid waters following Tropical Storm Sandy in 2012 recalled experiencing a sense of sadness and even despair as the turbidity continued unrelenting for so long. There was a palpable feeling of loss, and not just of a pretty water setting, but of the character and sense of place as well.

5. Economic Impact

5.1 Recreational Tourism

Changes to Esopus Creek as a result of increased turbidity have had serious social and economic effects on recreational tourism in the region. The visual richness of the aesthetic, cultural and natural landscape that forms Saugerties’ community character is damaged by turbidity releases. Not only is the damage obvious during the actual releases, but visitors for the first time or those returning related hesitancy about coming back, and many reported that they did not at first and were still unsure when they did.

Changes to the color and texture of the water influence scenic views along the creek from the clarity that is perceived as pure, habitat and life-giving, to a chocolate brown muddy appearance that is lifeless and depressing. The creek is no longer seen as a viable trout stream nor the lower reaches suitable for bass. No longer is there joy of kayaking and boating, nor swimming. Changes to the creek’s color and texture also influence heritage tourism such as visitors to the historic Lighthouse view the muddy outflow in the wetlands and into the Hudson in the foreground of their view against the scenic beauty of the Catskills on the horizon.

Agricultural tourism is also affected by the flooding of turbid waters. Views from hotels and restaurants, such as the scene of the water falling over the Cantine dam and its impoundment of Barclay’s Pond at the Diamond Mills Hotel and Tavern reduces many diners’ experience and room reservations are cancelled. Fewer visitors come to Krause’s Candy for their famous chocolates when the chocolate waters are flowing. Changes in the perception of landscapes and waterscapes, especially by introducing a foreign element into the scene, such as a dramatic shift in the color palette, have economic consequences.

5.2 “Industrialization”

The cultural landscape of Ulster County within the New York City watershed contains numerous historic sites that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places and on New York State and local inventories. Together they constitute a palimpsest that is the foundation of the region's changing community character as a rural, post-industrial economic landscape.

The industrial image of the discharge of turbidity into Lower Esopus Creek, its resulting muddy or chocolate-colored water, and its impact on the aesthetic values inherent in the rural and small town cultural landscape could be devastating, both economically, such as recreational tourism, and in terms of identity, or community character.

Citizens, public officials, and local businesses have worked hard to change the foundations of their economy and recognize how these changes are observable in the regional and local landscape. The image of the regional environment shared by visitors and residents alike centers on aesthetic values such as scenic views, heritage sites, and recreational activities, such as fishing and boating. The region is very consciously entering a post-industrial period of growth that could be reversed by the frequency, duration and magnitude of the Ashokan releases that cause increased turbidity, mud and discoloration to Esopus Creek.

Such events give an "industrial" image to the creek and landscape completely at odds with the scenic beauty that brought the 19th C painters to the banks of the Esopus. The concern that Thomas Cole evoked when viewing the landscape encompassing Catskill Creek in the 1830s that an encroaching railroad would compromise the creek's beauty may be compared to how the citizens of Saugerties perceive the changes to their image in the 1830s painting by Charles Townsend. An "industrial" image is at odds with the current cultural landscape and is contrary to local and regional efforts to increase recreational tourism.

5.3 Planning

Ulster County, the Town and Village of Saugerties, other Esopus Creek communities, and the seven municipalities of the Hudson River Drinking Water Intermunicipal Council are concerned about the releases of turbid and muddy water from the Ashokan Reservoir that impact regional plans for recreational and heritage tourism. The plans recognize the values associated with scenic beauty and water quality for increasing visitation to historic sites and landmarks such as the Lighthouse; hiking and bird watching at nature preserves such as Esopus Bend; swimming, fishing, boating and kayaking on the Lower Esopus; shopping in the commercial center of the Historic District; visiting farm-stands and apple orchards; restaurants, hotels and B&Bs; events such as the Garlic Festival, HITS and Arm-of-the-Sea Theater; and following the Art Trail of the Hudson River School artists in the watershed region. As the Town's plan attests, its attractiveness is a key to its tourism and location for events.

Conclusion

“Community Character” is a complex composite of social and economic history, cultural and natural landscape features, and aesthetic or visual elements, which collectively and over time, produce a distinctive identity and sense of place. The landscape of Esopus Creek, with special focus on the area in the Town and Village of Saugerties, is recognized for its beauty, history, recreational resources and amenities as a tourist destination. Cultural and natural landscape features such as parks, historic sites, nature preserves, historic sites such as the Lighthouse, and events venues such as the Arm-of-the-Sea Theater, as well as the Esopus Creek itself, are some of the visible expressions of the community’s character that would be adversely impacted by continued muddy outflow and turbidity of the creek.

This analysis of impacts has teased apart six elements of the Town of Saugerties cultural landscape that collectively emerge as community character: (1) concern for scenic views and aesthetic resources; (2) landscape architecture, nature preserves, parks and open space; (3) Hudson River School of Art; (4) historic sites and districts; (5) scenic roads and transportation; (6) recreation and tourism; and (7) comprehensive planning by local governments. The community character of the Town of Saugerties and the Lower Esopus Creek region cannot be reduced to these elements, however, but is in fact greater than their sum—the product of their interaction over time with the people who are tied to the place. Community character joins space and time, weaving together social, cultural, environmental, and economic history, to define what the community means to its members.

The visual impact of the effects of increased turbidity and resulting discoloration of Esopus Creek are of deep concern to the citizens of the Town and Village of Saugerties. The beauty of the creek, landscape and small town setting are central to their community character. The painting by Hudson River School of Art painter Charles Townsend of the impoundment, or Barclay’s Pond, and the village offers dramatic proof of the meaning associated with the aesthetic landscape by the local community. The painting’s centrality in the Village Hall visibly reinforces the community’s perception of scenic beauty and especially of the role of water in the scene. The community is united in their effort to stop the ecological and aesthetic disruption that accompanies the muddy outflow and turbidity in the creek. Their efforts demonstrate their shared sense of identity that forms the basis for community character.

In my opinion, the continued release of turbid and muddy water from the Ashokan Reservoir visually and adversely impacts Lower Esopus Creek; destroys the natural beauty of the watershed, a landscape that was painted by artists of the Hudson River School; harms its ecological communities of fauna and flora, of swimming fish and soaring eagles; conflicts with both local residents’ and visitors’ fishing and boating enjoyment as it undermines the recreational economy of the region; and overlays an indelible industrial image on the cultural landscape of the Town and Village of Saugerties and the mid-Hudson region more broadly. The view of the mud-brown waters flowing 34 miles down the Esopus from the Ashokan Reservoir to the Hudson River impacts the

aesthetic landscape that significantly and adversely affects the inhabitants' historic and prized community character.

Exhibit A

Curriculum Vitae of Harvey K. Flad, Ph.D.

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EDUCATION

Ph.D., Syracuse University, Geography, 1973
MA, Syracuse University, Geography, 1972
BA, University of Colorado, 1962

EMPLOYMENT

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS (Vassar College)

Assistant Professor Geography 1973-79; Associate Professor 1980-89; Professor 1989-2004.

ADMINISTRATIVE APPOINTMENTS (Vassar College)

Chair, Faculty Policy and Conference Committee, 2001-2003; Director, American Culture Program, 1998-2001; Director, Exploring Transfer Program, 1999; Chairman, Department of Geology and Geography, 1988-1998;; Director, Office of Affirmative Action, 1991-1993; Director, Urban Studies Program, 1983

OTHER WORK EXPERIENCE

Executive Director, Hudson River Shorelands Task Force, Red Hook, NY, 1980-1981; Assistant Map Curator, American Geographical Society, New York, NY, 1965-1968; Peace Corps, Nigeria, 1962-1964

OTHER PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES (selected)

CONSULTATION AND EXPERT TESTIMONY

Senior Historical Consultant, *Hudson Rising*, History of the Hudson River exhibit, New-York Historical Society, New York, NY, March-August, 2019. Highly reviewed *NY Times*, etc. Thousands of viewers.

Expert witness, "Community Character Analysis," Finger Lakes LPG Storage, LLC, Town of Reading, Schuyler County, NY"; submitted on behalf of Earthjustice, January, 2015; negative determination of proposal by DEC Commissioner 2018; cited as one of the most important in understanding environmental and visual impact on the cultural landscape by NRDC, July 2018.

Historical consultant, *Crossing Waters*, documentary film, produced and directed by Jane Watson, 2016, on 19th C immigration to City of Poughkeepsie; winner numerous national and international awards.

Historical consultant, Greater Walkway Region Discovery Zone / Gateway signs, Branding subcommittee, Walkway Over the Hudson and Scenic Hudson, 2012-14.

Historical consultant, *The Seer of Poughkeepsie*, documentary film, produced and directed by Julia Johnson, Vassar College film department, 2013. Available on Vassar College Youtube.

Curatorial consultant, "Hudson River Panorama: 400 Years of History, Art & Culture," Albany Institute of History and Art, Hudson 400 exhibit for the Hudson-Fulton-Champlain Quadricentennial, 2009.

Cultural landscape consultant, "Landscape Character," Scenic Hudson, *et. al.* In visual impact assessment of Kingston Harbor proposal, 2006.

Cultural landscape consultant, "Community Character," Scenic Hudson, *et. al.* In Visual Impact Assessment of St. Lawrence Cement proposal, Hudson, NY. Albany, NY: Department of State, 2005. A negative determination defeated the proposal.

Editorial consultant, National Geographic Society, "Heart of the Hudson" by Patrick Smith in *National Geographic*, vol.189 (March, 1996), PP. 72-95.

Geography consultant, United States Information Agency (USIA), technical assistance to University of Klaipeda, Lithuania, 1995.

Cultural landscape consultant, Delaware County Historical Association, for exhibit on ethnic resorts in the Catskills, NEH and NYS Council on the Arts Folk Arts Program grants, 1994.
 Cultural Landscape consultant, The Berkshire Museum, Pittsfield, MA, for exhibit "Labor and Leisure in Berkshire County," 1987-88. National Endowment for the Humanities, 1988.
 Expert witness, "Prepared Testimony in the Matter of Central Hudson Gas & Electric Corp. Danskammer Coal Conversion", NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, submitted on behalf of Scenic Hudson, Inc., co-authored with John F. Sears, 1984.
 Expert witness, "Prepared Testimony on Aesthetic Impact of Greene County Nuclear Power Plant," submitted on behalf of Columbia County Historical Society, *et al.*, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and Power Authority of the State of New York, Case 8006, Docket No. 50-549, Albany, NY, March 2, 1979. (60 pp.); cited as creating Visual Impact Analysis.

1. FELLOWSHIPS, GRANTS, HONORS, AWARDS

Helen Wilkinson Reynolds Award for Scholarship, Dutchess County Historical Association, 2010.

Senior Associate Fellow, Association of American Geographers, 2005.

Russel Wright Award for Environmental Preservation, Manitoga, 2003.

Fulbright Fellow, awarded 1996 for Lectureship in Kyrgyzstan, Central Asia, 1997-1998.

Ford Scholar Program Research grants, 1990, 1994, 2003.

Research Resident Fellow, New York State Library, Albany, N.Y., 1993-1994.

Research Fellow, The Institute on Man and Science, Rensselaerville, NY 1977-78.

County Award, Dutchess County Cooperative Extension Association, 1977.

Ford Fellowship in Ethnic Studies, Ford Foundation, 1971-72.

PUBLICATIONS

3.1. BOOKS, MONOGRAPHS

Main Street to Mainframes: Landscape and Social Change in Poughkeepsie. (Co-author Clyde Griffen)

Albany: The State University of New York Press, 2009. ISBN: 978-1-4384-2613-6.

Blighted Empire: The Visual Environment of New York State. Albany: New York State Council of

Environmental Advisors, 1975. (Cited by the *New York Times* in article and editorial).

ARTICLES, ESSAYS and CHAPTERS IN BOOKS

"Saving Springside: Preserving Andrew Jackson Downing's Last Landscape," *The Hudson River Valley Review*, vol. 34, no. 1 (Autumn 2017), pp., 18-44.

"Scenes 'most impressive and delightful': Nineteenth-century Artists in the Shawangunks, *The Hudson River Valley Review*, vol. 31, no. 1 (Autumn 2014), pp., 95-120, 134-36.

"Photographs as Place Makers of the Urban Landscape: Poughkeepsie's Downtown," *Thinking Historically: Dutchess County Historical Society 2014 Yearbook*, vol. 93, pp. 25-34.

"IBM's Early Days in the Hudson Valley: Poughkeepsie and Kingston," in *Kingston-The IBM Years*, ed. The Friends of Historic Kingston (Delmar, NY: Black Dome Press, 2014), pp. 9-32.

"The Influence of the Hudson River School of Art in the Preservation of the River, its Natural and Cultural Landscape, and the Evolution of Environmental Law, Chapt. 20 in Robert E. Henshaw, ed., *Environmental History of the Hudson River: Human Uses That Changed Ecology, Ecology That Changed Human Uses* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2011), pp. 293-313.

"The Hudson River Valley and the Geographical Imagination," *AAG Newsletter*, vol. 46, no. 5 (May 2011), pp. 1, 10-11.

"History of Urban Studies at Vassar College," "Histories" web page, Sesquicentennial web site, (Vassar College, 2010), <http://150.vassar.edu/histories/urban-studies/index.html>.

- "History of Earth Science and Geography at Vassar College," "Histories" web page, Vassar 150 web site, (Vassar College, 2010), <http://150.vassar.edu/histories/earth-science-and-geography/index.html>.
- "The Natural Resources of Dutchess County in the Past, Present and Future," Natural Resource Inventory web site, (Poughkeepsie, NY: Dutchess County Department of Planning and Development, 2010), <http://www.co.dutchess.ny.us/CountyGov/Departments/Planning/19401.htm>
- "The Parlor in the Wilderness: Domesticating America's First Iconic Landscape," *Geographical Review* vol. 99, no. 3 (July, 2009): 356-376.
- "Photography Changes Our Perspective of the American Landscape," (Smithsonian Institution, Click! Photography Changes Everything, 2009), <http://click.si.edu/Story.aspx?story=271>.
- "A Tree and Its Neighbors: Creating Community Open Space," co-authored with Craig M. Dalton, *Hudson River Valley Review*, vol. 21, no. 2 (Spring, 2005), pp. 56-67.
- "Audubon Terrace, The American Geographical Society, and the Sense of Place," *Geographical Review*, vol. 94, no. 4 (October, 2004), pp. 519-529.
- "Introduction to Ed Zahniser, and 'Wilderness and Our Community of Life'," *The Forest Preserve*, vol. 18, no. 1 (October, 2004), pp. 50-1.
- "The Hudson River Valley and the Geographical Imagination," *Watershed Journal*, ed. Miwon Kwon. (N.Y.: Minetta Brook, 2002), pp. 45-55.
- Editor, *Seen From the Other Shore: English and American Landscapes*, by David Lowenthal. (John Christie Lecture Series) Poughkeepsie, NY: Vassar College, American Culture Program, 2001.
- "The Hudson River Valley and the Geographical Imagination," in Ines M. Miyares, Marianna Pavlovskaya and Gregory A. Pope, eds., *From the Hudson to the Hamptons: Snapshots of the New York Metropolitan Area*. (Washington, D.C.: Association of American Geographers, 2001), pp. 8-15.
- "Following 'the pleasant paths of Taste': The Travelers Eye and New World Landscapes," in *Humanizing Landscapes: Geography, Culture and the Magoon Collection*, exhibit catalogue. (Poughkeepsie, NY: Vassar College, Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, 2000), pp. 69-102.
- "The Parlor in the Landscape: Nineteenth Century Mountain House Resorts and the Shaping of Nature," in *European Identity and its Expression in Philosophy, Science, Literature and Art*. CD-Rom. Bergen, Norway: International Society for the Study of European Ideas, 2000.
- "War won when power plants lost" and "Modern roads rooted in the past," in *The Hudson Valley: Our Heritage, Our Future* (Poughkeepsie, NY: Poughkeepsie Journal, 2000), pp. 128 and 136-7.
- "Kyrgyzstan" and 200 other entries in *The Columbia Gazetteer of the World*. (NY: Columbia University Press, 1998)
- "Country Clutter: Visual Pollution and the Rural Roadscape," in *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 553 (Sept., 1997), pp. 117-129.
- "Matthew Vassar's Springside: '... the hand of Art, when guided by Taste'," in *Prophet with Honor: the Career of Andrew Jackson Downing*, ed. by George W. Tatum and Elizabeth B. MacDougall. (Dumbarton Oaks Colloquium on the History of Landscape Architecture XI). (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Trustees for Harvard University, 1989), pp. 219-257.
- "Hudson Valley Landscapes: Fieldtrips in the Hudson River Valley, New York State," in *North American Culture*, vol. 5, no. 2 (1989), pp. 39-63.
- "A Time of Readjustment: Urban Renewal in Poughkeepsie, New York, 1955- 75," in *Poughkeepsie's Past: New Perspectives*, ed. by Clyde Griffen. (Poughkeepsie, N.Y.: Dutchess County Historical Society, 1988), pp. 152-180.
- "Meaning (and Morality) in Preserved Landscapes," *North American Culture*, vol. 4, no. 2, pp. 4-21.
- "Preserving 'Springside': Andrew Jackson Downing's only extant landscape," *Bulletin of American Garden History*, Vol. II, 1 (Spring, 1987), pp. 2, 5.
- "The Country and the City," in *Meeting the Future on Purpose: Papers in Honor of Lewis Mumford*, edited by Richard C. Wiles. Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y.: The Bard College Center, 1983).
- "Preservation of an Historic Rural Landscape: Roles for Public and Private Sectors," co-authored with Robbe Stimson, in *Farmsteads and Market Towns: Preserving the Cultural Landscape*. (Albany, N.Y.: Preservation League of New York, 1982), pp. 32-36.
- "The Hudson River Shorelands Task Force: Citizen Participation in the Preservation of an Historic Landscape," *Partnership in Conservation* (Second Conference of National Trusts), (Edinburgh, Scotland: The National Trust of Scotland, 1980), pp. 57-62

RESEARCH REPORTS

The Philipstown Turnpike: An Historic Cultural Landscape Study. Prepared for the Putnam Preservation League, Patterson, New York, 1988.

Historic Preservation and Tourism in Dominica: Recommendations for Scotts Head and Soufrière. Prepared for the Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica, Ministry of Cultural Affairs and Tourism. Submitted in behalf of Dominica/Dutchess County Partners, 1986

Scenic District Management Plan for the Mid-Hudson Historic Shorelands Scenic Area, co-authored with Robert M. Toole and Robbe Stimson. Albany, N.Y.: NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, Heritage Task Force for the Hudson Valley, 1983.

EXHIBITS, VISUAL AND GRAPHIC PRODUCTIONS

A Digital Tour of Poughkeepsie, DVD. Produced by Urban Studies Program, Vassar College. (Script researcher, writer, and narrator), Vassar College, 2006; uploaded to Vassar YouTube, 2010.

"Humanizing Landscapes: Geography, Culture and the Magoon Collection". Gallery exhibit. (Co-curator of gallery exhibit). Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, Vassar College, Oct. 5-Dec.20, 2000.

"Panorama of the Hudson River from New York to Albany," map reproduction of original engravings by William Wade, 1845, republished in five panels with additions and changes over 135 years by Hudson River Sloop Clearwater 1980. (Principal project consultant); team also included artist Alan Gussow, art historian John K. Howat, and cinematographer Jack Ofield.

United States Geography, filmstrip program produced by the Encyclopedia Britannica Educational Corporation, Chicago, IL. (Principal program and design consultant of five series), 1977-1980. Coordinator of individual consultants in geography (Harm deBlij, Merle Prunty, James Vance, Richard Morrill, and Wilbur Zelinsky). Series 17111K, published 1979-80.

Hyde Park, 16mm film, produced and directed by Ralph Arlyck; co-produced by the Hyde Park Visual Environment Committee, with additional funds from NYS Council on the Arts. (Researcher and interviewer on the historical, social, and visual aspects of the "Sense of Place"). Poughkeepsie, NY: Ralph Arlyck Film, 1977. Winner of First Prize, National Trust for Historic Preservation Film Festival, Mobile, Ala., October, 1977. National television showing on PBS (Channel Thirteen, New York sponsoring station), April, 1978. Available on video-cassette from Timedexposures.com.

COMMISSIONS/BOARDS/PANELS

Mohonk Preserve, 1982 – 2020 Board of Directors; 1982-present, committee and advisory roles
Waterfront Advisory Commission, City of Poughkeepsie, 1986-1997, 2011-present.

Advisory panel, Manitoga-The Russel Wright National Historic site, 2003-present.

Annual Meeting, of the Association of American Geographers, New York, 2000-01 and 2011-12.

Science Advisory Panel, Smithsonian Photography Initiative, Smithsonian Institution, 2004.

Faculty host, Visiting Fulbright Scholars from Vietnam (1997-98) and Central Asia (2001)

Board of Review, New York State Archives, New York State Library, 1999-2000.

A.A.G. Committee on the Status of Women in Geography, 1998-2000

Founding member of Environmental Studies caucus, American Studies Association, 2000

Faculty, NEH Summer Institute for College Teachers, "Hudson River Valley Images and Texts:

Constructing a National Culture in Nineteenth-Century America," Vassar College, 1993

National Panel, Division of Preservation and Access, National Endowment for Humanities, 1991-92.

Advisory Panel, The Hudson River Valley--A Heritage for All Time, NYS D.E.C., 1979-80.

REVIEWS

Book reviews, professional journals:); *Journal of Regional Science* (2012, 2004);); *Geographical Review* (2004); *Society and Natural Resources* (2004); *H-Net Reviews in the Humanities & Social Sciences* (2011); *The Hudson River Valley Regional Review* (2018); 2021 commentary.

Manuscript reviews – both professional journals and scholarly publishers