NEW YORK
STATE OF
OPPORTUNITY

Department of
Environmental
Conservation

Catskills Advisory Group

Update

September 27, 2022

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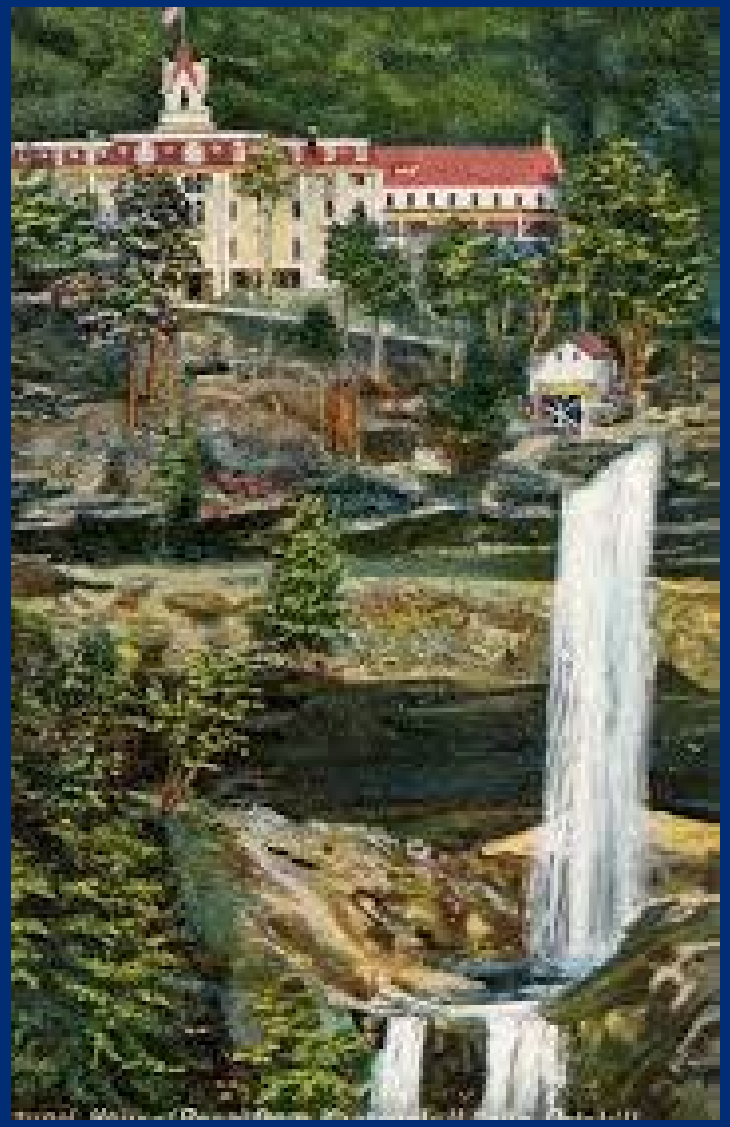
2020 State of the State Proposal

Protect High-Traffic Public Lands for Future Generations Governor Cuomo has recognized the outstanding value of our public lands and has improved plentiful recreational opportunities for New Yorkers...The three busiest trailheads in the Adirondack High Peaks Wilderness saw a 78 percent increase in registered hikers between 2007 and 2017. Trails in the Catskills have seen a 60 percent increase in use over the same period. Overall, tourism in the Adirondacks and the Catskills are up 22 percent since 2011.

State of the State Continued

To preserve these singular natural resources for future generations, New York will develop a framework to balance public use needs, working in collaboration with the State's newly formed Adirondack High Peaks Strategic Planning Advisory Group. The State will form a similar advisory group for the Catskills.



Catskill Advisory Group

- Created by Commissioner Seggos
- Local leaders from government, advocates for environment, recreation, people with disabilities, inclusion, economic development, scientists and researchers, local business owners
- Interim report was released in January
- Final report to be released by the end of the year

Catskill Advisory Group Charge

- Ensure public safety
- Address impacts in areas experiencing unsustainable public use
- Protect natural resources and recreation infrastructure
- Provide a quality recreation experience
- Support local economic vitality
- Ensure that science/fact-driven decisions making

The Report Themes

- Whole-park management
- Natural resources
- Marketing, communication and education
- Traffic and parking
- Benefits to park communities
- Diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice

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Whole-Park Management

- Catskill Park Coordinator
- Implement CAG recommendations
- Ample funding
- Visitor Use Management Framework
- Adequate staffing
- Data collection and monitoring

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Natural Resources

- Data collection and monitoring
- Natural resource protection as a driver for decision making
- Create a Catskill all-taxa biodiversity inventory

Marketing, Communication and Education

- Route 23A/Kaaterskill Clove
- Unified social media messaging
- Expand in-Person educational opportunities
- Inclusive communication

Traffic and Parking

- Kaaterskill Clove shuttle
- Prioritize solutions for hot spots
- Communicate traffic/parking availably in real-time

Benefits to Park Communities

Increase Park/Community Connectivity

- Encourage hut-to-hut hikes
- Create “Park Towns” or “Trail Towns”
- Develop trail links that would connect central business districts

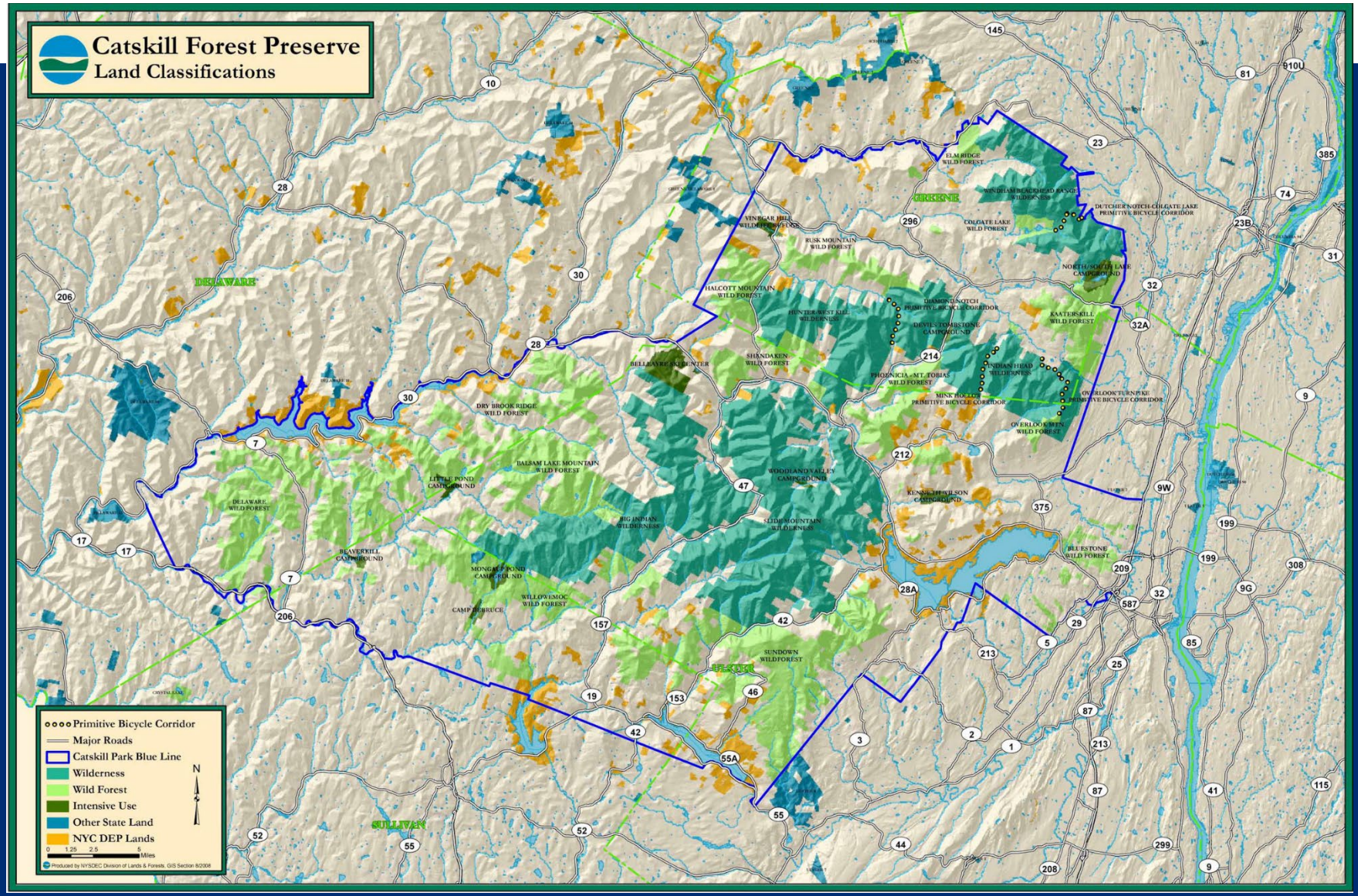
Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice

- Ensure public-facing park resources are inclusive
- Providing/updating facilities to meet accessibility standards
- Ensure DEC promotes diversity among its staff
- Examine the diversity of visitors and their economic impact
- Align park strategies with the “Open Spaces for All” report from OSI
- Create “Catskill Park DEIJ Working Group”

Visitor Use Management Framework - VUMF

- A process designed for land managers
- The intent is to provide high quality visitor experiences, while protecting natural/cultural resources
- Land managers collaboratively develop, implement, and monitor strategies and actions to provide sustainable access to lands and waters.
- Research will be needed to understand the current conditions of the natural resources.
- Social scientist will be needed to understand all aspects of the visitor make up and expectations
- Research is needed to understand the relationship between visitor use and impacts

Questions?



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