

Lake Taghkanic State Park

Columbia County
Towns of Gallatin and Taghkanic, NY



Lake Taghkanic State Park Draft Master Plan Executive Summary

October 31, 2024



New York State
Parks, Recreation and
Historic Preservation



Draft Executive Summary for Lake Taghkanic State Park Master Plan Towns of Gallatin & Taghkanic, Columbia County

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October 31, 2024

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Lake Taghkanic State Park Master Plan is the result of a coordinated effort by many people and groups. The Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation wishes to acknowledge the time and input provided by everyone who participated in the development of these documents. The Agency worked with and coordinated input from members of the public, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, the New York Natural Heritage Program, and many others who contributed to the development of this Master Plan.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) is proposing to adopt and implement a Master Plan for Lake Taghkanic State Park (LTSP). The Master Plan (“the Plan”) provides a framework for implementing improvements that will create a 21st century recreational destination for this facility, which will reach its 100th anniversary in 2029.

The Plan prioritizes the creation of a more accessible park with new recreational opportunities and expanded activities that will increase the Park’s relevance for existing and new visitors and foster a greater connection with its community.

Outreach and Public Input

Engaging a diverse group of stakeholders in the development of a master plan is integral to OPRHP’s planning process. Community support for changes to a facility that are proposed in the Plan will enable the park to offer experiences, educational content, and recreational opportunities relevant to a broad audience in the future. The LTSP Plan is intended to shape the Park in ways that will best accommodate visitors in the years to come. It is therefore essential that the proposed actions are informed by feedback from the Park’s diverse visitorship.

To ensure that park users, local interest groups, and other stakeholders were involved in creating the Master Plan, public meetings and visitor surveys were used to help inform Plan content. Hearing from those who use the facility and live or work in the area helps planners understand the Park’s key issues and identify its needs and any barriers to access. Feedback received from public outreach early in the planning process also informed the development of goals and a vision statement for the Park.



Public meetings were held early in the plan development process.

Early in the planning process, a public survey was conducted to ask visitors about their experiences at LTSP. The survey was circulated from August to December 2023 on social media and in the Park on posters with a QR code. The survey gathered information about visitation times, recreation amenities used, preferences for activity types, and ideas for future recreation offerings. A significant portion of LTSP’s visitors live outside the Park’s immediate area and, to maximize outreach, both virtual and in-person meetings were held in October 2023 and November 2023. The intent of these workshop-style meetings was to allow residents, elected officials, regular Park visitors, and other interested parties the opportunity to talk about their experiences at LTSP. Comments and stories from the participants helped paint a picture of how people use the Park and provided information essential to developing a meaningful and relevant Master Plan.

Additional opportunities for public input are provided once a complete Draft Master Plan is published, and the full Draft Plan will be publicly available to review on the

OPRHP website. During the public comment period both virtual and in-person meetings will be held to allow stakeholders the opportunity to provide feedback on actions proposed in the Plan. Subsequently, the Final Master Plan will include an appendix that includes all substantive public comments received during the review period, along with the Agency's responses.

Park Setting and Background

Lake Taghkanic State Park is in the Taconic Region of OPRHP's administrative system. The Park encompasses 1,850 acres in the south-central part of Columbia County, straddling the line separating the Towns of Gallatin and Taghkanic. The closest city is Hudson, NY (Columbia County seat), approximately 12 miles to the northwest. The Village of Rhinebeck is about 15 miles to the southwest. Both are historic Hudson River settlements and popular regional destinations for shopping, dining, sightseeing, outdoor recreation, and cultural tourism.

Access to LTSP is from one of two entrances. The primary public access point is a dedicated entrance on the Taconic State Parkway (TSP) on the Park's west boundary. An entrance on NY 82 on the Park's east border is used by larger vehicles, which are not permitted on the TSP. No public transportation is available directly to the Park. Public bus lines do not service the Park and the closest rail line is the Amtrak train station in the City of Hudson. Bicycle access to LTSP is possible and a regional system of state bike routes includes the Route 9H corridor in Columbia County (state bicycle routes are travel lanes where motorists and bicyclists must "share the road").

The Park's mailing address is 1528 State Route 82, Ancram, NY 12502. A map showing LTSP's property boundary is available in the Appendices, Figure 1.

Park Resources

The planning process begins with a study of existing conditions. For Plan purposes, the Park's existing resources are organized within the following broad categories:

Natural Resources – Flora, fauna, natural habitats, rare and endangered species

Cultural Resources – Archeological, architectural, and historical/cultural resources

Recreational Resources – Natural areas, built facilities, and recreation programs and activities

Education, Interpretation, and Outreach – Public programs, interpretation, and other educational content and outreach strategies

Operations, Infrastructure, and Facilities – Park infrastructure, including buildings, roads, and utilities, and management practices that support the operation and maintenance of the Park

Need for a Master Plan

Lake Taghkanic State Park has never had a master plan. New elements have been added to the park or adapted as needed over time. In 2029 the Park will turn 100 years old, and, over the past century, outdoor public recreation has been subject to many changes. Today's challenges include aging and outdated infrastructure, issues of accessibility and equity and demographic shifts that are creating demand for new types of recreation, activities, and programs. The growing impacts of climate change are, increasingly, affecting the Park, adding new pressures to those responsible for operations and maintenance, as well as concerns about public health and safety. Considerations such as these call for a fresh look and new approaches.

Master plans provide a record of where a park is now, a vision of what it should be in the future, and specific actions needed to get it there. A thoughtfully designed plan identifies current conditions, needs, as well as barriers to park access. It seeks to create vital, inclusive places that foster well-being and community engagement. The plan sets a vision for the future park, with specific recommendations for actions that will help accomplish that vision.

Guiding Principles for Planning

Agency Mission and Policies

Master plans developed for OPRHP facilities are guided by the agency's mission statement: "To provide safe and enjoyable recreational and interpretive opportunities for all New York State residents and visitors and to be responsible stewards of our valuable natural, historic, and cultural resources." OPRHP also has agency-wide policies to address management issues commonly faced by its facilities. These cover topics such as accessibility, bird conservation, management of trees and wildlife, and more. OPRHP policy documents can be viewed at: <https://parks.ny.gov/inside-our-agency/public-documents.aspx>.

Lake Taghkanic State Park Vision Statement

An early step in the planning process is to develop a statement that describes LTSP in the future. The vision statement developed for this plan was used as a guide to develop recommended actions to be implemented at the Park over the next 10 to 15 years.

Lake Taghkanic State Park will be a safe and enjoyable, accessible, and welcoming facility that engages visitors year-round in a resilient natural setting. The Park will offer modern amenities and recreation facilities, with new opportunities to explore the Park's rich history. The reinvigorated park will engage its community with new partnerships that will enhance interpretation, recreation, and Park operations.

Master Plan Intended Outcomes

Based on an analysis of existing facility features, public input, and in the context of realizing the Agency's mission and vision statement, the following outcomes were developed to describe future conditions at LTSP that will result from Master Plan implementation:

LTSP offers accessible, relevant, and inclusive programs, recreational amenities, and activities that reflect current trends and preferences. The Park is a welcoming destination that engages its community and existing and new visitors.

The Park's historic Civilian Conservation Corps elements are appropriately preserved and revitalized for public use and enjoyment now and in the years to come.

The Park has safe, accessible pedestrian facilities that encourage visitors to get out of their cars and walk or bike.

The Park provides a safe and efficient work environment with updated maintenance facilities.

Circulation infrastructure at the Park allows for smooth traffic flow and provides a welcoming entrance experience.

The Park is resilient and sustainable, incorporating green infrastructure and solar energy.

Recommended Actions

The Master Plan is intended to inform agency actions and projects over the next 10 to 15 years. Recommended actions are organized by resource category. Below are projects and initiatives for the Park that have been identified as those that will best address the facility's needs and realize the Plan's vision. Both capital projects and those implemented using other mechanisms are included.

A wide array of potential actions to undertake at the Park were evaluated for their positive and negative impacts. (For the full analysis, see Appendix A.) Those found to be beneficial, reasonable, and that will best accommodate the facility's short- and long-term goals, were recommended for implementation. All recommended actions are described below.

Actions for Natural Resources

Stewardship

Expand on the existing knowledge and protection of Rare, Threatened, and Endangered (RTE) species, species of Special Concern (SC), and Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) in the Park.

In the past year, two new species with a State Conservation Status Rank of S3 (i.e., vulnerable in New York) were discovered at Lake Taghkanic State Park. Historical records indicate that the Park once supported several rare flora and fauna species not found during recent surveys. Future surveys will help determine the presence and extents of RTE and SC species and SGCN within the Park. Expanding knowledge and protection of these species, through habitat improvements and collaboration with local conservation organizations will preserve natural resources at the Park for generations to come.

Develop and implement an Environmental Stewardship Plan for LTSP.

An Environmental Stewardship Plan guides stewardship management actions at a facility. With limited resources and staff time, a Stewardship Plan for LTSP will help to prioritize stewardship actions to ensure the ecological health and biodiversity of the Park.

Invasive Species

Expand invasive species management efforts; develop and implement programs to promote public engagement and participation in invasive species management.

The proliferation of invasive species is detrimental to populations of native species and decreases the biodiversity of an area. At LTSP, Hemlock Woolly Adelgid has led to a decline in the number of Hemlock trees to the south of the lake, between the C, D, and B lots, and to the north of the campground. Continued treatment of this and other terrestrial invasive species will be more effective with active public participation.

With the lake as the Park's central feature, limiting the spread of aquatic invasives is a high priority and requires patron participation. Patron education will include information about how boats and bait buckets can carry invasive plant and animal species, and how to minimize the spread of invasives using best management practices.

Water Quality

Maintain the water quality of Lake Taghkanic by protecting the watershed's integrity and headwaters.

Swimming, boating, fishing, and hiking are some of the most popular recreational activities at the Park. Maintaining the lake's water quality is essential to the continued use and enjoyment of these activities.

Where feasible, using green infrastructure, right-sizing culverts, and stabilizing riparian zones will prevent runoff from entering the lake while providing an educational opportunity to increase knowledge and understanding of these strategies and practices.

Actions for Cultural Resources

Civilian Conservation Corps Elements

Renovate and retrofit the East Bathhouse as a community center with flexible interior spaces for programs, meetings, and other public uses and public outdoor space (e.g., patio, seating, fire pit).

The historic CCC-built East Bathhouse is highly vulnerable to loss. The Park's most significant 1930s-era feature, and a keystone of the Park's early infrastructure, today the Bathhouse is vacant and deteriorated. It is highly visible to visitors from the campground and to those driving or walking around the Park. The building offers a wonderful example of CCC architecture, exhibiting a skillful use of local materials, with a design that is both functional and welcoming. Addressing its condition and re-using this important feature as a community amenity is essential to the Park's integrity.

Dedicate a portion of the CCC-built East Bathhouse for education and interpretation.

The East Bathhouse is centrally located in the Park, on a rise, with dramatic views across the lake. It is a natural draw for visitors and is ideally scaled and located to serve as a gathering space. The central portion is well-designed to function as an educational hub for the Park with interpretative exhibits, educational programs, and a meeting place for on-site activities.

Improve the CCC campground by addressing needed cabin repairs, improving drainage sitewide, and adding new outdoor amenities (e.g., stone patios, picnic tables, or seating) at some cabin sites.

Now more than 80 years old, the Park's historic CCC cabins are an integral part of its recreation infrastructure. The cabins need significant work beyond the scope of ongoing maintenance activities to ensure they continue to be both functional for visitor use and effective representatives of the CCC's work for years to come. As part of the CCC story in the state overall, they are an important part of the Park's interpretive program. The cabins need to be cared for appropriately so they will continue to be available for future generations of visitors to enjoy.

Renovate the CCC Recreation Hall.

While only a portion of the Recreation Hall building retains original CCC elements, it is an important historic structure and amenity at the Park. The building provides campers with an accessible, family-friendly restroom and indoor public space. It is a natural gathering space at the Campground and a convenient size for meetings. The building also serves as a safe zone for visitors during storms and hazardous weather.

Rental Cottages

Upgrade utilities at the Park's rental cottages, repair deteriorated materials, and address code and accessibility issues where possible.

When creating the Park, the State purchased existing cottages around the lake that had been constructed by private homeowners in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Some cottages were relocated to create a "family colony"-style community at their present location. Many have been rented by the same families over multiple generations. Most have outdated fixtures and aging utilities, and some do not meet current building code. While the Park is working to update the cottages, because of their older and varied construction, it may not be feasible for all cottages to be retrofitted for universal accessibility.

Address circulation and site drainage issues around the Cottages; repair eroded and compacted areas and improve visitor access to the lakefront.

The Cottage area has chronic drainage issues. The clay soils don't allow stormwater to infiltrate, and runoff has caused erosion. Visitors drive on lawns and walking paths to access them, which has led to soil compaction and areas of patchy lawn. Walkways and access paths to most Cottages are not universally accessible, and many entrances are reached only by steps.

Replace three rental Cottages with ADA accessible units.

Lakeside rentals are in high demand, and the loss of three cottages at the Park (from fire and structural issues) has resulted in fewer units available for visitors to enjoy and a loss of revenue for the Park. New cottages will be ADA and code compliant and will be designed to integrate into the overall aesthetic of the Cottage community.

Demolish and remove the barn and house at the Park's Reesa Farm section.

Acquired by NYS in 1962, the Reesa Property has a circa 1870s barn and farmhouse. Trail connections have been developed on the property, but the buildings have remained vacant and unused. A field assessment by DHP staff identified substantial structural deterioration to the barn and found the former residence in very poor condition. The property is accessible by car only from outside the Park and its location on its northern periphery makes active facility use impracticable. With no clear purpose for the buildings, their level of deterioration makes rehabilitation for Park use financially untenable.

Actions for Recreational Resources

Biking

Enhance biking amenities to facilitate non-vehicular transportation within the Park.

The distance between the Campground and West Beach is approximately one mile, yet most patrons choose to drive as no comfortable cycling route exists. Improving biking amenities along the route will make cycling between destination points more practicable.

Explore options for providing bike/scooter rentals for use within the Park.

Providing bike/scooter rentals would make biking within the Park more accessible and decrease the number of vehicle trips within the Park.

Courts and Ballfields

Install a pickleball court at Parking Lot B.

Pickleball has become increasingly popular in recent decades and there is demand for court activities in Columbia County. Adding pickleball to the Park will provide an additional recreational activity for campers and attract new visitors to the Park. Pickleball courts will address the Master Plan objective to provide recreational amenities and activities that reflect current trends and preferences.

Update the Basketball Court to meet current safety standards.

The Park's basketball court is a popular recreational amenity. Updating the basketball court will ensure the continuation of this recreational activity and visitor health and safety.

Improve the drainage, raise, and resurface the ballfield.

Drainage of the ballfield has been a persistent issue due to its low-lying location. Improvements have been made over the years, but issues remain, particularly after heavy rain when the field can take up to

a week to completely dry out. Raising and resurfacing the field will make for more desirable field conditions and allow for regular maintenance.

Lake Activities

Install a boat storage structure by the East Boat Launch.

Boats are stored haphazardly along the lake shore by the East Boat Launch, disrupting the otherwise scenic views in this area. Adding a boat storage structure will increase the functionality and aesthetic appeal of the boat launch area.

Relocate the East Boat Launch for more direct access to the lake.

Relocating the East Boat Launch will allow patrons more direct access to the lake and prevent the need for a large turn while backing down to the launch.

Install an ADA-compliant kayak launch at the East Boat Launch.

The lack of accessible docks and launches limits boating opportunities. Installing an ADA-compliant kayak launch will increase the park's overall accessibility and expand access to the lake for those with mobility challenges.

Improve the Park's boat rental facilities by installing an ADA-compliant dock and upgrading connectivity for credit card use at the rental shed.

Boats are pulled on and off the lakeshore multiple times a day during the rental season, causing wear and tear to the shoreline. Storing the boats on the dock will reduce damage to both the shoreline and the boats and improve the visitor experience. A dock will also provide the opportunity for an ADA-accessible launch. Being able to use credit cards at the boat rental shed will improve the user experience of boat rentals.

Install an ADA-compliant fishing pier at the West Beach.

The lack of accessible fishing areas limits fishing opportunities. Installing an accessible dock will improve access to the lake.

Trails

Repair or re-route low, wet, unsustainable, and eroded sections of the Park's existing trail system – repair culverts and bridges.

Repairs to the trails will improve the user experience, making the trail safer and easier to maintain. Issues with drainage, compaction, erosion, and wayfinding signage will be addressed.

Develop and implement a park-wide Trail Wayfinding Signage and Marking Plan.

A Trail Wayfinding Signage and Marking Plan will guide future trail improvements, providing the Park with a comprehensive and thoughtful approach to trail marking and signage.

Improve the snowmobiling experience by clearly indicating, both on the map and through signage on the trails, where snowmobiles are permitted.

Clearly marking where snowmobiles are permitted on the Park's trails will make snowmobiling in the Park safer and more enjoyable.

Expand the existing parking lot at the trail kiosk by the East Entrance (NY 82).

Expanding the gravel parking lot will ensure sufficient space to accommodate an increased number of trail users who may be drawn to the Park's east end by trail improvements.

Rehabilitate and improve the Lakeview Trail (LV) on the south side of the lake and designate the Lakeview Extension Trail (LVE) as the new Lakeview Trail for hiking.

Rerouting and repairing the popular Lakeview Trail will provide a more scenic experience. Trail enhancements will improve the user experience, making the trail safer and easier to maintain.

Eliminate wet trail segments of the Fitness Trail (FN), designate the section of the Lakeview Trail between the two intersections with the LVE as part of the FN, rename the trail as the Fitness Loop, and improve signage.

Repairs to the trails will improve the user experience, making the trail safer and easier to maintain. Eliminating sections of the trail will reduce confusion and improve wayfinding.

Develop a true Campground Loop Trail by adding an east-west cross trail connection from the left branch of the Campground Loop back to the Campground Loop trailhead; adjust the location of the Campground Loop trailhead for better access and less intrusion into campsites.

Upgrading the trail tread and relocating the entrance to the Campground Loop will improve the visitor experience, both for hiking and for campers in sites adjacent to the existing trailhead. Currently, visitors must walk back on the Park's main road to complete the loop. Adding the Campground Loop connection will enhance the trail experience, provide more route options, and improve safety.

Assess potential route options for creating an east-west trail connection between the Reesa's Farm Trail and the Campground Loop and implement if a viable route is determined.

Creating an East-West trail connection will improve the user experience and reduce or eliminate the need for hikers in the Park's northern section to walk back on the road.

Evaluate route options for a trail connecting from the Campground Loop east to the gravel parking lot by the East Entrance (NY 82) and implement if a viable route option is determined.

Creating a cohesive trail network with more trail connections will improve the hiking experience at LTSP. During the hunting season, this trail will provide an additional access route to the hunting area at the northern end of the Park.

Develop a linear trail in the southeast portion of the Park from County Route 8 to the Fitness Trail, with a spur leading to the Wildlife Viewing Area.

Adding a linear trail opens the property, acquired in 2020, to the public and provides more route options and access to a unique area of the Park. The Wildlife Viewing Area provides an enjoyable destination and an opportunity to view aquatic species and migratory birds.

Investigate options for connecting existing trails to the newly acquired property on old NY 82 and implement if appropriate.

Exploring trail options for the 2024 acquisition may expand public access and provide more trail route options. Trails into this area may not be feasible or desirable due to the presence of a large wetland.

Investigate the possibility of connecting the LTSP trail network to New Forge State Forest and implement, as appropriate.

Connecting LTSP with the nearby New Forge State Forest would offer LTSP visitors a complementary experience, with fishing opportunities, trails, and a scenic waterfall, in a more "undeveloped" setting. While a physical linkage may not be immediately feasible, providing a connection to the Forest through information at LTSP could be provided in the near term.

Actions for Education, Programming, and Interpretation

Education and Programs

Develop new programs that will engage both existing and new visitors and attract area residents to the Park year-round.

There is considerable demand for expanded educational content and recreational programs at LTSP, and staff would like to offer more activities, including developing more offerings in off-peak seasons. With many untapped subjects relevant to the Park and region, new programs would provide visitors with a richer, more meaningful experience at LTSP throughout the year.

Develop and implement nature programming for visitors of all ages.

There is high demand for nature programs at the Park, especially for overnight campers, who are often family groups with a range of ages. There is always interest in educational programs related to the environment and the Park's natural elements.

Develop educational programs and content that will expand access for visitors, including multilingual content.

The Park's visitorship is very diverse, and staff noted a need for multilingual content as well as programs and activities for visitors with a wide range of ages, backgrounds, and abilities.

Create seasonal, "floating" staff positions to develop and implement educational content at multiple parks across the Taconic Region.

LTSP staff have many creative ideas for new programs and activities, but a dedicated staff member is essential for these ideas to be effectively developed and implemented. While a full-time educational staff member is not required, part-time staff who float between parks will enable LTSP to offer new and more varied programming.

Develop an accessible interpretive route that incorporates a conceptual "timeline" that illustrates the site's progression from prehistory to the present.

To help meet the goal of expanding accessibility in all aspects of the Park's offerings, proposed educational material and recreational programs will be supported by new and retrofitted infrastructure. A themed walk will be developed on a segment of the Lakeside Trail, where a proposed multi-use path is planned. This feature will help to encourage walking and biking between different parts of the Park and offer accessible educational content that will engage a wide range of visitors.

Create short, entertaining informational videos to inform and educate visitors about the Park's amenities and expectations for behavior.

Park staff expressed a need for more targeted approaches to expand outreach and better inform visitors about existing and new amenities. Well-designed, short videos can instruct visitors about safe and acceptable behavior and may reduce staff time needed to address issues and make repairs.

Educate visitors about the historic value of the cabins and other CCC buildings to raise awareness of their significance.

Heavy seasonal use and year-round exposure to the elements puts a lot of wear and tear on the CCC cabins, and their aging materials are vulnerable to damage. Staff have posted signs in the cabins

explaining their historic significance and vulnerability and plan to develop short educational videos to help get the message out to a wider audience.

Explore possibilities for partnerships to support the development of new programs and activities.

Park staff have developed many productive partnerships over the years and will continue to build on these efforts. Collaborating with different types of organizations whose interests align with the Park's and Agency goals brings in fresh ideas and perspectives. It can spur creative thinking and help expand the mindset of both visitors and staff. Planning new programs and activities with a partner may also remove some pressure on staff to develop and implement new content.

Interpretation

Expand the Park's interpretative content and incorporate multi-modal methodologies (e.g., audio, visual, programming, tactile/interactive elements).

Recognizing that people learn and recreate in different ways, developing educational content and programs using a wider variety of methodologies will be an important component of new content. This approach to developing expanded interpretation at the Park is integral to achieving intended Master Plan outcomes of creating a more relevant, accessible, and welcoming facility.

Develop a nature-interpretive walk along a segment of the Lakeview Trail with interactive/tactile content appropriate for a greater range of abilities.

There is an audience for many types of interpretive content at LTSP. Offering interactive and multi-modal nature content will help visitors learn about the Park's natural elements as well as see first-hand the environmental issues that are affecting them. A nature-themed walk will also encourage people to explore the Park's trails and get out of their cars and into lower-use areas.

Develop a Comprehensive Signage Plan that assesses the Park function and needs, with recommendations for all signage types, including wayfinding, informational, and interpretive signs.

The Park has updated some signage in recent years. With the new amenities, infrastructure, and more comprehensive interpretive programming proposed in the Master Plan, it is important to ensure that a cohesive approach to signage is in place, consistent with ORPHP's signage guidelines.

Actions for Infrastructure and Operations

Camping Infrastructure

Redevelop a portion of the Campground Parking Lot for tent campsites and relocate some existing tent platforms into the new area to decrease density.

The tent site layout at the Park's campground reflects an older pattern of camping preference for clustered family groupings. Visitor comments indicate that tent sites are too close together and do not offer enough privacy. An adjacent parking lot is oversized for current demand and well-located close to campground facilities. The redevelopment will include trees and plantings and ADA-accessible sites will be incorporated into the new area. In addition to improving the visitor experience, environmental benefits include a reduction of impervious area that support Master Plan and agency stewardship and sustainability goals.

Improve the campground’s vehicular circulation, creating a more defined entrance that provides an improved “gateway” experience for campers.

Visitors enter the campground through a large parking lot, where information about the facility is not available. Creating a dedicated entrance for all camping access and including an information kiosk with maps and information will provide a better sense of arrival. An existing gravel road that may have been the original CCC entrance to the campground will be redeveloped to provide a clear access point for campers to enter.

Redevelop Parking Lot 1 for RV camping.

There is strong demand for RV camping in the Park’s region. Transforming a previously disturbed area into an RV campground will be a popular and potentially transformational addition to LTSP. Lot 1 is well-located near the lakefront, a Camp Store, and utility connections. Currently used to stockpile materials, this underutilized and unsightly area will become a greener and productive visitor amenity that supports Master Plan goals to provide updated recreational opportunities. This action works hand-in-hand with redevelopment plans for the East Bathhouse and other proposed Master Plan actions intended to revitalize this former activity hub in the Park.

Develop new tent campsites in the area west of the East Bathhouse.

Demand for camping at LTSP is high, and camping near water is especially popular. Adding campsites in this area will allow the Park to offer accessible tent sites, supporting Master Plan goals to develop a more accessible and inclusive facility. The area is located near an updated playground, the East Bathhouse, and the camp store, and parking is available at the nearby campground lot. This action is well-integrated with other redevelopment proposed in the East Beach/Bathhouse area.

Improve the accessibility of selected cabins in the campground.

The Park’s campground is set in a wooded area with steep slopes and stone outcroppings typical of the geography of the region. This scenic quality adds to its appeal, but also creates access challenges. Additionally, the interior layouts of the historic cabins often do not allow for ADA adaptations. The cabins will be assessed and, where feasible, will be retrofit for improved accessibility. As historically significant structures, any modifications will be reviewed by DHP. To accomplish the Master Plan vision of being welcoming and inclusive, it is important that the Park provides equitable opportunities for all users.

Operations and Maintenance

Relocate the East Maintenance Area to an adjacent location (at the existing fueling station/pole barn) with updated facilities.

The East Maintenance Area is in a visually prominent location near the Park’s main road where the buildings and equipment are visible to visitors. The buildings are in poor condition and the facility is sited close to the lakeshore, Waterfront land is the highest value resource at a public park and should be used for recreation. The facility visually impacts the adjacent historic Livingston cottage and a public boat launch. Relocating and updating the maintenance area to an existing site north of the road will reduce visibility of the operations, improve working conditions, and allow the current site to be restored as a natural setting for recreational use. EV chargers and electric equipment storage will be considered for the new facility.

Improve and update the West (Parkway) Maintenance Area at its current location.

The Parkway Maintenance Area (Parkway Garage) houses a carpentry shop, a Park Police building, and is used to store beach equipment. and the option of consolidating its two maintenance areas was considered, but the Park is large, and it was determined that keeping the Parkway facility in its existing location best supported staff activities and efficiency.

Park Police Building

Replace the Park Police Building with a new facility in a different location.

Representatives from the Taconic Region Park Police were consulted about the condition and functionality of the existing Park Police Building. They indicated that the internal layout of the building is not effective for some police operations. The building is not energy-efficient and does not meet ADA standards or current building codes. While it is important to maintain a Park Police presence at LTSP, the existing building is also located outside the Park's public areas. A more centrally located and visible facility closer to areas of high activity in the Park is preferable. A location for a new Park Police building has not yet been determined.

Remodel and update the existing Park Police Building.

The existing Park Police building is in moderately good condition and until a new facility can be built it can be adapted to be more energy-efficient and the internal layout modified to improve its function. Once a new building is in place the building will be repurposed for Park use.

Vehicular Infrastructure

Rehabilitate the West Beach Parking Area with green infrastructure including permeable pavement, tree islands, pedestrian walks, EV chargers, and bicycle racks.

Redeveloping the main visitor lot with green infrastructure offers the greatest opportunity for upgrading the Park and increasing resilience and promoting more sustainable transportation. The large West Beach Parking area is the Park's highest-use lot, in a highly visible location near the Park Office and West Bathhouse and overlooking the swimming beach. The lot has no trees, and its deteriorated pavement is unsightly and detracts from this scenic location. Its undefined layout without painted lines results in poor circulation and potentially unsafe conditions. Implementing this action is key to improving visitor safety and comfort at the Park as well as protecting the lake's water quality.

Relocate contact booths at the West (Parkway) Entrance further into Park and add electric/phone service, security components, and a battery-operated payment system.

On high-use days, cars entering from the west can back up onto the Taconic State Parkway, causing a potentially hazardous condition. The entrance booths do not have electricity or phone service and there is no climate control. Upgrading the booths and moving them farther into the Park will improve both circulation and staff working conditions, and result in an improved visitor experience.

Relocate the Park's East Entrance booth and provide electric/phone service and a battery-operated payment system.

The entrance booth on the Park's east side is located on the passenger side, which requires staff to walk in the active roadway. This potentially unsafe condition also causes slow-downs on high-use days. The booth has no phone service or climate control. Possible locations for the updated booth have been identified. The new booth location will include a turn-around area for improved circulation.

Non-Vehicular Infrastructure

Create a shared-use trail on the section of the Lakeview Trail between the West Beach and the Campground.

The distance between the Park's two main recreation amenities, the Campground and the West Beach, is approximately one mile. Most people drive to the beach and those who walk or bike often use the road, which can result in safety issues. Separating uses with level, paved routes is integral to improving accessibility and comfort for all abilities. Developing an accessible shared-use route between these two popular destinations will encourage foot traffic, strollers, and cyclists at the Park to be more inclined to leave their cars behind. Reducing car use improves safety and decreases user conflicts, as well as having environmental benefits.

Improve pedestrian facilities in paved areas by painting lined routes and crosswalks.

The Park's roadways and parking areas are mostly not lined to indicate use, lacking painted parking stalls and pedestrian crosswalks. This action addresses potential visitor safety issues while improving circulation and increasing pedestrian comfort.

Utilities and Water Infrastructure

Improve connectivity in the Park by installing fiber-optic cable for broadband connectivity at key points.

The East Maintenance Area, campground, and contact booth do not have landline telephones, internet, and cell connectivity. Without these services, staff communications can be difficult and there are safety concerns that might arise during emergencies. Visitor preferences indicate that there is high demand for internet connectivity at parks. Going forward, visitor demand for coverage will grow, and it is important to plan now for future needs.

Relocate electric lines currently on poles in recreation areas underground.

Moving electric utilities underground has multiple benefits. In addition to reducing visual impacts, electric lines and poles in recreation areas can present operational and safety challenges. With projected increases in severe weather, moving lines underground will increase the Park's resilience to climate change impacts.



The Park's water treatment facility uses water from the lake to provide potable water.

Increase the Park's quantity production of potable water.

The Park's water treatment system uses surface (lake) water to produce potable water of excellent quality. The treatment system is aging, however, and as components deteriorate there will be increased failures. As improvements in the Master Plan are implemented, demand for potable water will also likely increase. The Park needs to be prepared for future conditions by planning and implementing changes that will ensure a sufficient potable water supply in future years.

Modernize the Park's wastewater system.

Most of the Park's septic systems are at the end of their operational life, and some have begun to require replacement. The campground's septic systems are undersized and require frequent maintenance. Others were installed close to the lake when the Park was first developed and need to be relocated. New septic systems will also be needed to support redevelopment proposed in the east part of the Park. As the Lake is the Park's primary recreational resource, as well as its drinking water supply, any potential water quality impacts from septic fields must be anticipated and proactively addressed.

Complete the formal process for closing the landfill site.

The Park's landfill site has been unused since the early 1980s but has not been formally closed. Cost has been the primary factor in not completing the DEC process for closure of solid waste landfills. Implementing this action is in keeping with the agency's mission to be good stewards of the land.

Investigate opportunities for developing a free-standing solar project at the Park.

The region is interested in developing additional solar projects and would like to consider options at LTSP. This action supports agency directives to reduce reliance on fossil fuels and generate more renewable energy at its facilities. Several locations in the Park have been considered as potential sites but require further analysis.

Install small-scale solar installations on existing rooftops (cottages, bathrooms, maintenance buildings).

The solar installation on the West Beach Bathhouse roof has been a success story at the Park and generates a good quantity of electric power. Rooftop solar requires little maintenance and has only minor visual impacts. Specific sites have not been selected, but there are a range of potential opportunities for adding solar to existing structures at the site.

Incorporate solar elements as part of the redevelopment of the West Beach Parking Lot.

The large West Beach parking lot will be a model for green redevelopment. Solar installations in public settings offer the potential for public education while allowing the agency to offset its energy use. With anticipated increases in temperature extremes and more frequent intense storms, elements such as solar carports will provide a safer, more comfortable visitor experience.

Environmental Review

The environmental review for Master Plans at state facilities is conducted in accordance with the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA). A Full Environmental Assessment Form has been completed for this plan (including Parts 1, 2 and 3). The Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, as Lead Agency, has determined that the Lake Taghkanic State Park Master Plan and the projects implemented under the plan will result in no significant adverse impacts on the environment. Primarily, proposed actions have been located in existing disturbed areas that minimize clearing and grading in natural areas, minimizes additional stormwater impacts to natural areas, and moves potential impacts

(e.g., maintenance facilities, wastewater disposal) away from sensitive areas. Where projects have been located in natural areas (e.g. trails, dock, boat launch), footprints of disturbance have been minimized and projects have been located to avoid sensitive areas and rare, threatened and endangered species/significant ecological communities. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) has not been prepared. Documents completed for the environmental review of the Master Plan will be included in Appendix D of the Final version of the Plan.



Master Plan Implementation

The Draft Master Plan proposes phased implementation of prioritized actions that will stabilize, rehabilitate, and repurpose underutilized buildings, improve overall Park access, enhance natural resources, and create new or expanded recreational opportunities to reflect visitor needs.

Detailed cost estimates are not developed for proposed components in the plan, but improvements are likely to cumulatively cost tens of millions of dollars to implement. The pace and sequencing of recommended actions will be determined by the availability of funding (a function of OPRHP’s annual capital and operations budgets), the availability of staff, and the need to balance investments throughout OPRHP facilities statewide.

Once adopted, the Master Plan will be reviewed annually to select projects for inclusion in the Park’s budget and to assess the overall progress in plan implementation. Operational improvements that are already planned at the time of the Plan’s adoption will go forward as scheduled.

The **Action Implementation Priorities Table** on the following pages indicates all actions that are recommended for implementation. Proposed elements shown are subject to reorganization based on need and available funding.

LAKE TAGHKANIC STATE PARK
PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES TABLE

IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITY LEVEL	PROPOSED ACTION	CAPITAL PROJECT
Natural Resources		
Ongoing	Expand on the existing knowledge and protection of Rare, Threatened, and Endangered (RTE) species, species of Special Concern (SC), and Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) in the Park.	
Ongoing	Expand invasive species management efforts; develop and implement programs to promote public engagement and participation in invasive species management.	
Priority Level 2	Develop and implement an Environmental Stewardship Plan for LTSP.	
Priority Level 2	Maintain the water quality of Lake Taghkanic by protecting the watershed's integrity and headwaters.	
Cultural Resources		
Priority Level 1	Renovate and retrofit the East Bathhouse as a community center with flexible interior spaces for programs, meetings, and other public uses and public outdoor space (e.g., patio, seating, fire pit).	
Priority Level 1	Dedicate a portion of the CCC-built East Bathhouse for education and interpretation.	
Priority Level 1	Upgrade utilities at the Park's rental cottages, repair deteriorated materials, and address code and accessibility issues where possible.	
Priority Level 2	Improve the CCC campground by addressing needed cabin repairs, improving drainage sitewide, and adding new outdoor amenities (e.g., stone patios, picnic tables, or seating) at some cabin sites.	
Priority Level 2	Replace three rental Cottages with ADA accessible units.	
Priority Level 3	Renovate the CCC Recreation Hall.	
Priority Level 3	Address circulation and site drainage issues around the Cottages; repair eroded and compacted areas and improve visitor access to the lakefront.	
Priority Level 3	Demolish and remove the barn and house at the Park's Reesa Farm section.	
Recreational Resources		
Priority Level 1	Install a Pickleball Court at Parking Lot B.	
Priority Level 1	Improve the Park's boat rental facilities by adding an ADA-compliant dock and upgrading connectivity for credit card use at the rental shed.	
Priority Level 2	Install a boat storage structure by the East Boat Launch.	
Priority Level 2	Relocate the East Boat Launch for more direct access to the lake.	

LAKE TAGHKANIC STATE PARK
PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES TABLE

Priority Level 2	Install an ADA-compliant kayak launch at the East Boat Launch.	
Priority Level 2	Install an ADA-compliant fishing pier at the West Beach.	
Priority Level 2	Enhance biking amenities to facilitate non-vehicular transportation within the Park.	
Priority Level 3	Update the Basketball Court to meet current safety standards.	
Priority Level 3	Improve the drainage, raise, and resurface the ballfield.	
Priority Level 3	Explore options for providing bike/scooter rentals for use within the Park.	

Trails

Ongoing	Repair or re-route low, wet, unsustainable, and eroded sections of the Park's existing trail system – repair culverts and bridges.	
Ongoing	Develop a linear trail in the southeast portion of the Park from County Route 8 to the Fitness Trail, with a spur leading to the Wildlife Viewing Area.	
Ongoing	Develop a true Campground Loop Trail by adding an east-west cross trail connection from the left branch of the Campground Loop back to the Campground Loop trailhead; adjust the location of the Campground Loop trailhead for better access and less intrusion into campsites.	
Priority Level 1	Develop and implement a park-wide Trail Wayfinding Signage and Marking Plan.	
Priority Level 1	Rehabilitate and improve the Lakeview Trail (LV) on the south side of the lake and designate the Lakeview Extension Trail (LVE) as the new Lakeview Trail for hiking.	
Priority Level 1	Eliminate wet trail segments of the Fitness Trail (FN), designate the section of the Lakeview Trail between the two intersections with the LVE as part of the FN, rename the trail as the Fitness Loop, and improve signage.	
Priority Level 3	Improve the snowmobiling experience by clearly indicating, both on the map and through signage on the trails, where snowmobiles are permitted.	
Priority Level 3	Expand the existing parking lot at the trail kiosk by the East Entrance (NY 82).	
Priority Level 3	Assess potential route options for creating an east-west trail connection between the Reesa's Farm Trail and the Campground Loop and implement if a viable route is determined.	
Priority Level 3	Evaluate route options for a trail connecting from the Campground Loop east to the gravel parking lot by the East Entrance (NY 82) and implement if a viable route option is determined.	
Priority Level 3	Investigate options for connecting existing trails to the newly acquired property on old NY 82 and implement if appropriate.	
Priority Level 3	Investigate the possibility of connecting the LTSP trail network to New Forge State Forest and implement, as appropriate.	

Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

LAKE TAGHKANIC STATE PARK
PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES TABLE

Priority level 1	Create a shared-use trail on the section of the Lakeview Trail between the West Beach and the Campground.	
Priority level 1	Improve pedestrian facilities in paved areas by painting lined routes in parking areas, and adding crosswalks and ADA parking spaces.	
Camping		
Priority level 1	Assess pedestrian and vehicular accessibility issues in the Cottage area and implement improvements needed to increase accessibility.	
Priority level 1	Improve the accessibility of selected cabins in the campground.	
Priority level 2	Redevelop Parking Lot 1 for RV camping.	
Priority level 2	Improve the CCC cabins by addressing needed repairs and upgrade with outdoor amenities, where appropriate.	
Priority level 2	Address site drainage issues in the cottage area; repair eroded and compacted areas and improve access to the lakefront.	
Priority Level 3	Redevelop a portion of the Campground Parking Lot for tent campsites and relocate some existing tent platforms into the new area to decrease density.	
Priority Level 3	Develop new tent campsites in the area west of the East Bathhouse.	
Priority Level 3	Improve the campground's vehicular circulation, creating a more defined entrance that provides an improved "gateway" experience for campers.	
Education, Programming & Outreach		
Ongoing	Educate visitors about the historic value of the cabins and other CCC buildings to raise awareness of their significance.	
Priority Level 1	Develop new programs that will engage both existing and new visitors and attract area residents to the Park year-round.	
Priority Level 1	Develop a Comprehensive Signage Plan that assesses the Park function and needs, with recommendations for all signage types, including wayfinding, informational, and interpretive signs.	
Priority Level 1	Develop and implement nature programming for visitors of all ages.	
Priority Level 1	Develop educational programs and content that will expand access for visitors, including multilingual content.	
Priority Level 1	Create seasonal "floating" staff positions to develop and implement education/interpretation content at multiple parks across the Taconic Region.	
Priority Level 1	Explore possibilities for partnerships to support the development of new programs and activities.	
Priority level 2	Develop a nature-interpretive walk along a segment of the Lakeview Trail with interactive/tactile content appropriate for a greater range of abilities.	
Priority level 2	Develop an accessible interpretive route that incorporates a conceptual "timeline" that illustrates the site's progression from prehistory to the present.	

LAKE TAGHKANIC STATE PARK
PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES TABLE

Priority level 2	Create short, entertaining informational videos to inform and educate visitors about the Park's amenities and expectations for behavior.	
Priority level 2	Expand the Park's interpretative content and incorporate multi-modal methodologies (e.g., audio, visual, programming, tactile/interactive elements).	
Operations, Infrastructure and Facilities		
Priority Level 1	Rehabilitate the West Beach Parking Area with green infrastructure including permeable pavement, tree islands, pedestrian walks, EV chargers, and bicycle racks.	
Priority level 1	Complete the formal process for closing the landfill site.	
Priority level 2	Relocate the East Maintenance Area to an adjacent location with updated facilities.	
Priority level 2	Relocate contact booths at the West (Parkway) Entrance further into Park and add electric/phone service, security components, and a battery-operated payment system.	
Priority level 2	Relocate the contact booth at the East (NY 82) Entrance and provide electric/phone service and a battery-operated payment system.	
Priority level 2	Replace the existing Park Police Building with a new facility in a different location (to be determined).	
Priority level 2	Remodel and update the existing Park Police Building.	
Priority level 3	Remove the existing Quonset Hut and replace it with a new storage building.	
Utilities		
Ongoing	Increase the Park's quantity production of potable water.	
Priority level 1	Install small-scale solar installations on existing rooftops (cottages, bathrooms, maintenance buildings).	
Priority level 1	Incorporate solar elements as part of the redevelopment of the West Beach Parking Lot.	
Priority level 1	Relocate electric lines currently on poles in recreation areas underground.	
Priority level 1	Improve connectivity in the Park by installing fiber-optic cable for broadband connectivity at key points.	
Priority level 1	Modernize the Park's wastewater system.	
Priority level 3	Investigate opportunities for developing a free-standing solar project at the Park.	