

SHAWANGUNK MOUNTAINS SCENIC BYWAY



CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT PLAN



Cornfields at dusk, looking toward the mountains on Rt 208 near Birch Road in the Town of Shawangunk



SHAWANGUNK MOUNTAINS SCENIC BYWAY

CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT PLAN

October, 2005



Trapps Cliffs near the Mohonk Preserve Visitor Center, US 44/NY 55 in the town of Gardiner.

Presented by the Shawangunk Mountains Scenic Byway Steering Committee

John Valk, Jr., Chairman
Supervisor, Town of Shawangunk

Brinton Baker, Vice Chair
Representative, Town of Rochester

Don Wilen, Vice Chair
Supervisor, Town of New Paltz

Phil Jamison
Representative, Town of Crawford

Iris Friedman
Representative, Village of Ellenville

Carl Zatz
Supervisor, Town of Gardiner

Vincent T. Martello
Supervisor, Town of Marbletown

Susan Cockburn
Supervisor, Town of Montgomery

Jason West
Mayor, Village of New Paltz

Bob Gallagher
Supervisor, Town of Rosendale

Tom Gale
Representative, Town of Wawarsing

PROJECT MANAGER
Al Wegener, Landscape Consultant
New Paltz, NY (845) 255-3572

ADVISORS:

David Church, Commissioner
Orange County Planning

Alex Collins, Manager
Minnewaska State Park Preserve

Virginia Craft, Planner
Ulster County Planning Department

Dennis Doyle, Director
Ulster County Planning Department

Glenn Hoagland, Executive Director
Mohonk Preserve, Inc.

Cara Lee, Director
Shawangunk Ridge Program of
The Nature Conservancy

Joyce M. Minard, President
New Paltz Regional
Chamber of Commerce

Russell Robbins, NYSDOT
Senior Transportation Analyst

Lisa Weiss, NYSDOT
Scenic Byway Coordinator

PROJECT FISCAL SPONSOR
The Mohonk Preserve, Inc.

We would like to express our warm appreciation to the following people who contributed greatly to the development of this Plan by serving earlier as active members of the Steering Committee during their terms as officials of their municipalities: Town of Gardiner Supervisors Laura Walls and Jack Hayes, Town of Marbletown Supervisor Tom Jackson and Councilman Tim Sweeney, Town of Montgomery Supervisor Al Valk, Town of New Paltz Supervisor Carol Roper, Village of New Paltz Mayor Tom Nyquist, Town of Rosendale Supervisor Phil Terpening and Town of Wawarsing Representatives Greg Black and Hattie Grifo.

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And a round of thank yous to the over 250 people who participated in our meetings in all of the 11 municipalities around the Byway, and who expressed their enthusiasm, raised key issues and generated many of the ideas included in this Plan.

Credits:

The presentation was written by Al Wegener, except for the history of the region, which was researched and written by Wendy E. Harris M.A., R.P.A. of Cragmoor Consultants.

Art direction, layout and production coordination by Ad Essentials, New Paltz, NY. Linda Engler, President and Kristen Gardner, Graphic Designer. The folks at Ad Essentials gave unstintingly of their expertise, time and patience. Their full measure of helpfulness is appreciated by all of us who have worked on this project.

Photography by Al Wegener, except as indicated. Thank you to G. Steve Jordan, professional photographer, for contributing the use of his photos on pages 24 through 27, and to the many other fine photographers whose work is shown herein.

Cartography by Herb Chong of Peekskill. Maps for the sections of the route by Al Wegener and Ad Essentials.

Byway logo design by Dave Palmer, New York City, NY.

Georges Jacquemart, PE, AICP, and Maya Phatate, senior urban designer, of Buckhurst Fish & Jacquemart, Inc. provided transportation strategies and design assistance.



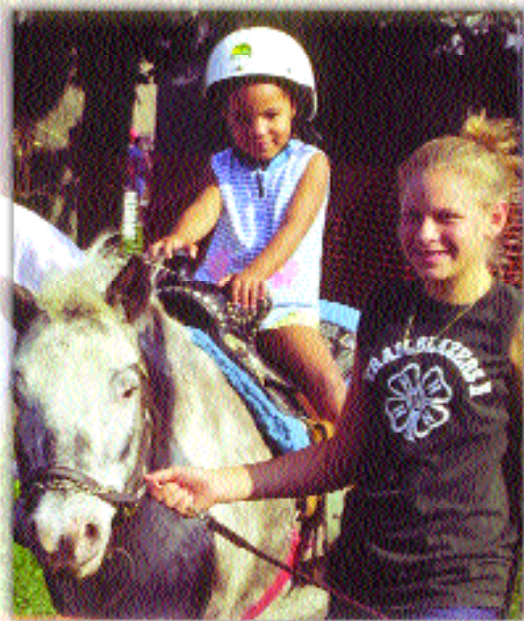


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Executive Summary

The idea of the Shawangunk (SHON-gum) Mountains Scenic Byway is to link together the communities around the northern Shawangunk Mountains and, in so doing, to give birth to a new region of New York State. . .the Shawangunk Mountains Region. Encircled by the 82-mile Byway, this new region of over 115,000 acres is wonderfully rich in scenic, natural, recreational and historic resources.

The beautiful Shawangunk Mountains cover 94,000 acres of our region and are the centerpiece of the Byway. The mountains can be seen throughout most of the route. The views, looking across a mostly rural countryside of farm fields and forests, are among the most pleasing New York State has to offer.

Named one of "Earth's Last Great Places" by The Nature Conservancy, the Shawangunks are cited in the New York State Open Space Plan as "one of the highest priority areas for biodiversity conservation in the northeastern United States." About 33,000 acres are protected, including lands of the Minnewaska State Park Preserve, The Mohonk Preserve and Sam's Point Preserve.

Several of the more than 35 natural communities are globally rare, such as the dwarf pine ridge community. And we have dozens of rare species, such as the mountain spleenwort and the timber rattlesnake. Our chestnut oak forest of over 38,000 acres is the second largest in New York State, and we have an extensive forest of hemlock-northern hardwoods.

North of the mountains is the Rondout Valley, with the Rondout Creek and other streams and kills. To the south is the Wallkill Valley, with the Wallkill River and the Shawangunk Kill, a DEC-designated Recreational River. Other natural resources in the region include the Shawangunk Grasslands National Wildlife Refuge and the Vernoo Kill State Forest.

Traveling along the Byway is one way to enjoy these scenic views and natural resources. In addition, we are proud to have over 250 miles of hiking trails, about 100 miles of mountain biking, nearly 150 miles of cross-country skiing and other recreational activities, such as rock climbing. In fact, more rock climbers come to the "Gunks" than to Yosemite or any place else in the U.S.

We can trace the history of our region back thousands of years, and are fortunate to have in a well-preserved state much evidence of life here going back to the late 1600's. In the Shawangunk Mountains Region, we are proud to have 56 listings on the National Registry of Historic Places. These include the Huguenot Street National Historic Landmark District, the Lake Mohonk National Historic Landmark, and eight other historic districts.

Much of our history involves industries that employed scores of people here for many years. The National Register includes sites with artifacts and remains of the D&H Canal at High Falls and Ellenville, the cement industry at the Snyder Estate Natural Cement Historic District and the Binnewater Historic District in Rosendale, the O&W Railroad in Wawarsing and the Tuthilltown Gristmill in Gardiner.

Together, these scenic, natural, recreational and historic resources help to tell the story of our region: the story of the towns and villages in the Rondout and Wallkill valleys and their connections for thousands of years with the northern Shawangunk Mountains as well as with each other.

Now these towns and villages have come together in a regional partnership with a plan for the Shawangunk Mountains Scenic Byway and the Shawangunk Mountains Region.

Our Plan is actually four mini-plans, although each is comprehensive and ambitious. Goals for these plans follow, with highlights of strategies and projects for each.

Tourism and Economic Development Plan

Goals: Build a strong identity for the Shawangunk Mountains Scenic Byway and Region. Improve the ability of each of the participating communities to benefit from the tourism that is attracted to our Region.

Strategies and Projects: Byway signage identifying the route, cooperation with state, county and local tourism groups, visitor centers in the Wallkill and Rondout valleys, information kiosks, general and special-interest communications, expansion of tourism-related resources.

Transportation Plan

Goals: Help to build a strong identity for the Shawangunk Mountains Scenic Byway and Region. Enhance the availability, convenience and safety of multimodal travel throughout the Byway. Upgrade the appearance along the Byway right-of-way.

Strategies and Projects: Improve guiderails and shoulders throughout the Region, redesign of certain intersections with preference for roundabouts, encouragement of bicycle and bus travel, enhanced landscaping and other aesthetic features along the right-of-way, including upgrading the attractiveness of our Main Streets, and better access management.

Preservation of Resources Plan

Goal: To encourage the preservation of the scenic, natural, recreational and historic resources of the Region.

Strategies and Projects: Guide development off the Ridge, encourage conservation subdivision design and open space planning, provide helpful information to local planning boards, utilize regional strategies for farmland and open space preservation, expand recreational opportunities on the Ridge and in the valleys, aid the preservation and presentation of historic resources.

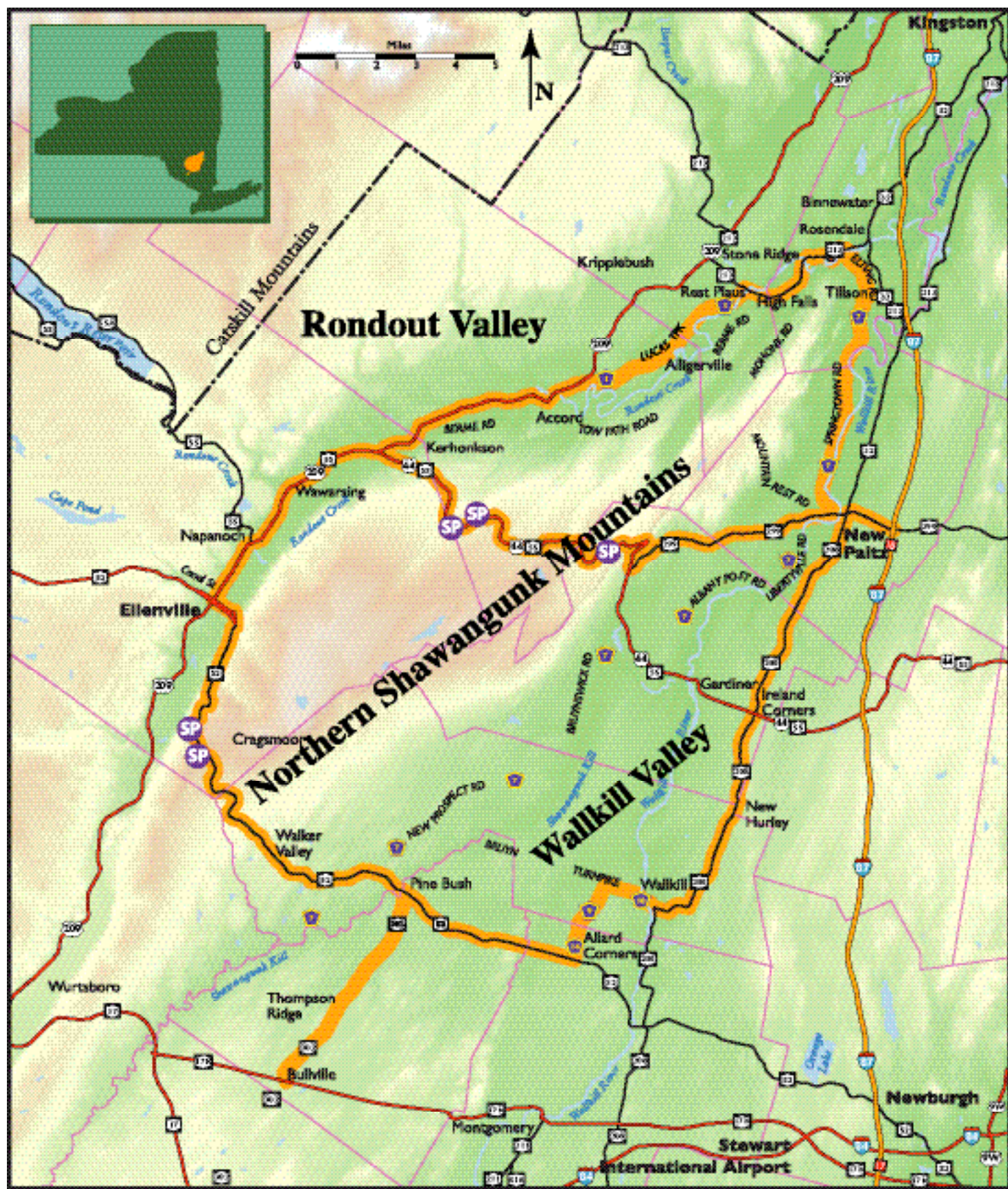
Plan for Management

Goal: To provide a regional management entity that will implement the Corridor Management Plan in a manner that respects home rule authority and also engages the active participation of the public in each of the communities along the route.

Strategies and Projects: Formation of the Shawangunk Mountains Regional Partnership by an intermunicipal agreement with an Executive Committee made up of the chief elected official or appointed representative of each of the nine towns and two villages along the Byway route. Guided by an Advisory Committee made up of State and County representatives as well as other key stakeholders in the Region.

Participation by the public and organizations in the communities on the working committees that will function on a continuing basis to assure implementation of the tourism, transportation and preservation plans. Financed through an organized multi-source funding program, and aided by a support/service staff.

Designation of the Shawangunk Mountains Scenic Byway and effective implementation of the Corridor Management Plan will add important scenic, natural, recreational and historic resources to the New York State Scenic Byways Program.



Introduction

One of the most unique areas of the eastern United States is located less than 90 miles north of New York City.

It's an area of over 115,000 acres with exceptional and diverse resources . . . scenic, natural, recreational and historic.

This is the area of the northern Shawangunk Mountains, and the valleys around the mountains, known since the days of the early Dutch settlers as the Wallkill and the Rondout.

The concept of the Shawangunk Mountains Scenic Byway is to link together the communities in these valleys that encircle the mountains. In so doing, we will be creating a new and distinctive region of New York State, a region bonded together by the common connection these communities have with the Shawangunks.

The idea of the byway dates back to 1997, when the Mohonk Preserve and Friends of the Shawangunks developed a planning study for the 12-mile road corridor along Routes 299 and 44/55. The study presented suggestions for accommodating growth while preserving the viewshed, and pointed out the possible benefits of State Scenic Byway designation.

To explore these possibilities, a steering committee was formed early in 2000, spearheaded by Al Wegener. Our process has followed a truly grass roots approach, with the general public involved through meetings held in our towns and villages.

Now our route is 82 beautiful miles long and includes all of the nine towns and two villages that encircle the northern Shawangunks. These local municipalities

have led the planning for our Byway through the participation of their chief elected official or officially-appointed representative on the Byway Steering Committee.

Through this process, we have shaped the story of our Region; namely, the connections over the years between the northern Shawangunk Mountains and the communities in the two surrounding valleys.

We have also gained a greater appreciation of the vast and wonderful resources we have in the Region. And we have a better understanding of the issues and opportunities involved in achieving our goals for tourism, transportation and preservation in our Region.

Our plan is organized as follows:

First, a description of the scenic, natural, recreational and historic resources of the region which we believe to be of true significance to the people of New York State.

Second, the concept, route and features of the Byway and the Region (corridor) as presented by route segments in the Guide.

Third, our vision and goals.

Fourth, the individual plans with strategies and projects to achieve our goals.

The appendix follows with a report of the public meetings and letters of support.

We respectfully submit this plan and look forward to designation by New York State of the Shawangunk Mountains Scenic Byway as a State Scenic Byway and a member of the New York State Scenic Byways Program.

John Valk, Jr.

Chairman of the Steering Committee
Supervisor, Town of Shawangunk

The New York State Scenic Byways Program:

A New York State-designated scenic byway is a road corridor with resources of regional significance. It offers an alternative travel route while telling a story about the State's natural beauty, heritage and/or recreational activities.

The program was launched in 1992 through Article XII-C of the State Highway Law. Now we have over 2,200 miles of road in the system. Some are Scenic Roads that were designated by NYS DEC, such as our Route 302, prior to the creation of the NYS DOT program. Some are State parkways, such as the Taconic and the Palisades. North Country Touring Routes are also included, as is the 504-mile Seaway Trail that parallels the

St. Lawrence River, Lake Ontario, the Niagara River and Lake Erie, and is the only National Scenic Byway in New York State. Lakes to Locks Passage is an All-American Scenic Byway.

State Scenic Byways include the Adirondack Trail, the Cayuga Lake Scenic Byway, the Dude Ranch Trail, the Military Trail, the Mohawk Towpath, the North Fork Trail Scenic Byway (on Long Island), the Olympic Trail, the Revolutionary Trail, the Roosevelt-Marcy Trail, the Route 20 Scenic Byway, Scenic Route 90, the Southern Adirondack Trail and the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway, which follows Route 97 from Port Jervis to the village of Hancock in Delaware County.



The Hudson River Valley Greenway

is exploring the feasibility and potential role of a coordinated scenic byways program that would involve NY State-designated Scenic Byways in the Hudson Valley. Recent discussions by the Greenway with the public at meetings in each of the counties indicate a commonality of possible

byway themes that might be promoted. This project is being guided by the Hudson River Valley Scenic Byways Steering Committee, and the Shawangunk Mountains Scenic Byway is represented on this committee.

The Shawangunk Mountains Scenic Byway:

The Shawangunk Mountains Scenic Byway would add to the State Byways system an 82-mile route, strategically located midway between metro New York and Albany, and well within a day's drive for folks from Philadelphia, Boston and New Jersey.

The Shawangunk Mountains Region, defined by the Byway loop, would add important resources of statewide significance . . . scenic, natural, recreational and historic . . . to the State's Byways program

Our Vision:

The Shawangunk Mountains Scenic Byway will be managed by a regional partnership of the eleven towns and villages that encircle the Northern Shawangunk Mountains. This is a coming together of the communities that, for thousands of years, have had a common bond with the Shawangunks.

Through this partnership, we seek to add a regional dimension to the vision and plans created at the local level by our towns and villages. Together, we strive to encourage growth and development while preserving those resources that are essential to the intrinsic character of our region.

The future we see is one in which:

The Shawangunk Mountains Region will be recognized as a distinct region of New York State.

Tourism will be spread throughout the region rather than concentrated on the Shawangunk Ridge.

Visitors to our region will be aware of our many scenic, natural, recreational and historic resources and will know how to access them as well as the places to dine, stay and shop.

Our recreational resources will be expanded and will include additional lands on the Ridge, fuller utilization of our waterways, more bicycling, and

public access to greenways linking open space areas in the valleys and adjacent to the Ridge.

We will be more aware of the rich history of our region and we will have an organized program for the interpretation and presentation of the vast historic resources we have throughout the region.

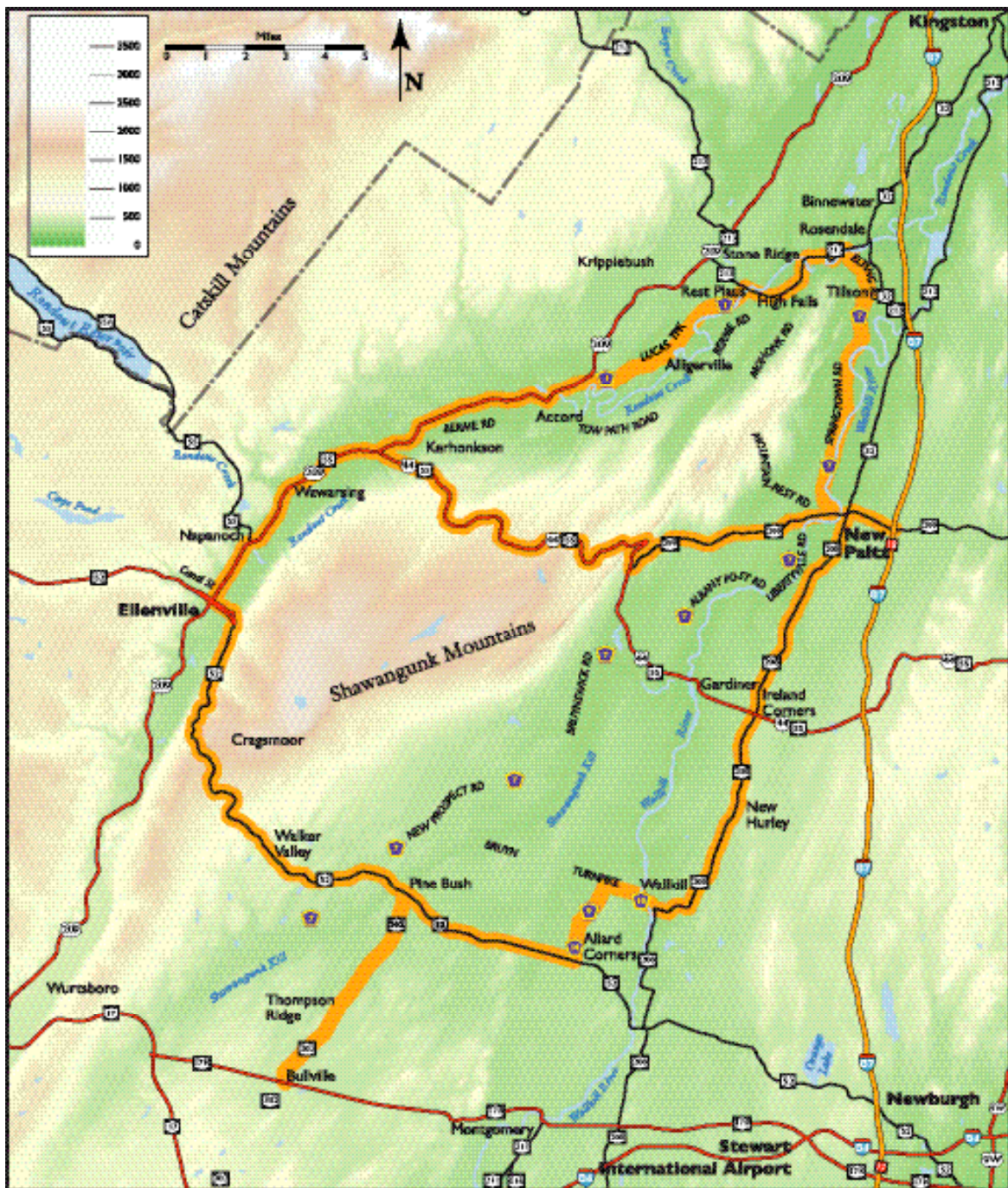
Our transportation system will be improved, particularly in regard to the New Paltz section, and traffic will flow smoother and more safely through certain intersections. We will have adequate shoulders for the safety of bicycle travel throughout the region. And we will have a more aesthetically-pleasing corridor, with improved design and access management, graced by landscaping in keeping with our rural countryside.

We will continue to preserve the unique biodiversity and natural landscape of the Shawangunk Ridge. We will preserve farmland and other agricultural resources. We will be engaged in on-going implementation of Open Space plans.

Although more housing will be built in our countryside, the impact of this on our scenic views will be minimized. We will continue, in particular, to enjoy the scenic views of the Shawangunks and be reassured of where we are.

Our Goals:

1. Build a strong identity for the Shawangunk Mountains Scenic Byway and Region.
2. Improve the ability of each of the participating communities to benefit from the tourism that is attracted to our Region.
3. Enhance the availability, convenience and safety of multimodal travel throughout the Region, and upgrade the appearance along the Byway right-of-way.
4. Encourage the preservation of the scenic, natural, recreational and historic resources of the Shawangunk Mountains Region.
5. Provide a management entity that will implement the Corridor Management Plan in a manner that respects home rule authority and engages the active participation of all the communities along the route.



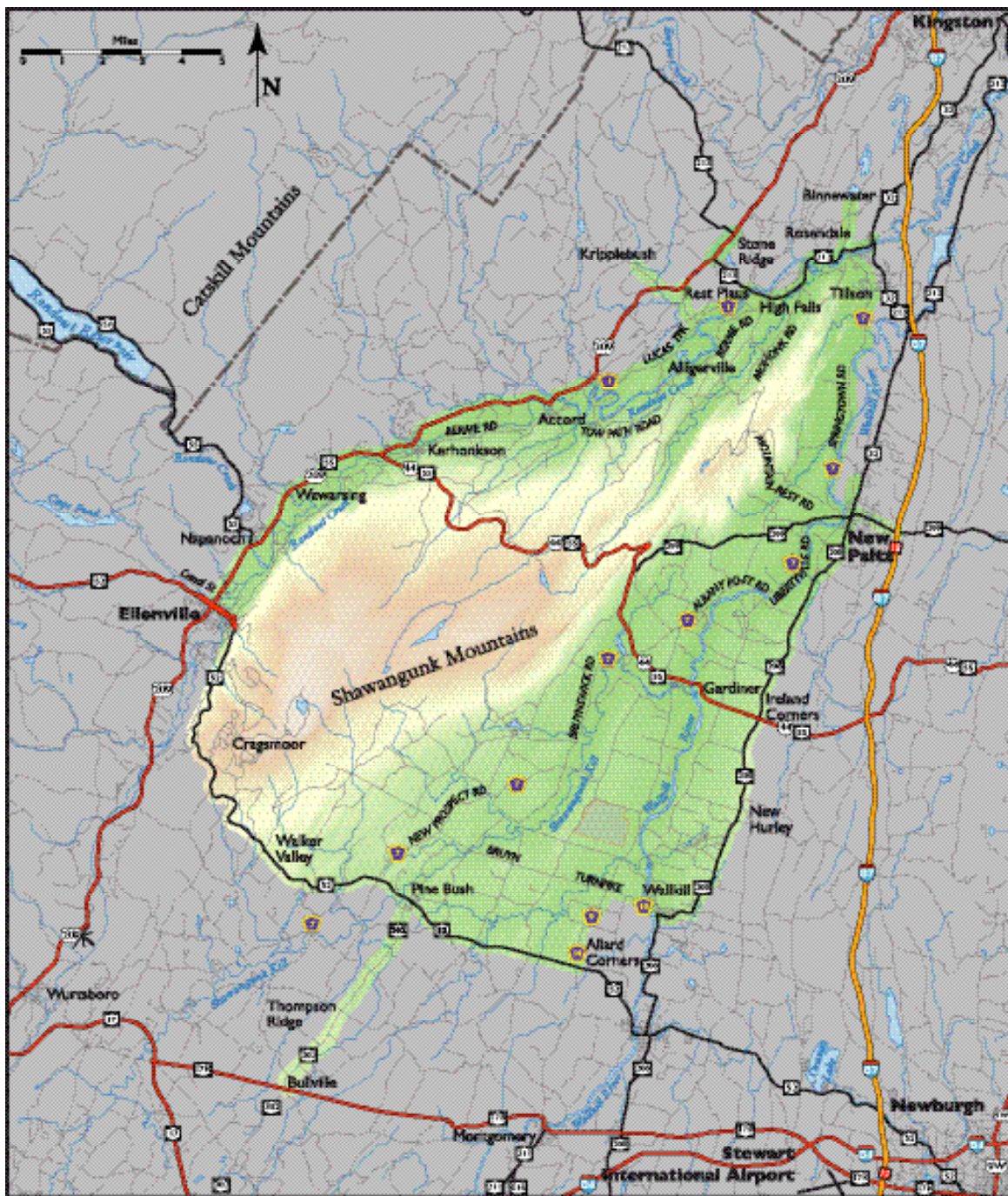
The Route of the Shawangunk Mountains Scenic Byway:

82 miles in all, the Byway route follows State and County roads, past mostly rural countryside, through the Shawangunk Mountains and down the main streets of our villages and hamlets. The route intersects key roads, providing numerous points of access, as mapped and detailed on pages G-2 and G-3.

The overall route may be visualized as a loop with a tail and a bisector. Traveling the route, one sees views of the mountains from all directions. And the bisector US 44/NY 55 and NY 52 go right over the mountains.

The 4.1 miles of Route 302 designated by the DEC in 1988 as a State Scenic Road have been integrated into the Shawangunk Mountains Scenic Byway.

In the future, as growth and other change occurs in the region, it may be desirable to add other road sections to the route, perhaps as "spurs" to the main route.



Shawangunk Mountains Scenic Byway Region:

The Shawangunk Mountains Region (corridor) includes all the area inside the loop and extends 1/4 mile outside the loop. The Region encompasses the Northern Shawangunk Mountains, our two valleys of the Wallkill (south and east) and the Rondout (north), and key resources such as the Mohonk Mountain House and the Huguenot Street Historic District.

We've also included the historic districts of Rest Plaus, Kripplebush, Stone Ridge and Binnewater, which are either adjacent to the route or very nearby, as well as historic Main Street, Rosendale.

The 3,688-acre Vernoo Kill State Forest, the largest parcel of an important corridor linking the Shawangunks to the Catskills, is also included. The Vernoo extends to the Byway along Route 209 and has its main entrance in Wawarsing.

In all, the Region covers an area of more than 115,000 acres.



SCENIC: The Albert K. Smiley Memorial Tower on Sky Top can be seen from many directions along the Byway route. This view is from Rt 299 just east of Yankee Folly Road.

Resource Overview

The Shawangunk Mountains Scenic Byway Region is wonderfully rich in scenic, natural, recreational and historic resources, and many of these are recognized to be significant from a state, national and even global perspective.

The New York State Open Space Plan, cites the Shawangunks as "one of the highest priority areas for biodiversity conservation in the northeastern United States " and refers to the exemplary natural communities here, several of which are globally rare, such as the dwarf pitch pine barrens.

A similar rating of our natural resources is voiced by The Nature Conservancy, which refers to the Shawangunks as one of "Earth's Last Great Places." Two of our preserves, at Sam's Point and the Mohonk Preserve, are registered as National Natural Landmarks.

The mountains are the centerpiece of the Byway, and are seen from nearly everywhere along the route, looking across a mostly rural countryside of farm fields and forests. The result is a visual harmony: scenic views which are among the most pleasing New York State has to offer.

The recreational resources take us outdoors to enjoy these views, with over 250 miles of hiking, about 100 miles of mountain biking and nearly 150 miles of cross-country skiing. And more rock climbers come to the "Gunks" than Yosemite or any place else in the United States.

With 56 listings on the National Register of Historic Places, the Byway Region has historic resources that are very much a part of our scenic landscape. These include many wonderful stone houses built in the late 1600's and nine historic districts.



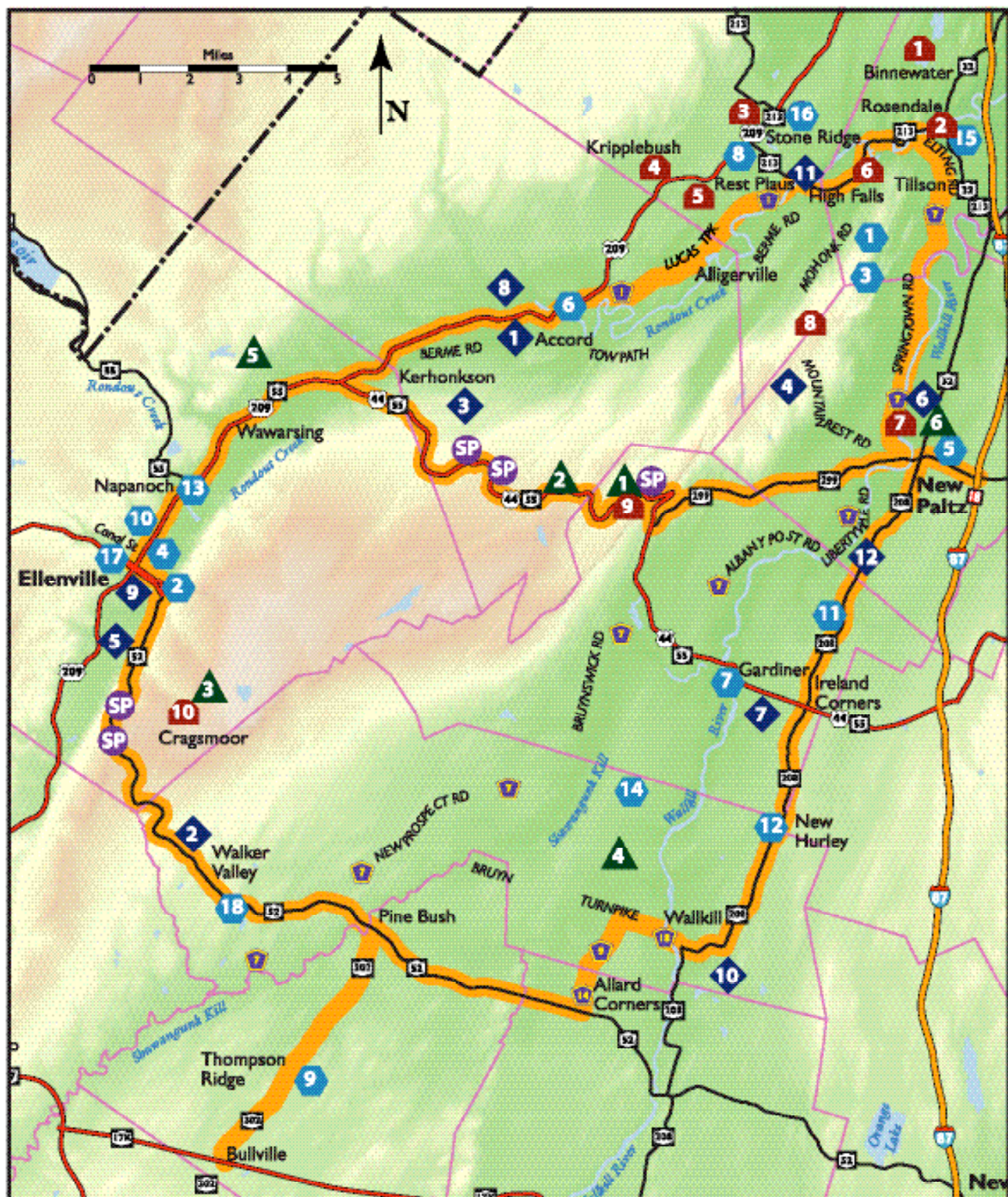
RECREATIONAL: Hiking along the D&H Canal Five Locks Walk in High Falls combines scenic recreation with a sense of history.



NATURAL: Lake Minnewaska and cliffs of erosion-resistant Shawangunk conglomerate, formed about 420 million years ago.



HISTORIC: Bevier-Elting House (1698) in the Huguenot Street National Historic Landmark District, one of 56 listings on the National Register. Huguenot Historical Society Photo.



Major Resources of the Shawangunk Mountains Region



Scenic Pullofts (5)



Preserves

1. Mohonk Preserve
2. Minnewaska State Park Preserve
3. Sam's Point Preserve
4. Shawangunk Grasslands
National Wildlife Refuge
5. Vernooy Kill State Forest
6. Harcourt Wildlife Sactuary



Recreational Areas

1. D&H Canal Heritage Corridor
2. Hang gliding
3. Hudson Valley Resort and Spa
4. Mohonk Mountain House
5. Nevele Grande Resort
6. New Paltz Golf Course
7. Ranch Parachute Club
8. Rondout Golf Club
9. Shawangunk Country Club
10. Shawangunk Town Rail Trail
11. Stone Dock Golf Course
12. Wallkill Valley Rail Trail



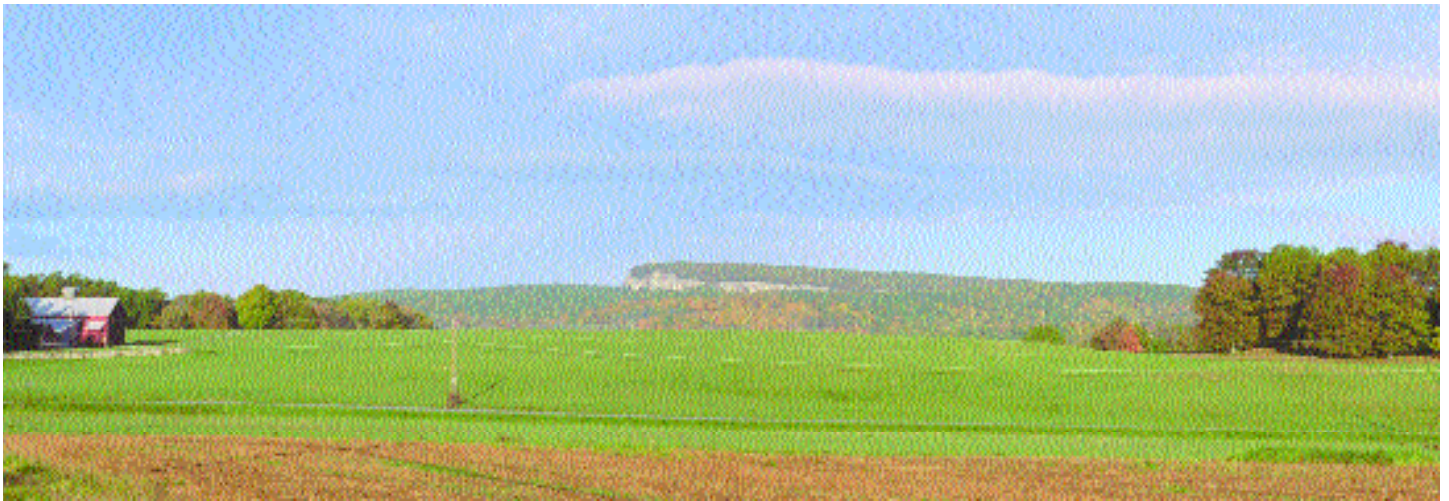
Historic Districts

1. Binnewater Historic District
2. Snyder Estate Historic District
3. Main Street Historic District in Stone Ridge
4. Kripplebush Historic District
5. Rest Plaus Historic District
6. High Falls Historic District
7. Huguenot Street National
Historic Landmark District
8. Lake Mohonk National Historic Landmark
9. Trapps Mountain Hamlet Historic District
10. Cragsmoor Historic District



Historic Sites with Public Access

1. D&H Canal Museum
2. D&H Canal Ticket Office
3. Depuy Canal House
4. Ellenville Village Square & PO
5. Elting Library
6. Friends of Historic Rochester
Museum & Meeting Room
7. Gardiner School
8. Hasbrouck House
9. Hopewell Presbyterian Church
10. Hunt Memorial Building
11. Kettleborough Schoolhouse
12. New Hurley Reformed Church
13. O&W Railroad Station
14. Reformed Church of Shawangunk
15. Rosendale Library
16. Stone Ridge Library
17. Terwilliger House Museum
18. Walker Valley Methodist Church



A. View looking north across Watchtower Farms fields and Sky Top opposite Wallkill View Farm Market.



B. Dairy farm along Rt 209 in Kerhonkson with views south of Sky Top.

Scenic Resources

The views shown in the photographs in this section are representative of the area and give the reader an idea of what is seen as one travels around the Byway. The photos are keyed to the map locations on page 27. Photos of the scenery along each section of the Byway route and within the Region are provided in the Guide, which follows page 53.

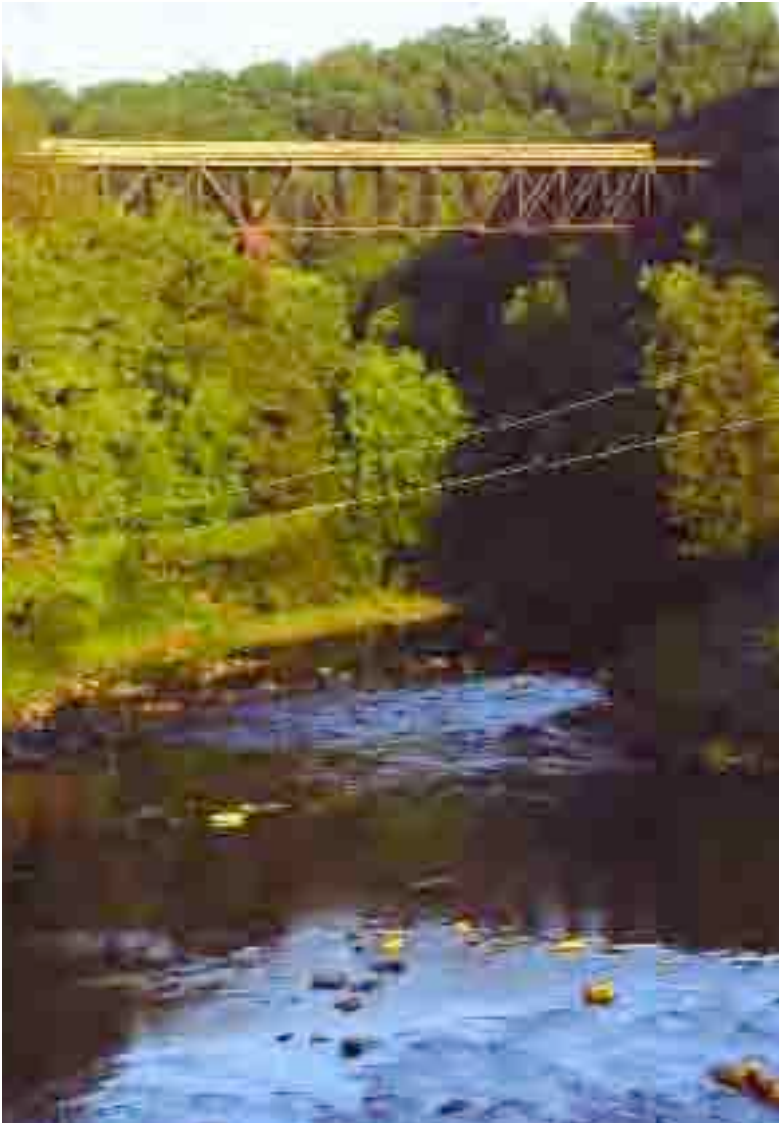
By encircling the Shawangunks, the Byway offers pleasing views of the mountains from every direction, and from near and afar. The hard white Shawangunk conglomerate rock, exposed and visible throughout the ridge, identifies these mountains. As one travels the route, the differences in the mountains from one place to another become evident. An alert observer is able to piece these together and mentally construct a visual montage of the entire expanse of the ridge.

The views of the mountains depend a lot on the agriculture and rural countryside we are still fortunate to enjoy here. We look out across orchards, rows of field and sweet corn, other vegetables, hay fields and pastures. And our eyes take in the farm houses, barns, silos and sheds, the fences, wagons and machinery, the livestock and horses.

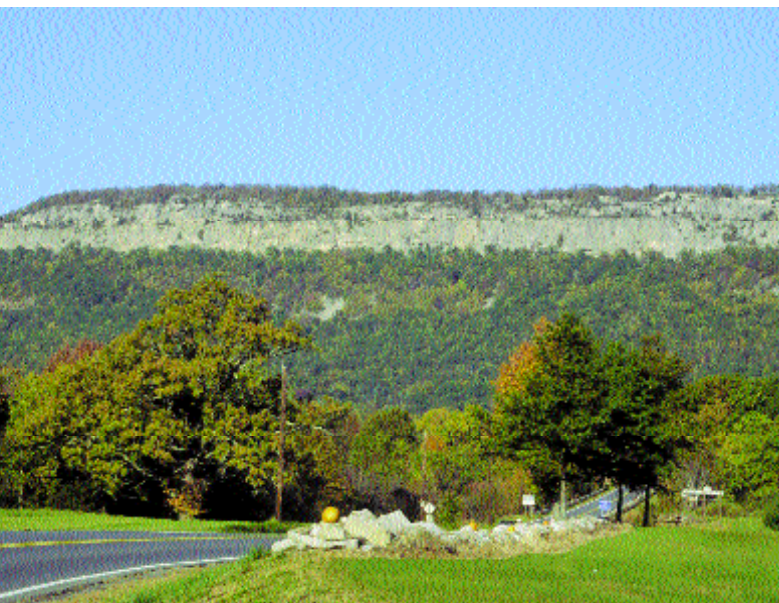
Although we are experiencing much change and population growth, this is still very much a rural countryside, with small villages and hamlets. In commercial areas, we have managed to avoid large stretches of out-of-character development. And, even in the built-up areas, the traveler is able to enjoy views of the Shawangunks and, off to the north and west of us, the Catskills.

The overall effect is one of harmony, a visual cohesiveness of the mountains with the surrounding rural countryside.

We still have this beauty here.



C. Rondout Creek from Rt 7 in Rosendale with old Wallkill Valley RR bridge.



D. Escarpment from Rt 299 by Jenkins-Luekins Orchards looking west.



E. Pullofs on Rts 44/55 and Rt 52 offer views of the Catskills.



F. Wallkill River flowing north toward the hamlet of Wallkill.



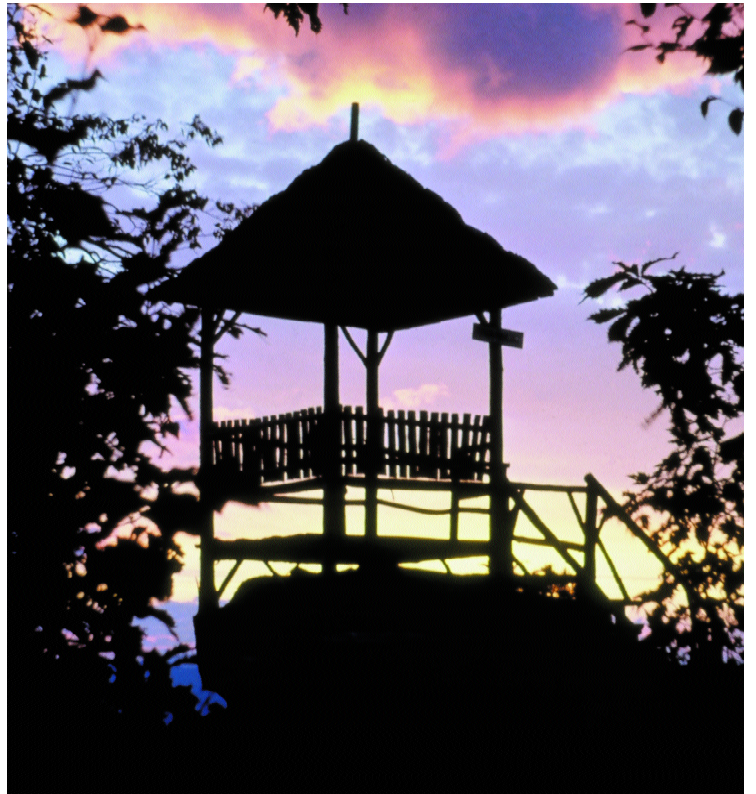
G. Col. Cornelius Whykoop house (1767) in the Stone Ridge Historic District, one of more than 50 colonial-era stone houses in the Region.



H. Thoroughbred mare and foal at Buckleigh Farms on Thompson Ridge, Rt 302, designated a State Scenic Road in 1988 by the DEC.



I. Mohonk Preserve's Bonticou Crag from Springtown Road, Rt 7.



J. Gazebo at the Mohonk Mountain House is one of more than 100 of these distinctive summer houses in the Region. Photo by Mohonk Mountain House

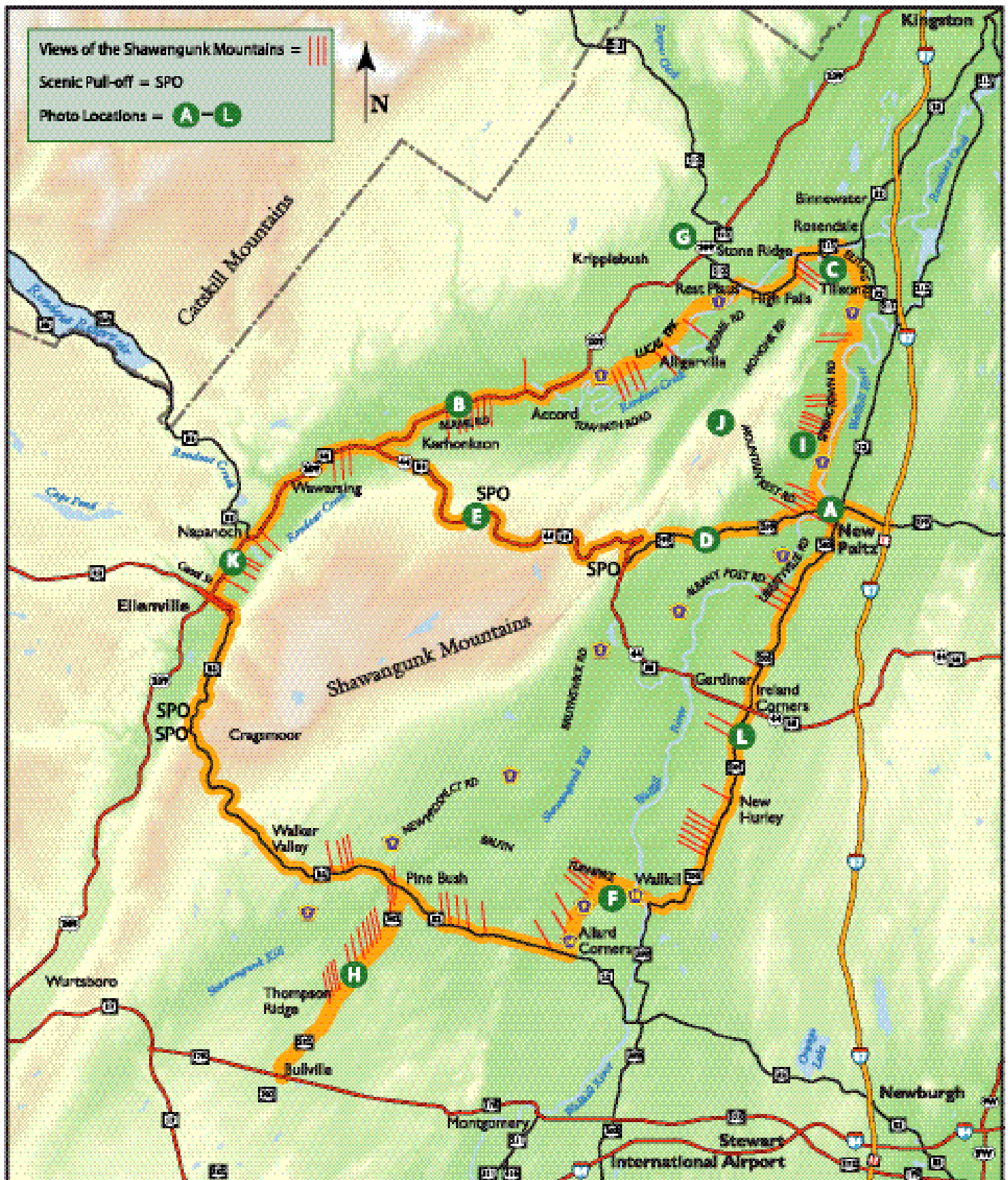


K. View to east from Rt 209 in Napanoch of Ridge rising above harvested cornfields of Eastern New York Correctional Facility.



L. Escarpment, looking northwest over orchards and farm buildings along Rt 208 just south of Rts 44/55.

Scenic Resources





Summer sun sets behind the Trapps at the Mohonk Preserve.



The Peterskill in autumn at the Minnewaska State Park Preserve.

Natural Resources

THE NORTHERN SHAWANGUNK MOUNTAINS

stretch 18 miles across the Byway region in a south-westerly direction from the Rondout Creek at Route 213 in Rosendale to below Sam's Point just beyond Route 52. From here south the mountains are less imposing and are known as the Southern Shawangunks in Sullivan County, the Kittatinny Mountains in New Jersey and the Blue Mountains in Pennsylvania.

In our Region, the most obvious feature of the mountains is the southeast-facing, stark white, sharp-edged cliffs that are visible for miles around. Put on a good pair of hiking boots and you'll find old farm fields leading into spacious forests with giant boulders and rock slabs, five glacier-formed lakes, and many clear streams or "kills", some plunging off the edge of cliffs as powerful waterfalls. Walk quietly and look closely and you may see plants and wildlife you have never seen before. Continue on and you'll reach barren windswept ridgetops with struggling pitch pines, and here, in this openness, you may discover the wonder of being surrounded by nature.

Naturalists and others have studied the Shawangunks for over 100 years and have reached some conclusions about these 94,000 acres that are worthy of notice.

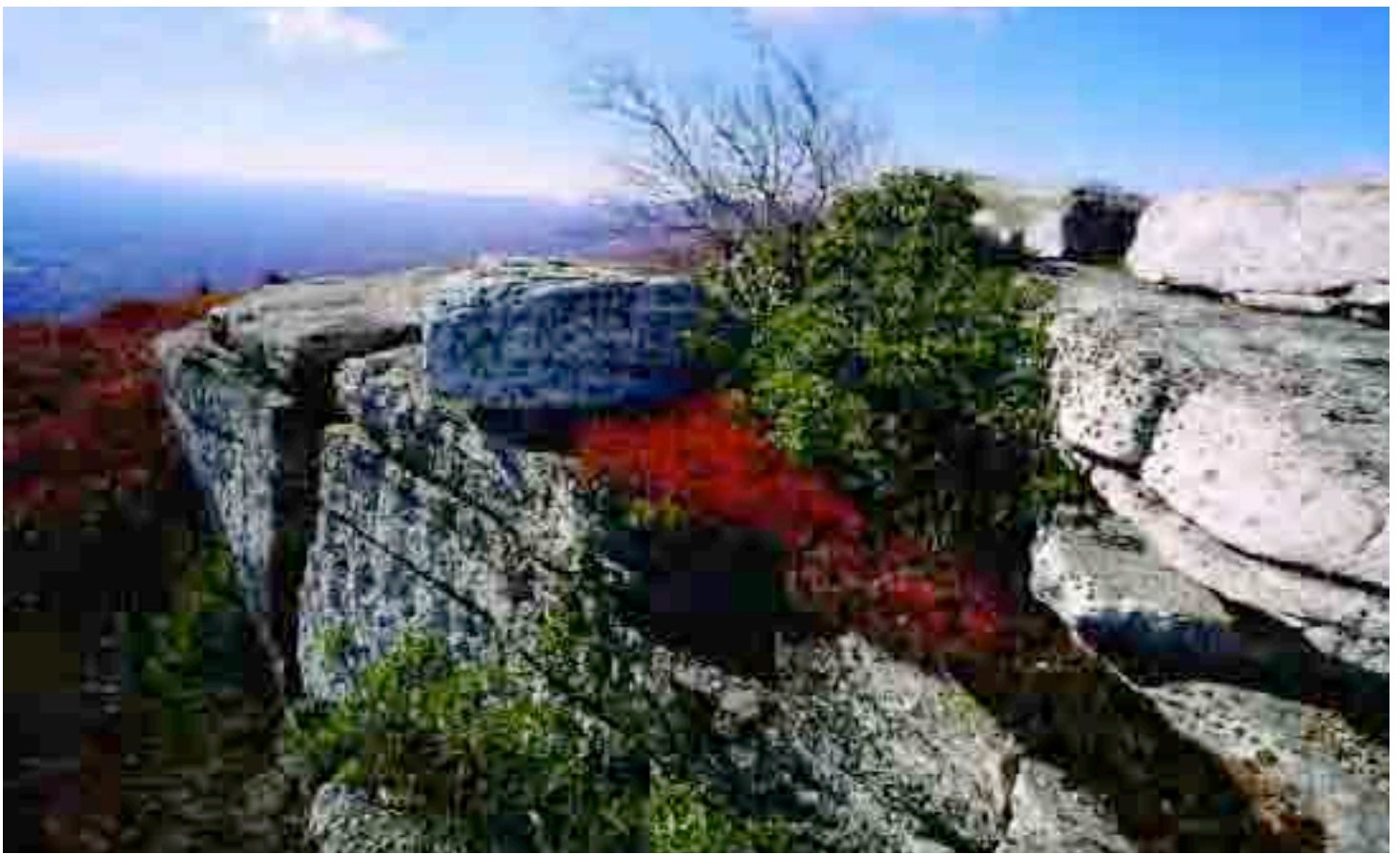
John Burroughs, who visited here often in the late 1800's, felt there was "nothing else like it in the whole country."

Active on the ridge since 1972, The Nature Conservancy has named the Northern Shawangunks one of "Earth's Last Great Places."

continue . . .



Verkeerderkill Falls, the highest waterfalls in the Shawangunks, at the Sam's Point Preserve.



Castle Rock at Minnewaska State Park Preserve.



Mountain Laurel grows throughout much of the Shawangunks.

Natural Resources

The New York State Open Space Plan refers to the Shawangunks as “one of the highest priority areas for biodiversity conservation in the northeastern United States.”

The New York Natural Heritage Program gives the Shawangunks the highest possible ranking for biodiversity.

The Metropolitan Conservation Alliance of the Wildlife Conservation Society says the mountains are “home to some of New York’s most significant habitats and richest assemblages of wildlife.”

The Shawangunks support more than 35 natural communities, of which several are globally rare, such as the world’s best example of the dwarf pine ridge community. Other globally rare communities include ice cave talus slopes, pitch pine-blueberry-peat swamps, and perched bogs.

We also have dozens of species which are rare, including the mountain spleenwort (*Asplenium montanum*) and the timber rattlesnake (*Crotalus horridus*).

A Noah’s Ark here would have to carry over 50 species of mammals, more than 200 species of birds, 23 species of amphibians and 18 species of reptiles. Invite flora aboard and berths will be needed for over 900 species of flowering plants, 57 species of ferns and fern allies, 80 species of mosses and 60 species of lichens.

Our chestnut oak forest of over 38,000 acres is one of the largest in New York State, and we have an extensive forest of hemlock-northern hardwoods.

continue . . .



Mossy Brook forest on land of the Mohonk Mountain House.



Goldenrod and the invasive purple loosestrife in a meadow near the lower Coxing Kill.



Bog at Minnewaska State Park Preserve.

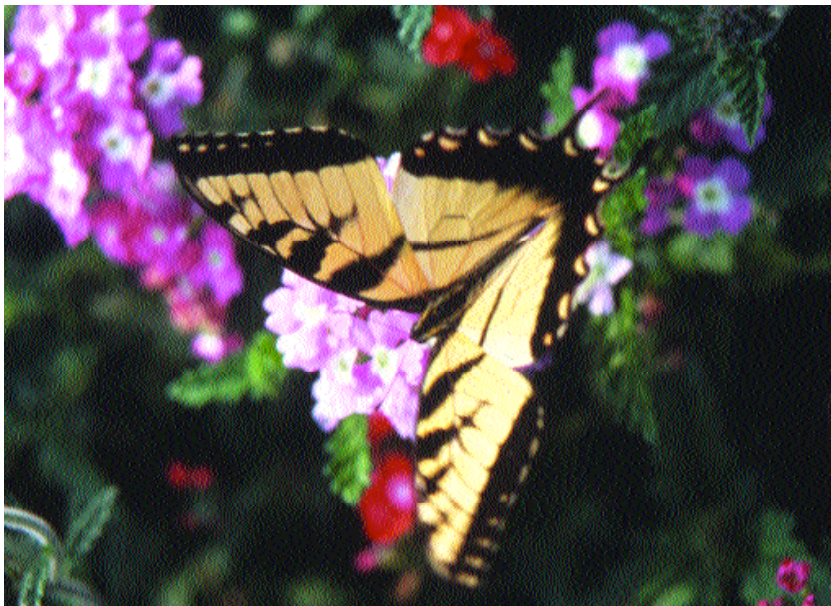


Immature female peregrine falcon at the Mohonk Preserve in 2003. The Preserve now hosts one of only three nest sites between New York City and Albany.
Photo by Tom Sarro



The five-lined skink is a lizard, rare this far north.

Photo by Frank Knight



Eastern Swallowtail at Sam's Point.

Photo by The Nature Conservancy

Natural Resources

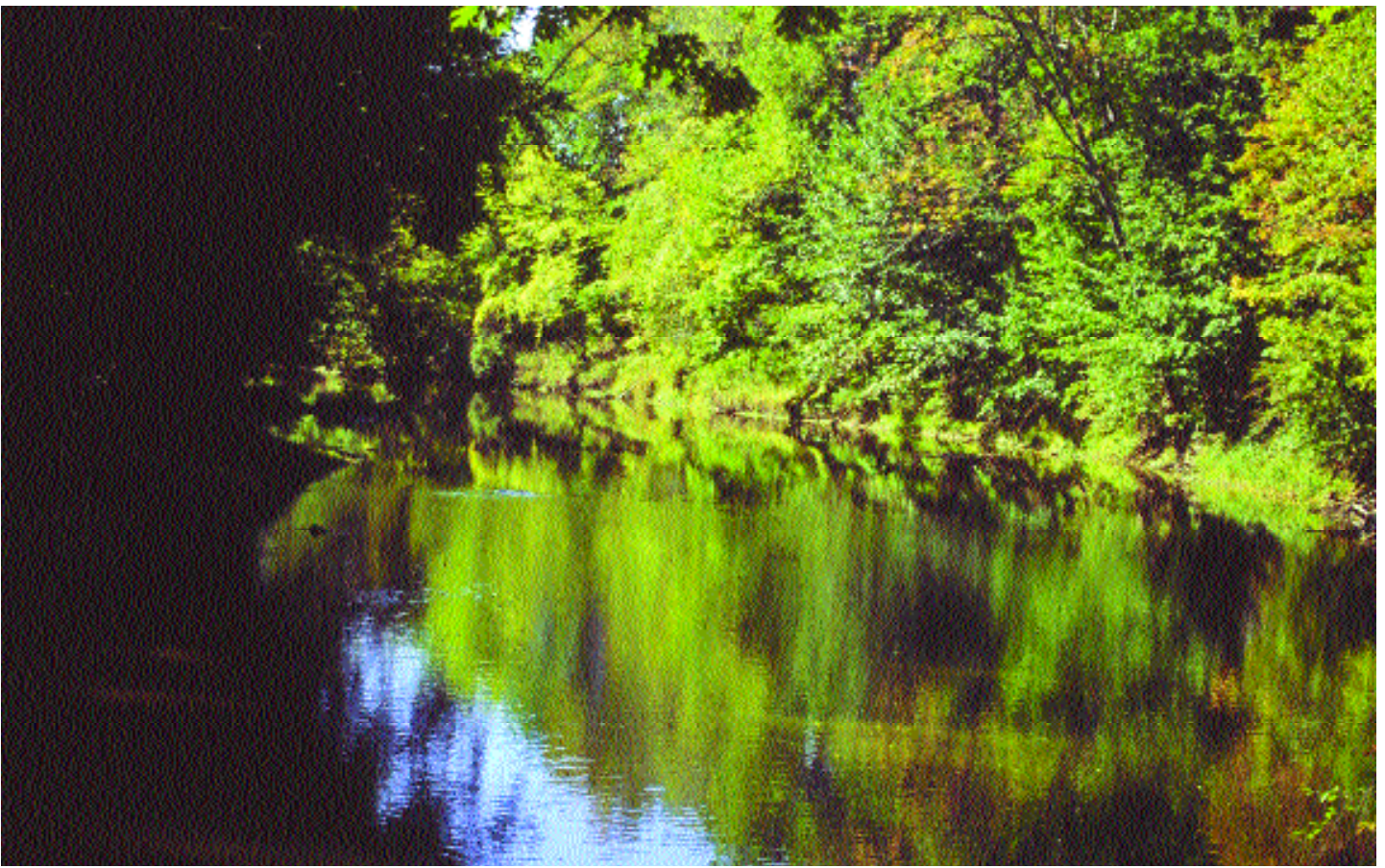
The ridge is part of the Appalachian Flyway for migrating birds and the Monarch Butterfly. Vultures, eagles and nine species of hawks fly here, including red-shouldered and Cooper's hawks, which have been in decline in the Hudson Valley but are showing some signs of comeback here. Also found here are the bald eagle and the black vulture, the raven, coyote and the fisher. And three peregrine falcon chicks fledged here in 2003. They're another species that nearly disappeared from the northeast.

Paul Huth, Director of the Daniel Smiley Research Center of the Mohonk Preserve, has observed this return of native species, and the arrival of new species which are extending their range, such as the clay-colored sparrow, a prairie nester. In his mind, these trends demonstrate that the unique biological character and relatively unfragmented landscape of the Shawangunks offer the potential for natural processes to continue to evolve, leading to more wildness than was here years ago.

If so, that would bode well for the future of one of the most scenic and biologically unique natural resources in New York State . . . and the centerpiece of the Shawangunk Mountains Scenic Byway.



Rare pitch pine-blueberry-peat swamp at Sam's Point. Photo by The Nature Conservancy



Rondout Creek along Rt 209 just north of Accord. The Rondout originates in the Catskills and flows southeasterly through Honk Lake, turns abruptly northeast by Napanoch , and then is a slow-moving, wide, deep-running stream with a gentle gradient.



The Shawangunk Grasslands National Wildlife Refuge is off Hoagerburg Road northeast of Wallkill.

Other Natural Resources

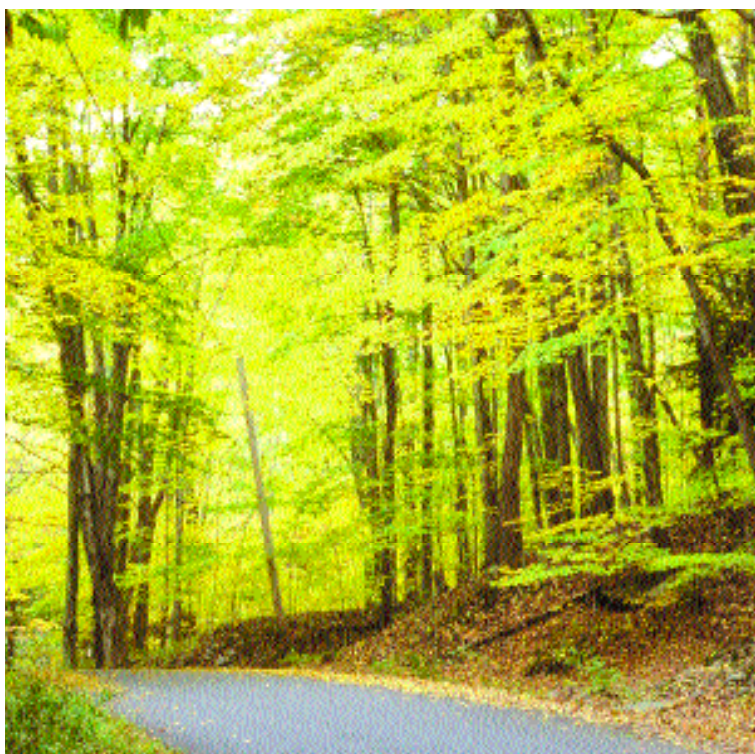
The Rondout Creek, the Wallkill River and the Shawangunk Kill (a DEC-designated Recreational River) are the main waterways which flow through our valleys and empty into the Hudson River, just 15 miles east of the mountains.

The Shawangunk Grasslands National Wildlife Refuge is under the management of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and provides 566 acres of habitat for grassland-dependent birds. Also see pages G60-61.

The Vernooey Kill State Forest, managed by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, provides 3,688 acres which will link the Shawangunks to the Catskills. Also see pages G50-51.



Wallkill River alongside Bruyn Tpke outside Wallkill. The Wallkill is joined by the Shawangunk Kill in Gardiner and flows north into the Rondout Creek just east of Rosendale. Records indicate the Wallkill has 22 species of fish, more than any other Hudson River tributary.



Lundy Road in Wawarsing provides access to the Vernooey Kill State Forest.

Recreational Resources



Hiking the red trail at Minnewaska State Park Preserve.

HIKING or just plain walking in the woods, is our most popular form of recreational activity. In all, we have about 250 miles of hiking routes, with more than half dedicated as hiking trails or paths, and the remainder along carriage roads, old logging, mining and farm roads, rail trails and old canal towpaths.

More than 20 miles of the Long Path wanders through the Shawangunks. Sponsored by the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference, the Long Path starts in Fort Lee, New Jersey, and goes north to Altamont, just 15 miles west of Albany. The Long Path Guide states that the Shawangunk Ridge Trail offers "many spectacular views in all directions. These are among the most dramatic in southern New York."

Fortunately, for those people with limited time, many great views are near the trail heads.



Climbing at the Mohonk Preserve, with about five miles of cliff face to choose from.

ROCK CLIMBING in the Gunks at the Mohonk Preserve attracts over 50,000 climbers each year, up to 800 on a busy day, more than Yosemite or any place else in the U.S. The Gunks contain the greatest concentration of quality beginner and intermediate climbs to be found anywhere in the world.

The popularity of climbing the Gunks can be explained in part by the steep walls and big handholds. The hard rock is reliable and has formed in strata that angles up about 10 degrees, creating incut holds and challenging roofs. Plus, the cliffs are easy to reach; most are just a short walk from the trail heads. The Trapps and Near Trapps crags are the most popular, with about two miles of white cliffs up to 250 feet high. The cliffs of "Lost City" are in the backcountry.

At the Peter's Kill Area, the Minnewaska State Park Preserve offers the only technical rock climbing of any of the state parks in New York, with access for 65 climbers at a time.

Recreational Resources



Mountain bikers enjoy the carriage roads at Minnewaska State Park Preserve.

MOUNTAIN BIKING is a major recreational activity in the Shawangunks because of the dirt/shale carriage roads built during 1860-1920. Nearly 100 miles of these carriage roads, at Minnewaska State Park Preserve, the Mohonk Mountain House and Mohonk Preserve, provide a stable, well-drained route for mountain bikers to enjoy much of the scenery and natural beauty of the Shawangunks.

Evidence of this is the ranking by Outside Magazine of the Castle Point trail at Minnewaska as one of the Top Ten mountain biking trails in the country. M. Margulis in "Mountain Biking" calls it "one of the finest mountain bike trail systems in New York."

This is not the place, however, for adventurous all-out riding, and there is no single-track. Riding responsibly is part of the mountain biking culture here. This is encouraged by the Gunks Mountain Biking Association (GUMBA), whose members ride on weekends and explain this viewpoint to their fellow mountain bikers and provide assistance where needed.

Mountain biking routes are also available in the valleys, along the rail trails ... bringing the total miles up to well over 100.



35 miles of trails are available for skiing at the Mohonk Mountain House.

Photo courtesy of Mohonk Mountain House

CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING is the major winter activity in the Region. The trails exist along much of the carriage road system as well as on the rail trails, some of the golf courses and Williams Lake, where even lighted night skiing is possible. Of the nearly 150 miles of open trails in the Region, about half are groomed.



Serious cross-country skiers don't wait for the snow.



Photo by Hatti Langsford



Photo by Kamuran Bayrasli



Photo by Mohonk Mountain House



Recreational Resources

HORSEBACK RIDING also follows along most of the carriage road and rail trail systems. Horses may be trailered to Minnewaska and the Mohonk Preserve or rented at the Mohonk Mountain House or Nevele Grande. Many boarding, breeding and training farms are in the Region.

SCUBA DIVING for certified divers with a permit is available at Lake Minnewaska.

SWIMMING is enjoyed at Lake Minnewaska and Lake Awosting and at the Mohonk Preserve's Split Rock on the Coxing Kill.

ROAD BIKING is enjoyed throughout the Region, although the lack of shoulders on some roads limits bike use.

BIRD WATCHING is enjoyed throughout the Region, with the preserves sponsoring guided outings. The Shawangunks are part of the Appalachian Flyway for migrating birds and is home once again to Peregrine Falcons. The Shawangunk Grasslands National Wildlife Refuge has been designated as an Important Bird Area by Audubon, New York.

CANOEING AND KAYAKING are enjoyed mainly along calm stretches of the Wallkill River and Rondout Creek.

SKYDIVING and HANG GLIDING: The Ranch Parachute Club in Gardiner is a year-round skydiving club and school with state-of-the-art aircraft and instruction. It is one of the busiest and safest dropzones in the U.S. Hang gliders launch from cliffs over Rt 52, near Cragmoor, and descend to the Rondout Valley below. This activity is supervised by the Northeastern Air Sports Association.

GOLF in the Shawangunks includes courses at: Hudson Valley Resort & Spa, Kerhonkson; Mohonk Mountain House, New Paltz; Nevele Grande Resort, Ellenville; New Paltz Golf Course, New Paltz; Rondout Golf Club, Accord; Shawangunk Country Club, Ellenville; Stone Dock Golf Course, High Falls.

"PICKING your own" is growing in popularity throughout the region, with fruit, berries and pumpkins aplenty. See Farm Market list page 62 of "Guide".

Other Recreational Resources

Trails in the Wallkill and Rondout Valleys

Wallkill Valley Rail Trail

12.2 miles of linear park from the Shawangunk/Gardiner town line to the New Paltz/Rosendale line. Views of mountains, Wallkill River and crosses old railroad bridge.

D&H Canal Heritage Corridor Alliance

A cooperative effort of towns in the Rondout Valley to develop a 35 mile linear park. The path will follow the Delaware & Hudson Canal route from Ellenville to Accord. North of Accord, one arm follows the old Ontario & Western Railroad route to Kingston, while another arm is planned to go in an easterly direction, in the vicinity of the old canal, toward High Falls and Rosendale.

Shawangunk Town Rail Trail

4.5 miles of rail trail with access in the village of Wallkill.

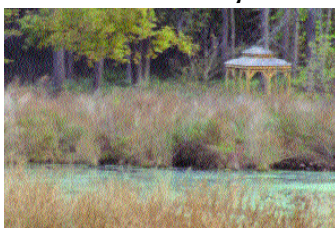
Harcourt Wildlife Sanctuary

Located in New Paltz between Huguenot Street historic district and the Wallkill River. A one-mile loop through about 40 acres of wetlands, open fields and floodplain.

The Shawangunk Wine Trail includes four wineries in our Region: Whitecliff Vineyard (in photo) in Gardiner, Rivendale Vineyard in New Paltz, Brimstone Hill Vineyards and Baldwin Vineyards in the Pine Bush area.

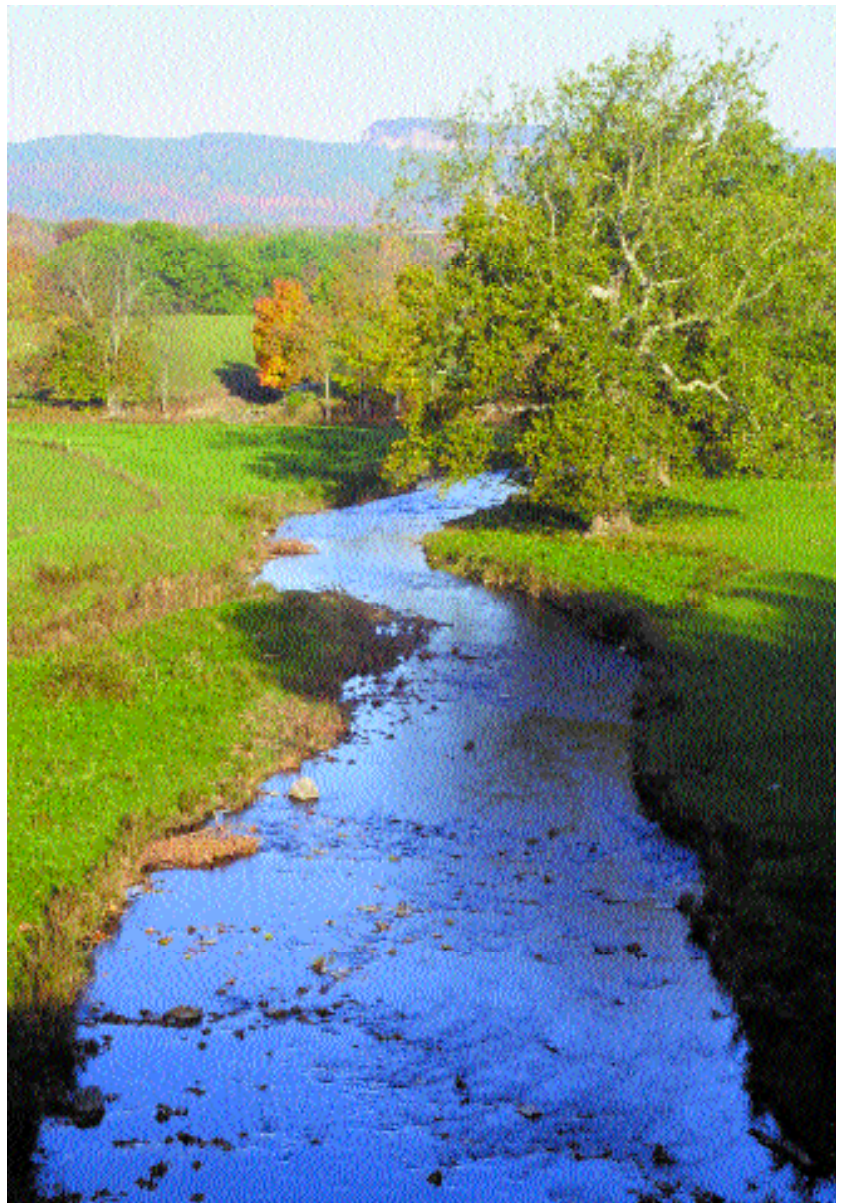
The Hudson Valley Pottery Trail

includes visits in the Region to Brinton Baker at the Stone Window Gallery in Accord and to Kaete Brittin Shaw's studio in High Falls.



Whitecliff Vineyard

Photo by T. Ligmari



Plattekill Creek from the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail.

Historical Resources

On the following several pages, our historian, Wendy E. Harris, has sketched the history of the region going back hundreds of years. Many of our historical resources are shown in photographs that accompany the text.

We are fortunate to have much to photograph. Many of the early Dutch-style stone houses built here in the colonial era survive throughout the region. In fact, of the 56 listings on the National Register, 13 were built in the early 1700's or before.

Many listings are farmsteads, such as the Van Wagenen stone house (1751) and farm complex in the Rondout Valley and the Johannes Decker stone house (1726) and farmstead in the Wallkill Valley.

Much of our history involves the industries that were here for many years. The National Register includes sites with artifacts and remains of the D&H Canal at High Falls and Ellenville, the cement industry at the Snyder Estate Natural Cement Historic District and the Binnewater Historic District in Rosendale, the O&W Railroad in Wawarsing, and the Tuthilltown Gristmill in Gardiner.

In addition to these historic resources of national significance, we have many listed on the state and county registers. Further detail and discussion of historic resources are included in the Guide.



Carrying water as in the 1700's at the Huguenot Street National Historic Landmark District, one of the oldest streets in America with the original stone houses. Photo courtesy Huguenot Street Historical Society



D&H Canal Museum in High Falls .

The history of the Shawangunk Mountains Region goes back to about 11,500 years ago, when the last glaciers were receding from the landscape and the Native Americans who lived here traveled back and forth over the ridge between the two rivers that give the Wallkill and Rondout valleys their names.

For thousands of years, Native American settlement was shaped by waterways which served as travel and trade routes, fishing areas, pathways for following game and sites for cultivation. Our rivers were said to be "lined with corn-planting grounds".

Evidence also indicates that the ridge itself was an especially attractive area for the region's original inhabitants, perhaps for hunting and gathering various foodstuffs such as berries, nuts and medicinal plants.

The ridge must have been an important landmark in a world of footpaths and rivers, visible from the Hudson River as well as from the mountains lying to the northwest. Native American travelers followed a number of trails over the ridge. One such footpath, the "Old Wawarsing Trail," connected Native American settlements on either side of the mountain and crossed the steep eastward facing escarpment at a break near Indian Cave, passed close by Lake Awosting, and finally reached the Rondout floodplain just outside of the hamlet of Wawarsing. The alignments of other trails became the basis for many modern roadways including Route 209, Route 52, and Routes 44/55.

The first Europeans arrived in Kingston in the early 1650's. Although we are now accustomed to defining the region's early settlers as "Dutch," only a portion actually came from the Netherlands. The settlers, in fact, encompassed a heterogeneous mixture of French, Walloon, German, Flemish, Scandinavian, and English heritage.

During these first years, the settlers and their Native American (Esopus) neighbors attempted a peaceful co-existence. These efforts, however, were almost immediately doomed by conflicting concepts of land ownership.

Tensions culminated in the First and Second Esopus Wars, spanning the years 1659 to 1664. During the wars, the settlers pursued the Esopus down the Wallkill and the Rondout rivers. It was during these expeditionary journeys that the settlers may have first fully grasped the region's enormous agricultural potential.

English forces conquered New Netherland in 1663 and in 1668 English soldiers at Kingston were awarded portions of land within present day Marbletown.

Other settlements soon followed. In 1677, portions of the towns of New Paltz, Lloyd, Esopus, and Rosendale were granted to 12 French Huguenots who moved from Hurley to New Paltz and began building homes in 1678. Settlers are believed to have been in the Town of Shawangunk as early as the 1680's and by 1700 settlers were living in Wawarsing.



1721 Jean Hasbrouck House in the Huguenot Street National Historic Landmark District in New Paltz. One of the oldest streets in America with its original houses.

By the beginning of the 18th century, the farms and villages had completely transformed the lands of the Esopus. Dutch architecture, religion and language were pervasive throughout the region well into the middle third of the 18th century. Even New Paltz's French Huguenots came to speak Dutch before switching over to English at the end of the century.

Perhaps the most lasting legacy of the Dutch and French Huguenots are the homes they built of native limestone. Many of these structures can be found today along the region's roadways, on remote farmsteads, or clustered together in the older villages



1770 stone and frame house in the Main Street National Historic District serves now as the Stone Ridge Library.

Although early settlers were involved in the lucrative fur trade, it was apparent from the very beginning that the region's "real riches" lay in the lowlands adjoining the Wallkill River and Rondout Creek. As early as 1683, wheat and other produce were grown for market, including trade with both New York and the West Indies. The fields to the north of New Paltz, especially in an area called "Bontecoe," became famous for wheat production.

The milling of grain was a vital economic function. Thus, the presence of waterways that could furnish hydropower influenced the location of Euro-American settlements in the region. The unbroken forests and barrens of

the Shawangunks fed numerous streams that flowed down the ridge's slopes, joining the Rondout, the Wallkill and the Shawangunk Kill. In what is now the Town of Gardiner, the earliest recorded settlement was at



1788 Tuthilltown Grist Mill.
Photo by Tuthilltown/Erenzo

Tuthilltown where a mill was built upon the Shawangunk Kill in 1745. Settlement in the Town of Crawford began in the mid-18th century, clustered around a series of mills on the Dwaars Kill and Shawangunk Kill. In the town of Shawangunk, hydropower also played a major role in the settlement of Brunswyck, Dwaarskill and Wallkill.

On the western side of the ridge, in the Town of Rochester, a cluster of mills developed on



Van Wagenen stone house in the town of Rochester.



Front porch of Johannes Decker (1726) stone house in Bruynswick.

the Stony Kill and Peters Kill, tributaries of the Rondout that drained the Shawangunks' western slope. The first gristmill in the Town of Wawarsing dates to 1702. It was constructed on the Vernoooy Kill.

Many of the region's early "service industries" —such as taverns, inns, blacksmiths, brewers—grew up along the early road system, especially at crossroads and fording places. Like mills, these facilities attracted small communities, often accompanied by a Dutch Reformed Church. In the narrow



1835 New Hurley (Dutch) Reformed Church .

Rondout Valley, settlement was focused upon a single roadway, the Old Mine Road (corresponding to present day Route 209). Like most roads of the time, the Old Mine Road followed an ancient Native American trail. By the 1730's, farmers as far away as Pennsylvania and western New Jersey followed the Old Mine Road to the Hudson River at Kingston, where they loaded their produce on New York City-bound sloops.

In the Wallkill Valley, several early roadways were oriented east/west to take advantage of Hudson River landings. The Bruyn Turnpike is said to date to the 1690's. The principal north/south route, opened in 1735, was the Old Kings Road—running through Kingston, New Paltz, and "the Shawangunk Precinct" before finally reaching Goshen in Orange County (portions corresponding to present day County Route 7). Because the King's Road followed the west bank of the Wallkill River, New Paltz residents could connect with it only by crossing the Wallkill by scow. Another road was built on the east bank of the Wallkill River leading south by 1790 (corresponding to Plains Road and Route 208).

As the two valleys became more populated and good farmland scarce, a small number of families were drawn to the few locations on the Shawangunk Ridge where the soils could support agriculture. By the end of the 18th century, there were three communities on the ridge: Trapps Hamlet, within what is now the Mohonk Preserve; and the Mance and Goldsmith Settlements, near what is now Cragmoor. Mountain residents raised sheep and grew flax to provide wool and linen. They raised cattle to provide leather for their clothing and equipment. Hunting and trapping were pursued for both sustenance and currency.

During the Revolutionary War, there were no

engagements here between the warring armies. But in the spring of 1779, Tories, Hessians and Iroquois attacked the settlement at Fantinekill, near present day Ellenville. This was followed by murders and raids in the Town of Shawangunk and on the ridge in 1780, and the destruction of Warwarsing in 1781.



1767 Col. Cornelius Wynkoop stone house where George Washington stayed in Stone Ridge.

General George Washington did indeed sleep here. On November 15, 1782 he stopped for the night in Stone Ridge at the Wynkoop-Lounsbery House on his way to Kingston. His troops spent the evening at the Tack Tavern. Both structures are still standing.



Typical canal barge crew quarters at D&H Canal Museum in High Falls.

The event that marked the region's entry into the industrializing world of the 19th century was the completion of the Delaware and Hudson Canal in 1828. Built to carry anthracite coal from northeastern Pennsylvania to New York City, the D&H presented what seemed to be limitless economic opportunities to many rural communities. Villages lucky enough to be located along the canal's route thrived. Others sprang up almost overnight, owing their existences to the canal. Within the region, these self-described "canal towns" included Ellenville, Napanoch, Port Hixon, Port Ben (East Wawarsing), Middleport (Kerhonkson), Port Jackson (Accord), Alligerville, High Falls, Lawrenceville and Rosendale.



Canal museum guide demonstrates how locks worked.

Cheap transportation via the canal opened markets for a wide range of local products and resources. From the slopes of the Shawangunks came lumber, cordwood, charcoal, shingles, hoop poles and millstones. Agricultural products included fruit, grain, and flour. New factories opened along the canal's route. Ellenville and Napanoch were transformed into industrial centers. Their products included pottery, axes, glass, iron, leather, paper and cutlery. Support services for the canal included stores, hotels, boarding houses, taverns, and harness and blacksmith shops. A number of communities,

Historical Resources

especially Ellenville, developed boat-building facilities.



Exhibit of artifacts from cement industry at Snyder Estate Natural Cement Historic District in Rosendale.

Perhaps the most significant industry associated with the canal was the manufacture of hydraulic cement, also known as Rosendale cement. Hydraulic cement was critical to the canal's construction because it was not soluble in water. Due either to luck or the intervention of a geologist employed by the canal company, limestone beds discovered in the vicinity of High Falls and Rosendale in 1825 were found to produce a superior quality hydraulic cement. In the following decades, a cement manufacturing district developed around Rosendale and High Falls. The various communities supported by the industry tended to cluster along the canal's route and near limestone outcroppings. The region's cement manufacturing factories went into a decline in the 1890's, finally eclipsed by the manufacture of the faster setting Portland cement.

Like the cement industry, the quarrying of millstones from Shawangunk conglomerate also developed as a result of the ridge's

geological properties. The quarries were located on the northwestern slope of the Shawangunk Ridge, concentrated in a strip that extended from Kerhonkson to High Falls. Approximately 350 tons of millstones were exported over the D&H from these towns each year and most of the nation's millstones came from the region.

Owing their existence to the canal, as well as to Hudson River shipping (and later to the railroad) were a series of industries that entailed the exploitation of the region's forests. Perhaps the most widely dispersed across the region was the tanning industry, based upon the harvesting and processing of hemlock bark. Ironically it was only the bark which was sought, not the tree. But thousands of acres of hemlocks were used for this purpose.



Woman's Studio Workshop is housed in a 100-year-old mercantile building, once the company store of the Rosendale Cement Company.

Tanneries also required enormous amounts of pure water to fill the countless tanning vats that were used in the process. By the 1850's almost every creek in the Rondout Valley hosted a tannery. There were tanneries at Wawarsing, Honk Hill, Samsonville, Lackawack, Napanoch and Ellenville as well as on the Shawangunk Kill near Pine Bush, the Verkerderkill near present day Walker Valley, and the Wallkill River, opposite Springtown. Tanning continued in our region through the 1880's.

Canal records from the mid-19th century provide a glimpse of several other commodities harvested on the ridge. Charcoal was used by blacksmiths and for the production of pig iron. Early settlers at the Trapps Hamlet engaged in its production. Shingle making was also an important local industry, as indicated by the place name "Shingle Gully," given to a ravine located on the mountain's western slope just above Ellenville.

Hoop pole production and sawmilling developed in the wake of the destruction brought about by the tanneries. Numerous water-powered sawmills soon appeared along the mountain streams, processing not only the discarded hemlocks but also spruce, pine, and hardwoods. An immense amount of lumber, timber, and cordwood was shipped on the canal between 1836 and 1866

Hardwood saplings often replaced the hemlocks and this became the impetus of a local hoop manufacturing industry. Wooden hoops were fashioned from saplings and used to bind kegs, casks, and barrels. Beginning in the 1840's and 50's, and reaching its peak in the late 1880's and early 90's, the industry is said to have shipped fifty to sixty million hoops out of the region annually. At one time, the largest dealer of hoops in the country was located in Ellenville, shipping hoops all over the world. The hamlet of Kripplebush,

in the Town of Marbletown, was another important center for hoop making.

Crossing the ridge remained a difficult undertaking until the middle of the 19th century. One road, built in 1825, corresponding in part to present day Mountain Rest Road, crossed the ridge linking the communities of Canaan and Butternut to Allgerville. Initial construction of the Newburgh-Ellenville Plank Road began in 1849. Running along an alignment that would later become Route 52, it passed directly through Pine Bush and was largely responsible for the initial growth of that community. The 32-mile road was built of rough hemlock planks nailed to sleepers that were laid on the ground. In 1869, maintenance of the now rotting planks stopped and the road was allowed to revert to mud and dirt.

The New Paltz-Wawarsing Turnpike was completed in 1856. It was a toll road, running from the bridge over the Wallkill at New Paltz, westwards through Trapps Hamlet, and finally terminating in Kerhonkson at the D&H Canal. During the 1850's it was filled with farmers and drovers taking their produce and cattle to Hudson River landings. Anyone wishing a night's lodging could stay at Ben Fowler's hotel and tavern, located just south of Trapps Hamlet.



Wallkill Valley Railroad bridge now serves rail trail users.

The era of the railroads began in the late 1800's. The Wallkill Valley Railroad was completed as far as New Paltz by 1870. The New York and Oswego Midland Railroad (afterwards the New York, Ontario and Western Railroad or "O&W") also reached the region at this time—one branch extending as far as Pine Bush by 1868 and another branch arriving in Ellenville in 1871. It included a tunnel drilled through the base of the Shawangunks near Wurtsboro in 1871. The advantages of railroad transport were inescapable and in 1898 the D&H Canal Company signed an agreement with the Erie Railroad to transport its entire output of coal. By 1902, the O&W had built track extending between Port Jervis on the Delaware River to Kingston on the Hudson River, thus duplicating the route of the now nearly extinct D&H Canal.

For farmers on both sides of the mountain, accessibility to railroads was a virtual guarantee that their dairy products and produce would reach the New York City market without spoiling. The fields surrounding New Paltz were filled with new orchards. Visitors reported peach, pear and cherry trees, vineyards, and acres of berries including currants, strawberries, blackberries, and raspberries. New Paltz was now "a great fruit producing town". The village of Gardiner, a community born with the railroad, was now the preferred shipping depot for about 30 local growers.

Creameries were established adjacent to the depots at Bullville, Thompson Ridge, Pine Bush, Wallkill, Gardiner, New Paltz, and other smaller communities. Milk shipped in the afternoon in the Wallkill Valley was in New York City households by the following morning. The most famous dairying enterprise in the region was the 2000-acre home farm and condensed milk factory of the Borden Milk Company in Wallkill. (Remember "Elsie, the Borden Cow"?)



Hopewell Farm's late 19th century Norman-style dairy barn along Rt 302.

On the ridge, the gathering and distilling of wintergreen and huckleberry picking were two of the more important occupations. Wintergreen, which grows in the mountain's many shaded and moist ravines, was used for flavoring and for medicinal purposes. Its leaves were gathered and brought to local "stills" where it was converted into oil.

By 1871 huckleberries (the word "blueberry" being reserved for cultivated varieties) became one of the Shawangunk Region's major items of export. The "patch" extended from Lake Mohonk to Sam's Poit. An 1899 map shows at least three separate huckleberry picker camps immediately west of Lake Maratanza. Like the Native Americans before them, the huckleberry pickers manipulated the local ecology by setting fires in order to increase yields. This particular Shawangunk Ridge lifeway continued—complete with yearly fires—well into the 20th century.

The arrival of the railroads coincided with the initial appearance of resorts for summer guests in the Shawangunks. The first hotels to open here during this era—the Mohonk Mountain House in 1870, the Mountain House at Sam's Point in 1871, Cliffhouse (1879) and Wildemere (1887) at Lake

Minnewaska, and the Mt. Meenahga House on the ridge overlooking Ellenville in 1883—catered to guests who valued the Shawangunks' scenic beauty. Although forests directly adjoining the hotels were being clear cut for tannin bark and timber, landscaping at the hotels featured meandering carriage roads and vistas opened to create breathtaking views of the valleys and the distant Hudson.

In an effort to preserve the wilderness landscape and to become self-sufficient, the Smiley family, owners of the Lake Mohonk and Lake Minnewaska resorts, embarked upon an ambitious program of land acquisition. The more than 17,000 acres they purchased over time included agricultural lands and forests, as well as remote ravines and ridge tops.



Mohonk Mountain House as it appeared in 1888-91.

Smaller hotels and boarding houses were located in almost every village along the O&W and Wallkill Valley lines and the entire region benefited from the development of tourism. In 1901 listings for the Ellenville-Cragmoor area alone contained approximately 40 hotels or boarding houses.

Hotels catering to Jewish families began to appear in the Rondout Valley in the first



Restored 1889 Eli Van Leuven cabin at Trapps Mountain Hamlet National Historic District on the Mohonk Preserve. Photo courtesy Mohonk Preserve.

decade of the 20th century. These were owned and operated by immigrants from Eastern Europe and Russia who were drawn by the belief that farming was a viable alternative to urban sweatshops. Because much of the land that they had purchased was unproductive, the practice soon developed of taking in paying boarders during the summer months. Some of these small boarding houses eventually grew into the famous "borscht belt" hotels of the southern Catskills region, such as the Nevele and Fallsview Hotels in Ellenville. Along side them were countless small bungalow colonies. Several of the villages along the ridge's western slope soon developed sizeable Jewish populations.

Beginning at the turn of the century, New York State began a program of road development in the region, creating a transportation infrastructure benefiting automobiles, buses and trucks. Improvements to the Ellenville-Kingston Road (today's Route 209) were underway in 1921. In the same year, the New Paltz-Highland Road became the first concrete road in Ulster County. The



Wallkill Library (1935) in the Borden Park.

Minnewaska Trail, today's 44/55, was built over the ridge, connecting New Paltz and Kerhonkson in 1930. Much of the original road alignment and many of the Trapps Hamlet homesteads were destroyed during its construction. Route 52, the other main highway crossing the ridge, was completed in 1936, replacing what remained of the Newburgh-Ellenville Plank Road .

By the 1920's, automobiles had become so popular that the railroads began to falter. In 1937, passenger service on the Wallkill line was discontinued. The O&W held out until 1952 before turning exclusively to freight and then ceased operations in 1957. Conrail, which then owned the Wallkill line, cut all regular service north of Walden in 1977.

The completion of the New York State Thruway initiated yet another phase in the region's development. By 1957, the Thruway had been incorporated into the vast Interstate Highway System. With the exception of New Paltz and Kingston, it bypassed the communities that had been serviced by the Wallkill Valley Railroad and, for the first time in history, the state's major transportation corridor had been shifted away from the Hudson River. The Thruway also put the Shawangunks within two hours driving distance of New York City.

With their proximity to the metro area, the Shawangunks provided a perfect space to pursue such activities as hiking, rock climbing and other nature-related recreational activities. By the end of the 20th century, the Shawangunks became a tourist destination as never before.

Environmental advocacy and land trust movements emerged during the 1960's. The result was a series of preserves spanning the length of the northern Shawangunks, including the Sam's Point Dwarf Pine Ridge Preserve, Minnewaska State Park Preserve and the Mohonk Preserve. By the close of the 20th century, 30,000 acres of the northern Shawangunks' nearly 94,000 acres of land were held by private and public land holding institutions.

At the beginning of the 21st century, the region still retains its rural character, small-scale businesses and much of its scenic qualities. But there is cause for concern. Open land and farmland in the Wallkill and Rondout valleys are under pressure to develop. Proposals for the Shawangunk Ridge and adjacent areas may threaten the natural systems which have evolved there over the last 450 million years. How the communities around the mountains address these issues will shape the course of history for the years to come.



Antique Car at Rochester history day.

National Registry Listings of Byway Region Historic Places

* There are 21 additional listings in the Town of Rochester just north of the Byway Region.

Crawford

Hopewell Presbyterian Church	1825-1849
Shorter House	1750-1799
Alexander Thompson House	1750-1799
Robert A. Thompson House	1800-1824
Peter Aldrich Homestead	1700-1749

Gardiner

Bevier House	1825-1849
Brykill	1700-1749
Johannes Decker Farm	1700-1749
Gardiner School	1875-1899
Jenkins-DuBois Farm and Mill Site	1750-1799
Locust Lawn Estate	1700-1749
Trapps Mountain Hamlet Historic District	1750-1799
Tuthilltown Gristmill	1750-1799
Van Vleck House	1750-1799
Bevier Stone House	1650-1699

Marbletown

Delaware and Hudson Canal	1825-1949
High Falls Historic District	1750-1799
Kripplebush Historic District	1750-1799
Lock Tender's House and Canal Store Ruin	1825-1849
Main Street Historic District	1750-1799
Rest Plaus Historic District	1700-1749
Cornelius Wynkoop Stone House	1750-1799
Josiah DuBois Farm	1800-1824

New Paltz

Guilford-Bower Farm House	1850-1874
Jean Hasbrouck House	1650-1699
Maj. Jacob Hasbrouck, Jr. House	1750-1799
Huguenot Street National Historic Landmark District	1650-1699
John A. Lafevre House and School	1750-1799
Lake Mohonk National Historic Landmark	1850-1874
The Locusts	1825-1849
Sahler Stone House	1750-1799
The Elting Library	1700-1750

Rochester*

Van Wagenen Stone House and Farm Complex	1700-1749
Jacobus Van Wagenen Stone House	1750-1799
All Saint's Chapel	1875-1899

Rosendale

Binnewater Historic District	1875-1899
DuBois-Deyo House	1750-1799
Snyder Estate Natural Cement Historic District	1800-1824
Bruynswick School No. 8	1825-1849

Shawangunk

William Decker House	1700-1749
Andries DuBois House	1750-1799
J.B. Crowell & Son Brick Mold Mill Complex	1750-1799
Dill Farm	1750-1799
Johannes Jansen House and Dutch Barn	1700-1749
Thomas Jansen House	1700-1749
Miller's House at Red Mills	1825-1849
Pearl Street Schoolhouse	1825-1849
Reformed Church of Shawangunk Complex	1750-1799
Terwilliger House	1750-1799
Benjamin Van Keuren House Ruin	1700-1749

Wawarsing

Chetolah	1900-1924
Cragmoor Historic District	1850-1874
Hornbeck Store Complex	1800-1824
O&W Railroad Station at Port Ben	1900-1924
O&W Railroad Passenger Station at Napanoch	1900-1924
US Post Office, Ellenville	1925-1949