

7.0 Relationship to Other Planning Processes

There are other efforts underway in the New Paltz area and beyond that address open space that are relevant to the proposed Mill Brook Preserve. In addition to the Town and Village comprehensive plans and the 2006 Open Space Plan, a variety of other plans exist that relate to the proposed Mill Brook Preserve and regional environmental protection. These include the Shawangunk Mountains Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan, the Ulster County Open Space Plan, adjacent town open space or comprehensive plans, and the Wallkill River Watershed Management Plan. These parallel processes have helped to highlight the importance of a regional approach and linkages across municipal borders.

Other plans which are relevant to the Preserve include the New York State Open Space Conservation Plan, the New York Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, various Hudson River greenway plans, the Ulster County Long-Range Transportation Plan, the Ulster County Priority Housing Strategies, Ulster County Intermunicipal Watershed Agreements, and the Palisades Interstate Park Commission's 21st Century Plan. In 2010, voters in New Paltz accepted a \$2 million bond referendum for purchase and protection of open spaces in the Town.

8.0 Proposed Boundaries

The Open Space Plan generally described and located the boundaries for the proposed Mill Brook Preserve. One major goal of this Plan is to develop more specific boundaries based on ecological needs: the premise of the preserve concept is to include lands needed to ensure ecological functioning of the stream, wetland and associated upland woodlands.

The boundary delineation process was initiated by understanding the watershed of the Mill Brook and its role in the larger Wallkill River Watershed (see Map 3). The roughly 1,300 acre sub-watershed of the Mill Brook is fragmented from the potentially available open space, either by the NYS Thruway or by existing development. Although not included in the potential preserve boundaries, other lands located in the watershed within the Town of New Paltz remain critical for water quality and environmental health. The recommendations included in this Plan address potential actions that should be taken to locate and enhance connections between different locations within the entire Mill Brook watershed.

There are approximately 345 acres of undeveloped open space contiguous with the Mill Brook. Because this area alone is not sufficient to sustain biodiversity, the delineation included steps to identify a core preserve area that includes as much of the riparian corridor, wetlands, and associated upland areas as possible. This core area was chosen to include examples of existing native ecosystems, to provide stream and wetland buffers, and to provide connections for both people and wildlife.

Drawing upon field observations and background materials provided by the Open Space Committee (including the Hudsonia report, SUNY student research projects and reports from the New Paltz Environmental Conservation Committee), the following concepts and natural elements were identified as being significant to creating the Preserve:

1. Identify a core area that can continue to support a healthy ecosystem that conserves as much of the biodiversity of the site as possible,
2. Provide corridors from the core preserve to both buffer streams and provide connections for people and wildlife, and
3. Include at least the following unique habitats and features: