

Scenic Resources

Much of Rhinebeck’s unique character is recognized in an historic shorelands scenic district. The Mid-Hudson Historic Shorelands Scenic District, designated as scenic under Article 49 of New York State Environmental Conservation Law, covers the east bank of the Hudson River, from Hyde Park to Germantown. The section within Rhinebeck extends eastward from the centerline of the Hudson to a line 500 feet east of Lemon Lane, Hook Road, Old Post Road and Route 9. It offers panoramic views of the River, with impressive landscapes enhanced by the Catskill Mountains to the west.

Portions of this area were also listed as historic districts on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979 as further discussed in Chapter 11, “Historic and Cultural Resources.” The Twenty-Mile Historic District is within the Scenic District, and is composed of the surviving estates built in the area throughout the 18th and 19th centuries. The magnificent homes of this district span more than two centuries. They represent the architectural and social history of the times, and served as residences of several successful and powerful New York families. Included in this group of estates is Ferncliff, home of the Astor family.

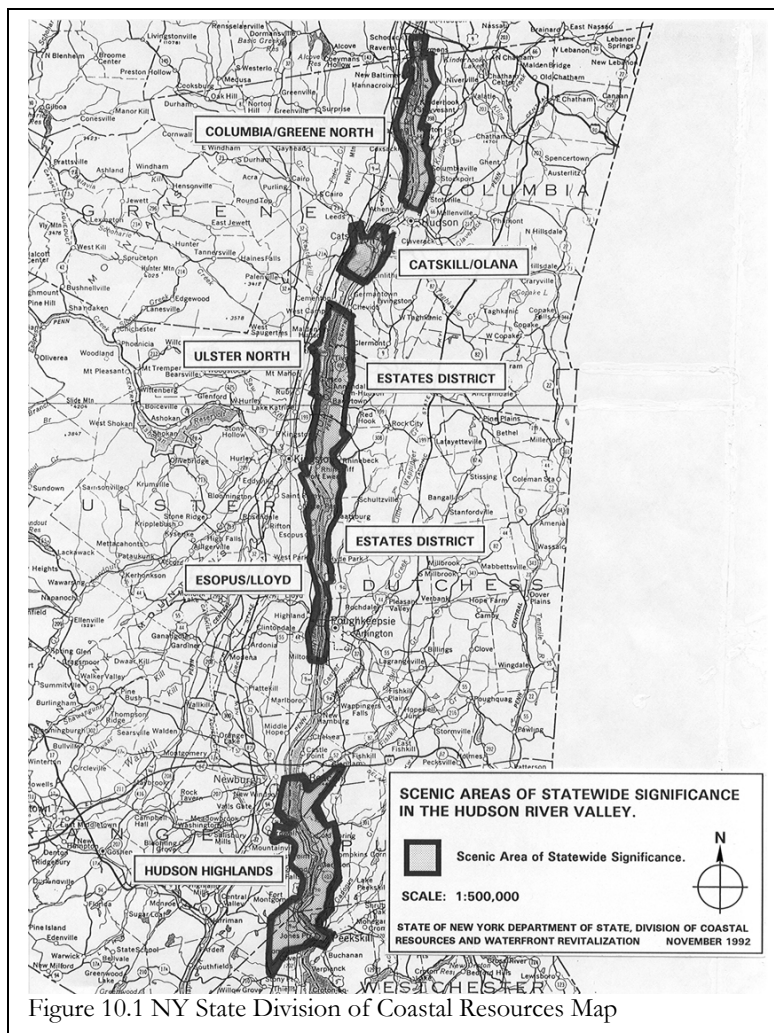
The estates assumed additional importance through the role that many of their occupants played in state and national history. However, the special significance of the area is derived from its location along the Hudson River, with views of the Catskill Mountain range adding a dimension that rivals and enhances its historic and architectural significance.

In 1983, the Hudson River Shorelands Task Force completed a management plan for the Mid-Hudson Historic Shorelands Scenic District under contract with New York State. The plan contains a detailed inventory of scenic resources, land use, and tourism and recreation sites within the district, and proposals for recognizing and protecting the integrity of the district’s uniqueness. It presents specific recommendations for managing viewsheds, natural complexes, architecture, estate grounds, townscapes, the pastoral countryside, stone walls, railroad rights-of-way and campuses. These recommendations, and the planning, zoning, and project review mechanisms that can be used to implement them, have been reviewed as part of the research work for The Rhinebeck Plan and should be considered part of the background documentation for the Plan. These recommendations are discussed below, under the heading, “Regional Plans.”

SCENIC RESOURCES

Scenic Districts

The Town of Rhinebeck is included in two scenic districts designated by the state. In 1981, the New York State Legislature established the Coastal Management Program, which provided for the designation and protection of scenic areas of statewide significance (SASS). The Hudson River was the first area to be reviewed for SASS designation, and the result is six areas with the stretch of the river from the Troy Dam to New York City, as depicted in Figure 10.1 below. Rhinebeck is included in the Estates District segment of the Hudson River SASS. For more information about the SASS designation for Rhinebeck, please see the New York State Department of State's *Scenic Areas of Statewide Significance* publication (July 22, 1993 by the Division of Coastal Resources and Waterfront Revitalization), which is on file at Rhinebeck Town Hall or available through the Department of State. Figure 10.1 below shows the Estates District in the Town of Rhinebeck.



The Mid-Hudson Historic Shorelands Scenic District was designated by the Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) in 1981, under Article 49 of the New York State Environmental Conservation Law. The District stretches from Germantown in Columbia County to Hyde Park in Dutchess County. A *Management Plan* was published in 1983 by the Heritage Task Force for the Hudson River Valley, Inc. working cooperatively with the DEC, the Department of Transportation, the two county planning agencies, a Scenic Road Advisory Committee, the Hudson River Shorelands Task Force and several consultants. For more information on the *Management Plan*, see the description provided below under Regional Plans.

Scenic Roads

There are both national and state scenic byway programs that designate distinctive roadways possessing specific characteristics, such as scenic quality, unusual natural areas, historic and

culture resources and special recreational opportunities. Rhinebeck contains such designated scenic byways.

A survey completed by the American Recreation Coalition in 1995 showed that driving for pleasure is the second most popular recreational activity after walking.¹ Scenic roads help to maintain the scenic beauty and quality of life of the town, but are also an integral part of Rhinebeck's popularity as a tourism destination.

Roadways that have been designated as scenic roads (as shown on Figure 10.2 at the end of this Chapter) by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation New York (now under the auspices of the New York State Department of Transportation's Scenic By-Ways Program), include:

- NYS Route 199 from the Dutchess/Ulster County line on the Kingston/Rhinecliff Bridge to the intersection with NYS Route 9G.
- River Road from the intersection with Rhinecliff Road to the Red Hook/Rhinebeck town line.
- NYS Route 9 from the Hyde Park/Rhinebeck town line to the intersection with South Mill Road.
- South Mill Road from the intersection with NYS Route 9 to the intersection with Morton Road.
- Morton Road from the intersection with South Mill Road to the intersection with Kelley Street.
- Mill Road from the intersection with Morton Road to the intersection with NYS Route 9.

Roadways that have been locally designated as having scenic significance include:

- Kelly Street from the intersection with Morton Road to the intersection with Rhinecliff Road.
- Charles Street from the intersection with Kelly Street to the intersection with Rhinecliff Road.
- Rhinecliff Road from the intersection with Charles Street to the intersection with NYS Route 9.
- NYS Route 9 from the intersection with South Mill Road to the intersection with Montgomery Street in the Village of Rhinebeck.
- Astor Drive from the intersection with River Road to the intersection with Montgomery Street in the Village of Rhinebeck.
- Montgomery Street from the intersection with NYS Route 9 to the intersection with Old Post Road on the town/village line.
- Mt. Rutsen Road from the intersection with Old Post Road (just north of the village of Rhinebeck) to the intersection with River Road.
- Old Post Road from the intersection with Montgomery Street to the intersection with NYS Route 9G.

¹ Reported in *Saving America's Countryside – A Guide to Rural Conservation*, Second Edition (1997).

- NYS Route 9G from the intersection with Old Post Road in the Town of Rhinebeck to the Rhinebeck/Red Hook town line.

Vision: The rural, scenic, natural and historic character of the town should be protected.

Rhinebeck is renowned for its scenic beauty and bucolic open spaces, rural and historic character and outstanding quality of life. The town is also known for the care it takes to ensure that its nationally recognized resources are protected and preserved. We cannot preserve all remaining unprotected lands as open space, nor preserve, all at once, those lands which we can; however, in accordance with the mandate of an overwhelming majority of Rhinebeck residents, we must find ways to protect as many remaining open space lands as are necessary to maintain Rhinebeck's rural character, quality of life, scenic resources and natural environment.

Objective: Critical Environmental Area designations should be enacted to help protect cultural resources, including rural and scenic roads, landscapes, hamlets and such other original settlements as Rhinecliff, Hillside, Rock City and Wurtemberg.¹

Actions:

1. Designate all Class A Scenic Roads in Rhinebeck (listed in the Mid-Hudson Historic Shorelands District Plan) as CEAs, for their scenic road significance. Evaluate development regulations within and adjoining the scenic road corridors. Designate the following scenic roads as CEAs:

- ✓ Route 9 from the intersection with South Mill Road to the intersection with Old Post Road in the village of Rhinebeck
- ✓ Grinnell Street, Dutchess Terrace and Loftus Street in Rhinecliff
- ✓ Morton Road from the intersection with South Mill Road, leading to the intersection with Rhinecliff Road (State Route 308)
- ✓ Rhinecliff Road from the intersection with Morton Road to the intersection with both Ryan Road and River Road
- ✓ River Road from the intersection with Morton Road to the town's boundary with Red Hook (Work with Red Hook to encourage a continuous CEA along River Road and Annandale Road.)
- ✓ Astor Drive from the intersection with River Road to the intersection with Old Post Road in the village of Rhinebeck
- ✓ Mt. Rutsen Road from the intersection with River Road to the intersection with Old Post Road just north of the village of Rhinebeck
- ✓ Hook Road (Upper and Lower) from the intersection with River Road to the intersection with Old Post Road
- ✓ NY Route 9G from the intersection with Old Post Road in Rhinebeck to the Red Hook town line.
- ✓ NY Route 199 from the intersection with Route 9G to the Ulster County Line *via* the Kingston-Rhinecliff Bridge



River Road

2. Designate the following scenic viewsheds and historic landscapes as CEAs:

- ✓ Hamlet of Rhinecliff including the views from Grinnell and Loftus streets and Dutchess Terrace
- ✓ Southlands Farm
- ✓ Burger Hill Park
- ✓ Linwood Spiritual Center
- ✓ The Route 9 gateway to the village, north of Ackert Hook Road
- ✓ Former lands of Olin Dows
- ✓ The “flats” north of the village along Route 9, including the Dutchess County Fairgrounds and undeveloped lands to both the east and the west
- ✓ Lands along the Hudson River on the west side of River Road, as well as open lands on the east side of the Road
- ✓ Former lands of Levi P. Morton
- ✓ Open fields along Route 9G in the Wurtemberg area
- ✓ Open lands along State Route 308 between Rhinebeck village and Rock City
- ✓ The open fields and views northwest to the Catskills from the area of the Quitman House on Route 9
- ✓ Lands along the 20-mile “Historic District Hike & Bike Route”
- ✓ Gateway to town *via* Bulls Head/Slate Quarry Road from the Taconic Parkway
- ✓ Open lands on both sides of Rhinecliff Road/State Route 308
- ✓ All existing farms including, but not limited to, Scholldorf, Buttonwood, McLaughlin, Lown and Sepasco
- ✓ Areas recommended for CEA designation in the 1989 Open Space Plan
- ✓ All parcels over 200 acres; consider all parcels over 50 acres
- ✓ The Landsman Kill corridor
- ✓ Open lands along Mill Road, including lands of Kibel/DeCola and L. McLaughlin
- ✓ Mill Road Pond and the waterfall
- ✓ Buttermilk Falls
- ✓ Miller Road triangle (triangle formed by State Routes 308, Route 9G and Miller Road)
- ✓ Creed parcels in Rhinebeck and Rhinecliff



Miller Road

3. Designate the following historic town roads in Rhinebeck as CEAs under SEQR for their rural and/or scenic significance:

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| ✓ Ackert Hook | ✓ Old Post |
| ✓ Bollenbecker | ✓ Oriole Mills |
| ✓ Burger | ✓ Patton |
| ✓ Cedar Heights | ✓ Pells |
| ✓ Crosby Lane | ✓ Pilgrims Progress |
| ✓ Fox Hollow | ✓ Primrose Hill |
| ✓ Frost | ✓ Ryan |
| ✓ Haggerty Hill | ✓ Schultz Hill |
| ✓ Hilltop | ✓ Stone Church |
| ✓ Middle | ✓ Violet Hill |
| ✓ Mill | ✓ Vlei |
| ✓ Miller | ✓ Wey |



Pells Road

- ✓ Old Primrose Hill
- ✓ Old Rock City
- ✓ White Schoolhouse
- ✓ Wurtemberg

Objective: The development approval process should be amended to require consideration of scenic elements for all development in specified viewsheds during the development approval process.

Actions:

1. Preserve the visual integrity of Rhinebeck’s Scenic District, as designated by New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), as well as other scenic viewsheds throughout the town.
2. Preserve scenic district qualities by becoming an “Interested Party” in the SEQR review process for proposed projects outside of Rhinebeck town boundaries.
3. Prepare Scenic Resource Protection Regulations in the Zoning Law ensuring scenic integrity in new development and re-development during the review and approval process.
4. Require conservation subdivision and the use of conservation easements to protect viewsheds.

¹ Also refer to page 9.17 for a list of CEAs relating to the Hudson River.