

D R A F T

Copake Conservation Resources Committee
Report to the Copake Town Board
Inventory of Conservation Resources
July 9, 2010

Introduction

The Copake Conservation Resources Committee (CCRC) respectfully submits this preliminary report to the Copake Town Board and requests that the findings be officially accepted.

The CCRC has functioned entirely on a volunteer basis with no budget and without professional consulting assistance. Members of the CCRC have surveyed the approximately 44 square mile area that comprises the Town of Copake and have used the following criteria as the basis for recommending the preservation of certain areas of critical concern:

1. Bodies of water
2. Historic structures
3. Open space
4. Recreational areas
5. Scenic viewsheds
6. Waterways
7. Wetlands
8. Wildlife habitat

Inventory

Our inventory list is subjective and is submitted as a first draft for public consideration. We seek comment, recommendations and other input from Copake residents.

1. Bodies of water
 - a. Melcher Pond
 - b. Copake lake
 - c. Robinson Pond
 - d. Shaver Pond
 - e. Goose Pond
 - f. Pond adjacent to Rusty Dor Farm
 - g. Chrysler Pond
 - h. Upper Rhoda Pond
 - i. Snyder Pond
 - j. Miller Pond
 - k. Weed Mine Pond
 - l. Pond west of Pumpkin Hollow Road North

2. Historic structures

- a. Copake Iron Works in the Taconic State Park
- b. Robinson Pond Dam
- c. Churches – St. John in the Wilderness. St. Bridget’s, Copake United Methodist Church, Craryville United Methodist Church, West Copake reformed Church.
- d. Copake Town Center – Memorial Clock, Copake Inn, commercial building between Route 7A and Empire Road, Holsapple House, Copake General Store.
- e. Copake buildings – Octagon House, Central New England railroad station, Copake Grange, First Town Meeting Building, Senator Deane Homestead.
- f. Copake Falls buildings – Taconic Wayside Inn, Copake Falls Post Office, Roeliff Jansen Historical Society headquarters, Copake Falls railroad station (Depot Deli), Fox House, Roeliff Jansen Central High School, Copake Iron Works Schoolhouse.
- g. Craryville buildings – Bert’s Tavern; Random Harvest Store Front, Railroad Station across from Random Harvest.
- h. West Copake buildings – Astor House.
- i. Archaeological resources – Copake is an archaeologically sensitive area. Several recorded sites are located within the hamlet of Copake and Copake Falls. Without local protection, unidentified archaeological sites may be lost or destroyed. The Town should consider forming an archaeological review board.

3. Open Space

The two most threatened open spaces in Copake at this time are:

- a. The open fields and rising hills (the Taconic Range) that run east of Route 22 to the Massachusetts border from the Ancram town line to Hillsdale. This significant area is protected by the Scenic Corridor Overlay Zone. It is the central portion of a protected three-town viewshed beginning in Ancram and ending in Hillsdale.
- b. The 100 acres north and west of the Copake Hamlet owned by Housing Resources. The advantages to the town of keeping all or most of this land for the benefit of all Copake citizens are immense as we look toward the near and long term future. The Town should appoint a committee to plan sensibly the transition from Housing Resources ownership to an ownership/partnership that benefits all Copake residents.

Other open spaces in Copake include:

- c. Audubon Society Preserve;
- d. Both sides of Route 7 from the junction of Route 7A north to Craryville;
- e. Hills and fields between Route 7 to the west and High Meadow and Sky Farm roads to the east;

- f. Both sides of Route 27A from Chrysler Pond to Ancram town line;
 - g. Fields and wetlands east of Empire Road from Copake clock triangle to Ancram town line.
4. Recreational
- a. Taconic State Park in Copake Falls;
 - b. Harlem Valley Rail Trail and the as-yet unimproved rail bed from the Depot Deli north to the Hillsdale town line;
 - c. Catamount Ski Area (in Copake);
 - d. Summer Camps – KOA, Pontiac, Waubeeka, Berkshire Hills Emanuel Camp;
 - e. Copake Country Club;
 - f. Town roadways for bicycling;
 - g. Public access to Copake Lake;
 - h. Roeliff-Jansen Park.
5. Scenic
- a. Taconic Range – the rising hills, wooded and open, east of Route 22 running to the Massachusetts border from the south end of Copake to its northern end, and protected by the SCOZ;
 - b. Looking east from Overlook Road from Black Grocery Road to County 7A;
 - c. Looking northwest from North Mountain Road, north of Copake Falls to Breezy Hill Road;
 - d. Looking southeast from Empire Road south of Copake hamlet to Troutbrook Road;
 - e. Looking northwest from County Route 7 from the junction of 7 and 7A to Route 23. Includes northwest views from Birch Hill Road north of Melcher Pond to oak tree on Route 7.
 - f. Looking east and west from High Meadow Road from Snyder Pond Road to Sky Farm Road;
 - g. Looking east and west from County Route 27A from Copake Town line to Chrysler Pond.
6. Waterways
- a. Roeliff Jansen Kill
 - b. Bashbish Brook
 - c. Nosterkill
 - d. Preechy Hollow Brook
 - e. Cedar Brook

7. Wetlands

- a. NYS DEC wetland east of Route 22 at Hillsdale Town line;
- b. NYS DEC wetlands south of Route 23 at Fado Road and south of Route 23 and east and west of County Route 7 south of Craryville hamlet;
- c. Large NYS DEC wetland on either side of the Roe-Jan Kill from Overlook Road south to Robinson Pond;
- d. Large wetland east of Empire Road, west of Weed Mine Road and running south from the junction of Weed Mine and Valley View Roads to the Copake/Ancram town line.
- e. Various NWI wetlands in and around #4 above and running east along the line of Lackawanna Road to Preechy Hollow Brook;
- f. NYS DEC Wetland system running from west and south of Robinson Pond, both sides of the Roe Jan Kill to both sides of County Route 7 just above the Copake/Ancram town line.
- g. NYS DEC wetland between County Route 7 and Camphill Village Road
- h. New York State DEC wetlands at northwestern and eastern ends of Chrysler Pond.
- i. Various NWI wetlands south of Pumpkin Hollow Road South, west of Snyder Pond, south of Chrysler Pond to the Copake/Ancram town line.

8. Wildlife Habitat

The CCRC believes that the whole town provides supportive wildlife habitat in a relatively intact matrix. Protected and preserved lands such as the Taconic State Park and the Audubon Society Preserve may offer better habitat than, for instance, agricultural fields, but a wide range of wildlife appears to benefit from the significant percentage of open space in Copake.

9. Farmland – to be provided by Bill Kiernan.

Conclusion

The Copake Conservation Resources Committee has made a considerable effort to inventory Copake's assets during the past two years. We recognize however, that this is a work in progress and our findings can be supplemented and improved. We welcome all input.

The Committee believes that Copake's current zoning regulations go a long way toward preserving the town's natural resources. There are, nevertheless, opportunities for improvement.

The Committee recommends that Copake constitute a Conservation Resources Commission to provide input on development proposals in the fashion of the town's Planning Board. Such a Conservation Commission would be responsible for guiding local efforts to ensure that natural

resources of local and regional importance are protected and stewarded. It would lead local efforts to set conservation priorities and ensure that sensitive areas are protected from inappropriate land use. Such a Commission could also be empowered to hold a conservation interest in lands protected through municipal ownership or conservation easement.

Thank you.

Committee Members

Edgar M. Masters, Chairman

Dan Haas

Lonny Kalfus

Bill Kiernan

Bill Newcomb

Iris Sachs

Susan Winchell-Sweeney