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Part One: Foundation for Planning

Introduction

Hyde Park, New York, is home to three national historic sites that together attract more than half a million visitors every year: the Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Site; Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site (also known as Val-Kill); and the Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site. The sites are combined into a single administrative unit: Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites, under one superintendent and operated by one staff, but each of the sites was established by separate legislation and has its own national significance. The properties comprise three of the approximately 390 areas that make up the National Park System. Although they are formally designated as national historic sites (NHS), these areas may be considered—and are frequently referred to in this document—as national parks. Together the parks include over 1,100 acres of federally owned land along the east bank of the Hudson River, along with two fully furnished mansions, 40 historic buildings, 14 miles of roads and trails, 35 acres of forest plantations set out by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR), five historic gardens, nearly 100 acres of open fields, and over 25,000 objects and artifacts. The parks are supported by an annual budget of over \$5 million and the work of hundreds of volunteers.

Hyde Park is located in the central Hudson River Valley, some 80 miles north of New York City, the largest metropolitan area in the United States (population over 16 million). The two closest urban centers are the City of Poughkeepsie (population 30,000), which borders Hyde Park to the south, and the state capital, Albany (population 96,000), some 70 miles to the north.

Named by Native Americans *Muhheakantuck*, meaning “great waters in constant motion” or “river that flows two ways,” the Hudson River stretches 315 miles, from its source in Lake Tear of the Clouds in the Adirondack Mountains to its mouth in Upper New York Bay. It is a tidal estuary for over 150 miles, from New York Harbor to the federal dam at Troy. With its verdant landscapes and scenic views of the Shawangunk and Catskill Mountains to the west and the Taconic range to the east, the Hudson River Valley has inspired artists and authors for generations. It has also been home to entrepreneurs, enriched by the proximity to New York City. In addition to the Roosevelts and Vanderbilts, the mid-Hudson region has been home to other prominent families,

such as the Livingstons, the Montgomerys, the Millses, and telegraph pioneer Samuel F.B. Morse, who also established “country places” along the east bank of the river in the 18th and 19th Centuries. Today, many of these estates are preserved and are open for public enjoyment, making this section of the Hudson Valley famous as the “Great Estates Region.”

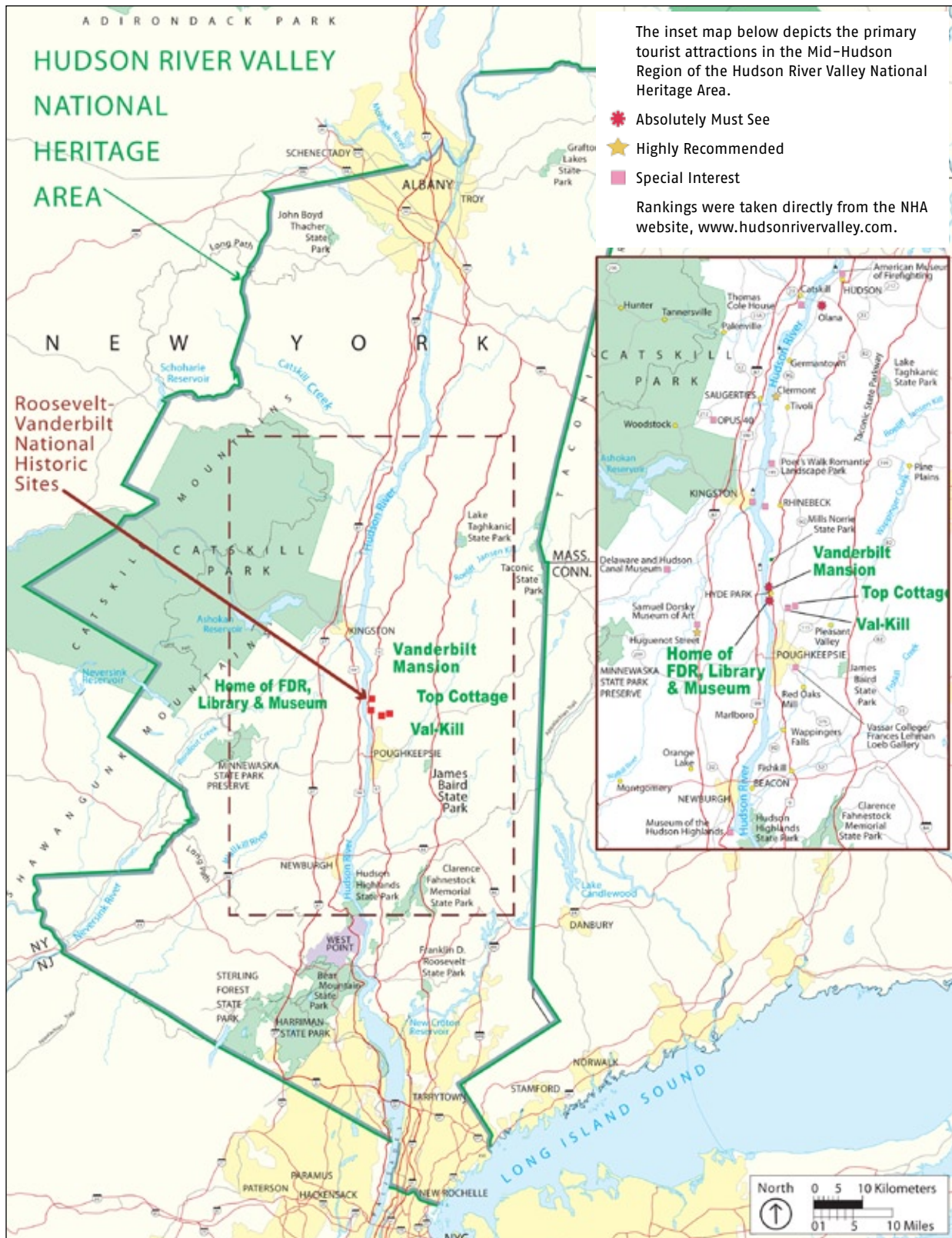
The region is also host to numerous colleges and universities. Notable nearby institutions include the Culinary Institute of America (two miles to the south) and Marist, Bard, and Vassar Colleges.

Purpose of the General Management Plan

The Roosevelt and Vanderbilt sites are at present guided by three separate planning documents: the Vanderbilt Mansion’s 1976 Master Plan; the Home of FDR’s 1977 Master Plan (along with a 2000 Master Plan Amendment); and the Eleanor Roosevelt NHS’s 1980 General Management Plan. Although the plans for the Home and the Mansion coordinate some aspects of management, no single plan addresses commonalities among the sites; this document is meant to fill that need.

The main function of a general management plan, after providing a clear definition of a park’s purpose and management direction, is to guide subsequent planning and management. The NPS seeks to have all parks operate under approved general management plans. This ensures that park managers effectively and efficiently carry out the mission of the NPS:

The National Park Service preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the national park system for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.



Map 1-1: Hudson River Valley Context

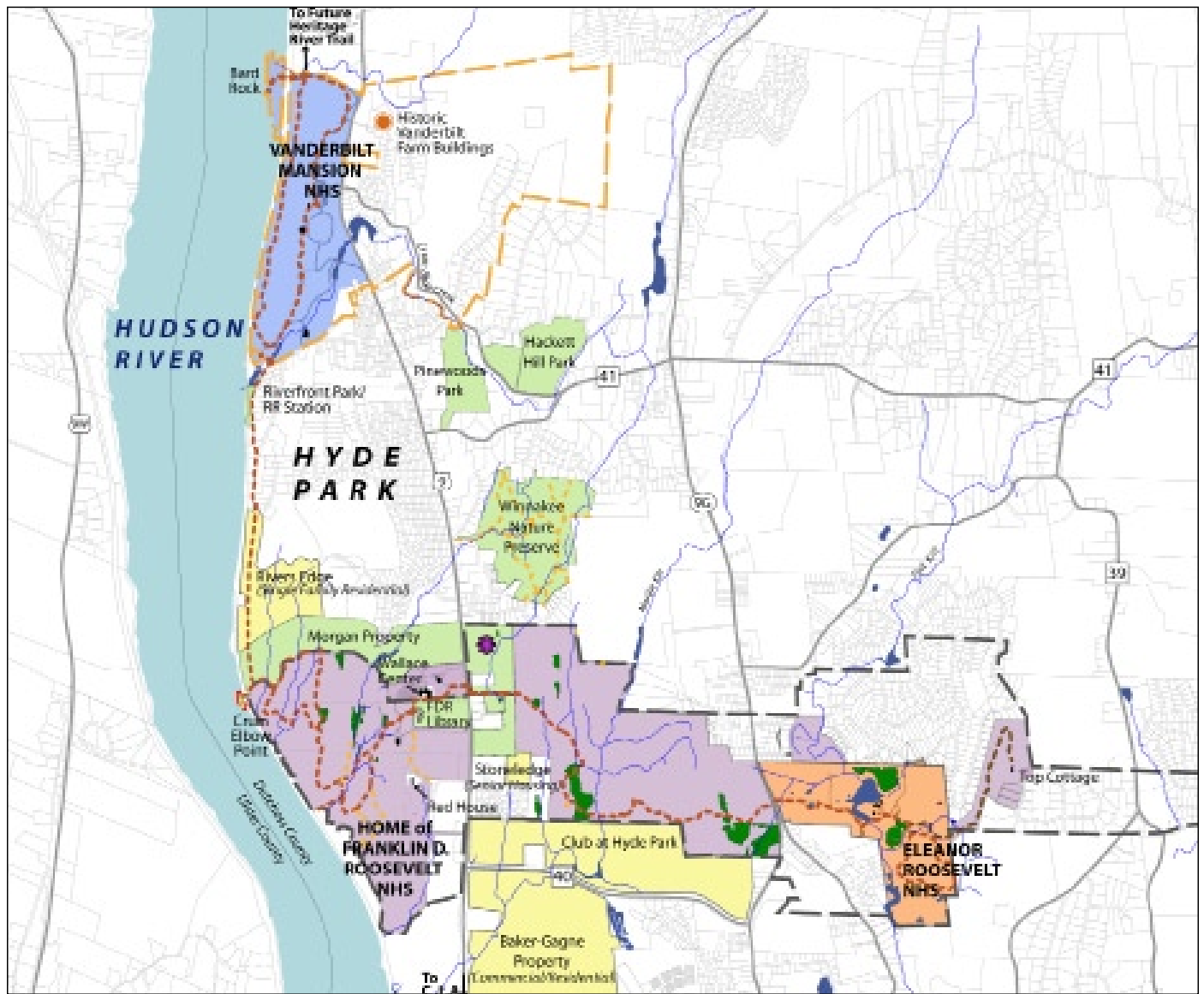
A general management plan describes and explains a park's resource conditions and visitor experiences. It takes the long view, 20 years into the future, and is meant to be a policy-level guide to park managers.

The planning process follows National Park Service *Management Policies 2006* and Park Planning Program Standards. Law and policy require plans to address four key elements:

- the types of management actions required for the preservation of park resources;
- types and general intensities of development (including visitor circulation and transportation patterns, systems, and modes) associated with public enjoyment and use, including general locations, timing of implementation, and anticipated costs;
- visitor carrying capacities and implementation commitments for park areas; and
- potential modifications to the external boundaries of the park, if any, and the reasons for the proposed changes.

The process employed in creating this plan is sequential, and the presentation of the plan follows the stages in this process. It begins with collecting, reviewing, and defining vital information about the parks, which includes inviting public opinion about the parks and the plan. This leads to the formulation of elements such as park purpose and significance, interpretive themes, and goals (ideal conditions). Together, these elements compose the Foundation for Planning portion of the plan. This information was used to identify issues that the plan needed to address. In the subsequent and central stage of the process, the team created management alternatives, which describe objectives, or desired future conditions, and potential resulting actions. After analyzing the environmental impacts and getting public feedback, the team selected one of the alternatives as preferred. Input from partners and the public was crucial at several stages, particularly the scoping, review of alternatives, and this, the draft plan, stage. Next steps, after the conclusion of the public comment period, are to prepare the final plan and record of decision. The planning process is described fully in Part Five.

After the general management plan is adopted, implementation plans will be developed to lay out near-term management actions consistent with the plan. Site-specific planning, research, and technical environmental analysis will be performed when funds for implementation become available. Such specific undertakings are subject to federal and state consultation requirements, which call for public involvement.



Map 1-2: Hyde Park Context

- Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Site
- Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site
- Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site
- Historic Roosevelt Family Estate (NPS acquisition boundary)
- Historic Vanderbilt Estate
- Parks and Protected Land
- Proposed Future Development
- Historic Forest Plantation
- Water
- Hyde Park Trail
- Top Cottage Trail
- Other Trail
- Proposed Location for Hudson Valley Welcome Center



Overview of the National Historic Sites

The following section provides an overview of each park. National Park Service planning guidelines distinguish “Fundamental Resources and Values,” or those that are critical to achieving the park’s purpose and maintaining its significance. The fundamental resources, as well as other important resources, are described below. For an analysis of the fundamental resources, see the end of Part One. For a summary of the historical context for the parks, please refer to Part Six “Appendix B: Historical Overview.” For an in-depth description of the parks, please see “The Affected Environment” (Part Three).



FDR Home

Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Site

Congress accepted President Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s pledge to donate a portion of his estate for a presidential library and a national historic site in 1939. The President made his donation for the historic site, consisting of his home and 33 adjacent acres, to the American people in 1943. Expanded through subsequent donations and acquisitions, the Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Site now comprises almost 719 acres of the former 1,522-acre historic Roosevelt Family Estate. (Eleanor Roosevelt NHS was also part of the Roosevelt estate, and its 181 acres bring the total NPS portion of the estate to 900 acres.) Under Public Law 105–364, approved November 10, 1998, the Secretary of the Interior is authorized to acquire lands and interests in lands that were owned by Franklin D. Roosevelt or his family at the time of his death. The lands so acquired are to be added to and administered as part of the Home of FDR or Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site, as appropriate.

Few figures in American public life have been so closely identified with a particular place as President Roosevelt with his Hyde Park home. FDR was born at his family’s country place on the Hudson River and remained closely connected to the house and surrounding lands his entire life. The property was both home and political headquarters, a haven for spiritual renewal and, after he contracted polio, for physical rehabilitation. On this land he set out forest plantations, maintained family and tenant farms, built a hilltop retreat, and established the nation’s first presidential library. Here he participated in community life, welcomed dignitaries, supporters, and the media, and conducted the work of the presidency.

The FDR Home, or main house, is the centerpiece of the estate. It contains furnishings and objects of great historical value. Among the more than 10,000 items in the site collections are FDR’s bird collection, top hat, personally designed wheelchairs, and telephone that once connected directly to the White House, all of which convey the human details of an extraordinary life. Other structures that were familiar features of FDR’s life include the Stable, the Garage, two Ice Houses, and the Greenhouse. Top Cottage, at the easternmost reach of the Roosevelt estate, was conceived and built by FDR as a personal retreat and reflects his architectural sensibilities, regional interests, and physical needs. The intimate cottage evokes the personality of one of the 20th Century’s towering figures.



Top Cottage, conceived and built by FDR as a personal retreat

The NHS preserves lands of the historic Roosevelt Family Estate that stretch from the Hudson River east to Route 9G and include gardens and grounds, woodlands, and former agricultural lands. These fields and forests are where FDR spent much of his boyhood and where he explored and showcased ideas about land stewardship later in life. FDR's home included not just his house, but the entire estate, over half of which he personally acquired. Significant features include the native oak forest, numerous forest plantations, remnants of his first Christmas tree plantation set out in 1926, and experimental plantations established in cooperation with the New York State College of Forestry between 1930 and 1933.

The estate also included several gardens and orchards. As the ultimate expression of his attachment to his Hyde Park home, FDR chose the family rose garden as his final resting place, where he and his wife Eleanor lie buried in a gravesite of his design.

The site's magnificent view overlooking the Hudson River to the mountains beyond inspired the President's deepest feelings.

The Home of FDR National Historic Site also includes roughly one-half of the estate of FDR's half-brother, James "Rosy" Roosevelt. This property historically was similar to the FDR property in layout, with a straight, tree-lined main entry drive and a stately home (the "Red House") at its terminus. The other half of the former J. R. Roosevelt property is outside NPS ownership and is now occupied by the Hyde Park Mall.

The National Park Service expanded the national historic site in 1974–75 by adding, by donation, 24 acres of the adjacent Newbold-Morgan estate, known as Bellefield, for use as park headquarters. The parks' main administrative building is the historic centerpiece of the Bellefield property, Bellefield Mansion, originally built c. 1795 and reconstructed in a neoclassical style by McKim, Mead, and White in 1909–11. Extending from the south side of the Mansion is the formal garden built c. 1912 to the design of Beatrix Farrand, widely considered one of the finest landscape architects of the early 20th Century.

In 2007, through the efforts of Scenic Hudson, Inc., the Town of Hyde Park, and the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area, the NPS acquired an important tract of 334 acres between Route 9 and Route 9G, which restored much of the unity of the estate as it had existed during FDR's lifetime. (See "Related Programs, Plans, and Initiatives" for a description of the Hudson Valley Welcome Center Project.)

Franklin D. Roosevelt Library and Museum

Also established by the 1939 legislation was the nation's first presidential library, the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, which forms a vital part of the Roosevelt "campus." It is managed by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). The Library property comprises nearly 20 acres. The visitor center for the parks and the FDR Presidential Library is the Henry A. Wallace Visitor and Education Center, located to the west of the Bellefield Mansion, on property transferred from the NPS to NARA for this purpose. The managers of the two sites work together closely, sharing the visitor center and presenting a comprehensive depiction of the Roosevelts.



The Bellefield Mansion, the parks' main administrative building, with the Farrand Garden in the foreground



The Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum



Stone Cottage, the first building constructed at Val-Kill



Eleanor Roosevelt's Cutting Garden



Val-Kill Cottage, originally built as a furniture factory for Val-Kill Industries and later converted into Eleanor Roosevelt's residence

Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site

The 181-acre Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site was established by Congress in 1977 to preserve Mrs. Roosevelt's cherished home at Val-Kill on a portion of the Roosevelt Family Estate. Here she founded Val-Kill Industries to provide new skills and employment opportunities for unemployed local farm workers. At her Val-Kill home, she wrote books and newspaper columns, served as the first U.S. delegate to the United Nations, chaired the committee that drafted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and came into her own as one of the most influential figures of her time.

Purchased by FDR in 1911, Val-Kill soon became a favorite family picnic site. In 1924, FDR urged Eleanor and her friends Nancy Cook and Marion Dickerman to build a cottage so they could enjoy the peace and solitude year-round. Construction of the Stone Cottage was started in 1925 and completed the following year. Val-Kill Cottage was built in 1926 as a furniture factory for Val-Kill Industries that was run by the three women. Eleanor Roosevelt converted it to her residence in 1936–37, and it became her year-round home after FDR's death in 1945. At Val-Kill, Eleanor Roosevelt surrounded herself with family and friends and hosted a range of people, from national and world leaders to local youth and students, who reflected her diverse interests.

Other important structures at Val-Kill are the Stable-Garage, the Doll House, the Playhouse, and the swimming pool. The Doll House is a small wooden structure, originally located near the FDR Home and moved to Val-Kill by Eleanor Roosevelt in 1945 for the use of her grandchildren. The Playhouse, a one-story frame building, was built in several phases beginning in 1928 and was adapted for various uses, including a forge and metal-working shop for Val-Kill Industries.

Eleanor Roosevelt loved the beauty and tranquility of the Val-Kill landscape, characteristics that endure today. Val-Kill Pond, a dammed section of the Fall Kill, is a central feature around which the main buildings, Stone Cottage and Val-Kill Cottage, are arranged. Lawns, gardens, woodlands, and forest plantations set out by FDR surround the structures. The site also includes a large white pine plantation set out by FDR in 1914. The plantation, known as "The Secret Woods," is said to be where Eleanor Roosevelt read stories to her grandchildren. In addition to the Secret Woods, the remains of several plantations survive, including white cedar, tulip tree, and Scotch pine plantations set out as experimental plots by the New York State College of Forestry. The agricultural context of Val-Kill remained important throughout Eleanor Roosevelt's life, and she actively sought to continue it after FDR's death, when she and her son Elliott launched Val-Kill Farms.

Although most of the furnishings and personal possessions were dispersed following Eleanor Roosevelt's death, the park has since been able to acquire historic furnishings and other collections associated with the site. The collection includes primarily historical material (4,000 items). Objects such as handcrafted Val-Kill Industries furniture, family photographs, and personal memorabilia reflect the human dimension of life at Val-Kill.

In the enabling legislation, Congress authorized the NPS to enter into cooperative agreements with qualified public or private entities to carry on Eleanor

Roosevelt's legacy. The NPS has a cooperative agreement with The Eleanor Roosevelt Center at Val-Kill (ERVK) to carry out this mission. The park's legislation also specified that a memorial to Eleanor Roosevelt be established at Val-Kill. The 1980 management plan for the site designated her beloved Cutting Garden as the memorial.

Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site

Located about three miles north of Franklin D. Roosevelt's home is the Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site. President Roosevelt directed the designation of this property as a national historic site in 1940. The NPS administers 212 acres, or the "pleasure grounds" portion of the former 684-acre country place. The 212 acres represent the entire area authorized by the designation order of December 18, 1940.

Frederick W. Vanderbilt, a grandson of the shipping and railroad magnate "Commodore" Cornelius Vanderbilt, saw himself as part of his family's illustrious tradition of arts patronage. In 1895, he purchased an existing estate and employed the nation's most prestigious architects, landscape architects, artisans, and craftsmen to improve and furnish it. The centerpiece of the estate is the Mansion created for Frederick and Louise Vanderbilt by McKim, Mead, and White, a preeminent architectural firm at the turn of the 20th Century. The fully furnished 50-room house rivals the most stately North American homes of the period in the quality of its design, interiors, and decoration. It also incorporates advanced building features, such as steel and concrete construction and a centralized heating system.

To the north of the Mansion is the Pavilion, a neoclassical-style guest house, also designed by McKim, Mead, and White. The Coach House was built in 1897 to the design of architect Robert H. Robertson. It is a brick structure in Queen Anne style that the architect adapted as a garage for automobiles in 1910. The Tool House and Gardener's Cottage are matching buildings and the only ones that pre-date Vanderbilt occupancy. The Main Gate House and Lower Gate House, which echo the Beaux-Arts style of the mansion, were built to McKim, Mead, and White designs in 1898. The Mansion had electric power and running water supplied by its own hydroelectric plant. Located on the south side of Crum Elbow Creek, the Power House is a one-story cobblestone building built in 1897 that provides a prime illustration of the self-sufficiency of the large estates of the era. It produced electricity by water power until 1938 and pumped water to the farm portion of the estate until 1941.

The site is one of the most intact remaining Hudson River picturesque landscapes and depicts the evolution of landscape design in America over some 200 years. The Vanderbilts retained much of the landscape as it was planned after 1828 by the Belgian landscape designer Andre Parmentier, who laid out carriageways and pathways to reveal an unfolding series of dramatic views framed by precisely arranged trees. They modified the formal Italian garden and added a rose garden and classically inspired support structures. Below the formal gardens is the Crum Elbow Creek valley, a naturalistic landscape that forms the southern end of the park. Paralleling the creek with its ponds and waterfalls



The Vanderbilt Mansion



The Vanderbilt Coach House



The Vanderbilt formal gardens



One of a pair of grand orreries purchased by Stanford White for the Vanderbilts in 1897. Grand orreries are decorative instruments that were used to demonstrate the movement of the planets. These objects are exceptionally rare and are one of the treasures of the NPS.



Freshwater tidal marsh at Roosevelt Cove

is a gently winding drive lined by specimen trees and grass shoulders. Numerous structures were erected to support and enhance the estate's vast gardening operation and embellish the designed landscape, among them the Pool House (1903), the Loggia (Garden House, 1910), Pergola (1903), and White Bridge (1897). The White Bridge is significant as one of the early surviving Mellan arch bridges in the U.S.

An overlook from the Mansion provides a dramatic vista up the Hudson Valley, with the Catskill Mountains in the distance, a view that has become emblematic of the great Hudson Valley estates. Bard Rock, one of the few arms of land in the area that offers direct access to the Hudson River.

More than 7,000 historic objects, featuring European fine art, American and European decorative arts and furnishings, and carriages and automobiles, are vital in portraying the lifestyle of the Vanderbilts. This collection has outstanding integrity for its association with the family, the distinction of the designers, and the intrinsic and artistic value of individual objects. Approximately 90% of the original furnishings for the Mansion survive in the collection and include many important examples of European fine art and American and European decorative arts and furnishings from the 16th to the early 20th Centuries. In addition to the objects displayed in the main public rooms on the first and second floors of the Mansion, the collection includes most of the domestic equipment and furnishings associated with the kitchens, laundry, and other basement work areas.

Natural Resources

Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites include natural resources that, while not fundamental to the legislated purposes of the parks, are important and are protected by federal laws, executive orders, and policy. These include wetlands and other aquatic resources, several natural communities considered rare and/or significant within New York State, and prime agricultural lands.

The parks' aquatic resources include a wide variety of palustrine (marshy) and tidal river systems. Within the parks are approximately 4 miles of streams, 20 acres of ponds, and 46 acres of known freshwater wetlands. There are also numerous clusters of vernal pools, seeps, and intermittent streams, many of which have not been inventoried or mapped.

At the Home of FDR NHS, a 25-acre freshwater tidal marsh provides nesting and migratory stopover habitat for waterfowl and wading birds. (The waterway is owned by New York State.) This feature was created by the railroad embankment in the 19th Century. It is largely dependent upon the flushing action of the tidal flows through culverts under the embankment, which have diminished over the years.

There are several good, mid-size examples of red cedar rocky summit forest type located to the west of the FDR Home. This community type is characterized by dry upland ridges with low areas, shallow soils, and prickly-pear cactus, and it is dependent upon periodic fires. This type of community is limited in distribution, restricted essentially to the mid-Hudson Valley and Lake George regions, with about 20 documented in New York State.

A hemlock-northern hardwood forest is located on the lands between Route 9 and Route 9G. It is the most intact of the forests within the parks, with very few exotic species. This forest extends into the undeveloped lands to the north and south of the park. The property between Route 9 and Route 9G also contains rich beech-maple mesic areas with basswood and white ash trees and ephemeral spring flowers, along with well-buffered red maple-black gum swamps.

At Vanderbilt Mansion NHS, there is an impressive example of a mature oak/tulip tree forest community over 60 acres in size, with a 40-acre core of very mature trees. A portion of this community is considered “old growth.” This community is defined by large oaks, beeches, and tulip trees, with at least 24 oaks averaging 1 meter DBH (diameter at breast height). Embedded within this community is a Norway spruce plantation.

The parks contain some prime agricultural lands—those lands best suited to producing food, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops. Within the parks there are two categories of prime agricultural lands: 3.1 acres of prime farmland soil and 15 acres of soils of statewide significance.

The parks contain a diverse array of animal species, in part due to the perpetuation of large areas of wetland and forest since the 17th Century. The parks are within the summer range of the Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*), which is on the federal list of endangered species, but the presence of this species has not been verified. Val-Kill has been home to the Blanding’s turtle (*Emydoidea blandingii*), which is on the New York State list of threatened species and was last seen in the park in 2003. Several other turtle species (spotted, wood, and box) and salamander species (Jefferson’s, blue-spotted, and marbled), which have been identified as species of special concern in New York State, are known to occur in the parks. The presence of several birds on Federal or State lists of species of concern (including the bald eagle and red-shouldered hawk) has been documented, but there are few reliable long-term data.

Primary Partners

Roosevelt-Vanderbilt NHS collaborates with several partner organizations to further its mission. Collaborative activities include managing related resources, providing advocacy and volunteers, and raising funds. The following are organizations with which the park has formal agreements.

The Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum was established in 1939 by FDR and opened in 1941. It is operated by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), which also administers the Henry A. Wallace Visitor and Education Center, operated in partnership with the NPS.

The Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute (FERI) is a private nonprofit organization that promotes the study of the Roosevelt era and is the primary support organization for the FDR Presidential Library. FERI funded the restoration of Top Cottage and has preserved the former James Roosevelt House, the “Red House.”

The Eleanor Roosevelt Center at Val-Kill, Incorporated (ERVK) is a private nonprofit organization established in accordance with the Eleanor Roosevelt NHS authorizing legislation to conduct programs that perpetuate Eleanor Roosevelt’s interests and concerns. The organization is headquartered and operates programs at Val-Kill.

Honoring Eleanor Roosevelt: A Project to Preserve Her Val-Kill Home is an official project of Save America’s Treasures, a public-private partnership between the NPS and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. It was established in 1999 to raise funds for preservation, education, and interpretation. The organization is based in New York City and Boston.

The Roosevelt-Vanderbilt Historical Association (RVHA) is a nonprofit cooperating association based in Hyde Park established to support the historic sites through sales of interpretive materials. RVHA operates stores at Vanderbilt and Val-Kill.

The Beatrix Farrand Garden Association is a regional organization of volunteers formed in 1994 to re-establish and maintain the gardens at Bellefield. Beatrix Farrand, one of the nation’s foremost landscape architects, designed the gardens in 1912.

The Frederick W. Vanderbilt Garden Association, Incorporated is a local nonprofit organization of volunteers founded in 1984 to re-establish and maintain the formal gardens at the Vanderbilt Mansion NHS.

Purpose and Significance of the National Historic Sites

The general management plan is based on the purpose and significance of the national historic sites. The National Park Service Organic Act of 1916 states the fundamental purpose of each unit in the National Park System:

. . . to conserve the scenery and the natural and historical objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such a manner as to leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.

The park purpose is further guided by the legislative history for each site. (To review key sections of the parks’ legislative history, see “Appendix A: Legislation”). The purpose statements below present the fundamental reasons each park was established based on the legislative history.

The significance statements focus on what is most important about each park or the resources from which the park derives its national significance. They are guided not only by the parks’ legislation, but also by an understanding of the resources derived from research, management experience, and public input.

Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Site

PURPOSE

To preserve and interpret the birthplace, lifelong home, and memorial grave-site of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, so that current and future generations can appreciate the life and legacy of the longest-serving U.S. president—a man

who led the nation through the two great crises of the 20th Century, the Great Depression and World War II.

SIGNIFICANCE

The Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt NHS, together with the adjoining FDR Presidential Library, is the best place to understand the influences that helped shape the personality, values, and world view of the U.S. President who, in a time of deep national crisis, redefined the role of the federal government to provide more security and opportunity for its citizens and who led the nation into an era of profoundly greater involvement in world affairs. The unparalleled assemblage of resources preserved here—the home and birthplace, gravesite, gardens, greenhouses, landscaped grounds, outbuildings, farmland, forests, farm roads, trails, views, furnishings and memorabilia, and the adjacent presidential library and its collections—offers unrivaled insight into the life and legacy of the 32nd U.S. President, who profoundly influenced the world in which we live.

Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site

PURPOSE

To commemorate and perpetuate the lifework of Eleanor Roosevelt, and to preserve and interpret the place most central to her emergence as a public figure, so that current and future generations can appreciate her life and legacy as a champion of democracy and human rights.

SIGNIFICANCE

Eleanor Roosevelt chose Val-Kill for her retreat, her office, her home, and her “laboratory” for social change during the prominent and influential period of her life from 1924 until her death in 1962. During that time she formulated and put into practice her social and political beliefs. This is the place most closely associated with one of the most important public figures of the 20th Century.

Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site

PURPOSE

To preserve and interpret the country estate of Frederick W. and Louise Vanderbilt as a premier example of an “American country place,” illustrating important economic, social, and cultural developments resulting from America’s industrialization following the Civil War.

SIGNIFICANCE

Historically known as Hyde Park, the site is a superb example of country-place design, with its centerpiece 50-room Beaux-Arts-style mansion surrounded by one of the most outstanding Hudson River picturesque landscapes remaining today. Developed with one of the country’s first industrial fortunes, the country place represents the domestic ideal of the elite class in late 19th-Century America. It provides a context for studying estate life and the social stratification of



Franklin D. Roosevelt



Eleanor Roosevelt



The Vanderbilt Mansion, circa 1950s

the period and a glimpse into the world of the American elite prior to the Depression and World War II. The property's legacy as a celebrated landscape was among the factors that prompted FDR to direct the designation of the national historic site in 1940.

Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes are tools to help people understand the importance of a national park. Based on the purpose and significance statements, the interpretive themes express the central meaning of a park's resources. Themes are conceptual—linking larger ideas and beliefs—rather than a simple listing of important topics or a chronology of events.

Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Site

AT HOME ON THE HUDSON RIVER

"All that is within me cries out to go back to my home on the Hudson River."

—FDR, July 11, 1944, in a letter agreeing to accept the Presidential nomination for a fourth term

Franklin D. Roosevelt was deeply rooted in the Hudson River Valley, which had been home to his ancestors since the 17th Century. FDR's father, James Roosevelt, purchased the Hyde Park home in 1867. After his death, the property remained under the ownership of Sara Delano Roosevelt, FDR's mother, until her death in 1941. The Roosevelt Family Estate was FDR's birthplace, his lifelong home, and the nucleus of his personal life and public career. The stability and security he experienced here helped mold his responses to both personal challenges and national crises. As president, he conducted official business during his frequent visits to his Hyde Park home. As his political ambitions and prominence grew, FDR adapted and enlarged his family home. He transformed the Italianate country villa into a formal Colonial Revival mansion, nearly doubled the size of the estate by acquiring upland farms, and designed and built a personal retreat, Top Cottage, set on a wooded hilltop looking out onto the Shawangunk Ridge and Catskill Mountains. The cottage and its surrounding landscape provided an intimate setting where he could meet with important visitors and close friends to discuss the state of the world or simply relax. He planned Top Cottage to accommodate his wheelchair and give him greater mobility. As a crowning expression of his attachment to his Hyde Park home, FDR chose the family's Rose Garden as the final resting place for himself and his wife, Eleanor, and designed their plain white marble monument.



President Roosevelt in Hyde Park on Christmas Eve, 1943

A LEADER DURING WORLD CRISES

"The only sure bulwark of continuing liberty is a government strong enough to protect the interests of the people, and a people strong enough and well enough informed to maintain its sovereign control over the government."

— FDR, Fireside Chat from the White House, April 14, 1938

Elected president in 1932, Franklin D. Roosevelt led the nation through two great crises of the 20th Century, the Great Depression and World War II. In that troubled era he dominated American life through the force of his personality and

his political mastery. During his unprecedented 12 years in office, he redefined the role of the federal government by forging a “New Deal” with the American people through the creation of federal agencies and policies designed to protect the poor, the unemployed, and the elderly and to provide greater opportunity for all Americans, while preserving the capitalist system. In World War II, he mobilized America’s vast latent industrial resources and led a coalition of nations to defend democracy against authoritarian regimes. He enunciated the Four Freedoms—freedom from fear, freedom from want, freedom of speech and expression, and freedom to worship in one’s own way—and embodied them in the United Nations, an organization that he hoped would guarantee lasting international peace.

HIS “LABORATORY” FOR IDEAS

“Forests are the lungs of our land, purifying the air and giving fresh strength to our people.”

— FDR, January 29, 1935 in a statement given upon acceptance of the Schlich Forestry Medal

As the security he found on his family estate helped mold Franklin D. Roosevelt’s character, he in turn expressed his ideas and values on this land. The property reflects his active pursuits in rural improvement and preserving local heritage. He acquired upland farms and used the new properties to explore and showcase ideas about land stewardship, conservation, and rural life. Here he practiced a type of wise-use conservation intended to improve the land, and also to help sustain the economic viability of farming and teach area farmers sound agricultural practices. His outdoor experiments and practical demonstrations at Hyde Park in many ways paralleled his state and national policies with regard to forestry, agriculture, and the environment. Here FDR also displayed his interest in architecture rooted in local heritage. He designed his presidential library, as well as his and Eleanor’s private retreats, based on the traditional Dutch Colonial architecture of the Hudson River Valley. FDR’s architectural influence can be seen in the design of many public structures in Hyde Park and across the country.

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT’S LEGACY

Franklin Roosevelt championed issues and programs of enduring relevance to American society, including concern for the future of democracy, economic revitalization, and sustaining rural life. Agencies and programs such as Social Security, the Securities and Exchange Commission, Civilian Conservation Corps, and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation reflect and perpetuate his view of government’s role in a just society. FDR was also the first president who made a conscious effort to perpetuate a physical legacy. He did so by creating a presidential library, thereby inventing the concept of presidential libraries, and by establishing his home as a national historic site. By donating family lands to the National Park Service and the National Archives and establishing a portion of the Vanderbilt estate as a national historic site, FDR actively sought to preserve these resources for future generations.



FDR inspecting forestry work



Civilian Conservation Corps inspection trip, August 12, 1933 at Shenandoah National Park, Virginia



Eleanor Roosevelt in her living room at Val-Kill, 1957



Eleanor Roosevelt hosts Wiltwyck School for Boys students at Val-Kill



Eleanor Roosevelt with at Val-Kill shop apprentice, Karl Johannesen

Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site

ELEANOR ROOSEVELT'S PLACE: VAL-KILL

Val-Kill, Eleanor Roosevelt's home, represents the emergence of her personal and political independence. With the freedom she felt there, Eleanor Roosevelt developed Val-Kill according to her tastes and interests. Its simple and casual décor, in marked contrast to the FDR Home, reflects her personality. Its informal, tranquil atmosphere and rural setting made it an important gathering place for Roosevelt family and friends. Over time, Eleanor Roosevelt used her Val-Kill home as a center for social activism and a meeting place for guests, ranging from students to world leaders.

ADVOCACY AND ACTIVISM

Eleanor Roosevelt championed social welfare and civil rights, wielding influence without being elected to office. She supported sometimes controversial causes and interceded with FDR. "I was the agitator, and he was the politician," she said. Her political activism was forged through friendships with progressive reformers including Nancy Cook and Marion Dickerman, whom she invited to live at Val-Kill. She toured the country and war zones on FDR's behalf, returning with detailed observations and determined advocacy. After FDR's death, any thoughts she entertained of a quiet retirement ended when President Truman named her a delegate to the United Nations General Assembly. As chair of the UN Human Rights Commission, she was instrumental in winning acceptance in 1948 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a project close to her heart. Although she resigned her position in 1952, she continued to promote the UN and regarded her work with the world organization as her greatest source of satisfaction. In copious writings and public appearances and later teaching at Brandeis University, she continued to be a strong advocate for humanitarian concerns. Recalling her own difficult childhood, she enjoyed working with young people, especially the disadvantaged, and brought many of them to enjoy Val-Kill's charms. While she refused calls to be a candidate, she used her considerable influence to steer the Democratic Party in a progressive direction. Though she did not always prevail, she helped provide ordinary citizens and the underprivileged access to administrative and legislative power.

HER "LABORATORY" FOR IDEAS

Eleanor Roosevelt used Val-Kill to express the interest in education and training that was evident in other portions of her life. With her associates, Marion Dickerman and Nancy Cook, she established a business there named Val-Kill Industries that produced furniture, metal ware, and fabrics with the aim of reviving traditional crafts as a means to train and assist unemployed rural citizens. After FDR's death, Eleanor Roosevelt used the bulk of her own resources to purchase the east half of the estate, including some upland farms, Top Cottage, and Val-Kill, and immediately sold the property to her son Elliott for a farming venture, Val-Kill Farms. Her dedication to social improvement also found outlets farther afield, such as in the Arthurdale community in Appalachian West Virginia.

ELEANOR ROOSEVELT'S LEGACY

"Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places close to home. So close and so small they cannot be seen on any map of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person: the neighborhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm, or office where he works. Such are the places where every man, woman, and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world."

—Eleanor Roosevelt, United Nations, 1958

To this day, the ideas addressed in the open atmosphere of Val-Kill remain vital to public debate and to the pursuit of democratic ideals. Eleanor Roosevelt's dogged advocacy of human rights and world peace, her firm insistence on social justice, her proud patriotism, and her commitment to individual and government action continue to inspire.

Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site

WEALTH AND SOCIETY IN THE INDUSTRIAL AGE

Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site illustrates the rise of American industrial fortunes in the decades following the Civil War. Rapid industrialization allowed the accumulation of great wealth and sharpened class differences. In the late 19th Century, a new wealthy elite redefined the requirements for social standing. Rather than lineage, one's personal accomplishments, possessions, and philanthropic interests came to determine prestige. The Vanderbilt family epitomized this new American class, which looked to the residences of European nobility as the inspiration for its grand homes.

A HUDSON RIVER GREAT ESTATE

Vanderbilt Mansion NHS is a premier example of the Hudson River Valley great estates as they flourished before the Depression and World War II. The valley's extraordinary setting, which has inspired artists and authors, as well as architects, landscape designers, and conservationists, distinguishes the stately homes here from similar properties elsewhere. The great Hudson River estates contributed significantly to the development of the valley through close connections to the communities that grew up around them and provided much of their workforce. The comparison between the Vanderbilt estate and the Roosevelt estate, as well as other aristocratic country places in the Hudson River Valley, can reveal important differences in the lifestyles and tastes of the occupants.

A LEGACY OF THE PICTURESQUE LANDSCAPE

The Vanderbilt Mansion NHS retains a designed landscape developed and adapted over the course of two centuries. Beginning in the 1790s, successive owners conducted horticultural experiments and extensive gardening at the country place known as Hyde Park. Around 1830, the Belgian landscape designer Andre Parmentier was hired to lay out a picturesque landscape including a



"Hyde Park, Hudson River." Currier and Ives print, circa 1935



The pool and pool house in the Vanderbilt formal gardens, circa 1930



Frederick and Louise Vanderbilt on the grounds at Hyde Park with their dogs



The Reception Room of the Vanderbilt Mansion, circa 1940

system of roads, paths, and scenic vistas. Frederick and Louise Vanderbilt enhanced the features and grounds of the estate, which included an Italian garden designed by James Greenleaf. During much of its history, it also included a working farm with buildings designed by Alfred Hopkins.

PATRONAGE AND THE FLOWERING OF ARTISTIC ACHIEVEMENT

Frederick and Louise Vanderbilt acquired the Hyde Park estate during an era of remarkable artistic creativity and patronage in the United States, made possible in part by the nation's rising industrial fortunes. The Vanderbilts enlisted an army of professionals to create a place that would imitate and rival the palatial houses of Europe. The Beaux-Arts-inspired mansion by McKim, Mead, and White is one of the finest examples of the renowned architectural firm's mature work. Other important architects, landscape architects, and decorators contributed to the estate and employed the finest craftsmen to outfit and furnish the mansion. Ultimately, the landscape, architecture, and interiors represented by the Vanderbilt Mansion NHS came to exemplify the American Renaissance style and to embody the Vanderbilt family's role as modern "merchant princes" at the vanguard of finance, the arts, and international society.

Associated Resources Outside of Park Ownership

A number of sites associated with the Roosevelts and the Vanderbilts are outside of NPS ownership. The following section highlights some of these important places, both in Hyde Park and farther afield.

Roosevelt-related Resources

RESOURCES WITHIN THE HISTORIC ROOSEVELT ESTATE

The following resources are located within the historic Roosevelt Estate. All but the FDR Presidential Library and Museum are within the area of NPS acquisition authority for the Home of FDR National Historic Site.

FDR Presidential Library and Museum

A primary Roosevelt-related resource outside of the park boundaries is the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, which consists of nearly 20 acres of property between Bellefield and the FDR Home.

The Red House

The Federal-style James R. Roosevelt House, also known as the Red House, is located to the south of the FDR Home, on the James R. Roosevelt portion of the Roosevelt Family Estate. James R. Roosevelt was FDR's half-brother.

The Val-Kill Tea Room

A small building referred to as the Weaving Cottage, or Val-Kill Tea Room, remains just north of the traffic island formed by the intersection of Route 9G and Creek Road. The structure was built in 1933 for Eleanor Roosevelt as a tea house and has long functioned as a restaurant.

Remaining Undeveloped Roosevelt Lands

Four parcels of largely undeveloped land remain on the eastern side of Route 9: the 29-acre parcel across from the Home of FDR main entrance; a 4-acre parcel south of the 29-acre parcel; a 15-acre parcel south of the Roosevelt Cinema; and a 13-acre parcel east of the Stoneledge senior housing development. One undeveloped parcel remains on the western side of Route 9, a 98-acre parcel located to the south of the Hyde Park Mall.

Former Farm Structures

The Roosevelt farmhouse, located in the present-day Springwood Village development, remains but in altered condition. All but one of the farmhouses associated with the upland farms that FDR acquired also remain in altered condition.

LOCAL RESOURCES OUTSIDE OF THE HISTORIC ROOSEVELT ESTATE

The following resources are located outside the historic Roosevelt Estate and outside the area of NPS acquisition authority for the Home of FDR National Historic Site.

St. James Episcopal Church

Across from the Vanderbilt Mansion is St. James Episcopal Church, where Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt worshipped and where FDR's parents are buried.

Rosedale

In the southern part of Hyde Park are the remaining structures associated with "Rosedale," the estate of Isaac Roosevelt and later John A. Roosevelt, FDR's uncle: the main house, the Roosevelt Point Boathouse, and the Cottage. Now a private residence, the main house (1832) sits on the crest of a hill with a view of the Hudson River. The boathouse and cottage remain at the river's edge. The boathouse was built to store John Roosevelt's 68-foot ice yacht, the "Icicle." The entire Roosevelt family shared use of the boathouse, and FDR frequented the Rosedale Estate during his childhood.

Oak Terrace

Near Hyde Park in Tivoli, New York, is Eleanor Roosevelt's Grandmother Hall's country home, Oak Terrace, where Eleanor lived as a child after her mother died.

Public Buildings

Beyond the bounds of his estate, FDR's passionate interest in architecture rooted in local heritage influenced the design of many public buildings, among them libraries, schools, post offices, and municipal buildings.

RESOURCES BEYOND THE HUDSON VALLEY

New York City

Several important sites associated with the Roosevelts are located in New York City. Most notable is the United Nations, in addition to various apartment buildings where the Roosevelts lived.

Warm Springs, Georgia

Much farther afield is the Little White House in Warm Springs, Georgia, where FDR sought rehabilitation after contracting polio, and where he died on April 12, 1945. The site is now the Franklin D. Roosevelt's Little White House State Historic Site.

Arthurdale

Eleanor Roosevelt's dedication to social improvement was showcased at Arthurdale, a community in Appalachian West Virginia.

Washington D.C.

In Washington D.C., in addition to the White House, the Roosevelts' official residence from 1933 to 1945, is the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial, a national park site near the National Mall.

Campobello Island

On Campobello Island in New Brunswick, Canada, is Roosevelt-Campobello International Park, the Roosevelt summer home.

Vanderbilt-related Resources

RESOURCES WITHIN THE HISTORIC VANDERBILT ESTATE

The following resources are located within the historic Vanderbilt Estate, but outside of the authorized boundary, or area of NPS acquisition authority, for the Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site.

Vanderbilt Farm

The boundaries of the Vanderbilt Mansion NHS embrace the "pleasure ground" portion of what once was a nearly 700-acre estate. Vestiges of the Vanderbilt farmlands remain across Route 9, including farm buildings clustered along a narrow, stone wall-lined lane that aligns with the park's north gate.

Wales House

Just outside the park boundary on its southeastern corner is the Wales House (1896), built for a classmate of Frederick Vanderbilt. Originally part of the Vanderbilt Estate, it was designed by McKim, Mead, and White and is now a private residence.

Howard House

Other related structures include the Howard House (1896), designed by McKim, Mead, and White and built for a niece of Louise Vanderbilt, and its associated Carriage House located to the east of Route 9.

RESOURCES BEYOND THE HUDSON VALLEY

Other Frederick Vanderbilt Estates

In addition to Hyde Park, Frederick Vanderbilt maintained residences in New York City, Bar Harbor, Upper St. Regis Lake in the Adirondacks, and at "Rough Point" in Newport, Rhode Island.

Other Vanderbilt Family Estates

Other Vanderbilt family estates in the United States are preserved and opened to the public. Among the most noted are Biltmore in Asheville, North Carolina, and The Breakers in Newport, Rhode Island.

Related Programs, Plans, and Initiatives

Many institutions, organizations, and governmental agencies play an important role in providing the public with resources and information about the Hudson River Valley and the Hyde Park area. Given the number and breadth of organizations and agencies working in the region, the list below is not comprehensive, but is intended to highlight key programs in the region.

Regional Efforts

The **Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area** was established by Congress in 1996 to recognize, preserve, protect, and interpret the nationally significant history and resources of the valley for the benefit of the nation. This four-million-acre heritage area between Waterford and the northern border of New York City is a partnership of local, state, and federal sites with the Hudson River Valley Greenway serving as its manager. The National Park Service provides technical and financial support through the Roosevelt-Vanderbilt parks.

New York State's **Hudson River Valley Greenway**, the manager of the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area program, is an agency created to facilitate the development of a voluntary regional strategy for preserving scenic, natural, historic, cultural, and recreational resources of the Hudson Valley, while encouraging compatible economic development and maintaining the tradition of home rule for land use decision-making.

One important program of the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area is "**Teaching the Hudson Valley**," which aims to help teachers share with students and other educators an understanding of and love for the culture, ecology, and history of the Valley and the tools needed to preserve it. "Teaching the Hudson Valley" is administered by the Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites in partnership with the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area, **New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's Hudson River Estuary Program**, and the **Hudson River Valley Institute** at Marist College.

One regional effort underway is the **Hudson Valley Welcome Center Project**, a partnership among the NPS, the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area, Scenic Hudson, and the Town of Hyde Park. The project started in 2000 to preserve and utilize undeveloped lands adjacent to the Home of FDR. Community leaders and local residents helped develop the concept through a series of facilitated discussions initiated when the Scenic Hudson Land Trust purchased land to protect it from incompatible development. From this series of productive discussions, the "Hyde Park Planning Concept," which outlined plans for a regional information and transportation center, emerged. Building on this concept, the Partners have sought to effectively and innovatively use four parcels of former Roosevelt Family Estate lands to build a sustainable economy and

tax base, create a vibrant community identity, and preserve the historical integrity of the area. The project involves four undeveloped parcels of Roosevelt land purchased by Scenic Hudson: a 29-acre parcel across from the Home of FDR entrance; a 4-acre, land-locked parcel south of the 29-acre parcel; a 15-acre parcel adjacent to the Roosevelt Cinema; and a 334-acre parcel between Route 9 and Route 9G. (The 334-acre parcel has been acquired by the NPS and is now part of the Home of FDR NHS). This vision involves the following overarching goals:

- To create a hub for tourist services in the Hudson Valley and promote economic development opportunities for complementary cultural and recreational amenities.
- To provide a sustainable transportation system for tourists visiting Hyde Park and establish links with other regional visitor destinations.
- To rehabilitate an historic route, “Roosevelt Farm Lane,” and other landscape features of the historic Roosevelt estate. (Roosevelt Farm Lane was completed in November 2008).

The partners envision the hub, the “Hudson Valley Welcome Center” (proposed to be located across from the Home of FDR) to serve as a focal point in the Hudson Valley where tourists, visitors, and residents can get comprehensive information on the rich variety of entertainment, cultural, and hospitality options available throughout the region. The partners also envision co-locating thematically related complementary development on the Welcome Center site, such as a wine and culinary center or native plant nursery, to enhance visitation to the Center and provide additional amenities.

Another regional initiative in New York State is the **Hudson-Fulton-Champlain Quadricentennial Commemoration**, the goals of which include stimulating and encouraging tourism during and after the 2009 Quadricentennial year.

In 1998 the Hudson River became an **American Heritage River**, one of only 14 nationwide. The Hudson’s unique place in American history and culture, its role in the birth of the modern environmental movement, and the marked improvements in its ecological health over recent decades all contributed to this designation.

The **Hudson River Estuary Program** is a partner-based effort among federal, state, and local programs administered by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. Its mission is to conserve and restore the Hudson River’s extraordinary natural heritage and scenery.

The **Hudson River Watertrail Association**, a nonprofit volunteer coalition of non-motorized boating enthusiasts, formed in 1992 to improve river access by car-top boaters.

Regional and national land trusts, including Scenic Hudson, the Open Space Institute, and the Trust for Public Land are working in collaboration to protect lands within the Hudson Valley from development and preserve the scenic quality of the region.

The **Northern Dutchess Alliance** aims to create a broad-based and inclusive institutional structure for regional cooperation and economic development throughout northern Dutchess County.

Local Efforts

The **Town of Hyde Park Comprehensive Plan**, developed over a decade with extensive public input, expresses the vision for the future of Hyde Park and identifies challenges facing the Town. It suggests strategies to guide development and enhance the Town's sense of place, encourage civic identity, expand economic vitality, and capitalize on the Town's wealth of historic, scenic, and natural resources.

Completed in 2002, the **Albany Post Road Corridor Study** (Route 9) identifies land uses and traffic conditions along the corridor. Recommendations focus on consolidating vehicular entries, improving pedestrian networks, providing more street trees and landscaping, and extending the area covered by the 30-mph speed limit. A local Route 9G Corridor Committee also works to enhance the setting of the Route 9G corridor.

Planning Issues

In consultation with members of the public and partners—through meetings, newsletter mail-back cards, and via email and the web—the planning team identified the following list of substantial planning issues. (For more details on public involvement and the planning process, see Part Five: Coordination and Consultation.) The planning issues are presented in three categories that correspond to overarching goals of the NPS: 1) to preserve park resources; 2) to provide for visitor use and enjoyment, and 3) to ensure organizational effectiveness.

Preserving Park Resources

CONDITION OF CULTURAL RESOURCES

A generalized threat to the parks' cultural resources is the enormous backlog of preservation projects (now totaling well over \$50M) due to inadequate funding. Many of the parks' fundamental resources, including historic structures, designed landscapes, and museum objects, are in poor or serious condition. See "Critical Backlog of Maintenance and Preservation Projects" below, for further description of this issue.

DIMINISHED HISTORIC SETTING

The historic setting or rural context of the properties has diminished. The original rural setting is no longer evident. Over the years, the historic Roosevelt lands outside of NPS ownership along the eastern side of Route 9 have become increasingly built-up and commercial. Buildings, parking lots, and signs have been erected on lands that were FDR-era farm fields. The 100-foot deed restriction granted on this land by the trustees of the Roosevelt estate has not been strictly enforced and is insufficient to protect the estate's historic agricultural character. Development pressures on historic Roosevelt Family Estate lands along Route 9, the "gateway" to the sites, threaten the historic setting. Beyond management of park lands, the planning team considered whether there is a feasible and appropriate role for the park in advocating for the protection of the parks' historic setting.

UNDETERMINED TREATMENT OF CULTURAL LANDSCAPES

Roosevelt-Vanderbilt NHS lands now total 1,111 acres and include designed landscapes, former agricultural lands, forest plantations, managed woodlands, and orchards, stone walls, and historic roads and trails. The existing management plans provide little guidance on the treatment of these rich cultural landscapes. The properties contain forest plantations that have gone unmanaged and are becoming unrecognizable. Former farm fields have become overgrown. There is also the opportunity to re-consider treatment of the Roosevelt Home Garden, now that the 1948 visitor parking area has been removed from the garden site. The planning team considered what type and level of treatment is desirable and appropriate for the cultural landscape, and whether there are better ways to portray its historic condition.

OBSCURED SCENIC VIEWS

Views of the Hudson River from the FDR Home and the Vanderbilt Mansion are diminishing due to the vegetative growth on the park property along the Hudson River. In addition, intensifying development pressures beyond park boundaries across the river in Ulster County could severely compromise views unless action is taken. The planning team evaluated the appropriate level and extent of viewshed treatment and protection.

INCONSISTENCIES ABOUT PERIODS OF TREATMENT AND INTERPRETATION

Over the years various plans and studies have suggested appropriate dates for the Period of Treatment (time during the period of significance when the property reached its height of development and when it best reflected the characteristics for which it is significant) and the Period of Interpretation (period of interpretive emphasis) for each park. At the outset of the planning process, however, the dates had not been formally decided. This determination provides a reference for making decisions about the presentation of cultural resources and, through its effect on interpretive activities, would have an impact on the visitor experience. Based on the purpose and significance statements, themes, and studies undertaken to inform the planning, the team developed a consensus on this issue.

Providing for Visitor Use and Enjoyment

DECLINING VISITATION

As the Roosevelt era recedes into history and fewer people are connected to it by memory, visitation to the Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites has declined, as is the case with many historic sites. Overall visitation has declined by 14% in the past decade. The declines are most pronounced at the Home of FDR and Val-Kill, with visitation down by some 40% since 1996. Vanderbilt visitation, although below its peak, has generally leveled off. A grant-supported marketing effort by NARA, FERI, ERVK, and the NPS is intended to help reverse this trend and has met with some success, evidenced by the visitation increase to the Home of FDR in 2006, which was up by 10.4% over 2004 levels. The planning team considered additional ways to encourage visitation.

UNDERUTILIZED RESOURCES

At present, visitors experience only a portion of the resources preserved at the parks. The primary interpretive experience continues to be a guided tour of the historic residences that has changed little since the parks were established. The majority of the other estate buildings and the cultural landscape are not adequately interpreted and therefore not fully appreciated. The team considered how the NPS could provide a more complete presentation of the park resources to the visitor.

APPROPRIATE RECREATIONAL USES

A network of designed trails traverses the parklands—including key segments of the town-wide Hyde Park Trail, a portion of which is designated a National Recreation Trail— but is woefully underutilized. Park guidelines allow hiking on the trails, while equestrian and motorized (ATV) uses are prohibited, and bicycle use is restricted to park roads. However, experience shows that ATVs and mountain bikes are ridden throughout the national historic sites. The team looked at current trail use throughout the park and on adjacent trail networks to determine whether guidelines should be modified to make the trail system more accessible to visitors and to enable more effective controls on prohibited uses.

OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING

An issue raised repeatedly by members of the public is the desire for more and improved educational opportunities at the parks. While a variety of participatory educational programs are offered, they are generally under-enrolled, with the overwhelming majority of students (89%) instead taking historic house tours. The programming also concentrates heavily on the Home of FDR NHS (79%). Only 5% of the programs relate to Val-Kill and 16% relate to Vanderbilt. These programs reach about 3% of the overall visitors to the sites, or over 17,000 children per year. Given that the sites are located in the most densely populated region in the U.S., there is an opportunity to serve more students. Also, while the Wallace Center offers state-of-the-art conference and meeting space and is used for school groups, little dedicated space is available for hands-on programs. A single educational specialist serves all three parks. Seasonal staff may provide support to the education specialist on an ad-hoc basis. Roosevelt Library staff work with NPS to coordinate education programs. The planning team considered ways in which the park could better support its educational programming.

CONGESTED ACCESS ROUTES

The parks are located between two and six miles apart on congested suburban roadways and are separated by disparate auto-oriented land uses. According to two studies conducted by the Volpe National Transportation and Systems Center, visitors traveling to Roosevelt-Vanderbilt experience traffic conflicts, delays, and risk of vehicular collision at park entries due to high levels of traffic congestion on access routes. This traffic congestion significantly detracts from the visitor experience. Moreover, visitation is effectively limited to users of private vehicles and group bus charters. Although the sites are located some five miles from New

York City metro rail lines, they are not regularly accessible by this transit service. The planning team considered a coordinated framework for an alternative transit system.

Ensuring Organizational Effectiveness

CRITICAL BACKLOG OF MAINTENANCE AND PRESERVATION PROJECTS

As mentioned above under “Preserving Park Resources,” a major operational capacity issue is the enormous backlog of cyclic maintenance and preservation projects (now totaling well over \$50M) and inadequate staffing with which to pursue those projects. While modest increases have been made to the park budget in the past few years, they are insufficient to overcome deepening shortfalls accruing over several decades from rising fixed costs, such as employee cost-of-living adjustments, retirement and health insurance benefits, and utility costs; and the greater costs of overcoming the effects of deferred maintenance and preservation. Operations increases such as additional seasonal positions, afforded as part of the “National Park Centennial Initiative” (a broad effort by the Department of the Interior to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the NPS in 2016), and project funds, such as those provided through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), have provided some needed assistance, but are not sufficient to remedy the outstanding backlog. The team considered whether there are new ways to garner resources and work with partners to help address the backlog.



The Bellefield Outbuildings

INADEQUATE MAINTENANCE FACILITIES

Park maintenance operations are housed in historic structures within the parks. Since the 1970s, the maintenance division has been operating out of the Vanderbilt Coach House and the Bellefield outbuildings. Using these structures for maintenance operations undermines their long-term preservation. In addition, these facilities do not meet health and safety standards for NPS employees. The master plans for the FDR Home and for the Vanderbilt Mansion, completed some 30 years ago, called for the construction of a new maintenance facility and relocation of the maintenance function from the Vanderbilt Coach House. In 2001, the NPS prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the relocation of maintenance operations from the historic structures, and the Northeast Regional Director approved a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) in January 2002. The EA/FONSI concluded that decades of constant use have caused impairments to the historic structures currently housing maintenance operations, and that the historic structures do not provide adequate facilities for a modern maintenance staff to work efficiently and effectively. Due to issues on the town access road, the site that was under consideration for the maintenance facility at the time of the FONSI has since been utilized for a new museum services facility. The GMP team confirmed the need for a new maintenance facility and updated this proposal.

COORDINATION WITH OTHER ENTITIES

The mid-Hudson River region has a growing number of historic, natural resource, and cultural resource interest groups. One of the larger regional initiatives is the

Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area. The Roosevelt-Vanderbilt sites are located within the heritage area and are germane to its “Freedom and Dignity” theme. As significant attractions with nearly 500,000 visitors annually, the Roosevelt-Vanderbilt sites are expected to play a leadership role in the region. In addition, the park has formal agreements with numerous primary park partners (see “Park Partners” section) and works with many other organizations on stewardship initiatives affecting the broader region. Partner and volunteer efforts, while clearly beneficial, require ongoing involvement of park staff members and a significant commitment of their time. At present, much of this is done as collateral duty. The planning team examined the role of partnerships in the parks, determined whether additional involvement is desirable and appropriate, and identified the conditions for such involvement.

Analysis of Fundamental Resources and Values

The National Park Service works to ensure the conservation and public enjoyment of resources and values fundamental to achieving the park’s purpose and maintaining its significance. These qualities, if allowed to deteriorate, would jeopardize the park’s purpose or significance. The park may possess other resources and values that are important but not fundamental. Identifying fundamental resources and values is intended to help focus planning and management on what is truly important about the park.

The fundamental resource values analysis was developed during the planning process and reflects the input of the planning team and other National Park Service resource management professionals. The following section identifies the fundamental resources and values for each park, describes their condition, and lists the stakeholders in their preservation and management. It also identifies other important resources located within the parks.

Table 1–1: Fundamental Resources, Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt NHS

Fundamental Resources

Analysis and Guiding Principles

The FDR Home, Support Buildings, and Top Cottage

Importance: At the core of the site is the house where FDR was born in 1882. The importance of the house in shaping his perception of the world cannot be exaggerated. After its renovation in 1915, the house figured prominently in his political career as a setting for meetings and accommodation for important guests. Several outbuildings or dependencies are associated with the FDR Home and were essential to the functioning of the estate, including the Stable, the Garage, the Laundry, two Ice Houses, the Gardener’s Cottage, the Duplex, and the Greenhouse. Top Cottage, situated in the far eastern corner of the Roosevelt estate, was conceived and built by FDR as a personal retreat and reflects his architectural sensibilities, regional interests, and physical needs.

Condition and Trends: According to the NPS Facility Condition Index (FCI), a system of rating of the overall condition and importance of park resources, the park contains 18 historic buildings considered critical to its mission. The FCI indicates that the buildings range in condition from good to serious. The FDR Home is in poor to fair condition, while its outbuildings range from serious to good. Top Cottage is in good condition. Beginning in 2009, the NPS targeted funding, including ARRA funds, to improve the condition of these key buildings.

The FDR Home is furnished to FDR’s period of occupancy and is open for guided tours year-round. Though some changes have been made to accommodate visitors, it remains largely as FDR knew it. Though the outbuildings are preserved and appear as they did during FDR’s occupancy, only the Stable and Garage are open to the public on a regular basis. The Garage has been reconstructed.

Top Cottage (a National Historic Landmark) is remote from the more frequently visited areas of the park. The structure is restored to FDR’s occupancy, is used for “seminar-style” tours, and is opened periodically for small meetings and conferences. Given its intimate setting and its location in a residential neighborhood, public access to the structure needs to be balanced with protection of its intimate scale and quiet atmosphere.

Potential Threats: Continued delay of maintenance and repair projects.

Stakeholder Interests: In addition to the taxpaying public, two primary partners at the Home of FDR NHS have an interest in all aspects of the Roosevelt legacy: the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) and the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute (FERI). The park cooperating association, the Roosevelt-Vanderbilt Historical Association, has a profit-sharing agreement with NARA for the Wallace Center book store. The management of and public access to the Home of FDR is of interest to the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area, within which the park sites are located. Cooperation among managers, especially of thematically related sites, is an important consideration.

Laws and Policy Guidance: Pertinent federal laws and policies in effect for the protection of historic structures are described in “Compliance with Federal and State Laws and Regulations” (Part Five).

Special Mandates: The original portion of the Home of FDR site, consisting of 33.23 acres surrounding the home and adjoining outbuildings, was conveyed to the United States by deed from Franklin Roosevelt dated December 29, 1943. The deed stated that the property “. . . shall be maintained as a National Historic Site and in a condition as nearly as possible approximating the condition of the residence and grounds prevailing at the expiration of the life estate of Franklin D. Roosevelt, as hereinafter reserved.”

GMP Issues: Dates for periods of treatment and interpretation; opportunities to improve educational programs; poor condition/maintenance backlog; and inadequate maintenance facilities.

The FDR Landscape, including Scenic Views

Importance: The Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Site includes gardens and grounds, forest plantations and managed woodlands, former agricultural lands, and associated archeological resources. The park lands stretch from the Hudson River east to Top Cottage. The fields, forest, historic stone walls, farm roads, and other cultural resources are central to the historical importance of the estate. The estate also included several gardens and orchards. To the north of the FDR Home is the Rose Garden, which contains the graves of Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt, marked by a plain white marble monument designed by FDR. There are also archeological features, including building and structural remnants related to earlier farmsteads, as well as prehistoric sites. A network of farm roads and trails traverses the sites. A portion of the park trail system is designated a National Recreation Trail.

FDR often spoke of the splendid view from his bedroom, overlooking the Hudson River to the mountains beyond. The importance of this view to FDR is underscored by the stipulation in the deed donating the property to the US government, which states that the view should be preserved (see below). FDR sited Top Cottage atop a wooded summit, known as Dutchess Hill, taking full advantage of the views toward the Shawangunk Ridge and Catskill Mountains.

Condition and Trends: The grounds surrounding the FDR Home, including the Rose Garden and trails, are in good condition. The cultural landscape, in general, is not adequately utilized or interpreted. The trail system is largely underutilized. Demand for access to and interpretation of the Hudson River is growing, but access is largely blocked by the railroad and steep embankments. Use and interpretation of the forest plantations and other former agricultural lands have yet to be determined. Successional growth has obscured roughly 40 of the nearly 60 acres of open fields that existed in FDR’s day. Several important historic features have been lost. Major among them is the Roosevelt Home Garden, which was located on the grounds of the FDR Home to the north of the

Rose Garden. It included large and small vegetable gardens, a fruit tree orchard, an apiary, and several outbuildings. In 1948, to accommodate the large number of visitors to the FDR Home, the NPS replaced the Home Garden with an asphalt parking lot. In 2004, with the development of the Wallace Center, parking was relocated to the Wallace Center on the Bellefield property. Elsewhere, other missing elements include several small-scale service and utility features removed by the NPS, such as a garage and a chicken coop. The Hudson River view from the FDR Home is entirely blocked, except in the winter. The Top Cottage primary view—through the woodlands surrounding Top Cottage to the Shawangunks and Catskills—remains largely reflective of FDR’s tenure. A second vista to the southwest has become obscured by vegetation.

Potential Threats: Continuing low-density residential and commercial strip development in the area increases traffic and makes it difficult to convey the historic rural character of the sites. Forest plantations developed by FDR have not been maintained since 1945, and the historic plantation conifers are being crowded out by successional hardwoods. Aspects of the designed landscape are gradually deteriorating due to the loss of specimens, diseases and pests, and inadequate maintenance. In addition, some small-scale garden structures, such as the hot beds and the cold frames, are in ruins. Also, there is illegal use of the trails by all-terrain vehicles. The view of the Hudson is becoming increasingly obstructed by vegetation, even with annual mowing of the fields below the Home. Though views across the river in Ulster County remain largely uncluttered by modern development, development pressure there is growing and could undermine the long-term protection of the viewshed.

Stakeholder Interests: In addition to those noted above, the Town of Hyde Park, Scenic Hudson Land Trust, and the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area have an interest in the use and interpretation of some 334 acres of former Roosevelt Estate lands between Route 9 and Route 9G that were transferred to the NPS from Scenic Hudson (see “Related Plans, Programs, and Initiatives” section). In addition, the State University of New York’s College of Environmental Science and Forestry (formerly the College of Forestry) has an interest in assisting with future treatment and management of the forest plantations, building on the historic association with FDR. Preservation of the scenic views has a broad range of stakeholder interests that includes, in addition to those previously mentioned: municipal planning and legislative bodies; county planning, policy, and legislative offices; regional and state planning and regulatory entities; regional open-space organizations; and land trusts.

Laws and Policy Guidance: Pertinent federal laws and policies in effect for the protection of cultural landscapes, farmland soils, archeological resources, and air quality are described in “Compliance with Federal and State Laws and Regulations” (Part Five).

The portion of the national historic site located to the west of Route 9 is situated within New York State’s designated coastal zone management area. All proposed activities for this portion of the park must be consistent with the state’s coastal zone management program policies.

Special Mandates: As described previously, the deed conveyed to the U.S. from Franklin Roosevelt stated that the property shall be maintained in a condition as nearly as possible approximating the condition prevailing at the expiration of FDR’s life estate.

Deed restrictions granted by the trustees of the FDR estate in 1948, in the sale of Roosevelt land along the eastern side of Route 9, prohibited certain land uses and established a 100-foot setback for signs, buildings, and structures. The deed states that “. . . owners of any tracts, parcels or plots of land adjacent to or in the vicinity of said premises who may have derived title directly or

indirectly from or through Franklin D. Roosevelt, Deceased, to institute and prosecute any proceedings at law or in equity in connection with any violation or threatened violation of said covenant."

Public Law 105-364 (1998) authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to acquire by purchase with donated or appropriated funds, or otherwise, lands or interests in lands in Hyde Park that were owned by FDR or his family at the time of his death. The lands so acquired are to be added to and administered by the Secretary as part of the Home of FDR or Eleanor Roosevelt NHS, as appropriate.

The deed conveyed to the United States from Franklin Roosevelt stated that: ". . . there is also granted and released unto the party of the second part and its assigns, the right , at any and all times hereafter, to enter upon the 'Boreel and Kirchner Farms or Places' immediately south of the land herein conveyed, and upon the 'Wheeler Place' immediately west of the land herein conveyed, and cut down and remove from each of the said three named Places all trees and timber of any and all kinds that may be necessary to secure and preserve to the party of the second part and its assigns, the river and mountain views as they now exist."

GMP Issues: Undetermined treatment; diminished historic setting; periods of treatment and interpretation; appropriate recreational uses; opportunities to improve educational programs; congested access routes; poor condition/maintenance backlog; inadequate maintenance facilities; and obscured scenic views.

Museum and Archival Collections

Importance of the Resource: The Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Site collections include over 10,000 historic items, archeologically recovered objects (77,000), and associated field records. Like the site as a whole, the significance of the collection is based on its close association with FDR and other members of the Roosevelt family. The core of the collection consists of the furnishings of the FDR Home, with FDR's collecting interests and hobbies well represented. The park holds photographs of the Roosevelt and Newbold-Morgan properties and limited archival collections associated with the historic period.

Condition and Trends: Several items in the collection are in need of conservation. For example, the spines of the President's books are failing, bronze pieces are becoming permanently etched with soot, and textiles are torn and in need of major repairs. The stored museum and archival collections presently dispersed throughout a number of locations in the park including the FDR Home, the Vanderbilt Mansion, and Val-Kill are being moved to the new museum services facility (an approximately 9,600 square-foot structure that provides secure and environmentally controlled space for the stored collections, as well as space for research and some offices for museum services staff), which was completed in 2008.

Potential Threats: Delayed conservation projects; large tour-group size, which makes it difficult to properly monitor visitors and discourage inappropriate handling of objects.

Stakeholder Interests: In addition to the taxpaying public, the collections are of interest to NARA, FERI, ERVK, and RVHA as well as to FDR and ER scholars and other researchers. There are hundreds of requests each year for historic photographs, documents, and general information that can be found only in the park's archives.

Laws and Policy Guidance: Pertinent federal laws and policies in effect for the protection of museum collections and archives are described in "Compliance with Federal and State Laws and Regulations" (Part Five).

Special Mandates: As described previously, the deed conveyed to the U.S. from Franklin Roosevelt stated that the property shall be maintained in a condition as nearly as possible approximating the condition prevailing at the expiration of FDR’s life estate.

GMP Issues: Use of historic structures; periods of treatment and interpretation; opportunities to improve educational programs; and poor condition/maintenance backlog.

Table 1–2: Fundamental Resources, Eleanor Roosevelt NHS

Fundamental Resources

Analysis and Guiding Principles

The Cottages and their Dependencies

Importance: Originally purchased by FDR in 1911 for forestry experiments, the site offered a refuge from the formality of the Roosevelt home, or the “big house.” Val–Kill became a retreat for Eleanor and after FDR’s death became her home. Construction of the Stone Cottage was started in 1925 and completed the following year. Val–Kill Cottage was built in 1926 as a furniture factory for Val–Kill Industries. Eleanor Roosevelt and her friends converted it to her residence in 1936–37. It became her year–round home in 1945.

Associated outbuildings or dependencies include the Stable–Garage, the Doll House, and the Playhouse, all of which are important in illustrating aspects of Eleanor Roosevelt’s life.

Condition and Trends: According to the NPS Facility Condition Index (FCI), a system of rating of the overall condition and importance of the park resources, the park contains seven historic buildings that are considered critical to its mission. The FCI indicates that the buildings range in condition from good to serious. Val–Kill Cottage is in good condition; Stone Cottage in poor condition; the Playhouse is in fair condition; the Doll House, Stable–Garage, and West Garden Shed are in serious need of repair.

Eleanor Roosevelt’s apartment in Val–Kill Cottage is furnished to her occupancy. Though some changes were made to accommodate public access to the interiors, the structure remains largely intact.

Since the site’s establishment in 1977, Stone Cottage had served as headquarters and the centerpiece of ERVK’s programs. In 2008, ERVK relocated to a new headquarters building on the site of a former non–historic caretaker’s cottage.

Potential Threats: Continued delay of maintenance and repair projects.

Stakeholder Interests: In addition to the concerns of the taxpaying public, NARA, FERI, and the Hudson River Valley NHA, the park has an agreement with ERVK to conduct programs that carry on Eleanor Roosevelt’s legacy. Another partner, Honoring Eleanor Roosevelt: A Project to Preserve Her Val–Kill Home, works to support the preservation and interpretation of the site. Eleanor Roosevelt NHS and ERVK are also members of the International Coalition of Historic Sites of Conscience. The RVHA operates the bookstore at Val–Kill.

Laws and Policy Guidance: Pertinent federal laws and policies for the protection of historic structures as described in “Compliance with Federal and State Laws and Regulations” (Part Five).

GMP Issues: Uses of historic structures; periods of treatment and interpretation; opportunities to improve educational programs; poor condition/maintenance backlog; and inadequate maintenance facilities.

Importance: Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site includes all of the land historically associated with Val-Kill at the time of her death. The property includes forest plantations and natural woodlands, agricultural lands, designed landscapes, and associated archeological resources. Eleanor Roosevelt valued many aspects of Val-Kill, notably its beautiful setting and the tranquility of the natural landscape surrounding the Fall Kill. Val-Kill Pond, a dammed section of the Fall Kill, opens a view of the historic core of Val-Kill on the east bank. Several remaining landscape features underscore the importance of this site for Roosevelt family gatherings: the stone barbecue, the swing and teeter-totter, and the swimming pool. There are also archeological features associated with the former structures from the Eleanor Roosevelt period, as well as an earlier farmhouse and a dump site from the Roosevelt period.

The agricultural context of Val-Kill remained important throughout Eleanor Roosevelt's life. She actively sought to preserve it after FDR's death, when she and her son Elliott purchased land from the FDR estate trust and formed a company called Val-Kill Farms. The site also includes a large white pine plantation set out by FDR in 1914 and the remains of several plantations, including white cedar, tulip tree, and Scotch pine plantations set out as experimental plots by the New York State College of Forestry in 1930–31. The Cutting Garden, Shed, and Greenhouse were established c. 1937 to provide the cottages with fresh flowers.

Condition and Trends: The walkways and gardens are in good condition; the grounds are in poor condition; and the trails and Fall Kill Bridge are in serious condition.

Interpretation remains focused on the historic structures; other cultural resources, in general, are not adequately interpreted. Like the Home of FDR, the site's trail system is also largely underutilized. Use and interpretation of the Secret Woods, other forest plantations, and other former agricultural lands have yet to be determined. In addition, the forest plantations developed by FDR have not been maintained and are becoming unrecognizable as plantations. Open fields are diminishing in size; some 15 of the roughly 40 acres open in ER's day are now covered by woody vegetation.

Missing landscape features from the period of significance include the agricultural buildings in the central and western regions of the site, as well as the hot and cold frames associated with the Cutting Garden.

The enabling legislation directs the Secretary of the Interior to erect and maintain an appropriate monument or memorial to Eleanor Roosevelt within the boundaries of the NHS (see below). The 1980 general management plan for Val-Kill calls for the Cutting Garden, with a commemorative memorial tablet, to serve as the memorial. The NPS refurbished the garden, although it is not an accurate restoration to historic conditions. No memorial tablet was erected on the site, and visitors are not made aware of the significance of the garden.

Potential Threats: For much of the period of significance (1924–1962), Val-Kill's setting was rural and agricultural, surrounded by farmland. As with the Home of FDR NHS, the suburbanization that began in the 1950s continues to threaten the rural context, with low-density residential and commercial strip development and associated traffic problems.

Stakeholder Interests: In addition to those noted previously, the State University of New York's College of Environmental Science and Forestry (formerly the College of Forestry) has an interest in assisting with future treatment and management of the forest plantations, building on the historic association with FDR.

Laws and Policy Guidance: Pertinent federal laws and policies in effect for the protection of cultural landscapes, farmland soil, and archeological resources as described in “Compliance with Federal and State Laws and Regulations” (Part Five).

Special Mandates: Public Law 95-32 (1977) authorizing the establishment of Eleanor Roosevelt NHS directs the Secretary of the Interior to erect and maintain an appropriate monument or memorial to Eleanor Roosevelt within the boundaries of the NHS.

Public Law 105-364 (1998) authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to acquire by purchase with donated or appropriated funds, or otherwise, lands or interests in lands in Hyde Park that were owned by FDR or his family at the time of his death. The lands so acquired are to be added to and administered by the Secretary as part of the Home of FDR, or Eleanor Roosevelt NHS, as appropriate.

GMP Issues: Treatment of cultural landscapes; diminished historic setting; dates for periods of treatment and interpretation; underutilized resources; appropriate recreational uses; opportunities to improve educational programs; congested access routes; and poor condition/maintenance backlog.

Museum and Archival Collections

Importance: Following Eleanor Roosevelt’s death, the furnishings and personal possessions either passed to family and friends or were sold. The park has since acquired historic furnishings and other collections associated with the site. The collection comprises primarily historical material (4,000 items), including objects necessary to maintain the historic appearance of Val-Kill Cottage, original furnishings with site-specific provenance, and replacement pieces. In addition to objects associated with the historic site, the collection includes approximately 15 linear feet of documents, photographs, and movie film.

Condition and Trends: The collection is expected to grow substantially as the NPS continues acquisition of original objects related to Eleanor Roosevelt’s life and work at Val-Kill, most of which were dispersed at public auction following her death. Several items in the collection are in need of conservation. As described previously, the NPS has developed a new museum services building to improve the condition of the stored collections.

Potential Threats: Continued delay of conservation projects.

Stakeholder Interests: In addition to those noted above, the collections are also of interest to FDR and ER scholars and other researchers.

Laws and Policy Guidance: Pertinent federal laws and policies in effect for the protection of museum collections and archives as described in “Compliance with Federal and State Laws and Regulations” (Part Five).

GMP Issues: Use of historic structures; dates for periods of treatment and interpretation; opportunities to improve educational programs; and poor condition/maintenance backlog.

The Mansion and Dependencies

Importance: The centerpiece of the country place is the Beaux-Arts-style mansion created for the Vanderbilts by McKim, Mead, and White, a prominent architectural firm at the turn of the 20th Century. The fully furnished 50-room house rivals the most stately North American homes of the period in the quality of its design, interiors, and decoration. Modern for its day, the mansion was framed in steel, with concrete beneath the limestone facing.

Important buildings associated with the Mansion, and which expand the depiction of the estate operation, include the Power House, the Pavilion (a neoclassical-style guest house), the Coach House (a brick Queen Anne-style structure), and gatehouses. The Power House, a one-story cobblestone building built in 1897 in a rustic style, was one of the first private power houses built and is one of few extant today.

Condition and Trends: According to the NPS Facility Condition Index (FCI), a system of rating of the overall condition and importance of the park resources, the park contains 13 historic buildings considered critical to its mission. The FCI indicates that the buildings range in condition from good to serious. The Vanderbilt Mansion is in fair condition; the Coach House is in good condition; the Tool House, Power House, and the Main Gate House are in poor condition; and, the Lower Gate House is in serious condition.

In the absence of a centralized maintenance facility, the Coach House is being used for that purpose. However, the Coach House is inadequate for maintenance purposes and, although considered in good condition, such use threatens the long-term survival of this nationally significant structure.

A missing feature from the Vanderbilt era is the Sexton Boat House, which was located on Bard Rock. The 1.5-story, 800-square-foot structure housed sailboats and other small craft and received passengers brought in by launch from the Vanderbilt's yacht anchored in the river. It was the only outbuilding that the Vanderbilts retained on the former Sexton tract (the northern portion of the estate purchased in 1905). The NPS removed the Boat House in the 1950s.

Potential Threats: Continued delay of maintenance and repair projects and continued use of the Coach House for maintenance functions. The view of the Hudson remains, but has been reduced by encroaching vegetation since the time of the Vanderbilts.

Stakeholder Interests: In addition to the concerns of the taxpaying public, the site is of interest to RVHA, which operates the bookstore at Vanderbilt Mansion, and the Frederick W. Vanderbilt Garden Association, which refurbished and maintains the formal gardens.

Laws and Policy Guidance: Pertinent federal laws and policies for the protection of historic structures as described in "Compliance with Federal and State Laws and Regulations" (Part Five).

GMP Issues: Uses of historic structures; dates for periods of treatment and interpretation; opportunities to improve educational programs; poor condition/maintenance backlog; and, inadequate maintenance facilities.

The Vanderbilt Landscape, including Scenic Views

Importance: The site is one of the best remaining Hudson River picturesque landscapes. The property includes cultural landscapes and associated archeological resources. The grounds reflect the general organization of the picturesque landscape as designed by Andre Parmentier in 1829–1830. Two forest plantations remain: a small Norway spruce plantation, and a white pine plantation along Bard Lane. There are also archeological features relating to previous owners of the property, remains of the Sexton Estate purchased by Frederick Vanderbilt, as well as several trash dumps. An overlook along the northern end of the drive provides a dramatic view up the Hudson Valley, with the Catskill Mountains in the distance. This view was central to the original pre-Vanderbilt picturesque designed landscape and has become emblematic of the great estates of the Hudson Valley.

Numerous structures were erected to support and enhance the estate's vast gardening operation and embellish the designed landscape. The National Register nomination for the site specifically notes the Pool House (1903), the Loggia (Garden House, 1910), Pergola (1903), and White Bridge (1897). The White Bridge, built in 1897, is significant as one of the early and surviving Mellan arch bridges in the U.S.

Condition and Trends: The grounds and trails surrounding the Vanderbilt Mansion are in good condition. Garden elements range in condition from good to serious. The missing five greenhouses alter the original massing and scale of the garden. The cultural landscape is not adequately utilized or interpreted. Demand for access to and interpretation of the river is growing.

Potential Threats: Aspects of the designed landscape, notably the pine buffer along Route 9, are seriously deteriorated due to the loss of specimens and inadequate maintenance. Landscape features such as the perimeter wall and the wrought iron fence along the railroad are decaying. Extensive spring bulb plantings, including masses of naturalized daffodils that once appeared on open banks of Crum Elbow Creek, have almost disappeared. Invasive species are a problem at various locations. Although mown regularly, the fields have diminished by about 10 acres since 1936. At present, views across the river to Ulster County remain largely uncluttered by modern development. However, growing development pressure could undermine the long-term protection of the viewshed.

Stakeholder Interests: In addition to those described above, the Frederick W. Vanderbilt Garden Association, an organization of volunteers, refurbished and maintains the formal gardens. Preservation of the scenic views has a broad range of stakeholder interests that includes, in addition to those previously mentioned: municipal planning and legislative bodies; county planning, policy, and legislative offices; regional and state planning and regulatory entities; and regional open space organizations and land trusts.

Laws and Policy Guidance: Pertinent federal laws and policies in effect for the protection of cultural landscapes, farmland soil, archeological resources, and the protection of air quality as described in "Compliance with Federal and State Laws and Regulations" (Part Five). The national historic site is

situated within New York State's designated coastal zone management area. All proposed activities for the park must be consistent with the state's coastal zone management program policies.

GMP Issues: Treatment of cultural landscapes; diminished historic setting; dates for periods of treatment and interpretation; appropriate recreational uses; opportunities to improve educational programs; congested access routes; poor condition/maintenance backlog; and obscured scenic views.

Museum and Archival Collections

Importance: The significance of the Vanderbilt collection is based largely on its integrity as a single collection from one owner representing late 19th- and 20th-Century tastes in architecture, landscape, and interior design, as well as the prominence of the designers responsible for the interiors, the intrinsic and artistic value of both the individual art and decorative objects, and the designed interiors as a whole. The Mansion collections include many important examples of European fine art and American and European decorative arts and furnishings from the 16th to the early 20th Centuries.

The park's collections include over 6,500 historic objects, approximately 4,000 of which are on display in the Mansion. The collection also includes numerous archeological objects. Approximately 90% of the original furnishings for the Mansion survive in the collection. In addition to the objects displayed in the main public rooms on the first and second floors of the Mansion, the collection includes most of the domestic equipment and furnishings associated with the kitchens, laundry, and other basement work areas. The textiles are among the finest examples of the period in any collection. Vanderbilt-associated carriages and automobiles, stored in the Coach House, form part of the collection. Historic archival material includes a remarkably complete resource on Vanderbilt estate management.

Condition and Trends: Several items in the collection are in need of conservation. Gilded elements are becoming dislodged from furnishings, tapestries are buckling and worn from hanging without support, bronze elements are becoming permanently etched with soot, upholstery is shredding, and major furnishings, such as the grand orreries and the dining room table, are separating at their joints. As described previously under the "Museum and Archival Collections" section associated with the Home of FDR, the NPS has developed a new museum services facility to improve the condition of the stored collections.

Potential Threats: Delayed conservation projects; and large tour-group size, which makes it difficult to properly monitor visitors and discourage inappropriate handling of objects.

Stakeholder Interests: In addition to those noted above, the collections are also of interest to Vanderbilt scholars and other researchers.

Laws and Policy Guidance: Pertinent federal laws and policies in effect for the protection of museum collections and archives as described in "Compliance with Federal and State Laws and Regulations" (Part Five).

GMP Issues: Use of historic structures; dates for periods of treatment and interpretation; opportunities to improve educational programs; and poor condition/maintenance backlog.

Table 1-4: Other Important Resources, Roosevelt-Vanderbilt

Other Important Resources

Analysis and Guiding Principles

**The Bellefield Property,
Roosevelt-Vanderbilt
Headquarters**

Importance: Bellefield, a portion of the Newbold-Morgan estate, is not considered fundamental to the purposes of the parks, but as headquarters, is critical to the functioning of the Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites. The Bellefield property is located within the Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt NHS. The property includes buildings, structures, cultural landscapes, and archeological resources. The main administrative building, the Bellefield Mansion, was originally built c. 1795 and reconstructed in a neoclassical style by McKim, Mead, and White in 1909–11. Extending from the south side of the Mansion is the formal garden built c. 1912 and designed by Beatrix Farrand. Three outbuildings located to the west of the Bellefield Mansion are used for park maintenance: the Yellow Barn, the Stone Garage (designed by McKim, Mead, and White and erected in 1916–17), and the Block Garage (an early example of concrete block construction, built 1905). Southwest of the three outbuildings is the Stone House, built in 1905, which is used for park housing.

Condition and Trends: The Bellefield Mansion and outbuildings are in poor condition. The Farrand Garden is in good condition.

Potential Threats: The use of the Bellefield outbuildings for maintenance purposes continues to threaten their long-term survival.

Stakeholder Interests: The Beatrix Farrand Garden Association, an organization of volunteers, refurbished and maintains the Farrand Garden.

Special Mandates: Public Law 94-19 (1975), which authorized acquisition of Bellefield, allows the federal government to accept, via donation, lands within or contiguous to the historic Roosevelt Family Estate for use in administration of the parks.

Laws and Policy Guidance: Pertinent federal laws and policies in effect for the protection of historic structures, cultural landscapes, archeological resources, and museum collections and archives are described in “Compliance with Federal and State Laws and Regulations” (Part Five).

GMP Issues: Use of historic structures; poor condition/maintenance backlog.

James R. Roosevelt Place

Importance: The Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt NHS includes roughly one-half of the estate of James R. Roosevelt, FDR’s half brother. The property includes buildings, structures, cultural landscapes, and archeological resources. Like the FDR Home, it had a straight, tree-lined main entrance drive passing through open fields, a stately home (the Red House) at its terminus, formal gardens and grounds on the terrace above the river, and river views to the south and west. Today, a large portion of the JRR property is occupied by the Hyde Park Mall. The Red House and surrounding grounds are privately owned. The parks’ horticultural recycling area is located near the trotting course, as is the new museum services facility.

Condition and Trends: Missing features include river views, farm fields, and formal gardens (only foundations of garden structures remain).

Potential Threats: Incompatible use of the Red House could threaten the historic context of the FDR Home.

Stakeholder Interests: The James R. Roosevelt house, the Red House, is owned by the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute (FERI), which is in the process of seeking a new long-term property owner.

Laws and Policy Guidance: Pertinent federal laws and policies for the protection of historic structures, cultural landscapes, archeological resources, and museum collections and archives are described in “Compliance with Federal and State Laws and Regulations” (Part Five).

GMP Issues: Treatment of cultural landscapes.

Important Natural Communities

Importance: The parks contain wetlands and other aquatic resources, several natural communities considered rare and/or significant, and prime agricultural lands. At the Home of FDR, a 25-acre freshwater tidal marsh provides nesting and migratory stopover habitat for waterfowl and wading birds. Other important natural communities include: examples of red cedar rocky summit forest type at Home of FDR; hemlock-northern hardwood forest between Routes 9 and 9G; a mature oak/tulip tree forest community at Vanderbilt Mansion; and vernal pools and seeps. These communities are uncommon in New York State, though the examples in the parks are not considered outstanding. Val-Kill contains habitat for Blanding’s turtle, listed as threatened in New York State, as well as several other turtle and salamander species identified as being of special concern.

Condition and Trends: No Blanding’s turtles have been observed for several years. The full extent of vernal pools is not known. Improved flushing action would help sustain the freshwater tidal marsh.

Potential Threats: No threats specific to the parks are known other than damage by off-road vehicles. Some of these resources could be threatened by larger outside forces such as air and water pollution or global climate change.

Stakeholder Interests: New York State Department of Environmental Conservation would have an interest in protection of the natural communities. Private conservation organizations might be concerned.

Laws and Policy Guidance: Pertinent federal laws and policies for the protection of the important natural resources are described in “Compliance with Federal and State Laws and Regulations” (Part Five).