

Section 2.10 Recreational Opportunities on the Upper Neversink River

The Neversink River watershed is consistently beautiful and pristine river valley with a mix of opportunities for outdoor recreation, but knowing where public access exists is important. The natural and cultural heritage of this region is inextricably linked to the unique high quality streams that course through its mountains and valleys. These resources play a defining role in the character of its landscape and its history as the birthplace of flyfishing in America. For generations, those who are willing to travel far to the remotest reach of the Catskills have been rewarded with the truly treasured experiences it offers.

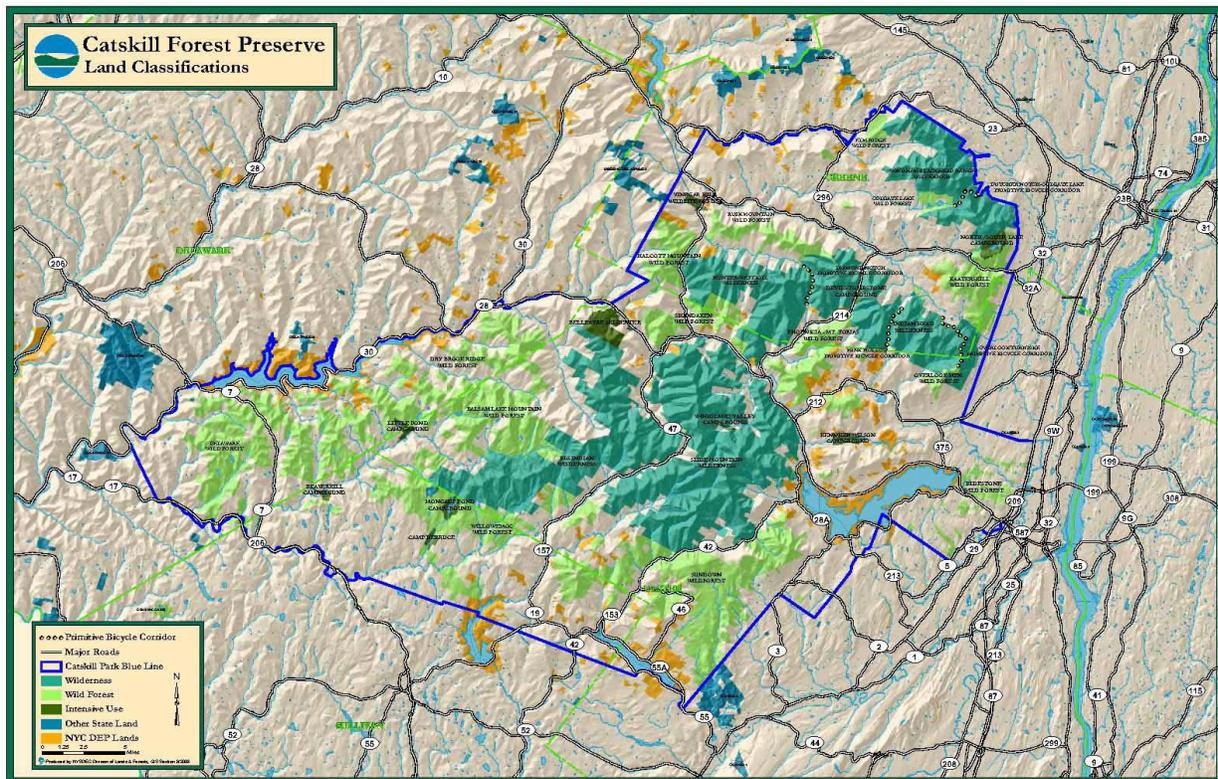


Figure 1 DEC map illustrating Forest Preserve areas in the Catskill Forest Preserve

Catskill Forest Preserve

The Catskill Park is a mosaic of mountainous public and private lands in Ulster, Greene, Delaware, and Sullivan counties. The Upper Neversink River watershed falls entirely within the “Blue Line” of the Catskill Park and is protected within the New York State Land which makes up the Catskill Forest Preserve. This land is managed primarily by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) according to its classification in the 2008 Catskill Park State Land Master Plan. In addition to the Catskill Forest Preserve,

it is the location of Slide Mountain, the highest peak. The locations of various management areas, as well as general background information can be found in DEC's *Catskill Forest Preserve Map and Guide*. This information can be obtained at DEC's regional offices; locations are listed on DEC's website: <http://www.dec.state.us>.

Frost Valley YMCA

Established in 1901 as one of the nation's first summer camps, Frost Valley YMCA now provides four seasons of outdoor, experiential and educational opportunities. Frost Valley YMCA is a 6,000 acre residential camping, environmental education, and conference center located in the heart of the "forever wild" Catskill Mountain Preserve. Frost Valley is a not-for-profit 501(c)3 organization which hosts about 35,000 guests per year, from schoolchildren for environmental education to summer campers during July and August. In addition, the camp is open for conference, group retreats, families and outdoor sporting members on weekends outside of the summer season.

The Outdoor Sporting Membership is a Frost Valley YMCA program dedicated to the responsible stewardship of natural resources-water, wildlife, forests and soils-and to the personal growth gained from spending time in the outdoors. Individuals can access Frost Valley property through annual membership and/or fees paid for the day. For further details including trail maps, go to www.frostvalley.org or call 845-985-2291.

- *Hike/Cross Country Ski*

Frost Valley offers over 30 miles of Catskill Mountain trails in a wide variety of terrain for every age and skill level. Day rates and year-round memberships are available.

- *Camp*

Outdoor Sporting Members gain exclusive access to backcountry camping at Frost Valley. This remote sites offer unmatched seclusion and natural beauty for those prepared with their own water and supplies-a true wilderness experience. Some sites have lean-to shelters; available to members by reservation for \$10 per site per night.

- *Fish*

The waters of the East and West Branches of the Neversink River are steeped in both history and natural beauty. With a Fly Fishing Membership, anglers gain access to over 6 miles of trout streams, including the Neversink River, Biscuit Brook, and Pigeon Brook. Fly Fishing members also have access to Lake Cole, White Pond, and Reflection Pond, all of which are NY State licensed fishing preserves. where caught fish may be kept. Frost Valley requires members to practice catch and release in all of its rivers and streams.

- *Hunt*

Frost Valley's hunting membership provides access to wild game while helping the camp manage deer. Includes Spring and Fall Turkey, Big Game Bow Hunting, Big Game Rifle Season, and Muzzleloader Season.

NYC DEP Lands

In addition to recreational opportunities on State Land, property owned by NYC DEP offers fishing, hiking, hunting, and trapping. Some parcels require an Access Permit in order to legally use the property, but as of May 2009 DEP updated its recreation rules to incorporate Public Access Areas where permits are not required.

Visit: http://www.nyc.gov/html/dep/html/watershed_protection/index.shtml and look for recreation links in the box on the right hand side of the page to find other Public Access Areas, apply for a permit or read additional information about using DEP property.

Forest Preserve Access

Along County Route 47, New York State DEC manages a number of trail head parking lots for the High Peaks range including Slide Mountain. Comprehensive information on this network of trails is available in the region's trail guides.

The Catskill Mountain Club is an excellent resource for outdoor recreationists. This group coordinates and leads several group outings per year and the member base provides a wealth of experience and knowledge about recreational opportunities throughout the Catskills. Visit www.catskillmountainclub.org for a listing of activities, suggestions about where to go, links to state land regulations and weather and trail reports.

Red Hill Fire Tower

A 1.35-mile hike through a pleasant forest, uphill but not too steep, leads you to the Red Hill Fire Tower. Thanks to volunteer efforts, the tower is now completely restored and open to the public. Enjoy 360-degree views of the mountains. The old ranger cabin, open on most weekends in summer, now has old photographs and other interpretive material about the days when the tower was used by the State for spotting forest fires. <http://www.catskillcenter.org/towers/redhill.html>



Photo 1 The renovated Red Hill Tower that stands 60' above the forest floor. (Aaron Bennett)

Fishing

NYSDEC has established numerous public access fishing sites along the upper Rondout Creek. Steep headwater streams like the upper Rondout are renowned for supporting healthy fish populations of native trout. The portion of the stream running through Denning is stocked annually with brook trout by the NYSDEC. The fishing season is April 1 – October 15. A New York State Fishing License is required. The basic state catch limit of five trout is applied in the upper Rondout; and as elsewhere, the practice of Catch and Release is voluntary.

Camping

The Peekamoose Valley campground, managed by NYS DEC, is a well known tourist location in the Catskills for outdoor enthusiasts. Situated just off County Rt.42 and next to the Rondout Creek, these campsites provide the perfect location for enjoying a hike, a swim and a campfire. This campground also boasts universally accessible features, including path to streamside picnic area, picnic tables, and fishing pier. <http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/45241.html>