

Landforms and Landmarks



Hawk's Nest



Washington's Headquarters

Throughout history, Orange County residents have been significantly influenced by the nature and variety of our regional landscape. Today, a combination of scenic, historic and cultural features combine to form important elements of the County's open spaces. They also define the community character or *sense of place* that has become so important to so many.

Referred to as landforms and landmarks, these features range from National Historic Landmarks to those special places unique to Orange County. Relying on a review of existing inventories and on available documentation including state, regional and municipal plans, this chapter highlights those landforms and landmarks that distinguish Orange County and that deserve additional attention and protection. Later recommended actions offer priorities for how these landforms and landmarks can be protected and buffered from adjoining and competing land uses.

The landforms and landmarks category includes the following priorities: existing historic districts and cultural sites, scenic areas/byways/river corridors identified from State or Federal listings, and certain scenic landscapes originally defined in the 1988 Amendment to the County Comprehensive Plan entitled "Preserving Scenic Qualities in Orange County."

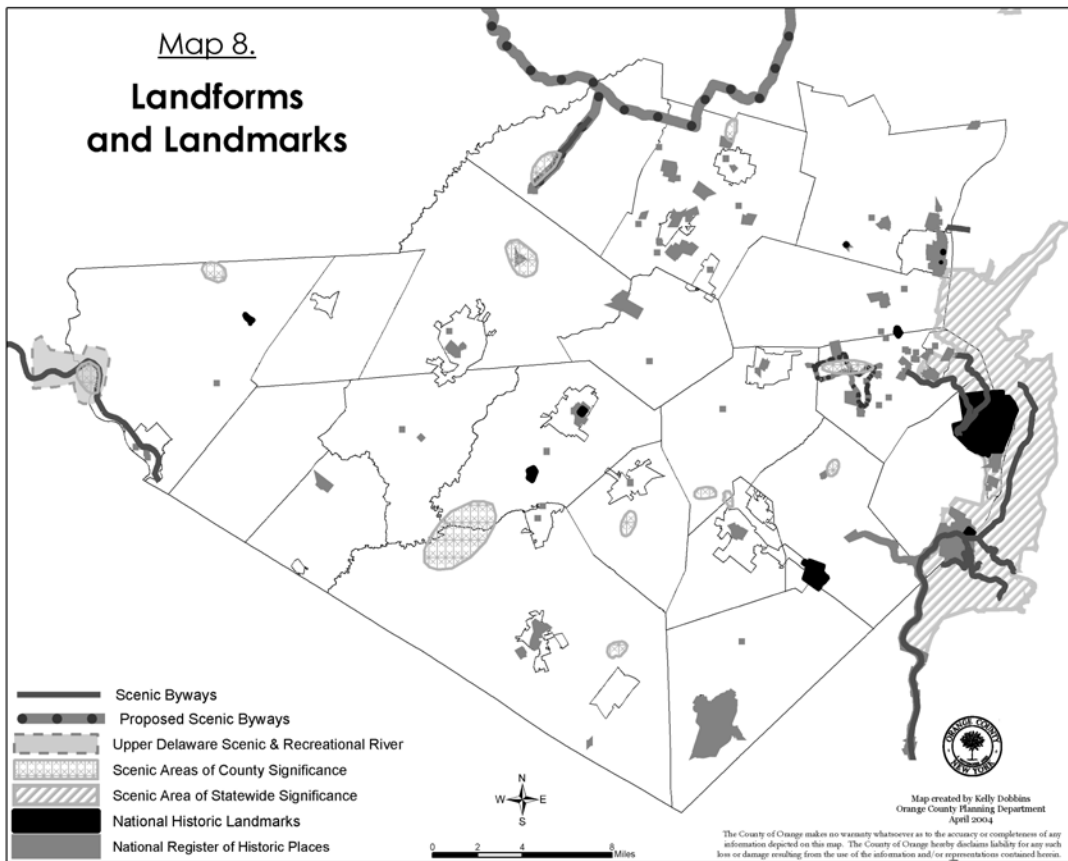
Scenic Byways

Orange County has a number of existing, proposed and potential scenic byways. The New York State Scenic Byways program was created in 1992 by the State Legislature and is administered by New York State Department of Transportation. The program encourages both economic development and resource conservation, recognizing that each of these aspects of a byway must be a part of the goals and strategies of the byway management plan.

In 1992, the State Legislature, as part of the inaugural byways, included several Orange County Routes. These include a series of “scenic roads” originating from earlier partnership work between municipalities, the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, and the former Heritage Task Force for the Hudson River Valley. Included here are:

- NYS Route 302 (Thompson Ridge), Crawford
- Old Storm King Highway (NYS Rt. 218), Cornwall/Highlands
- NYS Route 9W, Highlands/Cornwall
- Bear Mountain Bridge Road (NYS Rts. 2 & 202), Highlands/Woodbury
- Bear Mountain State Park Roads (misc. 8.27 mi.), Woodbury/Tuxedo
- Newburgh/Beacon Bridge, Newburgh

The State Legislature also included the full 26.58 miles of the Palisades Interstate Parkway, including the short, northern-most segment in Orange County.



Since 1992, additional scenic byways can be proposed and added to the system only with local support, completion of a nomination and corridor management plan, and approval by both the State Scenic Byways Advisory Board and the State Legislature. All byways must also define an organizing theme or themes – scenic, natural, recreational, cultural, and/or historical.

The Upper Delaware Scenic Byway (approximately 71 miles along NYS Route 97 from Port Jervis to Hancock (in Orange, Delaware and Sullivan counties) is a new byway. Roughly paralleling the Upper Delaware River from Port Jervis, the majority of the route is characterized by stunning scenery, a deep history, communities both lively and quaint, and an abundance of recreational opportunities.

The proposed Shawangunk Mountains Scenic Byway is a collaboration between Ulster and Orange counties, two villages and eight towns including Crawford and Montgomery in Orange County. Anchored by the scenic, recreational, and historic dominance of the Shawangunk Ridge, portions of NYS Routes 52 and 302 are expected to be nominated as part of a byway system linking corridors to New Paltz, Ellenville and Stone Ridge.

The Cornwall-Moodna Valley Scenic Byway is also proposed, linking a cluster of town roads and NYS Route 94 in the richly historic and visual Moodna Creek Valley.

Historic Places

Municipalities, property owners and historic preservationists have had consistent success in gaining recognition of places in Orange County that mark and symbolize our rich history. Unfortunately, land demands can occasionally threaten historic sites. These demands more commonly impact the setting or context of such sites, isolating and surrounding them.

Orange County currently has over 180 properties listed on the National and/or State Registers of Historic Places. This includes fourteen (14) National Register Historic Districts in eight (8) separate municipalities, each of which has additional individually significant properties. Historic districts are found in Cornwall (Duncan Avenue District, Mathiessen Park District, Mountainville District, & New York Military Academy District), Goshen (Church Park District), Highlands (Bear Mountain State Park District & Queensboro Ironworks), Monroe (Monroe Village District), Montgomery (Bridge Street District & Union Street-Academy Hill District), Newburgh (City) (East End District & Montgomery-Grand-Liberty Streets District), Newburgh (Town) (Orange Mill Hill District), and Warwick (Warwick Village District).

Highest value is given to National Historic Landmarks. These nationally significant historic places are designated by the Secretary of the Interior because they possess exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the heritage of the United States. Today, fewer than 2,500 historic places bear this national distinction, with nine (9) here in Orange County.

National Historic Landmarks in Orange County¹

Landmark	Location	Date Listed
United States Military Academy	Highlands	1960
Washington's Headquarters	Newburgh	1961
Arden (E.H. Harriman Estate)	Woodbury	1966
Historic Track	Goshen	1966
Delaware & Hudson Canal, Cuddebackville Section	Deerpark	1968
Knox Headquarters	New Windsor	1972
Fort Montgomery Site	Highlands	1972
Dutch Reformed Church	Newburgh	2001
Belknap Stone House	Newburgh	2001

Important reference is also made to the Dutchess Quarry Cave Site (also known as Lookout Mountain), property owned by Orange County and listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This internationally known archeological site has yielded stone tools and faunal remains (including extinct caribou bones) dating continuously back for nearly 12,000 years.²

Scenic Areas of Significance

The visual or scenic features of a community are increasingly recognized as high value open space features. While the majority of current municipal master plans in Orange County reference the high value of scenic resources, this County Open Space Plan focuses on scenic resources that are already recognized by County, State or Federal efforts.

In August 1988, the Orange County Legislature adopted "Preserving Scenic Qualities in Orange County" as an amendment to the County Comprehensive Development Plan. Eleven (11) Special Scenic Areas, visible from public sites and rights-of-way, were identified as deserving protection. These areas continue to be important and are priorities in this Plan. They include:

- Oxford Depot meadowlands as seen from Route 17.
- Lakes and surroundings on each side of Route 17 near Monroe.
- Walkkill River corridor north of Walden.
- Shawangunk Mountains as seen from Route 302.
- Panoramic views from Scotchtown Turnpike near Circleville.

¹ State Historic Preservation Office, NYS OPRHP. See www.oprhp.state.ny.us, State and National Register listing.

² Ibid. see also William A. Ritchie & Robert Funk, *Aboriginal Settlement Patterns in the Northeast*. Albany: NYS Museum, 1974.

- Long views from Route 17A between Sterling Forest and Warwick.
- Woodbury Creek along Route 32.
- Moodna Valley and Viaduct east of Salisbury Mills.
- Black dirt / muckland fields along Pulaski Highway – including views of Mounts Adam and Eve.
- Wallkill River along Route 416.
- Neversink River as seen from Oakland Valley Road.
- Scenic Roads (see above) – notably Hawk's Nest Road, Storm King Highway, Bear Mountain Bridge, and Newburgh Beacon Bridge.
- Views of Sugar Loaf Mountain from Kings Highway (Note – based on substantial citizen interest as well as complementary language in the Town of Chester Comprehensive Plan, this Special Scenic Area has been added to the 1988 listing.)

Finally, two additional scenic landscapes are documented. First, New York State has recognized the Hudson Highlands as a "Scenic Area of Statewide Significance" (SASS).³ This river corridor landscape, including the majority of lands from the Newburgh Beacon Bridge south and visible from the river in Orange County, is recognized as highly scenic, historic, and cultural. Second, the United State Department of the Interior has included 73.4 miles of the Upper Delaware River and its shoreline corridor, from Port Jervis north well into Sullivan County, as a National Scenic & Recreation River. The National Park Service, as managers of this corridor, notes the scenic, historic, cultural and recreational values of the Delaware. Indeed, the Delaware is cited as the longest, free-flowing river in the Northeastern United States.

³ see New York State Department of State, Scenic Areas of Statewide Significance. Albany: Division of Coastal Resources and Waterfront Revitalization, July 1993, pp. 355-470.