# Village of Wappingers Falls

# Parks and Recreation

# Master Plan

# August 2001

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## Officials

## Village Board 2001

Mary Ross, Mayor

James Bain, Trustee
Richard Cerino, Trustee
Scott Davis, Trustee
John Enson, Trustee
Roberty Juliano, Trustee
Robert Marshall, Trustee

## Parks and Recreation Master Plan Committee

Eileen Sassmann, Chairperson

Scott Davis
Peter Flaherty
Bruce Hayter
Chris Iverson
Peter McDonald
Margaret Stroble
John Enson
Al Ford
Paul Haynes
Marsha Kramer
Elizabeth Nedwell
Maire Flaherty
Meagan Ford
Cindy Latino
George Kolb, Jr.
Veronica Robinson

Jean O"Connell - Grants Consultant

## Recreation Committee

Bruce Hayter and Veronica Robinson, Co-chairpersons

## Parks Department

Al Ford

## Park Commission

George Kolb, Jr.
John Reagan
Carl Relyea, Jr.

## Highway Department

Thomas Marshall, Superviosr

# Resolution

WHEREAS, a Citizens Advisory Committee has been formed to review the Village's parks and recreation needs and services, and

WHEREAS, the Citizen's Advisory Committee has had a survey conducted of the Village residents seeking input on the residents' desires and wishes for what our parks and Recreation should provide to our citizens, and

WHEREAS, as a result of the Committee's work and survey results, a five year plan has been developed which the Village hopes to implement to expand the parks and recreation availability and usage within the Village for citizens of all ages.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that the Village Board of the Village of Wappingers Falls does hereby adopt the attached master plan as the Village Parks and Recreation Master Plan, and be it further,

RESOLVED, that the Village Board of the Village of Wappingers Falls will review said Parks and Recreation Master Plan on an annual basis, beginning one year from the date of this resolution.

(The above is the full text of the resolution unanimously adopted by the Village Board of Trustees at their regular monthly meeting on Wednesday, August 8, 2001.)

## Purpose of Master Plan

The purpose of this document is to develop a long range action plan for future recreation and parks programs and facilities for the five (5) year period ending with the year 2005. The study explores such areas as: programs, services, parks and facilities. The plan takes into consideration other aspects related to recreation such as beautification, acquiring new recreation sites and making existing facilities more accommodating to those with physical disabilities.

This plan describes current recreation resources, existing conditions and future needs, It also includes an inventory of existing facilities and photos of existing sites. The results of our Parks and Recreation Survey answered in February of 2001 can be found in a supplement to this document.

The information in this document provides the Village of Wappingers Falls officials with an action plan to be implemented which will upgrade and expand the Village parks and recreation availability and usage for citizens of all ages.

## Mission Statement

The recreation mission of the Village of Wappingers Falls is to provide accessible, affordable and quality leisure programs, activities, services and facilities to all residents regardless of age, gender, income, physical disabilities, creed or other barriers that would preclude participation.

The *Recreation Committee* has been established to develop recreation programs, especially the summer program, plan and implement community events and to identify the physical needs of the parks.

The *Park Commission* has been established primarily to maintain Mesier Homestead and Park according to the deed restrictions. In addition, this commission provides some oversight for MIA Park and Fisherman's Parks.

The *Parks Department* implements the plans of the Park Commission and provides the day to day work effort primarily on the Mesier Park and also MIA and Fisherman's Parks.

The supervisor of the *Highway Department* ensures that the ball fields are mowed and trimmed. The actual mowing may be contracted to outside firms like Greyco, an organization of disabled adults.

# Executive Summary

Parks are an asset in the Village of Wappingers Falls as shown by the Village vision: "The Village of Wappingers Falls is committed to preserving its rich historic, cultural, and environmental resources, while encouraging diverse economic development, providing services and recreation for the community, and facilitating tourism." [1]

The citizen survey[2] overwhelmingly demonstrated the desire to have well maintained and updated parks. Many respondents wrote unfavorable comments about the current conditions of the parks and the Lake. When questioned about activities they would like to see, many respondents were doubtful that the Lake could be cleaned so that activities could be enjoyed. Another concern of many residents was that was no activities for the young people to keep them out of trouble.

In response to the citizen survey and committee discussions, the following recommendations are presented:

- More attention needs to be paid to the **continuous repair, maintenance and upgrading of buildings and equipment in all the parks.**
- The **Lake** must be **cleaned** (of water chestnuts) in order for people to be **make** full recreational use of it.
- **Youth activities** (such as: movies and dances) need to be organized especially in the summer.
- Bain Park needs to be designed as a **Community Center and Skate Board** Park.
- A **Youth Board** must be formed to address the needs of the community to encourage positive activities for our youth.
- **Creative funding** (such as: donations, volunteer efforts and foundations) for recreational activities must be explored.

Details of these recommendations and detailed year by year recommendations can be found in the topic, **Recommendations**, on page 34.

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[1] Village of Wappingers Falls Comprehensive Plan Committee, *Village of Wappingers Falls Comprehensive Plan Volume I,* Chapter 1, page 1.1, March 2001 .

[2] Sample survey, tabulated results and writ-in comments appear in the appendix.

# Introduction

The Village of Wappingers Falls, despite its small size, has been successful in acquiring an impressive number of parcels of land for parks and recreation. Twenty six acres of public lands and 122 acres of public waters are available to Village residents. All of this, in a 1.2 square mile Village which is the second most densely populated municipality in Dutchess County. Over the last several years, the facilities available for recreation have fallen into disrepair and those facilities satisfy the needs of only part of the community. Key factors in considering the changes needed over the next five years are: improved facilities, more diverse facilities to encourage use of the parks by more segments of the Village, improved Lake and Creek access and handicapped accessibility to the facilities provided.

Since the Village is very small, all of the parks are close to all areas of the Village. While the Village needs to provide playground equipment for each park to serve the needs of the families immediately surrounding the park, the Village also needs to provide different activities in each park to satisfy the needs of more segments of the community. Issues involving regular maintenance and cleanliness must continue to be addressed with stronger emphasis being placed on safety, equipment modernization, handicapped accessibility and facility equipment layout.

2001 is an era of increasing temptations for our youths, societal pressures that devalue the family and a time when nuclear families have less access to multi-generational activities. It is contingent upon of us to provide mechanisms to promote healthy and constructive attitudes -- a mechanism that finds a way to optimize the presence of all of our residents, giving each age appropriate recreational opportunities. Our parks need to provide visual appeal, healthful challenges, a family atmosphere and youthful alternatives to negative pressures.

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan Committee has considered all of the above in our assessment of our Park assets. The existing facilities were audited and documented and feedback sought as to their utilization and quality. Suggestions for improvement were made looking to the future of our community, our expected challenges, opportunities for improving our quality of life and diversifying usage of our facilities. We need our Parks to reflect change, area demographics, youth demand, family strength and pride.

## Overview

The Village of Wappingers Falls offers numerous opportunities for recreational activities throughout the year. In addition to several sites which are maintained and operated by the Village, there exist various public and private recreation settings. The committee recognizes the need for the Village to work closely with our school districts and privately owned recreation sites to maximize the effectiveness of these facilities. Through this cooperative effort the recreational opportunities for all of our citizens will be enhanced.

The committee visited each Village park/recreation area to identify current conditions and immediate needs. In addition, results from our Parks and Recreation Survey and interviews with citizens were used to identify future needs and recommendations for the next five (5) years.

## Village Parks/Recreation Areas

The Village of Wappingers Falls currently maintains the following parks/recreation areas.

- **Mesier Homestead and Park**. This five (5) acre park can only be used for passive recreation according to the deed restriction which accompanied its donation to the Village. The park's location on East Main Street, surrounded by Village Hall, American Legion Hall and Grinnell Library, make it a natural focal point for the Village and is the home of several community wide events each year. In December 1999, a Millennium Time Capsule was buried in Mesier Park with a plaque indicating it is to be opened in 100 years. The house was constructed by Nicholas Brewer in 1741 on a farm of about four hundred and twenty (420) acres of land. The house was sold to Peter Mesier in 1776. On August 27th 1891, the house and a plot of five acres were conveyed to the Village of Wappingers Falls under an agreement that the property should be forever known as Mesier Park. Since the 1930's the Wappingers Falls Historic Society has maintained the second floor as a museum. This museum includes native American and 18th century artifacts as well as a photographic history of the Village. The Mesier Homestead is listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places as a contributing component of the Wappingers Falls Historic District.
- **James J. Temple Memorial Park.** This six (6) acre park at Market and McKinley Streets includes a baseball field, play lot, basketball court and parking lot.
- **Veterans Memorial Park.** Located on North Mesier Avenue, this six a(6) acre park includes a Little League baseball field, basketball court, playground, a multipurpose building, picnic tables and a parking lot.
- **Canale Memorial Park.** This three (3) acre park is located at the north end of West Main Street and abuts the seven (7) acre Village well field on the northwest portion of Wappingers lake. The park has minimal playground equipment.

- **Major Joseph W. McDonald MIA Park.** This is a vest pocket park off of Route 9 with a monument to honor Village native, Major Joseph W. McDonald, Jr., Missing in Action (MIA) in the Vietnam War since May 3. 1972. The back of the monument contains a plaque recognizing twenty five years of service from Joseph W. McDonald, Sr., as Village Treasurer. This was the first park dedicated to MIAs in New York State.
- **Fisherman's Park.** This is a small park located at the north end of Liss Road. The park is adjacent to Wappingers lake and provides public access to the Lake for fishing and boating.
- **Wappingers Lake** is an eighty-eight (88) acre lake was acquired by the Village in the late 1960's and its cleanup is a priority for the Village. The Lake is attractive to migrating water birds. Birds likely to be observed include gulls, geese, ducks and shorebirds. An Iceland gull and old squaw ducks have been sighted on the Lake in the past. The Lake supports a variety of warm water fish, including American eel, large mouth bass, small mouth bass, rock bass, brown bullheads (catfish) carp, yellow perch, black crappies, common shiners, bluebell shiners, golden shiners, white suckers, pumpkinseed sunfish and redbreast sunfish. [3]

  The Lake is part of the Wappingers Falls subwatershed of the Wappinger Creek. The Lake is classified in the New York State Water Quality Classifications as secondary contact recreation area which can support trout survival. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) Priority Waterbody List (PWL) was developed to address those water bodies that do not meet intended uses due to various pollution sources. On the PWL, Wappingers lake is listed as bathing "impaired". [4] (This is the second of four categories and means that pollution needs to be remedied before bathing can occur.) In a 1993 study of the Lake, the Army Corps of Engineers determined that further study or implementation of these findings was not authorized because the benefits of improving water quality were largely recreational and such benefits are a low priority for the Corps.[5] The Corps also indicated that dredging would have a limited life span. [6] The Corps recommended a long term approach that incorporates a wateshed-wide management plan. [7]

  In 1998 the Village designated the Lake a Critical Environmental Area (CEA) under SEQR to ensure that development near the Lake (for example, at South Hills Mall and the Poughkeepsie Galleria) consider the environmental impacts on the Lake.

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[3] The Wappinger Creek Watershed Planning Committee, *Natural Resource Management Plan for the Wappinger Creek Watershed,* October 2000, page 24.

[4] The Wappinger Creek Watershed Planning Committee, *Natural Resource Management Plan for the Wappinger Creek Watershed,* October 2000, page 7.

[5] US Army Corps of Engineers, New York District , *Wappingers Lake Dutchess County, New York Clean Lake Study,* April 1993, page 8.

[6] US Army Corps of Engineers, New York District , *Wappingers Lake Dutchess County, New York Clean Lake Study,* April 1993, page 9.

[7] US Army Corps of Engineers, New York District , *Wappingers Lake Dutchess County, New York Clean Lake Study,* April 1993, page 11.

This may facilitate funding availability and other resources to clean up the Lake. The Lake is an excellent resource and could potentially be a major recreational attraction.

- **Wappinger Creek** flows into and out of Wappingers lake. The flow out of the Lake into the Creek is over a dam and series of Falls. The lower Creek is Dutchess County's major tributary and an estuary of the Hudson River. Rare species include grassleaf arrowhead, subdulate arrowhead, kidney leaf mud plantain and Maryland bur-marigold. [8] The tidal Wappinger Creek supports mute swans, migrating Canada geese, mallards, black ducks, wood ducks, green heron, kingfishers and osprey. The estuary seasonally species include alewife, bluebook herring, white perch, striped bass, carp, golden shiner, white sucker, white catfish, small mouth bass, large mouth bass and yellow perch. Eel and striped bass are still off-limits for commercial fishing because of their high PCB content.[9]
  The estuary was designated a Significant Trail Habitat by the New York State Department of State in 1990.

The Village has proposed and named three vacant parcels as parks but as of this time they are undeveloped. Two of these parcels are proposed for the Downtown area to emphasize the presence of the Falls.

- **Bain Park** is a six (6) acre parcel located at the intersection of Clapp Avenue and Lower Henry Street. This area is just an empty lot where local residents park may park vehicles off the road from November to April.
- **Falls View Park** located on Market Street will provide a view of the Falls and the gorge, benches, additional downtown parking.
- **Galucci Park** located on the east side of West Main Street in the middle of the hill will be a pedestrian park with a view of the dam, landscaping and benches.

The Village owned parks can be classified into the following categories:

- **Passive** - these parks can be used for walking, fishing, biking and running. Mesier Park, MIA Park, Fisherman's Park
- **Active** - these parks can be used for personal as well as team sports Temple Park, Canale Park, Veterans' Park
- **Water Resources** - Wappingers Lake, Upper Wappinger Creek and Lower Wappinger Creek

It is expected that of the proposed parks only Bain Park will be for active recreation.

Private recreation areas within the Village which are available to the public include:

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[8] The Wappinger Creek Watershed Planning Committee, *Natural Resource Management Plan for the Wappinger Creek Watershed, October 2000,* page 14.

[9] The Wappinger Creek Watershed Planning Committee, *Natural Resource Management Plan for the Wappinger Creek Watershed, October 2000,* page 24.

- **Zion Park** on the southwest corner of East Main Street and South Avenue is a beautiful complement to Mesier Park in the center of the Village.
- **Scenic Hudson Property** - This wooded area is located at the top of the ridge overlooking the Market Street Industrial Park and extends to Channingville Road.
- **St. Mary's** ball field, basketball courts and playground equipment is available when not being used for school activities.

Within the Village boundaries there are several apartment complexes. Most of these provide some recreational facilities for their tenants. Three of these complexes (Ashley Apartments, Imperial Towers and Berkeley Square) are on the east side of Route 9 and all of the previously described parks and water resources are on the west side of Route 9. This creates a significant safety hazard to walking from these complexes to any of above described the parks and so makes it necessary to use a bike or car to get to get to the parks and hence adds to Village traffic.

- **Ashley Apartments** - This three story set of multiple buildings with one and two bedroom apartments provides no recreational amenities for its tenants.
- **Imperial Towers** - This five story set of two buildings with one and two bedroom apartments provides recreational amenities for its tenants including: tennis court outdoor swimming pool, basketball court and playground equipment.
- **Brookside Gardens** - This two story set of multiple buildings with one and two bedroom apartments provides no recreational amenities for its tenants but Veterans' Park is within two blocks of the complex.
- **OakTree Apartments** - This two story set of two buildings with one and two bedroom apartments provides no recreational amenities for its tenants but the Scenic Hudson property is adjacent to the complex.
- **De Marco Place** - This two story set of multiple buildings with senior citizen apartments provides a community room for its tenants. This complex is on the west side of Route 9 and is within two blocks of Mesier Park.
- **Berkeley Square** - This three story set of three buildings with one and two bedroom senior citizen apartments provides a community room in each building as well as a gazebo in the middle of the buildings.

Just outside the Village limits are two Wappingers Central School District schools whose outdoor facilities are available when school is not in session.

- **Wappingers Junior High School** located just off South Remsen Avenue has tennis courts, a basketball court, soccer field, football field and a track.
- **James S. Evans Elementary School** located up the hill adjacent to the football field of the Wappingers Junior High School has playground equipment and a basketball court.

Also just outside the Village limits along Creek Road on the estuary is the Town of Wappinger owned **Reese Park**. This thirty-eight (38) acre park and natural area, given to the Town of Wappinger on June 16, 1961 by the Reese family, is being maintained

as a conservation area to attract and hold native plants and animals to provide for observation and study of plant-animal communities.

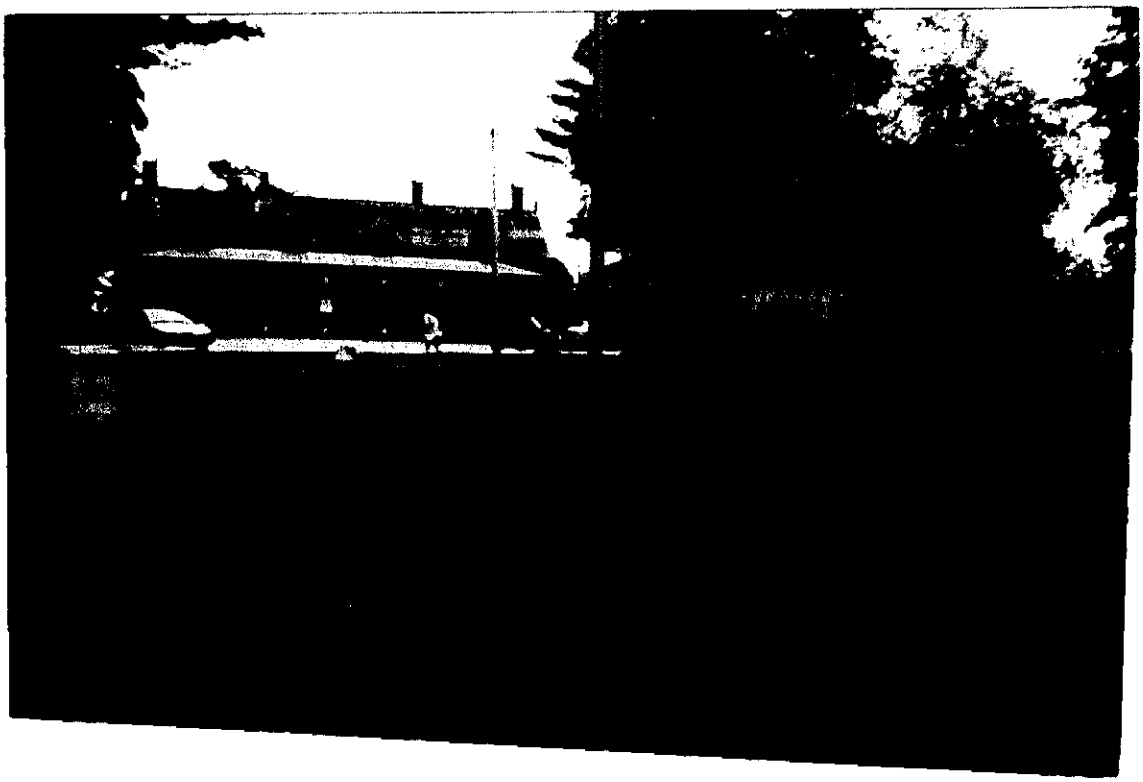
One of the largest recreational areas in the Village and beyond is the Wappinger Greenway Trail. The Wappinger Greenway Trail is a ten (10) mile figure 8 loop of on- and off-road trails encircling the lower Wappinger Creek (a Hudson River estuary) and the Wappingers lake. It was designed based on the initial input from Mrs. Frances Reese, a preeminent environmental advocate. The Trail will link historic, cultural, natural and economic resources of local and regional significance and it is a key element of the Hudson River Valley Greenway System. The trail is listed as one of the National Millennium Trails.
This unique trail ties together the Village of Wappingers Falls and Town of Wappinger and Town of Poughkeepsie parks and Dutchess County Bowdoin Park. In more detail, the Trail includes: the Central Business District of the Village, the Wappinger Historic District (on State and National Registers), the Grinnell Public Library, County Players Community Theater, Wappinger Creek, Wappinger Falls, Reese Audubon Nature Preserve and even a 19th century industrial facility that has undergone adaptive reuse (Market Street Industrial Park). The Metro-North train station in New Hamburg is one block from the Trail. The on-road parts of the Trail include: New York State Routes 9 and 9D (part of Route 9D is also East and West Main Street and South Avenue in the Village); County Routes 28 and 91, Town of Poughkeepsie roads (Channingville Road and Main Street in New Hamburg) and the Village of Wappingers Falls sidewalks.

## Analysis of Current Conditions

In February 2001, the Committee distributed a survey to ask the citizens about the state of the parks and what activities they wanted to see. In addition to the information provided on the survey many citizens took time to write-in comments. Most of these were related to the fact that the parks, equipment and the Lake were in terrible condition and that we had few activities for the 10-18 group. The residents also made it overwhelmingly clear that the play ground equipment must be upgraded in three parks: Veterans', Temple and Canale. Most of the survey respondents lived closest to Veterans' and the order of usage was: Canale, Veterans' and Temple.

The Village owns the following parks. For each park, there is an analysis of its current conditions as of May 2001 and a list of immediate and long term needs. Pictures are also included to illustrate existing conditions.

**Picture 2. Mesier Homestead**



- **Mesier Park**
  - *Location*: in the heart of the Village at the intersections of East Main Street and South Avenue (Route 9D)
  - *Resources:* Brewer/Mesier Homestead Historical building, gazebo, and five landscaped and grassy acres. The park also contains a two large stone memorials: one to Village Veterans and one to Village Volunteer Firemen. The Mesier residence and park were deeded to the Village in 1892 with the understanding the parcel would forever remain a park. The Mesier Homestead is listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places as a contributing component of the Wappingers Falls Historic District. The right side of the Homestead contains the offices of the Water Department.
  - *Conditions*: Homestead needs repair desperately, landscape conditions are good, trees are beginning to need to be replaced. The Homestead is handicapped accessible through a ramp on the porch. Some of the pathways are paved but some are not.
  - *Uses:* Community wide events: Picnic-in- the-Park, Summer band weekly concerts, Halloween Parade, Easter Egg Hunt, Memorial Day Services and Christmas Tree Lighting. In 1999, a millennium capsule was buried within the park grounds.

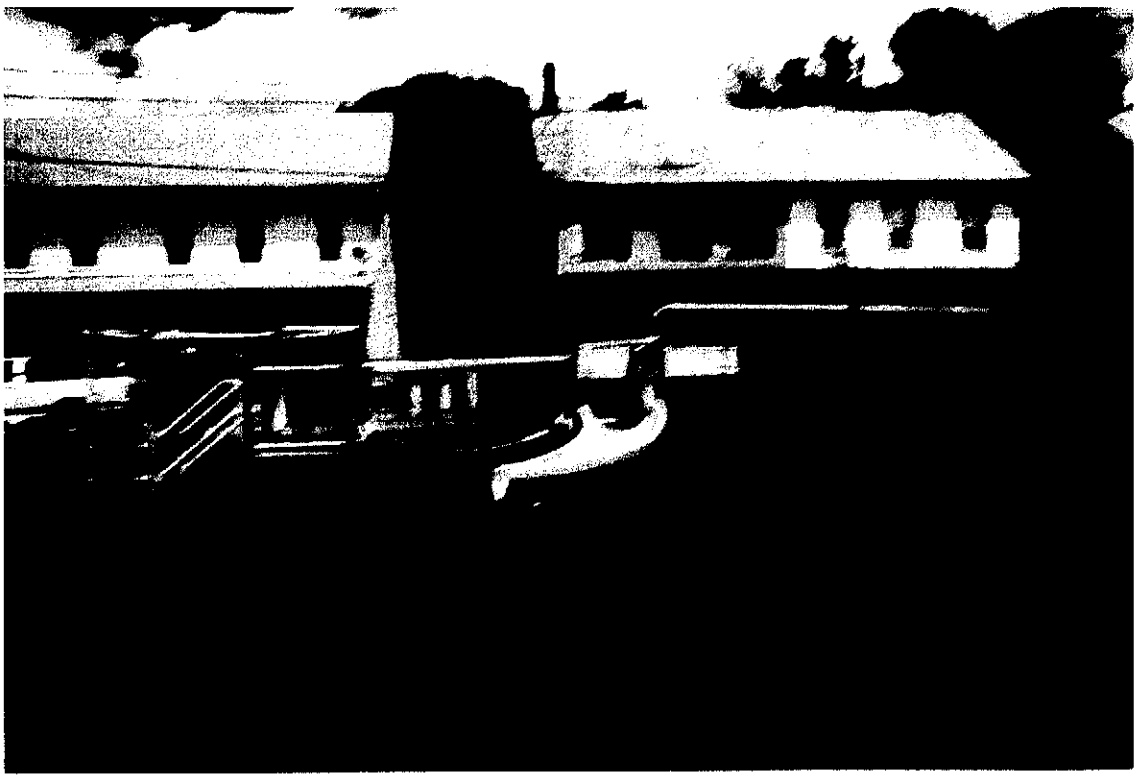
- *Immediate Needs*: Repair to the porch and other exterior repairs and maintenance to preserve the 1740's historic structure. Estimated cost is $250,000)
  - ✓ South Porch: Wood framing of porch floor is extremely damaged due to ongoing contact with grade and poor drainage. Lower sections of 8 columns are rotted. Porch ceiling and decorative elements exhibit localized areas of damage.
  - ✓ Masonry Foundation: Where visible, sections of the foundation are eroded and heaved. The depth and condition of the subsurface masonry is unknown.
  - ✓ Wood Sills: At the north, east and west elevations, many areas of wood sills are extremely deteriorated due to poor site drainage and ongoing contact with grade.
  - ✓ Vertical wood studs: At the north, east and west elevations, many areas of lower wood framing is assumed to be damaged.
  - ✓ Wood siding: At the north, east and west elevations, many areas of siding are damaged. At he south elevation, and many upper areas of the siding at the other elevations, siding is generally sound although has an extensive buildup of paint.
  - ✓ Windows and Doors: Original/early doors an windows are extremely deteriorated, in particular at sills, lower stiles and rails.
  - ✓ Site drainage: Positive drainage away from the building does not exist at all elevations, causing water to be in contact with lower wood areas and providing inadequate means for roof collected water to be handled. The worst conditions exist at the east elevation and west courtyard.
- *Long Term Needs:* Interior renovation is needed to the left side so that the Wappinger Historical Society can move its museum of Native American artifacts, 18th century clothing, tools and documents all of which originated in the Village to the first floor for easier visitor access. The museum has been maintained by the Historic Society on the second floor since 1970. Also needed is a plan for continuous maintenance of the Homestead and the grounds. Much of the charm of this park is related to the presence of large old trees. A tree inventory needs to be conducted to identify the trees there and then to come up with a plan to replace the trees as needed. Ensure that the entire park is handicapped accessible.

**Picture 3. South Proch at Mesier Park**

**Picture 4. Masonry Foundation aat Mesier Park**

**Picture 5. Siding at Mesier Park**

**Picture 7. Playground at Temple**



- **Temple Memorial Park**

  - *Location:* near lower Wappinger Creek, an estuary of the Hudson River. This park is actually on three different levels: the top level off Dutchess Avenue contains a children's playground; the basketball court on the second level is along Market Street; and the third level is a large grassy field along Creek Road. A set of steps connects the top level to the lower field.
  - *Resources:* Basketball court, benches, playground equipment, and a large grassy field used for baseball first by the workers from the Dutchess Bleachery in the early 1900's and later by local Little League teams. There is stone and plaque at the playground site with a dedication to former Mayor, James Temple.
  - *Conditions:* Playground desperately needs to be upgraded and basketball court repaired. The lower field is currently not used for formally and its bleachers are in disrepair.
  - *Uses:* There is no official use of any one of the parts of this field. Their is a great deal of use of the playground by neighborhood children, and the basketball court is used by children and twenty something adults to play basketball late into the evening.
  - *Immediate Needs:* Playground equipment needs to be updated, the benches need repair and basketball court needs painted backboards, a new hoop, two chain nets, and complete resurfacing and painting.

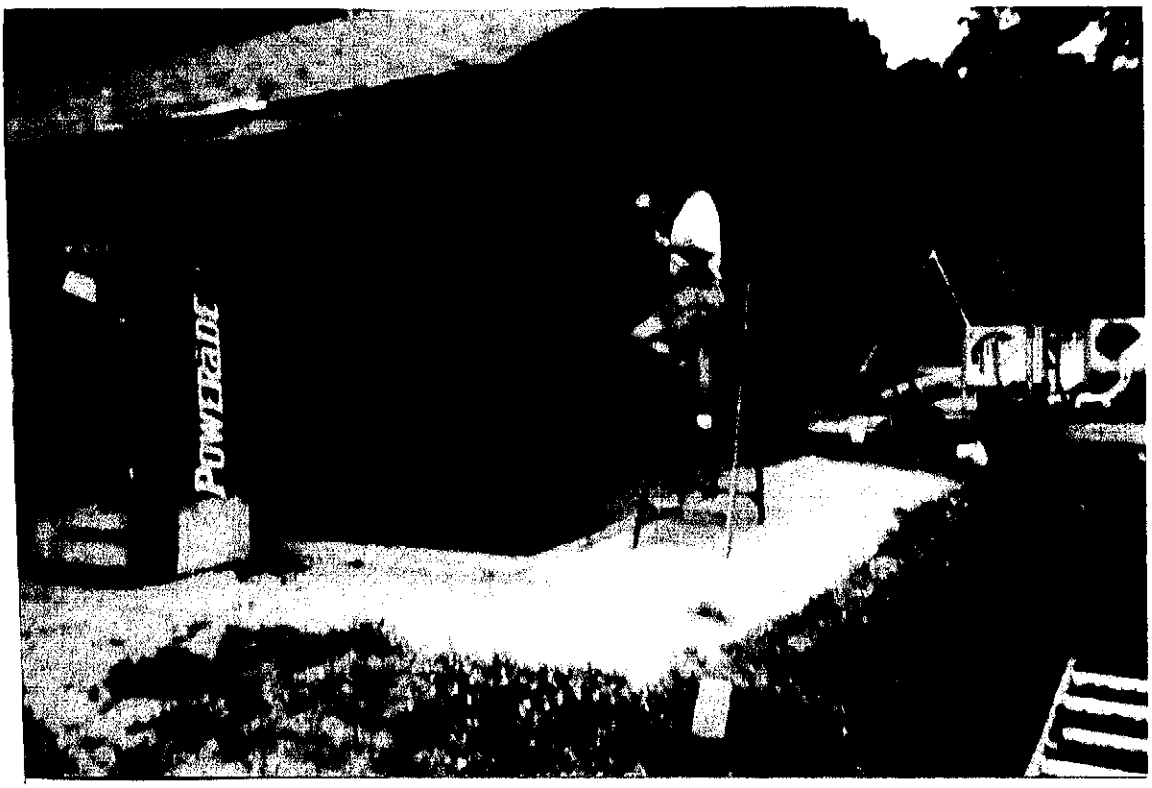
- *Long Term Needs:* A professional design is needed for the best use of the lower field. It may be perfect for soccer. The proximity of the lower field to Creek Road and the Lower Creek makes the field a good candidate for outdoor adventure type activities. If the Village can find another location for the Highway garage, the current building (across the street from the Temple field) could be used for an Estuary Education Center. Ensure that the entire park is handicapped accessible.

**Picture 7. Basketball Court at Temple**

**Picture 8. Lower Field at Temple**

**Picture 9. Stairs to Lower Field at Temple**

**Picture 10. Playground at Veterans' Memorial Park**




- **Veterans' Memorial Park**

  - *Location:* Site located along North Mesler Avenue and is adjacent to Village property that connects to the Lake. This Village property has been recently leveled and seeded with grass and makes many more options available in Veterans' Park.
  - Resources: Playground equipment; building with bathrooms and rooms for summer camp and storage of camp and park material; T-ball sized baseball field (small size because at its current position a regulation field would send balls into North Mesier Avenue); basketball court; parking for about 10 cars; two dugouts; a stone memorial dedicating the Field to Baseball Hall of Famer and Village resident, Dan Brouthers; and a memorial to men and women of the Village who have served in all wars..
  - *Conditions:* Building needs new roof, garage door replaced, windows replaced, bathrooms repaired and door locks replaced. Overall the building needs better

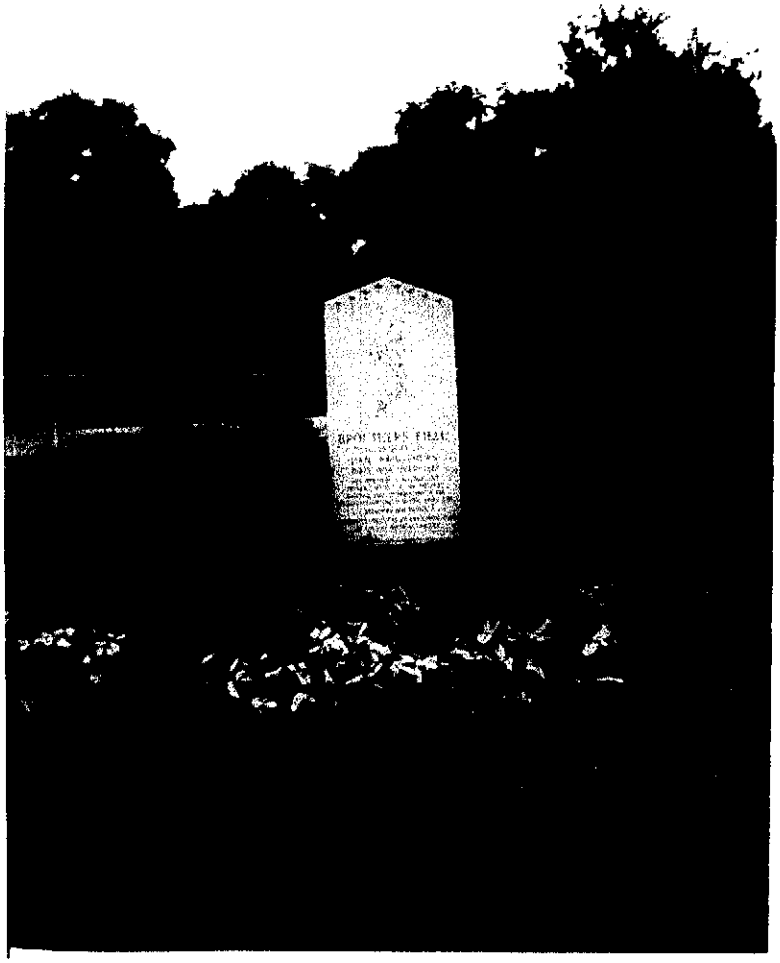
security - vandalism is continuous. The playground equipment needs to be replaced. The boat launch needs to be upgraded.

- *Uses:* Site of the five (5) week summer program; neighborhood play area. The site adjacent to the Lake has a boat launch that people use to put boats into the Lake.
- *Immediate Needs*: Replace the playground equipment. Repaint and repair the building and dugouts. Trim the buses especially around the memorials. Place chain nets on the basketball hoops. Regular maintenance and repair.
- *Long Term Needs:* Comprehensive design of current Veterans' Park and the adjacent Village property as a Family Park on the Lake with at least picnic facilities and greater Lake access. Ensure that the entire park is handicapped accessible.

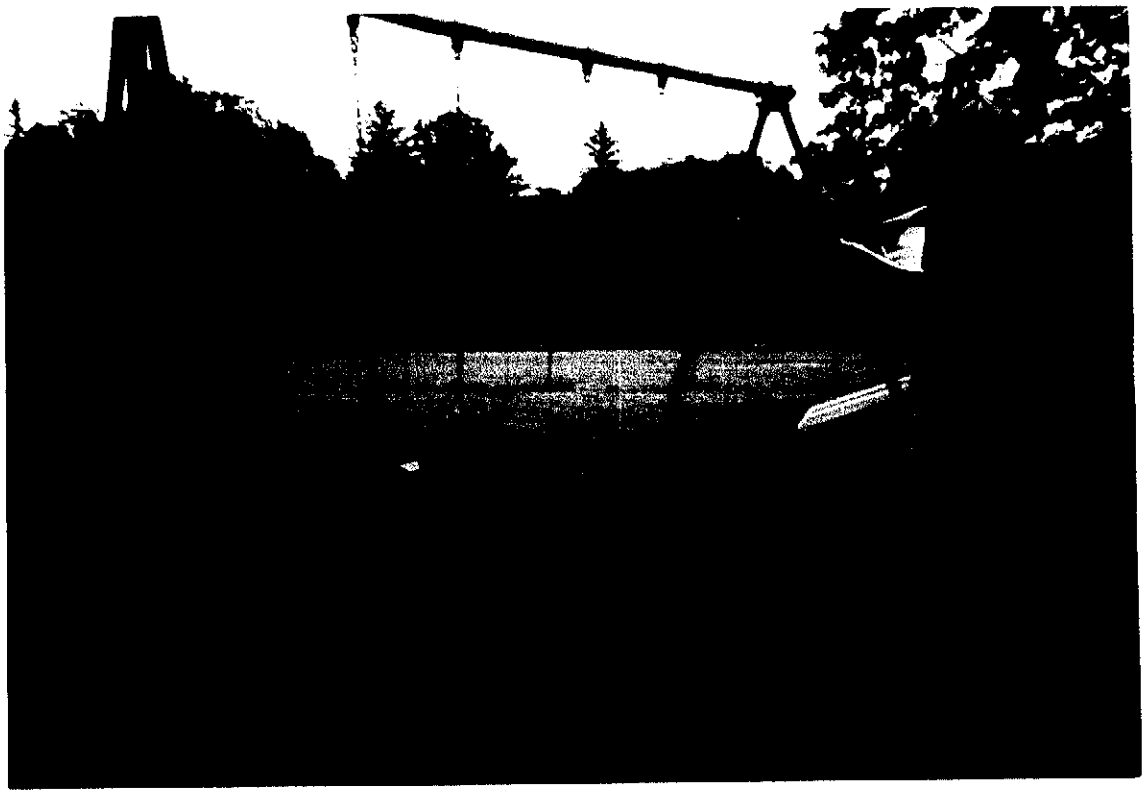
**Picture 11. Lakefront at Veterans' Park**

**Picture 12. Dugout and Field at Veterans' Park**

**Picture 13. Dan Brouthers Monument at Veterans' Park**



**Picture 14. Playground at Canale Park**



- **Canale Memorial Park**

  - *Location:* north entry to the Village adjacent to the seven (7) acre well field
  - *Resources:* Base ball (official size field), playground equipment, picnic table, bleachers, parking
  - *Conditions:* Playground equipment and fence are in disrepair. Parking needs to be redefined so it does not encroach on the Village well field which is adjacent to the field.
  - *Uses:* Several softball teams use the field: the Greater Wappingers Softball League, the Merchants' League and the Firemen's League. Some Town of Poughkeepsie Little League teams practice on this field.
  - *Immediate Needs*: Upgrade equipment/fence/parking and create a basketball court.
  - *Long Term Needs:* Redo the field to make the playing surface level. Ensure that the entire park is handicapped accessible.

**Picture 15. Ball field at Canale Park**

**Picture 16. Well field adjacent to Canale Park**

**Picture 17. View of MIA Park from Route 9**

- **MIA Park**

  - *Location:* On Route 9 at the intersection with East Main Street.
  - *Resources:* Monument to Major Joseph W. McDonald, Jr., a Village native who is Missing in Action (MIA) from the Vietnam War since May 3, 1972.
  - *Conditions:* Landscaping needs more constant and thorough attention.
  - *Uses:* Site of the annual Veterans' Day ceremony in November.
  - *Immediate Needs:* Dead shrubs need to be replaced and weeds in brick walkway needs to be weeded.
  - *Long Term Needs:* Repair of stone wall and benches; redesign the landscaping to eliminate shrub loss because of winter salt and snow removal; regular and continuous maintenance. Ensure that the entire park is handicapped accessible.

**Picture 18. Sign at MIA Park**

**Picture 19. Dirt Path to Lake from Fisherman's Park**

- **Fisherman's Park**

  - *Location:* At the end of Liss Road near Route 9.
  - *Resources:* Parking area for about 7 or 8 vehicles. This park provides access to the Upper Creek and Lake for fishermen or hikers/walkers.
  - *Conditions:* Well maintained. The wide paved path is handicapped accessible.
  - *Uses:* Fishermen and hikers use the park daily.
  - *Immediate Needs*: Regular maintenance
  - *Long Term Needs:* Bench near the water under the bridge, regular maintenance.

**Picture 20. Wappingers Lake**

- **Wappingers Lake**

  - *Location:* Along Route 9 at the northern boundary of the Village.
  - *Resources:* Boat access at: Spring Street, Brown Avenue
  - *Conditions:* Needs continual attention to retard growth of water chestnuts. The Lake grows more shallow each year with the influx of silt from other communities farther up the watershed.
  - *Uses:* Boating, fishing, canoeing, ice skating, hockey (none of the activities are organized by the Village)
  - *Immediate Needs*: Clearing water chestnut growth, better boat access
  - *Long Term Needs:* Study the non-point source pollution of the Lake and then take actions to correct it. Consider long term alternatives to the water chestnut weed cutter machine.

**Picture 21. Creek Road Boat Launch to Estuary**

- **Wappinger Creek**

  - *Location:* Above the Wappingers lake and below the Lake and dam flowing into the Hudson River. The Lower Creek is an estuary of the Hudson River.
  - *Resources:* Boat access at Creek Road
  - *Conditions:* The upper Creek above the Lake seems to have less water chestnut growth than the lower Creek. After the Creek flows through the Lake and over the Falls, it passes through the Market Street Industrial Park. There are two bridges over the Creek within the Industrial Park. One, is a very old bridge which makes the passage of trucks difficult and the other was built in 1999 and allows the smooth passage of trucks.
  - *Uses:* Boating, fishing, canoeing, (none of the activities are organized by the Village)
  - *Immediate Needs*: Better boat access
  - *Long Term Needs:* Study the non-point source pollution of the Creek and then take actions to correct it. Work through the Watershed Intermunicipal Council with the Towns of Wappinger and Poughkeepsie to create Critical Environmental Area and Critical Estuary Area designations for the estuary. [10]

[10]Village of Wappingers Falls Comprehensive Plan Committee, *Village of Wappingers Falls Comprehensive Plan Volume I,* Chapter 4, page 4.13, March 2001 .

**Picture 22. Bain Park**

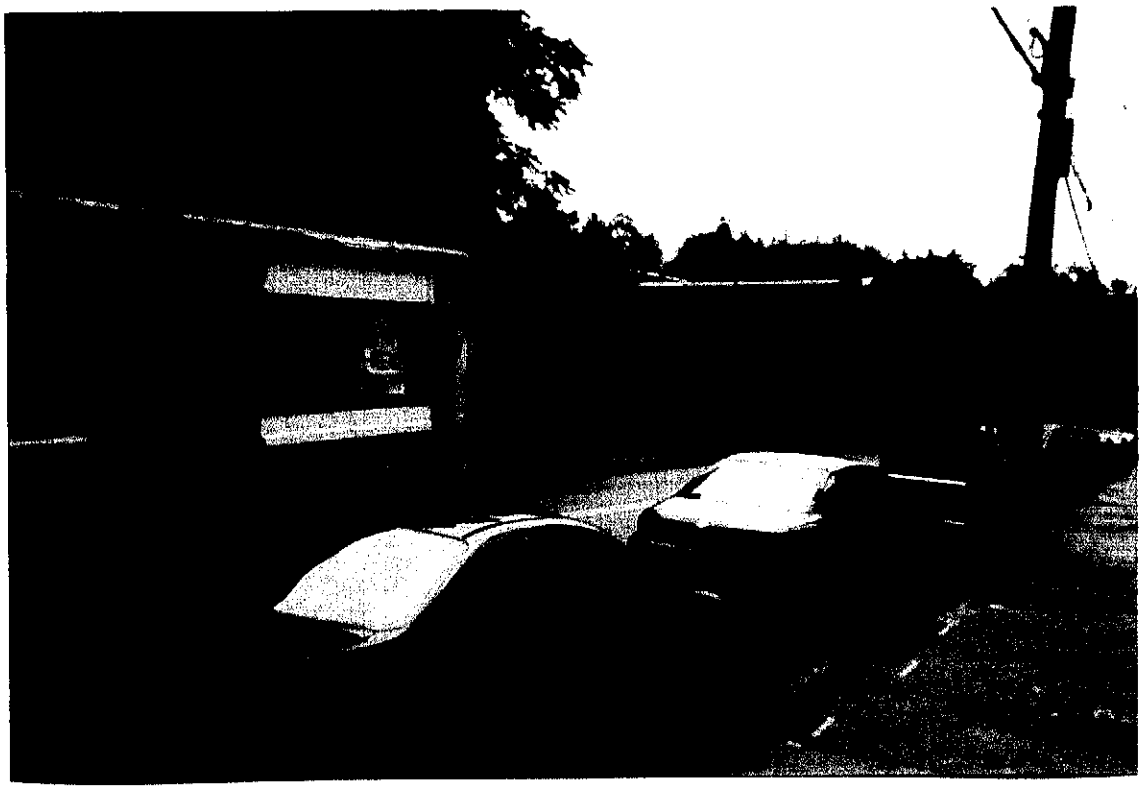
- **Bain Park (proposed)**

  - *Location:* At the corner of Clapp Avenue and Upper Henry Street.
  - *Resources:* None at present. It is just a vacant area with the perimeter used from November to December for additional parking for the houses in the area.
  - *Conditions:* Undeveloped
  - *Uses:* At the moment there are no official uses. of this park. Neighborhood children use the area for riding dirt bikes.
  - *Immediate Needs*: Design for a skate park and Community Recreation Center at the site. It would be nice to have both and outdoor and indoor skate park. The skate park is a more immediate need than the Community Recreation Center. (The Committee recommended this park as the best place for a Skate Park and Community Center.) The Community Center should serve the needs of all ages from babies to senior citizens. With the influx of a number of senior citizen complexes in recent years, we have a large population that could act as mentors for children in after school programs. A Community Center would be the ideal place to host such an activity.
  - *Long Term Needs:* Implement the Community Recreation Center.

**Picture 23. Falls View Park**

- **Falls View Park (proposed)**
  - *Location:* On Market Street
  - *Resources:* None at present. It is just a vacant area enclosed by fencing to protect pedestrians. The area overgrows each year with tree and brush growth. IN some seasons visitors can see the Falls from this site.
  - *Conditions:* Undeveloped
  - *Uses:* None
  - *Immediate Needs*: A detailed design for a landscaped park that includes parking. Preliminary designs have been done but detailed engineering work is required to ensure that the steep banks will not cave-in as the park is created.
  - *Long Term Needs:* Implement the park.

**Picture 24. Gallucci Park**



- **Gallucci Park (proposed)**
  - *Location:* on the east side of West Main Street across and slightly north of the County Players building.
  - *Resources:* None at present. It is just a vacant area with fencing to protect pedestrians from falling in. Trees have overgrown the area.
  - *Conditions:* Undeveloped
  - *Uses:* None
  - *Immediate Needs*: Design for a a vest pocket pedestrian park with landscaping and benches and special engineering emphasis on reinforcing the steep banks under the park
  - *Long Term Needs:* Implement the park.

## Recommendations

*The following are the recommendations of the Parks and recreation Master Plan Committee. First is the summary or general recommendations followed by a detailed year by year plan.*

### Summary

In response to the citizen survey and committee discussions, the following recommendations are presented:

- More attention needs to be paid to the **continuous repair, maintenance and upgrading of buildings and equipment in all the parks.** This might involve creating and implementing a Parks Maintenance Plan and hiring additional employees.
- The **Lake** must be **cleaned** (of water chestnuts) in order for people to be **make** full recreational use of it. Cleaning must be accomplished by use of the weed harvester, identifying and remedying sources of pollution in the Lake and cooperation of upland municipalities to minimize the flow of silt to the Lake. The *Natural Resource Management Plan for the Wappinger Creek Watershed* indicates that "one of its primary objectives is to identify and correct the sources of nutrient and sediments to the watershed and ultimately to Wappingers Lake and to recommend management strategies to prevent and reverse the trend." [11] The Village is a member of the Watershed Intermunicipal Council (WIC) which is made up of all municipalities containing the Wappinger Creek within its boundaries. WIC's goal is to implement the best practices identified in the Watershed Management Plan and so should be the vehicle to gain the cooperation of upland municipalities in minimizing the flow of silt to the Lake.
- **Youth activities** (such as: movies and dances) need to be organized especially in the summer. A Movie and Family Entertainment Committee was formed in July 2001 to provide these summer activities.
- Bain Park needs to be designed as a **Community Center and Skate Board** Park. The survey requested skate park activities at all of the listed parks and most respondents expressed a willingness to pay between $1 to $4 a day for this actives. There is also a strong desire on the park of youth on the Village for the Skate Park to the extent that they have prepared presentations for both the Village Board and the Parks and Recreation Master Plan Committee.
- A **Youth Board** must be formed to address the needs of the community to encourage positive activities for our youth. The board should be a coalition of Youth Services, Human Services, Health Care, Public Officials, Police, adult and young citizens. This board would have the responsibility of identifying and addressing the

[11]The Wappinger Creek Watershed Planning Committee, *Natural Resource Management Plan for the Wappinger Creek Watershed, October 2000,* page 77

youth related needs of the community. The existence of such a committee is needed to apply for federal and state funding of Department of Justice grants.

- **Creative funding** (such as: donations, volunteer efforts and foundations) for recreational activities must be explored.

**Park Needs 2001**

- Stabilize the exterior of Mesier Park
- Upgrade and repair existing facilities at Veterans' Park
- Upgrade equipment/fencing/parking and create a basketball court at Canale Field
- Upgrade existing equipment and resurface the basketball court at Temple Field
- Create a job description and hire a person dedicated to parks maintenance
- Replace the roof at the Veterans' Park Building
- Provide summer youth Activities; for example, movies and dances
- Ensure that the citizens at Berkeley Square have a gazebo

In June of 2001, a special Village Parks Fix-up Day was held on Saturday, June 16, from 9:30 Am until 1:30 PM. Many local businesses provided material (either as donations or at discount) and food and beverages for the volunteers. About twenty people worked that day on Veterans' Park and the playground at Temple Field. At Veterans' Park the volunteers were able to: paint the main building and one dugout; repair and seal the picnic tables; repair the bleachers and benches; and trim the bushes and shrubs around the monuments and dugouts. At Temple Field the volunteers were able to repair the playground equipment; repair the benches; repair the climbing structure; kill the weeds on the basketball court; paint the backstops; replace the broken hoop; and add net chains to the hoops. Several of the volunteers offered to return at another time to do more. Subsequent to that day, two volunteers spend over twenty hours working on the plumbing in the main building.

At the June Village Board meeting, there was a great deal of citizen concern about the unsafe condition of the playground equipment in our parks especially at Temple Field. In executive session, the Village Board votes to replace the playground equipment in three parks: Veterans', Temple and Canale. The equipment is expected in mid-July 2001.

During June, the business people at the north end of the Village approached the board and offered to upgrade Canale Field in exchange for being able to park in the new parking area at Canale during weekdays. This offer was accepted by the board and improvements should be completed in the Fall of 2001.

During the summer of 2001, work was done on the Mesier Homestead to correct problems with the porch and drainage. This activity was done using unexpended funds from the Parks Grant used to replace/restore the roof of the Homestead.

**Park Needs 2002**

- Complete Exterior Stabilization at Mesier Homestead
- Study Storm Water Discharge which creates Lake/Lower Creek pollution
- Design Veterans' Park as a Family Park on the Lake
- Design Temple bottom field for additional activities
- Design Community Center and Skate Park at Bain Park
- Complete the design of Falls View Park
- Redesign the landscaping at MIA Park to eliminate shrub loss because of winter salt and snow removal
- Create a five year Parks Maintenance Plan
- Work through the Watershed Intermunicipal Council with the Towns of Wappinger and Poughkeepsie to create Critical Environmental Area and Critical Estuary Area designations for the estuary

**Park Needs 2003**

- Begin to correct found sources of pollution of Lake/Lower Creek
- Implement Veterans' Park as a Family Park on the Lake
- Implement Temple changes for additional activities
- Implement Bain Park Skate Park
- Implement Falls View Park
- Create a tree inventory/replacement plan for Mesier Park
- Perform yearly Parks Maintenance/Replacement

**Park Needs 2004**

- Complete Interior Renovation at Mesier Homestead
- Continue to correct found sources of pollution of Lake/Lower Creek
- Continue to implement Veterans' Park as a Family Park on the Lake
- Implement Falls View Park
- Replace tree(s) in Mesier Park as planned
- Perform yearly Parks Maintenance/Replacement

**Park Needs 2005**

- Implement Bain Park Community Center
- Design Gallucci Park
- Replace tree(s) in Mesier Park as planned
- Perform yearly Parks Maintenance/Replacement
- Prepare Parks and Recreation Master Plan for next five years

## Resources

Currently the parks are maintained by Village budget for the Recreation Committee and Parks Department. This has not been adequate.

The efforts described above in 2001 represent the first time in recent memory that funding sources other than Village funds were used to improve recreation. It is expected that this will be the beginning of using many other funding sources for Village parks and recreation. It is expected that volunteer efforts will be continued on a regular basis in the parks. Some potential sources of volunteers are: the softball leagues that use Canale Field, local unions wishing do community service as well as some groups that provide alternatives to jail for youthful offenders.

## References


- *Village of Wappingers Falls Comprehensive Plan*, Volume I, March 2001
- *Natural Resource Management Plan for the Wappinger Creek Watershed*, The Wappinger Creek Watershed Planning Committee, October 2000
- *Wappingers Lake, Dutchess County, New York Clean Lake Study*, US Army Corps of Engineers New York District, Reconnaissance Report, April 1993