

## 5.3 Regional Recreational Assets

### The Importance

Parks and recreational facilities are essential to the health and well being of a community. They provide for recreation, community gathering, open space in urban environment, and a sense of community identity and ownership. Parks and recreational facilities enhance the quality-of-life for all segments of a community regardless of their means.

Neighborhood parks serve an area within easy walking distance. They provide a community center, open space and some limited recreational facilities to the nearby residents in an urban setting. Community park spaces are larger and provide for broad vistas, vegetation, community gathering, and recreation in urban and suburban environments. Regional parks are similar to community parks with the addition of other features such as hiking, skiing and nature trails, lakes, aquatics, boating, camping, and important natural and historic features.

### About this Indicator

This indicator compares the Capital District's state and national park system to regional park planning standards. It also reviews past studies of the Region's neighborhood and community park systems.

### Sources for this Indicator

- Each state and national park was contacted for acreage, visitor, and activity information.
- The Capital District Open Space Plan by CDRPC, 1972.
- Urban Land Use Planning by Kaiser, Godschalk, and Chapin

### Parks and Recreation in the Capital District

Compared to regional park space standards set out in Urban Land Use Planning, the Capital District has ample regional park space. The State and National Parks in the Capital District contain approximately 15,400 acres, or 19.4 acres per 1,000 people. The regional park space standard is 5 to 10 acres for every 1,000 people.

The Capital District's State Parks provide a full range of activities. With boat launches, including three motor boat launches, ice fishing, beaches and pools, walking/skiing trails, camping and numerous other activities, the State Park system gives the Capital District plenty of regional park space and recreational opportunities.

### 5.3 COMMUNITY LIFE

State/National Park	Acres	Annual Visitors	Municipality	County
Peebles Island State Park	158	102,000	Waterford	Saratoga
Grafton Lakes State Park	2,357	190,000	Grafton	Rensselaer
Bennington Battlefield State Historic Site	162	19,000	Hoosick Falls	Rensselaer
Cherry Plain State Park	176	30,000	Cherry Plain	Rensselaer
Thompson's Lake State Park/ Emma Treadwell Thacher Nature Center	300	46,000	East Berne	Albany
Moreau Lake State Park	4,100	280,000	Gansevoort	Saratoga
Saratoga Lake State Boat Launch	5	69,981	Saratoga Springs	Saratoga
Schodack Island State Park and Boat Launch	1,052	50,000	Schodack Landing	Rensselaer
Saratoga Spa State Park	2,200	1,200,000	Saratoga Springs	Saratoga
John Boyd Thacher State Park	1,844	200,000	Voorheesville	Albany
Saratoga National Historic Park/ Saratoga Battlefield	3,000	150,000	Stillwater	Saratoga
State Canal Park and Boat Launch	61	N/A	Waterford	Saratoga
<b>Capital District Total</b>	<b>15,415</b>	<b>2,3362,981</b>		

Capital District Acres of Regional Park Space Per 1,000 People ..... 19 Acres  
 Standard Acres of Regional Park Space Per 1,000 People ..... 5 to 10 Acres

The Capital District Open Space Study, conducted in 1972, found that the Capital District has a strong community park system. Since the time of that study, a number of Towns have added significantly to their park space while the population of the region has grown by 10%. It is reasonable to conclude that the Region's community park system is as strong as ever.

The Open Space Study did, however, find that the Capital District's cities are generally weak in neighborhood parks. While the communities well exceed the standard of 5 to 8 acres of community park space per 1,000 people, most cities are below half of the recommended 1 to 2 acres of neighborhood park space.

The service area of neighborhood parks is a better measure of this need. Neighborhood parks serve a radius of ¼ to ½ mile and there are many residential locations in the cities of Albany, Schenectady, and Troy that are not within a half mile of a park.

### Boating in the Capital District

While the Capital District has virtually unlimited resources for canoeing and row boating, the Region also has extensive water bodies for motor boating. Most of the state parks have canoe boat launches in addition to the many Department of Environmental Conservation boat launches and other points of public access to the regions many lakes, ponds, streams and rivers. In the Capital District, there are six large water bodies open to public motor boating. The Hudson River, the Mohawk River, Saratoga Lake, Round Lake, Ballston Lake, and the Great Sacandaga Lake all have public boat launches, although Ballston Lake's public motorboat launch is privately owned.