



NEW YORK STATE WATER RESOURCES INSTITUTE

Department of Biological and Environmental Engineering

230 Riley-Robb Hall, Cornell University
Ithaca, NY 14853-5701
<http://wri.cals.cornell.edu>

Tel: (607) 254-7163
Fax: (607) 255-4449
Email: nyswri@cornell.edu

CRP 3072/5072

Land Use/Environmental Planning Field Workshop Activities, 2018-2019 Semester Activities

July 2019

Department of City & Regional Planning
George R. Frantz, Course Instructor
212 Sibley Hall, Cornell University
Ithaca, New York 14853
607 255-2148



Abstract

The CRP 3072/5072 Land Use & Environmental Planning field workshop in the Fall 2018 semester conducted scenic resource inventories and prepared draft reports with recommendations for the Town of Marlborough, and Town of Lloyd in Ulster County. A third team of students, in response to feedback from the community, reviewed and revised the methodology section of the draft scenic resource inventory for the City of Poughkeepsie, Dutchess County, that was completed and delivered Fall 2017 semester. Public presentations of the drafts surveys and recommendations were made by the student teams to the Town of Marlborough Planning Board and City of Poughkeepsie Open Space Committee in December 2018.

In addition, during the Spring 2019 semester, faculty and student assistants completed revisions to the Town of Cornwall draft scenic resources inventory completed in the Fall 2017 semester, focusing on minor adjustments to the methodology.

CRP 3072/5072

Land Use/Environmental Planning Field Workshop Activities 2018-2019

The field workshop objectives were to:

- provide students with a working knowledge of open space conservation practices in the USA, an opportunity for engaged learning and research working with local government officials and committees;
- provide local governments with a framework for identifying and protection scenic resources within their boundaries.

Three Summary Points of Interest

1. The project involved a comprehensive approach to identifying important viewsheds and other scenic resources and developing methodologies for objectively prioritizing lands for protection through conservation easements and growth management tools.
2. Student teams compiled and analyzed data on land use, ecologically sensitive lands, agricultural land resources, demographic, economic and growth trends in their assigned communities.
3. Students developed a working knowledge of NYS open space planning practices in New York, inventory and analysis skills and GIS and other mapping skills.

Keywords

Scenic resources, Hudson River, open space, Hudson River Estuary Program, Cornell University

Introduction

The CRP 3072/5072 Land Use/Environmental Planning/Urban Design field workshop is an opportunity for upperclass undergraduates and graduate majors in planning, design and public policy to engage in experiential learning. The course is designed to provide technical assistance to communities in Upstate New York, and to give students the opportunity to work with a community in resolving critical planning issues. Students in the fall 2018 field workshop provided support to the Hudson River Estuary Program and three client municipalities, the Town of Lloyd and Town of Marlborough, Ulster County, and the City of Poughkeepsie, Dutchess County.

Each of the three field workshop teams:

1. Developed methodologies for identifying and prioritizing scenic resources within their client municipality. Scenic resources are defined as locations or features in the landscape that are viewed, visited, and enjoyed by the public for their aesthetic quality;
2. Supplemented the available mapping of land use, open space resources and historical and cultural resources with additional mapping utilizing GIS information resources and site surveys;
3. Conducted field inventories within their respective client communities, familiarizing themselves with the character of the municipality and mapping and photo-documenting scenic sites (October 13-14, 2018);
4. Solicited public input through public forums or meetings with individual stakeholders within the communities;
5. Developed a methodology for identifying and prioritizing scenic resources tailored to their respective client community using GIS mapping and weighting for specific parcel attributes. The methodologies were described and applied to properties within the town, in a report to the client municipalities.

Results and Discussion

The Fall 2018 semester CRP 3072/5072 Land Use & Environmental Planning field workshop built upon the experience and knowledge gained in previous scenic resource inventories in the Town of Esopus, Town of Hyde Park, Town of Cornwall, City of Beacon and City of Poughkeepsie. The students were able to investigate alternative methodologies for prioritizing lands for protection of viewsheds and other scenic resources. With completion of the 7 inventories in the Hudson River communities, there is now a list of attributes as well as suggested numerical scoring systems that are now

CRP 3072/5072
Land Use/Environmental Planning Field Workshop Activities
2018-2019



being incorporated into a scenic resource protection guidebook for use by communities through the Hudson River valley and New York State. In the Fall 2019 semester the guidebook will be tested by student in two additional municipalities.

Policy Implications

New York's longstanding home rule tradition of government places the protection of much of the state's scenic resources in the hands of local municipal government. This makes the protection of scenic resources in the Hudson River Valley a significant challenge, given the large number of municipalities in the region, and the wide range in terms of local government capacities to take action to protect scenic resources. The CRP 3072/5072 Land Use & Environmental Planning field workshop can provide local governments in the region the technical resources and guidance that they need in order to better protect key scenic resources.

The final report by each of the teams is considered a draft report in order to encourage additional community input and discussion, and if appropriate, revision. This approach will encourage community buy-in for the concept of scenic resource protection in the region.

The ultimate objective, a scenic resources protection guidebook, will provide communities as well as non-governmental land trusts with tool to conduct their own scenic resource inventories and establish programs for protection in the coming years.

Public Outreach and Partnerships

The CRP 3072/5072 Land Use & Environmental Planning field workshop students joined an existing partnership between the Hudson River Estuary Program, Department of Environmental Conservation and local municipal officials. During the semester, the student teams were in contact with designated local officials and residents in each community. In the Town of Marlborough, the student team hosted a community forum during which they presented their preliminary inventory data, and solicited nominations of potential scenic viewsheds from residents and officials in attendance. In addition, in both Lloyd and Marlborough students took advantage of informal encounters with residents in the course of the field surveys to solicit input, including speaking with orchard, vineyard and winery owners who are also major landowners in the region.

This report was prepared for the New York State Water Resources Institute (WRI) and the Hudson River Estuary program of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, with support from the NYS Environmental Protection Fund

CRP 3072/5072

Land Use/Environmental Planning Field Workshop Activities 2018-2019

Final presentations were made by student teams at public meetings in Marlborough and Poughkeepsie in December 2018. Due to scheduling issues that precluded a meeting in December, course instructor George Frantz made a presentation to the Town of Lloyd Environmental Council in January. These presentations have allowed community members to provide their insights in terms of community priorities in terms of scenic resource protection. Based on the feedback from the client communities, the draft methodologies for both client communities are being revised and reapplied to each community.

Over the course of the Fall and Spring semesters, course instructor George Frantz continued to work with DEC staff and towns to revise and edit the scenic resource inventories for Cornwall, Esopus, Hyde Park and Poughkeepsie. Most of the work has been in the form of minor modifications to the methodologies used to prioritize properties for protection, usually based on feedback from the community.

Student Training

Fifteen students were enrolled in the field workshop for the Spring 2018 semester. Eight were undergraduate students, and seven of the students were graduate students.

The second half of the semester consisted of studio-like working sessions in which the teams met, organized themselves, and worked on their team deliverables. The workshop is designed as an interdisciplinary educational experience, in which individual students contribute their specific skills to the project team as they learn new skills from their teammates. It is also an engaged learning experience for students, as they work directly with a client community and deliver a professional grade product (albeit in a draft form) at the end of the semester

Publications/Other Presentations

“Poughkeepsie Scenic Resources Inventory” (Revised Draft), Maurice Bradford, Skye Hart, Yi Yang

“Scenic Resource inventory for the Town of Lloyd, NY” (Draft), Yiren Du, Zhuojia Lou, Saqifa Walli, Zhuohan Xie, Airu Zhang, Xiaotian Zhou

“Scenic Resource inventory for the Town of Marlboro” (Draft), Abdulrahman al-Mana, Frances Chen, Jael Ferguson, Sunny Fu, Sean O’Connell, Vincent Wu

