

## 2.10 Recreational Opportunities

The Catskill Park is a mountainous region of public and private lands in Ulster, Greene, Delaware, and Sullivan counties. The natural and cultural heritage of the Catskill Region is inextricably linked to the unique high quality streams that course through its mountains and valleys and play a defining role in the character of its landscape. Recreation in and around these Catskill streams provides residents and visitors with a myriad of opportunities to reconnect with the natural world.

### Catskill Forest Preserve

The East Kill watershed is surrounded by the steep mountains of the Catskills. The entire East Kill watershed is located within the Catskill Park “blue line” (Fig 2.10.1). Twenty-eight percent of the watershed is managed by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) as Wilderness and Wild Forest. The majority of this protected land is located at the creek’s headwaters and

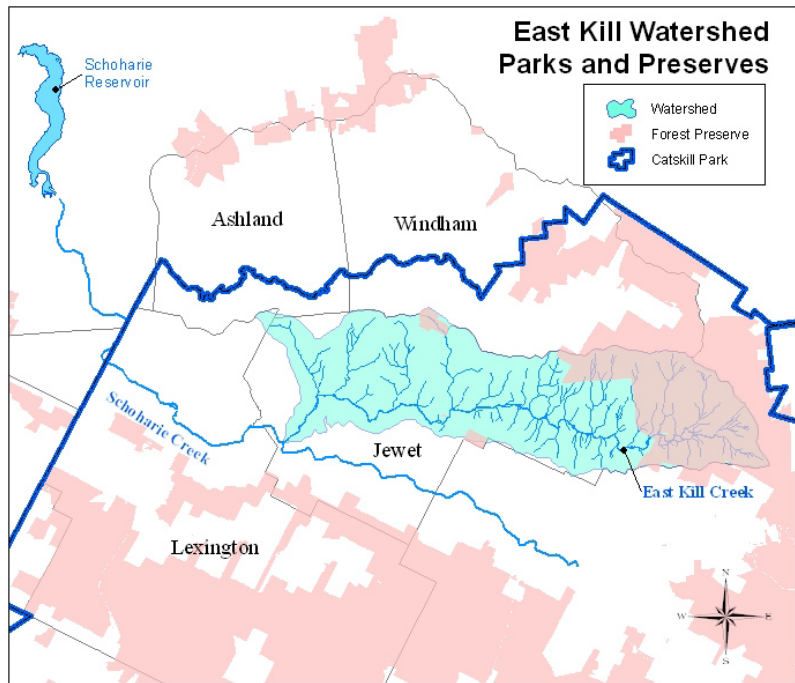


Fig 2.10.1 East Kill Creek Watershed Parks and Preserves

lies within the Blackhead Range and Colgate Lake Wild Forests. Within these forests, approximately 2 miles (14%) of the East Kill flows through protected preserve. Colgate Lake, located in this area, is a popular tourist destination and is part of the East Kill’s headwaters.

In total, there are 6,315 acres of Forest Preserve and 11.8 miles of foot trails within the East Kill watershed (Figure 2.10.2). Black Head, Black Dome, and Thomas Cole Mountains make up the Blackhead Range Wild Forest peaks and are popular hiking

destinations. The East Kill watershed is surrounded by other preserves outside its borders including Windham High Peak Wild Forest to the north and Hunter Mountain Wild Forest and Indian Head Wilderness to the south. North/South Lake State Campground is located a few miles southeast of the watershed and Devils Tombstone State Campground is located a few miles directly south of the watershed. Information on hiking these and other locations, including trail descriptions, pictures, hiker reviews, topographic maps, and literature



*View of the Blackhead Mountain Range (center-background) from Hunter Mountain summit*

references can be found at [www.localhikes.com](http://www.localhikes.com). Hiking is permitted on all lands held by New York State. Hunting is allowed but subject to required NYS licenses and regulations.

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) manages lands in the forest preserve according to its classification in the Catskill Park State Land Master Plan (NYSDEC, 1985). Management recommendations are based on specific land characteristics and its capacity to withstand certain uses. These public uses include Wild Forest, Wilderness, Intensive Use and Administrative Use. DEC's *Catskill Forest Preserve Map and Guide* graphically depicts the locations of these different management areas and provides general background information about the Catskill Park and Preserve. This information can be obtained at DEC's regional offices. Locations of their offices are listed on DEC's website: <http://www.dec.state.ny.us/website/about/abtrull3.html>. There is also an interactive map on DEC's website called Environmental Navigator. This map shows the entire state of New York and can be magnified to specific locations, showing recreational attributes such as trails and parking facilities:

<http://www.dec.state.ny.us/cfm/extapps/statelands/index.cfm>.

### **Fishing**

The East Kill is renowned for its fishing. Cold water temperatures and heavy forest cover especially favor trout populations. In 2005, it was stocked with 2,250 brown trout by

NYS DEC. Several fishing easements have been established along the East Kill near its confluence with the Schoharie Creek (Figure 2.10.3). Trout fishing season is open from April 1<sup>st</sup> through October 15<sup>th</sup>. A New York State Fishing License is required for those over 16 years of age. The basic state catch limit of five trout is applied to the East Kill and, as elsewhere, the practice of Catch and Release is voluntary, but encouraged. For more rules and regulations, or to view the fishing seasons for other fish species, visit DEC's Freshwater Fishing Regulations at:

<http://www.dec.state.ny.us/website/dfwmr/fish/fishregs/fishregsguide0608.pdf>.

### **References**

NYSDEC. 1985. Catskill Park State Land Master Plan. New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), Albany, NY.