



Gretchen Reed: Mohonk Preserve  
845.255.0919 ext. 243  
[glreed@mohonkpreserve.org](mailto:glreed@mohonkpreserve.org)

Cara Lee: Sam's Point Preserve  
845.255.9051  
[clee@tnc.org](mailto:clee@tnc.org)

Eileen Larrabee: Minnewaska State Park Preserve  
845.255.0752  
[eileen.larrabee@oprhp.state.ny.us](mailto:eileen.larrabee@oprhp.state.ny.us)

**NEWS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Shawangunk Ridge Preserves Boost Area Economy  
by Over \$12 Million Annually**

*Gardiner, New York, June 22, 2010* – For decades, Minnewaska State Park Preserve, Mohonk Preserve and Sam's Point Preserve have protected the area's most important natural landscapes and provided outstanding educational, research and recreational opportunities. A new study has confirmed that the three publicly accessible park/preserves also serve as important economic engines, creating jobs, driving tourism spending and contributing \$12.3 million to the local economy.

*The Study of the Economic Impact on the Local Economy of Minnewaska State Park Preserve, Mohonk Preserve and Sam's Point Preserve*, conducted by Business Opportunities Management Consulting of Rensselaer, N.Y., used Money Generation Models (MGM) developed for the National Park Service to determine the economic impacts that Minnewaska, Mohonk Preserve and Sam's Point have on the region, driven by visitor spending, employee spending, operations and capital expenses.

Key findings of the study include:

- Minnewaska, Mohonk Preserve and Sam's Point host a combined 392,659 visitors who spend over \$13 million annually
- Annual local sales taxes generated by Minnewaska, Mohonk Preserve and Sam's Point total \$459,000
- Over 350 local jobs are supported by the three park/preserves
- The total economic impact of Minnewaska, Mohonk Preserve and Sam's Point is \$12,307,593

“We are in the business of protecting the land and providing a place for people to enjoy nature,” said Glenn Hoagland, Executive Director of Mohonk Preserve. “But we’re also part of the green economy, contributing to the fiscal health of the community while doing what we do best.”

“This study highlights that protecting the environment and supporting the economy are not at odds, and that our preserves are an important part of the economic fabric of our region,” said Cara Lee, Director of The Nature Conservancy’s Shawangunk Ridge Program.

Ulster County officials also acknowledge the importance of the three park/preserves to the area’s overall economic health.

"As this study indicates, the Shawangunk Ridge park/preserves are protecting areas that are vital to our economy and quality of life. I commend Minnewaska, Mohonk Preserve and Sam's Point for highlighting the economic impact that these breathtaking open spaces have on our community," said County Executive Mike Hein.

“The park/preserves are great examples of ‘clean and green’ contributors to the economy,” said Ulster County Comptroller Elliott Auerbach. “In addition to benefitting the local tourism market, this study demonstrates their positive impact on jobs and sales taxes.”

Other recent reports have also reinforced the bottom-line value of parks and open space preservation. In March 2010, New York State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli issued *Economic Benefits of Open Space Preservation*, which noted that “rather than conflicting with other goals, open space preservation can provide significant economic benefits.” The report goes on to describe the benefits of open space preservation on regional economic growth through promoting industry, such as agriculture, forestry and tourism, contributing to increased land and property values, maintaining aesthetic values and offering outdoor recreational opportunities.

A March 2009 study, *The NYS Park System: An Economic Asset to the Empire State*, commissioned by Parks & Trails New York, found that overall, state parks produce about \$1.9 billion in annual sales for private businesses in the areas around the parks, with about 40% coming from tourists outside the local communities who might not otherwise visit the areas. The study also found that the benefit-to-cost ratio of

maintaining New York State Parks is more than 5-to-1 – with more than \$5 in benefits for every \$1 in costs.

While the challenges of the current economic climate have threatened many open spaces, the economic impact study of Minnewaska, Mohonk Preserve and Sam's Point demonstrates, these three park/preserves are environmentally and economically significant, sustaining jobs and supporting the region's tourism economy, while also protecting and preserving the rich natural and cultural heritage of the Shawangunk Ridge.

#### **About Minnewaska State Park Preserve**

The 21,000-acre Minnewaska State Park Preserve is owned and managed by New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. Minnewaska is located in Ulster County, east of the Village of Ellenville. Minnewaska is among the areas overseen by the Palisades regional division, with park operations in Kerhonkson. Located more than 2,000 feet above sea level Minnewaska's terrain is rugged and rocky, blanketed by dense hardwood forest encircling two lakes. Streams cut into valleys, incising sheer cliffs and ledges and emerging in waterfalls. For more information, visit [www.nysparks.state.ny.us](http://www.nysparks.state.ny.us).

#### **About Mohonk Preserve**

Located in five Ulster County towns, the Mohonk Preserve is the largest member- and visitor-supported nature preserve in New York State. Managing 7,000 acres of the Shawangunk Ridge, the Preserve works to protect the ridge and to inspire people to care for, enjoy, and explore the natural world. Mohonk Preserve is supported by 12,000 members and over 250 active volunteers. From its Visitor Center in the Town of Gardiner, the Preserve maintains a staff that conducts programs in land stewardship, land protection, education and research. For more information, visit [www.mohonkpreserve.org](http://www.mohonkpreserve.org).

#### **About Sam's Point Preserve**

Sam's Point Preserve is a 5,400-acre preserve in Ulster County on the highest point on the Shawangunk Ridge in New York. It is owned by the Open Space Institute and the Palisades Interstate Park Commission and is managed by The Nature Conservancy's Eastern New York Chapter. Its unique environment features dwarf pine trees along the ridgetop, Lake Maratanza, the highest lake on the ridge, and the Ellenville Fault Ice Caves. The Sam's Point Conservation Center welcomes school groups, volunteers and other visitors to Sam's Point and is the base of operations for the Nature Conservancy's stewardship, science and outreach activities at the Preserve. For more information, visit [www.nature.org/samspoint](http://www.nature.org/samspoint).

