



Peach Hill Park Concept Plan Recommendations

Spring 2019



Prepared by Crowley Cottrell, LLC
for the Friends of Peach Hill Park and
the Town of Poughkipsie, NY



Peach Hill Park

Peach Hill Park is located on the Northern edge of the Town of Poughkeepsie; it contains the highest point in the town. From this point there are many sights to be seen up and down the Hudson River. Currently these views are available at prescribed lookouts where volunteers have worked to maintain open vistas.

Peach Hill has an unusually rich assortment of plants and animals because of the variety of habitats which exist at the park. Hudsonia, a non-profit ecological research institute in the Hudson Valley, has identified eight different natural habitats at the park.¹

These habitats have evolved due to the site's history of human disturbance. The area has been the site of mixed agricultural uses since at least the 19th century.

The first aerial photograph of the site, taken in 1936, indicates that the property consisted of a small orchard, woodlands and an extensive area of fields and meadows.

After its purchase in 1948 by Charles Beck, more and more of the farmland was converted into peach, pear and apple orchards. By 1967, when William Paladino, Jr. acquired the property, the pears and peach trees had disappeared, and Peach Hill was almost entirely an apple orchard.

By 1999, the last year of commercial operation, there were approximately 10,000 apple trees, with a few acres of meadow and some boundary woodlands.²

Today, there are meadow, small functioning orchards, a pond and wet meadow, woodlands, shrub lands and acres upon acres of apple trees covered in invasive vines.

1. Tabak, Nava and Gretchen Stevens, *Significant Habitats in the Town of Poughkeepsie, Dutchess County*. New York; Hudsonia, Ltd., Annandale, NY 2008

2. peach-hill-park.org

Concept Plan

This concept plan aims to identify a future patchwork of habitats that will:

- Maintain and enhance high levels of habitat diversity
- Provide visitors with a way to experience and understand the rich history, habitat diversity and regional context of the site. The variety of experiences and vistas should encourage visitors to return and to become involved in the park
- Be maintainable by the town and the Friends of Peach Hill Park.

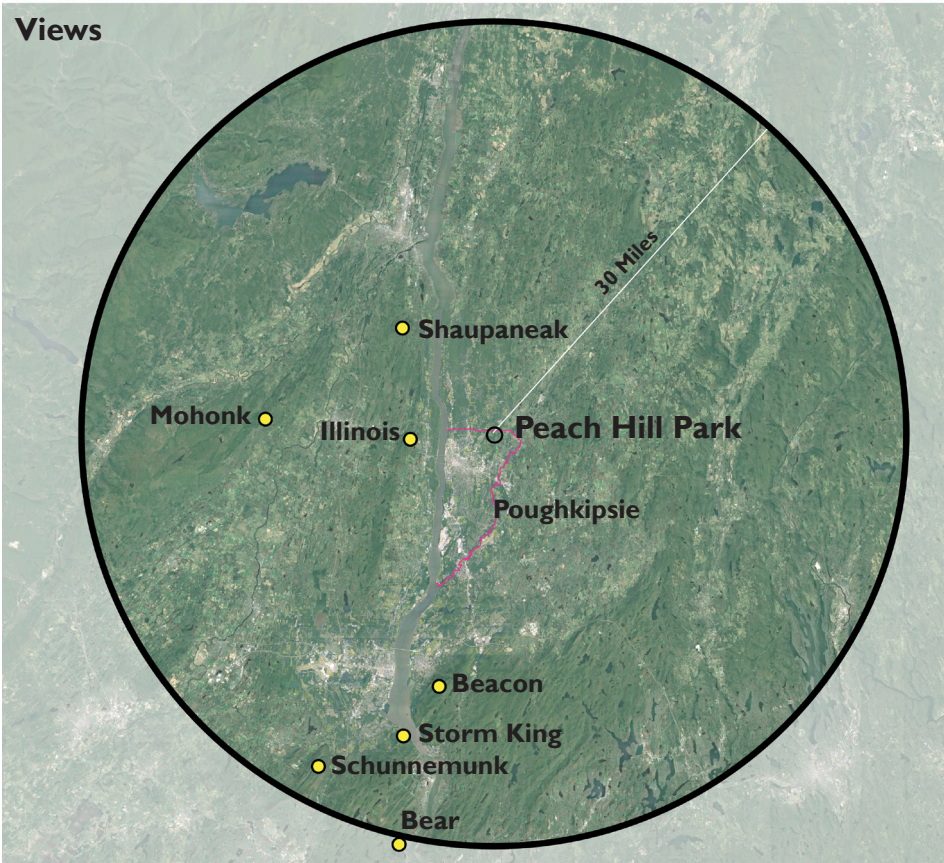
Basic recommendations for how to achieve the vision are outlined, but any project undertaken will need to involve a more in depth assessment of existing habitats and more detailed strategies for transforming each section. Any intervention will require monitoring and adjusting to ensure goals are being met.



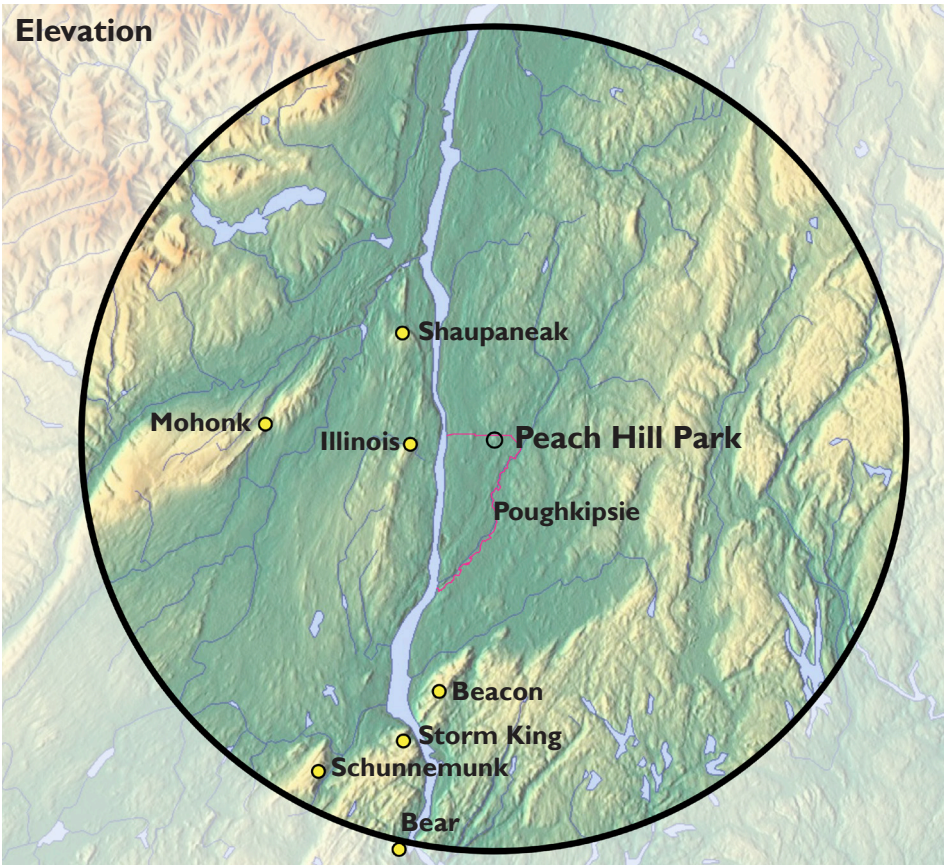
Peach Hill Park Master Plan Recommendations

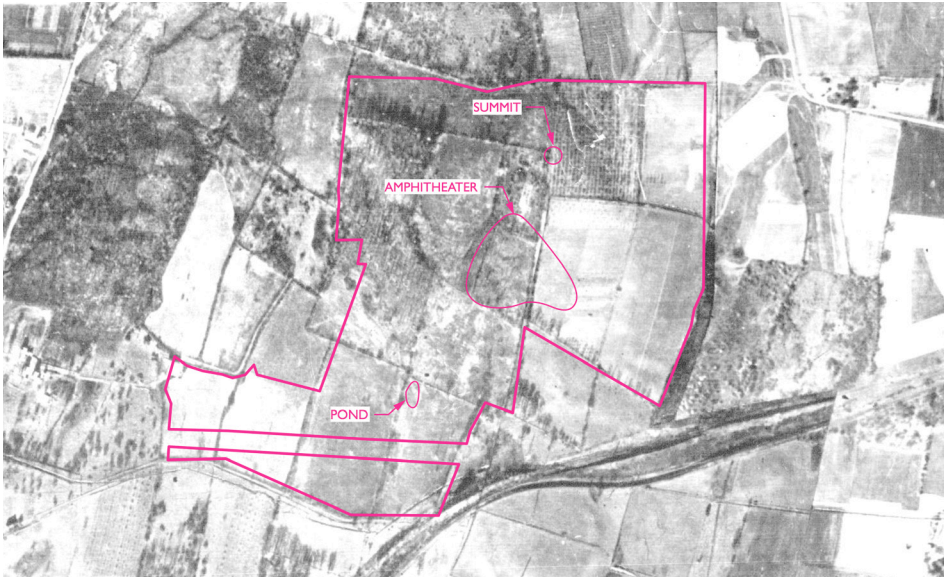
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Views



Elevation





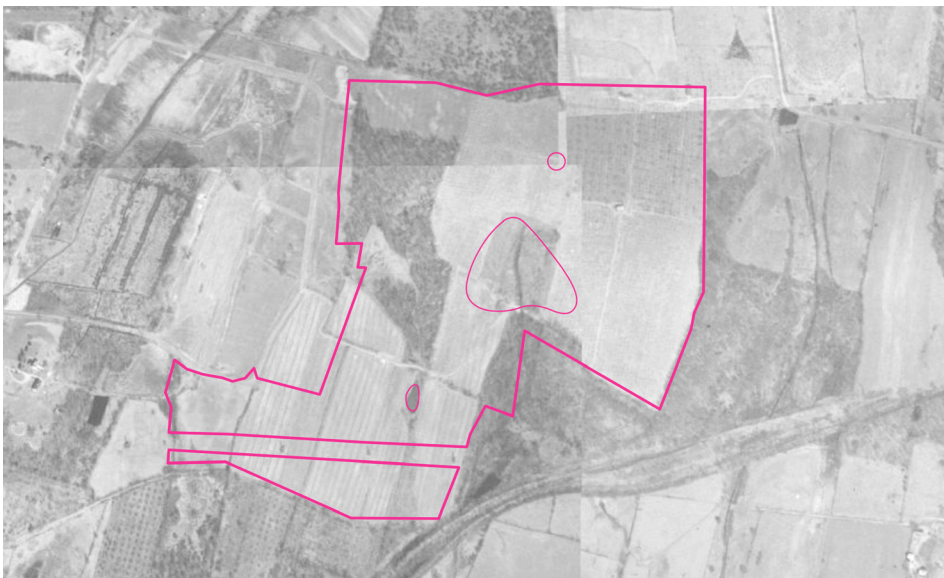
1936

Eastern field patterns established
Northwestern stonewall established
Current woodlands are scrub



1940

Orchard planted east side of
summit.
Woodlands growing in.



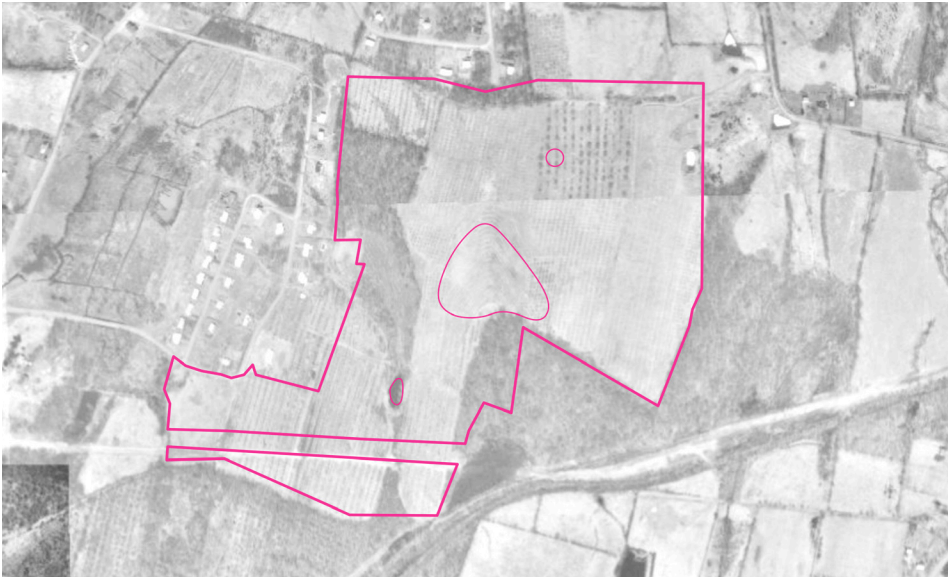
1955

Woodlands growing in.
Pond established.



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1970

More orchards planted



1980

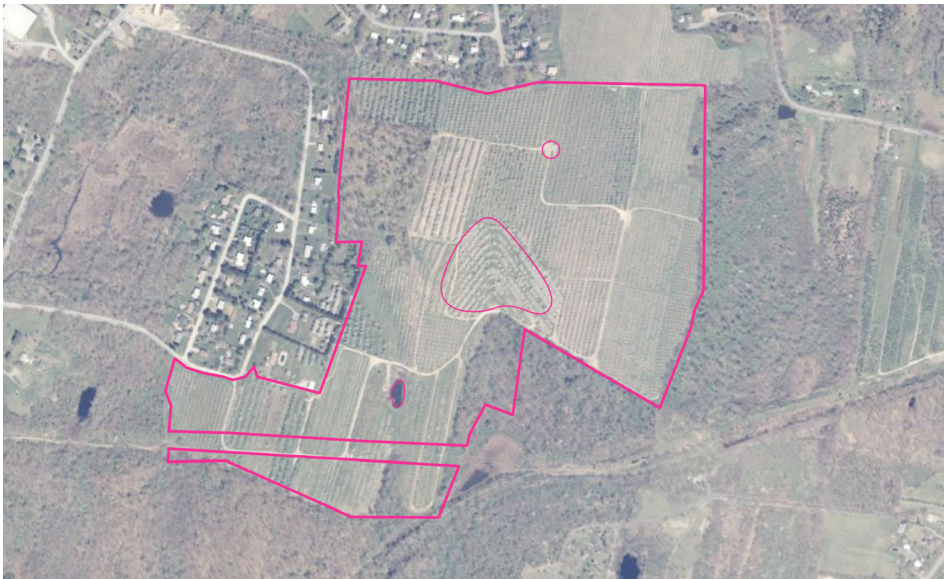
Orchards growing in.
Amphitheater terracing visible.



1990

North orchard established

Past Land Use Patterns



2000

Current path network clearly visible



2004

Erosion of tree grid visible



2016

Invasive overgrowth visible



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Land Use

Even since the first available aerial photographs, from less than 100 years ago, the habitats on the Peach Hill site have been in constant flux. This has much to do with economics and what was profitable to grow, and how much could be maintained.

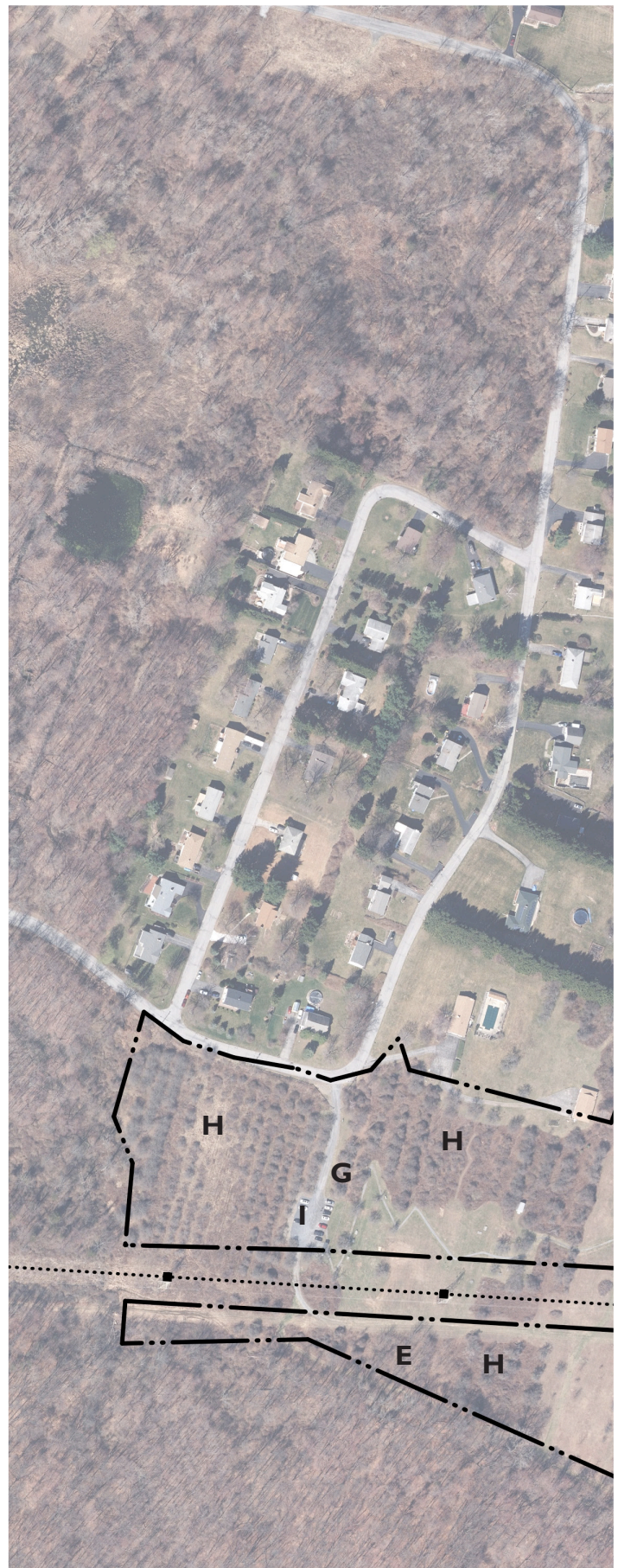
In order to maintain the diversity of habitats, continued disturbance is necessary. Without this, the entire site will be over-run with invasive vines. While the vines do provide some shelter and food for animals, the diversity of the site will be lost if they are allowed to take over completely.

Invasive vines cover trees at Peach Hill Park, 2019



LEGEND

- A** POND
- B** WET MEADOW
- C** MEADOW
- D** UPLAND SHRUB
- E** UPLAND HARDWOOD
- F** ORCHARD A
(MODEL ORCHARD)
- G** ORCHARD B
(MOWED ORCHARD)
- H** ORCHARD C
(INVASIVES / WILD)
- I** PARKING



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Existing Conditions