

2.9 Recreational Opportunities on West Kill

The blue line of the Catskill Park outlines 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 headwaters of the West Kill, and small sections along the main stream, are protected within the Catskill Forest Preserve, the New York State land within the Catskill Park. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) manages lands in the forest preserve according to its classification in the 1985 Catskill Park State Land Master Plan based on specific characteristics and 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 are listed on DEC's website: <http://www.dec.state.us>

The West Kill stream and its watershed contain portions of both this Wild Forest Unit and West Kill Mountain Wilderness Units. Guides for the West Kill Mountain Wilderness are currently available at the DEC Region 4 office in Stanford, NY. Hiking is permitted on all lands held by NY State. Hunting is allowed subject to required NY State licenses and regulations.

Fishing

Numerous Public Access fishing sites have been created along the West Kill by the NYSDEC. Steep headwater streams like West Kill are renowned for supporting healthy populations of native trout. Brown and rainbow trout inhabit its lower sections. The fishing season is April 1 - September 30. A New York State Fishing License is required. (The mainstem of the Esopus Creek and the Ashokan Reservoir have an extended season to November 30). The basic state catch limit of 5 trout is applied in West Kill; and as elsewhere, the practice of Catch and Release is voluntary.

NYSDEC Website: <http://www.dec.state.us>.

NYCDEP Website Information for Recreation: www.nyc.gov/watershedrecreation