

Marbletown Natural Heritage Plan

**Business Owners Focus Group
Wednesday, September 27, 2006
Summary Notes**

Participants

Robert Mann, Marbletown Multi Arts
Ken Davenport, Reliant Energy
Mike Biltonen, Blue Marble Farms
Barbara Esmark, BE Gallery
Thomas LaFera, Table Rock Tours
Karen Davis, Davis Custom Builders/Prudential Realty

Group Discussion Points

1. Open space conservation should be balanced with economic investment.
 - Need an economic development strategy
 - All types of people need to live here
 - Need to provide opportunities for an aging population
 - Need to keep people who grew up in the area
 - Promote/protect 209 corridor/businesses
 - College is a critical opportunity -should be connected to town/economic centers
 - Weekenders are important to the economy

2. There is a fine line between open space plan, zoning, conservation subdivision regulations.
 - All of these actions involve landowner equity
 - Community members and landowners do not necessarily see the distinction

3. Need to help people understand the need for a local open space plan.
 - There are many other pressing issues
 - How is it different from a regional open space plan?
 - Are we going to end up with many different plans that do not meet up?
 - How does it differ from Ulster County OSP, Shawangunk Regional Open Space Plan, 209 Corridor Study?

4. Open space plan needs to be fiscally sustainable.
 - Community can not afford what they want (tax burden)
 - Town needs revenue for other purposes
 - “Tourist” communities are not affordable for everyday people

5. Open space resources are important to town businesses.
 - They bring people to the region
 - Mohonk Preserve and ridge
 - Historic hamlets
 - Water
 - Natural beauty/charm
 - Recreational opportunities – biking, walking, hiking, equestrian

6. Conservation projects should provide a public benefit.
 - Specific opportunities for public access to Rondout and Esopus Creeks

7. We need to continually ask questions and make sure that the plan is economically driven.
 - May be able to privatize OS protection to a higher level
 - Pick a few key projects
 - Balance with other needs in town

8. We need to be able to say yes to good development – get behind it.
 - Need to identify economic opportunities and promote them just as we are with OS conservation
 - Need to support good development projects – say yes more often