

## Town of Esopus works toward adopting waterfront access plan

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Quanelle Keith of Kingston, N.Y., fishes on the Rondout Creek from Sleightsburgh Park in the town of Esopus on May 16, 2019.

Tania Barricklo — Daily Freeman file

ESOPUS, N.Y. — The Town Board has been presented with a waterfront access plan that includes recommendations for projects that should be part of future grant applications.

The 188-page Esopus Riverfront Access and Connections Study was discussed during a video conference meeting Tuesday at which consultant Matthew Rogers said the projects would include improved access to the Rondout Creek and Hudson River.

“The overall purpose of the study ... is to enhance waterfront access for all ages and abilities,” Rogers said.

The town's waterfront revitalization plan dates to 1987 but has not been updated to include recreational and commercial goals.

“We’re looking at ... identifying new recreational amenities at these different parks and preserves, new trail connections — both water and land trail connections — and we’re also beginning to plan and design for the anticipated sea level rise and the impacts of increased severity of storms,” Rogers said.

Projects cited in the study include:

- Improvements at Sleightsburgh Park to designate parking spaces for boat trailers, establish one-way traffic patterns, improve trail areas, create handicapped-accessible picnic and fishing areas, and establish canoe and kayak unloading areas.
- Bulkhead improvements at George Freer Park, as well as creating a launch for nonmotorized watercraft, creating handicapped parking spaces, improving traffic circulation, and addressing stormwater drainage problems that have eroded the shoreline.
- Shoreline stabilization work at Lighthouse Park, as well as creating a launch for nonmotorized watercraft, adding parking spaces, and creating handicapped-accessible picnic and parking areas.
- The expansion of trails at the Esopus Meadows Preserve onto Scenic Hudson land to the south, as well as adding picnic tables and removing vegetation and vines.
- Replacing the bulkhead at the Black Creek Preserve, as well as shoreline stabilization, abandoning a trail that leads to an eroding suspension bridge, making entrance improvements, doubling the size of the parking lot and adding handicapped parking spaces, upgrading culverts to improve the handling of stormwater runoff, adding seating, installing a bike rack, and adding a restroom.

The Town Board expects to vote on adopting the plan at its Aug. 4 meeting.

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