



New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
The Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller Empire State Plaza
Agency Building 1, Albany, New York 12238

518-474-0456

Human Resources
518-474-0453

Fiscal Management
518-474-0061

TDD: 518-486-1899

March 12, 2003

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Honorable Alan G. Hevesi
State Comptroller
New York State Office of the State Comptroller
110 State Street
Albany, New York 12236

**OFFICE OF THE STATE COMPTROLLER
COMPTROLLER ALAN G. HEVESI
EXECUTIVE CORRESPONDENCE UNIT**

Re: Audit Report #2000-S-58
Open Space Conservation Plan

Dear Comptroller Hevesi:

Pursuant to Section 170 of the executive Law, as added by Chapter 218 of the Laws of 1977, herewith is the final response of the Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation ("Office" or "OPRHP") to the Final Audit Report 2000-S-58 on the Selected Acquisition Practices under the Open Space Conservation Plan. As required by law, this response indicates the steps taken to implement the recommendations contained in the audit report, and if not implemented, the reasons therefore.

Recommendation 1:

Establish a joint interpretation (with the Department of Environmental Conservation) of the legal requirements governing the acquisition of parcels under the (Open Space) Plan and consistently apply that interpretation in all future acquisitions.

Office Response:

OPRHP has taken steps to meet with the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and with the Attorney General's Office to discuss a joint interpretation of the legal requirements concerning the acquisition of property under the Open Space Plan.

Recommendation 2:


For each open space land acquisition involving a third-party intermediary, document the reasons why that particular third-party intermediary was involved in the acquisition.

Office Response:

OPRHP is now documenting the reasons why particular third-party intermediaries are involved in particular acquisitions.

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Recommendation 3:

In the absence of further legislative clarification, provide annual reports of open space acquisition and the results of acquisition activities to SLAAC (State Land Acquisition Advisory Council).

Office Response:

OPRHP is compiling acquisition information in an annual report format that will be provided to the State Land Acquisition Advisory Council.

Recommendation 4:

In future acquisitions comply with EPF funding requirements related to obtaining local government approval and submit acquisitions to SLAAC for approval prior to purchase.

Office Response:

OPRHP has implemented a process for notifying local governments of potential acquisition projects and has been submitting potential projects to SLAAC for approval. Documentation to this effect is placed within the project files and within the project's electronic data record.

Recommendation 5:

Modify the OPRHP Annual Report to include all data required by statute.

Office Response:

OPRHP is currently preparing an Annual Report that includes all the data required by statute, to be submitted to SLAAC upon completion.

Recommendation 6:

Expedite the development of an automated tracking system for land acquisitions to help manage these assets effectively and efficiently. Work with the Office to development this system which will be capable of: (a) monitoring individual project status; (b) linking to other OPRHP systems, like the GIS; and (c) providing timely, reliable summary information regarding program accomplishments.

Office Response:

OPRHP Information Systems staff is currently programming the Land Acquisition Tracking System (LATS) in order to better integrate the system with the GIS and preparation of various reports, such as the Annual Report. It is anticipated that LATS will be completed prior to 4/1/03.

Recommendation 7:

When the new tracking system is in place, periodically reconcile expenditure amounts with OSC records to ensure the accuracy of OPRHP system records.

Office Response:

The LATS is being reprogrammed to accurately capture all costs associated with an individual project and will also be used to reconcile all expenditures with available OSC records.

Recommendation 8:

Post all fixed asset acquisitions on the Statewide Fixed Asset Accounting System when due.

Office Response:

OPRHP has implemented a procedure to enter fixed asset information in a timely manner.

Recommendation 9:

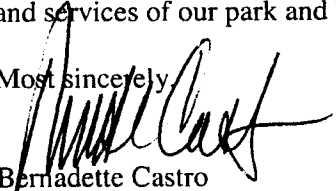
Include all costs associated with the acquisition of land in the cost of land in accordance with OSC Manual policies.

Office Response:

The LATS has been modified to capture all costs associated with a land acquisition in accordance with OSC Manual policies.

It is my opinion that the comments and recommendations made by your staff in conducting this audit are in keeping with our primary goals of improving the efficiency and services of our park and historic site system.

Most sincerely,


Bernadette Castro

Commissioner
State Historic Preservation Officer



J. Percy Lewis Bureau

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
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Honorable Alan J. Steen
State Comptroller
Office of The State Comptroller
110 State Street
Albany NY 12236