

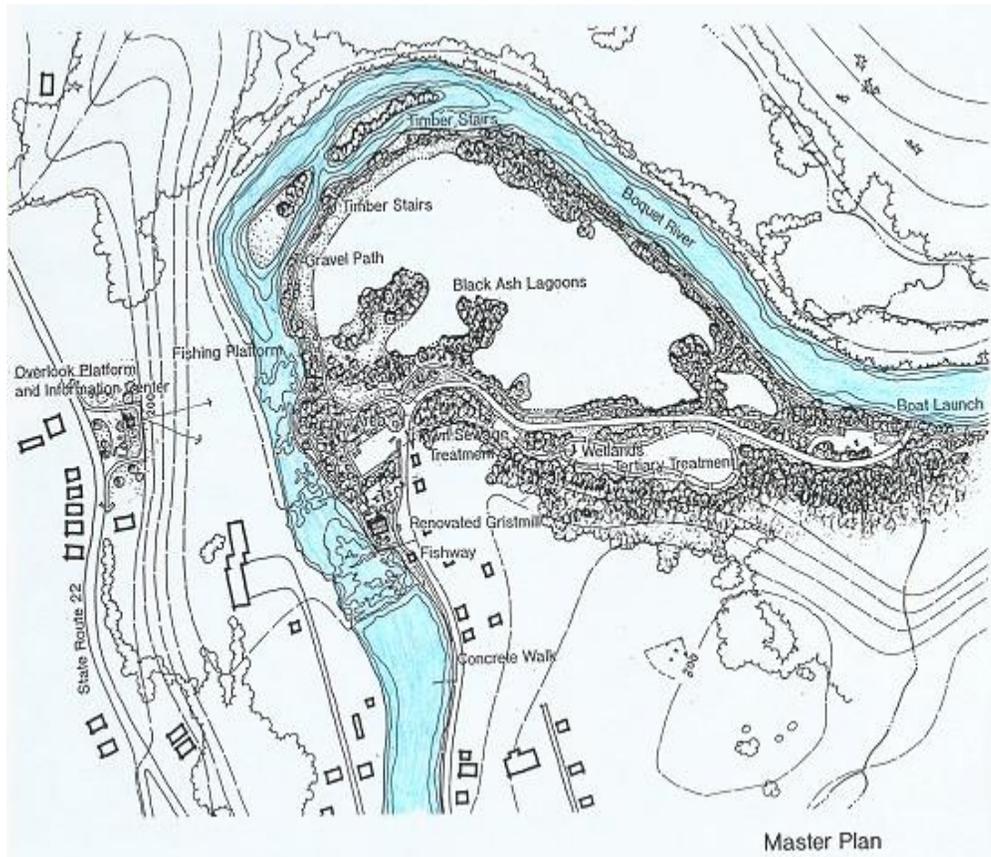
# THREE PARKS

BRASS has designed public parks in Willsboro, Elizabethtown, and Lewis with grants from the NYS Council on the Arts.

Willsboro's park includes trails, picnic areas, lighting, and a handicap ramp and fishing platform. Elizabethtown's Hand-Hale district park contains walkways and footbridges, and can be connected to five other public and quasi-public open space areas around the village core. The park in Lewis is located in the county forest. Former picnic areas to the west of Thrall Dam are planned for renovation, while a campground for tents and recreation vehicles has a separate entrance off Ray Woods Road.

Tasks ahead for BRASS: work with town governments and citizens to plan phased development, in-kind services, and to apply for construction grants. Also, BRASS will work with the Adirondack Land Trust and Boquet Valley residents to plan recreational trails for the Little Falls/Coon Mountain area.

## Willsboro Falls Park

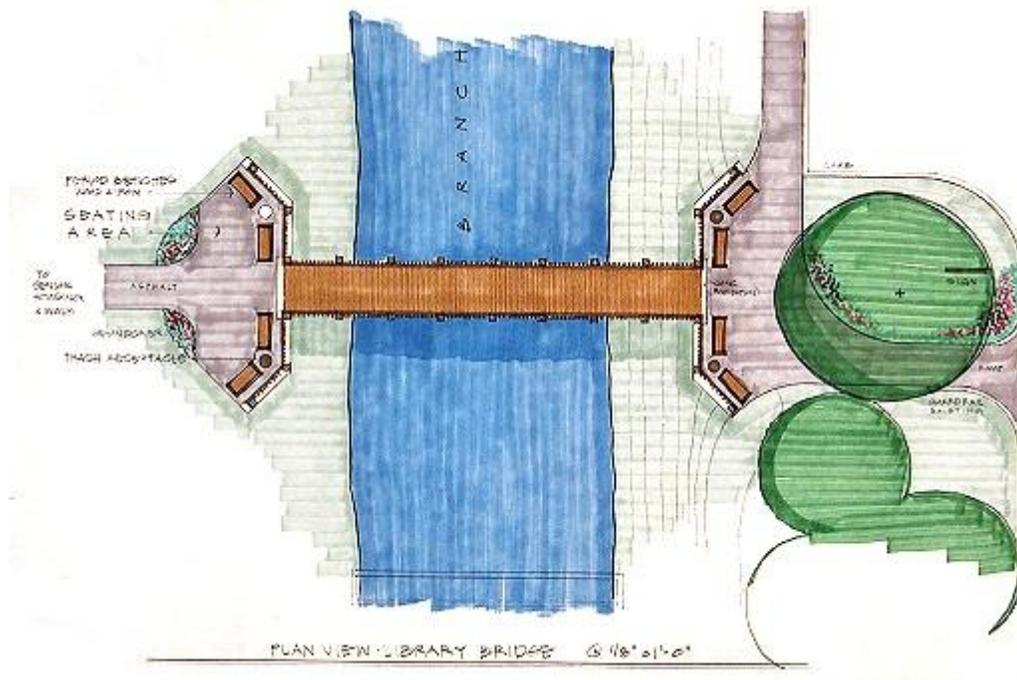
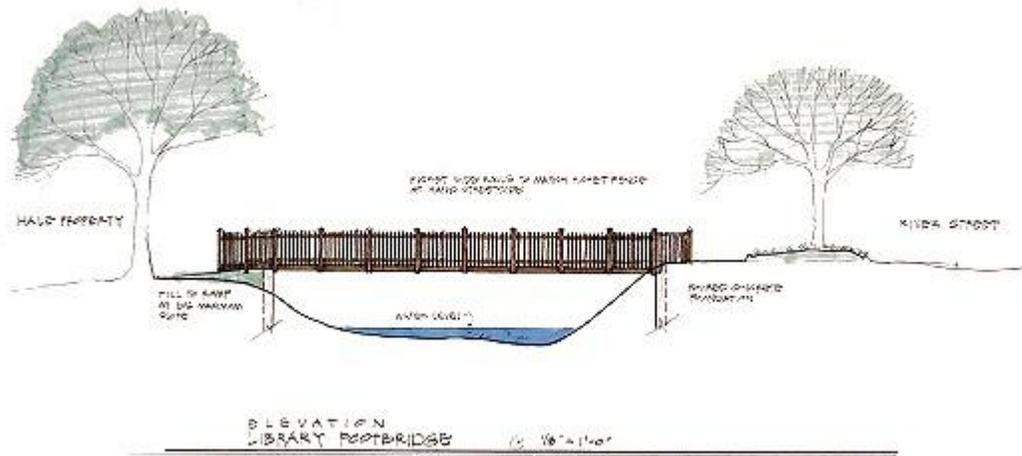


Willsboro Falls Park ties together auto, bike and foot trails, the Fishway, parking lot, and boat launch. It adds features to make the river more accessible to everyone: timbered stairs down to the water's edge, a picnic area, and a ramp and fishing platform. The latter two structures are designed for access by the handicapped. Because the slopes are steep and the site's black ash (a residue from the pulp industry) unstable, the ramp to the river actually parallels the river, inland about 55 feet in a natural gully. The path then enters an elliptical underpass and reappears at the water's edge where it turns upstream about 100 feet to the concrete fishing platform. Three openings in the wooden railed platform provide fishing access for wheelchair occupants. The rails can be removed during inclement weather, and a timber retaining wall protects the slope in back of the platform. Another picnic area is proposed for the boat launch site, and the access road would be re-graded for a greater diversity of vehicle and trailer use.

Editor's Up-Date: The barrier free design elements were never implemented due to the extreme instability of the black ash. However, a timbered crib has been constructed to inhibit site erosion, two timbered stairs lead down to the salmon pool for fishermen, and a new concrete ramp was constructed by BRASS and Willsboro's Department of Public Works to control erosion at the small boat launch site.

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## Elizabethtown River Walk



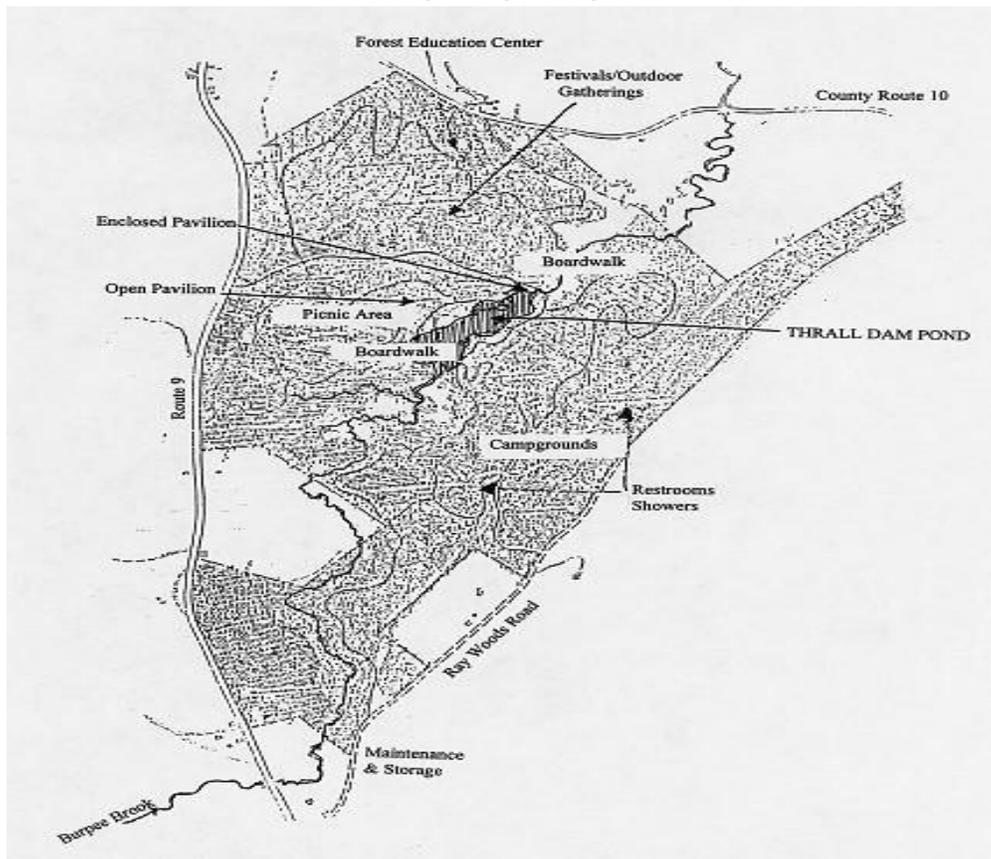
A group of Elizabethtown citizens was interested in envisioning an open-space recreational system that might help show off the wealth of historic, cultural and natural

resources, as well as make this Essex County seat a model for the Adirondack region which it serves. After several public meetings, inventories, and research, the landscape design architect (Jane Owens) arrived at six potential focal areas that might be enveloped in a greenbelt walkway: the Hand-Hale Historic District; a corridor along The Branch; the town & county core of historic buildings; the Barton Brook park areas; the town-owned Cobble Hill golf course; and a walk along the Boquet River.

Editor's Up-Date: The greenbelt river walkway was never implemented due—in part—to the huge mix of public and private lands requiring access easements and maintenance. Some elements of the plan, however, have been instituted behind the Social Center and around the golf course. Many town residents continue to hope a footbridge might yet be installed that could join the Senior Housing and Social Center to the rest of the town via a safe walk across Route 9N by the library.

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### Thrall Dam Park



Thrall Dam, owned by Essex County in Lewis, was once a lively recreation area. In the 1920's, the town Supervisor decided to dam Burpee Brook in order to develop a pond for ice sulky racing. Later, in the 1960's the spillway at the dam was rebuilt with community

labor, materials, and fundraising. Swimming and picnicking facilities were incorporated into the forested area around the pond.

When the pond began silting up and swimming was no longer desirable, the recreation area fell to disuse, vandalism, and the spillway deteriorated without maintenance.

With State Council on the Arts funding, BRASS decided not only to look at revitalization of the once popular recreational area, but to look at recreational and educational opportunities for the entire county forest. The forest and wetland areas, diverse topography, and access by three roads allowed BRASS and the landscape architect to develop a master plan that included a forest/wetland ecology educational facility, a place for winter festivals, hiking/riding/ski trails, food concession and restroom pavilions, swimming beach, and campground.

Editor's Up-Date: The park plan was reviewed by the Lewis Town Board but never taken before County officials. Unfortunately, the new County landfill was located immediately upstream on Burpee Brook, making repair to the spillway for swimming a dubious venture. As of 2002, the landfill is being permanently capped. Perhaps in a few years, with a series of groundwater and surface water tests, it might be once again possible to envision a park in the County Forest.

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