

Comprehensive Plan Town of Scipio, NY

January 2011



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	5
Public Participation	6
Plan Structure	6
Adopting and Implementing the Comprehensive Plan	6
History of Planning and Land Use in the U.S.	8
Prior Local and Regional Planning Initiatives	10
Federal and State Planning Initiatives	11
 Chapter 1: Goals and Recommendations	 13
Community Vision Statement	15
Agriculture and Farmland	16
Land Use and Subdivision Regulation	16
Environmental Stewardship and Water Quality Protection	20
Public Utilities and Services	21
Community Development and Historic Preservation	21
 Chapter 2: Community Inventory and Analysis	 24
Location	24
History of the Community	29
Hamlets and Historic Settlements	39
Historic and Cultural Resources	47
Demographic Profile.....	63
Population	63
Housing	65
Business / Economic Base	67
Municipal Infrastructure and Services	71
Land Use and Zoning	77
Natural Resources and Environmental Issues	77
Owasco Lake	86
Agricultural Lands	89
BioEnergy	101
Solar Energy	101
Wind and Wind Energy	105
The Marcellus Shale & Natural Gas	106
Public Parks and Protected Areas	108
 Chapter 3: Regional Influences	 115
Finger Lakes Region	115

Appendix A: Principals of Smart Growth	119
Appendix B: Conservation Subdivisions	120
Appendix C: Issues of Community Concern	123
Appendix D: Community Survey and Comments	129
Appendix E: National Register Listings	131
 List of Maps	
Suitability Analysis	17
Regional Location, Colleges & Universities	25
Regional Context	27
Roads and Scenic Views	49
Cemetery Locations in the Town of Scipio	59
School Districts	73
Energy Facilities and Resources	75
Slope	79
Wetlands and Floodplains	83
Watersheds	85
Current Agricultural Districts in Cayuga County	95
Proposed Agricultural Districts in Cayuga County	96
Scipio Agricultural Districts	97
Farmland Classification of Soils	99
Wind Energy	103
Land Use & Agricultural Districts	111
Public Lands and Recreation	113

GIS DATA Disclaimer

The original sources of each dataset is identified on the maps. Due to the different sources and scales of projection, key features such as roads, parcel boundaries and streams may not overlap accurately when comparing several data layers on the same map. Acreage calculations for various parameters in this report were generated through the use of ArcGIS and are an approximation of the actual size. For more precise measurements, contact the Cayuga County Planning Department.



"When an adventurer carries his gods with him into a remote and savage country, the colony he founds will, from the beginning, have graces, traditions, riches of the mind and spirit. Its history will shine with bright incidents, slight, perhaps, but precious, as in life itself, where great matters are often as worthless as astronomical distances, and the trifles dear as the heart's blood."

-- Willa Cather, from her novel *Shadows On The Rock*, 1931

INTRODUCTION

The Town of Scpio Comprehensive Plan was initiated, generated, and supported by the Scpio community in a collaborative process intended to guide Town officials and the community in making decisions that affect the future of the Town. The comprehensive plan provides a basis for guiding future growth, development and community preservation. The plan also acts as a historical document that identifies present land use and infrastructure, as well as the physical, cultural, and demographic characteristics of the Town.

In early 2007, the Scpio Town Board in consultation with the Scpio Planning Board agreed to appoint a Comprehensive Planning Committee (CPC) to research and prepare a comprehensive plan. In August of 2007, the Town Planning Board initiated a public request in the Town Newsletter for residents, landowners, business owners, and other concerned citizens to serve on the Comprehensive Planning Committee. The Town board appointed the CPC members and scheduled its initial meeting. In December 2007, the CPC held its first meeting and began to identify the formal process it would follow to develop the plan. The town of Scpio CPC was guided and assisted in the comprehensive planning process by the Central New York Regional Planning Board (CNYRPB), under a grant provided by Congressman James Walsh.

Through in-depth study, analysis, and community participation, the Comprehensive Plan provides a sound basis for guiding future growth, development, and community preservation. Community input from surveys and the Comprehensive Planning Committee played an important role in the development of the Comprehensive Plan by directly informing a series of clearly defined goals and recommended actions for the Town to pursue. Any future land use or zoning regulations must be consistent with the findings and recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.

Members of the Comprehensive Plan Committee:

Bruce Hatfield, Chair	Randy Lawrence	Dodie Rowlands
Marian Brown	Mark Malys	Mark Vorreuter
Mike Brown	Joe McSweeney	Keith Welch
Phil Buckhout	Gary Mutchler	Patricia White
Robb Jetty	Tom Olenych	

Public Participation

The Comprehensive Planning Committee formulated a survey which was mailed to 732 town residences and property owners and was available for public review at three public locations. The intent of the survey was to seek out opinions on present day Scipio and what the public sees for the Town of Scipio in the future. 168 completed surveys were returned, a 23% response rate. Analysis of the results of the written survey and community inventory formed the basis for this comprehensive plan. All CPC meetings were open to the public.

Plan Structure

The contents of this plan include an Introduction and four chapters. Chapter 1: Goals and Recommendations, lays out the specific goals and recommendations by topic area; Chapter 2: Community Inventory and Analysis, Chapter 3: Regional Influences is intended to give background information on existing conditions in the town and region; and Chapter 4: Issues of Community Concern, is a discussion of issues revealed through the public participation process. Four Appendices in the back of the Plan contain information on Principals of Smart Growth, Conservation Subdivisions, History of Planning and Land Use in the U.S., and the Community Survey.

Adopting and Implementing the Comprehensive Plan

Legislative Authority

In the State of New York, village and town governments are granted authority to adopt a comprehensive plan pursuant to Village Law §7-722 or Town Law §272-a. The comprehensive plan, a set of policy and analytic documents and maps, strategies and tools for the guidance of community well-being, land use, and development, is also intended to provide the foundation for local zoning laws. Once adopted, all land use policy decisions in the Town must be in accordance with the comprehensive plan. The review of future projects no longer occurs on an independent project-by-project basis, but rather in consideration of the comprehensive plan and the community vision. This Plan provides guidance as to where and how future development should occur in the Town. In addition, all other governmental agencies must consider this plan when directing or funding capital projects that occur within the Town.

Adopting the Comprehensive Plan

The purpose of adopting a comprehensive plan is the protection of the health, safety, and general welfare of the citizens of the community and their environment. Once adopted, review of future projects occurs in consideration of the community vision and the Comprehensive Plan. In addition, all other governmental agencies must consider this plan when directing or funding capital projects that occur within the Town. Adoption of a comprehensive plan is a discretionary decision and is considered a Type I action pursuant to Article 8 of the Environmental Conservation Law and Title 6 of the New York Code of Rules and Regulations Part 617.4(b)(1). This means that the plan must meet the provisions of the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) prior to final adoption by Town Board.

In accordance with New York State General Municipal Law 239, the Governing Board must refer the adoption or amendment of the proposed comprehensive plan to the County Planning Board's 239 Land Use Committee for review for potential inter-municipal impacts of the proposed plan. The Governing Board may adopt a Comprehensive Plan (or an amendment to a Comprehensive Plan) by resolution.

Review and Maintenance of the Plan

Because communities are continually changing and adjusting to new conditions, this comprehensive plan is a work in progress, and can be thought of as a document that provides guiding principles for the future development and growth decisions. This comprehensive plan should be reviewed regularly to ensure its continued relevance with the existing conditions, goals and objectives of the Town of Scipio. Following the adoption of the Plan; every five years, the Town Board should conduct an in-depth review of the plan and make changes as needed. This in-depth review should assess the status of the plan's recommendations and implementation actions such as land use regulation revisions, capital improvement programming, expansion of recreational opportunities, tourism, economic development, and progress on other work identified in the Goals & Recommendations (Chapter 1) of the plan. As policy-making changes and the physical characteristics of the community change, the comprehensive plan should also change. The plan should be a "living document".

Circumstances that may warrant revising the plan include:

- A finding of significant change within the community or substantial unforeseen circumstances or impacts;
- A finding of significant public benefit associated with the proposed revision or a need to maintain and protect public investments and resources; or
- The need to maintain compliance with new laws, regulations, court actions, or other mandates

Implementing the Scipio Comprehensive Plan

All of the work that the community has done thus far in preparing the Comprehensive Plan can be lost without a solid framework for implementation based on available funding resources and realistic expectations. Some recommendations in this plan may be implemented over a longer period of time, others will be a concentrated, short-term effort, but all elements of the Plan should be considered in terms of budgets and time frame.

A Comprehensive Plan is a valuable resource a community can use to win significant grant funding from a wide variety of sources. Forming partnerships with various public agencies at the local, county, state and federal levels is advisable as these agencies can often assist communities in their funding and implementation efforts. Special committees may be established by the Town Board to address specific focus areas identified in the Plan. These committees should include members of the community most familiar with the Comprehensive Plan and its guiding principles. Examples of such committees are a Farmland Preservation Committee, An Historic Preservation Committee, or a Energy and Technology Committee.

Community efforts can often be strengthened and community benefits broadened by cooperative planning and promotional strategies among neighboring communities. Through cooperative efforts with other agencies and inter-municipal relationships with neighboring municipalities, planning can have positive impacts on the community, as well as on the region as a whole.

History of Planning and Land Use in the U.S.

Towns across America, as a result of an evolving story of settlement, bare unique physical and cultural characteristics reflected in their villages and along their roadsides. Rural towns like Scipio contribute to, and are affected by regional centers of social, cultural, and economic activity. Rural life offers residents, employees, and visitors a wealth of opportunities and experiences to enjoy every day. Rural character and identity rests upon both tangible and intangible elements such as sights, sounds, scents and experiences that combine to provide the Scipio community with a familiar sense of place, and for many, a profound sense of meaning.

A comprehensive Plan provides a framework within which these unique characteristics and elements of a place can be drawn upon to create or preserve an environment supportive of a community's vision for itself. Through careful analysis, including direct community involvement in the process, rural planning addresses problems and takes advantage of opportunities to create unique, viable and pleasant rural places. This first Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Scipio, strives to do just that for a community already rich in citizen commitment and possibilities.

As European settlers emigrated to the United States they adopted English common law under which land they owned, their "property," meant a place in which they held a bundle of rights including:

- 1) the right to control and use the property;
- 2) the right to benefits from the property;
- 3) the right to transfer or sell the property; and
- 4) the right to exclude others from the property.

However, those rights were not absolute; they were, as they still are, subject to the rights of society often as codified in law. In the early history of the United States, society placed few limitations on the use of land as it seemed an endless resource, especially with a limited population base. From Jefferson's Corps of Discovery to the Homestead Act to massive federal irrigation, road building, and energy producing projects, the challenge was not limiting use of land but rather getting it settled, cultivated, and developed. However, as the population increased and people began to congregate in cities, the need arose for local governmental control to put some limits on the movement of industry and commerce into residential areas and to prevent residents from becoming nuisances to each other. These limitations generally took the form of zoning ordinances regulating incompatible uses, building heights, setbacks, and lot sizes. However, as

the density of populations grew and spread, some began to recognize a need for planning, and noting the changing times, Theodore Roosevelt reminded his constituents in the summer of 1910: “Every man holds his property subject to the general right of the community to regulate its use to whatever degree the public welfare may require it.”

Concern for the public welfare reached a peak in the 1960s and 70s as members of Congress observed that the balance between economic growth and development on the one hand, and protection of natural resources on the other, had tipped too far in the direction of growth and development. Congress moved to expand legal limitations that would address the issue of dwindling natural resources and environmental degradation. As a result, federal laws such as The National Environmental Policy Act, The Wilderness Act, The National Forest Management Act, The Endangered Species Act, etc., were enacted that have had significant impacts on land use. Many states also passed their own laws and adopted policies that complemented the new federal laws.

In New York, the enactment of Article IX of the State Constitution, the Municipal Home Rule Law, the Statute of Local Governments, and the State Environmental Quality Review Act have provided municipalities the power to enact local laws that compliment several of the federal laws mentioned above. The scope of this power and the procedures for implementing it, are set out in the Municipal Home Rule Law, adopted in 1963. Section 10 of the Municipal Home Rule Law contains the constitutional grants of power to local governments and adds thereto the powers to collect local taxes authorized by the Legislature, to provide for the protection and enhancement of the physical and visual environment, the apportionment of local legislative bodies, and assessments for local improvements, as well as the powers granted to local governments in the Statute of Local Governments.

The Municipal Home Rule Law also includes a Bill of Rights for Local Governments and provision for a unique Statute of Local Governments, under which home rule powers may be given to quasi-constitutional protection against change (Section 2(b)(1)). Among the rights and powers enumerated under the Bill of Rights for Local Governments are the right to have a legislative body elected by the people; to adopt local laws; to have local officers elected or appointed by the local residents or officers; the power to agree (as authorized by the Legislature) with the federal government, a State, or other government, to provide cooperative governmental services and facilities. Also included are the power of eminent domain; the power to make a fair return on the value or property used in the operation of certain utility services, and the right to use the profits therefore for refunds or any other lawful purpose; and the power to apportion costs of governmental services of function upon portions of local areas as authorized by the Legislature.

Prior Local and Regional Planning Initiatives

Various community-based planning initiatives have contributed to the development of the Scipio Comprehensive Plan. In 1989, a preliminary twenty page report, considered a draft of the master plan and zoning law to be proposed to the Town Board was developed by the zoning commission of the Town of Scipio. The intention was “to update and analyze the socio-economic and land use data bases for the town so as to establish a basic, comprehensive plan upon which the revised zoning law would be based.” Additional guidelines for future growth and development in the Town of Scipio came from the Zoning Law of the Town of Scipio also adopted in 1989 and amended with Local Laws in 1995. The Zoning Law of the Town of Scipio includes Articles regarding Planned Development Districts, Use Regulations, Special Conditions, Dimensional Requirements, Parking, Signs, and Nonconformities, in addition to general and administrative legislation for the town.

The development of the Owasco Lake Watershed Management Plan, in July of 2001, was a result of the collaboration, co-operation, and work of agency staff, municipal officials, and the public. The plan was produced by the Cayuga County Department of Planning and Development. Owasco Lake is an important resource to the communities within its watershed. Indeed, over 70% of the people residing in Cayuga County use it as a drinking water source. Residents and tourists enjoy recreational opportunities and the scenic views of the lake, while agriculture, fisheries, and wildlife depend on its water. The development of the Owasco Lake Watershed Management Plan was an important community action taken for the protection of the watershed and Owasco Lake water quality. The plan documents on-going lake management efforts, serves as a guide for future development and environmental initiatives in the watershed, and lists sources of revenue to fund projects. The Owasco Lake Watershed Management Plan Steering Committee and the Cayuga County Water Quality Management Agency, with the support of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the Owasco Watershed Lake Association, produced The State of the Owasco Lake Watershed Report which contains information on watershed characteristics, land use, economy, cultural resources, laws, ordinances, regulations, management programs, municipalities, and issues of concern. The report also discusses issues that affect or will affect the future of the lake. The information contained in the report was used in the development of the Owasco Lake Watershed Management Plan. Since watershed management is a dynamic process, the action plan will be evaluated and updated yearly by the Water Quality Management Agency.

In June of 1997, The City of Syracuse contracted with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Onondaga County to provide a lake management plan report for the Environmental Protection Agency for Skaneateles Lake, located in the Oswego River Drainage Basin. Skaneateles Lake, although not geographically connected to the Town of Scipio, is the next Finger Lake to the east of Owasco Lake and shares many physical characteristics and uses as both a regional water supply and recreational water body surrounded by agricultural lands. The Skaneateles Lake Watershed Management Plan was developed to chart the course for future lake management programs and the funding of the federal Clean Lakes Program in the Skaneateles watershed and may provide a good basis for developing Best Management Practices (BMPs) related to the Owasco Lake Watershed and the Town of Scipio. The plan is in no way conclusive, but does provide a number of recommendations for action that may be taken by the diverse municipalities, citizens, non-profit organizations, and government agencies that are charged with managing the resources of Skaneateles Lake and could be a helpful and informative resource for similarly situated municipalities like the Town of Scipio on Owasco Lake that may be facing similar issues.

Federal and State Planning Initiatives

As a part of the development of this Comprehensive Plan, relevant federal and state planning initiatives were reviewed. The New York State Open Space Conservation Plan (2009) serves as the blueprint for the State's land conservation efforts, which during the past several years have conserved nearly a million acres of land with an investment of more than \$658 million. The Plan is required by law to be revised every three years. The plan references the federal Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP) established in 2002 to protect important coastal and estuarine areas that have significant conservation, recreation, ecological, historical, or aesthetic values, or that are threatened by conversion from their natural or recreational state to other uses (Public Law 107-77, Department of Commerce, Justice, and State Appropriations Act of 2002). Priority status is given to lands which can be effectively managed and protected and that have significant ecological value.

Issues in the New York State Open Space Conservation Plan, of particular importance to the Town of Scipio, concern the Finger Lakes shorelines which are considered part of a Major Resource Area. The Plan notes that the shorelines of the Finger Lakes are tied up in private ownership to a degree seldom seen in other states resulting in most citizens having little direct experience of these unique lakes, even though their length provides hundreds of miles of shoreline. Public access for swimming, photography, shoreline fishing, and canoeing is extremely minimal, and natural, forested shoreline is itself a scarce resource having been incrementally lost over time to home site development. Strategies for these unique shorelines mentioned in the Plan include acquisition of additional public access, and consolidation of existing State projects. Specifically, lake shore protection projects are recommended that would establish "a network of strategically spaced open shoreline parcels to support low intensity and passive recreational uses including: kayaking, boating, birdwatching, angling, hunting, and simply seeking solitude by the water" (pg. 106). The Finger Lakes support a large and diverse population of waterfowl and raptors, which in turn generates significant public interest and educational opportunities. Four of the lakes are designated Important Bird Areas by New York Audubon and are a significant wintering area for waterfowl. Forested areas along and above the lakeshores provide habitat for raptors and neo-tropical songbirds.

The State Open Space Conservation Plan suggests that projects to preserve portions of the shoreline of these lakes, including Owasco Lake, for public access or wildlife could utilize acquisitions, easements, or additions to existing public segments. Parties including New York State, local governments, and non-profit organizations should prepare to capitalize on opportunities which will become increasingly critical as shoreline development and prices continue to climb, and while it is not possible to predict future opportunities, potential lakeshore protection projects should be considered wherever possible.

The New York Statewide Comprehensive Recreation Plan (SCORP) is prepared periodically by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) to provide statewide policy direction and to fulfill the agency's recreation and preservation mandate. The updated SCORP refers to the Finger Lakes including Owasco Lake as a major water recreational resource. The document serves as a status report and for overall guidance in recreation resource preservation, planning, and development through 2014. The document is also used to guide the allocation of state and federal funds for recreation and open space projects as well as for the allocation of municipal and not-for-profit funds to local areas and facilities with the greatest needs.



Old postcard image of Owasco Lake looking north from Ensenor, date unknown.
(source: <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/>)

CHAPTER 1: GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As a direct result of the public participation process and input from a community survey mailed to 732 Town residences and property owners and made available for public review at three public locations, the following survey summary analysis was made. This analysis resulted in a Community Vision Statement (see page 15) formulated by the Comprehensive Planning Committee and intended to provide guidance in planning and development decisions for the Town of Scipio in the future.

What did the community survey data reveal?

Most of the respondents to the community survey receive their information about Scipio either from the town newsletter or the newspaper, with only about 7% receiving it from the town website. Over 50% of the survey respondents were over the age of 55. Only 4% were under the age of 35, and 40% of the respondents were between the ages of 36 and 55 years.¹ Most survey respondents have lived in Scipio for over twenty years. However, it is notable that over 20% have lived in Scipio less than 10 years. Nearly 40% live on a public road, with only 12% living in the hamlets, and 24% living on farms. 16% of respondents live at Owasco Lake and 10% are part-time residents.

¹ Note: With respondent age weighted heavily to older residents of the community, response percentages in many survey questions may be strongly reflective of this demographic group. Responses to questions such as the importance of local job opportunities, outdoor sports and recreational opportunities, farm and agricultural business opportunities, easy access to urban areas, and modern infrastructure may have been different had the survey been completed by a greater than 4% number of residents under the age of 35.

The most important issues (listed as very important) to most survey respondents were: a clean and healthy environment (91%), a reasonable cost of living (80%), and rural character (72%). In fact over 85% of respondents want Scipio to maintain its rural character.

What defines Scipio as a Place?

There were many reasons listed by respondents for living in Scipio, but the most common reason chosen (24%) was the rural character of the town. Location, family and environment, were each selected by over 12% of respondents as reasons for living in Scipio. 66% of recipients judged the air quality in Scipio to be good with about half considering affordability to be good. Unfortunately, most respondents (60%) judged the quality of the lake water to be poor. Most respondents (60%) rated the quality of the school district as good, and nearly 70% rated Town Days as good. In fact, not a single respondent thought poorly of Town Days. The biggest concerns of respondents (very concerned) were the quality of the lake water (52%), and the loss of natural areas (45%). Scipio is clearly a beautiful place that respondents want to keep that way with 85 % to over 90% indicating that Scipio should encourage the preservation of scenic views, the protection of natural resources, and remain rural.

What does the community want for the future of the Town?

It naturally follows; because survey respondents most valued a clean and healthy environment (91%), and want to maintain Scipio's rural character (85%); between 63% and 71% of respondents think Scipio should encourage tax incentives for preserving natural areas, especially those that are undeveloped, and also for open space. Respondents indicated that they want to protect their natural resources with the enhancement of stewardship of watersheds (85%), protect environmental quality through local law (82%), and not allow commercial mining (64%). A significant number of respondents (40%) would like to see improved availability of child care services, more single-family housing (92%), commercial wind turbines (75%), affordable housing (70%), and senior citizen housing (67%). They registered negative opinions on mobile home parks (79%), multi-unit rental houses (56%), and mobile homes on individual lots (52%). Concern for the loss of farmland (71%), loss of open space (76%), big truck traffic (60%), and speeding (69%) was also registered by survey respondents.

Other things survey respondents would like to see the town encourage are a farmers market (65%), a town historical society (61%), hiking and biking paths (57%), a town park (56%), public access to Owasco Lake (54%), and a community center (53%). Positive responses were indicated for restaurant facilities, professional services, cottage/home business, natural gas drilling, light manufacturing, retail business, and cell towers. Respondents would also like to see Scipio undertake an inventory of historic sites (68%), improved communications with other towns (71%), publishing a community events calendar (69%), and placing community events in the local paper (75%).

Survey respondents registered strong positive opinions, between 60% and 84%, on land use regulation. They gave favorable responses to having land use regulation for the upkeep of vacant properties, siting for wind power, upkeep of occupied properties, mobile home placement, adverse environmental impacts, degradation of environmentally sensitive areas, septic inspection requirements, minimum lot sizes, land use that lowers surrounding land values, rental housing inspection requirements, design standards for commercial development, and future subdivision of large parcels. A strong opposition (85%) was registered against heavy manufacturing in the town of Scipio.

Considering that survey respondents so strongly registered their appreciation for farmland, scenic views and open space, and that 31% of farmers taking the survey don't know what they'll do with their farms upon retirement, some important proactive strategies for farmland protection surfaced in the survey results. Between 56% and 67% of respondents think Scipio should give tax incentives for productive land, protect farmland through easements, and limit conversion of farmland to other uses.

From these survey responses, some clear conclusions can be drawn. The community's desire for the future of the Town of Scipio depends on the protection of its resources, both natural and cultural, and on improving land use regulations and town government policies with an eye toward accomplishing specific goals and objectives as identified in the survey. These include land-use regulation for the protection of the environment, and preservation of the rural/agricultural character of the town (scenic views), in addition to renewable energy development (wind turbines), affordable housing, and senior housing. Other conclusions raise questions and will require further investigation. For example; if the town pursues natural gas drilling which 65% of survey respondents indicated should be encouraged, will that result in negative environmental impacts which 82% of respondents wish to protect against? These questions must be thoroughly investigated and carefully considered before the community can make wise decisions for the future health and well-being of the Town and community.

Community Vision Statement:

"The Town of Scipio would like to preserve its rural character, scenic beauty, and cultural and historic assets, and protect its natural and agricultural resources as it continues to accommodate new growth and services that meet the changing needs of the community."

The community survey and the community inventory, and analysis have formed the basis for the following goals and recommendations. These goals and recommendations are referenced in Appendix D – Issues of Community Concern/Community Survey.

The Suitability Analysis Map for tax parcels in the Town of Scipio (page 17) highlights important physical features of lands in the Town including large (100+ acre) parcels, lands with 15 percent or greater slopes, wetlands, floodplain areas, agricultural districts, scenic vistas, and hamlets. The map provides a visual reference to potentially high priority conservation areas or conditions that call for special attention in future planning and development decisions based on the goals and recommendations in the following chapter.

GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Agriculture and Farmland Protection

1. Preserve the rural-agrarian character of the Town

- a. Facilitate the protection of farmland balanced with managed community growth and preservation of open space through farmland protection and agricultural easements.
- b. Facilitate a collaborative relationship with educational institutions and community-oriented organizations in support of local agriculture and the farming community (ex. Sponsor an annual “Agricultural Day” to educate the general public about the importance of agriculture, local foods, etc.)
- c. Encourage farmland preservation by working in collaboration with related NYS, County and other agencies and programs.

2. Support future viability of local agricultural practices

- a. Encourage growth in a wide range of local agricultural services and businesses in support of a sustainable local farming community including local processing and local markets.²
- b. Continue to support the Right-to-Farm law.
- c. Work with Soil & Water District and Extension personnel on agricultural issues
- d. Encourage the Town to support tax incentives to keep farmland in production.
- e. Evaluate and implement tax abatement programs in agricultural assessments from the State Agricultural Assessment Program coupled with comparable penalties for converting farmland to non-farm use.
- f. Encourage the use of programs such as the Cayuga County Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) Program for sustainable and best management practices in all agricultural activities in the town

Land Use, Planning, and Subdivision Regulation Supportive of the Community Vision

3. Protect the existing open space & scenic views of farmland and lakes in the Town of Scipio

- a. Review and rework existing Town land use regulations to protect the Town’s rural-agrarian and scenic identity while effectively planning for “Smart Growth” (see Appendix A).
- b. Work with local or regional planning agencies to develop effective land use tools such as Overlay Districts, Easements, Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) or Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) programs to protect farmland, open space, scenic views, and historic areas in the town.³
- c. Develop a town-wide plan to support low-impact development patterns and land uses that conserve resources, complement the rural character of the residential setting, and encourage farms to remain in farm production, while providing reasonable land area for neighborhoods of single-family dwellings at a medium to low density on a range of lot sizes using conservation-sensitive design (see Appendix B). (The resources, lands and values identified by the community as important to conserve include: rural character, agriculture, highly visible open space lands, scenic views, and wildlife buffer areas).
- d. Use established environmental protection guidelines to regulate and limit building in areas with steep slopes (15% or more) reducing soil erosion, storm water run-off, and sedimentation of water resources.

² see Agriculture and Farmland Protection Programs: Local Stakeholder Views, A Report to the New York State Advisory Council on Agriculture, New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets November 5, 2003, <http://www.agmkt.state.ny.us/ACARoundTableReport.pdf>

³ See “Protecting Aesthetic and Scenic Resources” on page 125, Appendix C: Issues of Community Concern

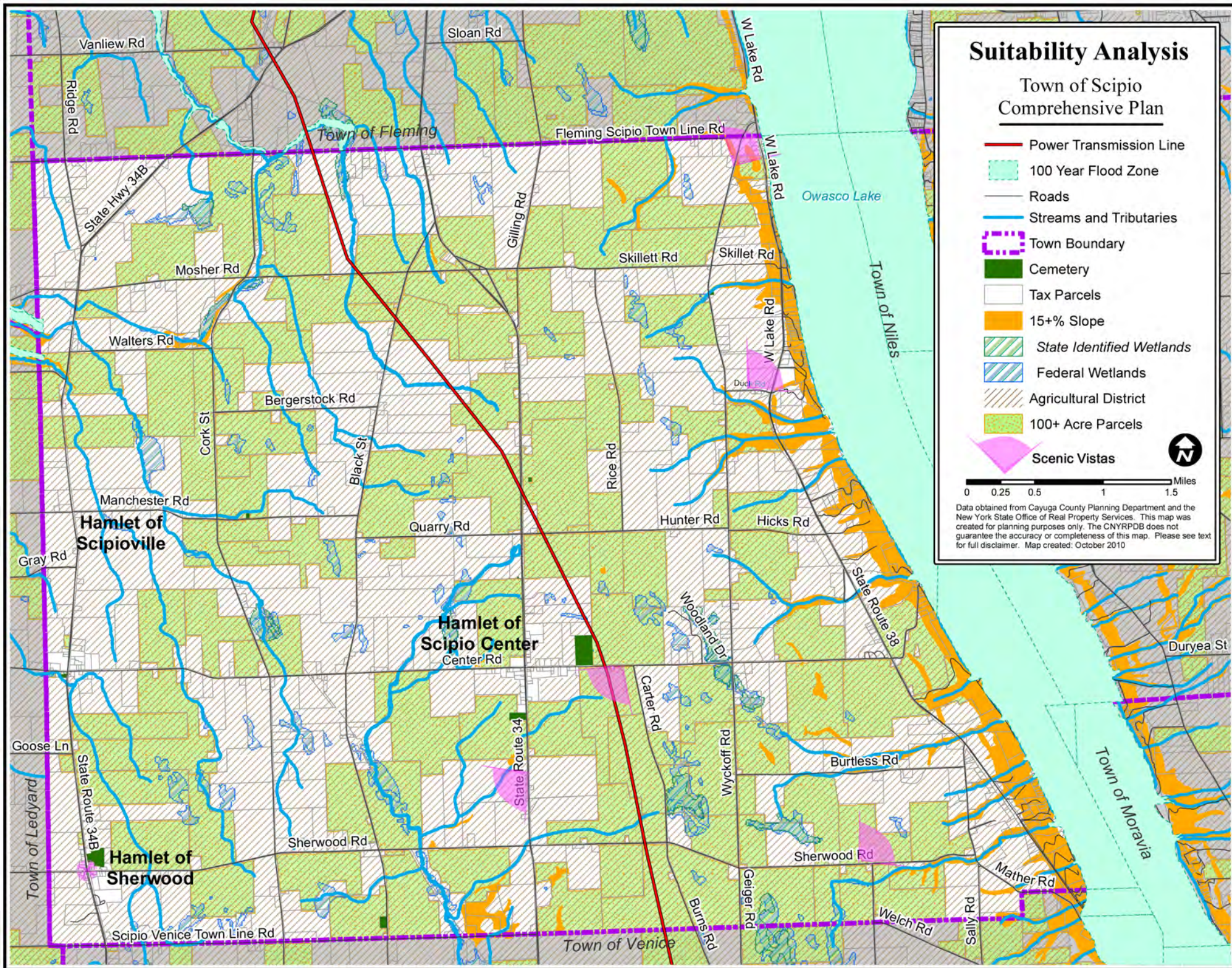
Suitability Analysis

Town of Scipio Comprehensive Plan

- Power Transmission Line
- 100 Year Flood Zone
- Roads
- Streams and Tributaries
- Town Boundary
- Cemetery
- Tax Parcels
- 15+% Slope
- State Identified Wetlands
- Federal Wetlands
- Agricultural District
- 100+ Acre Parcels
- Scenic Vistas

0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 Miles

Data obtained from Cayuga County Planning Department and the New York State Office of Real Property Services. This map was created for planning purposes only. The CNYRPDB does not guarantee the accuracy or completeness of this map. Please see text for full disclaimer. Map created: October 2010



- e. Encourage both compact development and preservation of large and continuous areas of absorbent vegetated open space and the minimal overall land disturbance associated with development by allowing flexibility in site planning.

4. Protect the natural resources of significance to the Scipio community.

- a. Maintain and reference (prior to development decisions) a current map of all natural resources including stream corridors, water bodies, undeveloped shoreline, beaches, wetlands, watershed areas, vegetation communities, woodlands, steep slopes, meadows, specimen trees, wildlife habitats, soils, geology, and aquifer contribution areas.
- b. Review and amend existing lakefront local laws to ensure both shoreline and water quality protections through adequate minimum shoreline requirements.⁴
- c. Ensure that site development requirements include standards for Best Management Practices (BMPs) is to minimize soil disturbance, erosion, and stormwater runoff, and ensure that those standards are met particularly in lakefront and streamside areas.⁵
- d. Encourage sustainable land use practices through the implementation of Incentive or Overlay Zoning as in Riparian zone that identify and protect buffers along stream corridors.⁶
- e. Establish local watershed preservation overlay districts to delineate protection of water resources.⁷

5. Maximize the potential of the town's history and historic resources to become sources of economic and cultural benefit to the community.

- a. Establish a Local Preservation Commission with the mission of developing an inventory of historic resources in the Town and a Local Preservation District to protect Scipio's historic character
- b. Adopt a Local Preservation Law that encourages preservation projects by providing tax incentives for investments in preservation district properties, while also establishing a review and approval process for exterior renovations of Local Preservation District properties. (Inclusion in a Local Preservation District increases property owners eligibility for state and federal preservation grant funds. Property owners may elect not to be included in the Local Preservation District and be exempted from the Local Preservation Law and potential preservation grant funding.)
- c. Apply to NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation to become a Certified Local Government (CLG) and then seek designation as a "Preserve America Community" to be eligible for federal preservation grant funding through the "Preserve America Grants Program."

⁴ Excessive development of environmentally sensitive lake shore lands can have direct, adverse water quality impacts. Existing local laws do not assure the preservation of water quality or environmental protection of sensitive shoreline areas. Appropriate shoreline minimum requirements would be best determined by an Environmental Carrying Capacity Study, but in general would be set at 70' of shoreline per dwelling unit where water quality and environmental protection are considered important (see *Fair Lake Michigan Environmental Carrying Capacity Study* : <http://www.ftwrc.org/publications/Fairlakeecc.pdf>).

⁵ It is a general rule that 1 acre of impervious surface = 1 million gallons of runoff per year. Carried with that runoff are the many chemicals and particulates that accumulate on lawn, driving and parking surfaces from fertilizers, herbicides and gasoline combustion engines. Permeable surfaces such as green roofs, water permeable concrete, and gravel help to minimize runoff and filter out pollutants and reduce their transfer to water bodies.

⁶ The composition of Land Cover (i.e. forests v.s. lawn, pavement, or frequent tilling) impacts water quality in very different ways. Ecosystem Services such as filtration and infiltration of stormwater runoff can be cost-effectively implemented by incentivizing the conversion of frequently tilled land or less pervious surfaces such as lawn and traditional paving to no-till land, meadow, garden, shrubland, or forest. Ecosystem services such as this can prevent the need for a costly traditional engineered municipal water treatment system in the future.

⁷ Overlay districts are additive restrictions mapped out for specific areas such as limits on excavation of soil within 100 feet of a stream corridor, or limits on fuel stations within an aquifer contribution zone. Overlay districts can be used to protect valuable resources without applying broad zoning restrictions to large areas. Three criteria are important in their creation: 1) the district should have a clearly defined purpose, e.g. to protect groundwater, prevent erosion, or preserve historical character. 2) areas that relate to achieving the purpose of the overlay district must be identified and mapped. 3) specific rules should be developed that apply to the identified district such as development guidelines that require capture and filtering of runoff, architectural design guidelines, etc.

6. Plan for and seek opportunities to increase the availability of affordable single-family, and senior citizen housing in the Town

- a. Identify desirable growth areas within or adjacent to existing hamlet areas.
- b. Explore the possibility of rehabilitating vacant or under-used structures to meet housing demands

Environmental Stewardship and Water Quality Protection

7. Support water quality preservation through good stewardship of Owasco Lake and the Owasco and Cayuga Lake watersheds

- a. Actively seek inter-town cooperation in both watersheds to improve water quality through a unified or coordinated set of zoning and land use regulations for all issues related to water quality and watershed protection.
- b. Support the development of an agricultural watershed protection program such as the Skaneateles Lake Watershed Agricultural Program (SLWAP)
- c. Actively work with the Owasco and Cayuga Lake watershed organizations to preserve and improve the quality of the water in both lakes.
- d. Encourage participation in the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Conservation Reserve Program (a program that assists farmers to convert highly erodible crop and pasture land to perennial cover - erosion control buffers)
- e. Work cooperatively with the County Soil and Conservation District to implement improved and protective roadside ditch maintenance practices to lessen or prevent erosion and pollutant runoff
- f. Encourage the development of an Environmental Education Outreach Program for town residents
- g. Protect Owasco and Cayuga Lakes from increased pollution and nutrient run-off both from development and agricultural practices.
- h. Encourage the use of buffer strips around streams and shorelines to reduce or eliminate run-off.
- i. Ensure adherence to current regulations and guidelines for the spreading of manure and tilling of soils.
- j. Encourage Best Management Practices and the minimization of phosphorous and other nutrient loaded fertilizers and products throughout the town.

Improved Public Utilities and Services

8. Improve Communications Infrastructure

- a. Explore options to expand wireless internet access availability for town-wide service
- b. Explore options to improve/broaden cellular phone service and be pro-active with cell phone companies in locating cell towers.

9. Explore potential benefits and impacts of renewable energy resource development

- a. Conduct a critical review of both individual and commercial wind energy, solar energy, bioenergy, and potential associated benefits and impacts on the Town.

10. Maintain or improve the present quality of Town roads and services

- a. Review road maintenance procedures to ensure continued quality of town roads
- b. Work with other town/government agencies to address the impact of heavy truck traffic on the community
- c. Maintain the Town's current practice of holding 2 clean-up days annually
- d. Continue the town transfer station program and keep the cost to the taxpayers low.
- e. Investigate future options for public water districts

Community Development and Historic Preservation

11. Encourage the improvement or development of additional community recreational facilities

- a. Explore options for the acquisition of additional town land for the development of community recreational facilities including parks, recreational trails, playing fields, and lake access.
- b. Explore options for improving public waterfront recreation areas including amenities at town-owned Rights-of-way on Owasco Lake (see photo-concept and plan view, pg. 22-23)
- c. Explore the possibility of developing an interconnected system of hiking trails and bike paths with historic and recreational points of interest throughout the town and hamlets.

12. Seek opportunities to increase community participation and civic resources

- a. Explore the possibility of upgrading and expanding the Town Newsletter.
- b. Encourage the development of a community website
- c. Encourage recruitment of a growing volunteer base for Town organizations

13. Support volunteer recruitment for fire and ambulance services.

- a. Explore creative ways to provide incentives for community volunteer programs
- b. Support and implement effective incentive programs for fire and emergency volunteers

14. Expand efforts to support the preservation of the historic heritage of the Town.

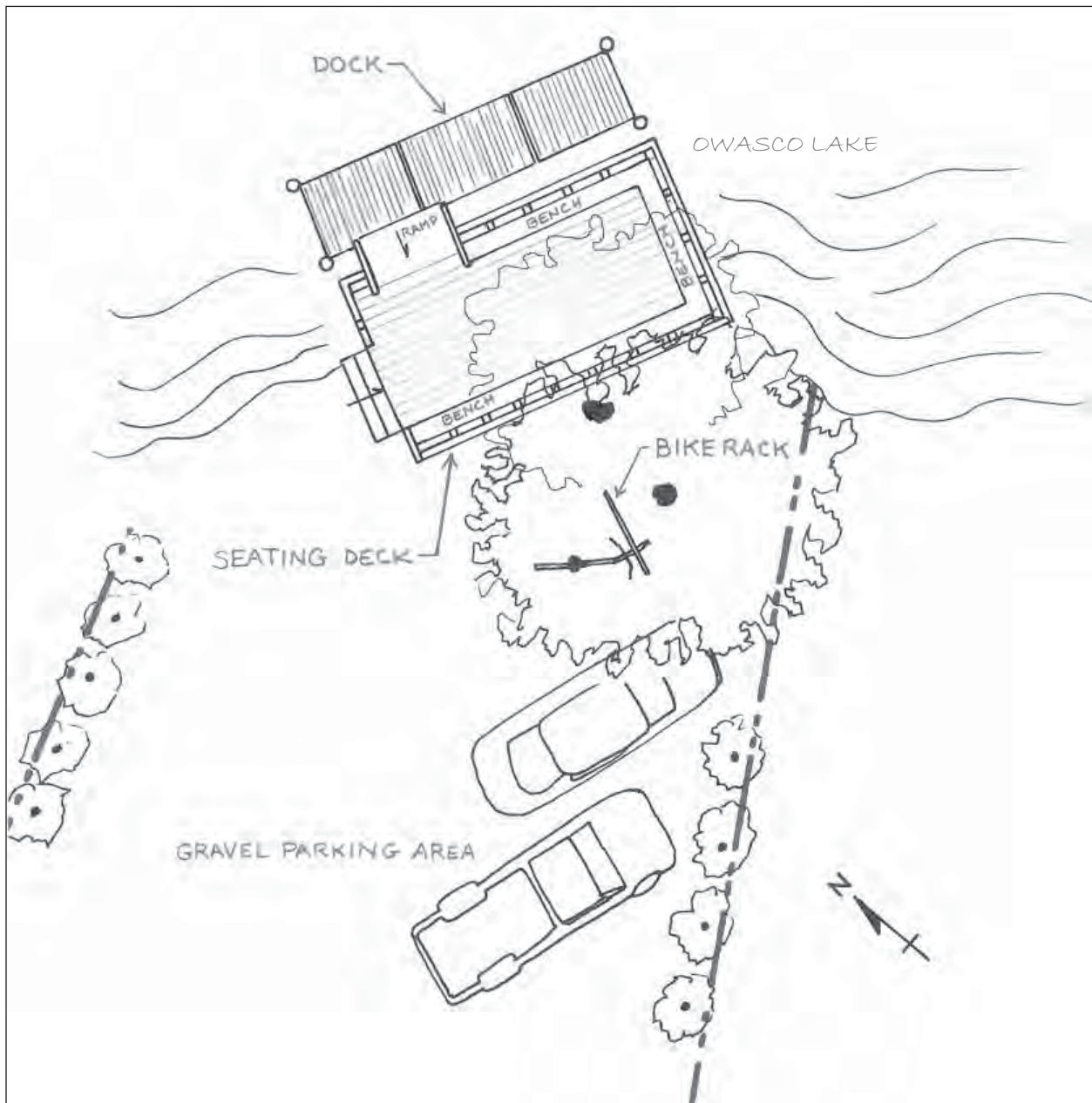
- a. Evaluate the potential for the development of a town history museum in an existing historic structure.
- b. Coordinate promotion of town historic sites with other regional heritage tourism programs through website links, maps and brochures
- c. Explore upcoming grant funding opportunities for preservation planning, capital improvements and interpretation of the Sherwood Equal Rights Historic District through the National Park Service "Network to Freedom" program, the National Women's History Project Act - "Votes for Women Trail", and the "Save America's Treasures" program (see recommendations a, b, and c under Goal 5 as first steps toward this recommendation).



Existing conditions at the Town right-of-way to Owasco Lake at Ensenore Road, May 2009.



Photo-concept showing the Town right-of-way to Owasco Lake at Ensenore Road improved for public recreational use.



Previous page (top) shows existing conditions at the Town-owned right-of-way at the end of Ensenore Road on Owasco Lake. The photo-concept at the bottom of the page illustrates how improvements including a waters edge seating deck and small dock, along with a bicycle rack would provide a comfortable community space for enjoyment of the lake shore.

Above, a plan view illustrates a potential approximate arrangement of the seating deck, dock, bike rack and parking within the right-of-way, as well as edge planting treatment to provide screening from neighboring properties.



Looking east over farmland above Owasco Lake in the Town of Scipio, New York

CHAPTER 2: COMMUNITY INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

Location

The Town of Scipio is located south of the center of Cayuga County in the heart of the Finger Lakes Region of Central New York. The Town is bounded on the north by Fleming, on the south by Venice, and on the west by Springport and Ledyard. The eastern border of the Town of Scipio is formed by Owasco Lake. Cayuga County is comprised of a hilly southern plateau where the Town is located, and a relatively flat central plain region with drumlins in the north. Cayuga means “People of the Great Swamp” in the Iroquoian language of the Cayuga people native to the region. Primarily a rural, agricultural community, Scipio is located to the south of the City of Auburn and is nestled between Owasco Lake to the east and Cayuga Lake to the west, approximately halfway between the southeastern shore of Lake Ontario and the New York/Pennsylvania border. The region features deep north-south valleys bordered by beautiful sloping shorelines occasionally cut by picturesque glens and gorges. (<http://www.nysm.nysed.gov/services/largemarkers/inventoryfour.html>) The gently rolling farmland between the lake shores varies in elevation between about 700 and 1400 feet. In places, the landscape of the Town offers spectacular views of the deep, glacially-formed lakes and surrounding farmland. Owasco Lake, though recently indicating a decline in water quality, offers a prime water supply sources to populations in the region.

The Town of Scipio is within easy commuting distance of several state and private Colleges and Universities including: Cayuga County Community College, Cornell University, Hobart and William Smith Colleges, Ithaca College, Le Moyne College, Onondaga Community College, Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT), SUNY College of Environmental Science & Forestry (ESF), SUNY - Cortland, SUNY Health Science Center, SUNY - Oswego, Syracuse University, Tompkins-Cortland Community College, University of Rochester, and Wells College.

Key	Name	Key	Name	Key	Name
1	BRYANT AND STRATTON BUSINESS INSTITUTE-PENN CAN CAMPUS	13	HOBART AND WILLIAM SMITH COLLEGES	25	STATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE AT OSWEGO
2	BRYANT AND STRATTON BUSINESS INSTITUTE-SYRACUSE	14	ITHACA COLLEGE	26	STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY AT MORRISVILLE
3	CAYUGA COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE	15	KEUKA COLLEGE	27	STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK COLLEGE OF ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE AND FORESTRY AT SYRACUSE
4	CAZENOVIA COLLEGE	16	LE MOYNE COLLEGE	28	STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER AT SYRACUSE
5	CENTRAL CITY BUSINESS INSTITUTE	17	NAZARETH COLLEGE OF ROCHESTER	29	SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY
6	COLGATE UNIVERSITY	18	NEW YORK CHIROPRACTIC COLLEGE	30	SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY, COLLEGE CENTER OF THE FINGER LAKES OF SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY
7	CORNELL UNIVERSITY	19	ONONDAGA COMMUNITY COLLEGE	31	TOMPKINS-CORTLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE
8	CORNING COMMUNITY COLLEGE	20	ROCHESTER BUSINESS INSTITUTE	32	UTICA SCHOOL OF COMMERCE-CANASTOTA
9	CROUSE HOSPITAL SCHOOL OF NURSING	21	SAINT JOHN FISHER COLLEGE	33	WELLS COLLEGE
10	ELMIRA BUSINESS INSTITUTE	22	SAINT JOSEPH'S HOSPITAL HEALTH CENTER SCHOOL OF NURSING-SYRACUSE		
11	ELMIRA COLLEGE	23	SIMMONS INSTITUTE OF FUNERAL SERVICE, INC.		
12	FINGER LAKES COMMUNITY COLLEGE	24	STATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE AT CORTLAND		



Regional Location Colleges & Universities

Town of Scipio Comprehensive Plan

MAP 1

50 Mile Buffer around
the Town of Scipio

Municipal

Town of Scipio

County Boundary

Cayuga County

Urban Areas

Natural Features

Water Body

Park or Forest

Transportation

Limited Access

Highway

Major Road

0 3.75 7.5 15 22.5 30 Miles



Data obtained from Cayuga County Planning Department and the New York State Education Department. This map was created for planning purposes only. The CNYRPDB does not guarantee the accuracy or completeness of this map. Please see text for full disclaimer. Map created: October 2009

Regional Context

Town of Scipio Comprehensive Plan

MAP 2

Slope

- Low (1% - 3%)
- Low to Moderate (4% - 6%)
- Moderate (7% - 12%)
- Moderate to High (13% - 20%)
- High (21% - 45%)

Towns

- County

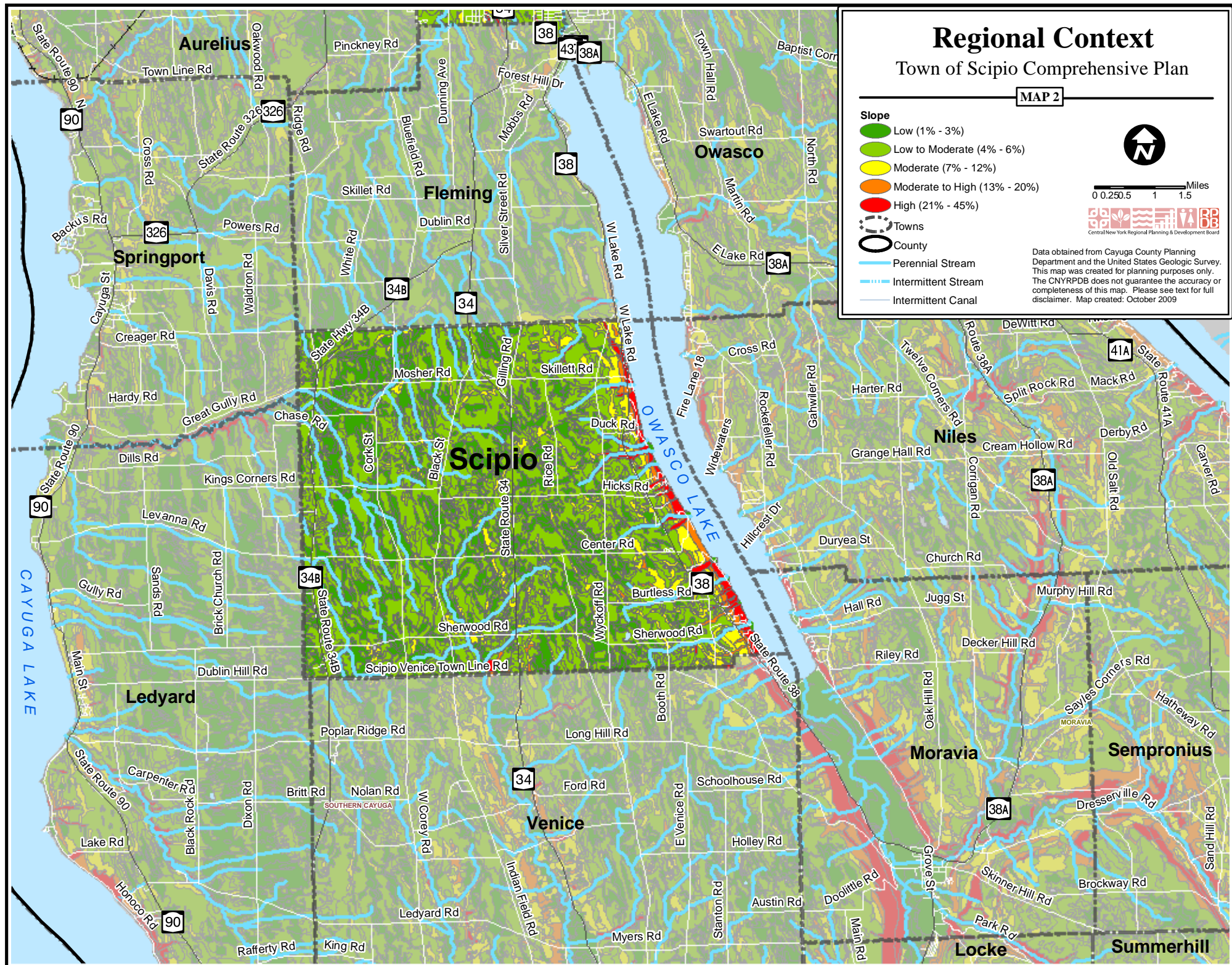
- Perennial Stream
- Intermittent Stream
- Intermittent Canal



0 0.250.5 1 1.5 Miles



Data obtained from Cayuga County Planning Department and the United States Geologic Survey. This map was created for planning purposes only. The CNYRPDB does not guarantee the accuracy or completeness of this map. Please see text for full disclaimer. Map created: October 2009



The quality of life in Scipio is enhanced by the availability of low-cost, and architecturally intact historical housing, good schools, nearby cultural attractions, parks and recreational opportunities, and low crime rates. Outdoor recreation opportunities abound in central Cayuga County with opportunities for hiking, biking, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, snowshoeing and enjoying the outdoors. In the Town of Scipio, direct access to Owasco Lake offers opportunities for water activities including boating, sailing, canoeing, kayaking, swimming, and sport fishing, although there is little public access available to these resources. (<http://www.cayuganet.org/profile.html#dem>)

History of the Community

Cultural History

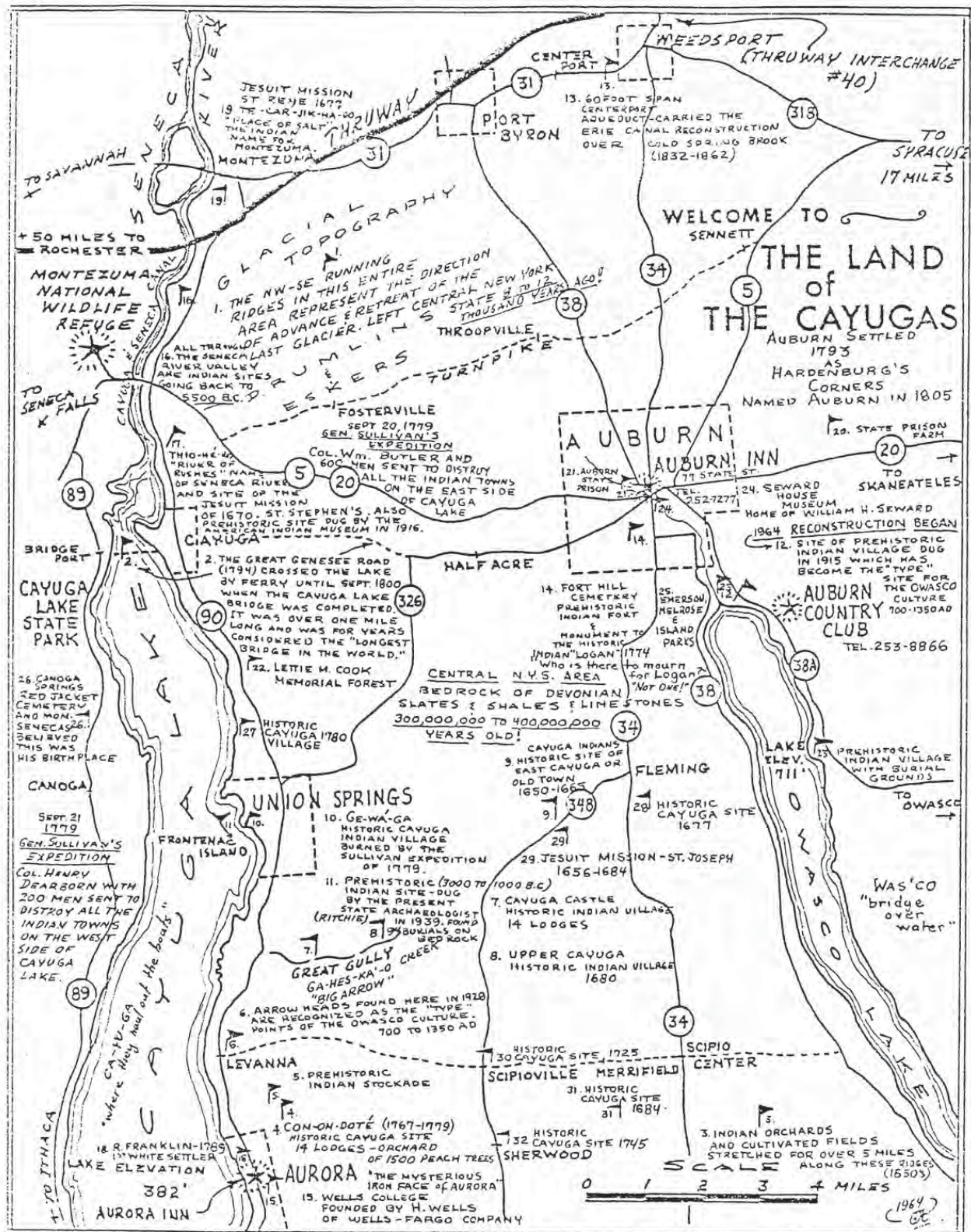
Prior to European colonization, lands in the Finger Lakes Region of Central New York were home to the Haudenosaunee (ho-den-o-shaw-nee) People of the Six Nations of the Iroquois. The Cayugas, one of the six nations, were known as the “People of the Great Swamp.” The Haudenosaunee raised crops and livestock in clearings, wetlands, and forested areas they maintained near regionally nomadic settlements.

During the Revolutionary War, both New York State and the Continental government offered land as a bounty for enlistment in the military forces. In 1779, George Washington launched an effort to clear the Iroquois people from their ancestral homes across New York State, and that year the Sullivan-Clinton Campaign employed over 5,000 troops, roughly one third of the Revolutionary Army in that effort. By Sullivan’s official report, the 1779 Campaign burned 40 Haudenosaunee towns and their agricultural fields including those of the settlement at Cayuga Castle just to the west of the Town of Scipio.⁸



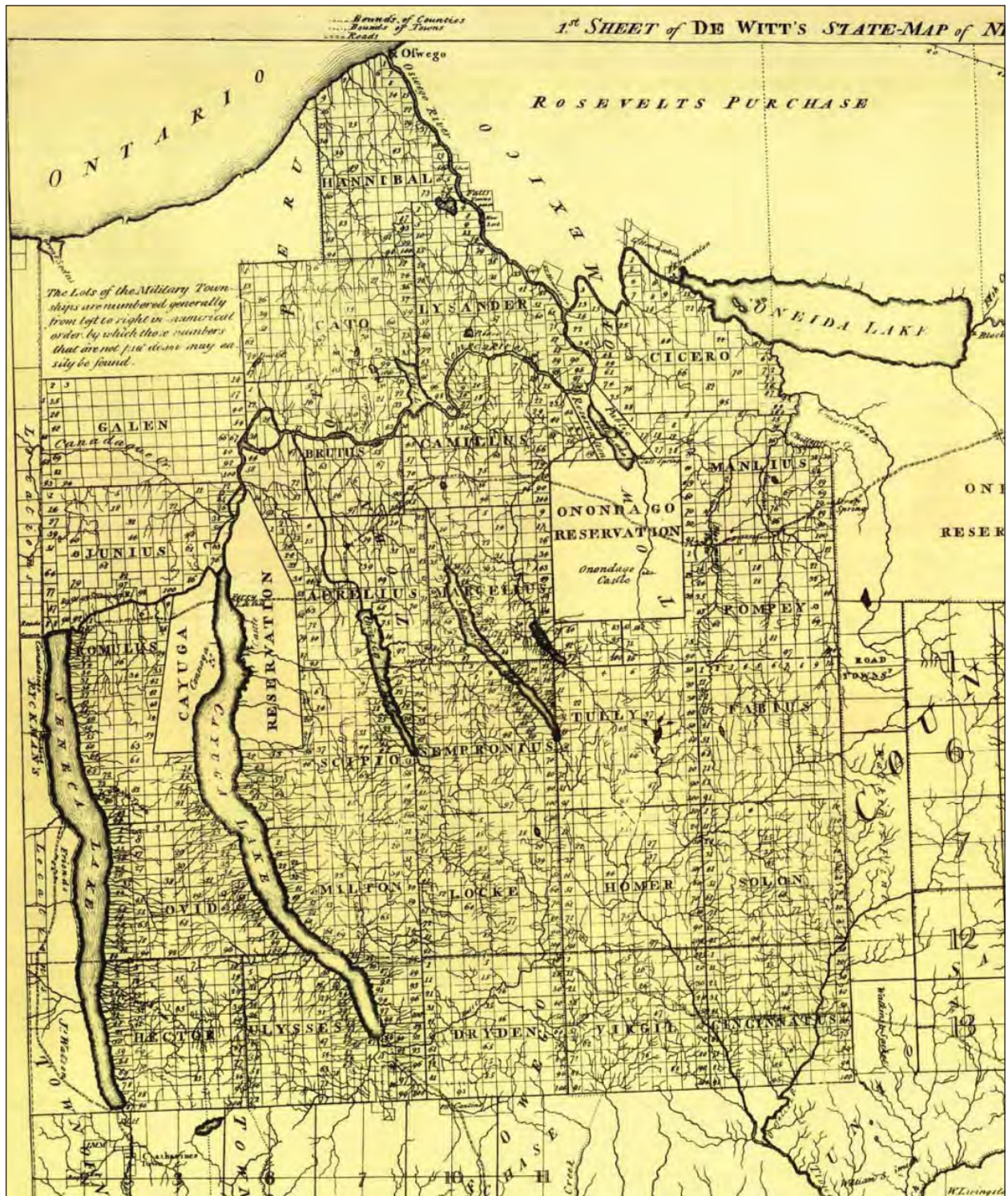
“Map of the Expedition of the army under General John Sullivan against the Indians of Western New York, in the Seneca and Cayuga lake regions, June 18th to Sept. 15, 1779. Manuscript.” (Source: <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com>)

8 Source: (<http://sullivanclinton.com/texts>)



"Land of the Cayugas" map created in 1964 showing locations of some Haudenosaunee villages, sites and orchards in the vicinity of the Town of Scipio prior to the 1779 Sullivan Campaign. (Source: <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com>)

On March 20, 1781, in an attempt to raise two military regiments, New York State passed legislation promising bounties of un-appropriated land equal to five times the grant of the federal government (500 acres) to an enlisting private fulfilling a three year enlistment. By July 1782, an area in central New York known as the Military Tract was set aside for this purpose. The Military Tract, located in the Finger Lakes area,



Map of the Military Tract of Central New York, 1793 (source: <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nycayuga/maps/1793/dewitt.jpg>).

contained 28 Townships, including two Native American reservations for the Cayugas and the Onondagas. In both 1795 and 1807, as the new American colonial government continued to pursue a westward push, the State of New York purchased the lands of the region from the Iroquois, although the state land purchases were never ratified by the U.S. Congress.⁹ Each of the subsections or Townships within the Military Tract was comprised of 60,000 acres, and the Townships were named for classical heroes as they were surveyed, mapped and numbered 1 through 26. The townships as originally surveyed were too large and geographically challenging to administer and were gradually divided into smaller towns. Maps of the early 1800s indicate a large reservation of land labeled Cayuga Reservation around the north end of Cayuga Lake and located immediately to the west of what would in 1796 become the western border of the Town of Scipio.



Detail of an 1825 map of Scipio and surrounding Towns by Vance showing the extent of the Town of Scipio across Owasco Lake to what is today the Town of Niles. (Source: <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com>)

The Town of Scipio, one of the earliest townships of the Military Tract, was formed March 5th, 1794 and named for a Roman General. It became Township number 12, and originally was contained within what was then Albany County; and included Sempronius (set off in 1799), part of Marcellus, Onondaga County (set

⁹ Source: (Iroquoia, Engelbrecht, William, 2003)

off in 1804), the towns of Ledyard, Venice, and a part of Springport which were set off in 1823.¹⁰ It once extended across Owasco Lake to what is presently the Town of Niles. Today, the eastern border of the Town is formed by the west shore of Owasco Lake.

At the turn of the nineteenth century, Scipio was largely virgin forest. Prior to cleared roadways, there were paths and blazed trails through the forested lands to Aurora at Cayuga Lake. Wildlife was abundant in Scipio forests; indeed the first town meeting, held in 1794, placed a bounty of \$5.00 (raised to \$12.50 in 1796) on every grown wolf taken. In the early years following settlement of the Town, and continuing into the first half of the nineteenth century, the major thoroughfare crossing southern Cayuga County in a north-south direction was along Route 34B, then known as Poplar Ridge Road. Travel east and west between Owasco and Cayuga Lake was by way of Sherwood Road. The Hamlet of Sherwood, settled by Judge Seth Sherwood of Vermont in 1794, developed at the intersection of these two early roads and was home to the first county seat, courts, and jail as early as 1804.¹¹ The History of Cayuga County 1789 – 1879 by Elliot G. Storke calls attention to the productive soil in the town which inevitably led to the growth of a wealth of farming enterprises in Scipio.

Scipio was the birthplace of portrait artist, Charles Loring Elliott in December of 1812 near Scipio Center. Elliott painted portraits for several years in the western part of New York State and later opened a studio in New York City. He is said to have painted more than 700 portraits of eminent men during the later half of the nineteenth century. Among his subjects were James E. Freeman; Matthew Vassar, in Vassar College; Louis Gaylord Clark; W. W. Coreoran; Fletcher Harper; Fenimore Cooper; Governors Seymour and Hunt, in the New York City Hall; and Erastus Coming, in the New York State Library, Albany. Several of Elliott's works were at the National Academy in 1868, including Don Quixote, Falstaff, Andrew Van Corlear, the Trumpeter, his own portrait, and The Head of Skaneateles Lake, said to be the only landscape that he painted.¹²

James Stuart, a British visitor to America, traveled across New York State by stage in September, 1828, on the well-known Genesee Road. In order to see more of the Finger Lakes Region than was possible on this central route, he took a side tour from Auburn to Ithaca which would have had him travelling through or very near the Town of Scipio. The following passages are from his journal:

*“There is a great deal of ground in the neighbourhood [of Aurora] devoted to orchards, at present in all their glory, loaded with fruit. The coachman drove so near the trees close to the road that we had as many apples as we chose to pull. We dined at a small hotel at Aurora on pork, which, as we have always hitherto found it in this country, was excellent. The hogs are allowed in this country to run out in the forests and orchards, where they subsist in great measure in the autumn on nuts, acorns, and fallen apples, and in some cases on fallen peaches. Before being killed they are put up for a short time on Indian corn. The flesh of the hogs fed in this way is firm and good. Our fellow-passengers consisted of a Pennsylvania farmer; an Ithaca storekeeper; and a female, with her son Ulysses. We passed many good farms, some of them recently brought into cultivation, on which the usual processes of housebuilding, and inclosing by strong wooden rails, were in progress.”*¹³

10 Source: 1789 History of Cayuga County, New York, by Elliot G. Storke, Syracuse, NY, pg.417.

11 Source: Sandie Gilliland, Town of Scipio Historian, 12/07/2008, and 1789 History of Cayuga County, New York, by Elliot G. Storke, Syracuse, NY.

12 Source: Edited Appletons Encyclopedia, Copyright © 2001 VirtualologyTM

13 From Three Years in North America, by James Stuart, (Edinburgh, 1833), Clayton Mau.



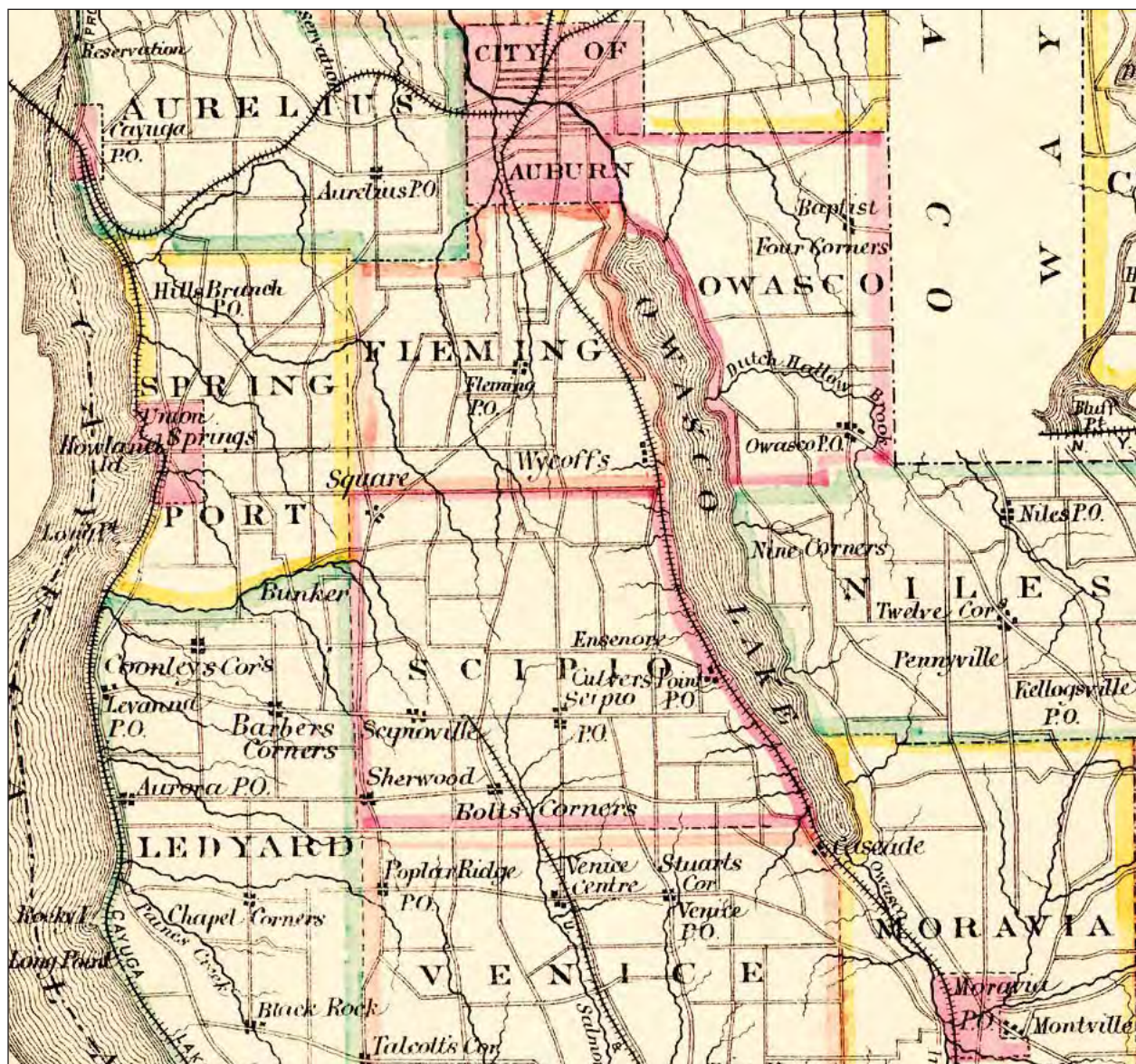
Above is a lithograph by J.S. Skinner of the 1850 Agricultural Fair at Auburn, NY showing a variety of livestock, visitors and buildings in an enclosed fairgrounds, looking like an early predecessor of the New York State Fair. (Source: <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com>). (Source: <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com>).

At right a "Comparative View of the Agricultural Condition of the County of Cayuga in 1850 and 1845" (Source: <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com>).

COMPARATIVE VIEW OF THE AGRICULTURE CONDITION of the County of Cayuga in 1850 and 1845.				
	1850	1845	Increase	Decrease
Improved Acres	298 633	295 651	2 982	
Unimproved acres	998 "			
Horses	12 503	13 932		1 429
Cows	18 113	19 715		1 602
Oxen	3 428	2 554		2 208
Other Cattle	19 905			
Sheep	122 446	175 148		52 702
Swine	28 769	43 546		14 777
Wheat Bushels of	468 730	652 896		184 166
Barley "	303 953	143 516	160 437	
Oats "	735 441	652 281	83 160	
Rye "	29 695	44 15	25 280	
Indian Corn	704 954	479 151	225 803	
Peas & Beans "	5691	60278		54 587
Buckwheat "	46 784	74 066		27 282
Potatoes	281 602	536 033		255 241
Hay tons of	72 590			
Butter lbs	1673375	1696764		23 449
Cheese "	217 413	394 001		176 588
Clover seed Bushels	2545			
Other grass seed	1678			
Flax lbs of	10761	139 126		128 365
Flaxseed Bush	1324			
Hops lbs of	1442			
Wool	367085	412 667		45 582
Maple Sugar	109 048			
Molasses Gallon	410			
Beeswax & Honey lbs	34678			
Domestic Fabrics \$	23 117	85546		62 429
Animals slaughtered	\$350 676			
Population	55489	49663	5826	

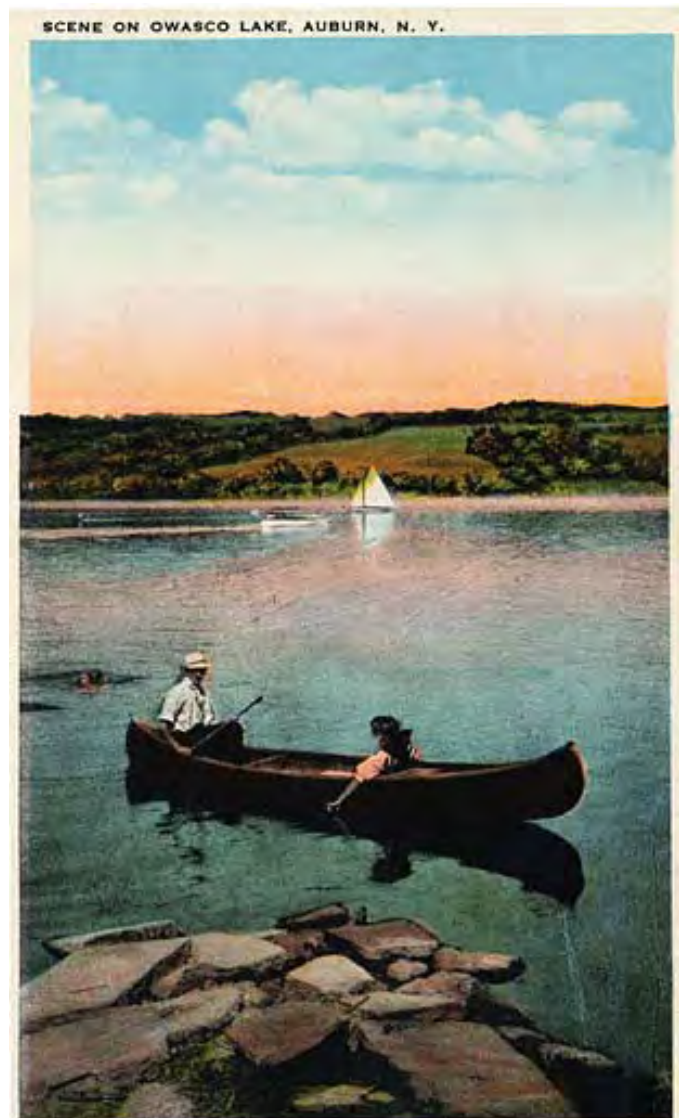
The New York Oswego & Midland Railroad, or the Short Line, as it was also known, was a rail line that travelled during the late nineteenth century by a more central route north and south through the county just to the east of Bolt's Corners and Scipio Summit or Merrifield in the Town of Scipio on its way between Auburn and Ithaca. The Southern Central Railroad along the western shore of Owasco Lake was in operation until nearly the middle of the twentieth century, and for a time it was possible through many connections to travel by steam train from the Town of Scipio to major metropolitan cities including Syracuse, Chicago, New York, and Boston.

During and following the Civil War years, at around the time of the introduction of the railroads across Cayuga County, Scipio became a center for social reform movements including abolitionism, the underground railroad, education and women's rights.



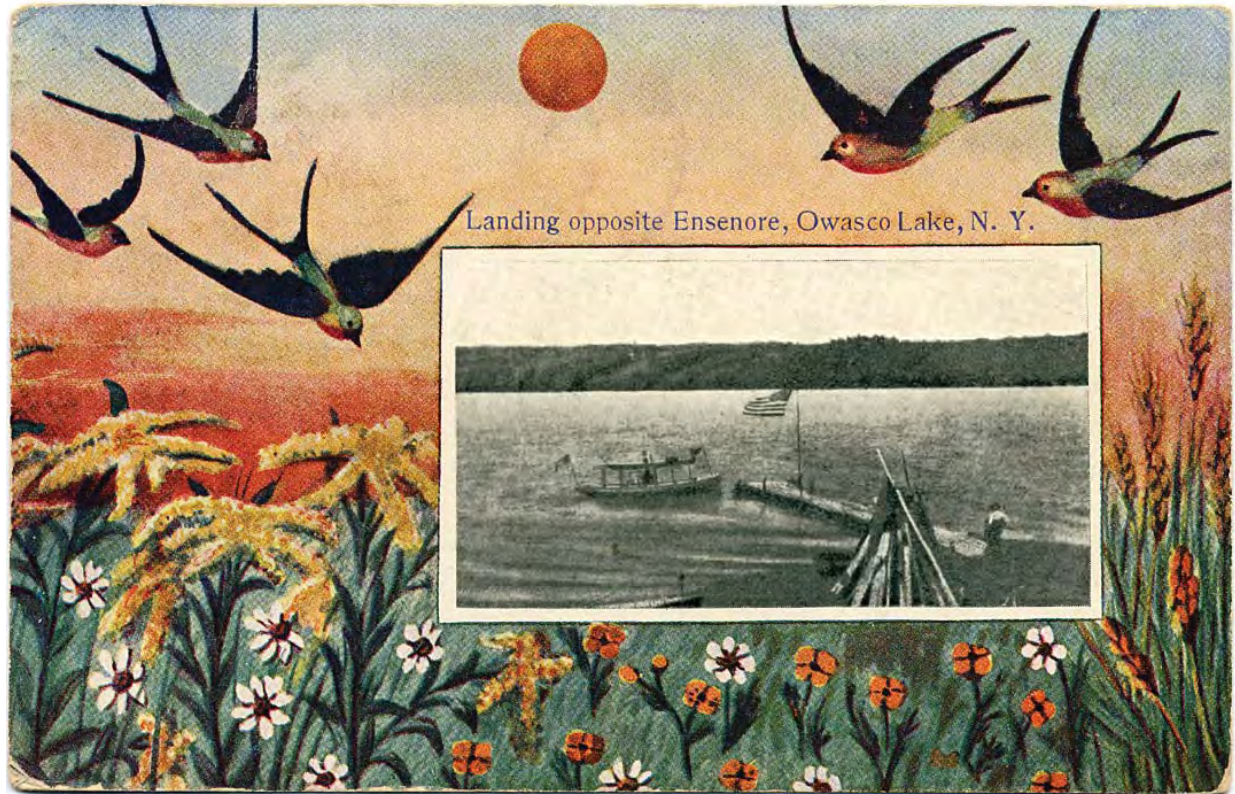
1879 map showing the Southern Central and New York Oswego & Midland Railroads in the Town of Scipio (Source: <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com>).

A predominant contingent of the Society of Friends, or Quaker faith, was catalyst to an unusually dedicated and effective community effort toward equal rights reforms in the young nation including equal access to education provided by the community at the Sherwood Select School, which was organized and operated entirely by women until its absorption into the public school system in 1926.¹⁴



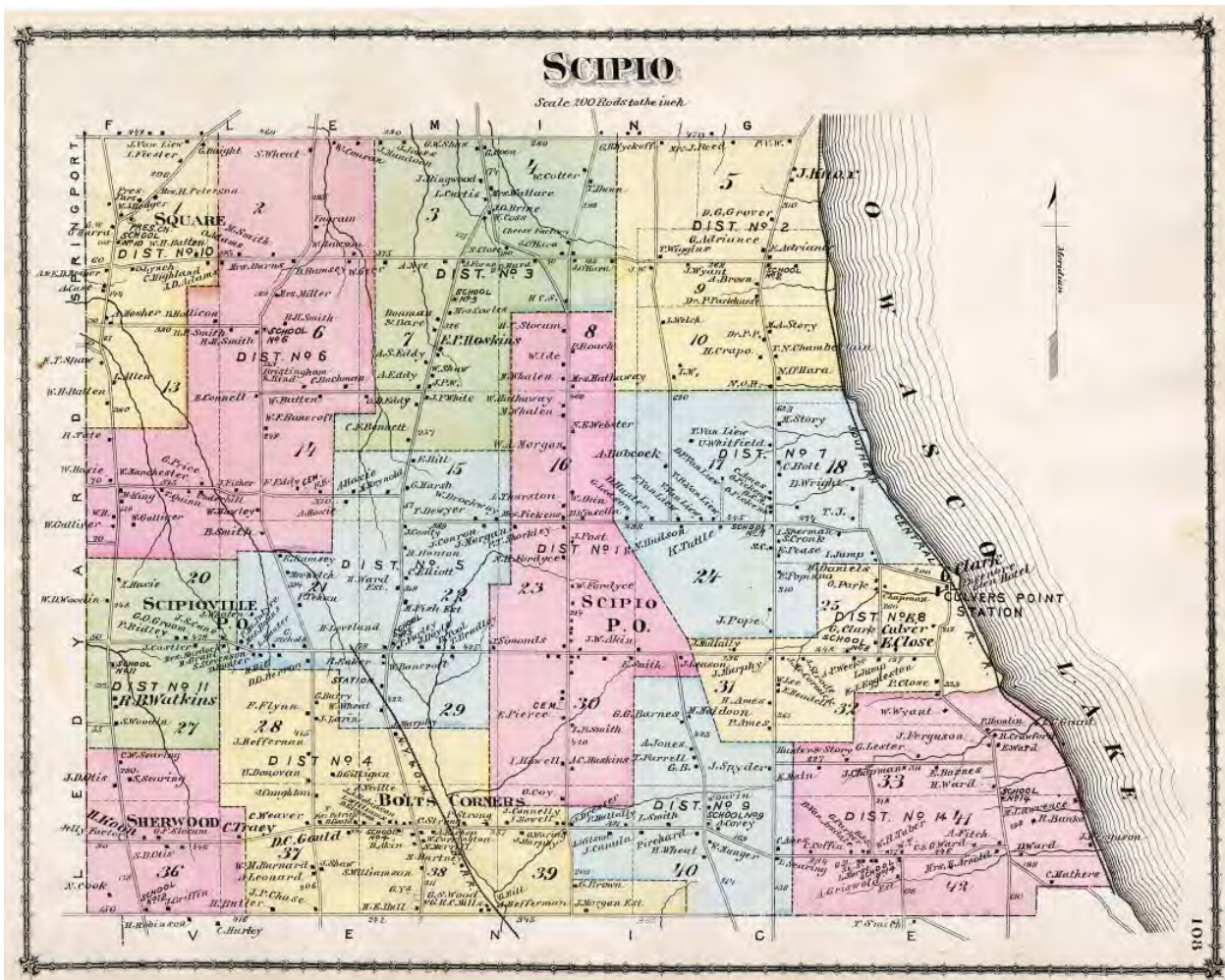
Above left, the Sherwood Select School, c.1904. The building was demolished in 1954. The site is now home to the Emily Howland Elementary School. At right, is a scene showing the boating on Owasco lake, date unknown (Source for both images: <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com>).

The Southern Central Railroad connected Auburn and Ithaca with local stops at Wyckoff Station just north of the Scipio Town line in Fleming and Culver's Point Station in Scipio. Culver's Point was the location of the Ensenore Glen Hotel where recreational visitors were hosted for the Town's beautiful lake shore for sailing races, swimming, and other popular summer activities. In 1878, a rowing contest was held between Cornell and Harvard University on Owasco Lake.¹⁵



Top image is a postcard from the Ensenore Glen Hotel, date unknown. Bottom image is of boating on Owaso lake, date unknown (Source for both: <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com>).

15 Source: Cornell Crew Supplement, September 1892, Volume XIII No.2, Ithaca NY



1875 map of the Town of Scipio (Source: <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com>).

Hamlets and Historic Settlements

As the Scipio population grew to 2,702 in 1829, so too did the need for local products and services. Community settlements and commercial centers of activity developed at Scipio Center, Scipioville, Sherwood, and Bolt's Corners. Smaller settlements developed at Waring's Corners, Merrifield (also known as Scipio Summit), and Wood's Mill which was located on Scipio-Venice Town Line Road between Route 34 and Black Street.

Scipio Center



Looking north west at the intersection of Route 34 and Center Road in the Hamlet of Scipio Center.

Scipio Center is situated on State Route 34 at the intersection of Center Road. According to Elliot Storke, Dr. Ezra Strong started the first store in this location in 1808 which later became a mercantile business and continuing in existence until sometime after 1875. Other businesses once in operation at Scipio Center included a cider-mill, two wagon shops, two blacksmith shops, and a hotel. Today, the hamlet of Scipio Center consists of a cluster of several residences, Scipio Community Church, River of Life Church (former St. Patrick Catholic Church), a Post Office, Masonic Lodge, a hair salon, an auto refinishing shop, a tavern, and a monument company.

There are several nineteenth and early twentieth century buildings still standing in the hamlet. Some are in very good physical condition, and some, although their historic character remains intact, are in dire need of repairs and restoration. Scipio Center, characterized by a mix of stately historic homes, barns, and small twentieth century buildings and surrounded by open farm fields, is the most geographically extensive hamlet in the Town of Scipio. It is the only hamlet in the Town with two churches and contiguous development extending approximately 1000 feet in four directions from it's center. State Route 34, a busy connector road between Auburn and Ithaca, runs north and south through the hamlet. Center Road runs east and west through the Hamlet connecting State Route 38 above the shores of Owasco Lake with State Route 34B and the Hamlet of Scipioville and Levanna to the west.



The southwest corner of State Route 34 and Center Road in the Hamlet of Scipio Center.



Two buildings at the southeast corner of State Route 34 and Center Road in the Hamlet of Scipio Center.



Looking north along State Route 34 at the southern edge of the Hamlet of Scipio Center.

Scipioville

Scipioville (below) is in the western part of the township, at the intersection of State Rt. 34B and Center and Levanna Road. The community was first settled by Henry Watkins in 1790-91, and was called Watkin's Corners. Later it became known as Fitch's Corners, Mechanicsburg, and finally Scipioville in 1836 with the establishment of the first post office. A leather currier and tannery was started in Scipioville in 1797. In 1806, Paine Fitch built a tavern, and there were two general stores, one on the southwest corner and one on the northeast corner. A distillery, tin shop, creamery, fertilizer storage, meat shop, buggy shop, and a grist, saw and planing mill were also located there. Webster's hotel was located on the southeast corner of Scipioville, and a building to the east of the hotel once served as a community dance hall.



Aerial image of the Hamlet of Scipioville (Source: www.bing.com/maps).

Today, Scipioville consists of a small cluster of residences mainly to the east of Route 34B including Scipioville Presbyterian Church (moved in 1961 from east of the four corners on Center Road to a new location on Route 34B within the hamlet). Farm buildings, surrounding farm fields, hedgerows, and a scattering of small wood lots and ponds also characterize the hamlet.



Looking southwest in the Hamlet of Scpioville, May 2010.



Scpioville Presbyterian Church was moved in 1961 from east of the four corners on Center Road to this location on Route 34B in the Hamlet of Scpioville.

Sherwood

The Hamlet of Sherwood, settled by Judge Seth Sherwood from Vermont in 1794-1795, is located to the south of Scipioville at the intersection of State Rt. 34B and Sherwood Road. A short time prior to the hamlet's settlement by Judge Sherwood, a family named White settled in the area, clearing about four acres of land about a half mile southeast of the corners.



Aerial image of the Hamlet of Sherwood (Source: www.bing.com/maps).

In 1796, Judge Sherwood built the first hotel on land just to the north on the northeast corner (the site of the present antique store, historically called The Block). A later owner, Henry Fisher built a harness shop in back of the hotel. For a brief time, in 1804 -1805, the Hamlet of Sherwood served as the County seat. In 1808, Joseph Barnes and Melvin Brown opened a store on the southeast corner dealing in potash. The upper floors of this building housed a shoe and boot store. Slocum Howland later used the barn to the east of this building to assemble the cast iron plows invented by Jethro Wood. During the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Sherwood was a lively community and a center for abolitionism, equal rights, and the Underground Railroad movements with Quaker settlers actively assisting freedom seekers.



Looking east at Cleavland's Antiques and the Howland Stone Store Museum at the center of the Hamlet of Sherwood, May 2010.

Today, the historic Hamlet features a mix of small and grand, deteriorated and restored, historic residential and commercial buildings. The Hamlet features many mature trees, old farm buildings and is surrounded by open farm fields. An early racially integrated cemetery, a reminder of the settlement's important historic role in the abolitionist movement, is located in Sherwood.

Although the Hamlet has been dubbed the “Sherwood Equal Rights Historic District” by the State of New York for its rich history of social activism, and has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places, Sherwood today struggles to maintain many of its aging and largely neglected historic structures. Some of the historically important buildings that remain in the hamlet are literally crumbling from years of neglected maintenance, or abandonment added to the effects of age and weather. Others remain in poor to fair condition and await much needed investments of labor and money. Still, the compact rural Hamlet remains a striking reminder and record in both physical form and documented history, of the community's, the State's, and the Nation's early settlement, development, and participation in key historical movements.

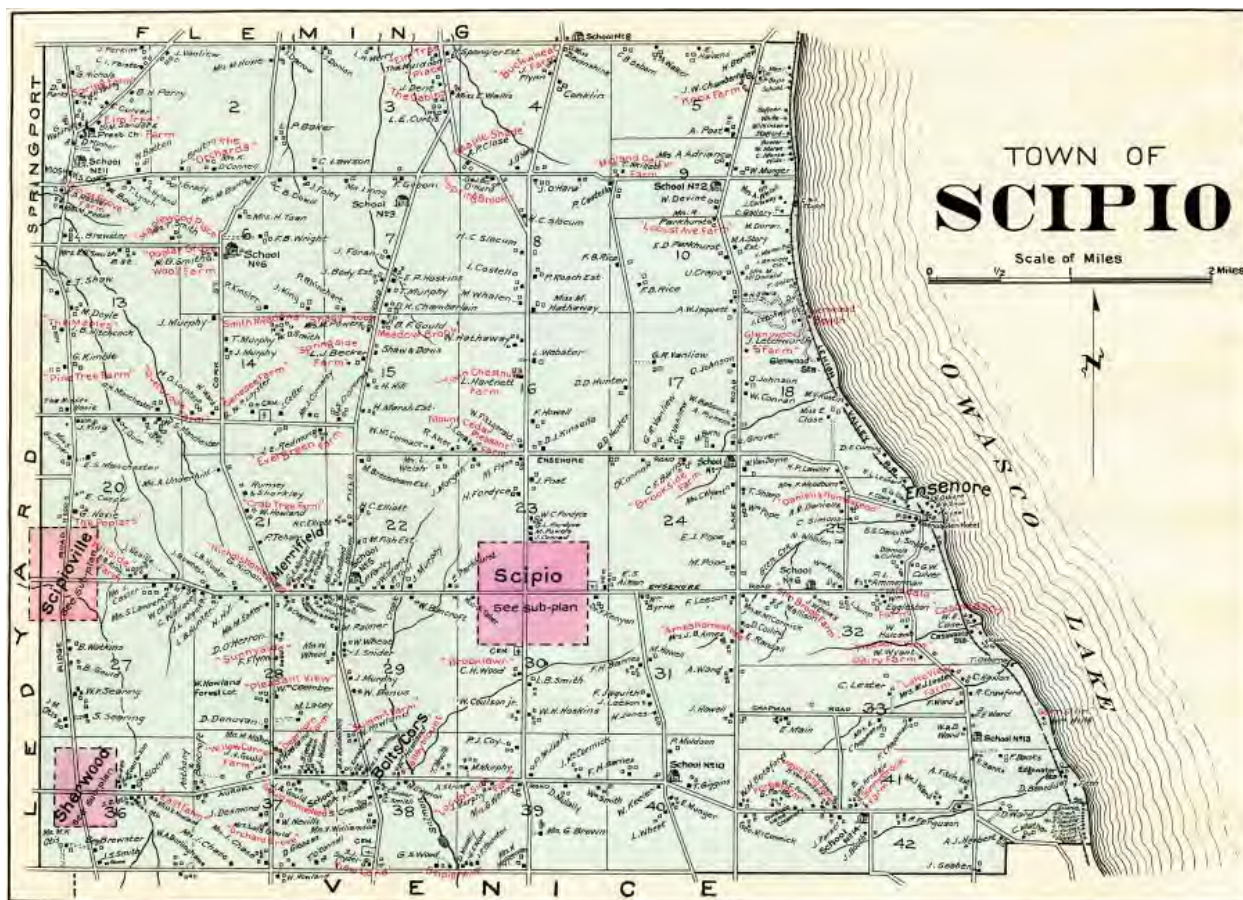
Bolt's Corners

The intersection of Sherwood Road, Black Street and Indian Field Road is the site of one of the earliest settlements in the Town of Scipio, Bolt's Corners. Its first settlers, Elisha Durkee and Gilbert Tracy arrived in 1788, each clearing some land and building log cabins there. James Wilcox acquired land and built a hotel in 1789, and in the nineteenth century, Bolt's Corners was an active community center. As the settlement grew, businesses at Bolt's Corners included an ashery, saw mill, grist mill, and brickyard. A significant building constructed at Bolt's Corners, a church built in 1821, had a steeple over 100 feet high, and in 1828 the congregation had a membership of over 300 people. A short line, the New York & Oswego Midland Railroad “Milk Train” passed through Scipio just east of Bolt's Corners during the late nineteenth century contributing to the hamlet's status as a commercial center where the local community came to purchase every day supplies. In the late nineteenth century, Bolt's Corners was the prime social and business center in the area, outside of the settlement of Aurora to the west on the shore of Cayuga Lake.



Looking west at Valley Mound Farm on the northeast corner of Bolt's Corners in the Town of Scipio, May 2010.

Today, Bolt's Corners is a rural four corners featuring a cluster of agricultural buildings and facilities on both the southwest and northeast corners. Open land and vast expanses of farm fields surround the crossroads, and the trace of the former New York & Oswego Midland Railroad remains alongside Salmon Creek to the east of the crossroads. One old homestead remains on the northwest corner of the former hamlet.



1904 map of the Town of Scipio showing the location of "Merrifield" between Scipio Center and Scipioville (Source: <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com>).

Waring's Corners

The intersection of Sherwood Road and State Route 34 is known as Waring's Corners. The southwest corner, now marked with a State Historic Marker, was once the site of Waring Place, a tavern built in 1806 and later used as both a Masonic Lodge and school house. Meetings of the Scipio Morning Star Lodge 169 F. & A.M. were held at Waring Place from 1811 to 1814, and again from 1822 to 1842. The intersection, today, features a farmstead on the northeast corner and a residence on the southwest corner. A small tributary to Salmon Creek cuts diagonally through the area just to the north of the crossroads which are surrounded by vast and open cultivated fields. Scattered hedgerows remain between some of the open fields and some mixed vegetation exists along parts of the stream corridor.



Scipio Summit (Merrifield)

Scipio Summit, or Merrifield as it is also known, is located just south of the intersection of Center Road and Black Street. It was the designated location about equally distant from settlements at Scipio Center, Scipioville, and Sherwood. 1872, Charles Morgan started a business in this location which included the sale of lumber, and grain. Mr. Morgan was also the agent for the railroad and the telegraph company. Of the two stores once located in Merrifield, one was in the basement of a residence, and the other at the railroad station. A post-office was established in Merrifield in 1876. Scipio Summit, or Merrifield, served as the northern terminus of the Utica, Ithaca and Elmira Railroad between 1873 and 1876. The line was extended from Merrifield to Auburn in 1889 as the Ithaca, Auburn & Western Line, but was abandoned in just three years later in 1891.

Today, the quiet, rural-agrarian settlement of Scipio Summit seems more aptly-named Merrifield. With just a few residences, barns and farm fields, and the railroad long gone, the scenic location is more of a sleepy wayside than a centrally-designated place in the Town.



Historic and Cultural Resources



The “scenically unique” rural-agrarian landscape of the Finger lakes Region. This view is looking northeast across a farm field from Ensenore Road in the Town of Scipio, 2007.

The Rural-Agrarian Landscape

As described by O. D. Von Engeln in his 1988 book *The Finger Lakes Region, Its Origin and Environment*, the Town of Scipio is located in a region that is “scenically unique.” Von Engeln’s description of the geographical environment of the Finger Lakes Region with “its general expression wide farm acres and level upland pastures [amid] long, narrow, roughly parallel lakes...with high, almost cliff-steep shores.[and] narrow, deep gorges” is an accurate description of the landscape surrounding the Town of Scipio. Located roughly halfway between NYS Designated Scenic Routes 20 and 90 to the north and south respectively, Scipio is at the heart of the picturesque region of the eastern Finger Lakes.

NYS Routes 38, 34, and 34B originate in the City of Auburn and cross the Town of Scipio to the south continuing on to Ithaca and Dryden in Tompkins County. There are scenic vistas of farmland gently sloping toward Owasco Lake along Route 38 in the Town of Scipio. Route 34 bisects the Town between the Hamlet of Fleming just north of Scipio and heading south to the Hamlet of Venice. Route 34B is a scenic two lane rural-agrarian road featuring picturesque farm fields with historic barns and buildings along its course.

Several roads in the Town of Scipio feature scenic views of historic buildings and vast acres of farmland, some of them are spectacular from the heights above the lakes to the east and west. Some of the most impressive publicly accessible views in the Town are the eastward view from the heights of Sherwood Road of farmland sloping to Owasco Lake, and the southwestward view over Scipio farmland from Center Road and State Route 34 near the Hamlet of Scipio Center. The historic Hamlet of Sherwood with it's compact cluster of diverse nineteenth century homesteads and commercial buildings surrounded by farm fields on State Route 34B is an architecturally unique surviving example of traditional American rural hamlet form (see Map 3). There are beautiful northeastern views of Owasco Lake from Duck Road and Wyckoff Road in the northern section of the Town.



View from Duck Road in the northern part of the Town of Scipio, 2007.



Farmland along Sherwood Road looking east toward the slope above Owasco Lake, 2010.

