

2.1 Regional Setting

The East Kill watershed is located in the northern Catskill Mountain region of southeast New York State (Fig 2.2.1). The East Kill flows from its headwaters upstream of Lake Capra (upstream of Colgate Lake) to its confluence with the Schoharie Creek in the town of Jewett. The East Kill roughly follows route 23C, paralleling the Schoharie Creek until their convergence. Nearly the entire East Kill watershed is located within the town of Jewett, with small parts entering into Windham, Ashland, and the northern tip of Lexington (Fig 2.1.2). The East Kill begins in East Jewett and ends at Jewett Center. This watershed region is closely surrounded by the steep mountains of the Catskills, specifically the Blackheads.



Figure 2.1.1 East Kill watershed

The entire East Kill watershed lies within the Catskill Park. The Catskill and Adirondack Forest Preserves were established by the NYS Assembly in 1885. An 1894 amendment to the New York State Constitution (now Article 14) directs: "the lands of the State now owned or hereafter acquired, constituting the forest preserve as now fixed by law, shall be forever kept as wild forest lands. They shall not be leased, sold or exchanged, or be taken by any corporation, public or private, nor shall the timber thereon be sold, removed or destroyed (NYS DEC, 2006)."



State Land historical marker

In 1904, the Catskill Park was designated, establishing a boundary or 'blue line' around the Forest Preserve and private land as well. Over the years the Catskill Park grew, and now comprises roughly 700,000 acres, about half of which is public Forest Preserve. The Catskill and Adirondack Parks are nationally unique because they are a checkerboard of public and private land; a grand experiment in how

nature and human society can coexist in a landscape (Catskill Center₁, 2006).

A dominant characteristic of the East Kill watershed's regional setting is its location within the 2,000 square-mile New York City Watershed. The NYC Watershed is the largest unfiltered water supply in the U.S., providing 1.4 billion gallons of clean drinking water each day to over nine million residents in New York City and some smaller municipalities (nearly half the population of New York State) (Catskill Center₂, 2006).



Figure 2.1.2 East Kill watershed towns

The East Kill is a tributary of the Schoharie Creek, which eventually empties into the Schoharie Reservoir where part of the water is transfer through the Shandaken portal to the Ashokan Reservoir. The Ashokan Reservoir supplies approximately 10% of NYC's drinking water. The NYC Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) operates this drinking water supply under a Filtration Avoidance Determination (FAD) issued by the Environmental Protection Agency and the New York State Department of Health. Central to the maintenance of the FAD are a series of partnership programs between NYC and the upstate communities, as well as a set of rules and regulations administered by the DEP. Due to its location within the NYC Watershed, the residents and landowners in the East Kill watershed are subject to the DEP rules and regulations written to protect this watershed.

References

Catskill Center₁, 2006. About the Catskill Region. Available on web: www.catskillcenter.org/region.html (Accessed 12/20/06).

Catskill Center₂, 2006. New York City Watershed. Available on web: http://www.catskillcenter.org/atlas/nycwatershed/nycw_1watershedbasins.htm (Accessed 12/20/06).

NYC DEC, 2006. Catskill Forest Preserve. Available on web: www.dec.state.ny.us/website/dlf/publands/cats/index.html (Accessed 12/20/06).