

SAUGERTIES LIGHTHOUSE

Overview

A landmark beacon on the Hudson River, the Saugerties Lighthouse is a venerable aid to navigation, constructed in 1869 at the mouth of the Esopus Creek. The Saugerties Lighthouse Conservancy maintains the Lighthouse and adjacent lands for the enjoyment of the public.

The restored, red-brick Lighthouse offers overnight Bed & Breakfast accommodations, public tours and special events. Furnished as it may have looked in the early 20th century, the Lighthouse contains a small museum, gift shop, parlor, kitchen, keepers' quarters, and two guest bedrooms. The operational light-tower offers a panoramic view of the Hudson River Valley and Catskill Mountains.

The Lighthouse can be reached via the half-mile nature trail at the end of Lighthouse Drive in the village of Saugerties, New York. A small dock is available on a limited basis to boaters.

Specifications

State: New York

Location: Hudson River at Esopus Creek,
42°4'19.5" N 73°55'47"W

Nearest Town: Saugerties, NY

County: Ulster

United States Coast Guard District: One

Station Established: 1836

Existing Historic Tower: 1869, attached to keeper's quarters

Previous Tower: 1836, integral to keeper's quarters

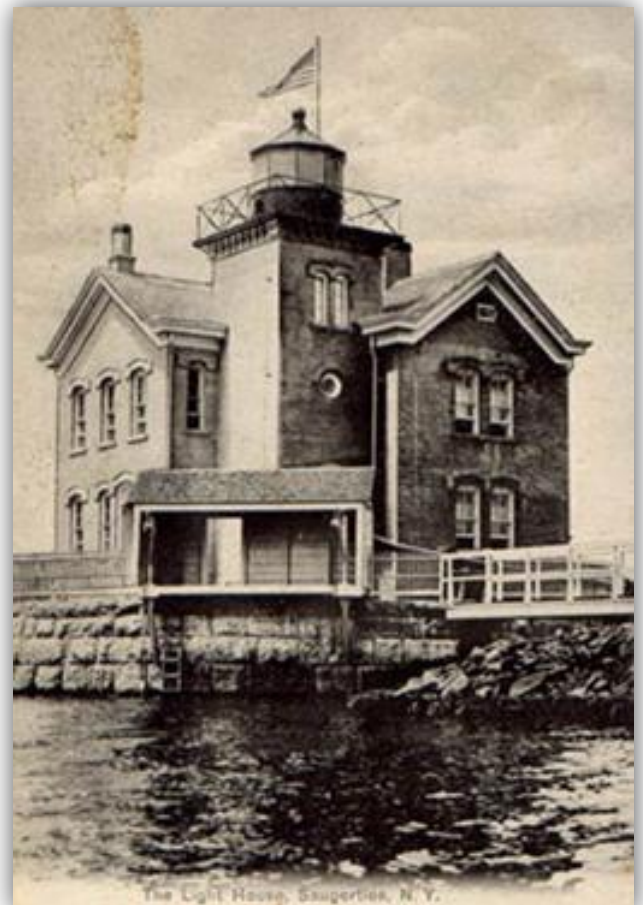
Automated and destaffed: 1954, eventually replaced by a light atop a pipe structure

Reactivated: 1990, currently operational

Architecture: Square tower attached to Italianate red-brick dwelling, circular limestone block crib

Other Structures: Rainwater cistern, Wooden boathouse

Tower Height: 46 feet



Markings/Patterns: Natural with black lantern

Original Optic: Sixth Order "Beehive" Fresnel

Present Optic: Solar-powered LED,
installed 1990

Light characteristic: Occulting white light
every 4 seconds (4 seconds white, 1 second
dark); visible for 5 nautical miles

Height of Focal Plane: 42 feet

Fog Signal Type: Bell (inactive), installed
1910

Current Use: Museum/Bed & Breakfast

Owner/Manager: Saugerties Lighthouse
Conservancy with USCG access to optic

National Register Status: Listed 1978;
Reference #79001642

Public Access: Exterior access year-round
from sunrise to sunset; Interior scheduled
tours on summer weekends or by appointment



Source: Saugerties Lighthouse Conservancy

URL: <http://www.saugertieslighthouse.com/history/overview-specifications/>

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Restoration

In 1954, the light was automated and the living quarters were vacated. The unoccupied building deteriorated rapidly. Eventually, the Coast Guard relocated the light from the tower to a post on the outer island and planned to demolish the building. A campaign mounted by local residents halted the demolition. In 1979, the lighthouse was placed on the National Register of Historic Places.



In 1985, the Saugerties Lighthouse Conservancy formed as a non-profit organization for the purpose of rescuing the dilapidated lighthouse. The Coast Guard relinquished jurisdiction and the property reverted to New York State. In 1986, the state legislature passed a bill selling the Lighthouse to the Conservancy for \$1. Efforts to stabilize the building began shortly thereafter while local architect Alex Wade completed plans for the reconstruction. A wooden barge was built to haul construction materials including tons of masonry materials. An elaborate scaffolding and shoring system was created to hold up the sagging tower, floors and roof so that new brick walls could be constructed. More than 10,000 new bricks were required to replace ones that had crumbled. The entire masonry structure, including the massive stone base, has been reconstructed. The lantern that houses the

light was removed from the building and completely restored to its original condition. Local craftsman completed the building with woodwork, plastering, and painting. After 4 years of extensive structural renovations, the tower light was restored to operation on August 4, 1990. The Coast Guard installed a fresnel lens with solar-powered light. The cypress picket fence around the Lighthouse was replaced. On it are the names of the many Keepers who lived and worked here and hundreds of donors who contributed towards the magnificent restoration.



Source: Saugerties Lighthouse Conservancy

URL: <http://www.saugertieslighthouse.com/history/restoration/>

DESIGNATED HABITAT: ESOPUS ESTUARY

HABITAT DESCRIPTION:

Esopus Estuary is located just east of the Village of Saugerties in the Town of Saugerties, Ulster County and in the Town of Red Hook, Dutchess County (7.5' Quadrangle: Saugerties, N.Y.). Esopus Estuary is an approximate 700 acre area that includes: the lower portion of Esopus Creek; fresh-tidal wetlands and littoral zone areas; and a deep-water section of the Hudson River. The tidal portion of Esopus Creek is heavily developed on both banks. Development includes residences, marinas, and industries.



FISH AND WILDLIFE HABITAT:

Esopus Creek is one of the primary freshwater tributaries of the Hudson River. Esopus Creek, while minimal in accessible mileage to Hudson River fish, is extremely important to the fisheries resource. The creek, from its mouth to the first impassable barrier (1.3 miles), serves as a spawning ground, nursery area, and feeding area for striped bass, white perch, shad, alewife, blueback herring, smelt, and many resident freshwater species including largemouth and smallmouth bass. The littoral zone of the Hudson River adjacent to the creek mouth is also an important spawning ground for shad, and serve as spawning, nursery, and feeding areas for striped bass, white perch, herring, smelt, and most of the resident freshwater species. The adjoining deep-water area of the Hudson serves as post-spawning and wintering habitat for shortnose sturgeon (E).



Fishing pressure is heavy on Esopus Creek during the entire season. Several black bass (smallmouth and largemouth) fishing tournaments are held here each summer, with participation from residents throughout the Hudson Valley. There is also important recreational fishing for striped bass in the area. Tidal marshes and shallows in the estuary also provide resting and feeding areas for migrating waterfowl, including black ducks and mallard. This results in significant hunting pressure from residents of the lower Hudson Valley region. The

extensive and varied fresh-tidal wetland at the mouth of Esopus Creek is important to many species of waterfowl throughout the year. Osprey (T) congregate at the mouth of the creek during spring migration (mid-April through May) where the shallows offer prime foraging conditions.

Several rare plant species have also been reported in this area.

Source: Town of Red Hook Local Waterfront Revitalization Program

URL:

<http://docs.dos.ny.gov/communitieswaterfronts/LWRP/Town%20of%20Red%20Hook%201995.pdf>

SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT

Located along the Hudson River at the confluence of the Esopus Creek, the land surrounding the trail to the Lighthouse consists of 17 acres of wooded grounds and tidal wetland flats. The area is supported by a sandbar comprised of dredged sediments from the channelization projects of 1888 and 1889, at which point the Esopus Creek was deepened to make way for ship access to the Saugerties Harbor.



The resulting peninsula now offers a scenic half-mile trail to the Lighthouse and its surrounding public decks, as well as a forked trail to a beachside picnic area on the Hudson. Family-friendly and easily accessible by car or foot, the trail serves as an enjoyable hike for kids and a preferred spot for bird watching, boat spotting and admiring the changes of the seasons. Traversed directly, the trail to the

Lighthouse is only about a 10-minute walk across earthen stretches, sandy flats and wooden boardwalks. It's important to note that the peninsula is subject to tidal flooding, making portions of the trail impassable at certain times of day. Please always check the tide table before your visit so you're prepared for what lies ahead. You'll also find a tide table posted in the kiosk located at the entrance to the trail. Waterproof, seasonal footwear is strongly recommended.



Home to nearly 100 species of flora, the trail's unique plant life includes trees, shrubs, vines, herbs, sedges, grasses and ferns. Over the years, the area has seen an increase in exotic invasive species such as tall *Phragmites* reeds and the Eurasian water chestnut, colloquially known as devil's heads or cow heads.

Growing in presence along eastern waterways, the water chestnut blooms restrict light and cut off oxygen to the surrounding waters, making it difficult for native plants and fish to share the same space. The area also hosts the Purple Loosestrife perennial weed, one of the most invasive non-native species in North American wetlands. While offering a beautiful splash of color to the landscape, the shrub is prolific in its spread and tends to push out the opportunity for native plants to flourish. This shrub is thought to have been

accidentally introduced by the shipping industry, as often rocky soil dredged from European wetlands was carried in ships to help maintain balance during long, rough voyages across the ocean. Upon arrival, the seed-rich soil was released into the coastal waters.

The peninsula is also an important habitat for breeding and migrating birdlife. Keep an eye out for nesting bald eagles, great blue herons, gulls, geese, ducks and hundreds more.

