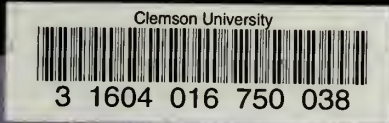


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National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Thomas Cole National Historic Site

General Management Plan / Environmental Assessment
2004





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Thomas Cole National Historic Site

General Management Plan and Environmental Assessment 2004

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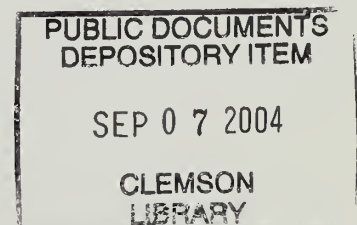
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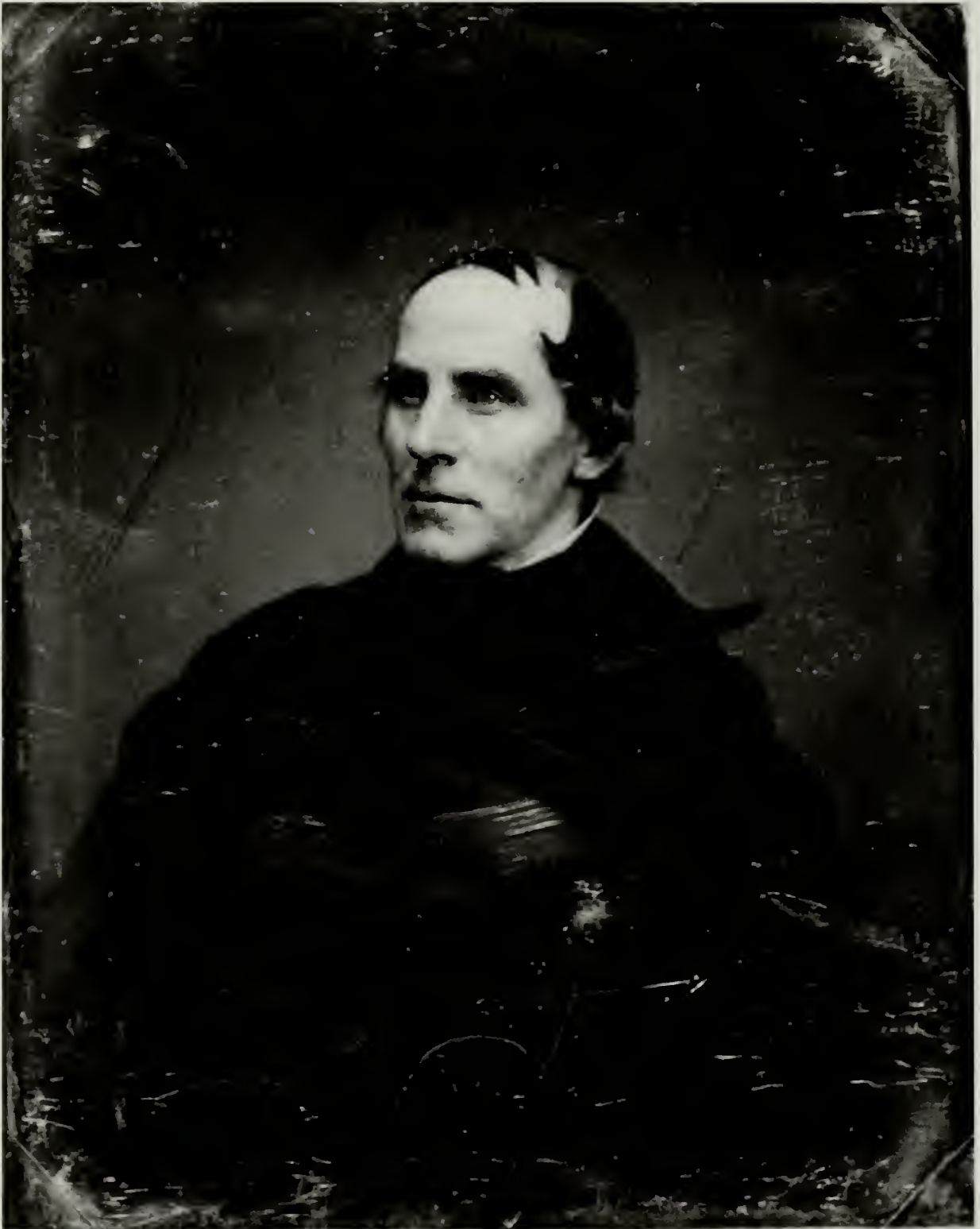
Thomas Cole National Historic Site

General Management Plan and Environmental Assessment

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Thomas Cole, Daguerreotype, c.1844-46. Library of Congress, Photographs and Prints Division [LC-USZ62-53759]

Executive Summary

In 1999, the U.S. Congress designated the home of Thomas Cole, at 218 Spring Street, Catskill, New York, a National Historic Site (NHS). The Thomas Cole NHS is not a unit managed by the National Park Service (NPS), but is an “affiliated area” of the national park system managed by the Greene County Historical Society and a designated board of governors. Public Law 106-146, which established the Thomas Cole National Historic Site in 1999, calls for the NPS to prepare a general management plan (GMP) for the site. The purpose of this document is to develop plans for the preservation and interpretation of the site and define the role and responsibility of the NPS with regard to the site.

*“Let me transport
you to those wild
blue mountains
That rear their
summits near the
Hudson’s wave....”*
Thomas Cole, “The Wild”

The Thomas Cole National Historic Site General Management Plan (GMP) sets forth management alternatives that direct future developments at this NHS. There are three alternatives: (1) Continuation of Current Management Practices (National Park Service policy requires that GMPs consider the alternative of making no changes to the current situation); (2) Thomas Cole and Cedar Grove; (3) Thomas Cole’s Art and the Regional Landscape.

Alternative One: Continuation of Current Management Practices would make no significant changes at the site, operations, or the visitor experience. *Alternative Two:* Thomas Cole and Cedar Grove would rehabilitate Thomas Cole’s Storehouse Studio and open it to the public and develop a Hudson River Art Trail brochure and map. This alternative would focus on Cole’s life at Cedar Grove.

Alternative Three: Thomas Cole’s Art and the Regional Landscape would have the primary goal of interpreting the life and work of artist Thomas Cole and his connection to painting sites in the Hudson Valley and Catskill Mountains. This would include interpreting Cole’s connection to other artists of the Hudson River School, of which he is considered the founder. In addition to the projects included in Alternative Two, Alternative Three would reconstruct Cole’s New

Studio and use it as an art gallery and meeting space and develop a trail of wayside exhibits in the Hudson River Valley and Catskill Mountains, which inspired many of the works of Cole and his contemporaries. Alternative Three is the recommended alternative, preferred by the Board of Governors of the Thomas Cole NHS.

The Thomas Cole NHS would tell the story of Thomas Cole’s art through the buildings where he lived and worked. Cole resided (1836–1848), raised a family, and died in the main house looking out toward his beloved Catskills. The main house, Storehouse Studio, and a new building resembling the demolished New Studio would offer an excellent opportunity to interpret Cole’s creative journey. The site’s interpretive themes would also include Cole’s influence on the Hudson River School of landscape painting and on the nature conservation movement in America.

The visitor would be given an introduction to Thomas Cole and his life at Cedar Grove in Cole’s Storehouse Studio, which would serve as an orientation facility for visitors. The section of the Storehouse Studio that served as Cole’s studio would be used to interpret his art, while the other space, once used for storage, would provide visitor services and a bookshop. A new building resembling the New Studio would be

constructed because the landscape representing Cole's era at Cedar Grove would be incomplete without it. Since paintings are important for interpreting Cole and the Hudson River School, it is desirable to create high-quality gallery space to exhibit works of art. The reconstructed New Studio would display art by Thomas Cole and Hudson River School artists. The grounds of the Thomas Cole NHS would be restored to their appearance in Cole's time. The landscape would be interpreted to explain life at Cedar Grove during Cole's era and how the site has evolved since then.

An important aspect of the Thomas Cole NHS mission is to interpret the surrounding landscape that inspired Cole and other painters of the Hudson River School. Within a 15-mile radius of Cole's house in Catskill, NY, significant landscapes painted by Cole and other Hudson River artists, including Frederic Church and Sanford Gifford, survive intact. A Hudson River School Art Trail would provide an unparalleled opportunity to study American art in its geographic context.

The Thomas Cole NHS is intended to connect visitors with other sites in the area related to Thomas Cole and the Hudson River School. The Thomas Cole NHS would encourage visitors to visit nearby Olana, the home of Cole's pupil Frederic Church, and undertake partnership programs with Olana. The Thomas Cole NHS, which lies within the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area, will work in partnership

with the national heritage area because that entity has adopted "Nature and Culture" as one of its three major interpretive themes.

The exhibition of contemporary art related to Thomas Cole and the Hudson River School and public education programs would be subsidiary priorities to be undertaken as resources permit. Contemporary art programs could include exhibits, an artist-in-residence program, children and adult art education, and an elderhostel. The programs could include teaching painting as well as art history. Exhibiting contemporary art from the Hudson Valley could be undertaken to a greater extent if the gallery space in the New Studio is completed.

This plan includes an environmental assessment of possible impacts related to the alternatives. This assessment finds that the potential impacts are not significant, although additional visitors will contribute to the local economy.

The GMP estimates the costs of each management alternative. The Thomas Cole NHS would compete for funding annually for existing authorized NPS programs with recurring appropriations such as Line Item Construction, Repair/Rehab, Cyclic, and Cultural Cyclic. Any federal assistance will be subject to NPS priorities and available funds. The ability of the Thomas Cole NHS to attract other sources of funding will speed completion of the projects outlined in this GMP.

I. Context of the Plan

Purpose of the General Management Plan

This document serves two purposes: (1) it is a draft general management plan (GMP) for the Thomas Cole National Historic Site, and (2) it is an environmental assessment (EA) for the GMP that assesses the probable impacts of the alternative actions proposed in the GMP.

The Thomas Cole NHS GMP is more detailed than the recommended GMP guidelines of the National Park Service in Director's Order-2 (DO-2). Due to the small size of the site and the fact that this NPS affiliated area is involved in specific projects on-site, its board wanted to use the GMP process to develop specific programmatic actions, not simply broad prescription statements.

A general management plan (GMP) is prepared and periodically updated for each unit of the National Park Service. In designating the home of Thomas Cole, at 218 Spring Street, Catskill, New York, a National Historic Site (NHS), Congress stipulated that this site complete a GMP. The

Thomas Cole NHS is not a unit managed by the National Park Service, but is an "affiliated area" of the national park system managed by the Greene County Historical Society and a designated board of governors.

The purpose of this document is to develop plans for the preservation and interpretation of the site and define the role and responsibility of the NPS with regard to the site. The GMP defines the basic philosophy of the site's management and provides broad guidance to those who make the decisions that affect the site's resources and its visitors. A GMP sets the direction for resource protection and visitor use in consultation with the public. The Thomas Cole NHS and the NPS will adopt the GMP findings and use them to guide the management of the site and their relationship to each other for a period of 10 to 20 years.

To develop a GMP, the board of the Thomas Cole NHS and the NPS must clearly define and understand the site's purpose, significance, and

"The painter Thomas Cole was the first to reside both summers and winters in the Catskills, and in so doing aroused the curiosity of the public."

Hans Huth,
Nature and the American



Cedar Grove, by Frederic Edwin Church, October, 1848. Church's sketch, showing main house, privy, and New Studio (l to r) and fence along Spring Street, provides a guide for future restoration at the Thomas Cole NHS. Courtesy of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site.



Thomas Cole's House, by Charles Herbert Moore, 1868. Courtesy of Edith Cole Silberstein.

goals. In order to focus attention and limited funding on the resources that matter most, the GMP must present an understanding of the site's purpose and the reason Congress designated it an affiliated area of the national park system. Goals describe the ideals that NPS and the Thomas Cole NHS strive to follow and the general conditions that must be met for the site to achieve its mission. Taken together, the purpose, significance, and goals form the foundation for the future course of the site.

The impacts of each alternative are described in the environmental assessment (EA), which is prepared to satisfy the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended. The draft GMP/EA describes the management alternatives, after which the national historic site, in consultation with the NPS and the public, chooses the alternative to be implemented. If no significant impacts are identified, based upon the environment assess-

ment, a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) will be prepared in accordance with NEPA requirements.

Development and Legislative History of the Thomas Cole National Historic Site

Thomas Cole's home at Cedar Grove was designated a national historic landmark (NHL) in recognition of its national significance in 1965. The house was sold by Cole's great-granddaughter Edith Cole Silberstein in 1979 to the Catskill Center for Conservation and Development. Mrs. Silberstein had held an auction in 1964 to sell artworks and artifacts from her house that were connected to Thomas Cole. The Catskill Center intended only to serve as a caretaker for the historic house until an entity stepped forward to maintain the property.

In 1981, the Catskill Center sold Cedar Grove to the Thomas Cole Foundation, which had been created to manage the historic site. The Catskill

Center conveyed Cedar Grove with a conservation easement that required preservation of the house's historic fabric. The conservation easement, which is still in effect for the current owners, the Greene County Historical Society, prohibits demolition of any of the existing structures and requires that the site be maintained to an acceptable level of repair and that alterations be consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

The Foundation opened it to the public on limited occasions and never had the house furnished. It lacked the resources to maintain the property and interpret Cole's life there and, in the 1990s, sought to transfer the property to the NPS.

The National Park Service first evaluated Cedar Grove for inclusion in the national park system in 1980, when it prepared the *Thomas Cole House Reconnaissance Study*. The reconnaissance study concluded that, although the site was nationally significant, it could not recommend "full scale creation of a national historic site" until several management options involving little or no NPS involvement had been explored. The reconnaissance study examined the alternatives of NPS ownership and management of Cedar Grove, affiliated area status for the site, and no NPS involvement. The NPS did not take action on Cedar Grove for a decade.

In 1991, the *Thomas Cole Suitability/Feasibility Study* determined that the home of Thomas Cole was nationally significant, suitable, and feasible for administration as a unit of the national park system. The management entity that had taken control of the Thomas Cole site was actively seeking NPS involvement. For its part, the NPS took an expanded view of designating the Thomas Cole home a national historic site, recognizing the importance of the cultural landscape at both Cedar Grove and in the surrounding Hudson River Valley and Catskill Mountains. In 1993, the National Park System Advisory Board affirmed its support for establishing a Thomas Cole National Historic Site. In 1998, the Greene County Historical So-

ciety was identified as a capable custodian for owning and managing the historic site and acquired the property.

In 1999, Public Law 106-146, the Thomas Cole National Historic Site Act, established the Thomas Cole National Historic Site in Catskill, NY as an affiliated area of the national park system (See Appendix I: Enabling Legislation). The Thomas Cole NHS is one of 24 affiliated areas, which are owned and operated by local public nonprofit organizations while receiving support from and the advantages of inclusion under the National Park Service. The legislation authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to enter into cooperative agreements with the Greene County Historical Society to preserve the home of Thomas Cole and other structures at the historic site and to assist with research, educational, and interpretive programs of Cedar Grove and associated landscapes. The act also authorizes the Secretary to enter into further cooperative agreements to facilitate public understanding of Hudson River artists through art exhibits, artist-in-residence programs, and other activities. This may include cooperation with the neighboring Olana State Historic Site, the home of Frederic Church, Cole's student and noted landscape painter in his own right. The Thomas Cole NHS may receive funds appropriated by Congress to protect, preserve, maintain, and operate this historic site. Public Law 106-146 also directs the Secretary of the Interior to prepare a general management plan (GMP) for the historic site.

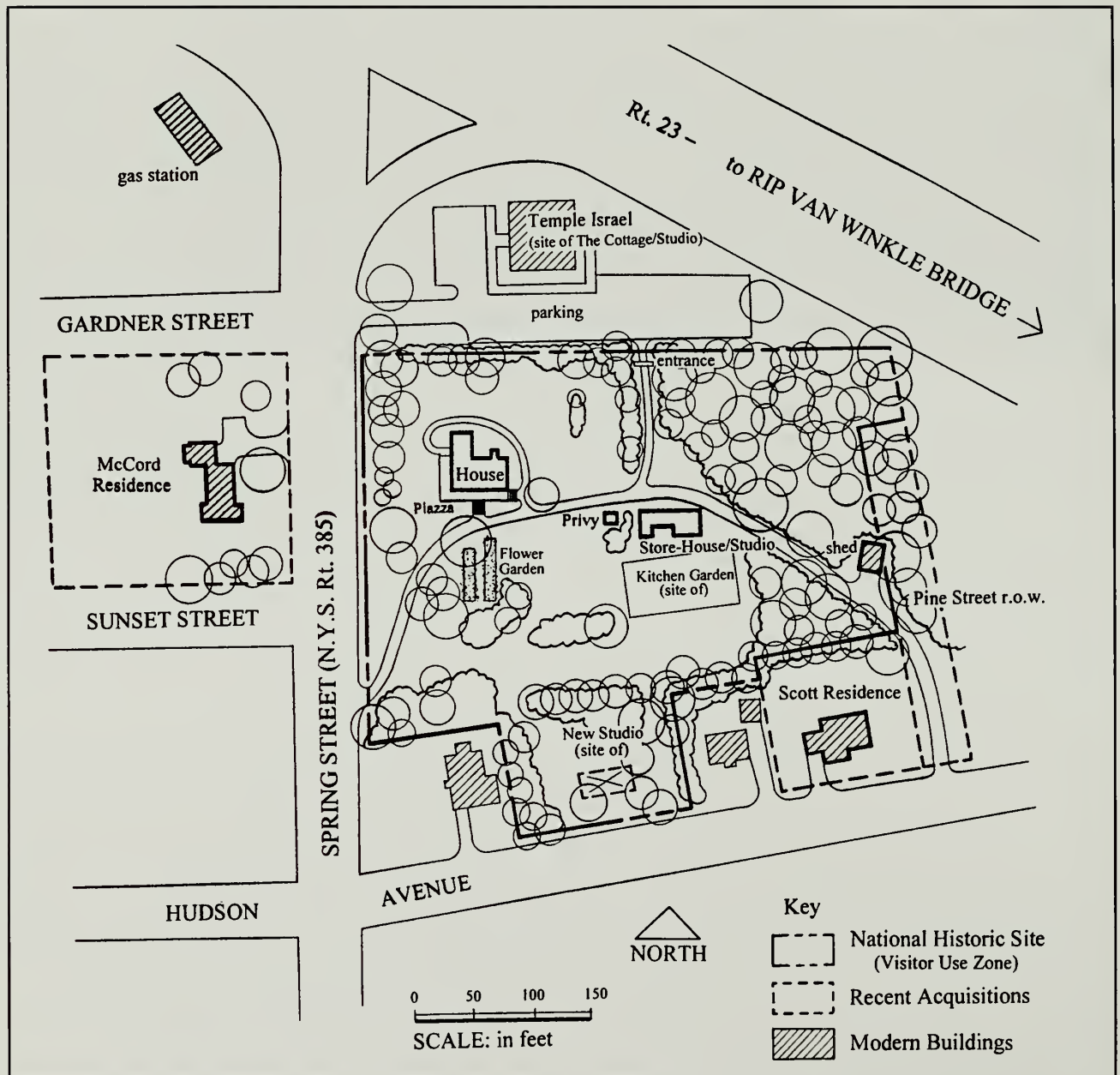
The Thomas Cole NHS opened to the public in 2001. Over 4,000 people visited the site the first year. The gala opening took place on July 14, 2001, honoring Thomas Cole's 200th birthday. Over 1,500 people attended the gala opening. On October 12-14, 2002 the Thomas Cole NHS, together with Olana and Columbia—Greene County Community College, sponsored a symposium on "Thomas Cole: 200 Years of the American Vision." Making presentations were nationally recognized scholars including David Schuyler, Franklin and Marshall College; Kenneth John Myers, Freer Gallery of Art,

Smithsonian Institution; Alan Wallach, College of William and Mary; Ellwood C. Parry III, University of Arizona; Franklin Kelley, National Gallery of Art; and Gerald Carr, independent scholar.

traced Cole's two trips to Europe; paintings by recently deceased Hudson Valley artist Ralph Wickiser; and paintings of the Hudson Valley by children's book illustrator Thomas Locker.

In 2002, the Thomas Cole NHS drew another 4,000 visitors and sponsored various exhibitions and special events. The Thomas Cole NHS seeks to schedule special exhibitions each season. The 2003 exhibitions included "Bon Voyage: Thomas Cole in Europe," an exhibition of prints that

The Thomas Cole NHS maintains a website that provides updated information on special events, directions, and background information on Thomas Cole and Cedar Grove. The website address is www.thomascole.org.



Thomas Cole National Historic Site, General Plan, 2003. Prepared by R.M. Toole, L.A.

Site Description

The Thomas Cole National Historic Site is located in Catskill, NY, a community of 11,989 on the western bank of the Hudson River, 32 miles south of Albany and 143 miles north of New York City. The site is approximately one-half mile from the village center and just a few hundred feet from the access road to the Rip Van Winkle Bridge, a major Hudson River crossing that provides access to the Catskill Park and Forest Preserve from the east.

The Thomas Cole National Historic Site is located on a 3.4-acre parcel at 218 Spring Street, in Catskill, NY. Known as Cedar Grove, the Thomas Cole site includes three historic structures—the main house, the Storehouse Studio, and a privy. The New Studio, which Cole designed and built on the southern edge of the property in 1846 and used until his death in 1848, was demolished in 1973. Except for the disappearance of that building, the site appears very much the way it did in 1848, when Cole died and his student Frederic Church sketched the estate.

The grounds of the historic site are maintained with grassy lawns, trees bordering each side of the parcel, and other scattered plantings. In 2002, two small beds of flowers were planted to resemble plantings from a painting done of the main house in the 1860s. A path leads under a bower onto the site from the Temple Israel parking lot. It connects to the main house and the Storehouse Studio.

A modern-day garage screened by trees stands at the rear of the site. The Greene County Historical Society, owner of Cedar Grove, also owns the abutting Scott House, 36 Hudson Avenue, and the McCord House, 107 Spring Street. The Thomas Cole NHS is interested in using the Scott House as the living quarters for the executive director or a caretaker or possibly for office and meeting space functions. The McCord House is currently used as a residence for caretakers. The

entire real estate holdings, including the Scott and McCord Houses, total approximately 5.5 acres.

The Thomas Cole NHS is surrounded by a neighborhood of well-maintained, modest single-family homes dating mainly from the 1920s through the 1950s. Commercial structures stand at the nearby crossroads of Routes 23 and 385, but they are screened from the main house by mature plantings. The closest abutter on the north is Temple Israel, a synagogue built in 1977 on a parcel that once belonged to the Cedar Grove estate. The one-story structure is attractively landscaped and has a parking lot that visitors to the Cole NHS use for parking. The Thomas Cole NHS has an informal agreement for its visitors to use the parking lot. The temple has the right to give a one-month notice terminating the parking agreement.

The house at Cedar Grove is a two-story brick structure built in 1815. The only addition has been a three-story north wing built around 1870. A one-story porch runs the length of the south and west facades, and a two-tiered porch covers the eastern half of the north facade. There is also a ground floor that can be entered at grade through a door under the south porch, and an attic.

The interior of the house is organized symmetrically around a central hall. On the first floor, the original house has a west parlor, east parlor, library/office, and pantry. On the second floor, the house has four bedrooms, including a nursery. The recently restored ground floor has a kitchen, pantry, wine cellar, and other storage spaces. The rooms on the first floor have high ceilings and windows. The west-facing, second-floor bedroom, where the artist died, looks out on the Catskill Mountains.

The central hall, west parlor, and west bedroom are furnished with period furniture from the Greene County Historical Society collection. There are a number of artifacts that belonged to

Thomas Cole and his family. The east parlor, east bedroom, and north bedroom have interpretive exhibits and displays of paintings by Hudson River artists, including changing exhibits of contemporary artists.

Since acquiring Cedar Grove in 1998, the Greene County Historical Society has spent close to one million dollars in restoring the property, primarily the main house. This work has included preparing interpretative panels. Funding sources have included the Beecher Trust, the State of New York, and Benjamin Moore Paints, which paid for painting the interior and exterior of the main house. The Thomas Cole NHS has received an additional \$250,000 from the Athens Generating Plant settlement (in order to receive a permit, the Athens Generating Plant has provided mitigation funds to various entities in the area) to be used primarily for restoring the Storehouse Studio. The Thomas Cole NHS has also received \$222,000 in federal funding—\$200,000 from the Save America's Treasures program is being used to complete the restoration of the Storehouse Studio, and \$22,000 from U.S. Department of Transportation funds is being used to improve access to the site. The Thomas Cole NHS is seeking additional federal funding for future budget years.

The Thomas Cole NHS also owns the burial plot of Thomas Cole and his family. It is located one-half mile away at the Thompson Street Cemetery.

Visitor Use at Thomas Cole NHS

In 2001, the first year of operation for the Thomas Cole NHS, approximately 4,000 visitors came to the historic house. In 2002, approximately 4,000 again came to visit Cedar Grove. Thomas Cole's Cedar Grove has been open 10:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. on Friday and Saturday from early May until the end of October. It is open from 1:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M. on Sundays. Cedar Grove also is open on Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, and Columbus Day. Special group visits by reservation are offered throughout the year and are eligible for special admission rates.

The admission fee is \$5. The grounds are open at no charge daily from 8:00 A.M. until sunset. Docents offer a house tour and an introduction to the life of Thomas Cole lasting approximately a half hour. No more than 15 persons make up a single group. Exhibitions of artwork thematically related to the Hudson River School are presented during the season. Special receptions are held at exhibit openings.

Thomas Cole and Cedar Grove

Thomas Cole (1801–1848) burst upon the American art scene in 1825, when he sold his first dramatic landscape paintings in New York City to well-known artists Asher B. Durand, Colonel John Trumbull, and William Dunlap. The paintings that so impressed these worthies were scenes depicting the Hudson River Valley and the Catskill Mountains, such as *Kaaterskill Falls* and *Lake with Dead Trees*. That year Cole had traveled up the Hudson River to explore and paint the Catskill Mountains. He stopped at the village of Catskill, the Hudson River port of disembarkation for the Catskill Mountains, and visited the recently built Catskill Mountain House.

Cole's paintings helped popularize travel in this area. The Erie Canal had just opened and Americans were starting to travel for pleasure in their country. Thomas Cole's paintings helped Americans see their country in a fresh way. Cole's dramatic landscapes so pleased art patrons in New York that he painted many more in the ensuing years. James Fenimore Cooper admired Cole's work and commissioned him to paint scenes described in his novel *The Last of the Mohicans*.

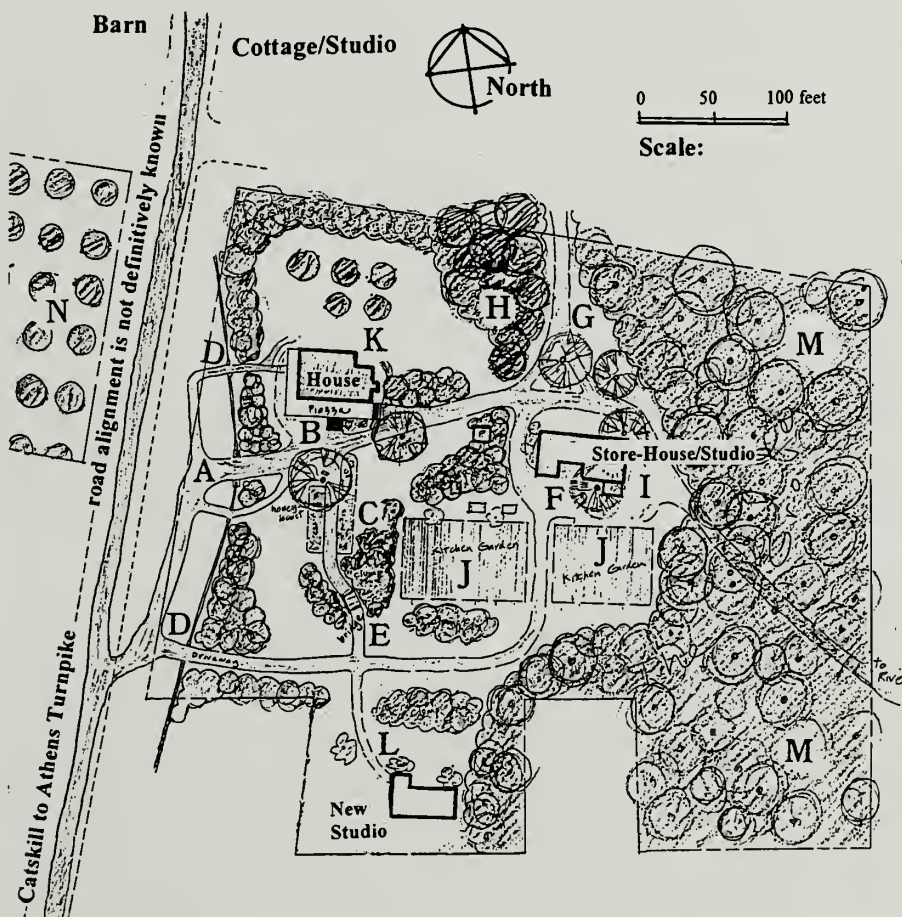
New York City became Cole's base of operation. He maintained a studio and spent the winter months in the city. His parents lived there with him. Cole joined New York's growing circle of writers and painters, befriending Cooper, Durand, and poet-editor William Cullen Bryant. He helped establish the National Academy of Design with artists Samuel F. B. Morse and Henry Inman.

After traveling in Europe between 1829 and 1832, Cole revisited the Catskills in the spring and fall of 1833. The following year, he rented studio and living space at the Cedar Grove home of John ("Uncle Sandy") Alexander Thomson in the village of Catskill. The estate, situated on the west bank of the Hudson River, afforded panoramic views of the Catskill Mountains. Cole returned to Cedar Grove the next two summers and fell in love with Thomson's niece Maria Bartow (1813–1884). In November of 1836, Cole married her at Cedar Grove and made the estate his primary residence for the rest of his life. The Coles had four children—Theodore, Mary, Emily, and Thomas II. Also living in the household were "Uncle Sandy" (until his death in 1846), and Maria's

three unmarried sisters, Emily, Harriet, and Frances, as well as household help. Since Catskill was a day-trip by steamboat away from New York City, he frequently traveled between the two places. In New York, he met with patrons, artists, and other cultural leaders and maintained a studio. Cole spent many winters in New York, but on several occasions he stayed in Catskill over the winter when the Hudson River froze. This included the winter of 1848, when Cole died at Cedar Grove.

Cole was deeply attached to Cedar Grove, which he considered a respite from the hurly-burly of New York City. When leaving at the end of the 1834 summer season, two years before he mar-

Period Plan (1848) showing today's historic site. Prepared by R.M. Toole, Landscape Architect (2003).



Period Plan (1848)

Thomas Cole National Historic Site
Cedar Grove
Catskill, New York

The Greene County Historical Society

- A Entrance Piers
- B Driveway and Kitchen Yard
- C Flower Garden
- D Roadside Wall/Picket Fence
- E Path to the New Studio
- F Work Yard
- G Lane to Cottage/Studio
- H Grove of Cedars
- I Carriage Yard
- J Kitchen Garden
- K Grounds north of House
- L Grounds of New Studio
- M Woodlot ("The Grove")
- N Orchard

ried Maria Bartow, Cole penned the following hymn of praise:

*O Cedar Grove! when'er I think to part
From thine all peaceful shades my aching heart
Is like to his who leaves some blessed shore
A weeping exile ne'er to see it more.¹*

Thomas Cole painted many of his most famous paintings in Catskill. These included Catskill Mountain landscapes and his allegorical series *The Course of Empire* (1833–36), *Departure and Return* (1837), *Past and Present* (1838), *The Voyage of Life* (1839–40), and *The Cross and the World* (1848). Although Cole regarded his allegorical works most highly, he continued to paint dramatic wilderness views because they were popular with the public.

Cole worked on some paintings in the main house. Before he married Maria Bartow, Cole had rented space at Cedar Grove for living and painting during the summer months. He used the now-demolished “Cottage” outbuilding for a studio for three summers before his marriage (1834–36) and for three years after, until Mr. Thomson built a storehouse that Cole used as a studio between 1839 and 1846. Cole had planned to use the storehouse, referred to as the Storehouse Studio, for a short time, but he ended up using it for eight years. In 1846, Cole constructed a purpose-built studio, referred to as the New Studio. He used it for the 14 months before he died, in 1848.

Cole never gained great riches from his painting and led a modest life at Cedar Grove. Artist Jasper Cropsey wrote how Cedar Grove did not exude “luxurie and wealth.” In 1841, Cole bought a 2.5-acre parcel near the house at Cedar Grove on which to build his own house. He even went so far as to make architectural drawings for an Italianate villa, which he never built because of “hard times.” Artists struggled in the antebellum era—Cole’s modest home at Cedar Grove contrasts markedly with the elaborate Persian villa his student Frederic Church built across the

Hudson River at Olana during the 1870s, when art had become more of a paying proposition.

Cole was drawn to the village of Catskill by its proximity to the Catskill Mountains. He loved to hike into the depths of the Catskills, sometimes in the company of fellow artists, family, and friends, but often by himself. The mountains, with their dramatic views and shifting moods, offered the experience of the sublime that inspired Cole’s art. The Catskills engendered a spiritual experience for a man who was deeply religious:

*I stood among the mountain heights, alone!
The beauteous mountains, which the voyager
On Hudson’s breast far in the purple west
Magnificent beholds; the abutments broad
Whence springs the immeasurable dome of heaven.²*

As Cole hiked the mountains and valleys of the Catskills, he wrote poetry and prose about the power of nature as well as sketching the striking scenery. Catskill Creek, a short distance from his home, was one of his favorite settings. He made at least a dozen paintings of the scene with the Catskills in the distance, including an 1843 work with the first view of a railroad in a scenic landscape by a major American artist. In 1844, Cole took his first pupil, Frederic Church, a Hartford youth who stayed at Cedar Grove for two years. The next year, Cole took on Benjamin McConkey. They did not receive regular instruction from Cole, but they received studio space, access to the master, and expeditions with Cole into the mountains. Cole preferred to treat his students as friends.

After Thomas Cole died, his home became a scene of pilgrimage. Frederic Church and Jasper Cropsey came to contemplate the house and record their observations in sketchbooks. In 1853, Cropsey prepared a series of drawings of Cedar Grove that enhanced the estate’s fame. Jasper Cropsey literally and figuratively traveled in Cole’s footsteps, renting Cole’s former studio in Rome, incorporating Cole’s style into his own, even using landscapes for allegorical expressions.

In fact, a painting until recently attributed to Cole, *Station of the Cross, Italy* (1844), was found to have been signed by Cropsey.

Cole's wife Maria and their children maintained the New Studio as a shrine and sitting room. Cole's paintings and artifacts remained on view for many years. Art historian Sandra S. Phillips wrote, "Cole was an artistic saint and thus his environment became a shrine."³ During the 1850s and 1860s, artists Benjamin B. G. Stone (1854) and Charles Herbert Moore (1865–1871) rented rooms and studio space at Cedar Grove, where they developed their painting styles. Later on, Charles Herbert Moore built his own house north of Cedar Grove.

Cole's Influence on American Culture

Thomas Cole's impressive landscape works arrived at the perfect time. Even though the financial lot of the artist in America was precarious in the pre-Civil War years, interest in art by patrons and the general public grew dramatically, especially with American themes. It was Thomas Cole who made landscape painting an important genre. In his early years, Cole specialized in scenic views, though he imbued them with spirituality and sense of national grandeur. He continued to paint dramatic scenery, but made the landscape more of a setting for allegorical and religious themes during the 1830s and 1840s.

Thomas Cole was a major cultural figure in New York during these years, a period of growing achievement in the American arts. New York City and Boston were the leading cultural centers of the new nation. Active in New York City during this period were writers James Fenimore Cooper, Washington Irving, and William Cullen Bryant, and painters Asher B. Durand and Samuel F. B. Morse. Cole knew and was respected by them all. Cole took Bryant, Durand, and William Sidney Mount on excursions in the Catskills and more far-flung destinations in the Northeast. Cole's paintings were exhibited at the leading annual art shows in New York, Boston, and Philadelphia. Cole wrote poetry and essays

promoting his views on American culture, painting, and nature. He kept well informed about intellectual developments in America and Europe and used his two lengthy European visits in 1829–32 and 1841–42 to deepen his cultural perspective.

When Cole died in 1848, William Cullen Bryant eulogized him at the National Academy of Design. In reviewing Cole's career, Bryant claimed that Cole was the preeminent painter of his era. To commemorate Bryant's eulogy of Cole, Asher B. Durand painted Durand's *Kindred Spirits* (1849), a painting of Thomas Cole and poet William Cullen Bryant situated in the Catskills. One of the most famous paintings of the Hudson River School, *Kindred Spirits* was intended to express Cole's strong influence on American culture. Art historian Ellwood C. Parry III, the author of Cole's biography, has written: "To trace the full extent of Thomas Cole's influence on the next generation of American landscape painters, focusing on prominent figures like Asher B. Durand, Frederic Edwin Church, and Jasper F. Cropsey, but not forgetting lesser characters such as Benjamin McConkey, Charles Baker, and John M. Falconer, would require another book teeming with illustrations."⁴ Even into the 21st century, Cole has provided inspiration to artists pursuing personal expression.

Besides influencing painting and poetry, Cole also shaped the way Americans thought about preserving nature. Cole decried the destruction of beautiful landscapes in poetry, essays, and some of his paintings. In his 1835 "Essay on American Scenery," Cole remonstrated: "The ravages of the axe are daily increasing, and the most noble scenes are often laid desolate with a wantonness and barbarism scarcely credible in a people who call themselves civilized." Historian David Schuyler wrote that Cole's concerns about the destruction of "noble scenes" ranked among the "earliest articulations of a conservationist ethos in nineteenth-century America."⁵ For his contributions to the conservation movement, Black Mountain, in the Catskills, was renamed Mount Thomas Cole.

"Mr. Thomson [Cole's wife's uncle] has lately erected a sort of storehouse, and has let me have part of it for a temporary painting-room. It answers pretty well—is somewhat larger than my old one, and being removed from the noise and bustle of the house, is really charming."

Thomas Cole letter to Asher B. Durand, 1839, upon moving into the Storehouse Studio

Thomas Cole helped develop the American belief that the divine providence guiding the nation's destiny is manifest in the wonders of its landscape. Cole made the Catskills and Hudson Valley into symbols of national greatness for his generation. Cole in his lecture on "American Scenery" delivered at the Catskill Lyceum in 1841 (a revised version of the 1835 essay) said: "There are those who, through ignorance or prejudice, strive to maintain that American scenery possesses little that is interesting or truly beautiful; that it is rude without picturesqueness, and monotonous without sublimity; that being destitute of the vestiges of antiquity, which so strongly affect the mind, it may not be compared with European scenery. ... Though American scenery is destitute of many of those circumstances that give value to the European, still it has features, and noble ones, unknown to Europe."⁶ Art historian Barbara Novak, in *Nature and Culture: American Landscape and Painting, 1825–1875* (1980), argued that Cole changed American views of art and nature by transferring the rhetoric of the esteemed genre of history painting to landscape painting. Cole substituted the American landscape for a missing national tradition.

Americans not only sought out landscape paintings, they traveled to the sites that inspired them. Cole played a major role in making the Catskills a leading tourist destination. By making Catskill, NY, his primary residence, he influenced artists to make their homes in the Hudson Valley, as Sandra Phillips maintained in *Charmed Places: Hudson River Artists and Their Houses, Studios, and Vistas* (1988). Historian Hans Huth wrote: "The painter Thomas Cole was the first to reside both summers and winters in the Catskills, and in so doing aroused the curiosity of the public."⁷

Interest in Thomas Cole and the Hudson River School has grown since the 1960s—witness the interest in preserving and interpreting the homes of Thomas Cole and Frederic Church. People interested in preserving the natural environment and celebrating the cultural contributions on the Hudson River Valley have been inspired by the work of Thomas Cole. During the summer of 2001, *The New York Times* ran a series of 10 articles about the Hudson River School of painting and the environment that encouraged it. Interest in the subject is at a high point.

II. Planning Background and Issues

Methodology

The National Park Service takes an interdisciplinary approach to planning. Specialists skilled in the fields of community planning, history, architecture, landscape architecture, archeology, collections management, transportation planning, and interpretation have participated on the planning team. Members of the Board of Governors of Thomas Cole's Cedar Grove and representatives of other institutions in the Catskill, NY, area also have participated on the planning team (See Appendix V: List of Preparers).

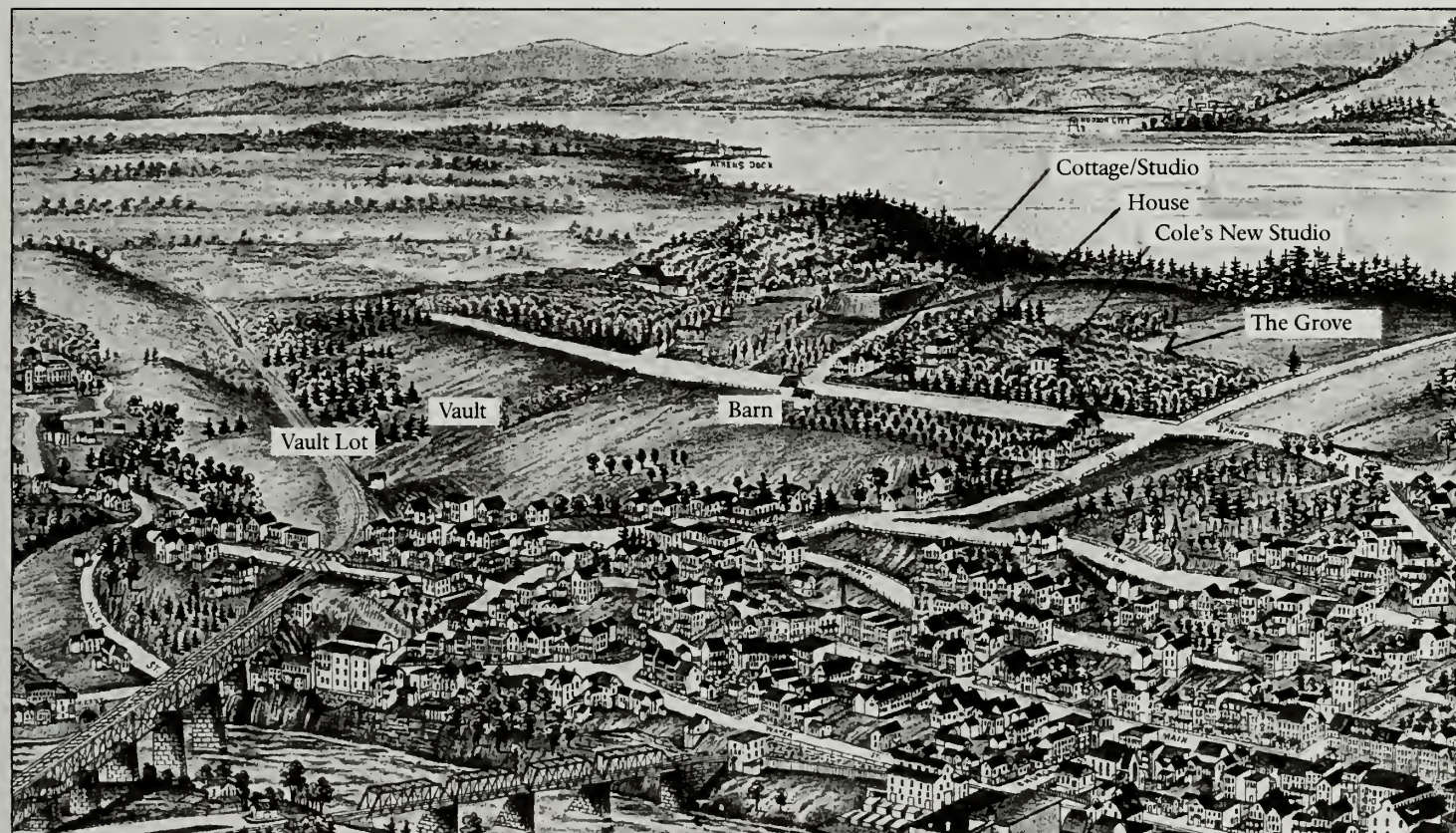
The GMP planning process and opportunities for public input were covered in the "Cedar Grove: The National Historic Site" quarterly newsletters for 2002 and 2003. These newsletters are distributed to over 500 people.

The project team met to outline the GMP issues and to take responsibility for planning and research tasks at a workshop held on January 12, 2002. On March 21, 2002 a public meeting took place at the restored Freight Master's Building at Catskill Point, in Catskill, NY, attended by 30 people. Participants provided ideas about how the Thomas Cole NHS should proceed with future development. Some of the issues included restoring the Storehouse Studio, providing visitor center space at Cedar Grove, creating the Hudson River Art Trail, and forming closer partnerships with other organizations, including Olana. Meeting participants argued that interpretive themes should include Thomas Cole's artistic career, his influence as founder of the Hudson River School, his influence on the conservation movement, and the history of the Cedar Grove estate.

"It was Cole who made it clear to the New York circle that American landscape was a potent source for artistic expression."

Joshua C. Taylor,
Fine Arts in America

View of Cedar Grove, from F.W. Beers, *Atlas of Greene County, New York*, 1889. Courtesy of New York State Archives, Albany, NY.



On July 9, 2002 the project team met to review research that had been done during the previous months and discuss potential management alternatives and mission and significance statements for the GMP. The project manager met with the Board of Governors of the Thomas Cole NHS on October 9, 2002 to discuss the development of the GMP and draft alternatives. Copies of the draft alternatives were sent to members of the Board of Governors and Board of Advisors for the Thomas Cole National Historic Site to obtain their comments. In February, July, and September 2003, the project team and the Board of Governors provided additional comments on the full draft GMP. (See Consultation and Public Involvement section for further information.)

Planning Issues

Based on the input from the Thomas Cole NHS board, public comments, and findings of resource studies, the planning team identified a set of interrelated issues involved in making Cedar Grove an effective national historic site.

HISTORIC STRUCTURES

The main house has been recently refurbished, but there remain issues of providing universal access and deciding how to use and interpret specific spaces. The Storehouse Studio, where Cole painted important works such as *The Voyage of Life* series, is currently in need of structural repair. The Thomas Cole NHS board wants to stabilize the Storehouse Studio and is



Main House, Cedar Grove. Courtesy of R.M. Toole, L.A.

considering the most appropriate uses for this building that showcase Thomas Cole's artistic achievements. The Thomas Cole NHS is exploring the reconstruction of the New Studio, which was demolished in the 1970s.

INTERPRETATION

To understand the career and influence of Thomas Cole, visitors, including school groups, should be exposed to exhibits, programs, and other forms of interpretation that convey the historic and cultural significance of this site. The modest facilities and the collection of art and artifacts of the Thomas Cole NHS need to be enhanced to support the interpretive programming.

VISITOR SERVICES

The Thomas Cole NHS needs more space than is available in the main house for visitor orientation, additional interpretative exhibits, a retail store, and a rest room. The GMP would examine where to put these visitor facilities.

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

During Thomas Cole's period of occupancy, Cedar Grove was a farm estate of about 110 acres. A Cultural Landscape Report relates the history of this property as known from current research and site investigations. This background is necessary for interpreting Cole's domestic life at Cedar Grove.

The character of Cedar Grove's historic landscape will serve as a benchmark for understanding the landscape changes that have occurred in the 150 years since Cole's death. The Cultural Landscape Report focuses on today's historic site to provide detailed information about the NHS property in the context of the larger historic farm parcel. This study traces how the Cedar Grove landscape has changed over the years and will guide decisions about further land acquisition, treatment of the landscape, public access, landscape maintenance, and interpretation.

This study would also guide the replanting of gardens at Cedar Grove. One of the main issues has been whether to restore the grounds to their appearance during Thomas Cole's lifetime or to a later period when ornamental flower gardens were maintained by his granddaughter Florence Cole Vincent.

COLLECTIONS

The Thomas Cole NHS has collections of furniture, artwork, and Cole-related artifacts. These are the property of the Greene County Historical Society, which also operates another historic house and a library. The site needs to develop policies for storing, caring for, interpreting, and collecting objects. One of the major questions is whether Cedar Grove should display paintings either owned by itself or borrowed from others. Potential issues include what kinds of artwork would be exhibited, what kind of permanent collection should be pursued, and what kind of security, environmental controls, and maintenance would be required.

TRANSPORTATION ACCESS

Transportation access and parking are important for attracting visitors to the Thomas Cole NHS and for encouraging visitors to explore sites in the region where Thomas Cole painted his dramatic landscapes. Transportation issues include transit links with Olana, sites in the village of Catskill, and Hudson River School painting sites in the Catskill Mountains. Pedestrian and bike linkages between these sites and the Hudson River Greenway and the village center should be considered. As the site develops, it will be important to maintain adequate parking.

HUDSON RIVER SCHOOL ART TRAIL

An important element of the program of the Thomas Cole NHS is interpreting the scenes which inspired the works of Thomas Cole and other Hudson River artists. The Thomas Cole NHS has been seeking to develop an Art Trail with wayside

exhibits and directional signs at sites in Catskill, NY, and in the Catskill Forest Preserve.

PARTNERSHIPS WITH OTHER HERITAGE, CULTURAL, AND TOURISM ORGANIZATIONS

The planning team has been examining how to develop partnerships that enhance the experience at Cedar Grove and more effectively interpret the Hudson River School of painting. The Hudson River Valley is one of the most historically rich regions of the country and has been designated by Congress as a national heritage area. The Thomas Cole NHS would be an ideal partner to work with the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area. The Thomas Cole NHS has been mentioned as an important resource in the national heritage area management plan. Hudson Valley artist homes are a major cultural resource. They include Frederic Church's Olana, Hudson (New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation); Samuel F.B. Morse's Locust Grove, Poughkeepsie; Jasper Cropsey's Ever Rest, Hastings-on-Hudson; and the Edward Hopper House, Nyack. National

Park Service sites in the Hudson Valley include the Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Site in Hyde Park and the Martin Van Buren National Historic Site (Lindenwald) in Kinderhook.

There is an obvious link to Olana, the home of Cole's student Frederic Church. Joint activities with Olana are already taking place. With the development of a proposed Olana Visitor Center, there are further opportunities for shared interpretation and visitor services and public transit. There is great potential for Cedar Grove, Olana, and the Hudson River School painting sites to become a major regional destination.

There might be possible partnerships with art museums in the region, including the Albany Institute of Art and History; the Newington Cropsey Foundation at Hastings-on-Hudson, NY; the Hudson River Museum, Yonkers, NY; the Samuel F. B. Morse House "Locust Grove" in Poughkeepsie, NY; and the National Academy of Design in New York (Cole was a founding member of the National Academy of Design in 1826).

III. Resource Analysis

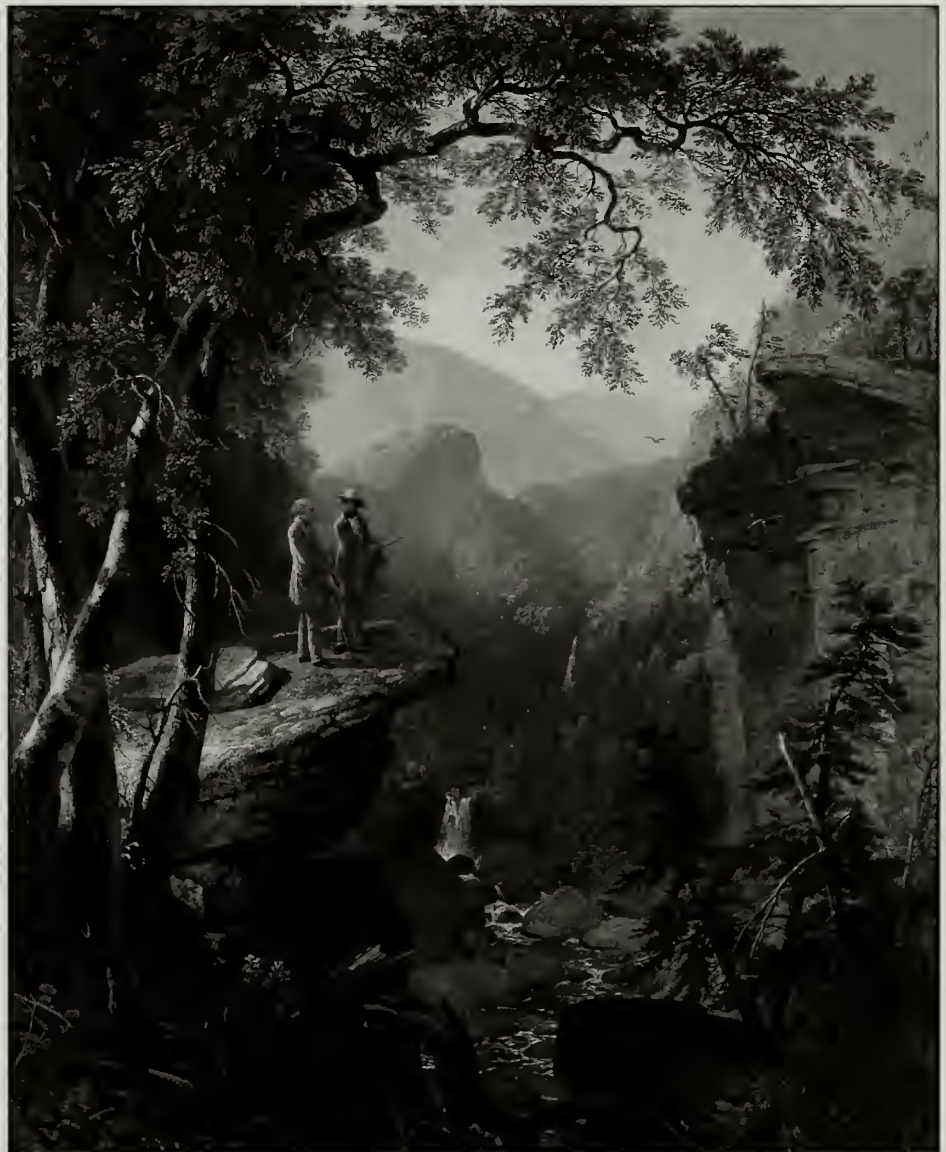
The planning team identified several distinct areas of analysis necessary to develop management alternatives for the Thomas Cole NHS. This research included an assessment of the costs and impacts of each action. A summary of the scope and findings of each action follows.

Historic Structures

The NPS Northeast Building Conservation Branch has prepared a Historic Structures Report, "The Artist Studios of Thomas Cole, Cedar

Grove, Catskill, New York," to provide information for undertaking restoration and reconstruction efforts. This report helped the project team understand how the Storehouse and New Studios could be important resources for interpreting the artistic career of Thomas Cole. The report also indicated that sufficient background material exists to inform a judicious restoration of the Storehouse Studio and construction of a new structure resembling the New Studio. A Historic Structures Report has not been done for the main

"Though American scenery is destitute of many of those circumstances that give value to the European, still it has features, and noble ones, unknown to Europe."
Thomas Cole, "American Scenery"



Thomas Cole (right) is pictured posthumously with his friend, poet William Cullen Bryant, in this famous memorial painting. Asher B. Durand, *Kindred Spirits*, 1849. Collections of The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.



Rear View of Main House, Cedar Grove.
Courtesy of R.M. Toole, L.A.

house, although the building has undergone substantial restoration. Since further restoration work is anticipated and new research material could enhance the interpretation of the house, it is suggested that a Historic Structures Report be completed for the main house.

Cultural Landscape

Consultant landscape architect Robert M. Toole has worked with the Thomas Cole NHS to develop an initial landscape research report (June 2002) that provides hitherto unavailable information for understanding to state of the site during Thomas Cole's time and thereafter. Mr. Toole has expanded this research in a Cultural Landscape Report. This material will inform a historically oriented restoration of Cedar Grove's landscape. Landscape architects from the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation have provided input on behalf of the National Park Service. In support of this work, NPS archeologists from the Northeast Cultural Resources

Center have undertaken a preliminary archeological study of the Cedar Grove garden to identify archeological resources prior to the Thomas Cole NHS's 2002 garden replanting.

Collections

Staff from the NPS Northeast Museum Services Center have assisted the site in developing a Scope of Collection Statement for Cedar Grove's collections. The recommendations stemmed from a "Trip Report: General Collections-Related Issues for the Thomas Cole National Historic Site" (June 2002). The Scope of Collection Statement defines what Cedar Grove should collect and why. By developing such a statement, the site obtains a clearer sense of its mission and its needs for physical curatorial and storage facilities. Since the collections of the Thomas Cole NHS are part of an umbrella collection of the Greene County Historical Society, a collections policy helps order the relationship between artifacts that belong with the historical society and with the NHS.

Historic Property Overlaid on the Existing Conditions

**Thomas Cole National Historic Site:
Cedar Grove**

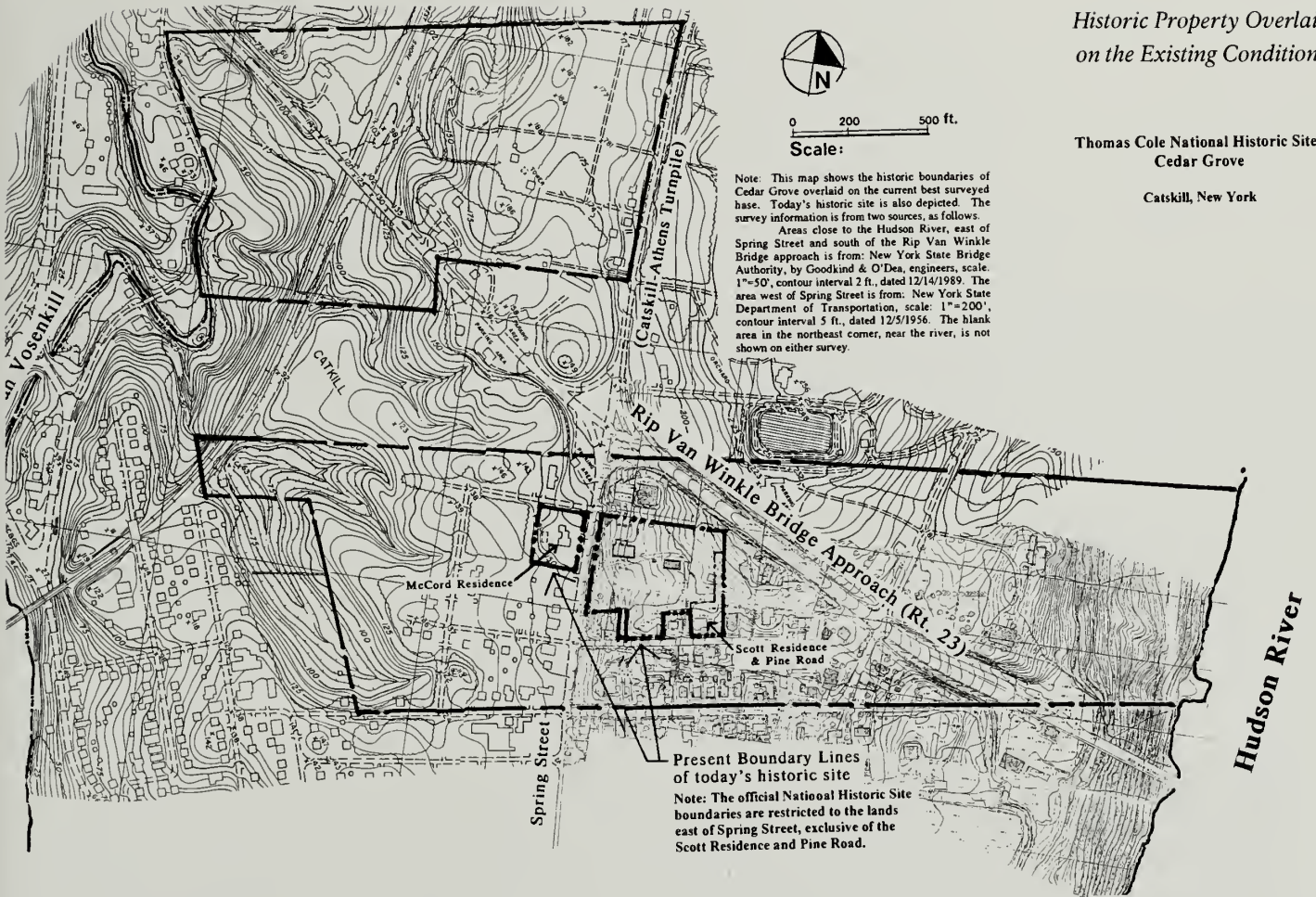
Catskill, New York



Scale:
0 200 500 ft.

Note: This map shows the historic boundaries of Cedar Grove overlaid on the current best surveyed base. Today's historic site is also depicted. The survey information is from two sources, as follows.

Areas close to the Hudson River, east of Spring Street and south of the Rip Van Winkle Bridge approach is from: New York State Bridge Authority, by Goodkind & O'Dea, engineers, scale: 1"=50', contour interval 2 ft., dated 12/14/1989. The area west of Spring Street is from: New York State Department of Transportation, scale: 1"=200', contour interval 5 ft., dated 12/5/1956. The blank area in the northeast corner, near the river, is not shown on either survey.



**Present Boundary Lines
of today's historic site**

Note: The official National Historic Site boundaries are restricted to the lands east of Spring Street, exclusive of the Scott Residence and Pine Road.

Hudson River

Northeast Museum Services Center staff prepared a separate “Trip Report: Collection Storage for the Thomas Cole National Historic Site” (July 2002) on storage needs. This trip report described how the Thomas Cole NHS has unexhibited collections scattered through 12 locations in five different buildings. There are seven different places in the main house where unexhibited collections are stored. The trip report recommends various steps the board of the Thomas Cole NHS can take to professionalize its storage of collections over the short term (one to five years) and the long term (five to ten years).

While the Board of Governors of the Thomas Cole NHS does not wish to fully furnish Cedar Grove, the Northeast Museum Services Center recommends that the Thomas Cole NHS consider a Historic Furnishings Report as a future project. A Historic Furnishings Report would be a valuable tool for the Thomas Cole NHS in its consideration of appropriate acquisitions. It would consolidate all extant information about the house’s furnishings and recommends furnishings appropriate to the most significant time period to be interpreted by the NHS.

Transportation Access

Consultants Bargmann Hendrie + Archetype and Carol Johnson Associates have undertaken a study of public access, parking, and transit options for the Thomas Cole NHS—“Transportation Study, Thomas Cole National Historic Site” (July 2002). The study provides options for increasing parking for regular visitation and special events. The study also describes strategies for enhancing

public access to painting sites at Cedar Grove, Catskill Creek, and in the Catskill Mountains.

Archeology

NPS archeology staff initiated archeological work at Cedar Grove by undertaking an excavation around the path leading southward from the main house in order to discover whether flower gardens had once been planted there, as was depicted in a painting by Charles Herbert Moore in 1868. The archeological team found some evidence of a flower garden and no evidence of other significant activities. This enabled the site managers to proceed with planting flowers where the Moore painting indicated they had existed.

Additional archeological research needs to be done in this area and at selected other places on the Cedar Grove estate before decisions are made about a final cultural landscape treatment for the site. Archeological study can make a valuable contribution to understanding landscape changes and property use over time, identifying specific locations for buildings and landscape features, and interpreting domestic life and activities on the site. Archeology can trace the existence of roadbeds, paths, and garden beds as well as artifacts that can help interpret life at Cedar Grove. Archeological surveys would be needed before reconstructing the entrance piers and fence along Spring Street. Ultimately, archeological research is needed before finalizing decisions about reconstructing the New Studio. Such research could uncover the foundation and may discover architectural hardware useful for understanding the design of the lost building.

IV. Purpose, Goals and Themes

Purpose and Significance of Thomas Cole National Historic Site

The foundation for the general management plan rests on the site's purpose and significance. The purpose and significance statements are based on the site's authorizing legislation and its legislative history. The purpose states why the park was established as an "affiliated area" of the national park system. The site significance defines the site's place within its broader national context.

SITE PURPOSE

The Thomas Cole National Historic Site preserves and interprets Cedar Grove, the primary residence and workplace of artist Thomas Cole. This site interprets Cole's impact on the Hudson River School of painting, which he helped found, as well as his broader impact on American culture in the first half of the 19th century.

This statement of site purpose has been developed from the findings and purposes in the Thomas Cole National Historic Site Act (1999),

which have been confirmed by the planning process and operation of the Thomas Cole National Historic Site:

Findings

1. The Hudson River School of landscape painting was inspired by Thomas Cole. The group of 19th-century landscape artists recorded and celebrated the landscape and wilderness of America, particularly in the Hudson River Valley region in the state of New York.
2. Thomas Cole is recognized as America's most prominent landscape and allegorical painter of the mid-19th century.
3. Located in Greene County, NY, the Thomas Cole House, also known as Thomas Cole's Cedar Grove, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and has been designated as a National Historic Landmark.
4. Within a 15-mile radius of the Thomas Cole House, an area that forms a key part of the rich cultural and natural heritage of the Hudson River Valley region, significant landscapes and

"It was while he was thus engaged that he married and fixed his residence at Catskill, in a region singular for its romantic beauty, where the remainder of his life was as happy as domestic harmony, his own gentle and genial temper, and the love of those by whom he was surrounded, could make it."

William Cullen Bryant,
"On the Life of Thomas Cole: A
Funeral Oration"



*The Thomas Cole Studios
American Antiques*

New York - Albany State Road
Catskill - on - the - Hudson, N. Y.

Postcard of Storehouse Studio as an
antiques shop, c.1930. Courtesy of
Greene County Historical Society.



Thomas Cole's Storehouse Studio, by Charles Herbert Moore, 1862. Courtesy of the Greene County Historical Society.

scenes painted by Thomas Cole and other Hudson River artists, such as Frederic Church, survive intact.

5. The State of New York has established the Hudson River Valley Greenway to promote the preservation, public use, and enjoyment of the natural and cultural resources of the Hudson River Valley region.

6. Establishment of the Thomas Cole National Historic Site will provide opportunities for the illustration and interpretation of cultural themes of the heritage of the United States and unique opportunities for education, public use, and enjoyment.

Purposes

1. To preserve and interpret the home and studio of Thomas Cole for the benefit, inspiration, and education of the people of the United States;
2. to help maintain the integrity of the setting in the Hudson River Valley region that inspired artistic expression;
3. to coordinate the interpretive, preservation, and recreational efforts of Federal, State, and other entities in the Hudson Valley region in order to enhance opportunities for education, public use, and enjoyment; and
4. to broaden understanding of the Hudson River School of painting and its role in American history and culture.

SITE SIGNIFICANCE

The Thomas Cole National Historic Site includes the home that Cole inhabited between 1836 and 1848, as well as studio sites where he painted many of his most famous works. The site also has various artifacts and works of art connected to Thomas Cole and the Hudson River School of painting. Since the NHS is located near scenes painted by Cole and other artists, it is well positioned to interpret the connection between their art and the landscapes that inspired them.

The site's significance was described in the 1965 National Historic Landmark (NHL) nomination:

Thomas Cole, pioneer interpreter of the romantic beauty of the American landscape, is one of America's notable allegorical painters of the first half of the nineteenth century, and the finest landscape painter of his time. The Hudson River school, which is receiving renewed attention today, sprang up largely because of Cole's work, and his landscapes remain outstanding examples of that school.

The Cole House in Catskill, New York is an attractive brick building that has been little altered since its construction in 1812-1814. To the east of the house is the two-story clapboard studio which Cole used until 1846.

The Thomas Cole House was identified in the National Park System Plan of 1972 as a National Historic Landmark representing "Romanticism in American Art, 1800-1840." With the revision of the thematic structure in 1987, the Cole House was categorized under the theme "Painting and Sculpture: Romanticism" and included in a list of seven artist homes that have been designated National Historic Landmarks. Of the seven, Cole is considered the most important artist to scholars of American art.⁸

Since the designation of Thomas Cole's Cedar Grove as a National Historic Landmark, the reputations of Cole and the Hudson River School of artists have risen dramatically. Cole and the Hudson River School have been the subject of many important museum exhibitions and books. The 1991 *Thomas Cole Suitability/Feasibility Study* used some of those publications to explain the critical significance of his work.

In *Fine Arts in America*, Joshua C. Taylor, former director of the National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, noted:

It was Cole who made it clear to the New York circle that American landscape was a potent source for artistic expression.... Cole had not simply called their attention to Hudson River

*scenery; he had raised it to the level of art.... Probably drawn to landscape by the generalized theories of sublime nature that had come down from the eighteenth century, with his fiery sense of drama and his great skill in projecting his own energy into natural scenery he gave his painting a sense of both universal and personal vision.... Thought of in this way, the wild scenery of the Catskills and the White Mountains took on a quality that the more domesticated European scenery could not provide.*⁹

In 1988, Ellwood C. Parry III published the definitive Cole biography—*The Art of Thomas Cole: Ambition and Imagination*, which presents a detailed argument for Thomas Cole's preeminent place in mid-19th-century American painting.

Major exhibitions and catalogues have included *American Paradise: The World of the Hudson River School* (Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1987), *Charmed Places: Hudson River Artists and Their Houses, Studios, and Vistas* (Bard College, Vassar College et al., 1988), and *American Sublime: Landscape Painting in the United States, 1820–1880* (Tate Modern, Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, 2002). Cole has been represented in every major retrospective of American art, including the exhibition *A New World: Masterpieces of American Painting 1760–1910* (Boston Museum of Fine Arts, 1983). In the catalogue for that show, Theodore Stebbins wrote:

Cole was quite simply the ablest landscape painter of his time.... He exulted in nature's variety, and identified her changing moods. He was a poet, a gifted essayist, prolific letter-writer, theorist, and traveler; he drew constantly and well, and he was not afraid to use his paints quickly and exuberantly. He was also much more than a landscape painter; he was a teacher and in a sense a history painter in his every work. As such, he was too sophisticated for his patrons, and he engaged in a constant struggle to combat and

*modify their taste for simple and recognizable American views.*¹⁰

The 1991 NPS suitability/feasibility study recommended that the perfect vehicle for interpreting the career and art of Thomas Cole would be his home, Cedar Grove. The Cole site also offers an unparalleled opportunity to interpret the regional landscape, which inspired Cole and other artists. The landscape of the Catskill Mountains, which can be viewed from the porch (formerly called “piazza”) of Cedar Grove, has not changed significantly from Cole's time. Much of the mountain scenery is within the boundaries of the Catskill Forest Preserve, which is managed by the State of New York, Department of Environmental Conservation to remain “forever wild,” in accordance with Article 14 of the New York State Constitution. Many of Cole's masterpieces depict scenes that are easily recognizable and are accessible within a 15-mile drive of Cedar Grove. These same views were painted by other members of the Hudson River School, including Jasper Cropsey, Asher B. Durand, Frederic Church, and Sanford Gifford. The trails and viewpoints that Cole and other artists painted still exist, though they are not as of yet interpreted for their associations with the artists.

The 1991 NPS suitability/feasibility study concluded: “The Cole National Historic Landmark and nearby landscapes associated with him, together represent an outstanding example of places associated with this artist and possess exceptional value and quality illustrating the cultural themes of our nation's heritage.... The site and nearby landscapes retain a high degree of integrity as the relatively unspoiled home, workplace, and source of inspiration for the father of American landscape painting, Thomas Cole.”

Mission Goals

Goals articulate the ideal conditions that site managers are striving to attain in perpetuity. The goals assert the ideals that the Thomas Cole NHS is protected, that site visitors are satisfied

and informed, and that the site works with other entities to foster stewardship of sites related to the Hudson River School.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

- Site managers protect, preserve, and maintain in good condition the landscapes, buildings, archaeological sites, artifacts, and archives related to the career of Thomas Cole and the Cedar Grove estate, where he lived and worked.
- Thomas Cole NHS contributes to the knowledge and understanding of the cultural and

natural resources that relate to Thomas Cole, the Hudson River School of painting, and the landscapes that were painted.

VISITOR USE AND INTERPRETATION

- The public learns about the art of Thomas Cole and his influence on the Hudson River School and 19th-century American culture.
- Thomas Cole NHS provides engaging, historically accurate interpretive and educational programs that make the site's stories and resources available to a wide range of audiences.



New Studio, c.1890. Courtesy of Vedder Memorial Library, Coxsack, NY.

COOPERATIVE EFFORTS AND PARTNERSHIPS

- Thomas Cole NHS develops partnerships in order to provide educational programs about Thomas Cole and the Hudson River School and to foster stewardship of relevant cultural and natural resources in the Hudson River Valley and Catskill Mountains.

Interpretive Themes

The following themes were identified to guide visitor interpretation:

THOMAS COLE'S LIFE AND CAREER

Thomas Cole was the most important American landscape painter in the first half of the 19th century. Cedar Grove was his primary residence and workplace from 1836 until his death in 1848. Here, Cole painted some of his most important works, including *The Course of Empire*, *The Voyage of Life*, and *The Cross and the World*. Cole, in addition to being the most influential landscape painter of his time, was also a family man, poet, architect, musician, Romantic nature-lover, and cultural leader.

THOMAS COLE'S INFLUENCE ON AMERICAN ART AND CULTURE

Thomas Cole had a major impact on American art and culture during the second quarter of the 19th century. Cole was the preeminent painter of his era. He helped develop the American belief that the divine providence guiding the nation's destiny was manifest in the wonders of its land-

scape. Cole made the Catskills and Hudson Valley into symbols of national grandeur for his generation. Besides influencing painting and poetry, Cole also influenced the way Americans thought about preserving nature. He decried the destruction of beautiful landscapes in poetry, essays, and some of his paintings.

THOMAS COLE'S RELATION TO THE HUDSON VALLEY AND CATSKILL LANDSCAPE

Thomas Cole, through his paintings and his exploration of the region's landscape, is considered to have been the single most influential person in establishing the Catskills and the Catskill Mountain House as outstanding 19th-century American tourist destinations, according to Roland Van Zandt's book *The Catskill Mountain House* (1966).

THE EVOLUTION OF CEDAR GROVE

Cedar Grove has changed from a 110-acre working farm to a 3.4-acre historic site. This theme would follow the evolution of the estate from its establishment by the Thomson family through Thomas Cole's lifetime to the period afterward when his descendants maintained and eventually sold Cedar Grove. This history tells the story of agriculture at Cedar Grove and how the site has been preserved over the years. Although much of this history does not pertain directly to Thomas Cole, it provides a context for understanding the site and what it was like in Cole's era.

V. Management Alternatives

“Nature has spread for us a rich and delightful banquet—shall we turn away from it? We are still in Eden: the wall that shuts us out of the garden is our own ignorance and folly.”

Thomas Cole, “American Scenery”

The Thomas Cole NHS GMP sets forth management alternatives that outline future conditions at this NHS. These alternatives are the core of the GMP. There are three alternatives: (1) Continuation of Current Management Practices (NEPA requires that GMPs consider the alternative of making no changes to the current management direction); (2) Thomas Cole and Cedar Grove; (3) Thomas Cole’s Art and the Region’s Landscape. These alternatives have drawn upon research studies and discussions with team members from the National Park Service, the board of the Thomas Cole NHS, and the public.

Alternative One: Continuation of Current Practices

CONCEPT

Under this alternative the Thomas Cole NHS remains essentially the same as it currently exists. With the improvements that have been made at this historical house in recent years, Cedar Grove will be open to the public for visitation and will interpret the life of artist Thomas Cole. It will continue to operate as a national historic site.

VISITOR EXPERIENCE

The visitor would be given an introduction to Thomas Cole and his life at Cedar Grove in the main house. The visitor would be able to view existing interpretive panels and some historic and contemporary Hudson River Valley art.

MAIN HOUSE

The main house will be the only place at the site showing exhibits or offering docent tours. The house would have rooms furnished to depict the period that Cole lived there and space for exhibiting interpretive panels and works of art connected to Thomas Cole and the Hudson River School. The amount of space available for exhibiting paintings would be limited. Without climate-controlled high-security space, the Thomas Cole NHS would be unable to display valuable works of art on loan from other institutions. The house could continue to display contemporary landscape paintings of the region.

PAINTING STUDIOS

This alternative would allow the Thomas Cole NHS to stabilize the Storehouse Studio, which is



Cole’s Storehouse Studio and plantings of Florence Cole Vincent (1876–1961) viewed from southeast, c. 1960. Courtesy of Vedder Memorial Library, Coxsackie, New York.

suffering structural problems. The building could be used for operational purposes, but would not be open to the public.

OTHER STRUCTURES

The site managers would continue to maintain the restored 19th-century privy and the modern storage shed at the site. The Greene County Historical Society owns the Scott House, 36 Hudson Avenue, and the McCord House, 107 Spring Street. Site managers would make no significant changes in the appearance of those buildings. The McCord House is currently used as a residence for caretakers and would continue to be used for this purpose. The Scott House is being used as living space for a caretaker and may be used in the future for office and meeting space.

COLLECTIONS

The lack of exhibit and storage space would make it difficult for the Thomas Cole NHS to expand its collection of artifacts and paintings. The site currently has a recently approved Scope of Collection Statement. The Scope of Collection Statement states that the site's policy is not to expand its collections substantially. If the current direction at the Thomas Cole NHS were to continue, some items would likely be added to the collections.

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

The landscape at Cedar Grove would be preserved as it is at present and would be maintained through a program of mowing and pruning. No further garden planting would take place, and no efforts would be made to return the grounds to their appearance during Thomas Cole's tenure at Cedar Grove.

UNIVERSAL ACCESS

Public rest rooms on the ground floor of the main house have universal access from the outside north entrance to the house. The first and second floors of the main house do not have universal access. In order to allow wheelchair accessibility to the ground-floor rest rooms, the pathway to the house needs to be regraded and resurfaced.

PARKING

The public would continue to park in the abutting Temple Israel synagogue's parking lot via informal agreement and enter the site from that parking lot.

SITE BOUNDARY

The site boundary encloses the national historic site's 3.4-acre historic house, studio, and grounds. Two contemporary residences (Scott House and McCord House), which have been purchased by the Greene County Historical Society for residential and administrative space, are outside the site boundary.

MANAGEMENT AREAS

The 3.4-acre national historic site would have a zone designated for visitor use (see management zone map, p. 10). This zone includes the main house, Storehouse Studio, New Studio site, and grounds. Outside this visitor use zone and the boundary of the National Historic Site, the Greene County Historical Society owns the McCord House and Scott House. Although not subject to this GMP, the Greene County Historical Society uses these structures for administrative and park support purposes and would not open them to visitors. If a boundary adjustment study is done for the Thomas Cole NHS and these facilities qualify for inclusion, they would be used for administrative support.

CARRYING CAPACITY

Site managers believe that the carrying capacity of the main house is determined by the fact that a maximum of 15 people can tour the house at any given time. Additional people can roam the grounds at the same time as tours. From three years of experience in hosting visitors, Cedar Grove has seldom had more than 15 visitors at a time, unless they are part of a bus group. In that case, an extra docent is used to guide the extra visitors, and the grounds are able to accommodate the overflow while they are waiting for a tour of the house.

Under this alternative, visitation is expected to remain the same because no new facilities will be available.

CONNECTION TO OTHER ARTIST-RELATED SITES IN THE REGION

The Thomas Cole NHS would continue to refer visitors to artist Frederic Church's home Olana by displaying its brochures. In order to guide visitors to painting sites in the Catskills, docents could provide directions to those sites.

SITE OPERATIONS

Currently the Thomas Cole NHS is managed by a volunteer board and an executive director. Volunteer docents greet visitors and guide them through the site.

Summary of Alternative One

Alternative One: Concept

- Allows for site to continue to show visitors Thomas Cole house and grounds.
- Allows for no significant effort to tell story of Cole's art and its relationship to regional landscape.

Resource Management

Objective	Potential Action Resulting from Objective
Main house, outbuildings, and grounds are preserved as they currently appear.	Maintain main house with its exhibits about Cole and Cedar Grove, as well as contemporary Hudson Valley paintings. Stabilize Storehouse Studio structure so that it does not deteriorate further. Maintain grounds to be attractive to public and not compromise existing resources. Maintain 19th-century privy and modern storage shed.
Limited collection of artwork and artifacts connected to Thomas Cole and Cedar Grove is protected and displayed.	Exhibit and store collection so as to protect the integrity of its objects.

Visitor Use and Experience

Objective	Potential Action Resulting from Objective
Visitor orientation and interpretation provided at main house.	Docents provide tour of main house with description of Cole's life at Cedar Grove. Exhibit panels in main house describe Cole's career.
Visitors seek out painting sites in region.	Docents provide directions to painting sites.

Cooperative Efforts and Partnerships

Objective	Potential Action Resulting from Objective
Partnerships are maintained with partners associated with Hudson River School.	Send visitors to Olana, Frederic Church's home, and develop shared programs.

Alternative Two: Thomas Cole and Cedar Grove

CONCEPT

The guiding approach at the Thomas Cole NHS would be to tell the story of Thomas Cole's life and the art he created at Cedar Grove through buildings he lived and worked in, which include the main house and the Storehouse Studio. In order to interpret the nearby landscape that inspired Cole and other painters of the Hudson River School, the site managers would develop a brochure and map to guide visitors to specific painting sites.

VISITOR EXPERIENCE

The visitor would be given an introduction to Thomas Cole and his life at Cedar Grove in the main house. Exhibit panels would narrate his career and depict some of his artworks. Some space would be available for exhibiting paintings by Cole, associated Hudson River School artists, and contemporary artists working under the inspiration of Cole and his colleagues. The section of the Storehouse Studio where Cole painted would be open to the public as part of the docent tour.

The Thomas Cole NHS would encourage visitors to visit nearby Olana, home of Cole's pupil Frederic Church and a State Historic Site. The visitor would also be provided with brochure/maps of the Hudson River Art Trail, which would feature sites where Cole and other Hudson River School artists conceived many of their best-known canvases.

MAIN HOUSE

The main house will be the primary location for visitors to tour and learn about Thomas Cole's life at Cedar Grove. Docent tours will be provided to all visitors, as has been done since the opening of the Thomas Cole NHS. The house would have rooms furnished to depict the period that Cole lived there and space for exhibiting interpretive panels and works of art connected to Thomas Cole and the Hudson River School. The east rooms on the first and second floors and the first floor gallery will continue to be available for

displaying paintings by Thomas Cole, his contemporaries, and current-day artists influenced by the Hudson River School.

PAINTING STUDIOS

The Storehouse Studio was built as storehouse space in 1839, but Thomas Cole used part of it as a studio. Under this alternative, the building would be restored to its appearance when Thomas Cole used it as a painting studio (1839–1846). In accordance with the Historic Structures Condition Assessment prepared by the Northeast Building Conservation Branch of the NPS, this work would entail removing structural elements that were added since then and restoring elements known to exist in the 1840s. Documentation of the studio's history would be used to guide the restoration.

Docents would show the west section of the Storehouse Studio to visitors and describe how Thomas Cole used the studio from 1839 until 1846. Objects from the historic site's collection, including an easel and paint box, would be displayed in this space.

The site of the demolished New Studio would be cleared of overgrowth and a wayside exhibit erected to tell the story of the New Studio. Exploratory archeological research would be undertaken to learn more about the New Studio and provide background material for site tours.

OTHER STRUCTURES

Between the main house and the Storehouse Studio, there is a fancifully decorated 19th-century privy, which has been recently restored. This structure will be maintained in its current state.

A metal utility shed for storing lawn mowers and other equipment, located at the rear of the property on Pine Road, will be retained in its current location to be used to store materials and equipment.

Abutting the NHS boundary, the Greene County Historical Society owns the Scott House, 36 Hudson Avenue, and the McCord House, 107

Spring Street. Across the street from the main house is the McCord House, which is currently used as a residence for Cedar Grove caretakers. The Scott House, which abuts the NHS on the southeast, also houses caretakers. The suburban-style house would be used to support the operations of the historic site such as a caretaker's/executive director's living quarters, office space to serve the Greene County Historical Society, collections storage, or curatorial, workroom, and research space.

Abutting the north side of the Thomas Cole NHS is Temple Israel, a 1977 structure on property that once belonged to Cedar Grove. The Thomas Cole NHS has a positive relationship with Temple Israel, with an agreement allowing the Thomas Cole NHS to use the synagogue's parking lot. The Thomas Cole NHS could use Temple Israel for meetings and conferences. If Temple Israel ever closes or relocates and seeks to sell its property, the Thomas Cole NHS would seek to acquire it. The Thomas Cole NHS could use this building for offices, meeting space, and visitor services and overcome space constraints imposed by the historic structures at the site. Acquiring Temple Israel would also help the Thomas Cole NHS secure itself from developments that might compromise its historic integrity and the capacity to host visitors at the historic site. The purchase would also give the Thomas Cole NHS control over the parking area. The enabling legislation prohibits the use of federal funds to purchase this property. In order for the site to receive NPS assistance in developing Temple Israel as a visitor facility, a boundary adjustment to include the Temple Israel property in the NHS would be necessary.

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

The Cedar Grove site had approximately 110 acres when Thomas Cole lived there. The site stretched east to the Hudson River and west past Spring Street. By the time the Thomas Cole NHS was established in 1999, the site had been whittled down to 3.4 acres. Since then the Greene County Historical Society has purchased adjoining parcels, which total 2.1 acres, but which

have not been added to the NHS. The landscape that exists at the Thomas Cole NHS has elements surviving from Cole's era as well as features added by descendants over the past 150 years.

The landscape at Cedar Grove would be preserved as it is at present and would be maintained through a program of mowing and pruning. No further garden planting would take place, and no efforts would be made to return the grounds to their appearance during Thomas Cole's tenure at Cedar Grove.

The evolution of Cedar Grove's landscape would be interpreted through interpretive displays or other media. An illustration of the 1840s view looking westward from the main house could be mounted at the porch to provide a better sense, not only of the Cedar Grove estate, but of the surrounding community of Catskill as well.

The overhead utility lines running in front of the house along Spring Street would be buried to enhance the site's primary view. The utility lines detract from the view from the porch out to the Catskill Mountains.

The Thomas Cole NHS would acquire abutting properties if and when they come up for sale. Priority would be given to properties on the block bounded by Spring Street, Hudson Avenue, Route 23, and Pine Road. By acquiring abutting parcels, the site would be able to improve the visitor experience by creating more of a continuous cultural landscape.

COLLECTIONS AND COLLECTION STORAGE

The Northeast Museum Services Center has developed a Scope of Collection Statement for the Thomas Cole NHS in order to inform and implement the GMP, guide future acquisitions, and describe the types of objects that should be collected.

The Thomas Cole NHS collection contains artwork, tools, furnishings, photographs, reference works, and personal items relating to Thomas Cole's life and work at Cedar Grove. Collections



Charles Herbert Moore, Oil Sketch of Storehouse Studio, c. 1862. Courtesy of Vedder Memorial Library, Coxsackie, New York.

are displayed in furnished rooms and formal exhibits. Since the purpose of the Thomas Cole NHS is to interpret the art and life of Thomas Cole, as well as his impact on the Hudson River School of painting, collections should be limited to artwork, artifacts, and archives directly related to Thomas Cole, his connection to the Hudson River School, and the history of Cedar Grove, especially the period of Cole's residence there.

The site managers would not pursue acquisition of additional Thomas Cole paintings due to limited exhibit space and the lack of climate controls.

The "Trip Report: Collection for Storage for the Thomas Cole National Historic Site," from the NPS Northeast Museum Services Center, recommends creating specific storage space for collections over a five-to-ten-year period. The 120-square-foot first-floor room to the side of the front parlor and the 110-square-foot former second-floor guest room (also called Cole's Winter Studio) could be used for storage. The trip report calls for an additional 800 square feet of open unobstructed space for collection storage and 400 square feet for curatorial office, workroom, and research space. The main house would be unable to provide this space, and budget constraints related to this alternative would

make it difficult to create appropriate storage in the Scott and McCord houses. Therefore, under this alternative, an off-site location would have to be identified to provide space for collection storage, office, workroom, and research space.

UNIVERSAL ACCESS

Under this alternative, the site managers would regrade and resurface paths on the property to provide universal access to the grounds and to the handicapped-accessible ground-floor rest room in the main house.

PARKING

The public would continue to park in the Temple Israel parking lot and approach the main house from that parking lot. An agreement between the Thomas Cole NHS and Temple Israel allows the NHS to use the parking lot. The agreement can be terminated by Temple Israel with a month's notice. The synagogue's parking lot can accommodate up to 40 cars. Currently, there are 20-25 visiting vehicles on days the Thomas Cole NHS is open. Buses use this parking area, but the limited space makes it difficult to turn around. Buses are required to make a three-point turn to turn around. A full turn-around could be laid out to provide a 45-foot turning radius, adequate for most buses and certainly for cars.



Postcard of Storehouse Studio, c.1910.
Courtesy of Vedder Memorial Library,
Coxsackie, NY.

Improvements to the parking lot are needed to accommodate universal access and bus and shuttle use, but the Thomas Cole NHS cannot readily make the improvements because it does not own the parking lot. Efforts should be made with Temple Israel to provide universally accessible parking spaces.

If use of the Temple Israel parking lot proves infeasible in the future, parking space would have to be created on or near the historic site. The most likely fallback parking area would be the rear portion of the Thomas Cole NHS, which the Greene County Historical Society owns. It would be accessed from Pine Road, which is a little-used roadway. Although there are drawbacks because of the intrusion of parking into the landscape, this area would be a backup parking place; the site managers could also pursue off-site parking facilities. There also is a need for overflow parking for special events. The Thomas Cole NHS could make arrangements with nearby institutional parking lots to accommodate overflow parking on special occasions.

SITE BOUNDARY

The legislative boundary encloses the national historic site's 3.4-acre historic house, studio, and grounds. Two contemporary residences (Scott

House and McCord House), which have been purchased by the Greene County Historical Society for residential and administrative space, are outside the site boundary. The Greene County Historical Society is interested in acquiring additional properties on the block bounded by Spring Street, Hudson Avenue, Pine Road, and the Rip Van Winkle Bridge approach (Route 23). These properties would provide control of a larger portion of the original Cedar Grove estate and enhance the visitor experience.

In order to expend federal funds on additional properties acquired by the Greene County Historical Society, the Thomas Cole National Historic Site boundary would have to be enlarged. If additional land were acquired, a boundary adjustment study should be done, which would also assess inclusion of the Scott and McCord houses (see Management Areas, below). If the boundary were expanded, then federal expenditures could be made on that property.

MANAGEMENT AREAS

The 3.4-acre Thomas Cole National Historic Site would have a zone designated for visitor use (see management zone plan). This zone includes the main house, Storehouse Studio, New Studio site, and grounds. Outside this visitor use zone and

the boundary of the national historic site, the Greene County Historical Society owns the McCord House and Scott House. Although not subject to this GMP, the Greene County Historical Society uses these structures for administrative and park support purposes and would not open them to visitors. If a boundary adjustment study is done for the Thomas Cole NHS and these facilities qualify for inclusion, then they would be used for administrative support.

CARRYING CAPACITY

The capacity of Cedar Grove should not exceed the number of people who can be accommodated in the main house and Storehouse Studio simultaneously. The historic site estimates that a maximum of 15 people can tour the main house at any given time because additional people would overcrowd the house and make it difficult for the guide to lead the tour and monitor the visitors. The rehabilitated Storehouse Studio could accommodate 15 in the historic studio space. The carrying capacity of the site's buildings is 30 people. The estimate of visitation at the site if this GMP alternative is implemented is approximately 6,000. The capacity for a six-month season opening four days a week/six hours a day would be 18,720.

All visitors have detrimental impacts on structures and landscape, and their impacts accumulate incrementally. The site managers will monitor damage to the interiors of the structures and to the landscape and make necessary repairs and adjustments to visitor management practices.

CONNECTION TO OTHER ARTIST-RELATED SITES IN THE REGION

The Thomas Cole NHS would continue to refer visitors to Frederic Church's home Olana by displaying its brochures.

Another important connection for the Thomas Cole NHS is with sites in the region that inspired

him and other artists to paint their renowned landscapes. Within a 15-mile radius of Thomas Cole's house in Catskill, NY, significant landscapes painted by Cole and other Hudson River artists, including Frederic Church and Sanford Gifford, survive intact. Legislation establishing the Thomas Cole NHS directs the site to develop an Art Trail of sites that inspired paintings by Thomas Cole and his Hudson River School associates. In order to guide visitors to painting sites in the Catskills, the Thomas Cole NHS would develop a map and brochure with other interested organizations.

The Thomas Cole NHS would serve as the starting point of the Art Trail, which would go to Catskill Creek and follow Route 23A up into the Catskills. This road provides access to principal sites on the proposed Art Trail. Kaaterskill Falls, which is located just off the highway in this area, was one of the most celebrated scenic places in 19th-century America. Off Route 23A, a 4-mile trip on Route 18 brings the motorist to North and South Lakes and the site of the Catskill Mountain House, another important scene for Hudson River School paintings.

In undertaking the Art Trail brochure, the Thomas Cole NHS should seek input from such organizations as the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area, Olana, the Mountain Top Historical Society, state agencies, nonprofit museums and cultural organizations, and tourism promotion agencies.

SITE OPERATIONS

Currently the Thomas Cole NHS is managed by a volunteer board and an executive director. Volunteer docents greet visitors and guide them through the site. Under this alternative, the Thomas Cole NHS would have two full-time employees—an executive director and an administrative assistant. Interns would be used to supplement the paid staff and volunteers.

Summary of Alternative Two

Alternative Two: Concept

- Tells the story of Thomas Cole's life at Cedar Grove.
- Rehabilitates existing structures in order to interpret Cole's life at Cedar Grove.

Resource Management

Objective	Potential Action Resulting from Objective
Structures at Cedar Grove are open to the public.	Rehabilitate main house and Storehouse Studio to allow public visitation.
Preserve cultural landscape as it exists.	Maintain grounds to be attractive to public and not compromise existing resources.
Exhibit art and artifacts connected to Thomas Cole.	Exhibit artwork and artifacts on a limited basis in main house.
Maintain collection of art and artifacts connected to Thomas Cole and Cedar Grove.	Store collection to protect its integrity. Identify off-site location to store collection.

Visitor Use and Experience

Objective	Potential Action Resulting from Objective
Visitor orientation provided at main house.	Docent tour interprets Cole's life at Cedar Grove. Exhibit panels in main house describe Cole's life at Cedar Grove.
Visitors see Cole's Storehouse Studio.	Docents lead visits to Storehouse Studio. Selected objects from collection displayed in Storehouse Studio.
Public can visit painting sites in region.	Cole NHS publishes brochure and map of regional painting sites.

Cooperative Efforts and Partnerships

Objective	Potential Action Resulting from Objective
Partnerships are enhanced to place Cole NHS in broader historical context.	Develops painting site brochure in conjunction with other cultural and tourism organizations.

Alternative Three: Thomas Cole's Art and the Regional Landscape

CONCEPT

The primary goal of the Thomas Cole NHS would be to interpret the artistic career and cultural influence of Thomas Cole at Cedar Grove, and the inspiration of the surrounding landscape of the Hudson River Valley and the Catskill Mountains on his art. This would include interpreting Cole's connection to other artists of the Hudson River School, of which he is considered the founder. The leading priorities of the GMP would be restoring the Cedar Grove buildings and grounds to their appearance during Cole's era, and interpreting Thomas Cole's art and his connection to the regional landscape.

The guiding approach at the Thomas Cole NHS would be to tell the story of Thomas Cole's art through the buildings he lived and worked in, which include the house, Storehouse Studio, and New Studio. The site's interpretive themes would also include Cole's influence on the Hudson River School of landscape painting and on the American nature conservation movement.

Cole's letters indicate that he painted many of his major works at Cedar Grove. He painted at least some of the works in *The Course of Empire* series here; he painted the first *Voyage of Life* series in the Storehouse Studio; and he painted many of his local landscapes both in the house and the Storehouse Studio. He was at work on *The Cross and the World* in the New Studio at his death. The main house, the Storehouse Studio, and a new structure resembling the New Studio offer an opportunity to interpret Cole's creative journey.

Another aspect of the Thomas Cole NHS mission is to interpret the surrounding landscape that inspired Cole and other painters of the Hudson River School. Within a 15-mile radius of Cole's house in Catskill, NY, significant landscapes painted by Cole and other Hudson River

artists, including Frederic Church and Sanford Gifford, survive intact. These settings offer an ideal opportunity for visitors to experience the scenes that inspired this art. The Congressional legislation establishing the Thomas Cole National Historic Site (PL 106-146) states that the Cole historic site's plan "shall include recommendations for regional wayside exhibits, to be carried out through cooperative agreements with the State of New York and other public and private entities." This alternative would provide an unparalleled opportunity to study American art in its geographic context.

VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Different areas of the Thomas Cole NHS will be used to interpret different aspects of Thomas Cole's life and art. The Storehouse Studio, main house, New Studio, and the grounds will each be used to tell a different part of Thomas Cole's story. Off-location sites on the Hudson River Art Trail and Frederic Church's Olana can be used to interpret other aspects of Cole's work. Presently the staff at the Thomas Cole NHS tells virtually his entire story at the main house. As the other components of the site become available for visitation, an interpretive plan needs to be developed to present a complementary interpretation in the different areas.

The visitor would be given an introduction to Thomas Cole and his life at Cedar Grove in Cole's Storehouse Studio, which would serve as an orientation facility for visitors. The Storehouse Studio has two sections, one which served as Cole's studio and would be used to interpret his art, and another area historically used for storage, which would provide visitor services. This facility would help establish visitor expectations, provide interpretation of the site, manage the flow of visitors at the site, and guide visitors to related sites.

At the Storehouse Studio, the visitor would be able to view interpretive exhibits, which could use a combination of media. The visitor would



View from Main House toward the
Catskills. Courtesy of Greene County
Historical Society.

be able to see Cole's restored work space in the Storehouse Studio and visit the main house, which would be interpreted to tell the story of Cole's artistic and domestic life there. Docents would give tours of the Storehouse Studio and the house (currently the house tours take approximately 30 minutes). The New Studio structure would display art by Thomas Cole, other Hudson River School artists, and contemporary works inspired by them. The grounds of the Thomas Cole NHS would be interpreted to explain life at Cedar Grove during Cole's era, although information would be provided on the evolution of the landscape since then. An interpretive display in the Storehouse Studio could explain the changes made to the Cedar Grove es-

tate over nearly two centuries. The Storehouse Studio would also include a shop for books and gifts related to Thomas Cole and the Hudson River School as well as a unisex universally-accessible public rest room.

The authorizing legislation for the Thomas Cole National Historic Site mandates that it connect visitors with other sites in the area related to Thomas Cole and the Hudson River School. The Thomas Cole NHS would encourage visitors to visit nearby Olana, home of Cole's pupil Frederic Church and a state historic site. The planned new visitor center at Olana would provide additional interpretation of the Hudson River School. At Cedar Grove, the visitor would also

Northeast view of Storehouse Studio.
Courtesy of R.M. Toole, L.A.



be provided with brochure/maps of the Hudson River Art Trail, which would feature sites where Cole and other Hudson River School artists conceived many of their best-known canvases.

The proposed new gallery space in the New Studio structure would provide the most appropriate venue for exhibitions of art.

The exhibition of and education about contemporary art related to the Hudson River School would be secondary priorities to be undertaken as resources permit. Contemporary art programs could include exhibits, an artist-in-residence program (artists could stay at the Scott House), children and adult art education, an elderhostel, and a summer graduate school internship or fellowship. The programs could include teaching painting as well as art history. Exhibiting contemporary art from the Hudson Valley could be undertaken as long as it does not detract from the site's primary mission to interpret Cole and the Hudson River School.

Weir Farm National Historic Site, in Wilton, CT, more actively promotes art education, but that site has been maintained continuously as a gathering place for artists, and its mission is to encourage ongoing artistic endeavors. Weir Farm NHS was specifically established to promote art education. Art education at Cedar Grove would entail substantial personnel, studio and education space, and financial resources.

In developing the visitor experience, the Thomas Cole NHS must take into account the interests of different audiences, including students, art history specialists, adult tourists, and minority groups. Interpretive techniques must be adjusted according to which groups are targeted audiences. Some groups may be more interested in Thomas Cole's art, while others may be interested in Cole's family life and the development of the Cedar Grove estate. Whatever their interests, they should be able to do things that will help them learn about and remember the primary themes of the historic site.

MAIN HOUSE

The house at the Thomas Cole NHS would be preserved in its current configuration and be used to interpret how Thomas Cole and his family lived at Cedar Grove. The rooms would have historic furnishings and interpretive exhibits telling the story of Cole's artistic and domestic life.

The first-floor rear parlor currently holds panels interpreting Cole's life. These could be moved in whole or in part to the Storehouse Studio, and this parlor would become available for new interpretive uses. The second-floor rear room currently functions as a special exhibitions gallery, which could be relocated to the art gallery in the New Studio structure. This could open up this room for new interpretive purposes. The small upstairs side room, which is used to exhibit paintings, could be used for new interpretive purposes if the paintings are moved. The recently restored ground floor, with the original kitchen and storage rooms, is available for public visitation.

PAINTING STUDIOS

The Storehouse and New Studios should be used to explain the development of Thomas Cole's art. The Storehouse Studio was built as storehouse space in 1839, but Thomas Cole used part of it as a studio. Although there is no record of Cole having designed the Storehouse Studio, the Historic Structures Report finds that it is highly probable that Cole played a part in its design, since he partly paid for its construction and considered himself an architect as well as an artist.

He originally considered it as temporary studio space because he intended to erect his own home and studio on 2.5 acres that he bought from his wife's uncle, John A. Thomson. Cole designed an Italianate-style house in 1841, but never built it. Cole put off construction because of "hard times and an adage which a knowing friend of mine uttered—'fools *build* houses and wise men *live* in them.'" When Cole realized that he would not build his own home and studio for a while, he added an oversize north-facing dormer with large 12/12 light sashes for more even

lighting at the Storehouse Studio. Cole liked to paint away from the main house, which was crowded with household members.

The wood-framed Storehouse Studio has a 30-foot by 60-foot U-shaped footprint (approximately 1,740 square feet, with 300 square feet being a later addition, which it is recommended to remove) with five bays and one-and-a-half stories. The studio's original wood board ceiling found in the bay beneath the added dormer is today concealed by a gypsum board ceiling constructed even with the one-story ceiling at the west side of the studio. The original ceiling has two layers of paint with a layer of varnish over the first layer. The outer layer of blue paint dates from the early 20th cen-

tury, and the bottom layer of salmon-colored paint, with the varnish, is from the 19th century. The painted ceiling corresponds to a practice among artists to paint studio ceilings to provide more even light in their studios.

The Storehouse Studio was originally intended to serve as a storehouse for the farm at Cedar Grove. In later years, the space was used as a carriage house, antique shop, and may have been occupied by farm workers. Today the studio has two sections: the three bays on the east side have storage space on the ground floor and second-floor (the former antiques shop); the two bays on the west side, which until recently were used as a caretaker's living quarters, were the original Thomas Cole studio space.

Interior view of Storehouse Studio looking west during its years as an antiques shop managed by Thomas Cole granddaughter Florence Cole Vincent, c. 1920. Courtesy of Vedder Memorial Library, Coxsackie, NY.



The building, which is in poor repair, must be stabilized before it can be used to interpret Cole's career or provide visitor services. The building is being restored to its appearance when Thomas Cole used it as a painting studio (1839–1846). In accordance with the Historic Structures Condition Assessment prepared by the Northeast Building Conservation Branch of the NPS, this work would entail removing structural elements that were added since then and restoring elements known to exist in the 1840s. Existing documentation of the studio's history is being used to guide the restoration.

The west section of the Storehouse Studio is being restored to interpret Thomas Cole's studio, while the east section will have a shop and visitor welcome area on the ground floor. The second floor will be used for storage space. Some of the interpretive panels telling the story of Thomas Cole at Cedar Grove, which are currently situated in the downstairs east parlor of the main house, may be moved to the Storehouse Studio to provide visitors an orientation to Thomas Cole's painting. The Thomas Cole NHS owns artifacts such as three Cole easels (two large easels and a smaller traveling easel), his paint box, and plaster busts sculpted by others. These artifacts may be installed in the studio space. If security is too great a concern, a replica easel could be installed. The visitor welcome area also could be used for multimedia presentations about Cole and his art.

Thomas Cole finally obtained a purpose-built studio when he built the New Studio. He moved in at Christmastime in 1846 and was able to use it for 14 months before he passed away. Cole designed the New Studio himself and located it on the only parcel at Cedar Grove that he ever owned. The studio faced toward the Catskill Mountains that were his inspiration. The building, though less ornate than his original drawings, followed the Italianate style. The design of the New Studio reflected Cole's artistic tastes near the end of his life. The design followed the Hudson River bracketed Italianate

style advocated by Andrew Jackson Downing in *Cottage Residences, or a Series of Designs for Rural Cottages and Cottage Villas, and Their Gardens and Grounds Adapted to North America* (1842). The New Studio had a hip-and-gable-shaped roof, ornate cornice, matching entry portico, and large double-hung windows.

For many years after Cole's death, his family maintained the building as an art studio, a shrine to the great artist. Daughter Emily Cole (1843–1913) used to paint china there. During the early 20th century, Cole's granddaughter Florence Cole Vincent used it with the Storehouse Studio as "Thomas Cole Studios of Antiques." Cole's great-granddaughter Edith Cole Silberstein sold off the New Studio to a party that wanted to use it as a vacation home. The building turned out to be too unstable for habitation. It was demolished in 1973, and the property was reacquired by Edith Cole Silberstein. Its demolition has had a negative impact on the integrity of the Cedar Grove site.

Since the New Studio was such an integral feature of Cedar Grove and so important to Thomas Cole's presence there, a new building should be constructed resembling the New Studio. The Historic Structures Report, which contains substantial information about the construction and design of the New Studio, concludes that sufficient documentation of the exterior of the New Studio exists to inform these construction plans. Less is known about the architectural details and furnishings of the building's interior at the time of Cole's occupancy. Therefore, no attempt would be made to re-create the interior in a historic manner that might misrepresent its original appearance. The architectural details for the exterior of the New Studio structure would be based on Cole's original plans, historic photographs, and information obtained through a thorough archeological investigation of the site.

This new construction would be compatible with the Secretary of the Interior's "Standards for Reconstruction" and NPS Management Policies.

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards permit reconstruction if documentary and physical evidence is available to permit accurate reconstruction and such reconstruction is essential to the public understanding of the property. The NPS Management Policies permit reconstruction of missing structures if there is no alternative that would accomplish the park's interpretive mission, sufficient data exists for the design, it occurs at the original location, and the disturbance or loss of significant archeological resources is minimized (NPS Management Policies, 5.3.5.4.4 Reconstruction of Missing Structures).

The project team and site managers, the Greene County Historical Society, have concluded that understanding the landscape and improvements at Cedar Grove during Thomas Cole's era would be difficult without the presence of Cole's New Studio. In addition, there is a need for a museum-quality art gallery, since neither the main house nor the Storehouse Studio are set up for large painting exhibits. The reconstructed New Studio would also become a community asset, able to host education programs and meetings.

The reconstructed New Studio would allow the site to more effectively interpret the evolution of Thomas Cole's artistic career at Cedar Grove by reconstructing the Italianate studio structure that embodied Thomas Cole's vision of the desirable creative environment. Thomas Cole designed the structure, which, as one of the first purpose-built artist studios in America, influenced other leading artists, especially those in the Hudson Valley, to build specially designed studios. Cole was painting *The Cross and the World* series in the New Studio when he died.

The Historic Structures Report "The Artist Studios of Thomas Cole, Cedar Grove, Catskill, New York," prepared by the Northeast Cultural Resources Center, Building Conservation Branch in 2002, made the following recommendation regarding the New Studio:

A) Following the procedural requirements and standards for the reconstruction of a historic

structure found in Chapter 8 of DO-28 (Management of Historic and Prehistoric Structures), the exterior of the New Studio can, if desired, be reconstructed to its Cole-era appearance following a through archeological investigation of the new studio site.

B) Due to the limited existing documentation of the new studio's historic interior appearance, the interior of a reconstructed new studio should not be designed in any manner that might lead to the misrepresentation of the building as the original 1846 structure. Instead the interior should be designed for contemporary uses such as a gallery, a site visitor center, a learning or research center, a limited curatorial storage facility, or another contemporary use deemed appropriate under the GMP.

In compliance with NPS Management Policies (5.3.5 Treatment of Cultural Resources), the reconstructed New Studio would be clearly marked as a reconstruction. This NPS Management Policy states:

As a basic principle, anything of historical appearance that the National Park Service presents to the public in a park will be either an authentic survival from the past, or an accurate representation of that once existing there. Reconstructions and reproductions will be clearly identified as such.

The proposed art gallery would exhibit the relatively small collection of paintings owned by the Greene County Historical Society, which owns paintings by other Hudson River artists than Cole, including Charles Herbert Moore and Benjamin Stone. The historic site does not have a significant collection of Cole paintings to exhibit to the public. Other institutions and individuals have offered to loan paintings by Cole and Hudson River School artists if the Thomas Cole NHS provides high-quality security and climate control for the gallery space. The house displays works by painters other than Cole in various rooms and may continue to display paintings if climate controls are installed. The Northeast

Museum Services Center has recommended contracting for an assessment of the information collected from monitoring devices and determination of equipment enhancements or appropriate new equipment for improved environmental conditions in the main house. The result should include procedural and equipment modifications that are sensitive to the building and collections while accommodating the needs of the public.

The reconstructed New Studio, with an estimated 704 square feet (22 feet by 32 feet), could serve interpretive and educational purposes, providing gallery space and/or meeting space. Paintings could be displayed along the walls and on panels erected in the middle of the studio. Meetings and classes would be constrained by the small size of the structure. Even if there were no exhibit panels in the middle of the space, no more than 40 people could use the space at one time (assuming approximately 100 square feet for a vestibule and administrative space and 15

square feet per person at a meeting). The board of the Thomas Cole NHS would have to develop a more definitive strategy about obtaining paintings on loan from other institutions. Since the building would be a reconstruction, state-of-the-art climate control, security systems, and fire suppression could be installed during construction. Because of the small building footprint, it may be too small to accommodate a basement, which, in any case would not have existed in Cole's time. Art curators and collection experts warn against storage in underground areas because of potential water damage.

The Thomas Cole NHS would be unlikely to exhibit many of Cole's works, so the site should also develop some way of using videos and computers to help visitors appreciate the range and influence of Cole's work. Multimedia presentations would likely be best exhibited in the Storehouse Studio.

Since Cole used a now-demolished outbuilding, called "The Cottage," as a studio between 1834 and 1839, further archeological and archival research should be done to learn more about that building and incorporate those findings into the interpretation of Cedar Grove.

For planning the uses of the Storehouse Studio and New Studio, Samuel F. B. Morse's home at Locust Grove, in nearby Poughkeepsie, has a new visitor center that may be instructive. The visitor center has two galleries interpreting Morse's art and his invention of the telegraph. One gallery (approx. 30 feet by 18 feet, with an area of 540 square feet) has seven paintings and several interpretive panels. An adjacent theater shows a 10-minute video on Morse's life. The visitor center also has a large gift and book shop.

OTHER STRUCTURES

Between the main house and the Storehouse Studio, there is a decorated 19th-century privy, which has been recently restored.

Within the boundary of the Thomas Cole NHS there is a metal utility shed for storing lawn



New Studio from northwest, c.1960.
Courtesy of Edith Cole Silberstein.

mowers and other equipment located at the rear of the property on Pine Road. There are no immediate plans to move this shed; but, if a landscape treatment is adopted that would seek to return the site to its appearance during Thomas Cole's era, the shed could be removed and its contents moved to the Scott House or another off-site location.

Abutting the NHS boundary, the Greene County Historical Society owns the Scott House, 36 Hudson Avenue, and the McCord House, 107 Spring Street. Across the street from the main house is the McCord House, which is currently used as a residence for Cedar Grove caretakers, as is the Scott House, which abuts the NHS on the southeast. In the future, the Scott House could be converted to office space to serve the Greene County Historical Society, store collections, and provide curatorial, workroom, and research space.

Abutting the north side of the Thomas Cole NHS is Temple Israel, a 1977 structure on property that once belonged to Cedar Grove. The Thomas Cole NHS has a positive relationship with Temple Israel, with an agreement allowing the Thomas Cole NHS to use the Temple parking lot and occasionally use the building for meetings. If Temple Israel ever closes or relocates and seeks to sell its building, the Thomas Cole NHS would seek to acquire it. The Thomas Cole NHS could use this building for offices, meeting space, and/or exhibits and visitor services and overcome space constraints imposed by other structures at the site. This would enable the Thomas Cole NHS to concentrate on showing the historic house and studios for interpretive purposes and not have to use them for meeting, administrative, or visitor service functions. Acquiring Temple Israel would also help the Thomas Cole NHS secure itself from developments that might compromise its historic integrity and the capacity to host visitors at the historic site. The purchase would also give the Thomas Cole NHS control over the parking

area. Federal funds could not be used to purchase this property. In order for the site to receive NPS assistance in developing Temple Israel as a visitor facility, a boundary adjustment to include the Temple Israel property in the NHS would be necessary.

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

The Cedar Grove site had approximately 110 acres when Thomas Cole lived there. The site stretched east to the Hudson River and west past Spring Street. During the period of Cole's residency, it was a working farm under the auspices of John A. Thomson, Mrs. Cole's uncle, who owned the property. Mr. Thomson died in 1846, and Cole's wife Maria and her three sisters inherited the farm. Cole himself was not very involved in the management of the farm. After that Cole's widow, their four children, and his three sisters-in-law (who remained unmarried) continued to reside there. Over time parcels at Cedar Grove were gradually sold off, with a large parcel being acquired for the Rip Van Winkle Bridge approach during the early 1930s. Plans called for taking the entire house for the bridge approach, but Cole's granddaughter Florence Cole Vincent made sure the house was preserved. Unfortunately, the so-called "Cottage" outbuilding, located north of the main house, was removed. Cole used it as a residence and a studio during his early years at Cedar Grove.

By the time the Thomas Cole NHS was established in 1999, the site had been whittled down to 3.4 acres. Since then the Greene County Historical Society has purchased 2.1 acres of adjoining property.

Since all that is left of the Cedar Grove grounds is the immediate area around the main house, it would be nearly impossible to restore the grounds as the working farm it was during the 19th century. During Thomas Cole's lifetime, the 3.4 acres around the historic house and studios varied from lawn and woodland surfaces to orchards, driveways, work yards, kitchen gardens,



Gate piers at Spring Street entrance to Cedar Grove, c. 1905. Courtesy of the Greene County Historical Society.

Cole House - Entrance columns - Circa 1905

Circa 1905. Van Loan, Photographer - From the collection of Phyllis Ellenthal

and ornamental flower gardens. Since Cedar Grove was a farm, certain areas close to the house were a workaday landscape. Nevertheless, ornamental shrubbery and flower beds were also cultivated, notably on the south front of the house and around the west side, where the driveway entered the property. The Spring Street frontage was defined by walls and fencing, with several gates giving access into the site for both pedestrians and horse-drawn vehicles. Records document that there were many trees on the site, including a grove of cedars northeast of the main house that gave the property its name.

After Cole's death, much of the use and appearance of the landscape remained unchanged. The ornamental areas and the grounds of Cole's New

Studio evolved into a picturesque profusion of bloom, as seen in period photographs and mentioned by several late-19th- and early-20th-century visitors. These visitors also identified plantings that were likely in place at the end of Cole's lifetime a half century or more earlier. The old front garden was said to include crocus, hyacinths, daffodils, hollyhocks, poppies, roses, lemon lilies, fraxinella, larkspur, valerian, asters, petunias, anemones, oleanders, and verbenas. Lilacs were located at the west end of the porch. The area to the east end of the house had lilies of the valley, yellow roses, rises, peonies, marigolds, and chrysanthemums.

By the 1930s, a more elaborate ornamental landscape had been developed. The overgrown

picturesque look was tidied up. Lawns were extended and maintained in a more refined way. Northeast of the main house, ornamental shrubbery, such as then-fashionable hydrangeas and shrub roses, were added and urns and sculptural features (some from the antiques business operated by Florence Cole Vincent) were set up where more informal and utilitarian landscape elements had been previously. The flower garden south of the house was enlarged and flower beds were extended to areas east and northeast of the main house. Although the kitchen garden beds were partly retained, this activity was reduced. The wall and fence demarcations along Spring Street were removed at an unknown date, so that the roadside landscape was more open and exposed. Trees close to the house and studios grew, though some were removed. Photographs from this period show the results of these alterations, which can be attributed to the taste of Florence Cole Vincent, who took over management of the property even before her father Theodore Cole died in 1928. She seems to have starting making changes to the landscape around 1914.

The Thomas Cole NHS will seek to re-create the cultural landscape of the 1830s and 1840s, when Thomas Cole lived there. This landscape treatment will be informed by the research in the Cultural Landscape Report, prepared by landscape architect Robert M. Toole. Such a landscape treatment would entail replanting cedar trees. Driveways would be modest gravel surfaces, and the kitchen garden south of the Storehouse Studio would be replicated, although planting historically appropriate vegetables could be a secondary undertaking. A period treatment of the landscape would also seek to replicate the Spring Street frontage as detailed in the 1848 sketch by Frederic Church. The brick piers, stone walls, and picket fencing would be reconstructed on their original alignments. Archeological research would be important in establishing precise locations for missing landscape components.

The Thomas Cole NHS will interpret the history of the Cedar Grove estate through interpretive

displays. A photographic display, model diorama, or other appropriate media could be used to depict the Cedar Grove estate and its agricultural activities during the time of Cole's residence. Interpretive displays should tell the story of Cedar Grove after his death, including the role of Florence Cole Vincent in preserving the estate.

An illustration of the 1840s view looking westward from the main house mounted at the porch could provide a better sense of not only the Cedar Grove estate, but the surrounding community of Catskill as well.

The Thomas Cole NHS is interested in burying the overhead utility lines running in front of the house along Spring Street. These utility lines detract from the view from the porch out to the Catskill Mountains. The site managers are working with the utility companies to undertake this project.

Another issue to be addressed is the possible purchase of abutting properties in order to piece together segments of the original estate. Although it would be impractical to reassemble the entire 110-acre estate, the Thomas Cole NHS might acquire abutting properties if and when they come up for sale. Priorities should be properties on the block bounded by Spring Street, Hudson Avenue, Route 23, and Pine Road. By acquiring abutting parcels, the site would be able to improve the visitor experience by creating more of a continuous cultural landscape.

COLLECTIONS AND COLLECTION STORAGE

To support the GMP planning process, the Thomas Cole NHS has developed a Scope of Collection Statement with the guidance of the Northeast Museum Services Center. One of the main issues relates to the Greene County Historical Society's being the parent organization of the Thomas Cole NHS. Although the Thomas Cole NHS has a measure of autonomy, much of its collections and archives belong to the Greene County Historical Society, which owns additional collections and properties (Bronck House

Thomas Cole Paintings

Cole made the Catskills and Hudson Valley into symbols of national grandeur for his generation. Besides influencing painting and poetry, Cole also influenced the way Americans thought about preserving nature. He decried the destruction of beautiful landscapes in poetry, essays, and some of his paintings.



Thomas Cole (right) is pictured posthumously with his friend, poet William Cullen Bryant, in this famous memorial painting. Asher B. Durand, *Kindred Spirits*, 1849. Collections of The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.



One of Thomas Cole's most popular works was the five-painting series *The Course of the Empire*. This painting, the fourth in the series, depicts the empire's destruction. Thomas Cole, *The Course of the Empire—Destruction*, 1836. Collection of the New York Historical Society. 1858.4.



Cole painted many scenes near his home at Cedar Grove, including a dozen different paintings of nearby Catskill Creek. Thomas Cole, *Catskill Creek*, 1845. Collection of the New York Historical Society, S-157.



Thomas Cole, *The Clove, Catskills*, c. 1827. Oil on canvas, 25" x 33". Courtesy of the New Britain Museum of American Art, New Britain, Connecticut. Charles F. Smith Fund. 1945.22. Photography credit: Michael Agee.

Scenes painted by Thomas Cole over 150 years ago still look similar today. *Cole's View, Kaaterskill Clove, Catskill Preserve, New York*. ©Hardie Truesdale, 1991.



and Vedder Research Library in Coxsackie, NY) besides Cedar Grove. The Northeast Museum Services Center has developed a Scope of Collection Statement for the Thomas Cole NHS in order to inform and implement the GMP, guide future acquisitions, maintain the integrity objects in the collections, and describe the types of objects that should be collected.

The Thomas Cole NHS collection contains artwork, tools, furnishings, photographs, reference works, and personal items relating to Thomas Cole's life and work at Cedar Grove. Collections are displayed in furnished rooms and formal exhibits. Few of the artifacts are in storage and not on display. Since the purpose of the Thomas Cole NHS is to interpret the art and life of Thomas Cole, as well as his impact on the Hudson River School of painting, collections should be limited to artwork, artifacts, and archives directly related to Thomas Cole, his connection to the Hudson River School, and the history of Cedar Grove, especially the period of Cole's residence there.

The Thomas Cole NHS should consider pursuing selected site-related objects and art-related objects in the hands of living family members or purchasers at the 1964 Cole house estate auction. These objects should be from the Thomas Cole period (1834–1848) and should serve interpretive goals. The site may pursue Thomas Cole drawings and paintings. The number of works of art to be collected will be determined by the site's ability to care for them properly, cost (the site should not divert funds from the care of items currently in the collection to purchase new objects), and its interpretive goals. Works of art by Thomas Cole would be the first priority, though they might cost the most. The GMP project team believes that the best way to obtain paintings for exhibition is by using short- or long-term loans from other sites.

The Thomas Cole NHS has recently been granted a long-term loan of Cole's painting *Prometheus Bound* by the Village of Catskill Library, which has long displayed it. Another

potential loan might include *The Angels Ministering to Christ in Wilderness*, which hung in the main parlor at Cedar Grove until 1964, when the Worcester Art Museum bought it at auction (the museum keeps the painting in storage). The Bronck House, which is owned by the Greene County Historical Society, has Hudson River School paintings by Jasper Cropsey and others that might be better exhibited at the Thomas Cole NHS. Other institutions and art collectors have indicated they might loan works if appropriate climate-control and security features were in place.

The "Trip Report: Collection for Storage for the Thomas Cole National Historic Site," from the NPS Northeast Museum Services Center, recommends creating specific storage space for collections over a five-to-ten-year period. Some rooms in the main house are currently used for storage.

A) A 110-square-foot former guest room could be used for storing larger objects like trunks and excess furniture.

B) An additional 120 square feet in a room to the side of the front parlor could provide storage space needed for smaller, sensitive objects and serve as a reference library and room for docents.

C) The trip report calls for an additional 800 square feet of open unobstructed space for collection storage and 400 square feet for curatorial office, workroom, and research space. This space would have to be protected by water-based fire suppression system (wet-pipe system preferred).

This collection storage space could be created over a five-to-ten-year period.

New space for collection storage and curatorial offices could be provided in the modern Scott House. The Scott House could be renovated to provide this space, depending upon the housing requirements for the site director or caretaker.

This structure could be equipped with appropriate HVAC and security systems. Basement areas should not be used for storage because they may be prone to flooding and dampness.

In developing a collection such as described above, the Thomas Cole NHS will pursue a professional staffperson with responsibility for maintaining and expanding the collection, curating exhibits, and implementing the policies called for in the Scope of Collection Statement. This would entail physically maintaining the collection, creating and maintaining computerized collection records, writing and enforcing exhibition and storage guidelines, planning future collection storage, and recommending future acquisitions in accordance with the Scope of Collection Statement.

UNIVERSAL ACCESS

The first and second floors of the main house do not have universal access. A handicapped lift either next to the front steps or in the building would not solve the problem of access over high thresholds or access to the second floor. A lift also might compromise the historic integrity of the structure. As an alternative for visitors unable to climb the steps, the NHS could exhibit a professional video tour of the first and second floors of the main house in the visitor center in the Storehouse Studio.

In order to provide universal access, the site needs to regrade and resurface paths between buildings, especially to the Storehouse Studio and the New Studio structure, to accommodate wheelchair access.



Workmen at Storehouse Studio, c. 1910. Cole's eldest son Theodore Cole (1838–1928) is the man wearing the long coat and hat. Courtesy of Vedder Memorial Library, Coxsackie, New York.

Public rest rooms on the first floor of the main house are accessible from the outside north entrance to the house. A wheelchair-accessible rest room would be constructed in the Storehouse Studio.

PARKING

The public would continue to park in and enter the site from the Temple Israel parking lot. An agreement between the Thomas Cole NHS and Temple Israel allows the NHS to use the parking lot and hold meetings in the synagogue. The agreement can be terminated by Temple Israel with a month's notice. The parking lot can accommodate up to 40 cars. Currently, there are 20-25 visiting vehicles each day the Thomas Cole NHS is open. Buses use this parking area, but the limited space makes it difficult to turn around. Buses are required to make a three-point turn to turn around. A full turn-around could be laid out to provide a 45-foot turning radius, adequate for most buses and certainly for cars. This would enable cars and buses to exit the parking lot without having to back out into the street, but it would entail the removal of approximately 10 auto parking spaces. This loss of spaces could be alleviated by using some of the wooded area at the periphery of Cedar Grove to expand the parking area.

Improvements to the parking lot are needed to accommodate universal access and bus and shuttle use, but the Thomas Cole NHS cannot readily make the improvements because it does not own the parking lot.

Efforts should be made with Temple Israel to provide universally accessible parking spaces. The parking area could also be improved by paving the gravel area of the parking lot and adding pavement so that buses or shuttle vans can turn around without making three-point turns.

If use of the Temple Israel parking lot proves infeasible in the future, parking space would have to be created on or around the site. The criteria

for siting the parking area should take into account public access and the impacts on cultural landscape resources, archeological resources, views, and neighbors. The most likely fallback parking area would be the rear of the Thomas Cole NHS, which the Greene County Historical Society owns. It would be accessed from Pine Road, which is a little-used roadway. Although there are drawbacks because of the intrusion of parking into the landscape, this area would be a backup parking place; the site managers could also pursue off-site parking facilities. There also is a need for overflow parking for special events. The Thomas Cole NHS could make arrangements with nearby institutional parking lots to accommodate overflow parking on special occasions.

SITE BOUNDARY

The Greene County Historical Society currently owns 5.5 acres at the site, including the 3.4-acre historic house and studio site (the legislated boundary of the NHS) and two contemporary homes on adjacent lots (Scott House and McCord House) being used for residential and administrative space. Greene County Historical Society ownership is interested in acquiring additional properties on the block bounded by Spring Street, Hudson Avenue, Pine Road, and the Rip Van Winkle Bridge approach (Route 23). These additional properties would provide control of a larger portion of the original Cedar Grove estate and enhance the visitor experience. Acquisition of these additional parcels by the Greene County Historical Society would require enlargement of the Thomas Cole National Historic Site boundary so that federal funds could be used for projects on those parcels. At the time this occurs, the boundary adjustment study should examine inclusion of the Scott and McCord houses, even if they will be part of the administrative support zone.

MANAGEMENT ZONE

The 3.4-acre national historic site would have a zone designated for visitor use (see management zone plan). It includes the main house, Store-

house Studio, New Studio site, and grounds. Outside this visitor use zone and the boundary of the national historic site, the Greene County Historical Society owns the McCord House and Scott House. This is the administrative support zone, and these buildings will be used for administrative purposes and will not be open to visitors. If Temple Israel were added to the site, it would become part of the visitor use zone and the site boundary would be expanded. Any residences abutting the Thomas Cole NHS that are acquired could become part of the visitor zone if they were demolished, landscaped, and opened to public access.

CARRYING CAPACITY

The carrying capacity of the Thomas Cole NHS is determined by the capacity of the structures open to the public. The historic site estimates that a maximum of 45 people can tour the main house per hour because additional people would overcrowd the house and make it difficult for the guide to lead the tour and monitor the visitors. The rehabilitated Storehouse Studio could have a carrying capacity of 20 in the historic studio space and the visitor center/bookshop. The New Studio structure could accommodate up to 40 for meetings, but it would be unlikely that more than 20 persons at one time could view art exhibits in the New Studio comfortably; therefore the capacity of the site's buildings is 85 people. Estimates of visitation at the site once the GMP is implemented range from 10,000 to 15,000 (current visitation is 4,000). The carrying capacity for a six-month season opening four days a week/six hours a day would be 53,040.

The capacity could be expanded by increasing the number of opening days. For instance, the historic site could open six or seven days a week during the six-month summer season and could open on weekends in April and November. That could increase the potential number of visitors by 50%.

All visitors have detrimental impacts on structures and grounds, and their impacts accumulate

incrementally. The site managers need to monitor damage to the interiors of the structures and to the landscape and make necessary repairs and adjustments to visitor management practices.

CONNECTION TO OTHER HISTORIC AND ART-RELATED SITES IN THE REGION

The Thomas Cole NHS is located within the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area, which has three major interpretive themes, including "Nature and Culture." The heritage area management plan specifically mentions Thomas Cole and the Hudson River School as important elements of the theme "Nature and Culture." The Thomas Cole NHS could play a prominent role in the programming of the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area, whose mission is to increase access to and interpret the nationally significant heritage resources in the valley through thematic trails and linkages. The national heritage area could help place the Thomas Cole NHS in context and encourage coordinated interpretation with other properties that tell the story of artists in the Hudson River Valley. A stronger relationship between the two organizations would be beneficial to both.

Another natural partner for the Thomas Cole NHS is the Olana State Historic Site, located just across the Hudson River in Hudson, NY. Olana was the home of Hudson River School artist and Cole student Frederic Edwin Church from 1860 until his death in 1900. It has been owned as a state historic site by New York State since 1966 and is a leading cultural attraction in the Hudson Valley. The Thomas Cole NHS and Olana promote each other to their visitors and have worked on cooperative projects, including a symposium for the 200th anniversary of Thomas Cole's birth in 2001.

At a public meeting on the Thomas Cole NHS general management plan on March 21, 2002, Linda E. McLean, Historic Site Manager of the Olana State Historic Site, said there should be

Thomas Cole, *Catskill Creek*, 1845.
Collection of the New York Historical
Society. S-157.



many opportunities for the Thomas Cole NHS and Olana to jointly interpret the history of the Hudson River School during the 19th century. Coordination might include joint tickets, brochures, and special events like the Thomas Cole 200th-birthday symposium in 2001.

Olana is planning to build a new visitor center to enhance the visitor experience at Olana, display art, and encourage a heightened appreciation of Church and other Hudson River School painters, including Thomas Cole. The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and The Olana Partnership have completed a Comprehensive Plan and Environmental Impact Statement on the 24,000-square-foot facility. Currently the cost of the facility would be \$11.3 million out of a \$30.5 million capital campaign with endowment. Significant fund-raising must take place before plans move forward.

The proposed visitor center could create partnership opportunities for the Thomas Cole NHS relating to programming, school programs, and interpretation. In the future, when the visitor center is open, there may be opportunities for shared shuttle bus services, which The Olana Partnership has studied.

Greene County obtained a grant from the Hudson River Greenway Conservancy for the Hudson River Valley to develop a 3,000-foot walking trail in Catskill, NY, connecting the RamsHorn-Livingston Sanctuary, Catskill Point, Dutchmans Landing Park, the Beattie-Powers Place (an 1831 Greek Revival house owned by the Village of Catskill), and the Thomas Cole NHS. This project would expand upon the Puddingstone Path that currently links Dutchmans Landing Park with the Beattie-Powers Place. The strategy is to continue the trail across the Rip Van Winkle Bridge to Olana.

This current view of Catskill Creek shows how scenes painted by Thomas Cole have changed little since his era. Courtesy of National Park Service.



Though still in the planning stages, this trail has the potential to develop tourism in Catskill by linking a set of important historic sites in the local community—the restored Freight Master’s Building at Catskill Point, the historic Beattie-Powers Place, and the Thomas Cole NHS. Long term, there may be an opportunity to reinstate ferry service between Hudson and the Olana site at the east side of the Hudson River that would connect with Catskill Point and, thus, the Thomas Cole NHS. Each of the proposed trail projects would improve the visibility and accessibility of the Thomas Cole NHS. This would also provide the Thomas Cole NHS an opportunity to interpret the physical and social aspects of the Catskill community as it was when Thomas Cole lived there through interpretive brochures and signage.

The Greene County Historical Society owns the burial plot of Thomas Cole and his family

in the Thompson Street Cemetery a half-mile away. The Thomas Cole NHS will direct visitors at Cedar Grove to the burial site, but is reluctant to erect trail signs or other obvious signs at the cemetery for fear of inviting vandalism in the cemetery, as the cemetery has suffered vandalism in the past.

HUDSON RIVER SCHOOL ART TRAIL

Another important connection for the Thomas Cole NHS is with sites in the region that inspired him and other artists to paint their renowned landscapes. Within a 15-mile radius of the Thomas Cole house in Catskill, NY, significant landscapes painted by Cole and other Hudson River artists, including Frederic Church and Sanford Gifford, survive intact. Scenes painted by other Hudson River School artists stretch up and down the valley. Legislation establishing the Thomas Cole National Historic Site resolves that the Cole Historic Site’s plan shall “include recommendations for regional wayside exhibits, to

be carried out through cooperative agreements with the State of New York and other public and private entities.” The Hudson River School Art Trail would interpret themes important to the Hudson Valley and to American culture and environmental stewardship.

This project would have wayside interpretive signs including pictures of paintings depicting that site as well as background information on the painting, the artist, and how the scene has been preserved. These wayside interpretive signs would serve as “captions on the landscape,” enhancing the visitor’s understanding about the Hudson River landscape and the art that it inspired.

The Thomas Cole NHS has developed a first-phase proposal for the trail drawing on the National Park Service’s conceptual map of painting sites, which was originally published in the National Park Service’s *Thomas Cole Suitability/Feasibility Study* (1991). This project would erect wayside interpretive exhibits at the six sites that are most appropriate for viewing the Hudson River-Catskill Mountain landscape. The project would also erect trail markers on highways and publish trail maps and brochures. The brochures would be a primary tool for publicizing the trail and helping visitors use it. It would provide directions for motorists and give hiking information from parking sites. Supporters of an unsuccessful TEA-21 grant proposal for the Art Trail made to the State of New York Department of Transportation included the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, which maintains the Catskill Forest Preserve; the New York State Division of Tourism; the Hudson River Valley Greenway Communities Council/Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area; and the Greene County Tourism/Promotion Department. This proposal may be resubmitted to the State of New York and other grant programs.

For the first phase, the Thomas Cole NHS would serve as the starting point of the art trail, which would go to Catskill Creek and follow Route 23A up into the Catskills. This road provides access

to principal sites on the proposed Art Trail. Kaaterskill Falls, which is located just off the highway in this area, was one of the most celebrated scenic places in 19th-century America. It was painted by Thomas Cole, Asher B. Durand, and other Hudson River School artists. Off Route 23A, a 4-mile trip on Route 18 brings the motorist to North and South Lakes and the site of the Catskill Mountain House, an important location for Hudson River School paintings and 19th- and early 20th-century tourism. A potential partner for the project is the Mountain Top Historical Society, which tells the story of the Catskill Mountain House and its surroundings.

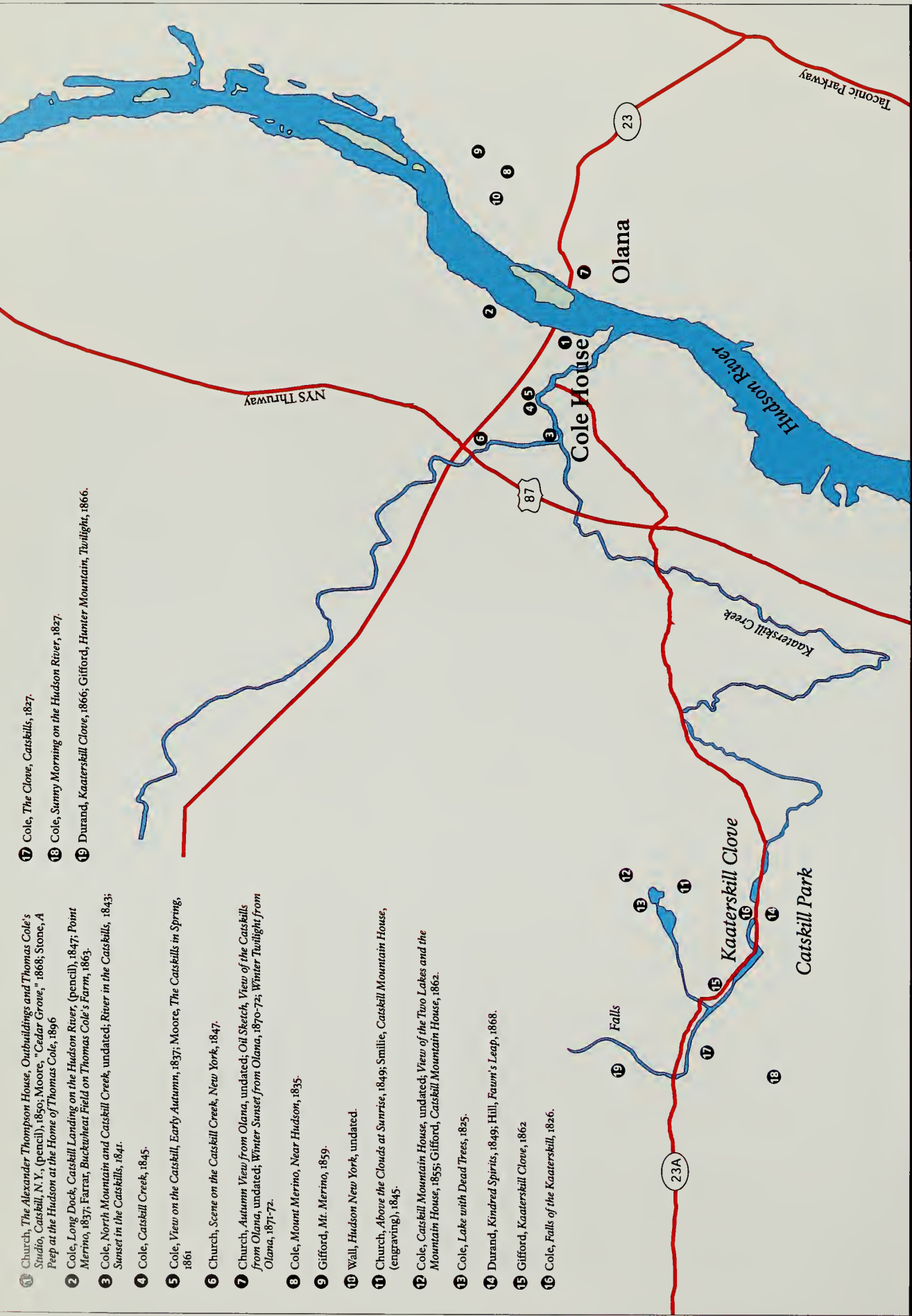
The transportation study (2002) done for the Thomas Cole NHS made additional recommendations for developing the Art Trail at particular sites:

Catskill Creek, Catskill—The best perspective for viewing the site where Cole painted a dozen works is from the bridge over Catskill Creek. The painting site is easily recognizable. This painting site is located near the intersection of Main Street/Old State Route 23 and U.S. Route 9W in Catskill. Vehicular wayfinding and parking are problematic because there are several roads intersecting at this point. The best opportunity for parking would be to work out an arrangement to use the adjacent parking lot at Tatiana’s Restaurant (which has developed a dining patio overlooking Catskill Creek). A wayside exhibit could be erected at the bridge.

South Lake, North-South Lakes State Campground, Haines Falls—This site is approximately 15 miles from the Thomas Cole NHS and can be reached from State Route 23 and State Route 18. Within the Catskill Forest Preserve and Park, which is owned and managed by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, South Lake is the scene of Thomas Cole’s painting *Lake with Dead Trees* (1825). It has a similar appearance today. Access to the site is

- 1 Church, *The Alexander Thompson House, Outbuildings and Thomas Cole's Studio, Catskill, N.Y.*, (pencil), 1850; Moore, "Cedar Grove," 1868; Stone, *A Peep at the Hudson at the Home of Thomas Cole*, 1896
- 2 Cole, *Long Dock, Catskill Landing on the Hudson River*, (pencil), 1847; Point Merino, 1837; Farrar, *Buckwheat Field on Thomas Cole's Farm*, 1863
- 3 Cole, *North Mountain and Catskill Creek*, undated; *River in the Catskills*, 1843; *Sunset in the Catskills*, 1841
- 4 Cole, *Catskill Creek*, 1845
- 5 Cole, *View on the Catskill, Early Autumn*, 1837; Moore, *The Catskills in Spring*, 1861
- 6 Church, *Scene on the Catskill Creek, New York*, 1847
- 7 Church, *Autumn View from Olana*, undated; *Oil Sketch, View of the Catskills from Olana*, undated; *Winter Sunset from Olana*, 1870-72; *Winter Twilight from Olana*, 1871-72
- 8 Cole, *Mount Merino, Near Hudson*, 1835
- 9 Gifford, *Mt. Merino*, 1859
- 10 Wall, *Hudson New York*, undated
- 11 Church, *Above the Clouds at Sunrise*, 1849; Smilie, *Catskill Mountain House*, (engraving), 1845
- 12 Cole, *Catskill Mountain House*, undated; *View of the Two Lakes and the Mountain House*, 1855; Gifford, *Catskill Mountain House*, 1862
- 13 Cole, *Lake with Dead Trees*, 1825
- 14 Durand, *Kindred Spirits*, 1849; Hill, *Faun's Leap*, 1868
- 15 Gifford, *Kaaterskill Clove*, 1862
- 16 Cole, *Falls of the Kaaterskill*, 1826

- 17 Cole, *The Clove, Catskills*, 1827
- 18 Cole, *Sunny Morning on the Hudson River*, 1827
- 19 Durand, *Kaaterskill Clove*, 1866; Gifford, *Hunter Mountain, Twilight*, 1866



Hudson River School Painting Sites



Thomas Cole House National Historic Landmark
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

North



through the campground access road and parking lot, which is closed to cars during the winter months. There is ample space for a wayside exhibit.

View of Catskill Mountain House Site—Thomas Cole and many other artists painted the Catskill Mountain House site looking south from Sunset Rock and the Catskill Escarpment. This vantage point is within the Catskill Forest Preserve and Park. It would not be appropriate to place a wayside exhibit in this relatively remote area, so an exhibit ought to be located at the North–South Lakes State Campground parking lot or the site of the demolished Catskill Mountain House, which has interpretive signage. An art walking trail could be laid out in this area because walking trails already exist there.

Kaaterskill Clove—One of Thomas Cole’s most popular landscapes is *The Clove, Catskill* (1827). The scene appears similar today. The problem is getting public access to the place where Cole painted from because it is on private property. A wayside exhibit could be erected in a public area near the site off Route 23A.

Kaaterskill Falls—This is the scene of Cole’s early painting *Falls of Kaaterskill* (1826) as well as Asher B. Durand’s memorial to Cole *Kindred Spirits* (1849). This site is on public property in the Catskill Forest Preserve and Park, but it is somewhat difficult to reach. The falls can be reached from the bottom by parking at a small parking lot on State Route 23A and then walking along the edge of the road for several hundred feet, crossing the winding road, and then hiking up a trail through rugged terrain to view the falls. Visitors can reach the falls from above by driving through the North–South Lakes State Campground to Laurel House Road and hiking down to the falls, a route which is not very safe.

The current pedestrian access below the falls is not safe because pedestrians cross the high-

way at many unmarked locations. An alternative to this situation might include delineating the highway crossing with a crosswalk and signage or building a walkway outboard of the current guardrail over the steep slope. Safety improvements are also needed at the upper locations to restrict pedestrian access near rock faces.

Before embarking upon the Art Trail project, the Thomas Cole NHS should work with a committee including the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area, Olana, state agencies, nonprofit museums and cultural organizations, and tourism promotion agencies to firm up plans for the trail. With these groups, additional sites may be added to the trail.

The Art Trail project would be complemented by Thomas Cole NHS efforts to tie into the area’s highway network by obtaining signs on the New York Thruway and directional sites on state and local roadways.

SITE OPERATIONS

Currently the Thomas Cole NHS is managed by a volunteer board and a full-time executive director, enabling the site to provide better public services and broaden the funding base. Volunteer docents greet visitors and guide them through the site.

The preferred situation would be for the Thomas Cole NHS to have at least five full-time employees—an executive director, development director, education coordinator, curator, caretaker—and two seasonal employees. Interns would be used to supplement the paid staff and volunteers. It is not assumed that this budget and staffing level would be reached immediately, but would be built up to gradually.

The Thomas Cole NHS plans to expand its days of opening from three days per week in 2003 to four days in 2004 to five days in 2005. This would allow it to have comparable operating hours to Olana State Historic Site.

Summary of Alternative Three

Alternative Three: Concept

- Tell the story of Thomas Cole's art and influence on American culture.
- Rehabilitates structures and landscape to resemble their appearance during Thomas Cole's era.
- Brings visitors to sites in Hudson Valley and Catskill Mountains that inspired Hudson River School art.

Resource Management

Objective	Potential Action Resulting from Objective
Structures at Cedar Grove resemble their appearance during Cole's era.	Maintain main house to appearance during 1840s. Rehabilitate Storehouse Studio to its appearance 1839–1846. Reconstruct New Studio exterior to have 1848 appearance. Conduct archival and archeological research to learn more about structures.
Landscape character at Cedar Grove is evocative of conditions in 1840s.	Conduct archival and archeological research to learn more about cultural landscape. Carry out recommendations emanating from cultural landscape report, eg. reconstructing Spring Street fence and gate, replanting kitchen garden, and restoring historic paths.
Maintain and expand collection of artifacts and artwork related to Cole according to NPS standards.	Adopt a Scope of Collections policy to inform acquisitions. Acquire appropriate artwork and Cole-era artifacts. Develop designated storage space in main house and Scott House.

Visitor Use and Experience

Objective	Potential Action Resulting from Objective
Orientation is provided at the outset of the visitor experience.	Develop visitor center with brochure rack, book store, displays, and multimedia presentation in Storehouse Studio.
Interpretation emphasizes Thomas Cole's art and its connection to the regional landscape and American culture.	Develop docent tours of main house and studios that explain Cole's art and his cultural influence. Develop multi-media exhibit on Cole's art and influence. Develop Hudson River Art Trail with brochure and wayside exhibit at sites that inspired paintings.
Exhibit artwork by Cole, his Hudson River School colleagues, and contemporary landscape artists.	Continue to exhibit artwork in main house. Develop reconstructed New Studio interior as museum-quality gallery space for historic and contemporary works.

Cooperative Efforts and Partnerships

Objective	Potential Action Resulting from Objective
Partnerships are enhanced to encourage an understanding of Thomas Cole's influence on the Hudson River School and American culture.	Develop partnership with Olana to explain relationship between Cole and Frederic Church, as well as partnerships with other organizations interpreting Hudson River School art.
Partnerships are enhanced to encourage appreciation of the landscapes that inspired the art of Thomas Cole and the Hudson River School.	With other interested organizations, develop Hudson River Art Trail with brochure and wayside exhibit at sites that inspired paintings.

**Element Common to Each Alternative -
Relationship between the Thomas Cole NHS
and the National Park Service**

In recent years, the National Park Service has relied increasingly on partnerships with other entities to carry out the preservation and interpretation of nationally significant cultural and natural sites. One of the forms of NPS partnerships involves working with a designated "affiliated area." There are 24 affiliated areas, including the Thomas Cole NHS, which is owned and managed by a subsidiary board of the Greene County (NY) Historical Society. Affiliated areas have high historic or scientific value. They are federally designated and are eligible for NPS technical and financial assistance, but they are neither owned nor administered by the NPS.

Since the designation of the Thomas Cole NHS in 1999, the NPS has provided technical assistance to the Thomas Cole NHS, primarily through the work of the general management plan, which got underway in 2001. The NPS has provided assistance with historic preservation research and planning, developing collection policies, archeological work at the site, transportation planning, and technical advice on management practices gleaned for other NPS sites.

Once the GMP is finalized and submitted to Congress, the relationship of the Thomas Cole NHS and the NPS may develop along the following lines:

The Thomas Cole NHS will be recognized for its affiliation with the NPS by being able to mark the site, printed materials, and its website with the NPS logo. The Thomas Cole NHS will secure a presence on the NPS website.

The Thomas Cole NHS could be eligible for federal funding through line-item construction appropriations or National Park Service appropriations in annual federal NPS budgets. The Secretary of the Interior would enter into a cooperative agreement to assist in the preservation of the site and in research and development of interpretive and educational programs regarding

the Thomas Cole NHS as well as the nearby landscapes that Cole and other Hudson River artists painted.

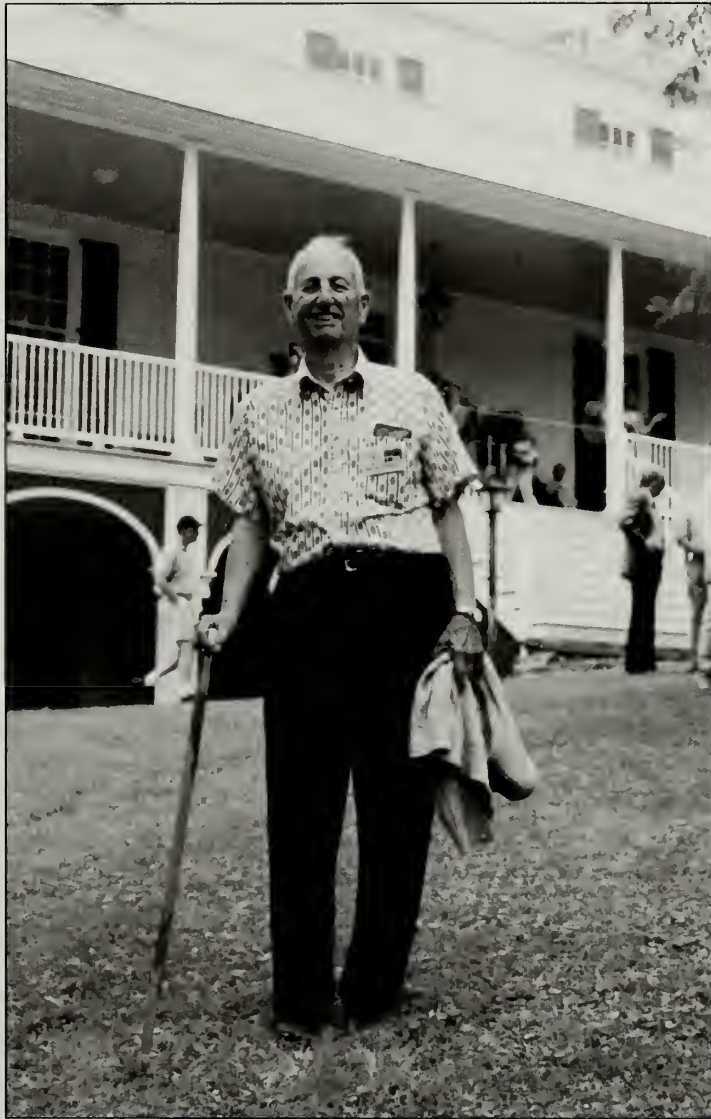
The NPS, through its lead contact at the Roosevelt-Vanderbilt NHS, in nearby Hyde Park, NY, would share management information and direct the site to appropriate technical assistance for planning, research, archaeology, building restoration, landscape restoration, natural resource management, collection management, interpretation, exhibitory, education, or other areas in which it has expertise. NPS services could be provided by the Northeast Regional Office, Northeast Museum Services Center, Building Conservation Branch, Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, Harpers Ferry Center, and other NPS entities. Funding would have to be secured for more than minimal technical assistance from NPS staff.

Staff and board members of the Thomas Cole NHS would be eligible to participate in relevant NPS regional, national, and international conferences, training workshops, and meetings. Staff and board members would be able to participate in NPS training opportunities in such areas as resource protection, interpretation, education, safety, environmental compliance, and operations.

Alternatives Considered but Not Proposed

1. MAKING THE THOMAS COLE NHS A CENTER FOR INTERPRETING THE ENTIRE HUDSON RIVER SCHOOL. This would entail substantial exhibit space for paintings, which it would be difficult to provide at the Thomas Cole NHS. In any case, the proposed 24,000-square-foot Olana Visitor Center might be better equipped to fulfill that function because it would have adequate museum-quality space for painting exhibits. Not only is the Thomas Cole NHS too small to cover the Hudson River School comprehensively, it lacks the staff and financial resources to undertake the task.

The Thomas Cole NHS does have the capacity to interpret the influence that Thomas Cole had on other artists, including Frederic Church and Asher B. Durand. The Thomas Cole NHS could



Treasurer Dr. Raymond Beecher at gala opening, July 14, 2001. Photo: © Richard N. Philp.

include appropriate material in interpretive panels, art exhibits, and docent tours and could refer visitors to other sites connected with the Hudson River School.

2. USING THE OLANA VISITOR CENTER AS THE PRIMARY VISITOR CENTER FOR THOMAS COLE NHS.

While the proposed Olana Visitor Center could interpret the Hudson River School, refer visitors to Thomas Cole NHS, coordinate transit services, and undertake cooperative projects with Thomas Cole NHS (Thomas Cole could be included in exhibits at the new visitor center), it does not make sense for the Thomas Cole NHS to use the Olana Visitor Center for its visitor ser-

vices and interpretation. Serving as the visitor center for the Thomas Cole NHS has not been a goal of the Olana State Historic Site Final Comprehensive Plan. The two historic sites each have different needs and resources. On-site visitor facilities are essential to the operation of the Thomas Cole site, and the Thomas Cole NHS has the facilities on-site to provide the desired range of visitor services.

3. MAKING THE FULL HISTORY OF THE CEDAR GROVE ESTATE A MAJOR INTERPRETIVE THEME.

The historic house, its use over almost two centuries, and the domestic and agricultural life of Cedar Grove should not be a main story because

the Congressional designation of the National Historic Site states that the site should focus on the story of Thomas Cole, his art, and the surrounding landscape that inspired him. In any case, the main house does not have enough original artifacts, either from Cole's period or later years, to fully interpret the house. The 110-acre estate from the 1840s has been reduced to a 3.4-acre historic site.

The Thomas Cole NHS could make the history and domestic life of Cedar Grove a secondary theme because knowledge of the site's history would enable visitors to understand better Cole's experience there and how the site has been preserved since then. Interpretive panels could give the full history of the Cedar Grove estate and/or a diorama could depict Cedar Grove circa 1848 and explain the changes to the site since then.

4. REASSEMBLING THE ENTIRE CEDAR GROVE PARCEL. The Cedar Grove estate had as much as 110 acres during the 1840s. Today's Thomas Cole NHS has 3.4 acres at Cedar Grove with an additional adjoining 2.1 acres. It would be impractical to repurchase significant tracts that were once part of Cedar Grove because of exorbitant costs and thoroughfares cutting through the property. Reassembling the larger Cedar Grove estate would not be necessary for interpreting Thomas Cole's career, his art, and his influence on the Hudson River School. Nevertheless, the Thomas Cole NHS could acquire parcels immediately abutting the site in order to enhance the integrity of the core property.

VI. Affected Environment

Natural Resources

TOPOGRAPHY

The Thomas Cole NHS Cedar Grove estate has shrunk considerably from 110 acres in Cole's time to 3.4 acres today (two abutting lots with modern houses which belong to the Greene County Historical Society have an additional 2.1 acres). The 3.4-acre site is set on the back crest of the Hudson River's lateral highlands between 160 feet and 180 feet in elevation above the Hudson River, which is about one-half mile to the east. The site is relatively flat.

SOILS

The soil type at the Thomas Cole NHS site is Nassau-Farmington, which is shallow, gently sloping to very steep, well-drained and somewhat excessively drained, medium-textured soil on hills and ridges. This parcel of land is not prime farmland.

FLOODPLAIN AND WETLANDS

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) website of flood hazard maps for the United States indicates that the Thomas Cole NHS is located in Zone X, which is an area determined to be outside the 500-year floodplain. From these maps, it is apparent that the 500-year flood zones are located just along the banks of the Hudson River. The banks slope up rapidly from the shoreline to the Thomas Cole NHS at an elevation between 160 and 180 feet.

There are no wetlands at the Thomas Cole NHS.

VEGETATION AND WILDLIFE

Most of the site is covered by open lawns with clusters of trees, shrubs, and brambles near the borders of the property. The site contains large clusters of lilacs, honeysuckle, and forsythia. Borders of hydrangea outline a former garden.

"Thomas Cole was the most famous painter of his time. What he painted is valuable because nobody had done it quite so well before him."

William Kennedy,
Albany Times-Union, 1964



Thomas Cole's daughter Emily Cole in New Studio, c.1910. Courtesy of the Albany Institute of History & Art Library, CV 553/II/8/2.

Ancient wisteria vines next to the house have been trimmed back, but would quickly return to frame the front entrance if allowed to grow on trellises. Other vines include climbing roses and grapevines grown on arbors. Mature deciduous trees remaining from the woodlot behind the house include oaks, maples, cedars, and black cherry. One remaining apple tree recalls the orchard that Cedar Grove once maintained. Closer to the main house are mature honey locust, white pine, and spruce trees. Much of the layout and many of the plantings resemble the situation when Thomas Cole lived there. Research indicates there was a vegetable garden there in Cole's time and more elaborate flower gardens in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

This is a suburbanized setting with typical small suburban animals on the property, such as squirrels and small birds. The relatively small site is bordered by houses and roadways, so it would be unlikely to have a habitat for rare and endangered species. According to the New York Natural Heritage Program, the Thomas Cole NHS site has "no records of *known* occurrences of rare or state-listed animals or plants, significant natural communities, or other significant habitats, on or in the immediate vicinity of the site."

AIR QUALITY

The Thomas Cole NHS is located in a Class II clean air area. Greene County has been monitored for attainment of the standard (Clean Data Areas) for ozone and carbon monoxide. According to the Clean Air Act, maximum allowable increases of sulfur dioxide, particulate matter, and nitrogen oxide beyond baseline concentrations established for Class II areas cannot be exceeded. These Class II increments will allow modest industrial activities within the vicinity of the site.

Cultural Resources

HISTORIC LANDSCAPE

In Thomas Cole's period, Cedar Grove was a farm estate of about 110 acres. Today, the Thomas

Cole NHS has 3.4 acres. This landscape of Cedar Grove has evolved over the past two centuries. Some plantings, including lilac shrubs and a spruce tree near the main house, date to the mid-19th century. Most plantings are newer, and some are quite recent. The driveways and pathways that existed on the site during Cole's era have been modified and even covered over, but traces of them are still evident. Although a working farm well into the 20th century, Cedar Grove long had flower gardens and grass areas near the main house. Farther away from the house was a farm garden, which no longer exists. A woodlot, with some trees dating to Cole's era, still exists on the eastern portion of the property.

The public roadway providing access to Cedar Grove, called Spring Street, has been realigned over the past 150 years and the wall, picket fence, and gate that fronted on Spring Street have long been dismantled.

The remainder of the original 110-acre estate has been largely developed for residences.

HISTORIC STRUCTURES

Three structures remain on the property. The main house was erected in 1815 and has received various additions (the latest being in 1870) and renovations over the years (the most recent renovation, to open the building as part of the NHS, being completed in 2001). The Storehouse Studio, where Cole painted important works, was built in 1839. It has been used as an art studio, a storehouse, an antiques shop, and a residence. The structure is in deteriorating condition and requires stabilization and appropriate treatment within the next few years to avoid loss. A restored privy dating to the mid-19th century stands near the house.

ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Archeological resources, the physical evidence of past human activity, form an important part of the NHS's resource base. There are archeological resources throughout the historic site connected with the Cedar Grove estate, which has roots



Upstairs "Lavender" room in Storehouse Studio when it was used as an antiques shop, c. 1920. Courtesy of Vedder Research Library, Coxsackie, New York.

with the Thomson family stretching back to 1787. There was European settlement in the area back to 1684 and the presence of American Indians before that.

Archeological investigations have focused on the area of the flower garden. This investigation confirmed photographic analysis of the location of paths and flower beds on the site. Archaeology is needed to confirm analysis of other parts of the grounds described in the Cultural Landscape Report. These include archeological resources around the main house and the Storehouse Studio. The rehabilitation of the Storehouse Studio has required an archeological survey as part of the plans and Section 106 compliance. The foundations of the New Studio, which was built in 1846 and demolished in 1973, still exist on the grounds and must be investigated. The stone wall, gate, and picket fence that once lined Spring

Street are not in evidence, but archeological evidence of those elements should be pursued.

COLLECTIONS

The Thomas Cole NHS has collections of furniture, artwork, and Cole-related artifacts. These are the property of the Greene County Historical Society, which also operates another historic house and a library. The number of artifacts and furniture from Cole's era is limited because they were sold off over the years, particularly at an auction in 1964.

The collection includes domestic objects, a limited number of paintings by Thomas Cole and other artists including Charles Herbert Moore and Benjamin B. G. Stone, historic reproductions of Cole's works, and Cole's painting tools and reference objects. The archives include personal papers of Cole and family members, historic

photographs of the site, and records of the preservation and administration of Cedar Grove in recent years.

Socioeconomic Environment

LOCAL ECONOMY

The Thomas Cole National Historic Site is located in the Village of Catskill, NY, which is an incorporated part of the Township of Catskill, which in turn is part of Greene County. Greene County is situated on the west bank of the Hudson River and includes much of the northern Catskill Mountains. The Village of Catskill is located directly on the Hudson River, where Catskill Creek flows into the river.

The Village of Catskill, which serves as the Greene County seat, is 2.83 square miles and

has a population of 4,392 (including 19% non-white). It has 2,048 housing units. The Town of Catskill has 64 square miles and a population of 11,849 (10% non-white). The number of housing units is 5,700.

Greene County has an area of 653 square miles, with 14 townships and 5 incorporated villages. The county population in 2000 was 48,195. The county grew by 7% during the 1990s and by almost 50% since 1970. Economic forecasters Woods & Poole project that the population in Greene County will grow at the fastest rate of any county in New York State between now and 2015. Much of this demographic growth stems from new residents seeking to enjoy life in the Hudson River Valley. The number of second homes and retirement homes is growing.

Over 1,500 persons attended the gala opening of the Thomas Cole National Historic Site and celebration of Thomas Cole's 200th birthday, July 14, 2001. Photo: © Richard N. Philp.



There were 19,851 jobs in Greene County in 2001 and an unemployment rate of 4.4%. In 1999, the per capita income of Greene County residents was \$18,931, while the statewide average was \$23,389; 8.6% of the county's families living below the poverty level, while the statewide average was 11.5%.

The economy in this area and throughout the Hudson River Valley is evolving into more of a service-based, and tourism- and second-home-oriented economy. Interest in improving the quality of life and developing cultural projects is increasing in Catskill, Greene County, and the Hudson Valley. The development of the Thomas Cole NHS fits this trend.

TOURISM IN THE HUDSON VALLEY

A study by Marist College and the Hudson River Greenway Council, "Impact of Visitors to Historic Sites in the Hudson River Valley: A Marist-Greenway Survey of Visitors" (1997), found that between 1.5 and 2 million tourists visited the 50 historic sites in the Hudson Valley in 1996. The estimated direct expenditures by tourists in the Hudson Valley was between \$70 million and \$130 million, with the total economic impact being between \$140 million and \$160 million.

The Marist College study found that visitors to historic sites in the Hudson Valley are well educated—62% have college degrees and 32% have graduate degrees. About two-thirds have an income of more than \$50,000, and about half are over 50 years old. About 31% of heritage visitors in the Hudson Valley are from New York State, with 14% coming from New York City. Other areas of visitor origin are: 12% from other Northeastern states, 25% from the Middle Atlantic region, 28% from the rest of the United States, and 4% from outside the country.

Heritage tourism has been on the rise across the country. According to the Travel Industry Association of America (TIAA), 45% of adults visit historic sites while on vacation, and 41% visit cultural attractions. Historic sites rank second as

family vacation destinations after ocean beaches and ahead of cities and theme parks. Forty percent of families visit historic sites on vacation.

The Marist College survey found that Hudson Valley visitors were very interested in specific aspects of historical significance. The most highly ranked aspects were the Hudson River itself (47% indicated interest), gardens (44%), architecture (42%), landscape architecture (34%), and art history (28%).

Of 40 historic sites surveyed in the Hudson Valley, three that may be comparable in certain respects to the Thomas Cole NHS are the Martin Van Buren National Historic Site, in nearby Kinderhook; the Home of Franklin Roosevelt National Historic Site/Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site, in Hyde Park; and Olana State Historic Site, across the Hudson River in the town of Hudson. The Martin Van Buren NHS and Franklin Roosevelt NHS are homes of former presidents. Olana is the historic home of painter Frederic Church.

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THOMAS COLE NHS

In 2001, 2002, and 2003, an average of 4,000 visitors came to the Thomas Cole NHS. The visitors to the Thomas Cole NHS made a positive economic impact on the local community, according to the National Park Service's Money Generation Model 2. The Money Generation Model 2 allows national park sites to estimate the economic impacts related to visitation at their sites. The Thomas Cole NHS has not yet surveyed its visitors to learn where they come from and how much they spend, as Olana, Martin Van Buren NHS, Roosevelt NHS, and other historic Hudson Valley sites have done. Therefore, in order to estimate a breakdown of visitor origins and average visitor expenditures at Thomas Cole NHS, this study uses visitor profile data from Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Site in nearby Hyde Park, NY.

A base number of 4,000 visitors at the Thomas Cole NHS spend an estimated \$119,580 annually

in the surrounding community for meals, rooms, shopping, and services. The breakout of expenditures by categories of visitor is shown below.

The total economic impact of direct and indirect spending was \$182,400 and personal income was \$62,400. The expenditures of visitors to Thomas Cole NHS generated 3 jobs in the local tourism industry.

The formula for determining the economic impact of National Park sites comes from Daniel J. Stynes, Dennis B. Propst, Wen-huei Chang, and YaYen Sun, National Park Service, *Estimating National Park Visitor Spending and Economic Impacts: Money Generation Model Version 2* (report prepared for the National Park Service by Michigan State University, Department of Park, Recreation and Tourism Resources, East Lansing, MI, 2000). The source for the Roosevelt-Vanderbilt NHS visitor and visitor expenditure data is "Money Generation Model – Version 2"

<http://www.prr.msu.edu/mgm2/>. The employment and spending multipliers were taken from Table E2. Multipliers for Small Metro Areas (Page E-1). The student proportion of 15% is separated out from the Regional Day-tripper category and is based upon the percentage of student visitation at the Women's Rights NHS in Seneca Falls, NY. Except for students, which are counted as one party each, the visitor parties are assumed to have two persons.

LAND USE

The property at the Thomas Cole NHS is zoned by the Village of Catskill R-1-One Family Residence District for residential use. This zoning permits single-family residences and religious and park uses. The historic site use at the Thomas Cole NHS is a nonconforming use. Nearby property at the junction of Spring Street and Route 23 is zoned for commercial uses. The Village of Catskill has stated that proposed changes to the site would not require special zoning permission.

Visitor Expenditures

Type of Visitor	Visitors	Parties	Expenditure/Party Night	Total Expenditures
Overnight (10%)	400	200	\$180	\$36,000
Regional Day-trippers (54%)	2,160	1,080	55	59,400
Local Day-trippers (21%)	840	420	49	20,580
Students (15%)	600	600	6	3,600
Total	4,000	2,300		\$119,580

VII. Environmental Assessment – Impacts of Alternatives

Thomas Cole “was a poet, a gifted essayist, prolific letter-writer, theorist, and traveler.”

Theodore Stebbins,
A New World: Masterpieces of American Painting, 1760–1910

Thomas Cole, *The Course of the Empire—Destruction*, 1836.
Collection of the New York Historical Society. 1858.4.

The Thomas Cole NHS GMP is undertaking an Environmental Assessment (EA) rather than an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), which is required for all major federal actions, under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969.

Alternative One: Continuation of Current Practices

Alternative One would represent no change in the operations and visitor experience at the Thomas Cole NHS over the existing conditions.

IMPACTS ON VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Visitors would obtain an understanding of Cole’s life and the development of Cedar Grove during the docent-led tour of the main house. Visitors would be able to view exhibit panels interpreting Cole’s life, as well as selected Hudson River

School art by artists of the 19th century and the contemporary era. The visitors would be able to tour the grounds and look at the Storehouse Studio from the outside. The opportunity to view original art of Thomas Cole and other Hudson River School painters would be limited because the site would not have a museum-quality space to exhibit the art.

IMPACTS ON CULTURAL RESOURCES

Historic structures and cultural landscape features would be preserved and protected for future generations under the current management.

IMPACTS ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Since no additional facilities or programs would be provided at the Thomas Cole NHS, there would be no additional impacts on natural resources.



IMPACTS ON SITE OPERATIONS

The Thomas Cole NHS would have a paid professional executive director, who would provide consistent operational management. Additional staff could be added, depending upon finances. But the lack of additional investment, facilities, and services at the site would not lead to significantly enhanced programming.

IMPACTS ON VISITATION AND THE SOCIOECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

Since there would be no changes to the operations and visitor experience at the Thomas Cole NHS, no new visitors would be attracted to the Thomas Cole NHS. A base number of 4,000 visitors at the Thomas Cole NHS spent an estimated \$119,580 annually in the surrounding community for meals, rooms, shopping, and services. Visitor expenditures would generate three local jobs in the tourism industry.

IMPACTS ON TRAFFIC AND PARKING

Since there would be no increase in visitation at the Thomas Cole NHS, there would be no increase in traffic around the site and no increased demand for parking.

NON-IMPAIRMENT OF RESOURCES

Under Alternative One, the historic site's resources and values would not be impaired because there would be no major adverse impacts on a resource or value whose conservation is (1) necessary to fulfill specific purposes identified in the establishing legislation of the Thomas Cole National Historic Site, (2) key to the natural or cultural integrity of the site or to opportunities for visitor enjoyment, or (3) identified as a goal in the historic site's general management plan or other relevant National Park Service planning documents.

Alternative Two: Thomas Cole and Cedar Grove

IMPACTS ON VISITOR EXPERIENCE

This alternative would improve the interpretive opportunities over the current situation. By restoring the Storehouse Studio it would allow

visitors to see the studio where Cole painted between 1839 and 1846. The Hudson River School Art Trail brochure would help visitors to view scenes that Cole and his followers painted in the Catskill Mountain landscape. Visitors would have fewer educational experiences than under Alternative Three. The site would not have space for a visitor center, a multimedia presentation about Thomas Cole's art and cultural influence, educational programs, or museum-quality gallery space for exhibiting art.

IMPACTS ON CULTURAL RESOURCES

Historic Structures

The house at Cedar Grove and the Storehouse Studio would be preserved and protected for future generations. The projected increase of visitation from 4,000 persons per year to 6,000 would be within the carrying capacity of the structures. Any plans for work on these historic structures will be reviewed by appropriate state and federal agencies for Section 106 compliance.

Landscape

Cultural landscape features would be preserved and protected for future generations under the current management practices.

Archaeology

The rehabilitation of the Storehouse Studio would entail limited archeological research before proceeding with that project. This research would lead to the protection of archeological resources as well as contributing important information for the rehabilitation. For research and interpretive purposes, a limited archeological survey would be done on the site of the New Studio. Though no effort would be made to reconstruct this structure, the archeological research could provide new information about the New Studio that could be used in interpreting Cole's life at Cedar Grove.

Collections

This alternative would continue the preservation and maintenance of the collection in space not

open to the public in the main house. Longer-term, off-site space would be needed for storage and would probably have to be rented. This would have the disadvantage of separating items from the collections in several different places.

IMPACTS ON NATURAL RESOURCES

The Thomas Cole NHS does not currently monitor air quality, nor has the site's air quality been assessed. Because of the relatively small number of visitors attracted to the site, including even the projected increase due to the implementation of the GMP, a negligible effect on air quality is anticipated.

During rehabilitation activities at the Storehouse Studio, there will be a minimal and temporary increase in noise, dust, and vehicle exhaust at the site. Mitigation measures will be undertaken to minimize temporary impacts.

Since there are no wetlands on the site, there will be no impacts on wetlands.

No threatened or endangered species, critical habitats, or floodplains are found on the site. Therefore, no impacts on these types of resources should occur. The overall condition of wildlife on the site would remain unaffected by the implementation of the plan.

IMPACTS ON SITE OPERATIONS

This management alternative would enable the Thomas Cole NHS to have a staff of two em-

ployees and allow it to carry out the measures in this GMP alternative. The Scott House, owned by the Greene County Historical Society, would be used for administrative purposes, freeing up space currently used for administrative purposes in the main house to be used for historic interpretation.

IMPACTS ON VISITATION AND THE SOCIOECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

The Thomas Cole NHS averaged around 4,000 visitors in its first three years of operation. As the Thomas Cole NHS gains publicity, rehabilitates the Storehouse Studio, and obtains year-round paid professional staff, the potential for increased visitation should rise. It is estimated that attendance could rise by 50% a year to 6,000 visitors.

The total economic impact of direct and indirect (expenditures by tourism-oriented business on goods and services in the community) spending would be \$272,642 and personal income would be \$93,272. The expenditures of visitors to Thomas Cole NHS would generate four jobs in the local tourism industry and an additional two jobs supplying goods and services to tourism businesses.

It is estimated that approximately 4,000 people (two persons per auto) would travel the Hudson River Art Trail, as described in a brochure published by the Thomas Cole NHS (see more detailed analysis in Alternative Three).

Visitor Expenditures

Type of Visitor	Visitors	Parties	Expenditure/Party Night	Total Expenditures
Overnight (10%)	600	300	\$180	\$ 54,000
Regional Day-trippers (54%)	3,240	1,620	55	89,100
Local Day-trippers (21%)	1,260	630	49	30,870
Students (15%)	900	900	6	5,400
Total	6,000	3,450		\$179,370

IMPACTS ON TRAFFIC AND PARKING

The traffic impacts from upgrading the Thomas Cole NHS and attracting 2,000 new visitors annually would be negligible, given the large amounts of traffic already on Route 385 and Route 23/Rip Van Winkle Bridge approach, as measured by the New York State Department of Transportation. The traffic impact would entail a net increase of approximately 850 car trips and 8 bus trips (approximately 40 students per bus) per year. This is based on the fact that there are already 4,000 visitors to the site, with a net 2,000 new visitors. Of these, 300 would be students, taking approximately eight buses; with two persons to a car, the remaining 1,700 visitors would equate to 850 car trips, or 1,700 trips each way. These levels of increase would not be perceptible to neighbors.

The increase in vehicles coming to the Thomas Cole NHS would increase the demand for parking, which is accommodated at the Temple Israel parking lot located next door. The synagogue's parking lot has the capacity to accommodate additional vehicles. Given that there are 40 parking spaces (30 spaces if a bus turnaround is created) and an average visit could take up to two hours, there could be a capacity of 90–120 cars per day in the parking lot. The current average per day is 20–25 cars. Under Alternative Two, the additional 850 cars per year would translate to approximately 8 cars per day, which could be accommodated easily by the parking lot. Eight new bus trips would be accommodated over the 26-week season.

These are the impacts as long as the Thomas Cole NHS is able to park cars in the Temple Israel parking lot. If the NHS can no longer use the Temple Israel parking lot, then it will create a lot at the rear of the 3.4-acre Cedar Grove site, where there is space there for parking. This parking lot would use space that is currently

covered by trees, grass, and undergrowth. It would take away open space and detract from the historic landscape.

NON-IMPAIRMENT OF RESOURCES

Under Alternative Two, the historic site's resources and values would not be impaired because there would be no major adverse impacts on a resource or value whose conservation is (1) necessary to fulfill specific purposes identified in the establishing legislation of the Thomas Cole National Historic Site, (2) key to the natural or cultural integrity of the site or to opportunities for visitor enjoyment, or (3) identified as a goal in the historic site's general management plan or other relevant National Park Service planning documents.

Alternative Three: Thomas Cole's Art and the Regional Landscape

IMPACTS ON VISITOR EXPERIENCE

This alternative would bring about a major improvement in interpretive and educational opportunities over the current situation. It would provide a more comprehensive overview of Cole's life, artistic career, and influence on American culture. By restoring the Storehouse Studio it would allow visitors to see the studio where Cole painted between 1839 and 1846. This building would also house visitor services, interpretive exhibits, and a bookshop. The new building resembling the New Studio would provide gallery space for displaying paintings. The Hudson River School Art Trail would permit visitors to view scenes that Cole and his followers painted in the Catskill Mountain landscape.

Improvements for visitors with disabilities would provide greater access to site resources. Barrier-free entrances to the Storehouse Studio and demolished New Studio would enable visitors with disabilities to visit these buildings. Since it would be difficult to universal access in the main

house, it is proposed to show a video tour of the main house in the Storehouse Studio, which would provide universal access.

IMPACTS ON CULTURAL RESOURCES

Historic Structures

The Thomas Cole house and the Storehouse Studio would be preserved and protected for future generations. A new building on the site of the New Studio, which has been demolished, would be built from historic plans to resemble the original building on the exterior; but the interior would have the appearance of a contemporary gallery space. The projected increase of visitation from 4,000 per year to between 10,000 and 15,000 could be accommodated at the site, although management changes would have to be made to accommodate the upward figure of 15,000, which would only come about with an aggressive marketing effort. Any plans for work on these historic structures will be reviewed by appropriate state and federal agencies for Section 106 compliance.

Landscape

Rehabilitation of the cultural landscape as described in the plan would improve visitor understanding of the cultural landscape. Any significant rehabilitation of the landscape to restore it to its appearance during Thomas Cole's era would require a cultural landscape treatment plan and archeological research before proceeding in order to ensure the protection and understanding of archeological resources. The projected increase of visitation from 4,000 per year to between 10,000 and 15,000 could be accommodated at the site, although management changes would have to be made to accommodate the upward figure of 15,000, which would only come about with an aggressive marketing effort. Any plans for changes to the landscape will be reviewed by appropriate state and federal agencies for Section 106 compliance.

Archaeology

The proposed building reconstruction and landscape rehabilitation work could impact archeological resources, so archeological research would be required before proceeding with these projects. This research would lead to the protection of archeological resources as well as contributing important information to the preservation, rehabilitation, and reconstruction work. Measures will be taken to mitigate disturbance of archeological resources.

Collections

This alternative would improve preservation and maintenance of the collections. The new building on the New Studio site would create space for exhibiting art and artifacts, as the building will have climate control and security systems. The bulk of the collections not on display will be stored initially in space not open to the public in the main house. Storage and curatorial space may be made available in the Scott House if it is renovated.

IMPACTS ON NATURAL RESOURCES

The Thomas Cole NHS does not currently monitor air quality, nor has the historic site's air quality been assessed. Because of the relatively small number of visitors attracted to the site, including even the projected increase due to the implementation of the GMP, a negligible effect on air quality is anticipated.

During construction activities, there will be a minimal and temporary increase in noise, dust, and vehicle exhaust at the site. Mitigation measures will be undertaken to minimize temporary impacts.

Since there are no wetlands on the site, there will be no impacts on wetlands.

No threatened or endangered species, critical habitats, or floodplains are found on the site.

Therefore, no impacts on these types of resources should occur. The overall condition of wildlife on the site would remain unaffected by the implementation of the plan.

IMPACTS ON SITE OPERATIONS

This management alternative would enable the Thomas Cole NHS to have a staff of at least four employees, allowing it to carry out the measures in this GMP alternative. The NHS could undertake a full range of programs, comparable to other historic sites in the region. Depending on the success of site renovations and programs, the operations budget could increase further.

IMPACTS ON VISITATION AND THE SOCIOECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

Taking into account the heritage tourism visitation trends in the Hudson Valley indicates that there is a large potential market for visiting the Thomas Cole NHS. The Thomas Cole NHS averaged around 4,000 visitors in its first three years of operation. As the Thomas Cole NHS obtains year-round paid professional staff, a marketing program, partnerships with other organizations, and new exhibits and facilities at Cedar Grove, the potential for increased visitation should rise markedly. Recent attendance

(2001) at neighboring comparable historic sites suggests that visitation at the Thomas Cole NHS could increase substantially (see table below).

Visitation at the Thomas Cole NHS could eventually approximate that at either Martin Van Buren NHS (15,582) or Weir Farm NHS (16,820). The Martin Van Buren House, called Lindenwald, is a national historic site less than 25 miles from Catskill, NY. Weir Farm, in Wilton, CT, is a former artist colony site that might have comparable appeal to Thomas Cole's Cedar Grove.

After the new Olana Visitor Center is opened and the historic house is restored, The Olana Partnership ("Market Analysis for the Olana State Historic Site," ConsultEcon, Inc./Office of Thomas J. Martin, 2001) projects that visitation at this historic house could double to 48,000; visitation of the grounds could reach 225,000; the Visitor Center could attract 268,000 (with 40,000 only visiting the center and the remainder visiting the house and/or grounds). The increased visitation at Olana and its new visitor center could have a significant impact on visitation at the Thomas Cole NHS, which is located just across the Rip Van Winkle Bridge, less than a mile away.

Visitor Attendance, Comparable Historic Sites

Historic Site	Annual Attendance (2001)
Home of FDR National Historic Site, Hyde Park, NY	127,422
Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site, Hyde Park, NY	83,062
Olana State Historic Site House, Hudson, NY	24,000
Olana Grounds	139,000
Weir Farm National Historic Site, Wilton, CT	16,820
Martin Van Buren National Historic Site, Kinderhook, NY	15,682

Two scenarios for visitation at the Thomas Cole NHS once the general management plan is implemented project the following:

1. Conservative Scenario—10,000 annual visitors;
2. Aggressive Marketing Scenario (comparable to Van Buren and Weir Farm)—15,000 annual visitors.

The Conservative Scenario would occur most likely with the full implementation of Alternative Three. The Aggressive Marketing Scenario would require an aggressive marketing campaign, a relatively large staff, and an expanded visitor season, each of which would be costly and would entail additional budget expenditures.

To estimate economic impacts, both scenarios employ the same distribution of visitors by category and visitor expenditures as the Home of FDR and both use the Money Generation Model 2.

Conservative Scenario: 10,000 Visitors

If Thomas Cole NHS has 10,000 annual visitors, an estimated \$298,950 would be spent in the surrounding community for meals, rooms, shopping, and services. The table below lists expenditures broken down by visitor category.

The total economic impact of direct and indirect spending would be \$454,400 and personal income would be \$155,450. The expenditures of visitors to Thomas Cole NHS would generate seven jobs in the local tourism industry and three additional jobs with businesses providing goods and services to the tourism industry.

Aggressive Marketing Scenario: 15,000 Visitors

If Thomas Cole NHS has 15,000 annual visitors, an estimated \$448,425 would be spent in the surrounding community for meals, rooms, shopping, and services. The table below lists expenditures broken down by visitor category.

Visitor Expenditures, Conservative Scenario

Type of Visitor	Visitors	Parties	Expenditure/Party Night	Total Expenditures
Overnight (10%)	1,000	500	\$180	90,000
Regional Day-trippers (54%)	5,400	2,700	55	148,500
Local Day-trippers (21%)	2,100	1,050	49	51,450
Students (15%)	1,500	1,500	6	9,000
Total	10,000	5,750		\$298,950

Visitor Expenditures, Aggressive Marketing Scenario

Type of Visitor	Visitors	Parties	Expenditure/Party Night	Total Expenditures
Overnight (10%)	1,500	750	\$180	135,000
Regional Day-trippers (54%)	8,100	4,050	55	222,750
Local Day-trippers (21%)	3,150	1,575	49	77,175
Students (15%)	2,250	2,250	6	13,500
Total	15,000	8,625		\$448,425

The total economic impact of direct and indirect spending would be \$681,600 and personal income would be \$233,180. The expenditures of visitors to Thomas Cole NHS would generate eleven jobs in the local tourism industry and an additional four jobs supplying goods and services to tourism businesses.

Hudson River Art Trail Visitation

The number of people who would use the Art Trail is estimated to be approximately 15,000 each year, based on the following analysis. Some of these visitors also will have visited Thomas Cole NHS and/or Olana, and others will only follow the Art Trail. According to New York State Department of Transportation traffic counts, 3,500 cars (2000 data) are the annual average daily total traveling on the 5.53-mile stretch of Route 23A from Route 32A in Palenville to County Route 25. This is the main access route for motorists traveling from the Thomas Cole Historic Site, in Catskill, to Hudson River painting sites in the Catskill Preserve and the North-South Lakes State Campground. If 1% of the cars traveling this road during April–October visited Art Trail sites, the number would amount to 7,700 (3,500 autos per day x 220 days x 1%).

With an average of two passengers per car, the number of trail visitors would total 15,400.

The order of magnitude of this estimate is confirmed by the attendance data for the historic homes of Thomas Cole and Frederic Church. In 2001–2003, an average of 4,000 people visited the Thomas Cole Historic Site. Olana, in Hudson, NY, annually attracts approximately 25,000 visitors to the house and another 139,000 to the grounds.

IMPACTS ON TRAFFIC AND PARKING

The traffic impacts from upgrading the Thomas Cole NHS and attracting between 6,000 and 11,000 new visitors annually would be negligible, given the large amounts of traffic already on Route 385 and Route 23/Rip Van Winkle Bridge approach, as measured by the New York State Department of Transportation. The range of traffic increases on Route 385 would be between 0.55% and 0.9%. On the Route 23 bridge approach it would be between 0.09% and 0.18%.

The traffic impact under the Conservative Scenario (10,000 visitors) would entail a net increase of 2,250 car trips and 40 bus trips (approximately 40 students per bus) per year. This is based on



Scenes painted by Thomas Cole over 150 years ago still look similar today. *Cole's View, Kaaterskill Clove, Catskill Preserve, New York.* © Hardie Truesdale, 1991.

the fact that there are already 4,000 visitors to the site, so there would be a net new 6,000 visitors. Of these, 1,500 would be students, taking approximately 40 buses; with two persons to a car, the remaining 4,500 visitors would equate to 2,250 car trips (round trips), which would double to 4,500 trips each way.

The Conservative Scenario would result in an annual increase in traffic on Route 385 (in front of the Thomas Cole NHS) of 0.5% and on Route 23 from the Route 385 intersection and the approach to the Rip Van Winkle Bridge of 0.09%. This is based on 930,750 annual vehicle trips on Route 385 and 4,966,920 annual vehicle trips on the Rip Van Winkle Bridge approach.

The traffic impact under the Aggressive Marketing Scenario (15,000 visitors) would entail a net increase of 4,375 car trips and approximately 60 buses (approximately 40 students per bus) per year. There would be 11,000 net new visitors to the site. Of these, 2,250 would be students, taking about 60 buses; with two persons to a car, the remaining 8,750 visitors would equate to 4,375 car trips per year (round trips), or 8,750 trips each way.

The Aggressive Marketing Scenario would result in an annual traffic increase of 0.9% on Route 385 and 0.18% on the stretch of Route 23 from the Route 385 intersection to the Rip Van Winkle Bridge.

These levels of increase would not be perceptible to neighbors.

The increase in vehicles coming to the Thomas Cole NHS would increase the demand for parking, which is accommodated at the Temple Israel parking lot located next door. The Temple Israel parking lot has the capacity to accommodate additional vehicles. Given that there are 40 parking spaces (30 spaces if a bus turnaround is created) and an average visit could take up to two hours, there could be a capacity of 90–120 cars per day in the parking lot. The current average per day is 20–25 cars. Under the Conservative Scenario, the additional 2,250 cars per year would translate to approximately 23 cars per day, which could be accommodated by the parking lot. Under the Aggressive Marketing Scenario, there would be an average of an additional 44 cars per day. This number of cars could be accommodated in the parking lot, though there would be crowding. One



Thomas Cole, *The Clove, Catskills*, c. 1827. Oil on canvas, 25" x 33".
Courtesy of the New Britain Museum of American Art, New Britain, Connecticut.
Charles F. Smith Fund. 1945.22.
Photography credit: Michael Agee.

way to lessen the crowding would be to spread the increased visitation over a greater number of days. The visitation season could be increased from approximately 100 to 150 days or more.

The 40 additional buses would be scheduled to visit the site mostly during the week at times when the site would not be open to the general public and there would be few cars in the parking lot.

These are the impacts as long as the Thomas Cole NHS is able to park cars in the synagogue parking lot. If this should become no longer available, the NHS will create a parking lot at the rear of the 3.4-acre Cedar Grove site. This parking lot would use space that is currently covered by trees, grass, and undergrowth. It would take away open space and detract from the historic

landscape. There is space there for parking, but it would be unable to accommodate the volumes anticipated in this alternative. The site managers would need to study other off-site parking alternatives.

NON-IMPAIRMENT OF RESOURCES

Under Alternative Three, the historic site's resources and values would not be impaired because there would be no major adverse impacts on a resource or value whose conservation is (1) necessary to fulfill specific purposes identified in the establishing legislation of the Thomas Cole National Historic Site, (2) key to the natural or cultural integrity of the site or to opportunities for visitor enjoyment, or (3) identified as a goal in the historic site's general management plan or other relevant National Park Service planning documents.

Summary of Impacts of Alternatives

	Alternative 1: No Change	Alternative 2: Cole & Cedar Grove	Alternative 3: Cole's Art & Landscape
Visitor Experience and Interpretation	Existing site continues current practices.	Interpret Cole's life at Cedar Grove by restoring Storehouse Studio for public access. Publish Art Trail brochure.	Interpret Cole's artistic career by restoring Storehouse Studio and erecting a new building on the New Studio site. Develop Art Trail to painting sites in region. Open visitor and shop facilities. Initiate educational programs.
Cultural Resources	Historic structures and cultural landscapes will be preserved as they are.	Restore Storehouse Studio for public visits and preserve other historic structures and cultural landscape. Archeological testing at Storehouse Studio and research at New Studio site.	Restore Storehouse Studio as it appeared in Cole's time and create visitor and shop facilities. Erect new building on New Studio site for gallery and meeting space. Restore landscape to historical period appearance. Conduct archeological testing at cultural landscape, Storehouse Studio, and New Studio to protect resources and obtain artifacts.
Natural Resources	No additional impacts on natural resources.	No additional impacts on natural resources.	No additional impacts on natural resources.
Transportation	No additional traffic.	Negligible additional traffic.	Negligible additional traffic.
Socioeconomic	Maintain existing base visitation of 4,000 visitors with annual expenditures of \$119,580.	Increase visitation to 6,000 with annual expenditures of \$179,370.	Increase visitation to 10,000–15,000 with range of expenditures \$298,950–\$448,425.

VIII. Consultation and Public Involvement

The NPS requires public consultation and civic engagement in preparing general management plans. The project team included the members of the Thomas Cole NHS Board of Governors as well as various National Park Service staff. It is important to point out that the site is owned and managed by a Board of Governors that has been created by the Greene County Historical Society. The Board of Governors has long been active in preserving and managing the Thomas Cole National Historic Site and is integrally involved in the local community. They have enlisted several dozen volunteers and raised significant amounts of private donations to fund the rehabilitation and operation of the main house at Cedar Grove. The Board of Governors has been active in the local tourism marketing efforts and has maintained close relations with local government. The Thomas Cole NHS also has a 31-member Board of Advisors, including local citizens and art history experts from around the country.

In order to involve important local interests, the project team also included Carmella Montello,

Executive Director, Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area/Hudson River Greenway Communities Council; Richard Brooks, Greene County Legislature; Linda McLean, Manager, Olana State Historic Site; Sara Griffen, President, The Olana Partnership; and George Rodenhausen, Trustee, The Olana Partnership. Representing the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) was James Gold, Director, Bureau of Historic Sites, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

As the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation was notified by letter of the Thomas Cole NHS draft GMP; and the Thomas Cole NHS will continue to consult with the New York Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation in implementing the GMP. As far as tribal consultation is concerned, it has been determined that there are no listed sacred Indian sites at the Thomas Cole NHS. The draft GMP has been sent to area tribes for comment.

Cole's concerns about his environment ranked among the "earliest articulations of a conservationist ethos in nineteenth-century America."

David Schuyler,
Apostle of Taste: Andrew Jackson Downing, 1815-1852



Board of Governors Chairman Robert Stackman greets attendees at gala opening, July 14, 2001. Photo: © Richard N. Philp.

State and local agencies offering support for a preliminary proposal for the Art Trail included the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, which maintains the Catskill Forest Preserve; the New York State Division of Tourism; the Hudson River Valley Greenway Communities Council/Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area; and the Greene County Tourism/Promotion Department. On local zoning and planning issues, NPS staff obtained input from Village of Catskill Building Inspector Al Schnare and Zoning Board Chair Florence Fieldman.

The GMP planning process and opportunities for public input were reported on in the *Cedar Grove: The National Historic Site* quarterly newsletters for 2002 and 2003. The newsletter is distributed to over 500 people, including all relevant area public officials, business leaders, and leaders of related nonprofit organizations. The newsletters updated local leaders and the public on progress with the plan, including the description of key issues, and invited the public to provide input.

The GMP planning process was discussed before the 100+ attendees at the October 13, 2001 symposium “Thomas Cole: 200 Years of the American Vision.”

All individuals and organizations on the broad-based 500-person newsletter mailing list were sent invitations to attend the March 21, 2002 public meeting, which was held to identify issues that members of the public wanted to see addressed in the GMP. The public meeting was publicized in the *Catskill Daily Mail* (3/21/02) and the *Kingston Daily Freeman* (3/8/02).

The March 21, 2002 public meeting took place at the restored Freight Master’s Building at Catskill Point, in Catskill, NY. Thirty people attended, including Joseph Izzo, Catskill Town Supervisor; Pat Delaney, Catskill Village Trustee; Richard Brooks, Greene County Legislature; and legislative aides to State Assemblymen John Faso and Joel Miller. Public meeting participants provided

ideas about how the Thomas Cole NHS should proceed with its GMP. Some of the key questions that were raised included:

1. Historic Structures—What more restoration work should be done on the main house?
2. How should the deteriorating Storehouse Studio, where Cole painted important works such as *The Voyage of Life* series, be restored? Should the Storehouse Studio be shown as it might have looked in Thomas Cole’s time? Should the building be used to provide visitor services? The New Studio, which Cole built in 1846, was demolished in 1973 because of its poor repair. Should it be reconstructed? If so, how should it be used?
3. Visitor Center—Should additional visitor facilities be provided at the Thomas Cole NHS? The purpose of a visitor center would be to help establish visitor expectations, provide additional interpretation, and manage the flow of visitors at the site.
4. Cultural Landscape—How should the grounds of the 3.4-acre estate (once 110 acres) be interpreted and maintained? This plan should decide what period of the Cedar Grove estate should be interpreted to the public.
5. Transportation and Public Access—How can the site be made accessible to public access? What should the parking facilities be? Are there transit options for the Thomas Cole NHS? How can the site be linked with Olana, sites in the village of Catskill, and Hudson River School painting sites in the Catskill Mountains? Pedestrian and bike linkages between these sites and the Catskill Greenway and the village center should also be studied.
6. Collections—What artifacts should the Thomas Cole NHS collect and why? Should the site exhibit and/or own paintings? Would they be historic and/or contemporary paintings? What gallery facilities are needed to display paintings?

7. Hudson River Art Trail—How should a trail of painting sites be developed and interpreted to the public?

8. Thomas Cole NHS Partners—How can the Thomas Cole NHS develop partnerships that enhance the experience at Cedar Grove and more effectively interpret Cole's career and art? What entities are possible partners?

9. Interpretative Themes—What should the interpretive themes be for the Thomas Cole NHS? How should Cole's influence on American culture and environmentalism be treated? Should the history of the Cedar Grove estate be interpreted?

10. Role of Education—What kinds of educational programs should be offered? What should be the role of contemporary artists? What facilities would be needed?

Following this public meeting, a synopsis of the issues raised was sent to the members of the Board of Governors and the Board of Advisors of the Thomas Cole National Historic Site for further comments. Several members submitted written comments.

Between April and October, 2002, the project team developed draft alternatives for the plan. In October 2002, copies of the draft alternatives were sent to members of the Board of Governors and Board of Advisors for the Thomas Cole National Historic Site to obtain their comments. A special meeting was held with the Board of Governors to discuss the draft alternatives on October 9, 2002. Several comment submittals were received and addressed in the draft GMP. Another meeting was held for input from the Board of Governors and Board of Advisors on September 21, 2003.

On April 8, 2004, the National Park Service Northeast Region Boston Office mailed out approximately 160 copies of the Draft GMP to board members, supporters, government officials, and the media. The Northeast Region

Boston Office also sent out copies of the Draft GMP's executive summary to approximately 100 additional persons with the message that they could request a complete copy of the Draft GMP. Each mailing included an invitation to a public meeting on May 10, 2004 at 7:00 PM at the Weight Master's Building, at Catskill, Point, Catskill, NY, to provide comments on the plan. The public meeting also was publicized through a Cedar Grove newsletter mailed to a 500-person mailing list. News releases were sent to the local press, and a front-page article announcing the public meeting was published in *The Daily Mail* (Catskill, NY). The Draft GMP was posted on the website of the Thomas Cole National Historic Site (www.thomascole.org). The invitation letter and the newsletter indicated that the deadline for public comments on the Draft GMP would be May 31, 2004 and that they could be provided by mail, email, or telephone.

Fifteen people attended the public meeting, and all of them expressed support for the Draft GMP and for Alternative Three being the Preferred Alternative. Chairman Robert Stackman expressed the support of the Thomas Cole NHS Board of Governors. James Gold, of the New York Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, said that he has been involved in the GMP planning process and agreed that Alternative Three should be the Preferred Alternative.

In addition to these meeting comments, two letters were received. The first author supported Alternative Two because it would be less likely to attract extra tourists and have an adverse impact on the historic site. The second author supported Alternative Three and urged a strong partnership with the Olana State Historic Site and the possibility of building a basement for storage at the reconstructed New Studio. Although there was little public feedback on this Draft GMP, earlier drafts received extensive comments, which were incorporated into the text and apparently addressed the public's concerns.



North elevation of Cole's New Studio,
c. 1970. Courtesy of Vedder memorial
Library, Cocksackie, New York.

IX. Endnotes

¹ Thomas Cole, "O Cedar Grove, whene'er I think to part," *Thomas Cole's Poetry: The Collected Poems of America's Foremost Painter of the Hudson River School*, ed. Marshall B. Tymn (York, PA: George Shumway Publisher, 1972; originally written 1834), p. 73.

² Cole, "I stood among the mountain heights, alone!" *Thomas Cole's Poetry*, p. 107.

³ Sandra S. Phillips and Linda Weintraub, eds. *Charmed Places: Hudson River Artists and Their Houses, Studios, and Vistas* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 1988), p. 66.

⁴ Ellwood C. Parry, *The Art of Thomas Cole: Ambition and Imagination* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 1988), p. 365.

⁵ David Schuyler, *Apostle of Taste: Andrew Jackson Downing, 1815-1852* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), p. 225.

⁶ Thomas Cole, "American Scenery," in *Hudson Valley Lives: Writings from the 17th Century to the Present*, ed. Bonnie Marranca (Woodstock, NY: The Overlook Press, 1991), pp. 377-378.

⁷ Hans Huth, *Nature and the American: Three Centuries of Changing Attitudes* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1957), p. 122.

⁸ See report of the Painting and Sculpture Theme Study Workshop held in June 1991.

⁹ Joshua C. Taylor, *Fine Arts in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), p. 85.

¹⁰ Theodore E. Stebbins, Jr., *Painter and Poet in the Land, A New World: Masterpieces of American Painting, 1760-1910* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1983), p. 65.

"Cole... exulted in
nature's variety, and
identified her changing
moods."

Theodore Stebbins,
*A New World: Masterpieces of
American Painting, 1760-1910*

X. Appendices

Appendix A: Enabling Legislation

Cole, in addition to being the most influential landscape painter of his time, was also a family man, poet, architect, musician, Romantic nature-lover, and cultural leader.

THOMAS COLE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE ACT

*Public Law 106-146
106th Congress*

An Act

To establish the Thomas Cole National Historic Site in the State of New York as an affiliated area of the National Park System.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) Short Title.—This Act may be cited as the “Thomas Cole National Historic Site Act”.

(b) Table of Contents.—The table of contents of this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

Sec. 2. Definitions.

Sec. 3. Findings and purposes.

Sec. 4. Establishment of Thomas Cole National Historic Site.

Sec. 5. Retention of ownership and management of historic site by Greene
County Historical Society.

Sec. 6. Administration of historic site.

Sec. 7. Authorization of appropriations.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

As used in this Act:

(1) The term “historic site” means the Thomas Cole National Historic Site established by section 4 of this Act.

(2) The term “Hudson River artists” means artists who were associated with the Hudson River school of landscape painting.

(3) The term “plan” means the general management plan developed pursuant to section 6(d).

(4) The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of the Interior.

(5) The term “Society” means the Greene County Historical Society of Greene County, New York, which owns the Thomas Cole home, studio, and other property comprising the historic site.

SEC. 3. FINDINGS AND PURPOSES.

(a) Findings.—Congress finds the following:

(1) The Hudson River school of landscape painting was inspired by Thomas Cole and was characterized by a group of 19th century landscape artists who recorded and celebrated the landscape and wilderness of America, particularly in the Hudson River Valley region in the State of New York.

(2) Thomas Cole is recognized as America’s most prominent landscape and allegorical painter of the mid-19th century.

- (3) Located in Greene County, New York, the Thomas Cole House, also known as Thomas Cole's Cedar Grove, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and has been designated as a National Historic Landmark.
- (4) Within a 15 mile radius of the Thomas Cole House, an area that forms a key part of the rich cultural and natural heritage of the Hudson River Valley region, significant landscapes and scenes painted by Thomas Cole and other Hudson River artists, such as Frederic Church, survive intact.
- (5) The State of New York has established the Hudson River Valley Greenway to promote the preservation, public use, and enjoyment of the natural and cultural resources of the Hudson River Valley region.
- (6) Establishment of the Thomas Cole National Historic Site will provide opportunities for the illustration and interpretation of cultural themes of the heritage of the United States and unique opportunities for education, public use, and enjoyment.

(b) Purposes.—The purposes of this Act are—

- (1) to preserve and interpret the home and studio of Thomas Cole for the benefit, inspiration, and education of the people of the United States;
- (2) to help maintain the integrity of the setting in the Hudson River Valley region that inspired artistic expression;
- (3) to coordinate the interpretive, preservation, and recreational efforts of Federal, State, and other entities in the Hudson Valley region in order to enhance opportunities for education, public use, and enjoyment; and
- (4) to broaden understanding of the Hudson River Valley region and its role in American history and culture.

SEC. 4. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE THOMAS COLE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE.

(a) Establishment.—There is established, as an affiliated area of the National Park System, the Thomas Cole National Historic Site in the State of New York.

(b) Description.—The historic site shall consist of the home and studio of Thomas Cole, comprising approximately 3.4 acres, located at 218 Spring Street, in the village of Catskill, New York, as generally depicted on the boundary map numbered TCH/80002, and dated March 1992.

SEC. 5. RETENTION OF OWNERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF HISTORIC SITE BY GREENE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

The Greene County Historical Society of Greene County, New York, shall continue to own, administer, manage, and operate the historic site.

SEC. 6. ADMINISTRATION OF HISTORIC SITE.

(a) **Applicability of National Park System Laws.**—The historic site shall be administered in a manner consistent with this Act and all laws generally applicable to units of the National Park System, including the Act of August 25, 1916 (16 U.S.C. 1 et seq.; commonly known as the National Park Service Organic Act), and the Act of August 21, 1935 (16 U.S.C. 461 et seq.; commonly known as the Historic Sites, Buildings, and Antiquities Act).

(b) Cooperative Agreements.—

(1) **Assistance to Society.**—The Secretary may enter into cooperative agreements with the Society to preserve the Thomas Cole House and other structures in the historic site and to assist with education programs and research and interpretation of the Thomas Cole House and associated landscapes.

(2) **Other assistance.**—To further the purposes of this Act, the Secretary may enter into cooperative agreements with the State of New York, the Society, the Thomas Cole Foundation, and other public and private entities to facilitate public understanding and enjoyment of the lives and works of the Hudson River artists through the provision of assistance to develop, present, and fund art exhibits, resident artist programs, and other appropriate activities related to the preservation, interpretation, and use of the historic site.

(c) **Artifacts and Property.**—The Secretary may acquire personal property associated with, and appropriate for, the interpretation of the historic site.

(d) **General Management Plan.**—Within two complete fiscal years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall develop a general management plan for the historic site with the cooperation of the Society. Upon the completion of the plan, the Secretary shall provide a copy of the plan to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate and the Committee on Resources of the House of Representatives. The plan shall include recommendations for regional wayside exhibits, to be carried out through cooperative agreements with the State of New York and other public and private entities. The plan shall be prepared in accordance with section 12(b) of Public Law 91-383 (16 U.S.C. 1a-1 et seq.; commonly known as the National Park System General Authorities Act).

SEC. 7. AUTHORIZATIONS OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as are necessary to carry out this Act.

Approved December 9, 1999.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—H.R. 658 (S. 140):

HOUSE REPORTS: No. 106-138 (Comm. on Resources).

SENATE REPORTS: No. 106-89 accompanying S. 140 (Comm. on Energy and Natural Resources).

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD Vol. 145 (1999):

Sept. 13, considered and passed House.

Nov. 19, considered and passed Senate.

Appendix B: Cost Estimates

The Thomas Cole National Historic Site (NHS) was established in 1999 and opened to the public in 2001. The Thomas Cole NHS has developed the following budget estimates for needs identified in the general management plan process. The projects whose costs are estimated are consistent with PL 106-146, the Thomas Cole National Historic Site Act (1999), which established the Thomas Cole NHS and authorized the Secretary of the Interior to:

- “enter into cooperative agreements with the [Greene County Historical] Society to preserve the Thomas Cole House and other structures in the historic site and to assist with education programs and research and interpretation of the Thomas Cole House and associated landscapes.”
- “enter into cooperative agreements with the State of New York, the Society, the Thomas Cole Foundation, and other public and private entities to facilitate public understanding and enjoyment of the lives and works of the Hudson River artists through the provision of assistance to develop, present, and fund art exhibits, resident artist programs, and other appropriate activities related to the preservation, interpretation, and use of the historic site.”
- “acquire personal property associated with, and appropriate for, the interpretation of the historic site.”

The Act also stipulates that “The plan shall include recommendations for regional wayside exhibits, to be carried out through cooperative agreements with the State of New York and other public and private entities.”

Alternative One: Continuation of Current Practices

Initiatives	Budget Estimate
Stabilize Storehouse Studio—Stabilize building, but do not prepare it for public viewing	\$90,000–110,000
Planning Costs (35% of Adjusted Net Capital Costs)	31,500–38,500
Total Capital Cost	121,500–148,500
Five-Year Property Preservation and Maintenance	135,000–165,000
Five-Year Education, Interpretation, and Research Program	90,000–110,000
Total	\$346,500–423,500

Alternative Two: Thomas Cole and Cedar Grove

Initiatives	Budget Estimate
Rehabilitate Storehouse Studio—Rehabilitate building and prepare studio space for public viewing.	\$270,000–330,000
Planning Costs (35% of Adjusted Net Capital Costs)	94,500–115,500
Total Capital Cost	364,500–445,500
Art Trail Guide	9,000–11,000
Five-Year Property Preservation and Maintenance	180,000–220,000
Five-Year Education, Interpretation, and Research Program	315,000–385,000
Education Program:	135,000–165,000
Interpretive Program and Exhibits:	135,000–165,000
Research Program:	45,000–55,000
Total	\$868,500–1,061,500

Alternative Three: Thomas Cole's Art and the Regional Landscape

Initiatives	Budget Estimate
Complete House Renovation—Complete restoration on Thomas Cole's house, begun in 1999.	\$270,000–330,000
Restore Storehouse Studio—Restore Cole's Storehouse Studio (1839-1846) for interpretive and visitor uses; \$250,000 already committed from Athens Generating Plant funds and \$200,000 from Save America's Treasures. This project also includes exhibits, possibly including a multimedia presentation.	855,000–1,045,000
Erect New Building on New Studio Site—Reconstruct Cole's New Studio as a gallery and meeting space	675,000–815,000
Restore Cedar Grove Landscape—Develop historically based treatment of the landscape at Cedar Grove; includes \$20,000 for Cultural Landscape Plan	180,000–220,000
Develop Art Trail—Develop historic trail markers and interpretive wayside exhibits at sites where Cole and other artists painted landscapes in Catskill, NY, and Catskill Mountains; phase one would cost approximately \$120,000, with the second phase costing approximately another \$80,000.	180,000–220,000
Planning Costs (35% of Adjusted Net Capital Costs)	756,000–920,000
Total Capital Cost	2,916,000–3,550,000
Five-Year Property Preservation and Maintenance	225,000–275,000
Five-Year Education, Interpretation, and Research Program	675,000–825,000
Education Program:	270,000–330,000
Interpretive Program and Exhibits:	315,000–385,000
Research Program:	90,000–110,000
Total	\$3,816,000–4,650,000

Appendix C: Compliance with Federal, State, and Local Laws, Executive Orders, and Regulations

The Thomas Cole National Historic Site will comply with all applicable laws, regulations, and executive orders, including those listed here, upon implementing its general management plan.

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT COMPLIANCE

The Thomas Cole NHS GMP is undertaking an Environmental Assessment (EA) rather than an environmental impact statement (EIS), which is required for all major federal actions, under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969. The Thomas Cole NHS is an affiliated site of the national park system managed by a local nonprofit organization, the Greene County Historical Society; and there will be no major federal action or significant impacts at the site.

As required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, the draft general management plan and environmental assessment (DGMP/EA) will be on public review for a minimum of 30 days. The final general management plan and environmental assessment (FGMP/EA) will respond to or incorporate the public comments in the draft document. Following the completion of the comment period, the NPS will determine if any significant issues or concerns have been raised that necessitate the preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS). If that has not occurred, the NPS will issue a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). Through the issuance of a FONSI, the NPS will document the selected alternative and set forth any stipulations for implementation of the GMP, thereby completing the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act.

The environmental assessment is a programmatic statement, presenting an overview of potential impacts relating to the proposed program for each management option. More detailed plans may be developed for individual actions. These more detailed plans would have to support the program under the preferred management option and would be subject to a more detailed review of environmental impacts, possibly involving project-specific NEPA compliance.

CULTURAL RESOURCE COMPLIANCE

The National Park Service is mandated to preserve and protect resources through the service's Organic Act of August 25, 1916, and through specific legislation such as the Antiquities Act of 1906, NEPA, and the National Historic Preservation Act. Cultural resources at the Thomas Cole NHS will be managed in accordance with these acts and in accordance with Chapter 5 of *NPS Management Policies*, 2001 Edition, Director's Order 28: Cultural Resource Management, Director's Order 2: Park Planning, and Director's Order 12: Conservation Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis and Decision Making.

In accordance with the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 (42 USC 4151 et seq.), the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 USC 701 et seq.), and *Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards*, all facilities and programs developed at Thomas Cole NHS will be made as accessible as possible given the site's historic preservation constraints.

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (16 USC 470, et seq.), requires that federal agencies having direct or indirect jurisdiction—including permits, approvals, or funding—over undertakings take into account the effect of those undertakings on National Register properties and allow the Advisory Council

on Historic Preservation (ACHP) an opportunity to comment. Actions recommended in the GMP alternatives only require Section 106 review if federal funds are expended, since the historic site is owned by a private entity, the Greene County Historical Society. It is anticipated that some federal funds and some private funds will be used to pay for the recommended undertakings. If federal funds are used the NPS will work with the New York State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and the Advisory Council to meet the requirements of Section 106 review.

The following list indicates those undertakings that are subject to further consultation and the stage of planning at which consultation is most likely to be completed:

<i>Actions</i>	<i>Compliance Requirements</i>
Rehabilitate Storehouse Studio	Requires SHPO review; historic structures report; archeological evaluation report
Reconstruct New Studio	Requires SHPO review; historic structures report; archeological evaluation report
Rehabilitate cultural landscape	Requires SHPO review; cultural landscape report; treatment plan; archaeology compliance

NATURAL RESOURCE COMPLIANCE

Clean Air Act, as amended (42 USC 7401 et seq.)—Thomas Cole NHS, in Greene County, NY, is located in a Class II clean air area. Greene County has monitored attainment of the standard (Clean Data Areas) for ozone and carbon monoxide. According to the Clean Air Act, maximum allowable increases of sulfur dioxide, particulate matter, and nitrogen oxide beyond baseline concentrations established for Class II areas cannot be exceeded. These Class II increments will allow modest industrial activities within the vicinity of the site. The Thomas Cole NHS will work with the State of New York to ensure that all site activities meet the requirements of the state air quality implementation plan.

Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 USC 1531 et seq.)—Section 7 requires all federal agencies to consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to ensure that any action authorized, funded, or carried out by the agency does not jeopardize the continued existence of listed species or critical habitat. Prior to implementation of any of the proposals set out in this GMP, the Thomas Cole NHS will consult with the USFWS pursuant to Section 7.

Executive Order 11988, Floodplain Management—All federal agencies are required to avoid construction within the 100-year floodplain unless no other practical alternative exists. Flood maps published by the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) indicate that no part of the Thomas Cole NHS is located in the 100-year floodplain. Therefore, the Thomas Cole NHS is not affected by this regulation.

Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands—All federal agencies are required to avoid, wherever, possible making impacts upon wetlands. There are no wetlands on the site.

Analysis of Impacts on Prime and Unique Agricultural Lands in implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (45 FR 59189)—A memorandum dated August 11, 1980 from the Council on Environmental Quality requires federal agencies to assess the effects of their actions on soils classified by the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service as prime or unique farmlands. This policy was developed to minimize the effect of federal programs in converting prime, unique, or locally important farmland to nonagricultural uses. There are no farmlands at the Thomas Cole NHS. Therefore, prime or unique farmlands will not be examined further.

SOCIOECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT COMPLIANCE

Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations—The National Park Service is required to consider the impacts of its actions on minority and low-income populations and communities, as well as the equity of the distribution of benefits and risks of those decisions. There may be socially or economically disadvantaged populations existing within the site's region. The management alternatives proposed in the draft GMP offer the potential to make a positive impact on the region's overall economic health and vitality. Economic impacts from employment and associated earnings are expected to be positive. Furthermore, the management alternatives would not result in disproportionately high and adverse environmental effects, including human health, economic, and social effects, on minority or low-income communities. There are no air or water pollution impacts that would affect human health. There would be no change in types or character of land use in the surrounding area that could affect minority or low-income communities.

None of the alternatives in this document would create significant impacts on minority or low-income populations. Therefore, this issue will not be examined further in this analysis.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990—There are specific requirements for disabled access to parking facilities, pathways, and buildings. The accessibility requirements apply to government facilities (Title II) and to private entities that provide public accommodations (Title III). An element of this GMP/EA has been developed to ensure appropriate access to persons with special needs or disabilities.

STATE AND LOCAL REGULATIONS

The Thomas Cole NHS will work with the State of New York and the Village of Catskill to determine how local regulations apply to any proposed development.

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Above: Thomas Cole, Daguerreotype, c. 1844-46. Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Photographs and Prints Division.

Front cover: Thomas Cole, *The Clove, Catskills*, c. 1827, oil on canvas, 25" x 33", New Britain Museum of American Art, photo: Michael Agee.

