

Reactions to 'preferred growth' report

BY DAN HUST

SULLIVAN COUNTY — Sullivan County's recent naming by the Open Space Institute (OSI) as the top county in the Catskills with "preferred growth" areas has elicited a range of comments from locals.

(For a summary of the "Private Lands, Public Benefits" report, see this past Tuesday's **Democrat**. For the report itself, go to www.osiny.org.)

Take a look:

- "It's great to hear an environmental group has done a study like this," said **Thomp-**

Part 2 of 3

son Supervisor Tony Cellini, whose township is ranked #2 in "preferred growth" areas out of all the towns in Sullivan, Greene, Ulster and Delaware counties.

He's especially pleased OSI — normally focused on preserving open space — welcomes controlled growth.

"I think we can use that [report] as an economic development tool," he anticipated, grateful to OSI for its time and resources.

- "The approach they took is different than the traditional analysis," observed **Catskill Mountainkeeper Executive Director Ramsay Adams**.

While he lauded the new data that emerged, "the eye-popping, shocking number of lands available for development is unfortunate," Adams said, worrying that "any kind of broad statement about developable acres is problematic."

He hopes the report is used with discretion and that local municipalities understand there's a lot more to siting development properly than just a property's status as "preferred" for growth.

"The real conclusions that have to be drawn [are] at the local level," he remarked. "... We want them to build stuff that is well-thought-out and planned."

That said, Adams is glad OSI undertook the effort, and he agrees there is "room for growth" in the Catskill Mountains.

"What's good about the report is it gives a baseline and really good information about where development and open space are," he explained. "... Information is our lifeblood."

- Fallsburg was tabbed as the #4 township with the most preferred growth area in the four-county region, and **Supervisor Steve Vegliante** likes that assessment.

"We have water and sewer infrastructure to all our hamlets, and we have rural development on the outside," he remarked. "I think the report was spot-on."

Vegliante said the town's master plan is similarly-themed, and he thinks the town will soon reap the benefits.

"We're starting to see people sniffing around again, which is a good sign," he related.

On Tuesday, April 19: More reactions from public figures.

