

New outlook for Cohoes Falls

Falls View Park offers a stunning perspective of a natural wonder

By [DAVID FILKINS](#), Staff writer

Click byline for more stories by writer.

First published: Friday, August 22, 2008

COHOES -- Cohoes Falls was forged nearly 12,000 years ago, when millions of gallons of water rushed over and dug into the soft shale. It is the second largest falls east of the Mississippi River, smaller only than Niagara Falls.

Bald eagles swoop down and eat fish in the large pool at the bottom of Cohoes Falls. Northern pike, walleye and more than a dozen other species swim in it. From 75 feet above, water crashes down on the rocks below.

It is an awesome site.

And before Thursday, the view was obstructed unless you stood nearly half a mile away. It's all changed with the opening of Falls View Park, a four-acre viewing area near the Brookfield Renewable Power facility.

"Wow!" Assembly Majority Leader Ron Canestrari, D-Cohoes, said to a crowd that had gathered for a ribbon-cutting ceremony. "Isn't this phenomenal?"

"Yes!" came a voice from the crowd.

"Yes!" came another, followed by loud applause from the group.

The park consists of a large lawn area, sidewalks, trails and a concrete wall facing the falls and decorated with "KEEP OFF THE WALL" signs. The \$2 million project was funded by Brookfield Renewable Power and began three months ago. Before the brush-cutter came through, the area was nothing more than a fence surrounded by dense weeds and trees.

For years, the only place to view the falls was from an observation deck near the power facility, nearly a quarter-mile downstream.

"It's way up there," Mayor John McDonald said as he pointed toward the facility. "I called today's press conference an official welcome, because for years people would climb the fence to check out the view illegally."

A trail down to the falls will be built in the coming months to provide fishermen and bird watchers access to the water. The park is available for weddings, schools and other groups, as well as the general public.