



NEW YORK STATE

Department of Environmental Conservation

DIVISION OF LANDS & FORESTS

Watson's East Triangle Wild Forest Draft Amendment

to the

2010 Watson's East Triangle Wild Forest Unit Management Plan

Towns of Croghan, Diana, and Watson - Lewis County

Town of Webb - Herkimer County

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INTRODUCTION

The Watson's East Triangle Wild Forest is located in the Town of Croghan, Lewis County and the Town of Webb, Herkimer County. The unit contains 13,417 acres of Forest Preserve land classified as wild forest. A Unit Management Plan (UMP) for the unit was completed and approved in 2010.

The UMP proposed the construction of a new lean-to near Buck Pond, at the end of the Buck Pond Road. To prevent inappropriate use of the lean-to, the UMP also proposed the entire length of the Buck Pond Road—totaling 0.3 miles—be closed to all motor vehicle use. During the fall of 2011, an assessment of the road was conducted to determine what was needed to convert it into a universally accessible trail as originally proposed in the UMP. That assessment indicated that a substantial amount of work would be required to meet accessibility guidelines. This would have included constructing part of the new accessible trail off from the old road bed in order to overcome a terrain obstacle.

During this same time period a discussion with a group of users at the existing campsite revealed that most of the current use of this site was during big game hunting season. Without motorized access, several members of this group would not be able to utilize this site due to physical disabilities. As one of the few remote locations within the area that affords access to people with disabilities, DEC staff considered other alternatives for the leanto location other than those proposed in the UMP.

Based on the considerations detailed above, the Department determined that it is appropriate for the Buck Pond Road to remain open for motor vehicle use, but only for those persons having a valid CP-3 permit. The current campsite will be made universally accessible to better facilitate use by users with disabilities, particularly during the hunting season. The universally accessible lean-to that was originally proposed for this site will not be located within Watson's East Triangle WF at this time. The Department will, however, construct the universally accessible leanto next to the Middle Branch of the Oswegatchie as proposed in the 2010 UMP.

IV. Proposed Management Actions

B. Man Made Facilities

1. Roads

The UMP called for the Buck Pond Road to be closed to all motor vehicle use to prevent issues with use of a lean-to that was proposed to be located near Buck Pond. This new proposal will retain the Buck Pond Road as a CP-3 road which will allow a limited amount of motor vehicle use.

Management Actions:

- Designate the entire Buck Pond Road (0.3 miles) as a CP-3 route.

3. Parking Areas

The UMP called for a two car parking area to be constructed at the intersection of the Buck Pond Road and the Bear Pond Road. As the Buck Pond Road is now proposed to remain open for CP-3 access, a new parking area, that doesn't impede traffic, will need to be constructed. The new location is approximately 50 feet in from the intersection of the Buck Pond and Bear Pond roads and utilizes an existing opening.

Management Actions:

- Construct a two car parking area near the intersection of the Bear Pond Road and Buck Pond Road.

7. Primitive Tent Sites

The existing primitive tent site at Buck Pond will be modified to make it universally accessible. This will include hardening of the tent site and installation of an accessible pit privy and picnic table. Hardening of the site will be undertaken in a manner, and with materials, that have the least impact on the character of the area.

Management Actions:

- Convert the existing Buck Pond primitive tent site into an accessible site by hardening where needed, installing an accessible privy, fire place and picnic table.

8. Gates/Barriers

The proposed rock barrier for the end of the Buck Pond Road will be replaced by a gate with a combination lock. This will allow access by persons with CP-3 permits but prevent unwanted motor vehicle use.

Management Actions:

- Install a new gate, instead of a rock barrier, at the beginning of the Buck Pond Road.

Buck Pond Accessible Tent Site Project

