



M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Terry Martino
FROM: Jim Connolly
DATE: November 29, 2012
SUBJECT: Highlights of Planning Division Activities for November 2012

REGIONAL PLANNING

Meeting with Adirondack Powder Ski Association

On November 9, Agency and Department staff (DEC) met with representatives of the Adirondack Powder Ski Association. The group has requested revisions to DEC policy to allow for cutting of small trees and removal of dead wood in forest glade areas on the tops and sides of mountains to allow for improved recreational experience for backcountry skiers. The proposal presents several problems since both DEC trail maintenance policy and APA guidelines for wilderness and wild forest management focus on trail maintenance and development and do not allow manipulation of habitat or larger areas of the Forest Preserve. DEC policies have also been developed to ensure that tree cutting does not trigger a material extent, as defined in various court decisions, in context of the Forever Wild clause of the State Constitution. The group is very interested in developing backcountry skiing opportunities at Lyon Mt. in Clinton County, as well as other locations. Staff committed to continued discussion to determine if their needs could be met through establishing backcountry ski trails. The group is scheduled to make a presentation on this topic at the next meeting of DEC's Forest Preserve Advisory Committee.

Common Ground Alliance Workgroup on Land Bank Proposal

Planning Director Jim Connolly has been assigned to provide support to a workgroup to discuss possible approaches to an

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Article XIV amendment which would allow for broader exemptions for utility lines on Forest Preserve lands. Currently individual Constitutional amendments are required to re-route or build electric transmission and distribution lines or other utilities on Forest Preserve lands. The work group includes members from DEC, two Agency commissioners (William Valentino and Sherman Craig) and former APA Chair Ross Whaley. The work group will be collaborating with Jim Herman and Dave Mason of the Adirondack Futures project to develop a position paper on this topic.

Inter-agency Meeting on Coordination of Lake George Projects

Agency staff convened a meeting of staff from DEC, Department of State (DOS), Lake George Park Commission (LGPC) and Lake George Watershed Coalition to discuss coordination of various projects in and around Lake George. The meeting provided an opportunity for Dave Wick, the new Executive Director of the Lake George Park Commission to meet staff from the other agencies. The Department of State provides major funding for Lake George projects through the Lake George Watershed Coalition. Funded projects include lake monitoring, non-point source control projects and nuisance aquatic species monitoring and control. Discussion items included the status of LGPC project for Asian Clam control; the status of a draft LGPC proposal for boat washing stations; DEC's assessment of possible Nitrogen removal requirements at the Lake George village wastewater treatment plant; an update on DOS funded projects; and the status of development projects which DEC and APA are reviewing for subdivision and stormwater permits. Agency staff reported on the development of an APA general wetlands permit for use on Asian Clam control and committed to expedited review of a request from the Park Commission to increase the area where benthic mats are being placed. The group will be meeting quarterly to discuss issues of mutual concern.

Meeting with Town of Crown Point on Hamlet Expansion

On November 27th, Agency planning staff met with the Crown Point Town Board to review Agency procedures for processing amendment applications for the official Adirondack Park Land Use and Development Plan map. The Town Board had previously passed a resolution under the former Town supervisor to proceed with an application to the Agency to

expand their Hamlet boundaries to coincide with their sewer district. Based on discussions at the meeting, it appears the new members of the Board, including the Town Supervisor, support the application request. Agency staff will continue to work with Town officials to prepare the application and develop required SEQR review documents.

Meeting of Adirondack Partnership Recreational Plan Work Group

On November 29, Agency Planning Director attended a meeting of the Adirondack Partnership Recreational Planning Work Group. The group is in the process of developing a recreational plan for the Adirondack Park which focuses on links between public lands and private sector economic development and tourism opportunities. Once completed, the plan and its recommendations will be submitted to the North Country Regional Economic Development Council for consideration.

STATE LAND & UMP REVIEW ACTIVITIES

On November 3, Agency staff participated in a series of discussion panels at a workshop on Park Stewardship sponsored by Adirondack Wild. The workshop was held at the Paul Smiths College Visitors Interpretive Center. Senior Natural Resource Planner, Kathy Regan, spoke about her involvement in establishing the Summit Stewards program which educates hikers and works to protect and restore sensitive alpine flora in the High Peaks. Dan Spada, Supervisor for Resource Analysis and Scientific Services, provided background on Agency partnerships with a variety of organizations including the Department of Environmental Conservation, the Environmental Protection Agency, Wildlife Conservation Society, Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program and the Adirondack Research Consortium. Agency Planning Director, Jim Connolly, spoke about planning initiatives to improve stewardship and collaboration on Park issues, including the Common Ground Alliance, Adirondack Futures project, NYS Open Space Plan, Unit Management planning, and the Adirondack Partnership recreational planning initiative. The keynote speaker for the program was Curt Stager, Paul Smiths College professor and author of *Deep Future: The Next 100,000 Years of Life on Earth*. Dr. Stager emphasized the importance of adaptive change to resource management and stewardship during a time

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of ongoing and potentially increasing human impact on the environment.

State land staff met with Dr. Jamie Savage Chair, Five Ponds Partners and Professor and Certified Forester (CF) SUNY-ESF Ranger School, to review a potential trail re-route that would take 4.14 miles of the Cranberry 50 off of Route 3. This project would require a UMP amendment and a portion of the trail would be on easement lands.

State land staff worked with Regulatory staff on a pre-application for a recreational trail between Ray Brook and Saranac Lake, paralleling the existing railroad. State land staff explored opportunities for the trail to be located in the Saranac Lakes Wild Forest to avoid serious wetland issues. Field work conducted did not lead to any immediate alternatives.

State land staff reviewed draft easement language regarding The Nature Conservancy/Finch lands. Staff continued to work on drafting the description of action for the eventual classification package.

State land staff participated in a conference call with DEC and DOT regarding hazard tree removal guidelines for State lands.

State land staff reviewed the trail re-route for Jay Mountain.

State land staff met with Erik Backlund from St. Lawrence University to learn about his research on Adirondack communities.

On November 7 and 19, State land staff conducted site visits to review DEC construction activity along the new Community Connector snowmobile trail between Inlet and Raquette Lake, proposed in the 2010 Moose River Plains Wild Forest unit management plan.

On November 20, State land staff conducted a site visit to (and assisted DEC staff with locating) a State-land segment of the new Community Connector snowmobile trail between Wells and Speculator, proposed in the 2010 amendment to the Jessup River Wild Forest unit management plan.

In mid-November, State land staff received and began review of a proposed final amendment to the 2004 Whiteface Ski Center unit management plan.

CARTOGRAPHY AND INFORMATION ANALYSIS

GIS Hardware/Software Management/Data Management - Staff continued major edits to the Lookup System 2 Mapping Application. Improved search tools with more intuitive interface and improved query logic for Agency staff to search tax map numbers, property owner names, parcel use classifications, state land unit names.

GIS Training - Staff is working with NYS Public Service Workshops Program to develop a GPS training course for Agency employees. The course is tentatively scheduled to be held early in 2013 and will be open to DEC and other state agency staff as space allows.

LUA Boundary/Blue Line Inquiry - Staff answered six inquiries about the location of the Park boundary, land use area boundaries and river area boundaries.

Map Amendments - On November 27, staff attended a Crown Point Town Board meeting to discuss map amendments. Staff has provided assistance to the town in recent years as the Town developed a Hamlet expansion plan. The Town Board passed a resolution in December 2011 to pursue a map amendment for the Hamlet expansion and requested that Agency staff discuss the process with the new Town Board in anticipation that the Town will move forward with the request.

Other - Staff assisted RASS and Legal staff with revisions to DAP.

State Land Re/Classification - Staff is doing preliminary work on the next annual State land classification package which will include recently acquired Forest Preserve, lands the State anticipates acquiring from The Nature Conservancy and State land that Agency staff has discovered was incorrectly mapped as private land. The package may also include the reclassification of some Forest Preserve lands.

Web Administration/Content Management - Staff provided a training demonstration to Keith McKeever, showing how to

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update the Agency home page editing content and posting changes to the web. Demonstrated adding public input notices regarding new General Permits.

Administrative Tasks - Staff prepared monthly reports.

November GIS/Web Task Summary:

Task	Count
GIS Agency Program Administration	0
GIS Consultation	0
GIS Hardware/Software Management	1
GIS Map Production	4
GIS Data Management	1
GIS Training	1
LUA Boundary/Blue Line Inquiry	6
Map Amendments Review	1
State Land Classification/Reclassification Review	1
Web Administration	1
Web Content Management	1
Administrative Tasks	1

JEC:WVL:KGP:KDR:MSK:JWB:lhb