

Description of Action
2009 State Land Classification & Reclassification
January 26, 2010

General Description of Action:

The proposed action involves the classification and reclassification of State Lands within the Adirondack Park according to the guidelines and criteria of the State Land Master Plan. The action involves land in 10 of the 12 counties in the Park including: Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Hamilton, Herkimer, Lewis, Oneida, St. Lawrence and Warren and includes 91 State land classification proposals totaling approximately 31,056 acres and 4 State land reclassifications totaling an estimated 258 acres.

This classification package includes proposals for the classification of recently acquired State lands, three reclassification proposals and a number of classifications involving map corrections. Map corrections are the result of regular staff review of the Agency's land classification GIS layer. This review over time has discovered areas of land depicted on the map as private land that are determined to actually be in state ownership. When such errors in the map are discovered, the Agency places the areas into the State land "Pending Classification" category for consideration in the next Agency classification process. This classification package includes 61 such map corrections as identified in the summary table.

The Lyon Mountain Tract in Clinton County is the largest contiguous parcel of this classification action. The size of this parcel allowed an alternative classification to be considered and is discussed in the description below.

The action only involves the classification or reclassification of State lands according to the provisions of the Adirondack Park State Land Master plan. The action does not authorize the development of new structures or improvements without prior unit management plan review and SEQRA assessment by the Department of Environmental Conservation and the Adirondack Park Agency.

A summary table and maps outline the scope of all the proposals within this classification package are attached for Agency consideration. In addition, the following more detailed narrative is provided for a number of the larger more significant classification proposals included in the action. The narrative descriptions are categorized according to the DEC Region and county.

Region 5 – Franklin and Essex Counties

Tahawas/Henderson Lake Parcel

This 6,131 acre parcel was acquired from the Open Space Conservancy, Inc. (OSC) in January 2009. The boundaries of this parcel abut pre-existing Forest Preserve in the High Peaks Wilderness. This parcel has 3 inholdings: one parcel contains a fire tower on the summit of Mt. Adams, the second contains remnants of two fire tower observer cabins, and the third is a shoreline parcel along the Upper Preston Pond which contains a small log cabin. Each of these inholdings will be subject to a conservation easement to be held by the State of New York, as described in APA Permit 2005-284. The State holds a purchase option for the Upper Preston Pond parcel. A fourth parcel which adjoins the Tahawas/Henderson Lake Tract includes the Masten House on Henderson Lake. This parcel has been retained by OSC and is currently leased to the State University of New York, College of Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF).

OSC retains the right on the Tahawau/Henderson Lake parcel to use the dam at Henderson Lake to produce hydroelectric power and to transmit that power from the dam along an existing road to the Upper Works Parking lot. The power generated is to be used only for the Masten House. Staff recommends that the road from the Upper Works Parking Area, beginning at the Hudson River bridge crossing to the dam at Henderson Lake and the dam be classified as a new Primitive Area.

The parcel contains several trails maintained by NYSDEC and includes structures such as a lean-to and pit privy on Henderson Lake, bridges (including cable suspension bridges), a number of boardwalks and dry-treaded trail sections through wet areas, and historical remnants of old roads, road culverts, water pipelines and other remains from when mining occurred on the site.

Agency Recommendation: Wilderness, to become part of the High Peaks Wilderness Area and a new Tahawus Primitive Area.

Region 5 – Clinton County

Lyon Mountain Tract¹:

This 17, 190 acre parcel was acquired from The Nature Conservancy (TNC) in October 2008. The parcel is located in Clinton County in the Towns of Saranac and Dannemora. The parcel is bounded on the north and east by private lands, the south partly by the True Brook Road, and the west partly by the Standish Road. Four neighboring parcels are in private ownership encumbered by conservation easements held by the State of New York. The privately owned rail bed of the former D&H Railroad runs through the eastern

¹ The Agency staff analysis for the proposed classification of the Lyon Mountain Tract, and associated maps, are available on this web page as a separate link.

side of the unit. The tract contains a number of existing structures and improvements including the Lyon Mt. Fire Tower, the lifts and old ski trails for the former Lowenberg Ski Area, old logging roads and areas formerly managed as commercial maple sugar bushes.

The proposed staff recommendation to classify the area as of Wild Forest is the result of an evaluation of the following criteria:

- Physical resources such as soils, slope, elevation and water
- Biological considerations such as wildlife habitat and rare species
- Psychological and social resources such as the sense of remoteness, the degree of wildness and the ruggedness of the terrain
- Extent of established facilities on the land
- Surrounding land use patterns

Staffs' analysis of these criteria, including the capacity of the land and its resources to permit a somewhat high degree of human use while retaining an essentially wild character, resulted in the staff recommendation to propose the Wild Forest classification for the area..

Agency Recommendation: Wild Forest, to become part of Chazy Highlands.

Region 6 – Herkimer County

Flat Rock Mountain Tract:

This 316 acre parcel of land was purchased by NYSDEC from The Nature Conservancy in 2003. It is located south of the Thendara Bridge on NYS Route 28 and is on the western shoreline of the Middle Branch of the Moose River, east of the Remsen-Lake Placid Railroad Travel Corridor. This parcel contains a portion of an existing dam owned by the Town of Webb according to DEC staff. The tract also contains one access road with reserved rights to the dam at "Lock~n~Dam". The lands on the eastern side of the river are part of the Black River Wild Forest.

Agency Recommendation: Wild Forest, to become part of the Black River Wild Forest.

Flat Iron Tract

This 702 acre tract is primarily forested, and contains numerous foot trails and abandoned skidder trails. This tract was purchased by NYSDEC from private landowners. It is bound to the west, northwest by the North Branch of the Moose River and by private lands to the south, east, and north. This section of the river is used regularly by canoeist and kayakers, who access the river above this tract. A small private airport is adjacent to

this tract and the land associated with the airport is currently being subdivided private home development.

This tract contains three easements, all of which are on the "Faith Norton" portion of the parcel adjacent to the cemetery. The three easements are described below:

1. An easement and ROW granted to the Town of Webb, on the behalf of the Old Forge Water District.
2. A ROW for a water pipeline granted to the People of the State of New York.
3. Any rights granted by the Old Forge Company to the Village of Old Forge to construct, lay, maintain, and repair a waterline.

All easements and ROW apply to the waterline that runs East-West, then curves South through the property, totaling approximately a distance of 575 feet.

Agency Recommendation: Wild Forest, to become part of Fulton Chain Wild Forest.

Region 6 – St. Lawrence County

Carry Falls Reservoir Parcel

This 226 acre parcel was acquired from the former Niagara Mohawk (NiMo) in 2005. This land is adjacent to the reservoir on the Raquette River and is primarily forested. The parcel is immediately adjacent to the Carry Falls Reservoir, though separated from the actual shoreline by a narrow strip of land owned by Reliant Power, a successor to NiMo. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) requires hydropower companies to retain a strip of land around their reservoirs to protect their ability to manage the water levels in the reservoir. The boundary line that establishes this strip of land is referred to as the FERC line.

This parcel is surrounded by private land to the west, north and east. The southern boundary of this tract abuts the Raquette River Wild Forest. There are remnants of old logging roads on the land.

Agency Recommendation: Wild Forest, to become part of Raquette River Wild Forest.