

## **2018 Planning Division Annual Report**

### **State Lands**

The primary responsibility of State land staff is to administer the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan (APSLMP). They review individual unit management plans (UMPs) and State land project proposals prepared by DEC staff to ensure their conformance with management guidelines and criteria of the APSLMP; provide general guidance and interpretation regarding the APSLMP to DEC staff and the Agency's Board; undertake long-range planning efforts for State lands in consultation with DEC; and develop proposals for substantive revisions of the APSLMP (including the classification and reclassification of State lands in the Park), also in consultation with DEC.

#### **Unit Management Plans**

As part of a comprehensive revitalization of New York's major winter sports venues in the Adirondacks, ORDA and DEC submitted to the Agency substantial new development proposals for Gore Mountain and Whiteface Mountain Ski Centers, as well as the Mount Van Hoevenberg Recreation Center. The objective is to bring these three venues fully back into world class standards for hosting upcoming national and international events. Staff reviewed these proposals in the form of amendments to the existing UMPs for each, and by August all had been reviewed and recommended to the Board as conforming with the APSLMP. Following the Board's concurrence and forwarding of the plans to the Commissioner of DEC for approval, work in the latter half of 2018 to begin the ambitious new construction and development was able to proceed.

Other amendments to existing UMPs reviewed by State land staff and determined by the Agency Board to also be consistent with the APSLMP included amendments to UMPs for the Black River Wild Forest, Cranberry Lake Boat Launch Intensive Use Area, Lake George Beach and Battlefield Park, Vanderhacker Mountain Wild Forest and the High Peaks Wilderness Complex. Three full, new UMPs for DEC's Eagle Point and Brown Tract Pond Public Campgrounds, as well as one for the Grass River Wild Forest were also reviewed and determined to be consistent with the APSLMP before being forwarded to the Commissioner of DEC. An amendment to the Generic UMP for Campgrounds and Day-Use Areas, reviewed and approved similarly, attests to New York's commitment to lowering greenhouse gas emissions by allowing for possible future installment of EV charging stations at certain DEC public campgrounds in the Park. In work of this type that will continue into 2019, State land staff consulted extensively with DEC staff in the Department's ongoing development of other new UMPs and UMP amendments. As part of this, staff participated in a number of public information meetings conducted by DEC concerning some of the draft plans.

Culminating a process largely undertaken in 2017, Agency State land and Regulatory Programs staff worked together to complete review and recommend approval of a new Generic UMP of broad importance across the Park: the NYS Department of Transportation's (DOT's) Generic Travel Corridor Unit Management Plan. DOT's adoption of the generic Plan will allow for a more thorough, but also more expedited

planning process for development of individual State highway corridor UMP's across the Park in the future. Finalization of the plan will be scheduled in 2019.

### **Revisions to the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan**

Also culminating a long process that was undertaken through 2016 and 2017, staff completed the FSEIS and other critical requirements for the historically significant, State land classification package featuring the Boreas Ponds Tract. This package also included the classification and reclassification of various small parcels and large tracts of lands in all twelve counties of the Park, as well as a variety of technical map corrections. Following the Board's acceptance of the staff's recommendation, the entire package and recommendation was forwarded to Governor Cuomo, which he signed and approved in late March.

One other, separate State land classification effort was undertaken and completed during 2018. This was the reclassification of two parcels of land at Gore Mountain, which served to add some high-elevation, spruce-fir forest to the Siamese Ponds Wilderness and to add some gentler, lower terrain to the Gore Mountain Ski Center. The latter addition was necessary for expansion of Gore's alpine ski trails near Rabbit Pond that will connect to Town of North Creek's "Ski Bowl" ski area, as called for by the 2018 amendment to the Gore Mountain Ski Center UMP, noted above.

In a major, proposed revision of the APSLMP concerning Travel Corridors, staff drafted and completed the FSEIS for a proposed new definition of Travel Corridors and proposed new guidelines for their management and use. This revision was focused almost entirely on clarifying how certain rail corridors in the Park might in the future be developed into "rail trails," with the Remsen – Lake Placid Travel Corridor being the one such rail corridor in the Park, at present. Upon accepting the State land staff recommendation concerning the revision, the Board forwarded it to the Governor for his anticipated approval and signature.

### **Regulatory Review**

State land staff consulted with Regulatory Program and RASS staff on various private-land projects that could affect State lands – some involving wetlands – as well as on Recreational Management Plans (RMPs) being developed for conservation easements held by New York State on certain large tracts of land. A number of wetlands permits were issued to DEC and two 814 Orders were reviewed by State land staff – one involving the Oswegatchie Conservation Easement (CE) in Lewis County and the other involving the Grasse River, Tooley Pond and Long Pond CEs in St. Lawrence County.

### **State Land Planning**

Two draft, interagency guidance documents were advanced with an objective to have them – following Board review for APSLMP compliance – become appendices to the State Land MOU between the Agency and the Department. These address the siting, construction and maintenance of both singletrack bike trails and cross-country ski trails on Forest Preserve lands in the Adirondack Park. The guidance document regarding bike trails was adopted after the Board's determination of APSLMP compliance in

March. The guidance document regarding cross-country ski trails is still undergoing review.

Another interagency guidance document, the “Inter-Agency Guidelines for Implementing Best Management Practices to Control Terrestrial and Aquatic Invasive Species on DEC Administered Lands of the Adirondack Park,” was jointly brought before the Agency by RASS staff and DEC Central Office Staff in the form of an important update that better addresses terrestrial invasives. Finalization and adoption of this document represented the culmination of nearly two years of cooperative and productive work aimed at protecting the Park’s valuable ecological resources.

Agency staff participated in a stakeholders’ group which was organized by DEC to develop a plan for the design, construction and use of the travel corridor between Tupper Lake and Lake Placid. State land staff participated in meetings.

Similarly, to 2017, staff completed review of nearly forty projects across the State lands of the Park. These consultations are to determine APSLMP compliance and whether a wetland permit is needed. Projects ranged from new foot trail construction and re-routing of existing trails, to snowmobile trail bridge replacement and road maintenance activities such as improving drainage.

### **Historic Resource Reviews**

Staff completed required historic resource reviews for various projects throughout the Adirondack region. These were undertaken in eight different Towns, including Minerva, Elizabethtown, Saranac, Horicon, Harrietstown, Lake Pleasant, Morehouse and Hopkinton.

## **Geographic Information Analysis**

### **Park Policy and Planning**

The Agency reviewed a proposed amendment to the Adirondack park Land Use and Development Plan (APLUDP) map that would expand the hamlet of Westport by approximately 29 acres. A decision on the proposal will be considered in 2019. The Agency worked with the Town of Duane regarding the land classifications and development potential in the Town. Agency staff created a series of land use and resource limitation maps and met with the Town Board to discuss the APLUDP map classifications and the map amendment process. Staff also provided mapping assistance and land use statistics to the Town of Crown Point’s comprehensive planning efforts, and mapping assistance to the Town of Inlet for their comprehensive planning efforts.

### **Data Improvement**

The Agency updated mapping of all Wild, Scenic, Recreational, and Study Rivers System setbacks, terminal boundaries, and water features using National Hydrography Data. Highway and Wilderness Critical Environmental Area mapping was also updated based on most current and accurate data. A geographic database was created to

maintain the geography of changes to land use classifications and boundaries in a more current format.

### **Lookup System**

Agency staff attended training on *ArcGIS API for JavaScript* to develop the next generation of the Agency's map information system, the "Lookup System." Wetland delineation mapping created by RASS staff using latest high-resolution aerial imagery and elevation data for a portion of the Park was added to the Lookup System.

### **State Land Classification**

Staff produced mapping products for State Land Reclassification action involving Gore Mountain Ski Center.

### **Major Data Updates:**

The Agency depends on high quality GIS data produced internally and received from external sources. Major GIS data updates in 2018 include 2017 aerial imagery and high-resolution elevation derived from LIDAR.

### **Map Production:**

The Agency had 5,000 copies of the Adirondack Park Land Use and Development Plan Map and State Land Map printed. This is the first map printing in a large quantity since the 2009 printing. The Agency also produced a digital map of conservation easements in the Park.

### **Website Development:**

A section of the Agency's website was developed for Large-scale Subdivision projects under review. This allows the agency to post all relevant materials for the public to access throughout the application and review process.

2018 GIS/Web Tasks Summary:

<b>Task</b>	<b>Year to Date</b>
GIS Agency Program Administration	72
GIS Map Production	81
LUA Boundary/Blue Line Inquiry	82
Map Amendments Review	13
State Land Classification/Reclassification Review	106
Web Administration/Content Management	51
Administrative Tasks	14

## **2018 Local Government Services Program**

The Local Government Services Program administers Sections 807 and 808 of the Adirondack Park Agency Act and its implementing regulations. Two program staff provide oversight of the eighteen Agency-approved Local Land Use Programs and review approximately 100 variance referrals and 30-50 zoning amendments annually

from the participating program municipalities. Additionally, staff respond to numerous informational requests from local officials within the Park. The workload is driven by strict statutory deadlines for responses to variance referrals and the need to provide timely responses to inquiries from elected and appointed officials.

A summary of Local Government Services accomplishments and reportable items in 2018 is provided in the table below. The information is compiled from LGS Committee monthly reports. The data highlights the number of Adirondack communities and officials that staff consulted with and provided assistance to during the course of 2018. The table also includes the number of intra-Agency consultations with Agency staff and coordination and planning initiatives with other state agencies and regional and state organizations.

<b>Local Government Services Summary of Program Accomplishments and Reportable Items</b>	<b>2018 Totals</b>
Land use regulations consulted/reviewed	49 <sup>i</sup>
ALLUP amendments approved	5
ALLUP variances reviewed/reversed	97/6
Comprehensive Plans reviewed	4
Meetings with town officials	18
Responded to land use planning inquiries	197
Training & Workshops provided	3
Intra-Agency local planning assistance	25
<i>“ALLUP” denotes “APA-approved local land use program”</i>	

**The reportable items in the table above include the following activities in each category:**

- In-Park Town and Village Interactions - Of 101 Adirondack Park towns and villages, staff met with or had interactions with 57 of those communities. Interactions include town meetings, training and Local Government Day. In 2018 Agency staff sent copies of the revised Adirondack Park Land Use and Development Plan Map to all 101 municipalities. In addition to the maps, local officials also received a mailing outlining the services provided by the Agency and available training.
- Land Use Regulations Consulted/Reviewed - Staff are regularly asked to review and comment on local land use laws. Most of the local laws are from municipalities with

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<sup>i</sup> Includes some amendments that required multiple reviews.

ALLUPs where the Agency has a statutory requirement to review. Non-ALLUP communities also request review of their local laws to determine compliance with or to avoid conflicts with APA regulations. Staff try to comply with those requests on a case-by-case basis as time permits. In 2018 staff reviewed land use laws from 13 communities in the Park.

- ALLUP Amendments - In 2017 the Agency amended the Delegation Resolution to allow for approval of certain ALLUP amendments under the authority of the Executive Director. This change allowed certain amendments to local land use controls to be approved in-house at the Agency without Agency Board approval. The Agency approved five amendments to ALLUPs in 2018. Four amendments were approved pursuant to the Del Res and one was by action of the Agency Board.

The Town of Caroga, which received original approval in 1979, received Agency Board approval for a rewrite of their zoning code in August of 2018. This was a complete repeal and replacement of the Caroga code. Agency staff had worked with the Town since 2013 on this rewrite which went into effect on January 1, 2019.

The Town of Queensbury, which received original approval in 1981, received Agency approval pursuant to the Del Res for rezoning a parcel from Moderate Density Residential (MDR) to Rural Residential Five Acre (RR-5A). In addition, the Town made a technical correction to its code to clarify standards for Sand and Gravel Extractions. This change clarified an amendment that received Agency approval in 2014 and did not require additional review.

The Village of Lake George, which received original approval in 1985, received approval pursuant to the Del Res for administrative changes to its zoning code. The amendment removed references to Class B projects and referrals to the Planning Board for area variances. The Village of Lake George is entirely in Hamlet and therefore Class B projects do not exist within the Village.

The Town of Bolton, which received original approval in 1980, made a technical correction to its code that did not require formal Agency review. The correction clarified the process for projects requiring a Special Use Permit.

The Town of Lake George, which received original approval in 1978, received Agency approval pursuant to the Del Res for amendments to its zoning and subdivision codes. The Town added several newly defined uses: 480a Property, Boardinghouse, Boat Repair Shop, Brewery, Distillery, Solar Farm, Tree Farm and Wind Energy Project. The Town also removed outdated references to mobile homes and removed language regarding stormwater and sanitary requirements that now exist in separate standalone codes which were adopted in 2016. In addition, the Town removed references to two zoning districts (RS-2 & RCH-S1) that were not associated with any lands in the Town.

- ALLUP Variances - Towns with an ALLUP are required to refer all locally approved variances (outside of Hamlet land use areas) to the Agency. The Agency has 30-

days for review in which time it may reverse the local determination if it was not based upon the appropriate statutory basis. In 2018 staff reviewed 97 locally granted variances from ALLUPs with six of the local grants reversed by the Agency. Beginning in 2017, Planning Division staff have worked on adding historic variance data to the Agency's Look-up System. Currently all but 106 of the 1,684 variance records have been added to the system.

- Comprehensive Plans Reviewed - Comprehensive Plans serve as the primary instrument for protecting the public interest and attaining local development objectives, as well as articulating the town's vision of present and future goals for growth. While the Agency has responsibility to review Comprehensive Plans from ALLUPs, staff also receive requests to review and comment on Comprehensive Plans from other towns in in the Park. The review of these plans further supports the Agency's regional land use planning role. In 2018 staff reviewed two Comprehensive Plans.
- Meetings with Town Officials - Staff regularly meet with elected and appointed officials to discuss Agency and local issues. These meetings occur with individual town representatives or with town boards in public meeting sessions. In 2018 staff conducted 18 meetings with town officials.
- Responding to Land Use Planning Inquiries - Local Government Services staff routinely meet with local officials for both formal advisories and informal guidance. In 2018 staff responded to 197 inquiries from local officials.
- Training & Workshops Provided - Working cooperatively with other state agencies, Agency staff, and local officials, the local planning staff provides training for municipal officials. The largest outreach program is the Adirondack Park Local Government Day Conference. More than 360 people representing 47 Adirondack towns and villages, and 67 other organizations attended the 2018 event. As part of the Conference in 2018, staff conducted a workshop geared toward the local officials in the municipalities with ALLUPs.
- Intra-Agency Local Planning Assistance - Local Government Services staff regularly provide assistance to Agency staff working on projects in towns with an ALLUP and other towns where local laws or processes require clarification. In 2018 local planning staff provided assistance to other Agency staff on 25 issues involving local zoning matters.
- Agency Board Presentations - The local government services staff presented one item to the Agency Board. Staff presented the Town of Caroga amendment to the Board for its consideration. Due to the change made to the Del Res in 2017, the four other ALLUP amendments approved by the Agency in 2018, were not required to be presented to the Board.

The attached map provides a graphic display of the towns and villages LGS staff were involved with in the past year. This map includes such activities as Local Government

Day, town meetings, review of local controls, and the Agency's Hamlet Economic Planning Assistance (HEPA) program.

# 2018 APA Local Government Services Staff Interactions

 LGS Staff Interacted with Town/Village in 2018

