



LEILANI CRAFTS ULRICH
Chairwoman

TERRY MARTINO
Executive Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: Terry Martino, Executive Director

FROM: Kathy Regan, Deputy Director, Planning
Kathy Regan

DATE: July 1, 2015

RE: Community Connector Trail Plan for the Towns of Newcomb, Minerva and North Hudson – Essex County.

This amendment is for the Proposed Final Amendments to the 2005 Vanderwhacker Mountain WF UMP, the 1995 Lake Harris Public Campground UMP, and the 2000 Camp Santanoni Historic Area UMP, dated June 2015. The primary purpose of this Community Connector Trail Plan (Plan) is to analyze alternatives and select preferred locations for proposed community connector multiple-use trails between the Towns of Newcomb, Minerva and North Hudson.

The Department first released the Plan in May of 2014. Following public hearings and comment, the Department modified the Plan and presented this at the May Agency Meeting. The Agency accepted Public Comment on the Plan from May 15 – June 15, 2015.

The Agency received 204 letters, emails or faxes in the month long public comment period, with an additional 13 comments received after the June 15th deadline. A number of comments were made objecting to snowmobiling in general, snowmobile trail design, and the interpretation of the Wild Scenic and Recreational Rivers Act (WSRRA).

The APSLMP identifies the construction of snowmobile trails and snowmobiling as conforming management and public recreational activities in lands classified Wild Forest, Intensive Use and Historic. The proposed Community Connector Trails occur on lands classified as such.

In 2009, the Adirondack Park Agency formally reviewed and approved – as conforming to the relevant guidelines and criteria of the APSLMP – the “Management Guidance: Snowmobile Trail Siting, Construction and Maintenance on Forest Preserve Lands in the Adirondack Park” (Guidance). The Guidance prescribes DEC’s current snowmobile

trail development and maintenance practices, considers snowmobiles' potential impacts and is being implemented in this Plan. Specifics for each of the trails proposed in the Plan will be identified and follow the Guidance, in Work Plans submitted by the Department for Agency review, thus enabling staff another opportunity to ensure impacts are minimized.

Comments made regarding the WSRRA were specific to the Boreas River crossing at NYS Route 28N (designated as Scenic) where it flows through State lands. The Department's River regulations apply on State lands. (APA's river regulations apply only to private lands in the Park). While certain guidelines and criteria of the APSLMP do pertain to the WSRRS and Scenic Rivers on State lands, the basic guideline for Scenic Rivers in the APSLMP is that they will be managed in accordance with the guidelines and criteria for lands classified as Wild Forest. In Wild Forest areas, snowmobile trails with bridges are allowed.

In that the Plan does not present a preferred alternative for Section 3, the alternative selected may require a UMP amendment. An amendment would be needed should the Department choose a preferred alternative which includes the use of the Gulf Brook Road for motor vehicles or snowmobiles. An amendment would need to consider a number of significant, relevant issues including: our Agency's classification of the lands of the Boreas Ponds Tract (presuming its anticipated acquisition by the State); proposed public uses of the Gulf Brook Road; potential impacts of trail development to private lands adjoining State lands in this section, and the potential for trail alternatives not included in this Plan.

With the understanding noted above, Agency staff had reviewed the Proposed Final Community Connector Trail Plan for the Towns of Newcomb, Minerva and North Hudson, and found the Plan conforms to the general guidelines and criteria of the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan.