

Appendix 3B

Proposed changes to the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan if Alternative 3B becomes the preferred alternative for the Revision of APSLMP Guidelines for Primitive Areas to allow for the use of bicycles and to allow for maintenance of certain trails using motor vehicles.

Alternative 3B: Amend Primitive Guidelines to Allow Former All-Season Roads in Primitive Areas to be Designated as Primitive Recreational Trails Enabling Limited Maintenance Using Motor Vehicles and Motorized Equipment.

PRIMITIVE

Definition

A primitive area is an area of land or water that is either:

1. Essentially wilderness in character but, (a) contains structures, improvements, or uses that are inconsistent with wilderness, as defined, and whose removal, though a long term objective, cannot be provided for by a fixed deadline, and/or, (b) contains, or is contiguous to, private lands that are of a size and influence to prevent wilderness designation; or,

2. Of a size and character not meeting wilderness standards, but where the fragility of the resource or other factors require wilderness management.

The definition recognizes two basic types of primitive areas: (i) where the ultimate goal is clearly to upgrade the area to wilderness at some future time, however distant, when the non-conforming uses can be removed and/or acquisition of private tracts is accomplished, and, (ii) where eventual wilderness classification is impossible or extremely unlikely.

An example of the first type would be the existence of a fire tower and associated structures and improvements (observer cabins, telephone lines, etc.) whose precise date of removal cannot be ascertained until the new aerial surveillance program of the Department of Environmental Conservation is fully implemented and communication systems modernized. Another example

would be a private or minor public road traversing a tract otherwise suitable for wilderness designation or separating such an area from a designated wilderness. Finally, an extensive private inholding or a series of smaller private inholdings whose eventual acquisition is desirable but cannot now be provided for, might so affect a potential wilderness area as to require primitive designation.

The second type includes smaller tracts that are most unlikely to attain wilderness standards, such as a small island in close proximity to a highly developed shoreline, or larger tracts with non-conforming uses, such as a railroad or major public highway, that are essentially permanent, but where in each case the high quality or fragility of the resource requires wilderness management.

Guidelines for Management and Use

Basic guidelines

1. The primary primitive management guideline will be to achieve and maintain in each designated primitive area a condition as close to wilderness as possible, so as to perpetuate a natural plant and animal community where man's influence is relatively unapparent.

2. In primitive areas:

(a) No additions or expansions of non-conforming uses will be permitted.

(b) Any remaining non-conforming uses that were to have been removed by the original December 31, 1975 deadline but have not been removed will be removed by March 31, 1987 as soon as possible.

(c) Those non-conforming uses of essentially a permanent nature whose removal, though anticipated, cannot be provided for by a fixed deadline will be phased out on a reasonable timetable as soon as their removal becomes feasible.

(d) Non-conforming uses resulting from newly classified primitive areas will be removed as rapidly as possible, except for those described in c above, and in any case by the end of the third year following classification.

(e) Primitive tent sites that do not conform to the separation distance guidelines will be brought into compliance on a phased basis and in any case by the third year following adoption of the unit management plan for the area.

3. Effective immediately, no new, non-conforming uses will be permitted in any primitive area.

4. Upon the removal of all non-conforming uses, a designated primitive area that otherwise meets wilderness standards will be reclassified as wilderness.

5. Construction of additional conforming structures and maintenance of existing facilities and improvements will follow the guidelines for wilderness areas.

6. No new structures or improvements in primitive areas will be constructed except in conformity with finally adopted unit management plans. This guideline will not prevent ordinary maintenance rehabilitation or minor relocation of conforming structures or improvements the removal of non-conforming uses.

7. All conforming structures and improvements will be located so as to blend with the surrounding environment and to require only minimal maintenance.

8. All management and administrative actions and interior facilities in primitive areas will be designed to emphasize the self-sufficiency of the user to assume a high degree of responsibility for environmentally sound use of such areas and for his or her own health, safety and welfare.

9. Any new, reconstructed or relocated lean-tos or individual primitive tent sites located on shorelines of lakes, ponds, rivers or major streams will be located so as to be reasonably screened from the water body to avoid intruding on the natural character of the shoreline and public enjoyment and use thereof. Any such lean-tos will be set back a minimum of 100 feet from the mean high water mark of lakes, ponds, rivers or major streams.

10. All pit privies will be located a minimum of 150 feet from the mean high water mark of any lake, pond, river, stream or wetland.

Primitive Recreational Trail

A former all-season road capable of withstanding such use may be designated as a Primitive Recreational Trail for use by foot, horse, bicycle, ski, snowshoe and other non-motorized recreational activities. A Primitive Recreational Trail may be maintained by the Department and administrative personnel for periodic, but not usual or routine, use of motor vehicles and motorized equipment to address significant drainage issues which may occur when bridges need to be repaired, culverts need to be replaced with bridges or where a severe wash-out prevents travel along the Primitive Recreational Trail.

Structures and improvements

1. All structures and improvements that conform to wilderness guidelines will be acceptable in primitive areas.

2. In addition, existing structures and improvements:

(a) whose removal, though anticipated, cannot be provided for by a fixed deadline, or,

(b) in the case of areas not destined to become wilderness, whose retention is compatible with the character of the area and whose removal is not essential to protect the resource, will also be permissible, in each case as specified in a duly adopted unit management plan.

3. Non-conforming uses, other than those that meet the criteria in section 2 above, will be removed in conformance with an approved unit management plan by no later than March 31, 1987.

Ranger stations

Ranger stations will be subject to the same guidelines as in wilderness areas, except that in areas not destined to become wilderness or in other special situations the indefinite retention of such stations may be provided for as specified by the Department of Environmental Conservation in a duly adopted unit management plan.

Motor vehicles, motorized equipment and aircraft

1. All uses of motor vehicles, motorized equipment and aircraft permitted under wilderness guidelines will also be permitted in primitive areas.

2. The use of motor vehicles and motorized equipment will be permitted as described under "Primitive Recreational Trail".

23. Additionally, the use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment and aircraft by administrative personnel will be permitted to reach and maintain existing structures, improvements or ranger stations:

(a) whose eventual removal is anticipated but cannot be removed by a fixed deadline; or,

(b) in primitive areas not destined to become wilderness whose presence is of an essentially permanent character; in each case as specified in a duly adopted unit management plan.

Public Roads, snowmobile trails and state truck trails administrative roads

1. The guidelines specified for wilderness areas will also apply to primitive areas, except that:

-- continued use of existing roads, snowmobile trails and ~~state truck trails administrative roads~~ by administrative personnel will be permitted, to the extent necessary to reach and maintain structures and improvements whose removal, though anticipated, cannot be effected by a fixed deadline or, in the case of primitive areas not destined to become wilderness, whose presence is of an essentially permanent character; and,

-- existing roads now legally open to the public may remain open for motor vehicles at the discretion of the Department of Environmental Conservation pending eventual wilderness classification, if their continued use will not adversely affect the character of the resources of the primitive area or impinge upon the proper management of an adjacent wilderness area;

-- existing snowmobile trails now legally open to the public may remain open for snowmobiles at the discretion of the Department of Environmental Conservation pending eventual wilderness classification if their continued use will not adversely affect

the character or resources of the primitive area or impinge upon the proper management of the adjacent wilderness; in each case as specified in a duly adopted unit management plan.

2. Upon the closure of any road, snowmobile trail or state truck trail, such routes will be effectively blocked as provided in the wilderness guidelines.

All Terrain Bicycles

The same guidelines will apply as in wilderness areas except that ~~all terrain~~ bicycles may be used on existing roads legally open to the public, ~~and on state truck trails administrative roads and on Primitive Recreational Trails~~ specifically designated for such use by the Department of Environmental Conservation as specified in individual unit management plans.

Flora and fauna

The same guidelines will apply as in wilderness areas.

Recreational use and overuse

The same guidelines will apply as in wilderness areas.

Boundary structures and improvements and boundary marking

The same guidelines will apply as in wilderness areas.

Designation of Primitive Areas

The application of the primitive definition and criteria described above results in the current designation under this master plan of ~~24-40~~ primitive areas scattered throughout the Adirondack Park. The objective for ~~22-of-many-of~~ these areas is to eventually upgrade them to wilderness. ~~Two-Some~~ areas (~~Valcour Island and Schuyler Island~~) are extremely unlikely to attain wilderness standards. ~~These areas comprise some 61,400 acres or 3 percent of the forest preserve within the Park. Quite a~~ wide variety of terrain and ecosystems is represented in the designated primitive areas, though not to the same degree as with wilderness.

All primitive areas are identified and their boundaries delineated on the map forming part of this master plan.

A general description of each designated primitive area is contained in Chapter III. Each description specifies the goal for ultimate classification and non-conforming uses for each area.