

## **Appendix 5**

Proposed changes to the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan if Alternative 3 becomes the preferred alternative for Revision of Master Plan Guidelines for Primitive Areas to Allow for the Use of Non-Natural Materials for Bridge Construction.

Alternative 3: Amend the Wild Forest Guidelines to Allow the Possible Use of Non-natural Materials on Bridge Designs following a Minimum Requirement Approach.

# WILD FOREST

## Definition

**A wild forest area is an area where the resources permit a somewhat higher degree of human use than in wilderness, primitive or canoe areas, while retaining an essentially wild character. A wild forest area is further defined as an area that frequently lacks the sense of remoteness of wilderness, primitive or canoe areas and that permits a wide variety of outdoor recreation.**

To the extent that state lands classified as wild forest were given or devised to the state for silvicultural or wildlife management purposes pursuant to statutory provisions specifying that these lands will not form part of the forest preserve (if such provisions are constitutional), the following guidelines are not to be interpreted to prevent silvicultural or wildlife management practices on these lands, provided that other guidelines for wild forest land are respected.

## Guidelines for Management and Use

Those areas classified as wild forest are generally less fragile, ecologically, than the wilderness and primitive areas. Because the resources of these areas can withstand more human impact, these areas should accommodate much of the future use of the Adirondack forest preserve. The scenic attributes and the variety of uses to which these areas lend themselves provide a challenge to the recreation planner.

Within constitutional constraints, those types of outdoor recreation that afford enjoyment without destroying the wild forest character or natural resource quality should be encouraged. Many of these areas are under-utilized. For example the crescent of wild forest areas from Lewis County south and east through Old Forge, southern Hamilton and northern Fulton Counties and north and east to the Lake George vicinity can and should afford extensive outdoor recreation readily accessible from the primary east-west transportation and population axis of New York State.

## Basic guidelines

1. The primary wild forest management guideline will be to protect the natural wild forest setting and to provide those types of outdoor recreation that will afford public enjoyment without impairing the wild forest atmosphere.
2. In wild forest 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 December 31, 1975 deadline but have not yet been removed will be removed ~~by March 31, 1987~~ as soon as possible.
  - (c) Non-conforming uses resulting from newly classified wild forest areas will be removed as rapidly as possible and in any case by the end of the third year following classification.

(d) 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~~ No new non-conforming uses will be permitted in any designated wild forest area.

4. Public use of motor vehicles will not be encouraged and there will not be any material increase in the mileage of roads and snowmobile trails open to motorized use by the public in wild forest areas that conformed to the master plan at the time of its original adoption in 1972.

5. Care should be taken to minimize conflict of incompatible uses. ~~designate separate areas for incompatible uses such as snowmobiling and ski touring or horseback riding and hiking.~~

6. When public access to and enjoyment of the wild forest areas are inadequate, appropriate measures may be undertaken to provide improved access to encourage public use consistent with the wild forest character.

7. No new structures or improvements in wild forest areas will be constructed except in conformity with a finally adopted unit management plan. This guideline will not prevent ordinary maintenance, rehabilitation or minor maintenance of conforming structures or improvements, or the removal of non-conforming uses.

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

9. All management and administrative actions and interior facilities in wild forest 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.

10. Any new, reconstructed or relocated lean-tos, primitive tent sites and other conforming buildings and structures located on shorelines of lakes, ponds, rivers or major streams, other than docks, fishing and waterway access sites and similar water-related facilities, will be located so as to be reasonably screened from the water body to avoid intruding on the natural character of the shoreline and the public enjoyment and use thereof. Any such lean-tos, ranger stations, storage sheds, horse barns and similar structures will be set back a minimum of 100 feet from the mean high water mark of lakes, ponds, rivers or major streams.

11. All pit privies, seepage pits or leach fields will be located a minimum of 150 feet from any lake, pond, river or stream.

### **Structures and improvements**

1. All structures and improvements permitted under the guidelines covering wilderness areas will be allowed in wild forest areas. In

addition, the structures and improvements listed below will be allowed and their maintenance, rehabilitation and construction permitted:

- small groupings of primitive tent sites below 3,500 feet in elevation, subject to the guidelines set forth below;

- nature and interpretive trails;

- trailheads adjacent to public highways;

- stream improvement structures for fishery management purposes;

- fishing and waterway access sites adjacent to public highways and complying with the criteria set forth below;

- horse trails; and,

- picnic tables.

The maintenance and rehabilitation of the following structures and improvements will be allowed to the extent essential to the administration and/or protection of state lands or to reasonable public use thereof but new construction will not be encouraged:

- horse barns;

- small scale dams, constructed of natural materials wherever possible;

- boat docks, constructed of natural materials wherever possible;

- small fireplaces in fire-sensitive areas;

- storage sheds and similar rustic buildings for use of administrative personnel;

- small-scale electronic communication and relay facilities for official communications;

- telephone and electrical lines to service permitted administrative structures;

- buoys;

- small-scale water supply facilities under permit from the Department of Environmental Conservation;

- ranger stations as set forth below;

- roads, and state truck trails administrative roads as set forth below;

- snowmobile trails as set forth below;

- fire towers and observer cabins as set forth below; and,

- wildlife management structures; and,

--Bridges constructed of natural materials whenever possible, following a minimum requirements approach analysis.

### **Ranger stations**

Existing ranger stations may be retained and new ranger stations constructed, but only where absolutely essential for administration of the area, no feasible alternative exists, and no deterioration of the wild forest character or natural resource quality of the area will result.

**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 wild forest areas.

2. In addition, the use of motor vehicles, snowmobiles, motorized equipment and aircraft will be allowed as follows:

(a) by administrative personnel where necessary to reach, maintain or construct permitted structures and improvements, for appropriate law enforcement and general supervision of public use, or for appropriate purposes, including research, to preserve and enhance the fish and wildlife or other natural resources of the area;

(b) by the general public, subject to basic guideline 4 set forth above, but only on:

- existing public roads;
- Department of Environmental Conservation roads now or hereafter designated as open for public use by motor vehicles by the Department of Environmental Conservation; and,

-- on rivers, lakes and ponds now or hereafter designated by the Department of Environmental Conservation as suitable for such motorized uses; and,

(c) by snowmobiles on snowmobile trails now or hereafter designated by the Department of Environmental Conservation in accordance with basic guideline 4 set forth above, and with the special guidelines for such trails specified below.

(d) by all-terrain vehicles but only on existing public roads or Department of Environmental Conservation administrative roads open to such vehicles, as specified in (b) above.

3. The Department of Environmental Conservation may restrict, under existing law and pursuant to authority provided in this master plan, the use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment and aircraft by the public or administrative personnel where in its judgment the character of the natural resources in a particular area or other factors make such restrictions desirable.

**Public Roads, jeep trails and state truck trails administrative roads**

1. Continued use of existing roads, snowmobile trails and ~~state truck trails~~ administrative roads by administrative personnel in wild forest areas will be permitted, to the extent necessary, to reach, maintain and construct permitted structures and improvements.

2. Existing roads or snowmobile trails, now open to and used by the public for motor vehicle use in wild forest areas, may continue to be so used at the discretion of the Department of Environmental Conservation, provided such use is compatible with the wild forest character of an area.

3. Established roads or snowmobile trails in newly-acquired state lands classified as wild forest may be kept open to the public, subject to basic guideline 4 set forth above and in the case of snowmobile trails to the special guidelines for such trails set forth below, at the discretion of the Department of Environmental Conservation, provided such use is compatible with the wild forest character of the area.

4. No new roads will be constructed in wild forest areas nor will new state truck trails administrative roads be constructed unless such construction is absolutely essential to the protection or administration of an area, no feasible alternative exists and no deterioration of the wild forest character or natural resource quality of the area will result.

### **Snowmobile trails**

Snowmobile trails should be designed and located in a manner that will not adversely affect adjoining private landowners or the wild forest environment and in particular:

-- the mileage of snowmobile trails lost in the designation of wilderness, primitive and canoe areas may be replaced in wild forest areas

with existing roads or abandoned wood roads as the basis of such new snowmobile trail construction, except in rare circumstances requiring the cutting of new trails;

-- wherever feasible such replacement mileage should be located in the general area as where mileage is lost due to wilderness, primitive or canoe classification;

-- appropriate opportunities to improve the snowmobile trail system may be pursued subject to basic guideline 4 set forth above, where the impact on the wild forest environment will be minimized, such as (i) provision for snowmobile trails adjacent to but screened from certain public highways within the Park to facilitate snowmobile access between communities where alternate routes on either state or private land are not available and topography permits and, (ii) designation of new snowmobile trails on established roads in newly acquired state lands classified as wild forest; and,

-- deer wintering yards and other important wildlife and resource areas should be avoided by such trails.

### **~~All terrain bicycles~~ Bicycles**

~~All terrain b~~Bicycles may be permitted, in the discretion of the Department of Environmental Conservation, on roads legally open to the public and on state truck trails administrative roads, foot trails, snowmobile trails and horse trails deemed suitable for such use as specified in individual unit management plans.

## Fire towers

The educational and informational aspects of certain fire towers should be encouraged and wherever feasible these fire towers should be retained where consistent with their need from a fire control and communications standpoint.

## Tent platforms

The Department of Environmental Conservation has removed all tent platforms previously existing under Department permit, erection of new tent platforms will be prohibited.

Small groupings of primitive tent sites designed to accommodate 20 people per grouping under group camping conditions may be provided at carefully selected locations in wild forest areas, even though each individual site may be within sight or sound and less than approximately one-quarter mile from any other site within such grouping, subject to the following criteria:

- such groupings will only be established or maintained on a site specific basis in conformity with a duly adopted unit management plan for the wild forest area in question;

- such groupings will be widely dispersed (generally a mile apart) and located in a manner that will blend with the surrounding environment and have a minimum impact on the wild forest character and natural resource quality of the area;

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

## Fishing and waterway access sites

Fishing and waterway access sites may be provided on any body of water irrespective of its size where the current or projected need for access clearly warrants such a site. Such sites will comply with the following management guidelines:

- Adequate public hand launching facilities or private facilities open to the public are not available to meet a demonstrated need.

- The physical, biological and social carrying capacity of the water body or other water bodies accessible from the site will not be exceeded.

- The site and attendant water uses will be compatible with the state and private land use classifications and attendant management guidelines and land use controls surrounding the water body.

- The site will be located in a manner to avoid adverse impact on adjacent or nearby state and private lands.

-- Motor size limitations or the prohibition of motorized use as appropriate to the carrying capacity of the water body are provided for.

-- There will be no adverse impacts on the physical, biological or scenic resources of the water body and surrounding land.

Any proposal to create a new fishing or waterway access site will be accompanied by an adequate demonstration that the above guidelines can be complied with.

### **Flora and fauna**

The same guidelines will apply as in wilderness areas, although exceptions may be made by the Department of Environmental Conservation in accordance with sound biological management practices, particularly where such practices will improve the wildlife resources.

### **Recreational use and overuse**

1. All types of recreational uses considered appropriate for wilderness areas are compatible with wild forest and, in addition, snowmobiling, motorboating and travel by jeep or other motor vehicles on a limited and regulated basis that will not materially increase motorized uses that conformed to the Master Plan at the time of its adoption in 1972 and will not adversely affect the essentially wild character of the land are permitted.

2. Certain wild forest areas offer better opportunities for a more extensive

horse trail system than in wilderness, primitive or canoe areas and horse trails and associated facilities in these areas should be provided where appropriate.

3. Although the nature of most wild forest areas indicates that potential recreational overuse will not be as serious as in wilderness, primitive and canoe areas, care must nonetheless be taken to avoid overuse, and the basic wilderness guidelines in this respect apply also to wild forest lands. The relatively greater intensity of use allowed by the wild forest guidelines should not be interpreted as permitting or encouraging unlimited or unrestrained use of wild forest areas.

### **Designation of Wild Forest Areas**

The application of the wild forest definition and criteria described above results in the current designation under the master plan of about 1.2-3 million acres of wild forest land, comprising approximately 53-51 percent of the forest preserve within the Adirondack Park. A wide variety of terrain and ecosystems is represented in these areas.

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

Chapter III contains a general description of 17 wild forest areas in the Park.