

**COVER SHEET  
and  
NOTICE OF COMPLETION  
of  
FINAL SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

**PROJECT TITLE:**

Amendments to the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan (APSLMP) involving major changes to basic guidelines, additional content, minor changes, and ministerial changes.

**NAME OF LEAD AGENCY AND PREPARER OF DSEIS:**

NYS Adirondack Park Agency  
Post Office Box 99  
Ray Brook, NY 12977

**PROJECT LOCATION:**

The amendment proposals involve public land in New York State's Adirondack Park.

**PROPOSED ACTION:**

Amendments to the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan (APSLMP) involving major changes to basic guidelines, additional content, minor changes, and ministerial changes.

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**DATE OF ACCEPTANCE OF FSEIS BY LEAD AGENCY: 3/11/2016**

**PUBLIC HEARINGS ON THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO APSLMP  
WERE HELD AT THE FOLLOWING LOCATIONS:**

January 6, 2016  
7:00 pm  
Adirondack Park Agency  
1133 NYS Route 86  
Ray Brook, NY

January 7, 2016  
7:00 pm  
Newcomb Central School  
5535 NYS Route 28N  
Newcomb, NY

January 13, 2016  
11:00 am  
NYS DEC Offices  
625 Broadway  
Albany, NY

January 13, 2016  
6:00 pm  
Saratoga Spa State Park  
19 Roosevelt Drive  
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866  
Gideon Putnam Room

DATE BY WHICH PUBLIC COMMENTS WERE RECEIVED: January 29, 2016

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	1
SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION .....	3
PROCEDURES UNDER SEQRA.....	6
STANDARDS FOR AGENCY DECISION .....	7
FINAL SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT.....	18
PURPOSE.....	18
PUBLIC NEED AND BENEFITS.....	20
BACKGROUND.....	20
ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING .....	22
ESSEX CHAIN LAKES AND PINE LAKE PRIMITIVE AREAS .....	22
ADIRONDACK PARK RECREATION INDUSTRY PROFILE .....	23
PROPOSED ACTION:.....	27
Revision of Master Plan Guidelines for Primitive Areas to Allow for the Use of Bicycles on Appropriate All-Season Roads Able to Withstand Such Use on the Essex Chain Lakes Tract West of the Hudson River.....	27
The Use of Non-Natural Materials for Bridge Construction on the Cedar River.....	34
Additional Content.....	37
Minor Changes.....	37
Ministerial Changes.....	37
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF PROPOSED ACTION.....	38
Revision of APSLMP Guidelines for Primitive Areas to Allow for the Use of Bicycles .....	38
Alternative 1: No Action.....	38
Alternative 2A: Amend Primitive Guidelines to Allow Bicycle Trails on Former All-Season Roads in Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Areas without Using Motor Vehicles for Maintenance .....	38
Alternative 2B: Amend Primitive Guidelines to allow former all-season roads in Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Areas to be designated as Primitive Recreational Trails, enabling limited maintenance using motor vehicles and motorized equipment.....	41

Alternative 3A: Amend Primitive Guidelines to allow former All-season Roads to be Designated as Bicycle Trails without using Motor Vehicles for Maintenance.....	43
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.....	49
Revision of Master Plan Guidelines for Primitive Areas to Allow for the Use of Non-Natural Materials for Bridge Construction .....	51
Alternative 1: No Action.....	51
Alternative 2: Amend the Wild Forest Guidelines to Allow the Use of Non-Natural Materials for the Construction of the Bridge Crossing the Cedar River.....	51
Alternative 3: Amend the Wild Forest Guidelines to Allow the Possible Use of Non-natural Materials on Bridge Designs following a Minimum Requirement Approach.....	53
CUMULATIVE IMPACTS.....	54
ADVERSE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS WHICH CANNOT BE AVOIDED..	54
IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENT OF RESOURCES.	55
MITIGATION MEASURES.....	55
GROWTH-INDUCING ASPECTS.....	56

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Summary of Public Comment and Responses

APPENDIX B: APSLMP in Legislative Format Showing Changes if Preferred Alternatives are Accepted

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The New York State Adirondack Park Agency (APA or Agency) has proposed a series of amendments to the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan (APSLMP) involving major changes to guidelines for management and use, additional content, minor changes and ministerial changes.

The APSLMP and the Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement: Guidelines for Amending the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan (1979) (FPEIS) contain standards and guidelines for amending the APSLMP. Agency staff have prepared this Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (FSEIS) in consultation with the Department of Environmental Conservation (Department or DEC). A Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) was published on December 10, 2015 and the Agency authorized the staff to hold combined public hearings on the DSEIS for the proposed amendments to the APSLMP. Four hearings were held, two inside and two outside the Park. The public had an opportunity to provide oral comments at the public hearings and to submit written comments throughout the comment period. Approximately 650 people attended these hearings and 51 spoke publicly at the hearings. The Agency received 832 letters, faxes or emails during the public comment period which ended on January 29, 2016. Appendix A provides the Response to Public Comment on the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement.

Staff have incorporated all comments on the proposed alternatives specific to the APSLMP amendment actions into this FSEIS. The FSEIS also includes a written response to public comments and presents final alternatives and a staff recommendation for a Preferred Alternative. The Agency Board will decide (a) whether to accept the FSEIS and (b) whether to recommend the APSLMP amendments to the Governor. If the APSLMP amendments are authorized by the Agency, a Board resolution recommending an alternative will be forwarded to the Governor for approval.

The action only involves amendments to the APSLMP: it does not authorize the development of new structures or improvements. Such proposals must be developed through the Unit Management Plan (UMP) process and an additional State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) assessment by the Department.

The APSLMP states that the protection and preservation of the natural resources of the State lands within the Park must be paramount. Human use and

enjoyment of those lands should be permitted and encouraged, so long as the resources in their physical and biological context, as well as their social or psychological aspects, are not degraded.

The APSLMP prescribes types of permissible uses in each category but it does not specifically control the levels of use beyond providing general management guidelines. Careful development of guidelines in the APSLMP, through this amendment process and as applied through the UMP process, should avoid or minimize significant adverse environmental impacts caused by types or levels of use.

## **SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION**

The proposed amendments to the APSLMP involve major changes to guidelines for management and use, additional content, minor changes and ministerial changes. Copies of the alternative proposed changes to the APSLMP were provided in Appendices 2 through 5 of the December 2015 DSEIS. A copy of the changes to the APSLMP now proposed is attached as Appendix B.

### Major Changes to Guidelines for Management and Use

This includes the two items the Agency agreed to consider in the December 18, 2013 Resolution recommending classification of the Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area and Pine Lake Primitive Area:

1. The use of (All-Terrain) Bicycles in the Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Areas.
2. The use of non-natural materials for bridge construction on the Cedar River.

These major changes to the Guidelines for Management and Use are evaluated in this document for potentially significant environmental impacts.

Eight alternatives were identified in the DSEIS: five alternatives considering the possible use of bicycles in areas classified as Primitive and three alternatives considering the use of non-natural materials for bridge construction. Through deliberation of the eight alternatives, consideration of public commentary, and in consultation with DEC, staff have identified the Preferred Alternative 2B for the use of bicycles in Primitive Areas and Alternative 3 for the use of non-natural materials for bridge construction.

The proposed amendments that consist of additional content, minor changes and ministerial changes have also been reviewed by staff in consultation with DEC staff. Changes have been made based on this consultation and consideration of public comment and are available in Appendix B.

## **SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS**

The revision of the APSLMP to allow for the use of bicycles as an additional non-motorized activity, along with skiing, snowshoeing, horseback and horse-and-wagon riding, on former all-season roads capable of withstanding such use and

designated as Bicycle Trails in the Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area and the Pine Lake Primitive Area will not have significant adverse environmental impacts.

The potential impacts of Alternative 2A, allowing Bicycle Trails in the Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Areas, on physical and biological resources, on the area character and landscape quality, on recreational opportunities and on the local and regional economy would be positive.

The potential impacts of Alternative 2B, allowing bicycles on Primitive Recreational Trails and the use of motor vehicles and motorized equipment on a periodic, but not usual or routine basis for specific major maintenance, rehabilitation or construction purposes during off-peak seasons, unless extraordinary conditions, such as a fire, major blow-down, or flood mandate more frequent work or work during peak periods in the Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Areas would have, in the long term, a neutral or even positive impact on the environment. The APSLMP currently allows the use of motorized equipment for maintenance in certain situations; the potential for adverse impacts from the use of motor vehicles and motorized equipment on these Primitive Recreational Trails may be offset by the benefits to land through drainage and erosion control.

Alternative 3A would expand the opportunity for the public to access Forest Preserve lands by allowing the use of bicycles on former all-season roads capable of withstanding such use and designated as Bicycle Trails in other Primitive Areas. This option would not allow motor vehicles for maintenance on the Bicycle Trails and would not have significant adverse impacts to the environment.

Alternative 3B would allow the designation of Primitive Recreational Trails and the use of motor vehicles and motorized equipment on a periodic, but not usual or routine basis to address significant (non-routine) maintenance issues. The impacts of this alternative are difficult to assess because of the number of Primitive Areas (40 including Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Areas). However, each new Primitive Recreational Trail proposed for one of these 40 areas would be subject to a SEQRA analysis.

Regarding the use of non-natural materials, Alternative 2 allowing the use of non-natural materials for the design and construction of a bridge at the Cedar River will not have significant adverse impacts. The APSLMP already provides that bridges are a conforming use in Wild Forest areas. The proposed alternative allows construction of a less intrusive bridge with a smaller profile, and therefore potentially a lesser aesthetic impact.



The impacts of Alternative 3, allowing the use of non-natural materials for the design and construction of bridges in Wild Forest areas using a “minimum requirement approach” cannot be assessed at this time and are more appropriately assessed through the unit management process applying the minimum requirement approach. The purpose of such an analysis is to design bridges that are smaller and less intrusive to the natural and aesthetic environment than those built with only natural materials. That analysis would identify potential adverse impacts and conditions to mitigate any adverse impacts identified. It is anticipated that the use of non-natural materials for bridge construction may result in lighter structures requiring less maintenance, repair and replacement, and that the construction process itself may have less impact on the land. However, the number of bridges this may be applied to is speculative at this point, and each bridge will be subject to a SEQRA analysis.

The cumulative effect of the approval of the APSLMP amendments has the potential to benefit the economy of communities in the Park, without creating any significant environmental impacts. Potential environmental impacts and mitigation measures are further identified and evaluated during the development of Unit Management Plans (UMPs) and associated SEQRA documentation for each unit of Forest Preserve land, as well as through site-specific work plans and Freshwater Wetlands Act (FWA) permits. UMP's, site-specific work plans and FWA permits identify specific mitigation measures in significant detail.

## **PROCEDURES UNDER SEQRA**

This Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (FSEIS) is a supplement to the Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (1979) (FPEIS), which sets forth guidelines for amending the APSLMP. This action is a Type I action according to the Agency's SEQRA regulations, 9 NYCRR 586.5(a)(6)(iii), and the FPEIS, which provides that significant changes to the Guidelines for Management and Use of existing classifications are a Type I action. Agency staff have determined that the Major Changes to Guidelines for Management and Use may have a significant adverse impact on the environment, and therefore have prepared this FSEIS. The proposed amendments that consist of additional content, minor changes and ministerial changes will have no significant impact on the environment.

The Agency notified the Department, the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historical Preservation and the Department of Transportation of its proposed designation as lead agency by letter dated October 9, 2015. All three state agencies have consented to the Agency's designation as Lead Agency.

Agency staff have prepared this Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement in consultation with the Department, and sought authorization from the Agency to hold public hearings on the DSEIS and the proposed amendments to the APSLMP to satisfy the requirements of both SEQRA and the APSLMP. Hearings were held both inside and outside the Park. The public had an opportunity to submit written comments and to make comments at the public hearings. During the Public hearings, 51 people spoke. The Public Comment period was from December 10, 2015 through January 29, 2016. During that time, the Agency received 832 letters, faxes or emails. Staff considered all comments and incorporated comments into this Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (FSEIS). The FSEIS also includes a written response to public comments and presents final alternatives and preferred alternatives. The preferred alternative could include modifications to alternatives or a combination of elements of multiple alternatives described in the DSEIS. The Agency will then

decide (a) whether to accept the FSEIS and (b) whether to recommend the APSLMP amendments to the Governor. If the APSLMP amendments are accepted by the Agency, the resolution approving them is forwarded to the Governor for approval of the APSLMP amendments, at which time the changes become effective.

## **STANDARDS FOR AGENCY DECISION**

The Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan (APSLMP) and the Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (FPEIS) contain standards and guidelines for amending the APSLMP.

The APSLMP states that planning is an on-going process and, as public use of the State lands expands or changes in years ahead, land use controls may require re-analysis. Protection and preservation of the natural resources of the State lands within the Park must be paramount. Human use and enjoyment of those lands should be permitted and encouraged, so long as the resources in their physical and biological context, as well as their social or psychological aspects, are not degraded.

The FPEIS lists the possible categories of amendments to the APSLMP, which include the Classification and Reclassification of State land, creation of a new State land classification, deletion of an existing classification, alterations of Guidelines for Management and Use, and alterations of existing classification definitions, alterations of introductory guidelines, alterations of facility definitions, and alterations of area descriptions.

The significant changes proposed in the FSEIS which relate to bicycle use and the use of non-natural materials for bridge construction require alterations of Guidelines for Management and Use. The FPEIS provides the following guidelines for the Agency to follow in making determinations regarding the appropriateness of alterations of Guidelines for Management and Use:

- 1. Guidelines should attempt to provide the highest possible quality recreational experiences for each land classification.*
- 2. Guidelines should allow only those minimum recreational and administrative facilities necessary to provide such high quality recreational experiences.*
- 3. Guidelines should provide for restoration and rehabilitation of lands designated Wilderness, Primitive and Canoe areas which do not*

- now meet Wilderness, Primitive or Canoe area standards due to excessive levels of use or the existence of non-conforming uses.
4. Guidelines for Wilderness, Primitive, Canoe and Wild Forest should encourage the resource user to be responsible for his own health, safety and welfare.
  5. Guidelines for all categories should require that conforming uses be designed and constructed of materials in a manner that causes no significant effects on the physical or biological resources and which do not intrude upon the wild character of such lands.
  6. Future guidelines should prescribe desirable levels of use based upon the land's physical, biological and social carrying capacities. In its present form, the Plan prescribes only types of allowable uses.
  7. Where an overuse problem exists, the creation of a special use zone allowing additional facilities in heavily used portions of Wilderness, Primitive, Canoe or Wild Forest areas should not be proposed. Dispersal or regulation of use would be a more appropriate response to such a problem.
  8. Guidelines should be designed to protect the character of Wilderness, Primitive, Canoe and Wild Forest areas. The very foundation of Wilderness is the guideline which prohibits motorized access by the public and severely restricts such access by the Department of Environmental Conservation. Alteration of this guideline to permit generalized use of motor vehicles or aircraft would destroy the character of wilderness, a cornerstone of the Master Plan.
  9. Present management guidelines for Intensive Use areas are quite general and difficult to apply to extensive development. Guidelines applicable to new development in Intensive Use areas should be no less restrictive than those applied to the private sector by the Agency and should be described with greater specificity. In any event, undeveloped State land should act as a buffer zone between Intensive Use facilities and adjacent private lands to protect the character of those private lands. Guidelines for new Intensive Use facilities should prohibit extensive vegetative cutting; extensive topographic alterations; the alteration of wetlands; and for alteration of the existing undeveloped character of State lands if that land is highly visible and forms an important component of one or more quality natural views. (FPEIS, pp 30-31)

The Agency has considered these guidelines when reviewing the public comment and selecting the preferred alternatives. Each is discussed below in relation to the preferred alternatives.<sup>1</sup> Guidelines should attempt to provide the highest possible quality recreational experiences for each land classification.

***Alternative 2B: Amend Primitive Guidelines to allow bicycling on former all-season roads in Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Areas. These trails would be designated as Primitive Recreational Trails. The Department may maintain a Primitive Recreational Trail by periodic, but not usual or routine, use of motor vehicles and motorized equipment for specific major maintenance, rehabilitation or construction purposes during off-peak seasons, unless extraordinary conditions, such as a fire, major blow-down, or flood mandate more frequent work or work during peak periods.***

The addition of bicycling to former all-season roads in the Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area would provide an additional type of recreational use and the recreational experience will be enhanced by the specific maintenance measures authorized by this Alternative.

***Alternative 3: Amend Wild Forest Guidelines To Allow The Possible Use Of Non-Natural Materials On Bridge Designs In Wild Forest Areas Following A “Minimum Requirement Approach”.***

The use of non-natural materials does not directly impact the type of recreational experiences available. It is possible that the use of non-natural materials may impact ones social recreational experience. It is probable that a structure with a smaller profile, allowed by using non-natural materials, would be less intrusive to the natural and aesthetic environment.

2. Guidelines should allow only those minimum recreational and administrative facilities necessary to provide such high quality recreational experiences. ***Alternative 2B: Amend Primitive Guidelines to allow bicycling on former all-season roads in Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Areas. These trails would be designated as Primitive Recreational Trails. The Department may maintain a Primitive Recreational Trail by periodic, but not usual or routine, use of motor vehicles and motorized equipment for specific major maintenance, rehabilitation or construction purposes during off-peak seasons, unless extraordinary conditions, such as a fire, major***

***blow-down, or flood mandate more frequent work or work during peak periods.***

Converting former all-season roads into trails under the limitations contained in this Alternative will minimize the facility and administration necessary for bicycling, while enabling a high quality recreational experience.

***Alternative 3: Amend Wild Forest Guidelines To Allow The Possible Use Of Non-Natural Materials On Bridge Designs In Wild Forest Areas Following A “Minimum Requirement Approach”.***

Enabling the use of non-natural materials could result in a structure with a smaller profile, which would be less intrusive to the natural and aesthetic environment and may require less frequent maintenance. Moreover, this preferred alternative provides for the adoption of a minimum requirement approach to certain facilities- bridges in Wild Forest- to provide high quality recreational opportunities in Wild Forest.

3. Guidelines should provide for restoration and rehabilitation of lands designated Wilderness, Primitive and Canoe areas which do not now meet Wilderness, Primitive or Canoe area standards due to excessive levels of use or the existence of non-conforming uses.

***Alternative 2B: Amend Primitive Guidelines to allow bicycling on former all-season roads in Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Areas. These trails would be designated as Primitive Recreational Trails. The Department may maintain a Primitive Recreational Trail by periodic, but not usual or routine, use of motor vehicles and motorized equipment for specific major maintenance, rehabilitation or construction purposes during off-peak seasons, unless extraordinary conditions, such as a fire, major blow-down, or flood mandate more frequent work or work during peak periods.***

The Essex Chain Lakes unit was classified as Primitive in 2014. There are permanent restrictions on the land that preclude Wilderness classification. Prior to transferring these lands to the State, The Nature Conservancy granted easements to the Towns of Minerva and Newcomb over portions of the Essex Chain Lakes Tract that will allow for, as permitted by DEC, float plane access to

First and Pine Lakes. The easement also grants the Towns access to, and use of materials from, two gravel pits located on the periphery of the property in order to provide gravel to maintain roads, trails and other infrastructure in this Area that may be open for motorized use. These activities would be nonconforming in lands classified as Wilderness. Even across adjacent lands and waters, such as the Essex Chain Lakes other than First Lake, the activities of float plane use in such close proximity to the lakes might detract from the sense of remoteness expected in Wilderness.

The vegetation of this unit has been shaped over the years through the effects of wind, fire, logging, and settlement, and influenced by soils, elevation, aspect, hydrological regimes, and many other processes. The historical management of this area for a sustainable supply of timber is apparent throughout. The vast majority of the unit is covered by varying successional stages of northern hardwood forest.

The addition of bicycle trails on former all-season roads will not affect the restoration and rehabilitation of these lands. The conversion of a limited mileage of the former all-season roads to Primitive Recreational Trails will create a more natural setting for these trails while allowing the remaining roads formally used for the logging activities to become a more natural forest.

The periodic use of motor vehicles and motorized equipment for the limited purpose of removing non-conforming structures such as culverts and replacing them with bridges, addressing major washouts and significant drainage issues will help restore the land to its natural state.

***Alternative 3: Amend Wild Forest Guidelines To Allow The Possible Use Of Non-Natural Materials On Bridge Designs In Wild Forest Areas Following A "Minimum Requirement Approach".***

The use of non-natural materials for the construction of bridges could enable the Department to design bridges that might be smaller and less intrusive than one designed and built with only natural materials.

A design that limits construction to only natural materials, particularly a bridge that requires an Engineer to approve the design, could result in a structure that is intrusive and not in character with the Forest Preserve. The guidelines proposed would not prevent the restoration and rehabilitation of these lands and would encourage the placement of bridges more in keeping with the natural setting.

These guidelines do not prevent the removal of non-conforming uses.

4. Guidelines for Wilderness, Primitive, Canoe and Wild Forest should encourage the resource user to be responsible for his own health, safety and welfare.

***Alternative 2B: Amend Primitive Guidelines to allow bicycling on former all-season roads in Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Areas. These trails would be designated as Primitive Recreational Trails. The Department may maintain a Primitive Recreational Trail by periodic, but not usual or routine, use of motor vehicles and motorized equipment for specific major maintenance, rehabilitation or construction purposes during off-peak seasons, unless extraordinary conditions, such as a fire, major blow-down, or flood mandate more frequent work or work during peak periods.***

The addition of another type of recreation on trails does not encourage less responsibility for one's health, safety or welfare.

***Alternative 3: Amend Wild Forest Guidelines To Allow The Possible Use Of Non-Natural Materials On Bridge Designs In Wild Forest Areas Following A "Minimum Requirement Approach".***

For bridges, the use of non-natural materials does not encourage the addition of an improvement or structure that might reduce the user's responsibility for their own health, safety and welfare. The Department could be building bridges at these locations, regardless of what materials they are allowed to use.

5. Guidelines for all categories should require that conforming uses be designed and constructed of materials in a manner that causes no significant effects on the physical or biological resources and which do not intrude upon the wild character of such lands.

***Alternative 2B: Amend Primitive Guidelines to allow bicycling on former all-season roads in Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Areas. These trails would be designated as Primitive Recreational Trails. The Department may maintain a Primitive Recreational Trail by periodic, but not usual or routine, use of motor vehicles and motorized equipment for***



***specific major maintenance, rehabilitation or construction purposes during off-peak seasons, unless extraordinary conditions, such as a fire, major blow-down, or flood mandate more frequent work or work during peak periods.***

The placement of Primitive Recreational Trails on former all-season roads able to withstand such use minimizes the trails' effect on the physical or biological resources. The goal is the creation of durable trails with only conforming structures.

***Alternative 3: Amend Wild Forest Guidelines To Allow The Possible Use Of Non-Natural Materials On Bridge Designs In Wild Forest Areas Following A "Minimum Requirement Approach".***

The adoption of a minimum requirements approach for the location and design of any bridge in Wild Forest constructed with non-natural materials would aid in ensuring bridges are designed in a manner that causes no significant effects on the physical or biological resources and does not intrude upon the wild character of such lands.

6. Future guidelines should prescribe desirable levels of use based upon the land's physical, biological and social carrying capacities. In its present form, the Plan prescribes only types of allowable uses.

***Alternative 2B: Amend Primitive Guidelines to allow bicycling on former all-season roads in Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Areas. These trails would be designated as Primitive Recreational Trails. The Department may maintain a Primitive Recreational Trail by periodic, but not usual or routine, use of motor vehicles and motorized equipment for specific major maintenance, rehabilitation or construction purposes during off-peak seasons, unless extraordinary conditions, such as a fire, major blow-down, or flood mandate more frequent work or work during peak periods.***

The all-season roads to be used for bicycling have been used for logging and for motor vehicles to access leased camps. It is anticipated that the land's physical carrying capacity will not be surpassed by the replacement of those motor vehicles with bicycles. The reported use by bicyclists under the Interim

Stewardship Plan has been modest. However, this guideline, like the present guidelines, does not prescribe a desirable level of use. The Department has the option of employing management tools such as a permit system to address issues of carrying capacity in the future if deemed necessary.

***Alternative 3: Amend Wild Forest Guidelines To Allow The Possible Use Of Non-Natural Materials On Bridge Designs In Wild Forest Areas Following A “Minimum Requirement Approach”.***

The use of non-natural materials for bridge construction does not affect the level of use. A bridge built of only natural materials is likely to be used as much as a bridge with non-natural materials. The minimum requirements approach may take into consideration these issues. This guideline will not prescribe a desirable level of use.

7. Where an overuse problem exists, the creation of a special use zone allowing additional facilities in heavily used portions of Wilderness, Primitive, Canoe or Wild Forest areas should not be proposed. Dispersal or regulation of use would be a more appropriate response to such a problem.

***Alternative 2B: Amend Primitive Guidelines to allow bicycling on former all-season roads in Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Areas. These trails would be designated as Primitive Recreational Trails. The Department may maintain a Primitive Recreational Trail by periodic, but not usual or routine, use of motor vehicles and motorized equipment for specific major maintenance, rehabilitation or construction purposes during off-peak seasons, unless extraordinary conditions, such as a fire, major blow-down, or flood mandate more frequent work or work during peak periods.***

Overuse is not a reported problem in the areas covered by this Alternative. The creation of bicycle trails on former all-season roads able to withstand such use is not proposed as the result of an overuse problem.

***Alternative 3: Amend Wild Forest Guidelines To Allow The Possible Use Of Non-Natural Materials On Bridge Designs In Wild Forest Areas Following A “Minimum Requirement Approach”.***

The use of non-natural materials is not proposed as the result of an overuse problem. The guidelines to be developed for the minimum requirements approach may take into account any reported overuse or abuse issues.

8. Guidelines should be designed to protect the character of Wilderness, Primitive, Canoe and Wild Forest areas. The very foundation of Wilderness is the guideline which prohibits motorized access by the public and severely restricts such access by the Department of Environmental Conservation. Alteration of this guideline to permit generalized use of motor vehicles or aircraft would destroy the character of wilderness, a cornerstone of the Master Plan.

***Alternative 2B: Amend Primitive Guidelines to allow bicycling on former all-season roads in Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Areas. These trails would be designated as Primitive Recreational Trails. The Department may maintain a Primitive Recreational Trail by periodic, but not usual or routine, use of motor vehicles and motorized equipment for specific major maintenance, rehabilitation or construction purposes during off-peak seasons, unless extraordinary conditions, such as a fire, major blow-down, or flood mandate more frequent work or work during peak periods.***

Bicycles use is non-motorized. The Preferred Alternative allows the use of motor vehicles for trail maintenance in two Primitive Areas on former all-season roads capable of withstanding such use and designated as Primitive Recreational Trails. The Department may maintain a Primitive Recreational Trail by periodic, but not usual or routine, use of motor vehicles and motorized equipment for specific major maintenance, rehabilitation or construction purposes during off-peak seasons, unless extraordinary conditions, such as a fire, major blow-down, or flood mandate more frequent work or work during peak periods. The expiration of the leaseholders' rights to use motor vehicles in these two primitive areas and the limitation on motor vehicle and motorized equipment use by the Department will enhance the outdoor experience and address potential resource degradation.

***Alternative 3: Amend Wild Forest Guidelines To Allow The Possible Use Of Non-Natural Materials On Bridge Designs In Wild Forest Areas Following A “Minimum Requirement Approach”.***

This alternative does not apply in Wilderness, Primitive or Canoe areas. Although it is anticipated that at least one bridge (on the Cedar River) subject to the minimum requirement approach will be used for snowmobiles, the use of non-natural materials does not directly increase motorized use in an area. Snowmobile trails can be, and have been, constructed with bridges made of natural materials.

9. Present management guidelines for Intensive Use areas are quite general and difficult to apply to extensive development. Guidelines applicable to new development in Intensive Use areas should be no less restrictive than those applied to the private sector by the Agency and should be described with greater specificity. In any event, undeveloped State land should act as a buffer zone between Intensive Use facilities and adjacent private lands to protect the character of those private lands. Guidelines for new Intensive Use facilities should prohibit extensive vegetative cutting; extensive topographic alterations; the alteration of wetlands; and for alteration of the existing undeveloped character of State lands if that land is highly visible and forms an important component of one or more quality natural views.

***Alternative 2B: Amend Primitive Guidelines to allow bicycling on former all-season roads in Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Areas. These trails would be designated as Primitive Recreational Trails. The Department may maintain a Primitive Recreational Trail by periodic, but not usual or routine, use of motor vehicles and motorized equipment for specific major maintenance, rehabilitation or construction purposes during off-peak seasons, unless extraordinary conditions, such as a fire, major blow-down, or flood mandate more frequent work or work during peak periods.***

The addition of bicycling to the Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area, or all Primitive Areas, does not affect Intensive Use Areas.

***Alternative 3: Amend Wild Forest Guidelines To Allow The Possible Use Of Non-Natural Materials On Bridge Designs In Wild Forest Areas Following A “Minimum Requirement Approach”.***

The use of non-natural materials is already allowed for many structures and improvements in Intensive Use Areas. This alternative only applies in Wild Forest areas.

# FINAL SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

## PURPOSE

The State of New York acquired the Essex Chain Lakes Tract (18,230 acres) from The Nature Conservancy on December 21, 2012 and also acquired the Indian River Tract (963 acres) from The Nature Conservancy on April 9, 2013. These lands were part of a larger package of lands acquired by The Nature Conservancy from Finch Pruyn, known as the Finch Lands. On December 18, 2013, the Agency adopted a Resolution recommending classification of the Essex Chain Lakes Tract, the Indian River Tract and other lands. Governor Andrew Cuomo approved the classification on February 4, 2014.

During the classification process, Agency staff determined that the condition of the existing Chain Lakes Road and Camp 6 Road had the capacity to withstand human use including bicycling, snowmobiling, horseback and horse and wagon riding, hunting and other uses allowed in Wild Forest. Currently the APSLMP only allows the use of All-Terrain Bicycles in Primitive Areas on “existing roads open to the public and on state truck trails specifically designated for such use by the Department...” Members of the public expressed a desire for the use of bicycles on the existing roads on the Essex Chain Lakes Tract. In the Resolution, the Agency acknowledged its commitment to consider a revision of APSLMP guidelines for Primitive Areas to allow for the use of All-Terrain Bicycles on appropriate all-season roads on the Essex Chain Lakes Tract west of the Hudson River.

Also, during the public comment period for the classification action, many local residents and snowmobilers expressed support for designating and building a snowmobile community connector trail connecting the communities of Indian Lake and Minerva. This trail could include a bridge over the Cedar River in or near the location where a bridge once connected the Chain Lakes Road (South) and the Chain Lakes Road (North).

The Department has stated that building a structurally sound bridge over the 130-foot span of the Cedar River using natural materials would result in a structure with a large profile that might be intrusive on the natural and aesthetic environment. To construct a bridge with a smaller profile, which would be less intrusive on the natural and aesthetic environment, the Agency committed to

considering a revision of the APSLMP Wild Forest guideline to allow a bridge containing non-natural materials at the crossing of the Cedar River.

## **PUBLIC NEED AND BENEFITS**

The inclusion of bicycling in the Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Areas will expand recreational opportunities based in Newcomb and Indian Lake. The purpose of the amendment is to enable the Department to add another area of State land for bicyclists to explore in the Newcomb and Indian Lake areas, and perhaps in other Primitive Areas. If a bridge is built across the Cedar, it would also allow bicyclists to ride back-country from Indian Lake to Newcomb, free of motor vehicles on the majority of the route.

The proposed amendment to permit the use of non-natural materials to construct a bridge over the Cedar River will allow the Department to design and build a bridge that could be smaller and less intrusive than one designed and built with only natural materials. The bridge could be part of a multi-use trail connecting Indian Lake with Minerva, which could be used by hikers, bicyclists, snowmobilers and equestrians.

These two changes to the APSLMP will increase recreational opportunities in the area. With a through trail, bicyclists may ride from one community to the other, increasing visitors in the communities on both ends of the trail. Similarly, other recreationists will be able to travel from one community to the other, with increased demand for visitor services at both ends. The increased visitation could generate more business opportunities and jobs in the communities.

## **BACKGROUND**

The APSLMP was adopted in 1972 following the requirement of the Adirondack Park Agency Act to “classify [State lands] lands according to their characteristics and capacity to withstand use....” (Former APA Act § 807.) The APSLMP contains nine classifications, seven of which are briefly described below.

**Wilderness** - A Wilderness area, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man--where man himself is a visitor who does not remain. A Wilderness Area is further defined to mean an area of State land or water having a primeval character, without significant improvement or permanent human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve, enhance and restore, where necessary, its natural conditions.

**Primitive** - A Primitive area is an area of land or water that is either: 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, of a size and character not meeting wilderness standards, but where the fragility of the resource, or other factors, requires wilderness management.

**Canoe** - A Canoe area is an area where the watercourses or the number and proximity of lakes and ponds make possible a remote and unconfined type of water-oriented recreation in an essentially wilderness setting.

**Wild Forest** - 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.

**Intensive Use** - An Intensive Use area is an area where the State provides facilities for intensive forms of outdoor recreation by the public. There are two types of Intensive Use areas: campgrounds and day use areas.

**Historic** - Historic areas are locations of buildings, structures or sites owned by the State (other than the Adirondack Forest Preserve itself) that are significant in the history, architecture, archeology or culture of the Adirondack Park, the State or the Nation; that are State historic sites; properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places; or properties recommended for nomination by the Committee on Registers of the New York State Board For Historic Preservation; and that are of a scale, character and location appropriate for designation as an historic area under this master plan and the state has committed resources to manage such as primarily for historic objectives.

**State Administrative** - State Administrative areas are areas where the state provides facilities for a variety of specific state purposes that are not primarily designed to accommodate visitors to the Park.

The APSLMP provides basic guidelines and specific guidelines for each classification for improvements, uses and activities. These specific guidelines should be read for a detailed understanding of the APSLMP's structure and intent. The Wilderness classification sets the base line upon which each following classification then adds permitted structures or activities.

## **Relationship among Guidelines for Management and Use**

Guidelines for Management and Use are found in each land use classification. The structure of the management guidelines begins with Wilderness restrictions, which are listed first, and adds permitted activities for each subsequent category, thus implying that each is less restrictive than Wilderness. Primitive and Canoe Areas are very close to Wilderness, and all three have resource considerations and values that require similarly greater protection than Wild Forest Areas. For example, in Primitive areas, “All structures and improvements that conform to wilderness guidelines will be acceptable in primitive areas” (APSLMP, page 26); the motor vehicle, road and all-terrain bicycles guidelines all begin with a statement that wilderness guidelines apply and add some possibilities for administrative use of some roads “to reach and maintain existing structures and improvements.” (APSLMP, page 27.)

## **ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING**

The Adirondack Park encompasses an approximately 6 million acre region of northern New York State which is split nearly evenly between State owned land and private land. The Park contains all or portions of 12 counties, 102 towns and villages, over 3,000 lakes, 30,000 miles of rivers and streams, more than 40 mountain peaks above 4,000 feet in elevation and a wide variety of habitats, including globally unique wetland types and old growth forests. The Adirondack Park also contains the headwaters of four major rivers including the Black River, Hudson River, Mohawk River and the St. Lawrence River.

### **ESSEX CHAIN LAKES AND PINE LAKE PRIMITIVE AREAS**

The approximately 7,000 acre Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area and 2,800 acre Pine Lake Primitive Area were classified in 2014 and are located in the Towns of Newcomb and Minerva in Essex County and the Town of Indian Lake in Hamilton County. The dominant feature of the landscape is the Essex Chain Lakes, a series of eight interconnected lakes. Together with nearby ponds, these units have eleven lakes and ponds that are interconnected or within portaging distance of each other to provide a six to seven-mile canoe route.

The units also contain several rivers, including portions of the Cedar River which is classified as a Wild River pursuant to the Wild Scenic and Recreational Rivers Act from the southwest edge of the Primitive Area to the Essex County line, at which place its designation changes to Scenic. The Department has proposed to construct a bridge across the Scenic section of the Cedar River, near the location of a previous bridge.

Prior to the State acquiring the lands of these Primitive Areas, these lands, which were part of the Essex Chain Lakes Tract, were managed for timber production for which an extensive road network was developed and maintained.

There are restrictions on the land within the units that precluded Wilderness classification, including easements to the Towns of Minerva and Newcomb over portions of the Essex Chain Lakes Tract that will allow for, as permitted by the Department, float plane access to First Lake and Pine Lake, which are on the western edge of the units. Float plane use in such close proximity to the units significantly diminishes the sense of remoteness.

There is also an easement that grants the towns the use of materials from gravel pits located near the periphery of the Units in order to provide gravel to maintain roads, trails and other infrastructure in this area that may be open for motorized use. These activities would be nonconforming in lands classified as Wilderness.

### **ADIRONDACK PARK RECREATION INDUSTRY PROFILE**

Tourism is a major driver of the Park's economies. More than 21,000 Adirondack jobs are supported by the industry and visitor attraction and spending are integral components of an economically sustainable region. The Adirondack Region benefited from more than \$1.29 billion in Adirondack region tourism spending in 2014. According to a report commissioned by New York State Empire State Development and performed by the firm Tourism Economics, Hamilton and Essex counties, those counties most affected by this classification action, are the most tourism-reliant counties in the region. Forty-seven percent of labor income in Hamilton County and 32% of labor income in Essex County is directly related to tourism. In Hamilton County, 49% of its workforce is employed in a tourism-related industry and in Essex County about 43% of workers are employed in the sector<sup>1</sup>. It should also be noted that these are the only two counties in New York State wholly located inside the Adirondack Park boundary.

The tourism industry in the Adirondacks is highly seasonal. In 2006, 71% of Adirondack visitor spending occurred in the period of May through September. In Warren County, a county that shares many recreation resources with both Essex and Hamilton Counties and is also located mostly within the Park, 78% of tourism spending occurred during those months. In Essex County, 60% of expenditures occurred during those months and in Hamilton County, 82% occurred during that

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<sup>1</sup> Tourism Economics, 2014. The Economic Impact of Tourism in New York: Calendar Year 2014, Adirondacks Focus. Albany, NY.

period<sup>2</sup>. These numbers correlate to strong seasonality trends in employment. From February to August of 2006, Essex County's unemployment rate dropped 3.2 percentage points, Warren County's dropped 3.9 percentage points, and Hamilton County's dropped 6.3 percentage points. By February 2007, each county's unemployment rate had risen nearly completely to its February 2006 level. Figure 1 highlights the seasonality of Adirondack employment in both 2006 and 2014.

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<sup>2</sup> Davidson-Peterson Associates and the Northern New York Travel and Tourism Research Center, SUNY Potsdam. 2006. 2006 Economic Impact of Expenditures by Tourists on Northern New York State. Potsdam, NY.

**Figure 1. Seasonality of Adirondack Unemployment Rates**

	Feb-06	Aug-06	Feb-07
Essex County	7.4%	4.2%	7.6%
Hamilton County	8.9%	2.6%	8.2%
Warren County	6.3%	2.4%	5.9%

	Feb-14	Aug-14	Feb-15
Essex County	9.0%	5.7%	7.7%
Hamilton County	10.9%	3.4%	9.2%
Warren County	8.7%	4.9%	7.3%

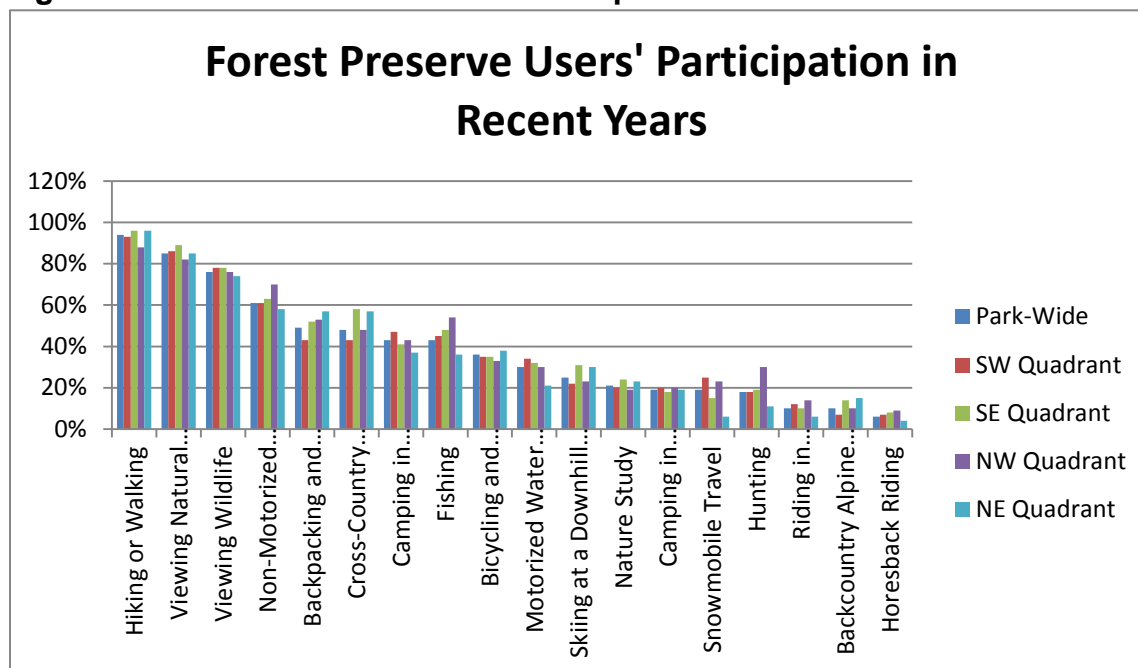
Research indicates that outdoor recreation is the major driver of visitation to the Adirondack Park with a variety of activities being attractive to these visitors. According to a 2013 report by the firm Placemaking, commissioned by the Regional Office of Sustainable Tourism (ROOST), the largest draw to Essex County is “outdoor activities,” with 76% of respondents indicating that this was an attractor.<sup>3</sup> For the visitors to Essex County attracted by outdoor activities, the ROOST study found that, “hiking” was the greatest draw (59%), followed by “canoeing/kayaking” (36%), and “skiing” (25%). “Cycling” (22%), “fishing” (21%), and “boating” (18%) rounded out the top six. Research commissioned by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and conducted by the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry (SUNY ESF) found similar patterns of recreation for Forest Preserve users. The two most popular activities common to both surveys were “hiking or walking” and “non-motorized water travel”. Figure 2 shows which outdoor activities recreation users had participated in within the Park in recent years as per the SUNY ESF study and Figure 3 examines the most popular outdoor activities that are common to both the Essex County and SUNY ESF surveys<sup>4</sup>.

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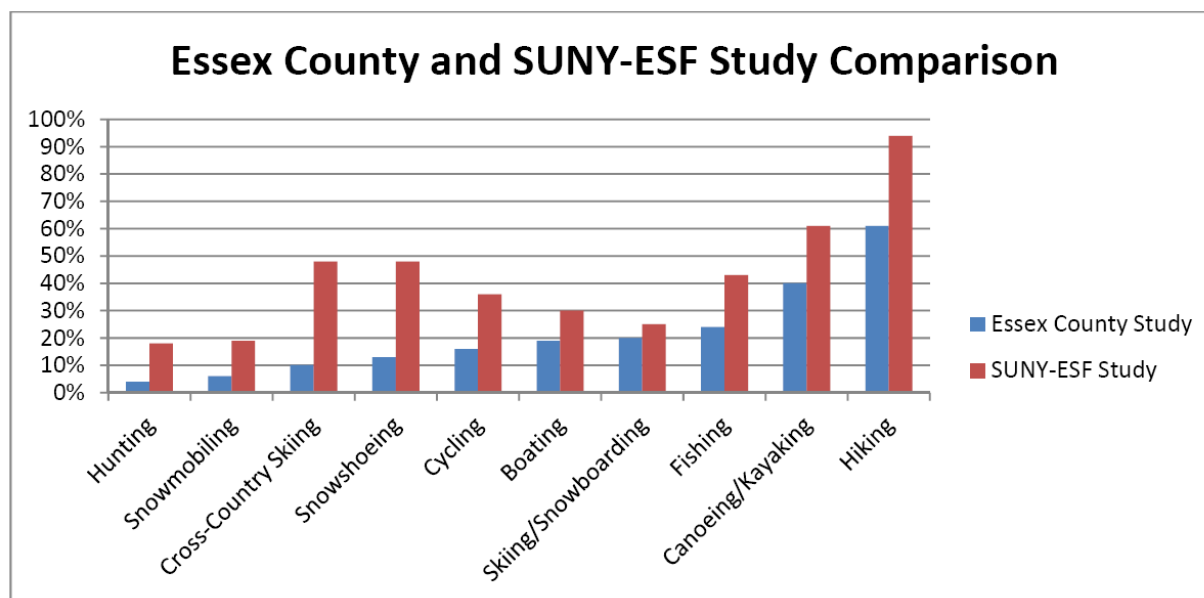
<sup>3</sup> Placemaking and the Regional Office of Sustainable Tourism/Lake Placid Convention and Visitor’s Bureau. 2012. Leisure Travel Study: 2013 Visitor Profile and Return on Investment-Conversion Rate Analysis. Essex County, NY. <http://www.roostadk.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Final-Leisure-Visitor-Study-2013.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Dawson, Chad, P., SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. Adirondack Forest Preserve Visitor Study Summary. Syracuse, NY: 2012.

**Figure 2. Forest Preserve Users' Participation in Recent Years**



**Figure 3. Essex County and SUNY-ESF Study Comparison**



The recreation participation data above highlights the sports that engage the greatest number of people in the Adirondack Park. Additional primary research and data would help to determine the total number of user days of each recreation activity in the Park.

## **PROPOSED ACTION:**

The proposed action involves several amendments to the APSLMP, including major changes to Guidelines for Management and Use as identified in the 2013 Classification Resolution, additional content, minor changes and ministerial changes.

The two items the Agency agreed to consider following the 2013 Resolution for the classification of the Essex Chain Lakes Tract and the Indian River Tract are listed below with alternatives. These major changes to the Guidelines for Management and Use are evaluated in this document for potentially significant environmental and economic impacts. The proposed amendments that consist of additional content, minor changes and ministerial changes will have no significant impact on the environment. A copy of the proposed additional content, minor changes and ministerial changes to the APSLMP was Appendix 1 of the December 2015 DSEIS. All of the proposed changes are shown in Appendix B to this FSEIS.

### **Revision of Master Plan Guidelines for Primitive Areas to Allow for the Use of Bicycles on Appropriate All-Season Roads Able to Withstand Such Use on the Essex Chain Lakes Tract West of the Hudson River.**

#### ***Alternative 1: No Action***

The No Action alternative would limit bicycle use in Primitive Areas to “existing roads legally open to the public and on state truck trails specifically designated for such use by the Department as specified in individual unit management plans” (APSLMP, page 28). This alternative would limit bicycle use in the Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Areas to the State Truck Trail connecting the Deer Pond Parking Area to the Deer Pond gravel pit. The use of this road would end when the Deer Pond gravel pit is deemed exhausted, reclaimed and reclassified. This alternative would not include any additional changes to the Guidelines for Management and Use other than those identified in Appendix 1 to the December 2015 DSEIS.

This is not the Preferred Alternative.

The Agency made a commitment in the classification resolution to consider bicycle use in the Essex and Pine Lakes Primitive Areas. The Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Areas were classified as Primitive due to their sensitive aquatic habitats and due to the reserved rights for float plane landings on First and Pine Lakes. Evaluation of the character of the former all-season roads shows that they can be used as bicycle trails.

***Alternatives 2A and 2B: Amend Primitive Guidelines to allow bicycling on former all-season roads in Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Areas.***

The same guidelines will apply as in Wilderness Areas except that bicycles may be used on existing roads legally open to the public, on administrative roads, and on former all-season roads capable of withstanding such use in the Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Areas designated for such use by the Department as specified in individual unit management plans.

If chosen, these alternatives would expand bicycling in the Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Areas to former all-season roads capable of withstanding and designated for such use. Currently, bicycling and horseback riding are allowed on designated roads legally open to the public and administrative roads in the Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Areas.

These trails would be designated as either Bicycle Trails (2A) or Primitive Recreational Trails (2B). These trails could also be designated to accommodate other non-motorized recreation uses including horseback riding and horse and wagon access. There are two alternative Primitive Area Guidelines for Management and Use for these trails:

**Alternative 2A**

Alternative 2A permits the continued use of former all-season roads for bicycling (this includes the approximate nine miles of former all-season roads as proposed in the Essex Chain Lakes Complex UMP). In addition, Alternative 2A would allow the maintenance of these trails using motor vehicles for an additional three year period upon the expiration of the leasehold rights. The use of motor vehicles for maintenance would end after October 1, 2022. The use of motorized equipment is allowed under current APSLMP guidelines, upon written approval by the DEC Commissioner. The prohibition against using motor vehicles for maintenance would not apply in cases of emergencies, however. This alternative would result in the addition of a guideline for Bicycle Trails in Primitive Areas as set out below:

**Bicycle Trail**



A marked trail designated for travel by bicycles, located and designed to provide access in a manner causing the least effect on the local environment. Bicycle trails in the Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Areas shall only be located on former all-season roads capable of withstanding such use and may not be maintained using motor vehicles.

The Agency made a commitment in its classification resolution to consider bicycle use in the Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Areas. The Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Areas were classified as Primitive due to their sensitive aquatic habitats and due to the reserved rights for float plane landings on First and Pine Lakes. Evaluation of the character of the former all-season roads shows that they can be used as bicycle trails.

Currently, the Department can use motor vehicles until October 1, 2019 to convert and rehabilitate these former all-season roads to trails; this date is the expiration date of The Nature Conservancy's reserved rights on these lands. During these three years the roads can be maintained as roads; bridges could be constructed using non-natural materials and geo-textile materials could be used to stabilize roads.

Given the unique rights within the Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area, it would be difficult for the Department to complete the work necessary to convert these roads into trails (to also enable horse and wagon use) prior to October 1, 2019, while the lessees and/or The Nature Conservancy have use of the road system. If Alternative 2A were selected, it is possible that the Department could continue their rehabilitation work to convert roads to trails an additional three years for culvert removal and drainage enhancement, ending on October 1, 2022. The APSLMP allows up to three years for the use of motor vehicles for the removal of non-conforming structures following the classification of the land. The Agency believes that the three-year time period to remove non-conforming structures, under these limited circumstances, can commence once the lessees and The Nature Conservancy no longer have use of the roads. The Department would not be able to build bridges with non-natural materials or modify roads with geo-textile materials during this additional three year window from October 1, 2019 to October 1, 2022.

At the conclusion of this additional three year window, on October 1, 2022, the Department would be obligated to manage the Primitive Area(s) pursuant to the guidelines for Primitive Areas in the APSLMP. The Department, following current guidelines for Primitive Areas, can use motorized equipment to maintain these trails. The prohibition of using motor vehicles for maintenance, however, would not apply in cases of emergencies. The APSLMP allows the use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment, and aircraft in cases of emergency in all classification categories:

*Irrespective of the above or any other guidelines in this master plan, use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment and aircraft will be permitted, by*

*or under the supervision of appropriate officials, in cases of sudden, actual and ongoing emergencies involving the protection or preservation of human life or intrinsic resource values -- for example, search and rescue operations, forest fires, or oil spills or similar, large-scale contamination of water bodies. (APSLMP page 22)*

Alternative 2A is not the Preferred Alternative.

## **Alternative 2B**

The second alternative, Alternative 2B would allow for the designation of Primitive Recreational Trails on former all-season roads capable of withstanding such use within the Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lakes Primitive Areas and allow for periodic, non-routine, maintenance of these trails with motor vehicles and motorized equipment to address significant drainage issues. Through the review process staff recognized the opportunity to be proactive on this road-to-trail conversion. In order to responsibly open these former roads as recreation trails for bicycles, horses and other non-motorized recreation the Department needs to use motor vehicles, motorized equipment, and aircraft on a periodic basis. The guideline would read:

### **Primitive Recreational Trail**

In the Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area and the Pine Lake Primitive Area only, former all-season roads capable of withstanding such use may be designated as Primitive Recreational Trails for foot, horse, horse and wagon, bicycle, ski, snowshoe use and other non-motorized recreational activities. The Department may maintain a Primitive Recreational Trail by periodic, but not usual or routine, use of motor vehicles and motorized equipment for specific major maintenance, rehabilitation or construction purposes during off-peak seasons, unless extraordinary conditions, such as a fire, major blow-down, or flood mandate more frequent work or work during peak periods.

The current APSLMP guideline for use of motorized equipment and aircraft in Primitive Areas is:

*Use of motorized equipment or aircraft, but not motor vehicles, by administrative personnel may be permitted for a specific major administrative, maintenance, rehabilitation, or*

*construction project if that project involves conforming structures or improvements, or the removal of non-conforming structures or improvements, upon the written approval of the Commissioner of Environmental Conservation. (APSLMP, page 22)*

This guideline would still apply within the Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Areas; Alternative 2B would also allow the use of motor vehicles and motorized equipment for periodic maintenance of designated Primitive Recreational Trails.

Under both alternative 2A and 2B the Department can use motor vehicles until October 1, 2019 to convert and rehabilitate these former all-season roads to trails. As with Alternative 2A, the Department could use motor vehicles for the removal of non-conforming structures such as culverts, for an additional three years, that is until October 1, 2022. If this alternative is selected, the Department would have until 2022 to use motor vehicles for converting the former all-season roads to trails.

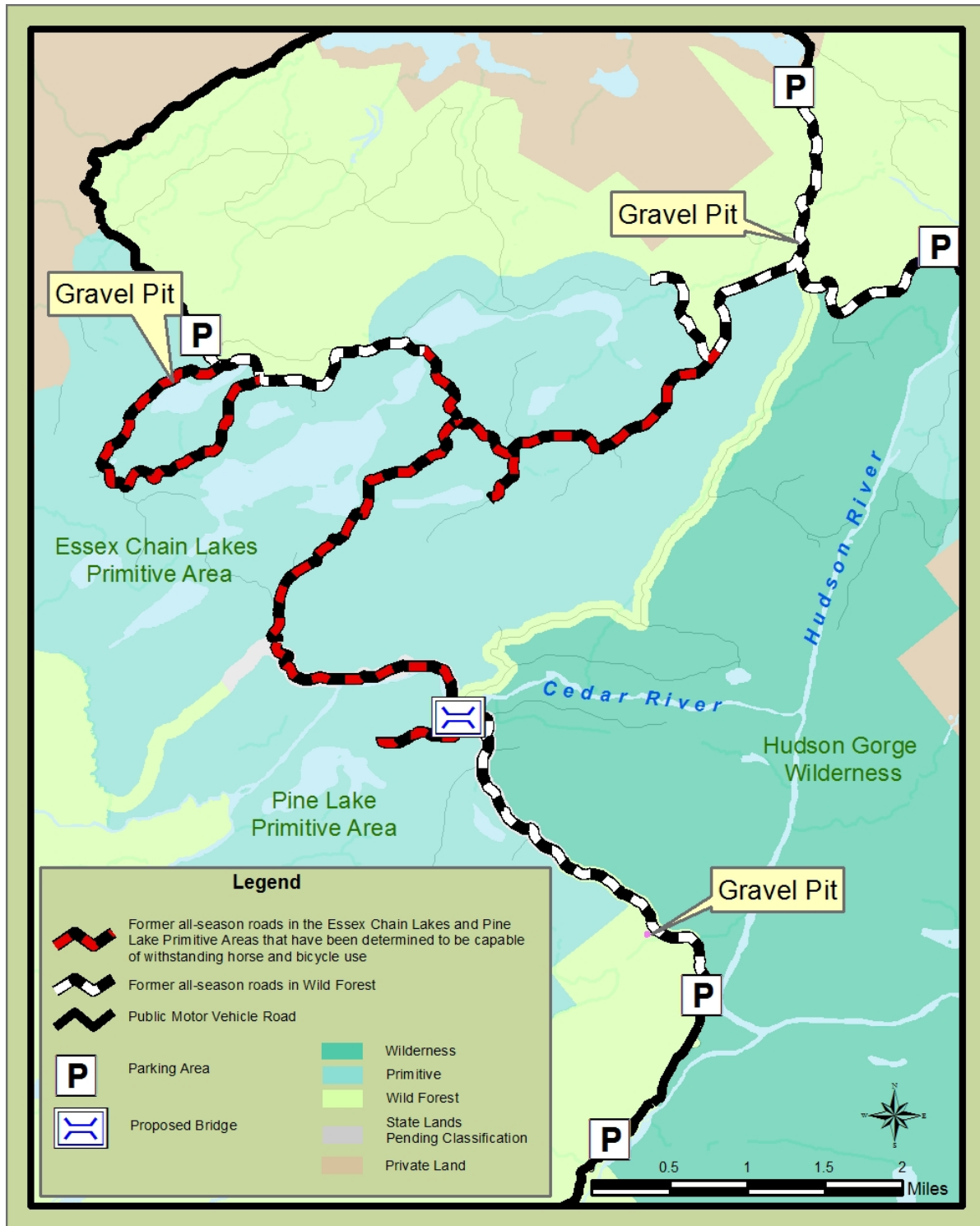
After October 1, 2022, Alternative 2B allows for the Department to be able to continue the use of motor vehicles and motorized equipment to maintain these trails on a periodic but not usual or routine basis. The Department will consult with the Agency through a work planning process to, identify work needed on these trails and specify the minimal amount and type of motor vehicle(s) needed to conduct this work.

The Master Plan allows the use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment, and aircraft in cases of emergency in all classification categories.

Alternative 2B is the Preferred Alternative.

Map 1, showing the potential Bicycle Trails or Primitive Recreational Trails in these units, is below.

**Map 1: Possible Bicycle or Primitive Recreational Trails**



## ***Alternatives 3A and 3B: Amend Primitive Guidelines to Allow Bicycling in all Primitive Areas.***

The same guidelines will apply as in Wilderness Areas except that bicycles may be used on existing roads legally open to the public, on state truck trails, and on former all-season roads capable of withstanding such use, designated by the Department in individual UMPs. If chosen, this alternative would allow bicycling as it is currently allowed and would allow the designation of Primitive Recreational Trails on former all-season roads capable of withstanding such use in any Primitive Area. As with the alternatives above specific to Essex Chain Lakes and the Pine Lake Primitive Areas, the first alternative (3A) would not allow the use of motor vehicles for maintenance; the second alternative (3B) would allow the use of motor vehicles and motorized equipment for periodic, not routine, maintenance as described.

If Alternative 3A is chosen, a new guideline for Bicycle Trails would be added to the Primitive Guidelines for Management and Use:

### **Bicycle Trail**

A marked trail designated for travel by bicycles, located and designed to provide access in a manner causing the least effect on the local environment. Bicycle trails in Primitive Areas shall only be located on former all-season roads capable of withstanding such use and may not be maintained using motor vehicles.

Alternative 3A is not the Preferred Alternative.

The Agency does not have information of the condition of former all-season roads in other Primitive Areas to know the full extent of what roads could be converted to trails for bicycle use. The majority of roads within Primitive Areas are Private and public use of bicycles on those roads could create trespass issues.

If Alternative 3B is chosen, a Guideline would be added to the Primitive Area Guidelines for Management and Use as follows:

### **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, horse and wagon, bicycle, ski, snowshoe and other non-motorized

recreational activities. The Department may maintain a Primitive Recreational Trail by periodic, but not usual or routine, use of motor vehicles and motorized equipment for specific major maintenance, rehabilitation or construction purposes during off-peak seasons, unless extraordinary conditions, such as a fire, major blow-down, or flood mandate more frequent work or work during peak periods.

Alternative 3B is not the Preferred Alternative.

### **The Use of Non-Natural Materials for Bridge Construction on the Cedar River.**

#### ***Alternative 1: No Action***

The No Action alternative would keep the existing definition for Natural Materials: “construction components drawn from the immediate project site or materials brought into the construction site that conform in size, shape and physical characteristics to those naturally present in the vicinity of the project site. Such materials include stone, logs, and sawn and treated timber. Natural materials may be fastened or anchored by use of bolts, nails, spikes or similar means” (APSLMP, page 17).

If this alternative is selected, the Department would be required to design a bridge that would be larger and more intrusive than might be possible with the use of non-natural materials. This alternative would not include any additional changes to the Guidelines for Management and Use other than those identified in Appendix 1 to the December 2015 DSEIS.

This is not the Preferred Alternative.

The bridge span needed to cross the Cedar River is approximately 130 feet. In order to design a bridge that could meet Engineering requirements for the variety of potential users, a large structure will need to be built. It is possible to design a less intrusive bridge using non-natural materials.

#### ***Alternative 2: Amend Wild Forest Guidelines to allow The Use of Non-Natural Materials for the Construction of the Bridge Crossing the Cedar River.***

If this alternative is selected, the Department would be allowed to design and build a bridge for the crossing of the Cedar River at a designated location in the vicinity of the Chain Lakes Road using steel, concrete or other non-natural materials. The intent is to construct a bridge with a smaller profile which would be less intrusive on the natural and aesthetic environment than one designed and built with only natural materials.

Alternative 2 is not the Preferred Alternative. The Agency believes that the use of non-natural materials for a bridge over the Cedar River could be less intrusive, and the Preferred Alternative (3) would enable that possibility.

***Alternative 3: Amend Wild Forest Guidelines To Allow The Possible Use Of Non-Natural Materials On Bridge Designs In Wild Forest Areas Following A “Minimum Requirement Approach”<sup>5</sup>.***

Alternative 3 is the Preferred Alternative.

The guidelines for this minimum requirement approach would be developed by the Agency and the Department and added as an appendix to the Memorandum of Understanding between the Adirondack Park Agency and the Department of Environmental Conservation concerning Implementation of the State Land Master Plan for the Adirondack Park (revised March 2010) (APA/DEC MOU). The intent would be to enable the design of a bridge that has a smaller profile and thus would be less intrusive to the natural and aesthetic environment.

The current requirement under the APSLMP of requiring bridges to be made of solely natural materials may have been motivated by primarily aesthetic intentions. The result has been massive bridges made of wood, including materials such as 40-foot long pressure-treated beams or logs weighing over one ton. Moving the materials for construction is expensive and can cause damage

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<sup>5</sup> The Minimum Requirements Decision Making (MRDM) process is employed by federal agencies involved in managing public lands, particularly wilderness. The Agency and the Department have used variations of this process in several appendices to the Memorandum of Understanding between the Adirondack Park Agency and the Department of Environmental Conservation Concerning Implementation of the State Land Master Plan for the Adirondack Park (revised March 2010) (“MOU”), specifically the Management Guidance: Snowmobile Trail Siting, Construction and Maintenance on Forest Preserve Lands in the Adirondack Park (November 2009) (Appendix E) and Inter-Agency Guidelines for Implementing Best Management Practices for the Control of Terrestrial and Aquatic Invasive Species on Forest Preserve Lands In the Adirondack Park (Updated July 2012) (Appendix F).

to the land. It is anticipated that the use of non-natural materials for bridge construction may result in lighter structures requiring less maintenance, repair, and replacement, and that the construction process itself will have less impact on the land.

The Department and the Agency would use a minimum requirement approach to determine if non-natural materials will be necessary to construct certain bridges in Wild Forest areas. It is anticipated that this would be fundamentally a 2-step process, to be clearly established through an interagency consultation process and defined as a guidance document that would be appended to the APA/DEC MOU. The first step would consist of identifying a problem, and evaluating if the problem warrants management action to protect or enhance the fundamental values and character of Wild Forest.<sup>6</sup> If the answer is “yes”, the minimum sufficient management action would be further defined. If the answer is “no”, no action is taken, no second step would be necessary, and the decision would be justified and recorded accordingly.

When the answer to the first step is “yes” the second step would begin and the minimum tool to accomplish the defined objective would be chosen among alternatives. The “minimum tool” is a way to describe how the action will be undertaken in a way that fundamentally protects wild forest character whenever possible while simultaneously accomplishing the management objective defined in the first stage.

The first step for applying this approach to bridges in Wild Forest is encompassed in the current UMP process, in which the Department, in consultation with Agency staff, may locate bridges as part of the trail planning process. The decision as to where a bridge will be located is made during the UMP process. If the approved UMP indicates that non-natural materials should be considered for the construction of a certain bridge or bridges within a Wild Forest Area, the Department and Agency would proceed to the next step.

The second step would be to determine whether non-natural materials are to be used. The decision would include considering alternative designs and materials to determine what the minimum tool would be to achieve the objective. This step would include the analysis of different designs and materials, natural and non-natural, which could be used to achieve the objective. The chosen design and construction plan will take into account the aesthetic concerns supporting the use of natural materials, longevity of the structure, impacts associated with construction activities, and other relevant site-specific considerations to ensure that the Wild Forest retains an essentially wild character.

The Agency considered expanding the possible use of non-natural materials to additional classification categories, particularly Wilderness, but determined that a

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<sup>6</sup> The MRDM process was developed for Wilderness areas on Federal lands, and is proposed here as an example for development of a similar analysis on Wild Forest lands. To the extent it could be used in other contexts, e.g. invasive species management, on Wilderness, Primitive or Canoe lands, a different analysis would apply.



different analysis would be needed and that should happen under a separate SEQR process. Building bridges in the Adirondack Park on trails has been limited to the use of natural materials. This limitation has forced managers to make decisions regarding the placement and even need for bridges in certain locations. This limitation can be helpful, particularly in Wilderness Areas, where bridges and other structures should be limited and designed to emphasize self-sufficiency of the user.

### **Additional Content**

The proposed action includes additional sections on Invasive Species and Conservation Easement Lands. None of this additional content will have a significant impact on the environment.

### **Minor Changes**

The proposed action includes updating terms such as “State Truck Trail” to “Administrative Road” and “All-terrain Bicycle” to “Bicycle”, adding definitions for terms which are referenced in the guidelines but not defined (Administrative Personnel, Bicycle Trail, Horse Mounting Platform, etc.). It also includes revising the Area Description for the Blue Mountain Wild Forest.

The Area Description for the Blue Mountain Wild Forest would be modified to reflect a change in language used for the 6 car parking area in the vicinity of Fourth and Fifth Lakes. The term “persons with disabilities” would be replaced with “Universal Access”. The sentence in the area description would now read: Wild Forest access along the Boots-to-Cornell Road, and then to the south shore of Fifth Lake was established for the sole purpose of providing Universal Access.

### **Ministerial Changes**

The proposed action includes grammatical corrections, updates to figures, removing the names of Agency Members no longer serving on the Board and other additions or deletions that would not change the meaning of the document.

These changes were previously shown in Appendix 1 of the December 2015 DSEIS, and there have been some modifications to those amendments. Appendix B to this FSEIS contains all of the proposed additional content, minor and ministerial changes.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF PROPOSED ACTION**

The APSLMP prescribes types of permissible uses in each category but it does not specifically control the levels of use beyond providing general management guidelines. The proposed alternatives are evaluated below in terms of their impacts on physical and biological resources, area character and landscape quality, recreational opportunities and local and regional economy.

All of the proposed amendment alternatives have the potential to diversify the user groups attracted to the Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Areas and its neighboring communities and to attract additional visitors to the communities. The spending associated with additional visitors to the area could reasonably be expected to induce additional market demand for goods and services that could result in new business enterprises.

### **Revision of APSLMP Guidelines for Primitive Areas to Allow for the Use of Bicycles**

Staff have evaluated the impacts of the revision of APSLMP Guidelines to allow for the use of bicycles in the Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Areas.

#### **Alternative 1: No Action**

Allowing for public recreational use of bicycles only on routes that are also roads open to, and maintained for, motor vehicle use would have no significant increased impacts on the character of the area or the physical and biological resources of the lands and waters of the Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Areas. Bicycling opportunities would continue to be available on public motor vehicle roads on lands classified as Wild Forest and on administrative roads within Primitive Areas. The recreational experience of boaters, equestrians, hikers, hunters, anglers and other non-cyclist users of the Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Areas will not see any additional impact related to the continued use by bicycles on roads already open to the public and on administrative roads. The level of use is not likely to increase.

#### **Alternative 2A: Amend Primitive Guidelines to Allow Bicycle Trails on Former All-Season Roads in Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Areas without Using Motor Vehicles for Maintenance**

This alternative proposes the APSLMP would allow designation of Bicycle Trails on former all-season roads only in the Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Areas. Alternative 2A would allow bicycles on a limited number of

former all-season roads capable of withstanding such use in the Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Areas.

### ***Impacts on the Physical and Biological Resources***

Public recreational use of bicycles will occur only on former all-season roads and will not allow the construction of any new bicycle trails. The use of these former roads as trails for use by bicycles will be limited to those former all-season roads that are determined to be capable of withstanding such use; therefore will have no significant adverse impacts on the surface waters, ground water or biological resources of the lands in the short-term or long-term. This alternative limits bicycle use to former-all-season roads in the Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Areas. Therefore significant impacts on physical and biologic resources would not be expected.

### ***Impacts on Area Character and Landscape Quality***

The APSLMP states that Primitive areas are essentially Wilderness in character or require Wilderness management due to fragility of the resources. The APSLMP does not allow bicycle use in Wilderness areas. The FPEIS states that recreational uses deemed to be compatible with Wilderness include hiking, mountaineering, tenting, hunting, fishing, snowshoeing, ski-touring, and nature study. Bicycle use has generally been considered to be incompatible with Wilderness areas, but the APSLMP makes exceptions for bicycle use in limited situations which are considered to not significantly impact the Wilderness character of an area. The APSLMP currently allows bicycle use on roads open to the public and state truck trails in Primitive areas.

The long term impacts to the character of the area and landscape quality would be limited because bikes would be used on former all-season roads and no tree cutting would occur.

### ***Impacts of Proposed Guidelines on Recreational Opportunities***

Allowing bicycle access on former all-season roads within the Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Areas creates an opportunity for cycling in a wild and remote area free from public motor vehicle traffic.

This alternative provides an opportunity for cyclists to ride several relatively easy loop trails in the vicinity of the Essex Chain Lakes. Remote and motor-free cycling on trails is relatively rare within the Adirondack Park and is currently

limited to lands classified as Wild Forest, Historic, and Intensive Use. Where some trails in Wild Forest areas are open to bikes, only a small percentage of the trails have a character that is conducive for beginner to novice level bicycle use. This alternative seeks to create a recreational opportunity that is uniquely suited to the existing conditions within the Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Areas.

Impacts to the recreational experience of boaters, equestrians, hikers, hunters, anglers and other non-cyclist visitors to the Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Areas may occur due to the presence of cyclists. The degree to which cyclists may have a negative impact upon the experience of other visitors is difficult to assess. The possibility for negative impacts to other recreationalists is largely dependent upon the expectations of those users and the overall intensity of use by cyclists.

If the Essex Chain Lakes Primitive Area trail network receives moderate use and users expect to see cyclists, it is unlikely that negative impacts will occur. If the intensity of use (by cyclists and others) within the Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Areas is significantly higher than other comparable areas, the possibility for an unacceptable level of conflict between users exists.

Not all visitors to the Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Areas may find the presence of cyclists to be inconsistent with the experience they seek. The relatively rare opportunity for cyclists to experience the wild and remote character of the Forest Preserve on trails without the burden of motor vehicle traffic is a valuable recreational opportunity.

The Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Areas contains a unique combination of fragile aquatic ecosystems paired with the capability to potentially support a broad diversity of muscle-powered recreational pursuits, including cycling. This alternative allows for cycling to be included within these Primitive Areas which recognizes the unique, less sensitive characteristics of the land as compared to the lakes and waters.

### ***Impacts on the Local and Regional Economy***

This alternative would expand the mileage of trails available for bicycling in the long term and thus could create a network of trails that is more attractive (than the No Action alternative) to cycling enthusiasts. The character of the trails converted from former all-season roads may dissuade more experienced off-road cyclists while the remote nature of the trails may also dissuade less experienced cyclists and/or their families. Overall however, this alternative creates a new trail system which provides the opportunity for cyclists to be attracted to the Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Areas, as well as the surrounding communities.

**Alternative 2B: Amend Primitive Guidelines to allow former all-season roads in Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Areas to be designated as Primitive Recreational Trails, enabling limited maintenance using motor vehicles and motorized equipment**

Alternative 2B proposes adding “Primitive Recreational Trail” as an APSLMP definition. The APSLMP would allow former all-season roads to be designated as Primitive Recreational Trails for use by foot, horse, bicycle, ski, and snowshoe and other Primitive recreational activities. This alternative would also allow the Department to use motor vehicles and motorized equipment on a periodic basis, not usual or routine, for specific major maintenance, rehabilitation or construction purposes during off-peak seasons, unless extraordinary conditions, such as a fire, major blow-down, or flood mandate more frequent work or work during peak periods. Currently, the APSLMP allows the use of motorized equipment or aircraft, but not motor vehicles, for a “specific major administrative, maintenance, rehabilitation, or construction project if that project involves conforming structures or improvements, or the removal of non-conforming structures or improvements” in Wilderness, Primitive and Canoe areas. The APSLMP also allows the use of both motor vehicles and motorized equipment in Wilderness, Primitive and Canoe areas in “cases of sudden, actual and ongoing emergencies.” This alternative would expand the use of motor vehicles for maintenance of these Primitive Recreational Trails. The trails would be listed as a conforming structure only in the Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Areas.

***Impacts on the Physical and Biological Resources***

Allowing for public recreational use of bicycles only on “Primitive Recreational Trails” in these areas would have no significant impacts on the physical and biological resources of the lands and waters. These trails will be maintained by

the Department, and that maintenance may include the periodic (non-routine) use of motor vehicles and motorized equipment. The establishment of this new type of trail and the limited use of motor vehicles and motorized equipment by the Department would be aimed exclusively at preventing such physical and biological impacts that might otherwise occur if significant, major drainage issues could not be effectively addressed.

### ***Impacts on Area Character and Landscape Quality***

In addition to the impacts discussed for Alternative 2A which would allow bicycle use on former all-season roads in the Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Area, impacts may result from limited administrative use of motor vehicle and motorized equipment under Alternative 2B. The FPEIS states the “very foundation of Wilderness is the guideline which prohibits motorized access by the public and severely restricts such access by the Department of Environmental Conservation.” This alternative would limit use of motor vehicles and motorized equipment by the Department on Primitive Recreational Trails in the Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Areas to specific situations in which non-motorized maintenance may be less effective and efficient at resolving resources issues, specifically bridge repairs, replacement of culverts with bridges (allowing free flow of streams) or where a severe wash-out prevents travel. This motorized access and use may have short term impacts on the character of the area, while the equipment is in use, but the long term impacts to the character of the area and landscape quality would be limited. Since Primitive Recreational Trails would only be conforming structures in the Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lakes Primitive Areas, the cumulative impacts on the character and landscape quality resulting from this alternative would not be significant.

### ***Impacts of Proposed Guidelines on Recreational Opportunities***

Allowing bicycle access on former all-season roads converted to Primitive Recreational Trails within the Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Areas creates an opportunity for cycling in a wild and remote area free from public motor vehicle traffic, although periodic motorized use may occur for non-routine maintenance.

This alternative provides an opportunity for cyclists to ride several relatively easy loop trails in the vicinity of the Essex Chain Lakes, as does Alternative 2A, described above. The recreational impacts for this alternative are similar to those for Alternative 2A, except that the Department would be able to address drainage issues on Primitive Recreational Trails more quickly under this

alternative. Thus it is possible that this alternative may result in a better recreational experience on better maintained trails than 2A. On the other hand, bicyclists, hikers, paddlers, and other non-motorized users may encounter Department using motor vehicles and motorized equipment, which would impair the sense of solitude and remoteness expected in a Primitive area.

### ***Impacts on the Local and Regional Economy***

This alternative would expand the mileage of trails available for bicycling and thus could create a network of trails that is more attractive (than the No Action alternative) to cycling enthusiasts. The required character of the trails converted from former all-season roads may dissuade more experienced off-road cyclists while the remote nature of the trails may also dissuade less experienced cyclists and/or their families. Overall however, this alternative creates a new trail system which provides the opportunity for cyclists to be attracted to the Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Areas, as well as the surrounding communities.

### **Alternative 3A: Amend Primitive Guidelines to allow former All-season Roads to be Designated as Bicycle Trails without using Motor Vehicles for Maintenance.**

This alternative proposes that the APSLMP would be amended to authorize the Department, with review by the Agency, to designate former all-season roads capable of withstanding such use for foot, horse, bicycle, ski, and snowshoe and other non-motorized recreational activities in any Primitive area UMP. The former all-season roads would be designated as Bicycle Trails, which would not be maintained with the use of motor vehicles.

### ***Impacts on the Physical and Biological Resources***

The impacts to the physical and biological resources of the lands and waters from public recreational use of bicycles on former all-season roads in these areas depends on the number and location of former all-season roads that would be designated as Bicycle Trails. The alternative (Appendix 3A) provides that Bicycle Trails be located and designed to provide access in a manner causing the least effect on the environment. Any specific trail would be part of a UMP or UMP Amendment subject to a separate SEQR process. An inventory of former all-season roads capable of withstanding such use in Primitive Areas has not been conducted. The park-wide statistics listed in the APSLMP for Primitive areas include 7.85 miles of public roads, which bicyclists can already ride on, 63.43 miles of "private" roads and an undetermined number of miles of state-owned roads with private access. (APSLMP, page 83). The APSLMP provides the

following statistics on acreage, non-conforming uses, roads, and some trails, in Primitive Areas:

Alder Creek area statistics:

State Land	23 Acres
Non-conforming Uses:	
Roads (private)*	1.9 Miles

Alice Brook area statistics:

State Lands	21 Acres
Non-conforming Uses:	
Snowmobile Trails (public)*	3.5 Miles

Ampersand area statistics:

State Lands	424 Acres
Foot Trails	0.5 Miles
Non-conforming Uses:	
Roads (private)*	3.5 Miles
Roads (public)*	0.8 Miles

Bald Ledge area statistics:

State Lands	529 Acres
Non-conforming Uses:	
Roads (private)*	0.5 Miles

Bartlett area statistics:

State Lands	6 Acres
Non-conforming uses:	
Roads (public)*	1.4 Miles

Bear Pond area statistics:

State Lands	12 Acres
Non-conforming Uses:	
Roads (private)	4.2 Miles

Boquet River Statistics:

State Lands	86 Acres
Non-conforming Uses:	
Roads (private)*	0.5 Miles

Buck Pond area statistics:

State Lands	48 Acres
Non-conforming Uses:	
Roads (public)*	0.6 Miles
Roads (private)*	7.3 Miles

Buell Brook Statistics:



State Lands	14 Acres	
Non-conforming Uses:		
Roads (private)	3.5 Miles	
Cathead Mountain area statistics:		
State Lands	212 Acres	
Chatiemac Lake area statistics:		
State Lands	2 Acres	
Non-conforming Uses:		
Roads (public)*	0.5 Miles	
Dead Creek area statistics:		
State Lands	1,125 Acres	
Non-conforming Uses:		
Roads (private)*		
Access Road	0.7 Mile	
Carriage Road	6.0 Miles	
Deer River area statistics:		
State Lands	1,870 Acres	
Non-conforming Uses:		
Steel bridge		1
Roads (private)*	0.5 Miles	
Dug Mountain area statistics:		
State Lands	50 Acres	
Non-conforming uses:		
Roads (private)*	0.1 Miles	
Eastern Five Ponds Access area statistics:		
State Lands	1,647 Acres	
Bodies of Water (1)	197 Acres	
Non-conforming Uses:		
Private Roads*	9.7 Miles	
Dams*	2	
Essex Chain Lakes area statistics:		
State Lands	6,955 acres	
Bodies of Water (14)	620 acres	
Non-conforming Uses:		
Camps		
Roads (private)	indeterminate mileage	
Float Plane Access	1 Lake (First Lake)	
First Brother area statistics:		
State Lands	99 Acres	
Non-conforming Uses:	None	

Forks Mountain area statistics:	
State Lands	15 Acres
Non-conforming Uses:	
Snowmobile Trail (public)	2.5 Miles
Gooseneck Pond area statistics:	
State Lands	1 Acre
Non-conforming uses:	
Roads (private)*	0.2 Miles
Hurricane Mountain area statistics:	
State Lands	11 Acres
Non-conforming Uses:	
Roads (private)*	0.6 Miles
Roads (public)*	2.4 Miles
Johns Brook area statistics:	
State Lands	156 Acres
Non-conforming Uses:	
Roads (private)*	1.1 Miles
Madawaska Flow – Quebec Brook area statistics:	
State Lands	5,774 Acres
Private Inholdings (1)	97 Acres
Bodies of Water (6)	220 Acres
Non-conforming Uses:	
Roads (private)*	3.0 Miles
Madawaska Road	1 Mile
Conversation Corners Road	2.9 Miles
Snowmobile Trail (private)	2.3 Miles
Nehasane area statistics:	
State Lands	55 Acres
Non-conforming Uses:	
Roads (private)	4.4 Miles
(public)	0.2 Miles
Railroad Station	1 Acre
OK Slip Pond area statistics:	
State Lands	30 acres
Non-conforming Uses	
Road (private)	2.6 miles
Partlow Lake area statistics:	
State Lands	77 Acres
Non-conforming Uses: None	

Pine Lake area statistics:	
State Lands	2,798 acres
Bodies of Water (4)	147 acres
Non-conforming Uses:	
Floatplane access*	1 Lake (Pine Lake)
Polaris Mountain area statistics:	
State Lands	953 acres
Bodies of Water (1)	18 acres
Non-conforming Uses	
Roads (private)	indeterminate mileage
Raquette-Jordan Boreal area statistics:	
State Lands	12,034 Acres
Bodies of Water (1)	28 Acres
Non-conforming Uses:	
Roads (private)	3.1 Miles
Camps	4
Raven Lake Road area statistics:	
State Lands	25 Acres
Non-conforming uses:	
Roads (private)	2.33 Miles
Sacandaga area statistics:	
State Lands	7 Acres
Non-conforming Uses:	
Roads (public)	1.95 Miles
Schuyler Island area statistics:	
State Lands	167 Acres
Trails	0.3 Miles
Non-conforming Uses:	None
Tahawus area statistics:	
State Lands	2 Acres
Non-conforming uses:	
Road to Henderson Lake Dam (private)*	0.1 Mile
Tamarack Creek area statistics:	
State Lands	46 Acres
Non-Conforming Uses:	None
Tied Lake area statistics:	
State Lands	8 Acres
Non-conforming Uses:	
Roads (private)*	2.5 Miles

Valcour Island area statistics:	
State Lands	957 Acres
Federal Inholding (1)	0.1 Acres
Trails	12.6 Miles
Non-conforming Uses:	
Former Seaton House and Associated Outbuilding*	2
Storage Shed*	1
Historic Lighthouse*	1
Wakely Mountain area statistics:	
State Lands	225 Acres
Foot Trails	0.4 Miles
Wanakena area statistics:	
State Lands	7 Acres
Non-conforming Uses:	
Roads (private)*	1.2 Miles
West Canada Mountain area statistics:	
State Lands	3,260 Acres
Water Bodies (3)	14 Acres
Non-conforming Uses:	
Roads (private)*	2.8 Miles
Wilmurt Club Road area statistics:	
State Lands	3 Acres
Non-conforming uses:	
Roads (private)*	0.9 Miles
Winding Falls area statistics:	
State Lands:	26 Acres
Non-conforming Uses	None

In order to accurately evaluate the potential physical and biological impacts from this alternative, staff would need to examine each of these forty units to determine if there are former all-season roads in the unit able to withstand bicycle use that could be located and designed in a manner causing the least effect on the environment. However, each proposed Bicycle Trail would be subject to a separate SEQR process when the UMP or UMP amendment is adopted, at which time the actual impacts for each individual trail would be evaluated.

### ***Impacts on Area Character and Landscape Quality***

The long term impacts on the character of the area and landscape quality would be limited by the restriction of Bicycle Trails to former all-season roads able to withstand such use that could be located and designed in a manner causing the least effect on the environment. However, as with the impacts on physical and biological resources, the full potential impacts of this alternative would require further analysis, but any single proposed Bicycle Trail would be subject to SEQR.

### ***Impacts of Proposed Guidelines on Recreational Opportunities***

The Park currently has forty Primitive Areas, but not all of these areas have former all-season roads which would be able to withstand use as Bicycle Trails. The impacts on recreational opportunities would be positive for bicyclists, but may be negative for other users seeking a wilderness-type experience in a Primitive area.

### ***Impacts on the Local and Regional Economy***

If chosen, this alternative would allow bicycling as it is currently allowed for in Primitive Areas and enable additional trails on appropriate former all-season roads able to withstand such use in any Primitive Area located within the Park. While this alternative would allow for additional mileage of trails that are open to bicycles on Primitive areas, the impact Park-wide would be relatively limited. However, the increased mileage of trails open for bicycling may benefit local communities.

### **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.**

This alternative proposes adding "Primitive Recreational Trail" as an APSLMP definition. The APSLMP would enable the Department, with review by the Agency, to designate former all-season roads capable of withstanding such use as Primitive Recreational Trails for use by foot, horse, bicycle, ski, and snowshoe and other non-motorized recreational activities. These Primitive Recreational Trails may be maintained by the Department by the periodic, but not usual or routine, use of motor vehicles and motorized equipment for specific major

maintenance, rehabilitation or construction purposes during off-peak seasons, unless extraordinary conditions, such as a fire, major blow-down, or flood mandate more frequent work or work during peak periods. This improvement would be listed as a conforming use in Primitive Areas.

### ***Impacts on the Physical and Biological Resources***

As mentioned above for Alternative 3A, there is no inventory of former all-season roads able to withstand such use in the forty Primitive Areas with the Adirondack Park. Allowing for the use of bicycles on suitable former all-season roads which would be converted to “Primitive Recreational Trails”, as defined above, could have significant impacts on the physical and biological resources, depending on the number and location of those trails and the extent of motorized access and maintenance. While it is unclear how many trails could be established, the use of motor vehicles and motorized equipment would be aimed exclusively at preventing such physical and biological impacts that might otherwise occur if significant, major drainage issues could not be effectively addressed.

### ***Impacts on Area Character and Landscape Quality***

As with Alternative 2B above, the limited use of motor vehicles and motorized equipment on Primitive Recreational Trails in Primitive areas may have short term impacts on the character of the area, as the equipment is in use, but the long term impacts to the character of the area and landscape quality would be limited.

### ***Impacts of Proposed Guidelines on Recreational Opportunities***

The impacts on recreational opportunities from this proposed guideline would be similar to the impacts from Alternative 3A, above: a positive impact for bicyclists and a potential negative impact for those seeking a wilderness-type experience. As with Alternative 2B, users may find the trails in better condition if motor vehicles and motorized equipment are allowed for maintenance, but some users may find the presence of motor vehicles and motorized equipment, however temporary, detracts from the recreational experience in a Primitive Area.

### ***Impacts on the Local and Regional Economy***

If chosen, this alternative would allow bicycling as it is currently allowed for in Primitive Areas and also make it possible for the Department to designate additional trails on appropriate former all-season roads able to withstand such

use in any Primitive Area located within the Park. The increased mileage of trails open for bicycling may benefit local communities.

## **Revision of Master Plan Guidelines for Primitive Areas to Allow for the Use of Non-Natural Materials for Bridge Construction**

### **Alternative 1: No Action**

The APSLMP does not prevent the construction of a new bridge over the Cedar River. The No Action alternative presents no change from current allowable practice. Construction of a bridge using natural materials will not affect recreation opportunities available in the area. However, the No Action alternative may require the Department to design bridges using the specifications articulated in that definition and may result in bridges that are larger and more intrusive to the natural and aesthetic environment than if they were constructed using non-natural materials. The No Action alternative may have a positive economic impact in that the materials might be sourced from local suppliers and non-natural materials including steel and aluminum are no longer manufactured in the Park. However, natural material bridges may be more expensive to construct and maintain than a non-natural material bridges, thus increasing the cost to the State for construction and maintenance.

### **Alternative 2: Amend the Wild Forest Guidelines to Allow the Use of Non-Natural Materials for the Construction of the Bridge Crossing the Cedar River.**

This alternative would allow the Department to build a bridge for crossing of the Cedar River using non-natural materials (steel, concrete or other non-natural materials).

### ***Impacts on the Physical and Biological Resources***

Constructing a new bridge over the Cedar River consisting of non-natural materials such as steel and/or glue-laminate beams would require the Department's development and the Agency's review of a detailed project proposal, featuring conditions and describing construction practices that would minimize significant impacts to physical and biological resources.

### ***Impacts on Area Character and Landscape Quality***

This alternative could have an impact on the character of the area or the landscape quality of the State land of the Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Areas. Bridges are conforming structures in all State land classifications with the Forest Preserve. Although non-natural materials themselves could have an aesthetic impact, a bridge with a smaller profile, allowed by using non-natural materials, could be less intrusive to the natural and aesthetic environment.

### ***Impacts of Proposed Guidelines on Recreational Opportunities***

The impacts on recreational opportunities from the use of non-natural materials for the construction of a bridge crossing the Cedar River will be minimal. The Department intends to build the bridge, and if this alternative is not selected, it may build a bridge suitable for multi-use recreation with natural materials. The recreational opportunities in the Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Areas do not necessarily depend on which materials are used for construction of the bridge.

### ***Impacts on the Local and Regional Economy***

The economic tradeoffs to this alternative are no different than the visitor attraction, construction costs, and maintenance costs tradeoffs identified in the No Action alternative.



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

This alternative proposes that following the development of a “minimum requirement approach”, the Department may use non-natural materials such as steel, concrete, and/or glue laminate for bridges constructed in Wild Forest areas.

***Impacts on the Physical and Biological Resources***

Construction of new bridges for any type of trail using non-natural materials would generally require that the Department and Agency review a detailed project proposal subject to a minimum requirements analysis, which is designed to minimize and mitigate the impacts associated with construction activities.

It is not known at this time what the number of potential bridges could be. Slightly more than half of the state lands in the Park are classified as Wild Forest, totaling 1,298,209 acres in 17 units. Within the Wild Forest units, there are six Wild Rivers, 27 Scenic Rivers and 25 Recreational rivers designated under the NYS Wild Scenic and Recreational Rivers System Act. In addition there are numerous rivers and streams outside the NYS Wild Scenic and Recreational Rivers System in Wild Forest units. The number of bridges would depend on the number of proposed trails requiring bridges.

For any bridge distant from road access, the use of non-natural materials under this alternative could lessen potential impacts to physical and biological resources during construction, since the quantity and size of construction materials would be less, therefore less likely to cause damage along the route traveled to the construction site.

***Impacts on Area Character and Landscape Quality***

Although non-natural materials themselves could have an aesthetic impact, a bridge with a smaller profile, allowed by using non-natural materials, could be less intrusive to the natural and aesthetic environment. Also, a design could include cladding the exterior of any bridge with a natural wood finish, thereby rendering the non-natural materials invisible to the eye.

***Impacts of Proposed Guidelines on Recreational Opportunities***

The use of non-natural materials for the construction of bridges following a “minimum requirement approach” may result in bridges less susceptible to wash out and failure. This impact is difficult to calculate, however, because of the uncertainty regarding the actual number of bridges that would be built with non-natural materials.

### ***Impacts on the Local and Regional Economy***

The economic tradeoffs related to this alternative are the same as those discussed in the No Action alternative.

### **CUMULATIVE IMPACTS**

The preferred alternative for bicycling in the Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive areas, Alternative 2B, allowing the creation of Primitive Recreational Trails, will not have a significant cumulative negative impact on the environment. The trails to be used are former roads deemed capable of withstanding use by bicycles. The periodic use of motor vehicles for specific major maintenance, rehabilitation or construction purposes during off-peak seasons, unless extraordinary conditions, such as a fire, major blow-down, or flood mandate more frequent work or work during peak periods may alleviate any environmental damage that could occur on these trails. The new Primitive Recreational Trails are limited to the Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Areas, which will limit the cumulative impacts of this amendment.

The preferred alternative providing for the use of non-natural materials for bridges in Wild Forest units (Non-natural Materials Alternative 3) could apply to future bridges over as many as 58 designated sections of rivers in Wild Forest units. However, any individual trail or bridge proposed under these alternative guidelines would be subject to a UMP or UMP amendment with a separate SEQRA review by the Department and an APSLMP conformance review by the Agency, in addition to plans specific to the particular bridge. Moreover, the minimum requirement approach will be designed to minimize the impacts of any bridge made of non-natural materials.

### **ADVERSE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS WHICH CANNOT BE AVOIDED**

Adverse impacts upon the resource quality and character of State lands within the Park are avoidable. Strong guidelines for the management of State lands are necessary to protect resource quality and character from overuse and

degradation while still providing public recreational use opportunities. In the Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive areas, people may have a high expectation of the quiet and remoteness expected in a wilderness setting, which will be unavoidably affected by the periodic use of motor vehicles and motorized equipment for limited maintenance activities. Consultation between the Agency and the Department through the work planning process will also minimize adverse environmental impacts.

The amendment allowing the use of non-natural materials for bridge construction following a minimal requirement approach poses an unavoidable adverse impact to the extent that persons are adversely impacted by the presence of non-natural materials in a Wild Forest setting. The existence of non-conforming bridges in Wild Forest and even Wilderness areas, constructed prior to the adoption of the APSLMP, does negate the impact of non-natural materials in new bridges. However, the use of a minimum requirement approach will mitigate those impacts.

## **IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENT OF RESOURCES**

The designation of Primitive Recreational Trails in the Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lakes Primitive Areas may remain allowed under the APSLMP guidelines applicable for these Primitive Areas.

Regarding the use of non-natural materials for a bridge crossing the Cedar River or other crossings in Wild Forest units, it is unlikely that bridges constructed of non-natural materials would be removed once constructed and in place. That would be an irreversible and irretrievable commitment of resources, for all practical purposes.

## **MITIGATION MEASURES**

The entire APSLMP is designed to allow only those uses of State land which will not degrade resource quality or character. The proposed amendments to the APSLMP are designed to further protect State land resources while providing high-quality recreational opportunities. The restrictions on using motor vehicles and motorized equipment on designated Primitive Recreational Trails only by the periodic, but not routine, specific major maintenance, rehabilitation or construction purposes during off-peak seasons, unless extraordinary conditions, such as a fire, major blow-down, or flood mandate more frequent work or work during peak periods in these two Primitive areas.

The minimum requirement approach for the construction of bridges in Wild forest will help to mitigate any adverse environmental impacts. The approach will take into account the aesthetic concerns supporting the use of natural materials, longevity of the structure, impacts associated with construction activities, and other relevant site-specific considerations to ensure that the Wild Forest retains an essentially wild character.

Potential environmental impacts and mitigation measures are further identified and evaluated during the development of UMPs with a separate public SEQR process for each unit of State land. In addition many projects, including snowmobile trails and bridges, require a work plan subject to Agency review. If a particular project involves wetlands, the Agency will also review it under the Freshwater Wetlands Act. These additional levels of review for specific projects will mitigate any potential significant adverse impacts.

## **GROWTH-INDUCING ASPECTS**

### **Impact on the Local and Regional Economy**

Visitation to the Adirondack Park is critical to the local, regional, and State economies. Visitors are attracted by a number of factors, especially outdoor recreation. The economic impacts related to the proposed amendments is dependent upon the total number of user days incurred as a result of the amendments and the spending that occurs from those user days. As visitation and associated spending in a community or region increases, so too does the market potential for visitor-oriented businesses. The Adirondack Partnership's Adirondack Park Recreation Strategy states that providing a diverse array of recreation opportunities is critical to maximizing the number of visitors to a region and attracting their spending.<sup>7</sup> The proposed amendments will help to diversify the user groups able to access to Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Areas and thus potentially attract a larger number of users who could spend money in the local communities.

Mountain biking is a rapidly growing market. According to the Outdoor Foundation, participation in the sport increased by 23.9% from 2007 to 2013 and over 8.5 million people participated in the sport last year.<sup>8</sup> This suggests that

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<sup>7</sup> Adirondack Partnership Recreation Planning Workgroup, 2013. [Adirondack Park Recreation Strategy: Capitalizing on the Economic Potential of our Natural Environment.](#)

<sup>8</sup> Outdoor Foundation, 2014. [Outdoor Participation Report 2014.](#) Washington DC.

additional trails to accommodate cycling have the potential to capture users from a large and expanding sport. Visiting bicyclists to the local communities would bring new spending to the area and management of this new activity to avoid user group conflicts would also benefit the local communities by not deterring other recreation visitors from coming to the area.

A bridge over the Cedar River will connect the communities of Indian Lake, Long Lake, Minerva, Newcomb, and North Hudson and help to create a regional destination. The proposed bridge will be able to accommodate a variety of user groups including hikers, cyclists, horseback riders and wagons, and snowmobiles pursuant to an adopted Unit Management Plan. The bridge could also accommodate a community connector trail between Indian Lake and Minerva which would help integrate these communities into a larger Park-wide snowmobile trail network. Visitors attracted to this area for the new recreation assets would spend money in the local communities helping to generate additional wealth for local residents.

Both of the proposed amendments have the potential to diversify the user groups attracted to the Essex Chain Lakes and Pine Lake Primitive Areas and its neighboring communities and to potentially attract more visitors to the communities than current visitation levels. The spending associated with additional visitors to the tract could reasonably be expected to induce additional market demand for goods and services that could result in new business enterprises.