



Adirondack Park Agency

SHERMAN CRAIG
Chairman

TERRY MARTINO
Executive Director

DRAFT MINUTES
State Land Committee
June 7, 2018
Agency Meeting
KF:KDR:mp

State Land Committee June 7, 2018

The State Land Committee convened at 11:00 am.

State Land Committee Members Present:

Karen Feldman, Committee Chair, Chad Dawson, Arthur Lussi, William Thomas and Robert Stegemann (DEC)

Other Members and Designees Present:

Daniel Wilt, John Ernst, Bradley Austin (DED), and Lynne Mahoney (DOS)

Local Government Review Board

Frederick Monroe, Executive Director

Agency Staff Present:

Terry Martino, Executive Director, Sarah Reynolds, Acting Counsel, Kathy Regan, Walt Linck, and Mary Palmer

Approval of May 2018 Draft Minutes

By motion of Mr. Thomas, seconded by Mr. Lussi, the May minutes were unanimously approved.

Deputy Director Report

Ms. Regan noted the Planning Division report which summarized March, April and May.

Ms. Regan said in March the Board approved guidance documents for Single-Track Bicycle Trails and an updated Best Management Practices for Invasive Species. Both have been sent to Commissioner Seggos and have been approved and are on the State Land page of the Agency's website.

Ms. Regan said staff expect a code rewrite for the Town of Caroga for the July Agency meeting. Additionally, staff anticipate a major update from Indian Lake and minor updates from Chester and Lake George.

Ms. Regan noted there are several items on the agenda. For Black River Wild Forest, Cranberry Lake Boat Launch and Lake George Battlefield UMP amendments staff are asking the Board for adoption of the Resolutions on Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan (APSLMP) conformance. For the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) of Gore Mountain and Gore UMP amendment staff are requesting Board acceptance of the DSEIS and authorization to proceed to public hearings and public comment. For Grass River and Saranac Lake Wild Forest UMPs staff are requesting Board authorization to proceed to public comment on APSLMP conformance.

Ms. Regan noted some last minute changes were made to the Black River UMP amendment and that those changes are in front of the Board members in a red-line document.

Mr. Lussi asked on the status of the DSEIS Regarding the Travel Corridor definition. Ms. Regan said staff are currently evaluating public comment and making modifications to the EIS.

Dr. Dawson asked how many UMPs will be coming before the Board. Ms. Regan said there are seven for July, potentially four in August and at least five going into September and October.

Black River UMP Amendment

Walt Linck (APA) presented the proposed final UMP amendment.

Mr. Monroe asked for clarification of page 17 of the UMP where it states that “the actual net change of snowmobile trail mileage is a loss of 8.1 miles but shows up as a gain because trails were unintentionally omitted from the 2009 inventory. Mr. Linck said that a number of trails were not counted in the 2009 inventory. Mr. Clague said when DEC staff were developing the guidance in 2009 it was recognized that there was not an accurate number of snowmobile mileage. During revisions to this UMP it was discovered that some Forest Preserve roads were mistakenly not accounted for in this baseline mileage figure, and further investigation revealed both the 2009 inventory and 2016 draft UMP also excluded a few existing trails. The baseline mileage has been adjusted in the final UMP to correct these oversights.

Dr. Dawson asked for clarification of the red-line document regarding the Railroad Spur Road. Mr. Linck explained that the existing publicly used gravel access point is being renamed a connector road and trail. It is extremely difficult to determine what section is road and what is trail without identifying the bounds of the highway right-of-way and the Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor.

Dr. Dawson asked if the resolution will include changes that are in the red-line document. Ms. Feldman said the resolution could include mention of the document in one of the “whereas” provisions. Ms. Reynolds said it could be added to the “now, therefore, be it resolved” section.

Ms. Martino noted that these changes will be made to the UMP itself. Ms. Regan said the changes will be incorporated into the UMP, however if the Board requests, changes can also be made to the Resolution. Ms. Feldman said the pages in the UMP will be replaced so there is no need to change the resolution.

Ms. Feldman asked for a motion adopting the Black River UMP amendment Resolution.

By motion of Dr. Dawson, seconded by Mr. Lussi, the adoption of the resolution for APSLMP Conformance was unanimously approved.

Ms. Feldman suggested for clarification that the red-line document changes are included in the UMP, there should be one change made to the resolution. In the “now, therefore” section we should add “last revised June 7, 2018”. Ms. Feldman amended the motion to have it approved that way. All were in favor.

Cranberry Lake Boat Launch UMP Amendment

Josh Clague (DEC) presented the proposed final UMP amendment.

Ms. Feldman commended both APA and DEC staff for coming up with UMPs that address the issue of accessibility.

There were no questions. Ms. Feldman asked for a motion adopting the Cranberry Lake Boat Launch UMP amendment Resolution.

By motion of Mr. Thomas, seconded by Mr. Stegemann, the adoption of the resolution for APSLMP Conformance was unanimously approved.

Lake George Battlefield UMP Amendment

Dave Wick presented the proposed final UMP amendment. He noted that two public comments were received. The only modification made to the plan was a clarification that any trees cut down would have to remain on State land.

Ms. Feldman said on page twenty of the UMP, in the response section to the draft UMP, it states “OPRHP identified options to be explored and developed as appropriate mitigation.” She asked if there are other mitigation efforts being taken than what had been proposed? Mr. Wick answered affirmatively. The primary mitigation effort is the creation of the Historical Visitor Center itself as a way to honor Lake George Battlefield Park.

Ms. Feldman asked for a motion adopting the Lake George Battlefield UMP amendment Resolution.

By motion of Mr. Thomas, seconded by Dr. Dawson, the adoption of the resolution for APSLMP Conformance was unanimously approved.

Dr. Dawson noted the title of the UMP is "Initial Draft Amendment" and asked if that should be changed to "Final." Ms. Reynolds said the resolution is correct but the title page for the amendment would have to be changed to read "Final." This would be considered a ministerial change.

Ms. Feldman asked if all were in favor of that ministerial change. All were in favor.

DSEIS for Reclassification of Gore Mountain and Gore UMP Amendment

Mr. Lussi is recused from both Gore Mountain Reclassification and UMP amendment and was not in the room for the presentations and discussion.

Ms. Regan gave an overview of the reclassification process and procedures.
Mr. Clague gave an overview of the UMP.

Ms. Regan noted that if authorized, the public comment period would start Wednesday, June 13 and run through July 13, 2018.

Dr. Dawson asked for clarification if there were two separate actions or one joined action. Ms. Regan said there is one action today, for the Board to authorize proceeding to public hearing. When staff return there will be two actions, accepting the final EIS and finding the UMP in conformance.

Dr. Dawson asked if these are two separate documents or if they are considered one because they have to be joined for the reclassification action. Ms. Regan said the UMP can stand on its own. The UMP amendment is required for the reclassification of Wild Forest to Intensive Use and is therefore an appendix to the DSEIS. Mr. Clague said from the SEQR standpoint they are considered a single action.

Ms. Feldman thanked Mike Pratt (ORDA) for being able to reduce the parcel size of what was conceptually proposed for reclassification (May 2018 amendment) to what has been brought to the Agency in this action. Mr. Pratt thanked staff for working with ORDA.

Ms. Feldman asked for a motion to authorize proceeding to public hearing.

By motion of Dr. Dawson, seconded by Mr. Stegemann, authorization to proceed to public hearing was unanimously approved.

Grass River UMP Amendment

Mr. Lussi returned to the room for this presentation.

Aaron Graves (DEC) presented the proposed Final UMP.

Mr. Wilt asked if National Grid currently utilizes the 100-foot corridor they own. Mr. Graves said they do not, but New York State will have to either purchase the land or enter into a cooperative use agreement before any proposals for this section could be implemented.

Mr. Stegemann asked if National Grid had any hydro rights that go with the parcel and if the State purchased the land, would those rights be included. Mr. Graves said National Grid does have hydro rights, but those rights have not been exercised. Those rights could be included with a purchase agreement.

Dr. Dawson noted that this plan talks about withstanding use and carrying capacity. He said that the plans for Vanderwhacker and the High Peaks actually carried those concepts through to the management actions. One of the requirements of the APSLMP is to monitor impacts and this plan does not write out how that monitoring will be accomplished. Dr. Dawson suggested that it would be helpful to have a monitoring plan incorporated into the UMP. Mr. Graves said he agreed, stating that DEC would like to monitor campsites and other high use areas, unfortunately, there are limited resources to accomplish this goal. Ms. Feldman agreed with Dr. Dawson.

Mr. Clague reminded the Board that the High Peaks and Vanderwhacker amendments are a pilot to see if this type of monitoring and phased implementation can work. Moving forward, DEC will try to include more specifics in UMPs tailored specifically to each unit. This idea will be also shared with other DEC Regions and staff are open to improving this concept.

Dr. Dawson said he was not suggesting to replicate the same actions with every UMP, but to choose which item is critical and important to each unit, and then to monitor those items. Mr. Clague said he will work with Mr. Graves at modifying the plan while it is out for APSLMP conformance public comment.

Ms. Feldman noted there was nothing specific about information for invasive species in the UMP, and suggested it be added or at least considered in future UMPs.

Ms. Feldman asked if there was any historic significance to the pump house. Mr. Graves said he did not believe there was. The pump house was used to pump water out of the river to the mine back in the 1940s.

Ms. Feldman thanked Mr. Graves for his presentation.

Ms. Feldman asked for a motion to authorize proceeding to public comment on APSLMP Conformance.

By motion of Dr. Dawson, seconded by Mr. Stegemann, authorization to proceed to public comment was unanimously approved.

Ms. Feldman asked what the time frame will be on the public comment period. Ms. Regan said it will run from June 13th through July 13th. Email addresses for each UMP will be put up on the Agency website.

Saranac Lake Wild Forest UMP

Steve Guglielmi (DEC) presented the proposed Final UMP.

Ms. Feldman applauded the efforts of protecting the fragile resources and directing uses to areas that can withstand a higher amount of use. She suggested monitoring areas of high use and adapting management actions as needed.

Mr. Guglielmi said he appreciated the guidance from APA staff and it is important for agencies to work together on long-term carrying capacity strategies.

Dr. Dawson applauded the conversation of capacity to withstand use and the limits of acceptable change. It would be good to have a Park-wide plan for the implementation of management practices. Dr. Dawson suggested having minor studies for carrying capacity and emphasized the need for more enforcement. Mr. Stegemann said staff from both agencies are looking at overuse and carrying capacity issues, and stated progress can continue in a timely manner and should not slow down UMP development.

Mr. Wilt asked if the 15.33 miles of snowmobile trails that are being closed would go back into the total mileage that is available for trails. Mr. Guglielmi answered affirmatively.

Mr. Ernst, in reference to the public comments for Weller Pond, asked if there is a precedent or consideration to restrict that pond to electric motors. Mr. Guglielmi said there are sections within the Saranac Lake Wild Forest that are restricted to electric motors. Staff felt that reducing the speed limit on Weller Pond addresses the concerns on noise, safety and natural resource protection and made the decision to not restrict the pond to electric motors. The campsites at Weller Pond are part of the system of campsites where the Department uses a reservation system. Electric motor access to the sites on Weller Pond is not feasible due to the required travel distance on Middle Saranac. Restricting access to electric would require a motor boat to use a gas motor to travel across Middle Saranac and an electric motor for Weller Pond.

Ms. Feldman noted that the plan calls for closing sixty campsites and opening fifty-nine across the whole unit, noting that some areas are closing quite a few to meet the APSLMP separation guideline. Ms. Feldman wondered how people would adjust to the relocation of campsites to other areas and questioned if they would use the new sites. Mr. Guglielmi said staff believe there is a balance of sites being opened and closed and that the public will adjust to these new locations.

Mr. Stegemann asked for comment on the ponds that are getting more sites in the vicinity of Follensby Clear. Mr. Guglielmi said there were proposals for putting campsites on more remote ponds. The public draft included those remote sites, but staff believe that the challenges of getting to those sites would limit their use by the public.

Mr. Lussi said staff indicated the increased popularity from the Saranac 6ers program and asked if there were any other mountains that could be added into that program to remove some of the pressure on Ampersand Mountain. Mr. Lussi stated the 6er program gets people out enjoying nature, but there are concerns of parking dangers. He suggested having a parking limit and once reached, having people go to a different area.

Ms. Feldman thanked Mr. Guglielmi for his presentation.

Ms. Feldman asked for a motion to authorize proceeding to public comment on APSLMP Conformance.

By motion of Mr. Stegemann, seconded by Mr. Lussi, authorization to proceed to public comment was unanimously approved.

Ms. Feldman clarified that the Gore Reclassification and UMP Amendment the Board voted on was for acceptance of the DSEIS, authorization to proceed to public hearing and also conformance with the APSLMP. Ms. Reynolds said the public hearing is for DSEIS purposes and the public comment is for SLMP conformance.

Old Business

None

New Business

None

Ms. Feldman, Committee Chair, adjourned the meeting at 3:00 pm.