



MEMORANDUM

TO: Richard Weber, Deputy Director, Planning

FROM: Matthew McNamara, Environmental Program Specialist 1

DATE: April 7, 2021

RE: Staff Review of the Hinckley Day-Use Area Proposed Final UMP

For Agency Board consideration, please find included in the Agency mailing package the Hinckley Day-Use Area (HDUA) Proposed Final Unit Management Plan (UMP), dated February 2021. Agency staff recommend a determination by the Agency Board that the UMP conforms with the guidelines and criteria of the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan (APSLMP).

For almost 50 years, HDUA has provided day-use recreation opportunities on the shore of Hinckley Reservoir. The 495 acres of Forest Preserve land that make up the Intensive Use Area along the Southeastern shore of the reservoir includes approximately 3 miles of undeveloped shoreline and 13 acres of land developed for public recreational day use.

The HDUA is in the Town of Russia, Herkimer County and is adjacent to the small Hamlet of Grant. Remus Brook flows through the Northern portion of the unit and Black Creek flows along the Southern border of the unit. Wetlands can be found along Remus Brook and sporadically within the backwaters along the reservoir shoreline. Water levels within the reservoir may fluctuate dramatically throughout the season. When sand bars are exposed offshore of the Day Use area, boaters will regularly visit and enjoy the transient sandy beaches and clear shallow waters.

Proposed management actions in the UMP include construction of 2.8 miles of new roads, 150 campsites, four comfort stations, a trailer dump station, a new pavilion at Prices Point, a hand carry boat launch and multiple buildings necessary for administration and management of a campground. Additionally, the existing ticket booth, bathhouse and beach comfort stations, supervisors' cabin, and garage will be reconstructed or replaced. The existing power and water systems will be improved and extended to serve the new campground facility. New multiple use pedestrian trails are proposed throughout the campground.

On February 12, 2021, the Agency Board authorized staff to proceed to public comment for the HDUA Proposed Final UMP, dated February 2021. The public comment period ran from February 12th through March 19, 2021. Eleven public comments (i.e. emails and letters) were received during this period.

Comments received during the APA public comment period were similar to the concerns raised during the DEC comment period held between September 1, and October 2, 2020. Agency staff found that the Department response to comments provided in Exhibit 19 adequately clarified their management proposals and that no further changes to the plan were necessary following the APA public comment period regarding APSLMP conformance.

Agency staff worked closely with Department staff as they considered the development of a trailered boat launch in the UMP. Public comments received by the Department and the Agency made clear that while there is strong support for a trailered boat launch, there is also significant concern for how an increase in motorboat traffic on the reservoir will affect the health and character of the waterbody. Agency and Department staff agree that an assessment of the Reservoir's physical, biological and social carrying capacity is required before the development of a trailered boat launch can be considered as any future amendment to the UMP. A public trailered boat launch managed by the New York Power Authority (NYPA) is currently available at a location outside of the Adirondack Park and immediately North of the Hinckley dam on Route 365.

Agency staff have carefully reviewed the plan for tree cutting activity and worked with Department staff to assure that tree cutting is minimized wherever possible. Tree cutting minimization manifests in the Agency review through a combination of:

- Maintaining the total number of sites within the limits set by the APSLMP,
- planning for campground development within the footprint of existing clearings wherever possible such as former roadbeds, previously developed campsites, comfort stations and existing trails;
- Upholding conservative size limitations (1200 sq. ft.) and campsite design criteria identified in the plan.
- Prioritization of campsite character and tree cover over development of all 150 proposed campsites.
- Including carefully scaled mapping in the plan that represents the size of cleared areas in relation to the entirety of the unit and sensitive resources such as wetlands and shorelines.

Agency staff have reviewed the HDUA Proposed Final UMP, dated February 2021. Staff recommend adoption by the Agency Board of the attached resolution determining that the HDUA Proposed Final UMP, dated February 2021 conforms to the general guidelines and criteria of the APSLMP.