



Adirondack Park Agency

KATHY HOCHUL
Governor

BARBARA RICE
Executive Director

TO: Ken Lynch, State Land Committee Chair
FROM: Megan Phillips, Deputy Director, Planning
DATE: May 4, 2022

RE: Motion to authorize public comment period regarding the topic of no material increase of road mileage on Wild Forest (Wild Forest basic guideline No. 4)

Staff are requesting that the board authorize a 60-day public comment period to gather public input to help inform the Board's interpretation of the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan (SLMP) Wild Forest basic guideline No. 4, specifically:

- 1) What was the existing road mileage on lands classified as Wild Forest in 1972? What is the existing road mileage on lands classified as Wild Forest today?
- 2) What constitutes a material increase in road mileage?
- 3) Does CP-3 mileage meet the definition of a road in the SLMP and therefore require inclusion in the total Wild Forest road mileage calculation?

The below summarizes the issues and possible alternatives that will be presented at the Agency meeting for the public and your consideration.

Wild Forest basic guideline No. 4 states,

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

Road Mileage:

Staff from the Agency and Department have compiled the data and are in agreement that the total road mileage on Wild Forest in 1972 was 211.6 miles. Staff also agree that present-day mileage, excluding CP-3 mileage, is 206.6 miles. Present day CP-3 mileage totals 21.6 miles, and there are additional 16.5 miles approved in UMPs that have not yet been opened. The present-day mileage including CP-3 is 244.7 miles.

Staff from both agencies are presenting three alternatives for your consideration to assist you in determining what constitutes "no material increase" and three alternatives for the interpretation of the definition of a road, per the SLMP. Please refer to the presentation, mileage tables, and maps posted on the Agency website for more details.

No Material Increase (NMI) Alternatives:

NMI Alternative 1: 15% increase in road mileage

This alternative is consistent with the 2008 snowmobile trail NMI interpretation. Snowmobile trail and road mileage are both limited by Wild Forest basic guideline No. 4, such that the same threshold for what constitutes a material increase could be established for each.

NMI Alternative 2: Increase more than 15%

This alternative accounts for the fact that there is no replacement of road mileage closed due to reclassification of Wild Forest to Wilderness, Primitive, or Canoe areas (unlike snowmobile trails, see SLMP page 38). The Board would have to set the percentage or mileage increase if this alternative is pursued.

NMI Alternative 3: Increase less than 15%

This alternative recognizes that the SLMP treats roads and snowmobile trails differently in the SLMP, in the sense that snowmobile mileage that is lost due to reclassification may be replaced, but there is no such provision for roads. The Board would have to set the percentage or mileage increase if this alternative is pursued.

Definition of “Road” Alternatives:

Road Alternative 1 - CP-3 included:

This alternative considers CP-3 mileage to meet the definition of a road under the SLMP. CP-3 permit holders are members of the general public, not administrative personnel, and/or DEC retains discretion over which routes to open for CP-3 use. Refer to definitions 1 and 36 on pages 17 and 20 of the SLMP. This scenario is consistent with the overall goal of the SLMP to limit roads on Wild Forest. It also currently allows for more CP-3 mileage than agreed to in the Galusha settlement, assuming a 15% no material increase limit. Under this scenario, the future acquisition of state lands classified as Wild Forest will create pressure to close either CP-3 routes or other existing roads.

Road Alternative 2 - CP-3 not included:

This alternative does not consider CP-3 mileage to meet the definition of a road under the SLMP. CP-3 permit holders are not synonymous with the general public for purposes of the road definition. DEC’s discretion to open roads is limited by the Galusha settlement. This scenario encourages accessible recreation. The future acquisition of state land will not create pressure to close CP-3 routes because they are not factored into the NMI calculation, however there will theoretically be no limit on CP-3 mileage in Wild Forest.

Road Alternative 3 - Non-Galusha CP-3 included:

This alternative considers CP-3 mileage to meet the definition of a road under the SLMP. CP-3 holders are members of the general public, not administrative personnel. However, DEC may lack discretion to close roads agreed to in the Galusha settlement. This alternative balances the spirit of Wild Forest basic guideline #4 with encouraging accessible recreation. Under this scenario, the State maintains at least the current CP-3 routes or equivalent recreational activity agreed to under Galusha.