

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

Fish Management
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John P. Cahill
Acting Commissioner

January 2, 1997

To Whom It May Concern:

Enclosed is a copy of the Findings Statement issued pursuant to the Final Environmental Impact Statement/Unit Management Plan for the Department's proposal to construct a boat launch facility on Great Sacandaga Reservoir near Broadalbin. Individuals and organizations who were sent either the Draft or Final Environmental Impact Statement/Unit Management Plan or the Responsiveness Summary, filled out cards at the associated public meetings or corresponded with the Department regarding the proposal have been sent the Findings Statement.

The statement is positive and concludes the requirements of the State Environmental Review Act (SEQR) for the environmental impact statement. The unit management plan has been separated from environmental impact statement and requires separate action. The Department intends to pursue all remaining approvals necessary to enable development of the boat launch proposal.

Identifying number P5-172200-0002

SEQR Statement of Findings and Decision

Great Sacandaga Lake at Broadalbin Boat Launching Site Development

The Department of Environmental Conservation pursuant to 6 NYCRR Part 617, the implementing regulations of Article 8 (State Environmental Quality Review Act - SEQR) of the Environmental Conservation Law, based on the executed Final Programmatic Impact Statement on Public Use Development Activities approved January 26, 1979 and the Draft and subsequent Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Unit Management Plan (UMP) completed October 1, 1991 which fully analyzed the proposal:

Makes a positive finding and decision on the proposed action to develop a boat launching site on Great Sacandaga Lake at Broadalbin in order to provide enhanced access to the lake's major southern basin for fishing and boating.

This concludes a decision process which was initiated on September 23, 1989, with the publication by the Department of the Draft EIS and UMP. Subsequently, a public hearing was held on October 13, 1989 at which additional concerns beyond those initially identified and addressed in the Draft, were identified. A Final EIS and UMP, which fully addressed the additional concerns identified was completed by the Department on October 1, 1991. The Adirondack Park Agency held hearings on the Final EIS/UMP April 7 and 8, 1992. As a result of these hearings several additional concerns were raised by individuals and by APA staff. This prompted still further studies by the Department, which ultimately resulted in the issuance of a Responsiveness Summary on August 14, 1996 which fully addressed these final concerns. Following a 30 day comment period, during which three (3) letters were received which raised further opposition to the project (but lacking new and substantive issues), the Department concluded that:

- 1) Public benefits resulting from the project outweigh environmental and social impacts; the action approved is one that minimizes and avoids identified adverse environmental effects to the maximum extent practicable.
- 2) The site should be developed as a public boat launching facility as designed and presented in DEC design plan #94-2796 dated Feb. 1996.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTION

It is proposed that the Department develop on 6.5 acres of land on Great Sacandaga Lake

in the Town of Broadalbin provided by the Hudson River - Black River Regulating District for the purpose, a public boat launching facility encompassing a 2-lane concrete boat launching ramp and parking for 70 cars and trailers and an adjunct 65 single-car parking area to service the Town of Broadalbin bathing beach, and associated entry way, connecting roadways and other amenities.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Great Sacandaga Lake is a 26,656 acre impoundment on the Sacandaga River in the Counties of Fulton and Saratoga. It is one of only six waterbodies in New York State larger than 25,000 acres. It supports a warmwater/coolwater gamefish association dominated by smallmouth bass, walleye and northern pike. The one-time world record northern pike (46 lbs. 2 ozs.) was taken from the reservoir in 1940.

The entire 125 mile shorefront along Great Sacadaga Lake is state owned. The shoreline is primarily forested and dotted with private camps and boat docks. The site to be developed, consisting of 6.5 acres of land, is relatively flat and approximately one-third cleared field and two-thirds forested. The site is presently developed to the extent that it has served as the Town of Broadalbin's bathing beach for many years. On the property presently are a crude parking area, fencing, entry gate, interior roadways, seasonally installed sanitary facility and other minor man-made improvements. There are three areas of wetland included within the property, none of which will be encroached upon by the proposed project.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Environmental impacts common to all fishing and boat access site development projects are described on pages 40-42 of the Programmatic Impact Statement. Site-specific environmental impacts were specifically identified and addressed in the Draft EIS/UMP (PP 25-29, 30-32) and Final EIS/UMP (PP 9-15, 28-32, 35-38) for the project, and include the following:

- Removal of 1.7 acres of trees and shrubs.
- Clearing of approximately 150 linear feet of shoreline vegetation.
- Dredging of approximately 2200 cubic yards of lake bottom material from below the mean high water level.
- Both temporary and permanent displacement of fish, wildlife and other organisms.

SOCIAL IMPACTS

Potential adverse public impacts common to all fishing and boat access site development projects are described on pages 39-40 of the Programmatic Impact Statement. Site-specific social impacts were specifically identified and addressed in the Draft EIS/UMP (PP 13-21), and Final EIS/UMP (PP 15-21, 22-27, 33-35, 38) and RESPONSIVENESS SUMMARY (PP 3-10, 13-17) for the project, and include the following:

- an increase, by 70 car and trailer units of parking (25%), in the total installed public boat access capacity.
- a potential increase, by 1.15% in the total number of boats present.
- a potential increase, by a maximum of 6.4%, in instantaneous boat density (i.e. boats in simultaneous use on the reservoir's surface at any one time).
- a slight increase in traffic on Lakeview Road.
- substantially increased safety and convenience for boaters desiring to utilize the main southern basin of Great Sacandaga Lake.

MITIGATION

Mitigation of environmental and social impacts resulting from project development are identified and addressed in the Draft EIS/UMP (PP 29-30), and include the following:

- all site work below mean high water will be scheduled to coincide with normal drawdown periods to the extent practicable, so that dredging, ramp installation and shoreline work can be accomplished "in the dry".
- silt screens will be employed during all phases of work with the potential to create runoff into the reservoir and wetland areas.
- all disturbed areas, not to be a part of the completed project, will be graded, prepared and seeded to restore vegetative cover.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternatives to the project as proposed, were identified and addressed in the Draft EIS/UMP (PP 32-35) and Final EIS/UMP (PP 38-46), and RESPONSIVENESS SUMMARY (PP 10-13) for the project. Alternatives addressed included:

- 1) No action. Rejected on the basis of inconsistency with Department mandate,

long-held expression of desire for such a facility by the Town of Broadalbin, and the expressions of desire for such a facility by the boating public.

- 2) Expansion of existing Department boat launches at Northville, Northhampton Beach Campsite and Town of Day (Saratoga County). Rejected on the basis of physical impossibility, excessive costs and/or environmental damage, and unsuitability in serving boater access needs to the main basin of Great Sacandaga Lake.
- 3) Reduced scope of development of the existing site. Rejected as insufficient to satisfy demand, provide for boater safety and convenience, and to make optimal use of existing property size and configuration.
- 4) Increased scope of development of the existing site. Rejected as requiring excessive tree-cutting, shoreline disturbance and wetland encroachment and associated visual impact.
- 5) Identifying and building a facility on another site. Rejected on the basis of the Department's prior documented efforts at finding a suitable site to provide public boat access to the main southern basin of Great Sacandaga Lake over more than a twenty year period.

Upon evaluation, all alternatives were rejected in a favor of development of the present site as proposed.

CERTIFICATION OF FINDINGS TO APPROVE/FUND/UNDERTAKE

Having considered the Draft and Final EIS and Responsiveness Summary and having considered the preceding written facts and conclusion relied upon to meet the requirements of 6 NYCRR 617.9, (as same existed upon the date of determination of significance), this Statement of Findings certified that:

- 1) The requirements of 6 NYCRR Part 617 have been met;
- 2) Consistent with the social, economic and other essential considerations from among the reasonable alternatives thereto, the action is one which minimizes or avoids adverse environmental effects to the maximum extent practicable; including the effects disclosed in the environmental impact statement, and;
- 3) Consistent with social, economic and other essential considerations, to the maximum extent practicable, adverse environmental effects revealed in the environmental impact statement process will be minimized or avoided

by incorporating as conditions to the decision those mitigative measures which were identified as practicable, and;

- 4) Consistent with the applicable policies of Article 42 of the Executive Law, as implemented by 19 NYCRR 600.5, this action will achieve a balance between the protection of the environment and the need to accommodate social and economic considerations.

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

Name of Agency



Signature of Responsible Official

Frank Dunstan

Name of Responsible Official

Acting Deputy Commissioner

Title of Responsible Official

December 6, 1996

Date

50 Wolf Road, Albany, New York 12233

Address of Agency