



Department of
Environmental
Conservation

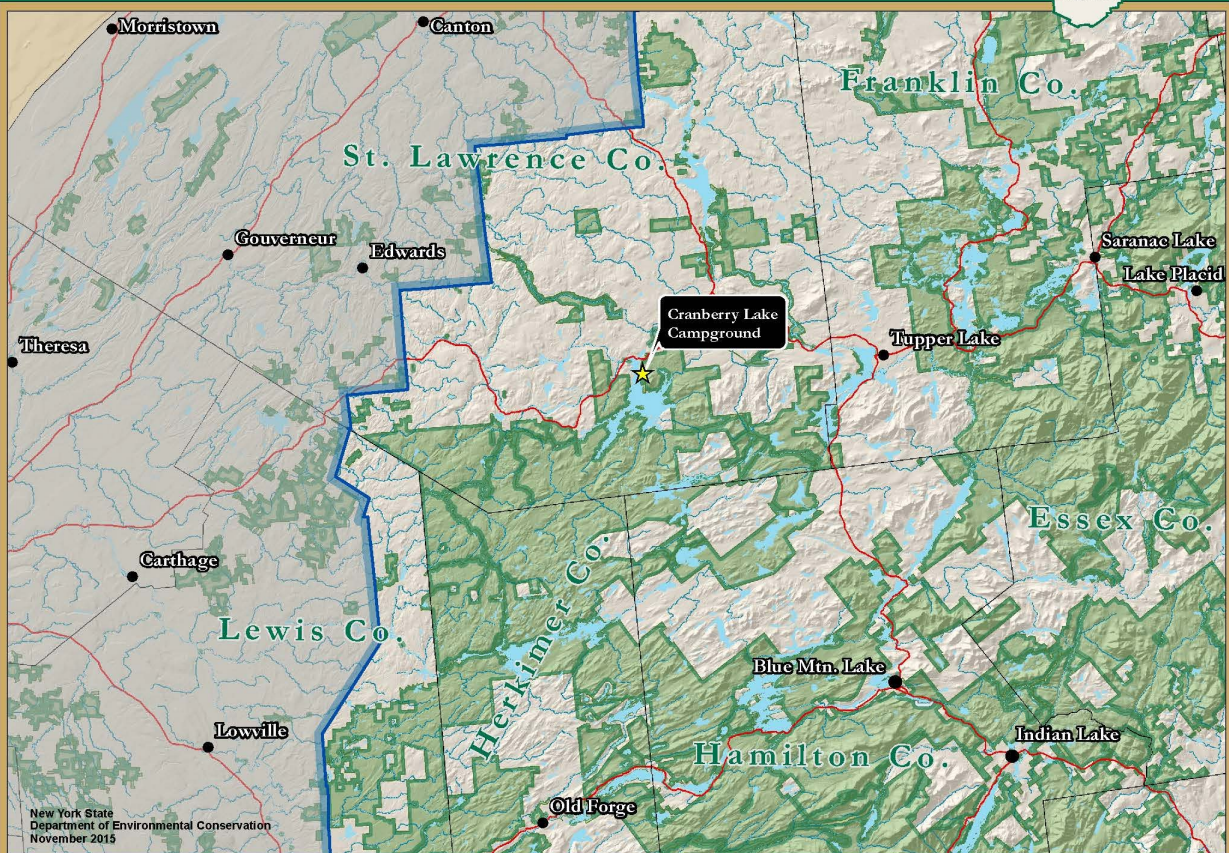
Playground construction Amendment to 2016 Cranberry Lake UMP

Public Draft

September, 2024

Cranberry Lake Campground

Exhibit # 1 - Location Map



New York State
Department of Environmental Conservation
November 2015

Amendment Proposal

- The construction of a playground is not outlined in the initial 2016 Cranberry Lake UMP.
- This amendment seeks to allow the construction of a playground in the parking lot area, replacing the area where the amphitheater was previously.
- Natural materials will be used when possible, including cedar logs, mortise, and tenon joinery to conform to guidelines related to Intensive Use Areas.
- The goal of this project is to construct a playground that benefits camper recreation while maintaining the primitive aesthetic inherent to the Adirondack Park.



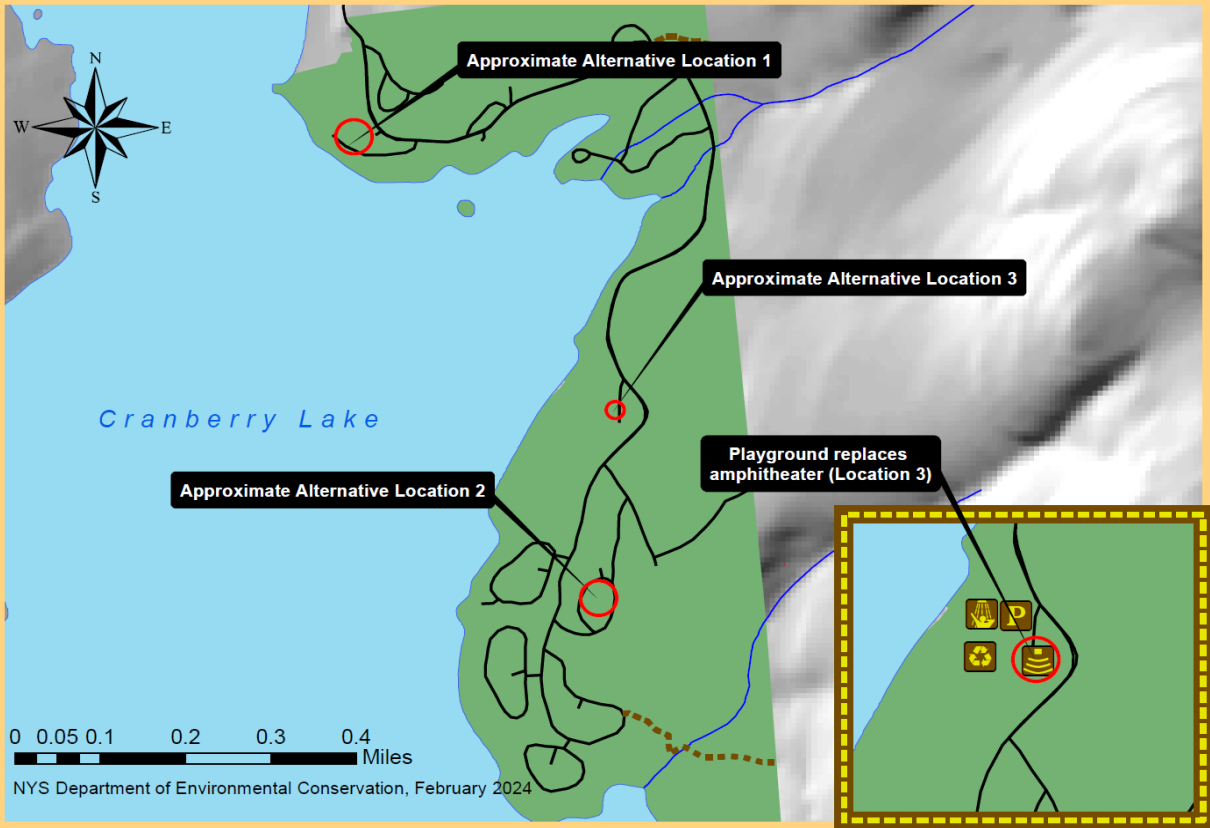
Proposal for construction of a Playground

- This playground will increase recreational activities available and the enjoyment of people already planning to visit the facility.
- The current parking lot needs to be fully resurfaced, so a new playground in its place would require no new topographic alterations of the land.
- The proposed playground location is in an already cleared area so no additional tree cutting outside of general pruning would be necessary.
- The playground will be of a rustic/primitive nature intrinsic to the aesthetics of the Adirondack Park.
- The playground will be constructed in a location that is away from the beach, ensuring that views of Cranberry Lake from the water as well as the beach will not be impacted.





Cranberry Lake Campground Playground Location Map



Playground replaces
amphitheater (Location 3)

Cranberry Lake Campground Playground Location



Location Alternative Selection

The preferred alternative was based on several factors, including:

- Low maintenance and high usage
- Low initial cost
- Low vegetative clearing and topographic alteration
- Wild and undeveloped quality of the Adirondack Park
- Aesthetics related to view of Cranberry Lake

Location 3 is the conclusive choice, as it meets more of these factors than any other alternative.



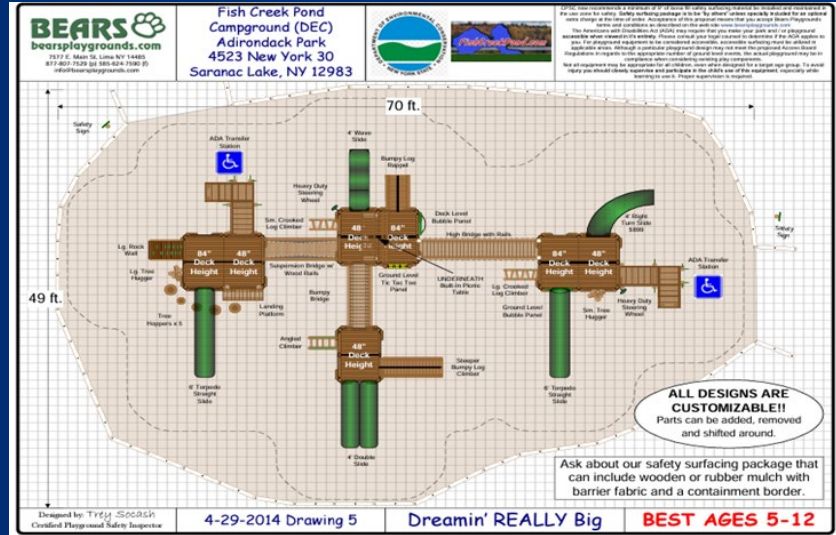
Selection of Materials

A playground made of natural materials such as cedar wood is most appropriate for the area. The playground will be large enough to accommodate facility use / occupancy and made almost entirely of natural materials to blend in with the rustic character of the Adirondack Park. Other DEC Campgrounds (Ausable Point, Meacham Lake, Fish Creek) have playgrounds in similar styles.





Example Playground Schematics





Facility Maintenance and Construction

The construction and maintenance of this playground facility is outlined as such:

- Site leveling, according to proper installation requirements of accessible surfacing. Minimal with existing pavement.
- Minimal initial high pruning considering placement and best management practices.
- Playground structure to be installed by contractor under supervision of the department.
- Playground will be inspected and maintained according to department policy.
- Accessible aspects will be inspected for compliance annually by ADA coordinator.
- Area will be patrolled daily for general maintenance such as garbage removal, damage to structure/surfacing and cleanliness.



Surfacing Alternatives

- Alternative 1: Poured Rubber. High cost, high maintenance, safe but high rate of degradation.
- Alternative 2: Shredded Rubber. Not fully ADA compliant, can cause leaching, gas-off, and runoff into local ecosystem.
- Alternative 3: Wood Chips. Inexpensive, high rates of decomposition as well as poor drainage.
- Alternative 4: Artificial Grass w/ Rubber Infill. Does not blend in with rustic qualities outlined for Intensive Use Areas. Turf could also be breeding ground for MRSA if not constantly tended.
- Alternative 5: No Surfacing. Dangerous, as well as breeding ground for ticks. Small rocks and pebbles can cause injury.
- Alternative 6: Rubber Mats / Tiles. Most expensive, but provides biggest benefit in terms of long-term maintenance, accessibility, and threat of leaching / gas-off.



Surface Alternative Selection

The preferred alternative was based on several factors, including:

- Effectiveness of achieving stated project goals
- Project site held to highest possible ADA standards
- Future disturbance of surrounding site is unlikely
- Safety from falls for playground users
- Cost / benefit analysis in terms of initial cost and maintenance
- Minimization of environmental impacts and blending with the surrounding environment

Rubber mats / tiles is the conclusive choice, as it meets more of these factors than any other alternative.



Summarized Comment Period

- The comment period ran from May 16th – June 17th 2023.
- We received three comments in total, two of which referenced issues with the construction of plastics in the campground and one that referenced the general constitutionality of the playground itself.
- These comments are grouped by theme and summarized below:



Summarized Comment One

- Two comments were received regarding rubber mats as a surface due to plastics exposure, including a great deal of scientific literature outlining the impacts of plastics.
- Due to the CLCPA and ADA, all new recreational structures must be able to withstand extreme weather conditions along with heavy use, as well as be accessible for those with impaired mobility.
- The playground itself will still be constructed of natural materials, namely cedar logs, mortise, and tenon joinery. The playground itself will have extremely minimal amounts of plastics, and the majority of time spent will be on the playground itself rather than the mats.



Engineered Wood Fiber

- EWF was tested in relation to an alternative for rubber matting.
- EWF is coated in polyurethane, requires a great deal of earthwork to install, and still sits on top of a plastic geotextile mat. It also has to be recoated with polyurethane every few years.
- A whole new drainage system would need to be installed with a large deal of earthwork to make this work – and it does not mitigate the problems with plastics.
- With ADA restrictions rubber mats are still the best option.



Comment One Conclusion

- Plastics exposure is something DEC takes seriously, however, the minimal exposure to the mats together with the almost wholly naturally constructed playground itself is not cause for concern and does not outweigh the benefit to campsite visitors and communities local to the campground.



Summarized Comment Two

- A comment was received regarding the constitutionality and master plan conformance of any campground infrastructure expansion in the Adirondack Park. The commenter expressed concern over the addition of a playground and instead encourages children to go for nature walks, fish, swim, canoe, and run around in the woods.
- The Department response is that a playground conforms aesthetically to guidelines related to Intensive Use Areas through construction materials. The playground will complement the environment and contribute to the preexisting rustic feel of the campground and surrounding natural area.



Comment Two cont.

Specifically, section III (2B) part e. of the General Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) allows for “rustic playground equipment [...] on a campground case basis. This policy fits under ongoing objectives, where practical to carry out a program which meets user needs and desires and encourages new park entries and visitor returns”.

Section IV (8) of the GEIS references objectives pertaining to general operations, “to carry out a program which meets user desires; encourages park entries and returns by development of nature trails, playgrounds, picnic pavilions [...]”.

Section V (8) of the GEIS references that other campground locations will be inventoried and scheduled for installation of playground equipment as may be appropriate [...] generally consist[ing] of 3-4 pieces.

Section V (C) of the GEIS also references that impacts on wetlands will be avoided by engineering design precautions to not alter or infiltrate wetlands – site specific UMPs will provide analysis on this. This section explicitly references playground as a structure involved in this process.



Comment Two Conclusion

- Supported by the GEIS, playgrounds are conforming structures provided that the impact to wetlands are not large and the rustic quality of the playground is preserved. It is also important to note that Cranberry Lake is one of only three campgrounds in all of DEC's Region 6 and provides and invaluable opportunity for the public to experience camping in the Forest Preserve.

