

2017 Planning Division Annual Report

State Lands

State land staff work with DEC staff to prepare and review individual unit management plans (UMPs) consistent with the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan (APSLMP); provide guidance and interpretation regarding the APSLMP to DEC staff and the Agency's Board; consult with DEC to develop long-range planning for State lands; review proposed DEC State land projects to ensure their conformance with the APSLMP; and develop staff proposals for the classification and reclassification of State lands in the Park, also in consultation with DEC.

Unit Management Plans

Early in 2017, the Agency determined that the Lake Champlain Islands Complex UMP (which features a handful of small islands in Lake Champlain, but also 957-acre Valcour Island) is compliant with the management guidelines and criteria of the APSLMP. Later, the Agency also determined that new UMPs for the Buck Pond, Caroga Lake and three Piseco Lake Public Campgrounds are compliant with the APSLMP.

In a long-awaited first for the Adirondack Park, the NYS Department of Transportation (DOT) finished preparing a draft Generic Travel Corridor Unit Management Plan for public review that was presented before the Agency for information purposes. A great deal of consultation with State Land, Legal and Regulatory Programs staff is reflected in this document. Presuming Agency review and approval in the coming year, DOT's adoption of the generic Plan will allow for a more thorough, but also more expedited planning process for development of individual State highway corridor UMPs across the Park in the future.

Amendments to existing UMPs reviewed by State land staff and determined by the Agency Board to also be consistent with the APSLMP included amendments to the UMP for the Siamese Ponds Wilderness, and to UMPs for the Blue Mountain, Jessup River and Moose River Plains Wild Forest Areas, all in the eastern part of the Park.

In continuing work of this type, State land staff consulted extensively with DEC staff in the Department's development of other new UMPs and amendments to UMPs. These include plans for the Cranberry Lake Boat Launch and Lake George Beach and Battlefield Park Intensive Use Areas; Gore Mountain Ski Area, Whiteface Mountain Ski Area and Mount Van Hoevenberg Recreation Area Intensive Use Areas; Chazy Highlands, Debar Mountain, Hammond Pond, Independence River, and Saranac Lakes Wild Forest Areas; and the Sentinel Range Wilderness. State land staff participated in public information meetings conducted by DEC concerning more than half of these area plans.

Revisions to the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan

Following the Agency's 2016 approval of an amendment to the APSLMP that allows, under specified conditions, the use of non-natural materials in the construction of bridges in Wild Forest, staff worked with DEC staff to develop a "Minimum Requirements Analysis" approach to planning bridge construction projects in Wild Forest areas. This document was presented to the Agency and approved as a new Appendix G to the State Land MOU between the Agency and the Department.

Two other draft, interagency APSLMP guidance documents were advanced with an objective to have them, following Board review for APSLMP compliance, become appendices to the State Land MOU between the Agency and the Department, too. These are the "Primitive Tent Site Guidance," and the "Siting, Construction and Maintenance of Singletrack Bike Trails."

Staff continued work to finalize the FEIS and other details for the State Land classification package previously put out for public review. The package includes classification, reclassification and technical map corrections and involves lands in all twelve counties of the Park. Work included preparation of Agency responses to the more than 11,000 public comments received by the close of the comment period on December 30, 2016. The public involvement and commentary has been unprecedented.

Regulatory Review

State land staff consulted with Regulatory Program and RASS staff on various private-land projects that could affect State lands – some involving wetlands – as well as on Recreational Management Plans (RMPs) being developed for conservation easements held by New York State on certain large tracts of land. A number of wetlands permits were issued to DEC and two RMPs were reviewed by State land staff – one for the Hyslop Tract in Essex County and another for the Cedarlands Conservation Easement in Hamilton County. The Cedarlands RMP was completed and adopted.

State Land Planning

Subsequent to approval of the Remsen – Lake Placid Travel Corridor UMP amendment in 2016, a stakeholders' group was organized through DEC to develop a plan for the design, construction and use of the travel corridor between Tupper Lake and Lake Placid. State land staff participated in meetings.

Staff completed review of 38 projects across the State lands of the Park. These consultations are to determine APSLMP compliance and whether or not a wetland permit is needed. Projects ranged from new foot trail construction and re-routing of existing trails, to snowmobile trail bridge replacement and road maintenance activities such as improving drainage.

Historic Resource Reviews

Staff completed required historic resource reviews for various projects throughout the Adirondack region. These were undertaken in ten different Towns.

2017 State Land Tasks Summary:

Task	Year to Date
APSLMP Consultations	85
APSLMP Revision	10
Park Policy and Planning	56
Administration	42
Historic Preservation Act Review	11

Park Policy and Planning

Map Amendments

The Agency approved two amendments to the Adirondack Park Land Use and Development Plan Map. The Agency approved a map amendment at the request of the Town of Crown Point that reclassified approximately 200 acres near the Hamlet of Crown Point from Low Intensity Use to Moderate Intensity Use. This map amendment reclassified approximately 6 acres from Low Intensity Use to Hamlet. The Agency also approved a map amendment request of the Town of Essex. This amendment, which was requested to bring the Town's zoning maps into alignment with the Agency's Land Use and Development Plan map, consisted of fifteen different changes. These areas ranged in size from 2.3 acres to 2,600 acres, totaling approximately 5,518 acres.

Geographic Information Analysis

APLUDP/SLMP data improvement

The Agency made significant mapping improvements to the Adirondack Park Land Use and Development Plan and State Land Master Plan map as required in the APA Act. Large scale parcels, water, and roads information were used to improve land classification boundaries.

Lookup System Improvements

The Agency's map information system, the "Lookup System," received major improvements with new analytic tools reporting the ecology, regulatory jurisdiction, and adjacent landowners of Park parcels. For the first time, the Lookup System and ATRADS, the Agency's business transaction tracking system, were connected in real time allowing staff to retrieve authoritative, complete, and current business information through the map interface. Staff use these custom, home-grown systems daily in their work on regulatory projects, jurisdiction inquiry review, enforcement cases, wetland determinations, local land use variances, and State land projects.

State Land Classification Package

Staff produced mapping products for review of the 2016-2017 State Land Classification and Reclassification Package covering 102 parcels around the park.

Major Data Updates:

The Agency depends on high quality GIS data produced internally and received from external sources. Major GIS data updates in 2017 include the following: parcels, Natural Heritage sites, Lidar elevation, photo points, telecommunication towers, regulatory transactions, roads, utility corridors, wetlands, and zoning.

Website Development:

2017 GIS/Web Tasks Summary:

Task	Year to Date
GIS Agency Program Administration	69
GIS Map Production	94
LUA Boundary/Blue Line Inquiry	101
Map Amendments Review	14
State Land Classification/Reclassification Review	4
Web Administration/Content Management	23
Administrative Tasks	11

Local Government Services Program

The Local Government Services Program administers Sections 807 and 808 of the Adirondack Park Agency Act and its implementing regulations. Two program staff provide oversight of the eighteen Agency-approved Local Land Use Programs and review approximately 100 variance referrals and 30-50 zoning amendments annually from the participating program municipalities. Additionally, staff respond to numerous informational requests from local officials within the Park. The workload is driven by strict statutory deadlines for responses to variance referrals and the need to provide timely responses to inquiries from elected and appointed officials.

A summary of Local Government Services accomplishments and reportable items in 2017 is provided in the table below. The information is compiled from LGS Committee monthly reports. The data highlights the number of Adirondack communities and officials that staff consulted with and provided assistance to during the course of 2017. The table also includes the number of intra-Agency consultations with Agency staff and coordination and planning initiatives with other state agencies and regional and state organizations.

Local Government Services Summary of Program Accomplishments and Reportable Items	2017 Totals
Land use regulations consulted/reviewed	37 ⁱ
ALLUP amendments approved	3
ALLUP variances reviewed/reversed	85/1
Comprehensive Plans reviewed	2
Meetings with town officials	16
Responded to land use planning inquiries	109
Training & Workshops provided	7
Intra-Agency local planning assistance	18
Presentations to the Agency Board	4
<i>“ALLUP” denotes “APA-approved local land use program”</i>	

The reportable items in the table above include the following activities in each category:

- In-Park Town and Village Interactions - Of 101 Adirondack Park towns and villages, staff met with or had interactions with 45 of those communities. Interactions include town meetings, training and Local Government Day. The dissolution of the Village of Port Henry in 2017 marked the 5th dissolution of a village since the Agency came into existence in 1973.
- Land Use Regulations Consulted/Reviewed - Staff are regularly asked to review and comment on local land use laws. Most of the local laws are from municipalities with ALLUPs where the Agency has a statutory requirement to review. Non-ALLUP communities also request review of their local laws to determine compliance with or to avoid conflicts with APA regulations. Staff try to comply with those requests on a case-by-case basis as time permits. In 2017 staff reviewed land use laws from 11 communities in the Park.
- ALLUP Amendments - In 2017 the Agency also amended the Delegation Resolution to allow for approval of certain ALLUP amendments under the authority of the Executive Director. This change allowed for certain amendments to local land use controls to be approved in-house at the Agency without Agency Board approval. The Agency approved one amendment via the Del Res and two by action of the Agency Board in 2017.

The Town of Colton, which received original approval in 1982, received Agency Board approval for a rewrite of their zoning and subdivision code in March of 2017. This was a complete repeal and replacement of the Colton code. The Town of Newcomb, which received original approval in 1993, received Agency Board approval to allow for sawmills and tourist accommodations in certain districts. Newcomb also adopted amendments to their code regarding alternate board members which did not require approval by the Agency. The Town of Lake George, which received original approval in 1978, received Agency approval pursuant to the Del Res for an amendment regarding fracking regulations. In addition, Lake George adopted regulations regarding residential garbage receptacles which did not require approval by the Agency. The Town of Johnsbury instituted a moratorium on solar which did not require approval by the Agency. Agency staff also worked and continue to work with several other communities on ALLUP amendments which have not yet received Board approval.

- ALLUP Variances - Towns with an ALLUP are required to refer all locally approved variances (outside of Hamlet land use areas) to the Agency. The Agency has 30-days for review in which time it may reverse the local determination if it was not based upon the appropriate statutory basis. In 2017 staff reviewed 85 locally granted variances from ALLUPs with one of the local grants reversed by the Agency. Planning Division staff have also worked on adding historic variance data to the Agency's Look-up System. Over 700 historic records have been mapped thus far with an additional 300-400 requiring additional research prior to inclusion into the Look-up System.
- Comprehensive Plans Reviewed - Comprehensive Plans serve as the primary instrument for protecting the public interest and attaining local development objectives, as well as articulating the town's vision of present and future goals for growth. While the Agency has responsibility to review Comprehensive Plans from ALLUPs, staff also receive requests to review and comment on Comprehensive Plans from other towns in the Park. The review of these plans further supports the Agency's regional land use planning role. In 2017 staff reviewed two Comprehensive Plans.
- Meetings with Town Officials - Staff regularly meet with elected and appointed officials to discuss Agency and local issues. These meetings occur with individual town representatives or with town boards in public meeting sessions. In 2017 staff conducted 16 meetings with town officials.
- Responding to Land Use Planning Inquiries - Local Government Services staff routinely meet with local officials for both formal advisories and informal guidance. In 2017 staff responded to 109 inquiries from local officials.
- Training & Workshops Provided - Working cooperatively with other state agencies, Agency staff, and local officials, the local planning staff provides training for municipal officials. The largest outreach program is the Adirondack Park Local

Government Day Conference. More than 320 people representing 41 Adirondack towns and villages, and 68 other organizations attended the 2017 event. Staff also presented at the Southern Adirondack Planning & Zoning Conference held in Lake George

In 2017 staff sent out a survey to the local officials in all 18 ALLUPs to gauge their training needs. Eighty-two responses were received and Agency staff look forward to working with these officials in 2018 on delivering training programs targeting their needs.



- Intra-Agency Local Planning Assistance - Local Government Services staff regularly provide assistance to Agency staff working on projects in towns with an ALLUP and other towns where local laws or processes require clarification. In 2017 local planning staff provided assistance to other Agency staff on 18 issues involving local zoning matters.
- Agency Board Presentations - The local government services staff presented four items to the Agency Board. Staff provided a summary of the Local Government Day

Conference; Town of Newcomb ALLUP amendment for Agency approval; Town of Colton zoning code rewrite for Agency approval; and an amendment to the Agency's Delegation Resolution.

The attached map provides a graphic display of the towns and villages LGS staff were involved with in the past year. This map includes such activities as Local Government Day, town meetings, review of local controls, and the Agency's Hamlet Economic Planning Assistance (HEPA) program.

ⁱ Includes some amendments that required multiple reviews.