Department of Environmental Conservation

Division of Lands and Forests

Blue Mountain Wild Forest

Unit Management Plan

May 1995

BUREAU OF
FOREST PRESERVE
MANAGEMENT

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
GEORGE E. PATAKI, *Governor* MICHAEL D. ZAGATA, *Commissioner*

"The view northward was beautiful, the cluster of high peaks surrounding Mt. Marcy, sharp in outline, were whitened, as with snow, and between us and them was stretched a dark billowy sea of lesser mountains, among which we detected familiar mountain landmarks, from here appearing changed and new. At the east our more southern stations were visible – Van de Whacker Mountain and the Chain Lakes – and southward, through a long lane cut in the timber, Snowy Mountain, our discovery of last season, was seen, and the level here showed, as we had previously proved, that it was indeed higher than Mt. Emmons."

Verplank Colvin's panoramic description from the Summit of Blue Mountain in 1873

BLUE MOUNTAIN WILD FOREST

UNIT MANAGEMENT PLAN

May 1995

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

GEORGE E. PATAKI
Governor

MICHAEL D. ZAGATA
Commissioner

STATE OF NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12233-1010

MICHAEL D. ZAGATA
COMMISSIONER

MEMORANDUM

APR 5 1995

TO: The Record

FROM: Michael D. Zagata

SUBJECT: Unit Management Plan (UMP)
Blue Mountain Wild Forest

The Unit Management Plan for the Blue Mountain Wild Forest has been completed. The Plan is consistent with the guidelines and criteria of the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan, the State Constitution, Environmental Conservation Law, and Department rules, regulations and policies. The Plan includes management objectives for a five-year period and is hereby approved and adopted.

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BLUE MOUNTAIN WILD FOREST UNIT
STATISTICS

State Land				37,800 acres
Bodies of Water:	Interior	21		568 acres
	Adjacent#	11		1164 acres
	TOTAL	32	TOTAL	1732 acres
Elevation:	Minimum (Benchmark-Chain Lakes Rd.)			1542 feet
	Maximum (Blue Mt. Summit)			3759 feet
Foot Trails, Marked (5)				24.4 miles
Snowmobile Trails, Marked (10)				17.5 miles
Nordic Ski Trail, Marked (1)				2.5 miles
Leantos				2
Fire Tower (1)				Blue Mountain
Trailheads, Developed				6

While a small portion of Long Lake is included in the Blue Mt. Unit the acreage and management of this waterbody will be addressed in a separate management plan.

REGION 5 PLANNING TEAM:

Unit Management Planning Coordinator:	Thomas Kapelewski, Sr. Forester
Area Manager:	John English, Supervising Forester
Lands & Forests:	Greg George, Forest Ranger Bruce Coon, Forest Ranger John Chambers, Forest Ranger Brian Finlayson, Cartographic Tech. II
Fisheries:	Richard Preall, Sr. Aquatic Biologist
Wildlife:	Kurt Armstrong, Sr. Wildlife Biologist
Operations:	Wayne Blanchard, Cons. Op. Supv. III Bruce Richards, Cons. Op. Supv. I

Other Staff Contributors:

Tom Wahl-Regional Forester, Delos Mallette-Associate Forester (retired), Gary Roberts-Lieutenant, Adelbert Young-Land Surveyor, Tom Atwell-Cons. Op. Supv. II, Jeff Meuwissen-Sr. Forester, Joe DeMatties-Sr. Forester, Rick Fenton-Sr. Forester and Walt Sabin-Sr. Wildlife Biologist.

PREFACE

Blue Mountain, long recognized by its peculiar misty blue color, dominates the local landscape and is the namesake for the wild forest lands that lie adjacent to this popular scenic attraction. The terrain varies from gentle in the Rock Lake area to steep and rugged from East Inlet Mountain to the Fishing Brook range. This ridge in the northern portion of the unit represents a wild block of forest preserve, unbroken for over ten miles except for a crossing of the Northville-Lake Placid Trail.

The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has prepared a unit management plan* (UMP) for the Blue Mountain Wild Forest Area (BMWF) as required by the Adirondack State Land Master Plan (ASLMP), Section 816 of the Adirondack Park Agency Act (Article 27 of the Executive Law). This document provides an inventory of the natural, scenic, cultural, fish, wildlife, and other appropriate resources of the unit. In addition all facilities for public or administrative use are identified. This UMP is to guide the preservation, management, and use of State lands, waters, and biological resources within the unit. The plan establishes long-term goals and objectives while detailing management needs and strategies. Ordinarily, the plan will be revised on a five-year cycle, but may be amended when necessary in response to changing resource conditions or administrative needs.

Although much of the information contained within this text was developed by DEC staff, public input via advisory committees, meetings, and general correspondence was important during several stages of the planning process. In 1986, the DEC appointed a citizen advisory committee to review specific issues and concerns for the Blue Mountain-Hudson Gorge Units. A listing of the committee members along with a summary are included in Appendix 1.

Completion of the various management actions outlined within this UMP will be dependent upon adequate manpower and funding. Where possible the DEC will work with volunteer groups, local communities, town and county governments; and pursue alternative funding sources to accomplish some of the proposed projects or maintenance.

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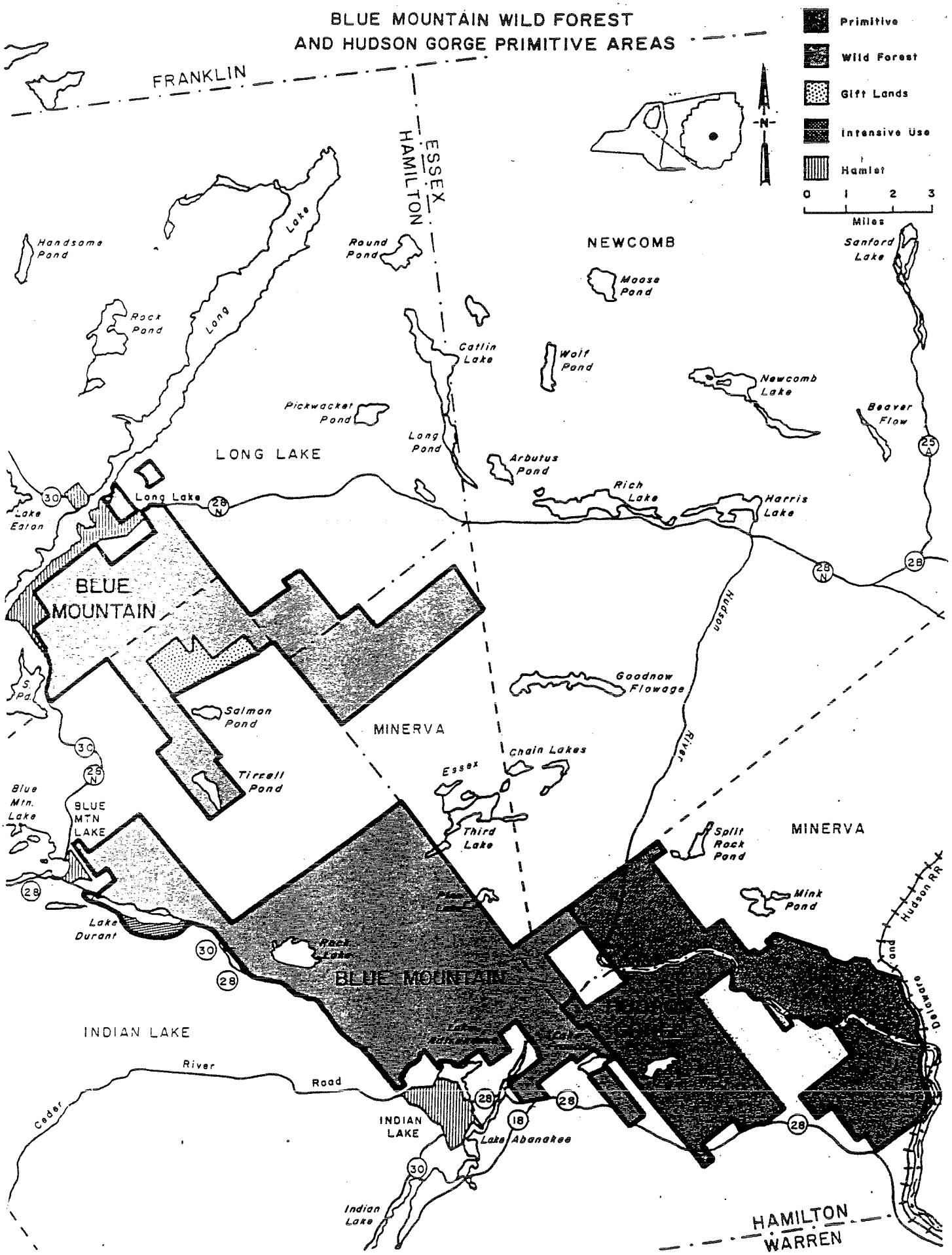
*This UMP is the end product after DEC examination of public comments and input on the November, 1993 Draft Unit Management Plan. The original document was modified through this review process, resulting in the compilation of this Final Plan.


BLUE MOUNTAIN WILD FOREST
AND HUDSON GORGE PRIMITIVE AREAS
Primitive
Wild Forest
Gift Lands
Intensive Use
Hamlet
0 1 2 3
Miles
N
FRANKLIN
ESSEX
HAMILTON
NEWCOMB
LONG LAKE
MINERVA
INDIAN LAKE
HAMILTON
WARREN
BLUE MOUNTAIN
BLUE MOUNTAIN
Handsome Pond
Rock Pond
Long Lake
Round Pond
Moose Pond
Sanford Lake
Catlin Lake
Wolf Pond
Newcomb Lake
Beaver Flow
Pickwacket Pond
Long Pond
Arbutus Pond
Rich Lake
Harris Lake
Long Lake
Lake Eaton
Goodnow Flowage
Salmon Pond
Tirrell Pond
Chain Lakes
Essex
Third Lake
Blue Mtn. Lake
BLUE MTN LAKE
Split Rock Pond
Mink Pond
Lake Durant
Rock Lake
Hudson River
Hudson RR
Delaware and
Cedar River Road
INDIAN LAKE
Lake Abanakee
Indian Lake
S. Pd.
25 A
28
28 N
30
25 N
18

I. UNIT DESCRIPTION

A. Area Overview

The Blue Mountain Unit is composed of State lands classified as wild forest located in the heart of the Adirondack Park. This unit consists of five separate tracts situated between the communities of Indian Lake, Blue Mt. Lake, Long Lake, and Newcomb. One administrative (forest ranger headquarters) and two intensive use areas (Long Lake Boat Launch and Lake Durant Campground) adjoin the unit. A separate management plan will be written for the campground facility.

The area is located east of Sargent Ponds Wild Forest and Blue Ridge Wilderness, north of Jessup River Wild Forest, west of Hudson Gorge Primitive Area and Vanderwacker Mt. Wild Forest, and south of the western High Peaks Wilderness Area.

B. Unit Geographic Information (See Appendix 27)

The wild forest lands within the unit are situated in the towns of Indian Lake and Long Lake, Hamilton County, and Minerva, Essex County. Within the unit there are no private inholdings completely surrounded by wild forest classified land.

The lands involved include State-owned portions of Townships 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22 and 34 of the Totten and Crossfield's (T&C) Purchase. Two separate tracts in Township 19, T&C Purchase, totalling 2,620 acres were gifted to the State of New York as "non-forest preserve" lands. This acreage is described later in the plan (Sections II-A-4-d and IV-E).

C. General Location (See Map Insert 8)

The Blue Mountain Unit is centrally located within the Adirondack Park, generally bounded by NYS Route 28N on the north, the Hudson River on the east, NYS Route 28 on the south and NYS Route 30 on the west. The actual unit boundaries follow public roads, water courses, lakes and individual property lines. State boundaries, where surveyed, are marked with yellow blazes and posted with "Forest Preserve" signs. USGS 15 minute topographic maps required to cover this unit include the Blue Mountain and Newcomb quadrangles.

D. Acreage

The Blue Mt. Unit contains approximately 37,800 acres. These State lands comprise only a small amount of the total land base in Hamilton and Essex Counties. The following chart lists approximate unit acreage by town and county:

COUNTY	TOWN	TOTAL ACRES#	UNIT LANDS##	PERCENTAGE
Essex	(All Towns)	1,055,000	4,900	less than 1%
	Minerva	103,600	4,900	5%
Hamilton	(All Towns)	1,160,200	32,900	3%
	Indian Lake	170,100	25,900	15%
	Long Lake	289,000	7,000	2%

Geographic Information System (1986) data from the Adirondack Park Agency.
BMWF lands including interior waters. Acreage estimated by planimeter from 15' USGS quadrangles.

E. Access

Most of the NYS lands and waters within the Blue Mt. Unit are easily accessible to the public with approximately 14 miles of public roads adjacent to the wild forest lands. The majority of potential access along with developed trailheads occur along NYS Routes 28N and 28/30. Secondary roads (Chain Lakes Road, Pelon Road, Benton Road, Durant Road, Tarbell Hill Road and segments of Old Route 30 and Old Route 28) provide additional points of entry. Major trailheads are located on both State and private lands and are further described in the man-made facilities section.

1. Public Easements (See Section II; B and E-8)

Some large parcels of private land contain sections of popular hiking trails that either terminate on or pass through forest preserve lands. In 1994 a Forest Legacy project (See Section VIII-F) was completed providing public access to Bullhead Pond. Marked trails within the unit that traverse other private lands include:

Trail Name	Color	Pvt. Lands	NYS Lands	Total#
Tirrell Pond	Red	3.0	.3	3.3
Blue Mt.	Red	1.6	.6	2.2
Northville-Lake Placid##	Blue	3.1	11.6	14.7##

Total mileage figures determined by field measurements.
Section from the NYS Route 28/30 to NYS Route 28N

Permission for trail construction and maintenance has been granted with deeded public easement for the sections of the Northville-Lake Placid Trail and Tirrell Pond Trail within the unit. There is no secured easement for the first 1.6 miles of the Blue Mt. Trail. Public access is allowed by verbal agreement between the private landowner and DEC but cannot be taken for granted.

The majority of the snowmobile trails within the unit traverse State land with segments crossing private property. Public access and use by snowmobilers on these private lands occurs along marked trail corridors and is subject to the owners' discretion and is not guaranteed.

The Town of Indian Lake provides an undeveloped trailhead area near the Indian Lake landfill (Pelon Road). This allows public access to marked DEC Nordic ski and snowmobile trails on NYS lands. The town also leases (annually) a parking facility and snowmobile trails on nearby private lands. This permits adequate parking and helps link snowmobile trails in the Blue Mt. Unit with the snowmobile trails in the Moose River Plains.

2. Water Access

Water access is possible from both lakes (Long Lake, Lake Adirondack, Lake Durant and Lake Abanakee) and rivers (Cedar and Indian). The DEC provides public boat launch facilities on Lake Durant and Long Lake. Aerial flights provide entry into some of the more remote locations.

3. Administrative Easements

a. Blue Mt. Tower Road

NYS has an easement for an access road across private lands from NYS Route 28N/30 to the state land boundary near the Blue Mt. Summit. The perpetual easement and right of way consists of a strip of land 50' in width containing 13.21 acres of land, more or less. The easement and right of way is for the right to construct, maintain, repair, operate, patrol, replace and/or remove the access road, telephone and electric power lines and cables, water lines, sewer lines, and a drainage ditch in, upon, over, under and across the 13.21 acre parcel of land. Together with the right to trim, cut, fell and remove therefrom all trees, underbrush, obstructions or obstacles in the right of way.

b. Long Lake Reservoir Road

Section 2 of Article XIV of the State Constitution permits the use of NYS lands for reservoirs in association with municipal water supplies. Under the terms of this provision permits for water supply purposes have been granted to the Long Lake Water District.

A restricted access service road traverses Blue Mt. Unit lands for 1.1 miles to the reservoir enclosure. Access by the town is allowed for normal required maintenance on the facilities to insure an adequate and safe water supply.

4. NonPublic Woods Roads (Private Easements: See Also II-D-2-a, IV-D-3, and VIII-I-1)

a. Status Unknown

(1) Clear Pond Road: This road crosses forest preserve lands in the northerly half of Lot 3, Township 16, of the Totten and Crossfield's Purchase. These lands were acquired as forest preserve by tax sale in 1890. Old USGS topographic maps (Newcomb, Oct. 1901 edition) show a woods road east of Clear Pond. This road continued northerly crossing the Cedar River and ending at buildings near Third Lake. It is believed this road originally provided access to private lands in Township 17, T&C Purchase at the turn of the century. There is no record of temporary revocable permits (TRP's) having been issued for use or maintenance of the section of road over NYS lands.

b. Status Under Investigation

(1) Salmon Pond Road: This road crosses forest preserve lands in Lots 19 and 20, Township 19, Totten and Crossfield's Purchase. The lands were acquired between 1881 and 1890. It is believed the road has existed since the turn of the century. TRP's have been issued for this road allowing use only for the purpose of administering or removal of forest products from the adjoining private lands.

c. Status Resolved Under Judgement of Consent*

(1) O'Neil Flow Road: This road crosses Lots 10 and 11 of Township 19, and Lot 39, Township 17; Totten and Crossfield's Purchase and is believed to have provided access into Twp 19 in the late 1800's. Lot 29 was purchased in 1900. Lots 10 and 11 were purchased in 1906 and 1908, and acquired by tax sale in 1905. This road has been used annually by the adjoining private landowner under the terms of a TRP issued for this road; allowing use for the purpose of administering or removal of forest products. The private landowner now has a valid easement for access and egress.

(2) Tyrrell (sic) Pond Road: This historic road has been abandoned for years and currently serves as the section of the Northville-Lake Placid Trail between Lake Durant and Tirrell Pond. Trail relocations have deviated from the original road in some locations. This abandoned road is mentioned here because it is a deeded Right-of-Way to private lands in the vicinity of Tirrell Pond.

5. Temporary crossing of NYS lands regulated by DEC Permit (See Appendix 20)

a. Transportation of materials across State lands using existing roadways.

(1) Salmon Pond Road (Access to private land)

b. Short-term ingress and egress to private property across State lands using existing roadways.

(1) Blue Mt. Tower Road (Access to private mountaintop facilities)

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*These roads have been the subject of a legal discussion concerning private access rights. The DEC has concluded that the landowner has a prescriptive easement over the road leading to its lodge on the O'Neil Flow. This legal right was negotiated under a Judgement on Consent which describes the location of the easement and identifies the use to be made of the road. The Judgement was signed by all parties to the lawsuit, a Supreme Court Justice has reviewed and signed the Judgement, and the Judgement and Map was filed in the Hamilton County Clerk's Office on August 1, 1994. In consideration of DEC consenting to the Judgement, the private landowner agreed to the dismissal of its lawsuit regarding the Tyrrell (sic) Pond Rd.

F. History (See also Section II-A-4)

The history of the area is not unlike that of the rest of the Adirondacks. Due to its rugged terrain and climate, with harsh winters and a short growing season, settlement has been sparse and slow to develop. With the difficulty of travel, making trade nearly impossible, settlers were dependent on the local resources for food and income.

Acquisition of lands in this unit began in 1877 with transfer of title through tax sales on several lots in Township 16 and 21. Between 1877 and 1900 the bulk of Blue Mt. Unit lands were acquired by the State. This included popular areas like the summit of Blue Mountain, Tirrell Pond, Rock Lake, and a portion of the Indian River. Acquisition efforts in the early 1900's occurred mainly in Township 19 and 20. More recently in 1956 portions of lots 20-24 were gifted to NYS (See Section IV-E). Purchases in 1964 in the northwest corner of Great Lot A, Township 20 and lot 72, Township 22 (Camp St. Mary-east of Tarbell Hill Rd.) finalized acquisitions within the unit to the present day.

A comprehensive treatment of the interesting history of the area is not practical here. Consult the Bibliography for additional sources of historical information. Relevant historical events that directly affected these lands are as follows (Aber & King, 1965; Hochschild, 1952):

1772 Survey of the Totten and Crossfield's Purchase was begun. All of the existing State lands in the Blue Mt. Unit lie within the T&C Purchase.

1813 The Fox Brothers held log drives on the Rock River by accumulating water at the 34th Flow reservoir (since named Lake Durant) and dams on Rock Lake outlet and Tirrell Pond.

1836 Blue Mountain was named Mount Clinch in honor of Charles Powell Clinch, a member of the State Assembly.

1851 Tirrell Pond was settled by a group of Irish immigrants from Ticonderoga, led by Father Olivetti, pastor of a church in Whitehall. The settlement consisted of sixteen log homes and a church. It lasted for about two years before being abandoned. The pond was named after Pat Tirrell, Father Olivetti's foreman.

1871 Chauncey Hawthorn built a guest house on Tirrell Pond.

1871 The opening of Dr. Thomas C. Durant's Adirondack Railroad, Saratoga to North Creek. This permitted access to the southcentral Adirondacks and enabled the development of stagecoach routes to hotels and resort accommodations in the communities of Indian Lake, Blue Mountain Lake, and Raquette Lake.

1878 Introduction of a stage line from North Creek to Blue Mt. Lake. Blue Mt. Lake reached its height of popularity between 1878 and 1900. During this period, it was probably the most fashionable resort area in the northeast.

1908 The last major forest fire.

1911 Construction of the Blue Mountain Fire Tower.

1913 Constitutional amendment passes allowing 3% of the Forest Preserve to be used for "the construction and maintenance of reservoirs for municipal water supply, State canals, and to regulate the flow of streams".

1917 Henry La Prairie's Inn at Tirrell Pond was a favorite stopping place for sportsmen. This illegal structure was burned by the local forest ranger on the grounds that the La Prairie family were occupying state land and had failed to leave on warning.

1923 The Northville-Lake Placid Trail was completed.

1931 Dam for Lake Byron, since renamed Lake Adirondack, was completed.

1931 Construction of Long Lake Reservoir on Sandy Creek.

1935 The Civilian Conservation Corps (C.C.C.) constructed a dam at 34th Flow for recreational purposes and as a water storage system for Blue Mt. Lake.

1936 34th Flow was christened as "Lake Durant" by the widow of William West Durant (railroad magnate).

1939 C.C.C. crews begin construction of Lake Durant Campground. A work camp was located on the site of the present forest ranger's headquarters.

1948 Lake Durant Campground opened to the public.

1950 Hurricane force winds cause severe damage and blowdown. Fire hazard reduction projects removed some of the salvageable trees in the vicinity of Salmon Pond, Tirrell Pond, Lake Adirondack, and Mt. Sabattis.

1951 Dam was completed for Lake Abanakee.

1955 Completion of a paved road (Route 30), from the southern end of Hamilton County, near Northville, to the Town of Indian Lake, opening the area for easy north-south travel.

1962 NYS Route 30 officially named the Adirondack Trail by the State Legislature.

1965 Forest Ranger Headquarters established at Lake Durant.

1972 The Blue Mountain Wild Forest was created as a legal entity as a result of the completion of the State Land Master Plan by the Adirondack Park Agency in consultation with the Department of Environmental Conservation.

1972 Creation of a wild, scenic, and recreational rivers system on both State and private lands. Included in this system are the Cedar, Rock and Indian Rivers.

1976 Completion of a ten mile reconstruction of Route 28 and 30 between Indian Lake and Blue Mt. Lake. A paved bicycle path, the first of its kind in the Adirondack Park, adjoins the regular road pavement. Public parking areas were developed for the Rock Lake and Rock River trails.

II. RESOURCE AND PUBLIC USE INVENTORY OVERVIEW

A. Natural Resources

1. Physical

a. Geology (See Appendix Map 5)

The Adirondacks are a roughly domical uplifted region where erosion has cut through younger, flat-lying sedimentary rocks to expose extremely deformed metamorphic rocks over one billion years old. These rocks are a southeasterly extension of the Grenville Province of the Canadian Shield.

The Blue Mountain Unit is located within the central highlands region of the Adirondack Mountains. The bedrock comprises both metamorphosed igneous rocks, principally granitic and syenitic gneisses, and metamorphosed sedimentary and volcanic rocks of the "Grenville Series" including marbles, quartzites, amphibolites, and assorted mica-quartz-feldspar gneisses, locally with abundant garnet. The metamorphosed sedimentary rocks tend to be softer than their igneous counterparts, and more readily removed by erosion, which accounts for much of the topographic relief in the area. An example of this is Blue Mountain, a mass of resistant igneous rock that rises 2,000 feet above the less resistant metamorphosed sedimentary rocks underlying the surrounding area.

The rocks of the Grenville Series were deposited between 1,300 and 1,150 million years ago, and intruded by the igneous rocks between 1,150 and 1,100 million years ago. Both were metamorphosed at temperatures on the order of 1,300-1,400 degrees F, and pressures about 7,000-8,000 times atmospheric. These conditions were necessary to form the minerals now found in these rocks, and the fact that these rocks are now exposed at the surface indicates that over 15 miles of overlying rocks have since been removed by erosion.

Excepting the glacial and postglacial deposits, all the rock formations in the Blue Mt. Unit are of Precambrian age. Given in the regular geologic order (youngest to oldest), they are as follows:

Glacial and postglacial deposits: Till, moraines, erratics, kames, and lake deposits can be found throughout the general area. Along the road between Long Lake and Deerland, kame deposits are visible along the eastern side of the valley. An esker of stratified sands and gravels occurs near Old Route 30, north of Lake Durant.

Pegmatite: Cutting nearly all types of the older rocks, including the gabbro; nonmetamorphosed.

Gabbro: Occasionally occurring as dikes or small stocks; more or less gneissoid; intrusive into the older rocks.

Syenite and Granite: These are the most widespread rocks of the area. A large, bare ledge of quartz syenite on Blue Mountain (visible from the south), appears like a snow bank in midsummer. In the bed of the Rock River, approximately one mile below the outlet of Rock Lake, large exposures show masses of granitic and syenitic rocks intruding a variety of older gneisses.

Grenville series: Prominently developed only in the southern half of the Unit; thoroughly crystalline stratified rocks, including various gneisses, marbles, and quartzite.

An important Grenville area extends up the Cedar River Valley. The most abundant rock appears to be coarse, crystalline, graphitic marble with closely associated hornblende and pyroxene gneisses. Exceptions occur 1 to 1-1/2 miles north and northwest of the community of Indian Lake and 3/4 of a mile southwest of Pine Lake, where the rock is largely a white feldspar-quartz gneiss.

Another prominent Grenville belt extends from Pine Lake through the valley of the Rock River to Lake Durant. Within this belt, marble exposures occur on both the Rock River about a mile below the outlet of Rock Lake and northeast of Unknown Pond. A large road cut on the north shore of Lake Durant exposes diverse, layered metamorphic rocks including pink and greenish gneisses, marble, and calc-silicate rocks. The intrusive nature of marble can be readily observed. Hornblende-garnet gneisses are frequently found in contact with marble, as evidenced in a test mining pit located approximately 1/2 mile east of Bullhead Pond.

Good exposures of the Grenville rocks also occur on Ledge Mountain, southwest of Unknown Pond. For about a mile, the top of this fire swept mountain is an almost continuous, barren rock ledge in which a type of mixed gneiss is beautifully exhibited. Pink, medium-grained, biotite granite intrudes white gneiss and light-gray, feldspar-quartz-garnet gneiss, these gneisses usually occurring in wavy, disconnected, thin layers throughout the granite. Farther down, on the south face of this mountain, large masses of dark, rusty-looking, Grenville gneisses occur in the granite.

The mountain directly south of Unknown Pond consists mostly of pink granite with numerous streaks or layers (sometimes 10 to 20 feet thick) of Grenville hornblende gneiss. Quartzites, while not prominently developed in the Grenville of the Blue Mt. Unit, can be observed in the ridge just north of Pine Lake.

Natural forces (glaciers, erosion, etc.) have influenced some of the topography of the Blue Mountain area. Ice erosion appears to have modified the relief to a minor extent only. Mountain masses may have been somewhat rounded off, while glacial till often created lakes and ponds in the lowlands. Sections of Blue Mountain were stripped of rock and have since been only slightly modified by postglacial weathering while the pronounced asymmetry of Stark Hill and Ledge Mountain demonstrates glacial scour and plucking. The steep mountainsides northeast of Tirrell Pond and west of Salmon Pond show evidence of the splitting off of large rocks due to exfoliation.

Geological information for this section was obtained from NYS Museum bulletins published in 1916 and 1932 for the Blue Mountain and Newcomb 15 minute USGS quadrangles, along with assistance from the New York State Geological Survey Unit.

b. Soils

The present day soils of the Blue Mt. Unit were formed as a result of extensive alteration of preglacial soils, topography, and drainage by glaciation during the Pleistocene Epoch. General soils maps and information provided by the Hamilton and Essex County Soil and Water Districts were used to document 13 broad soil associations within the unit. Examples of the most frequently encountered associations are:

(1) Deep Soils with Fragipans Developed in Glacial Till

This group is the predominant one for the area consisting of five associations within the unit. Derived mainly from granitic material, the soils are deep and vary from well-drained to poorly drained, with gently sloping to steep slopes. The most frequently encountered associations are:

(a) Becket-Canaan: Well-drained and coarse textured upland soils; the landform is sloping to moderately steep with many stones and boulders on the surface.

(b) Becket-Peru: Well-drained and medium textured upland soils; the landform consists dominantly of sloping hillsides that contain areas of broad flats and few depressions. There are many stones and boulders on the surface.

(2) Moderately Deep and Shallow Soils

Only one soil association in this group is on bedrock-controlled landscape within the Blue Mt. Unit. Derived from granitic material, these soils are typically shallow, well-drained to somewhat excessively drained and medium textured. Slopes range from gently sloping through steep.

(a) Canaan-Rock Outcrop: Exposed bedrock, developed in a thin mantle of glacial till; this association occupies the mountain tops with the dominant landform of moderately steep hillsides with smaller areas of steep hillsides.

(3) Deep Soils Developed in Organic Deposits

This is the least common group within the unit. They are nearly level, very poorly drained soils.

(a) Greenwood-Cathro: level bogs and swamps in glaciated upland till plains, lake plains, and outwash terraces; extreme acidity and high water table characterize these areas with a slow rate of organic decomposition (Northwest end of Tirrell Pond).

(4) Non-Soil Areas

This group consists solely of the Rock Outcrop-Canaan association and occurs mainly in the higher elevations of the unit. Rock outcrop, exposed rocks and boulders are typical. A thin (10 to 20 inches deep) layer of soil may have developed over bedrock. Slopes are generally very steep.

(a) Rock Outcrop-Canaan: very steep, shallow, moderately coarse textured soils, excessively drained. Bare rock is the dominant feature of the landscape (Blue Mountain Summit).

SUMMARY

Soils provide the basic support, nutrient, and water reservoir for the plant and animal communities within the Blue Mt. Unit. Physical features such as drainage, slope, vegetative cover, etc., influence the degree of soil disturbance, especially compaction created through public use. Site specific soil surveys of popular recreational areas have not been conducted within the unit. Additional information on area soils may be obtained in the Soil Reports for Essex and Hamilton Counties (APA, USDA Soil Conservation Service and Cornell University 1973, 1982).

c. Terrain (See Appendix Map 1)

The topography of this unit varies from gentle, rolling hills in the southern portion of the area to steep, rugged mountains to the north. The lands adjacent to Rock Lake, Tirrell Pond and along the major river drainages contain scattered small ponds and wetlands separated by rolling hills. The differences in relief are generally less than 500 feet. This contrasts sharply with the steep ruggedness of the northern portion of the unit having differences in elevation exceeding 1,000 feet.

Of the 11 named elevations within the unit three are included within the Adirondack Mountain Club's 100 Highest Mountain Peaks' list. Blue Mountain, with a summit elevation of 3,759 feet, dominates the landscape as it towers almost 2,000 feet over nearby Blue Mountain Lake. Fishing Brook Mt. (3,420 ft.) and Fishing Brook Range (3,480 ft.) represent additional elevations over 3,000 feet.

There is no prevalent trend of mountain masses, as compared with the eastern and southeastern Adirondacks, although there are some suggestions of the usual northeast-southwest strike. The remarkably straight channels of the Indian and Hudson Rivers are almost certainly developed along a fault believed to be a continuation of the Indian Lake Fault.

The lowest recorded elevation within the unit is documented with a bench mark at 1,542 feet on the Chain Lakes Road. The Indian River is approximately 30 feet lower as it leaves the unit entering private lands in the vicinity of the Gooley Club. Detailed information on area topography can be found on the Deerland, Blue Mountain Lake, and Dutton Mt. 7.5 X 15 minute USGS maps.

d. Water (See Appendix Map 2)

The water resources are an important component of the natural ecosystem within the Blue Mt. Unit providing a wide range of aquatic environments along with a variety of opportunities for public recreation.

An important division of drainage between the Raquette and Hudson River watersheds occurs within the unit with the boundary located along the Fishing Brook Range, and summits of Dun Brook, Buck, and Blue Mountains. The extensive land area in the Raquette watershed contains only two, small, unnamed ponds. The majority of ponded waters in the unit are part of the Upper Hudson watershed.

(1) Ponded Water

More than 32 ponds and lakes occur within the unit, of which 19 are named on USGS 7.5 minute topographic maps. Most of these waters have all or a majority of their shoreline within the wild forest boundaries. Eleven unit waters, including Lake Abanakee, Lake Adirondack, Lake Durant, First Lake, Pine Lake, Lake Francis, Barker Pond, Corner Pond, and Clear Pond, have sections of their shoreline in private ownership. The interior waters are almost entirely located in the southern portion of the unit and range in size from less than an acre to 253-acre Rock Lake. Some of the more popular BMWF waters include: 361-acre Lake Abanakee, 293-acre Lake Durant, 198-acre Lake Adirondack, 146-acre Tirrell Pond, 91-acre Pine Lake, 51-acre First Lake of the Essex Chain, 23-acre Clear Pond and 19-acre Bullhead Pond.

(2) Watercourses

In addition, the area contains approximately 40 miles of small, coldwater streams. Named streams include: East Inlet Brook, Sandy Creek, Tirrell Pond Outlet, Salmon River, and Dun Brook.

The Blue Mountain Unit also contains portions of the Indian, Rock and Cedar rivers. Segments of these rivers are classified under the Adirondack State Land Master Plan and Article 15-2711 of the Environmental Conservation Law as wild, scenic or recreational.

CLASSIFICATION# (See Section VIII-D, Appendices 22-24)

RIVER	WILD	SCENIC	RECREATIONAL
Cedar	7.0		1.2
Indian			1.6
Rock		6.9	1.2

#Approximate miles adjacent to NYS land within the unit.

(3) Recreation Potential

Flatwater recreational opportunities tend to be limited to the larger interior waterbodies and lakes that adjoin the wild forest area. With the exception of Tirrell Pond, these waterbodies and watercourses occur in the southern portion of the unit.

Larger waterbodies (greater than 10 acres) located adjacent to the wild forest boundaries that have a portion of Forest Preserve shoreline within the Blue Mt. Unit include:

WATERBODY	SURFACE ACRES	SHORELINE (MILES)#
Clear Pond	23	.1
Corner Pond	20	.3
First Lake	51	.9
Lake Abanakee	361	.6
Lake Adirondack	198	.8
Lake Durant	293	2.2
Lake Francis	106	.6
Long Lake##	4071	.4
Pine Lake	91	.8

Approximate measurement of forest preserve shoreline scaled from 7.5 minute maps.
Only a small fraction of Long Lake's shoreline is included in this unit.

In addition, sections of watercourses can provide seasonal recreational (fishing, day hiking, etc.) opportunities. Portions of the Cedar and Indian Rivers provide whitewater recreational opportunities during certain portions of the year.

The following table is derived from Appalachian Waters 2: The Hudson and Its Tributaries (Burmeister, 1974), with river class based on the International scale of difficulty:

WHITEWATER RESOURCES:

River	Section	Distance (miles)	Drop (feet)	Gradient (ft./mile)	Class## (Int'l Scale)
Cedar	NY 28/30 bridge to Hudson River	14	190	13.6	III
Indian	Lake Abanakee Dam to Hudson River	3	160	53.3	III-IV
Rock	NY 28/30 bridge to Cedar River	10#	202	20.2	III-IV

#Circuit of Rock Lake would add 2 miles.
Class rating is dependent on suitable water levels, typically medium high.

(4) Waterbody Narratives

Section VII-D Fisheries, lists the major ponded waters in the Blue Mountain Wild Forest with a brief narrative statement pertaining to their important features, including past and current management, accessibility, size, water chemistry, and fish species composition. Appendix 2 provides additional statistical information about ponded waters of the area, including watershed, fisheries management classification and depth. The most recent biological/chemical data are summarized in Appendix 3.

e. Wetlands (See Appendix Map 6)

A wetland is defined as any land that is annually subject to periodic or continual inundation by water and commonly referred to as a bog, swamp or marsh, which is one acre or more in size or located adjacent to a body of water with which there is a free interchange of water at the surface.

Wetlands are inventoried, mapped and protected under the 1975 NYS Freshwater Wetlands Act by the Adirondack Park Agency (APA). Wetland maps were promulgated pursuant to Article 24 of Environmental Conservation Law by the Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Conservation. Final maps for Hamilton County (1986) and Essex County (1990) were completed with coverage of the Blue Mt. Unit on the following 7.5 minute inventory sheets: Deerland, Dun Brook Mt., Blue Mt., Rock Lake, and Bad Luck Mountain.

Wetlands within the unit are primarily concentrated in the southern portion, along the Rock and Cedar River drainages and in association with many area lakes and ponds. Among the numerous wetland values are erosion and flood control, nutrient cycling, fish and wildlife habitat, in addition to

providing open space and areas for public use and recreation.

Wetland vegetation can be variable and may include trees and shrubs along with bog, emergent, and aquatic vegetation. The most common wetland types (Wetlands Guide, 1985) along with specific plant species that may be encountered in each type of wetland are listed below:

WETLAND TYPE	DESCRIPTION
Deep Water Marsh	Wetlands with significant portions of open water. Dominant plants consist of free floating vegetation, rooted vegetation with floating leaves, or submergent vegetation with pondweed, duckweed, and wild celery important for waterfowl. Shallow water areas are valuable for fish spawning and nurseries.
Deciduous Swamp	Tree-dominated wetlands consisting of live deciduous trees over 20 feet in height that are seasonally or permanently flooded. Important habitat for waterfowl nesting and a great variety of birds and wildlife.
Bog	A closed wetland with poor drainage commonly characterized by a floating base mat of peat moss (Sphagnum spp.). Bogs are communities of very specialized, generally acid-tolerant, plants.
Kettlehole Bog	A bog with several vegetative cover-types in rings. The central area has open water with acidity less than Ph 5.0, low oxygen level, and water colored dark brown from decaying matter.
Coniferous Swamp	Wetland where a significant part of the vegetational community consists of live coniferous trees over 20 feet in height. Important as deer wintering areas and effective in flood control.
Emergent Marsh	Shallow wetlands flooded with standing or running water much of the year. The vegetational community consists of herbaceous plants such as cattails, bulrushes, pickerel weed, loosestrifes, and arrowheads.
Shrub Swamp	Wetland where woody shrubs (predominantly alders) less than 20 feet in height dominate the vegetative community.
Wet Meadow	Vegetative cover primarily composed of sedges, rushes, and coarse grasses. Soils tend to be saturated due to the presence of groundwater at or near the surface. Wet meadows are often found in flood plains and abandoned beaver flowages.

Wetland areas with standing water contain an array of shrub and herbaceous species. Species found in shallow-water perimeters of some unit waters include:

Bog rosemary	Northern pitcher plant
Labrador Tea	Speckled Alder
Laurel, sheep	Spiraea
Laurel, pale	Swamp candles
Leatherleaf	Wild raisin

(4) Forest Health

A combination of many factors can influence the health of a plant community. Physical factors tend to be weather related with notable examples being lightning fires, ice damage, severe winds, and flooding. Pockets of the Blue Mt. Unit were severely impacted by the "Blowdown of 1950". Mudslides on the south slopes of Blue Mountain still occur today. Biological factors are variable and include the effects of disease, insects, and wildlife (beaver impoundments and deer wintering areas) on the forest environment.

Two major forest insects and two major diseases have had a significant effect on this area (DEC-Forest Health Reports, personal communication - Joseph DeMatties).

Blister Rust: White pine blister rust, caused by the introduced fungus Cronartium ribicola, is a major disease affecting white pine. A control program to reduce the number of alternate hosts (currants and gooseberries) was initiated in the 1930's and discontinued in the mid 1970's. Since that time there has been an increase of blister rust occurrence with consequent white pine mortality both in the Blue Mt. Unit and adjoining private land.

Beech Bark Disease: Beech bark disease is an important insect-fungus complex that has caused extensive mortality of American beech throughout portions of the Adirondacks. The primary vector, a scale insect, Crytococcus fagi, attacks the tree creating entry sites for the fungus, Nectria coccinea var. faginata. Changes in the percent of beech in the cover type can stimulate shifts in animal populations that utilize beech mast extensively as a food source. On the other hand, dead and/or dying beech trees may benefit other wildlife species by providing abundant nesting, feeding, and potential den locations.

Spruce Budworm: The spruce budworm, Choristoneura fumiferana, is considered to be one of the most destructive conifer defoliators in North America. Host species include balsam fir in addition to red, white, and black spruce. The last significant incidence of this pest within the Adirondack Park occurred in the mid 1970's. Populations of this insect, while currently not a problem, are being monitored throughout the northeast. One permanent pheromone sampling plot is located in the northern portion of the Blue Mt. Unit.

Forest Tent Caterpillar: The forest tent caterpillar, Malacosoma disstria, a native insect, may be found wherever hardwoods grow. Outbreaks have occurred at 10 to 15 year intervals with the last widespread outbreak in the late 1970's. Favored hosts are sugar maple and aspen with birch, cherry, and ash also being utilized.

In addition to the major insect and disease problems listed above, Eastern Spruce Bark Beetle, Dendroctonus rufipennis, along with various forest declines, has shown noticeable effects on the vegetation within the unit and the surrounding areas.

b. Wildlife

Comprehensive field inventories of wildlife species have not focused specifically on the Blue Mountain Unit. Various publications and field observations along with the Natural Heritage Program's Vertebrate Characteristic Abstract Data Base were used to develop species list's for the area. This unit is located within the Adirondack Mountain ecological zone of the State.

(1) Birds (See Appendix 5 and 6)

Numerous species of birds may be present in the unit during one or more seasons of the year. In addition to direct observation, several other sources of information were used to develop a list of birds present. Sources include Birdlife of the Adirondack Park by Bruce Beehler (1978), Birds of New York State by John Bull (1974), birds listed during the five-year Breeding Bird Atlas Project, and knowledgeable people.

Birds associated with marshes, ponds, lakes, and streams are numerous including the common loon, pied-billed grebe, great blue heron, green-backed heron, American bittern, and a variety of waterfowl. The most common ducks include the mallard, American black duck, wood duck, hooded merganser, and common merganser. Birds of prey common to the area include the barred owl, great horned owl, eastern screech-owl, northern goshawk, red-tailed hawk, sharp-shinned hawk, and broad-winged hawk.

A variety of song birds such as woodpeckers, flycatchers, wrens, thrushes, vireos, warblers, blackbirds, finches, grosbeaks, and sparrows can be found among the various habitats present in the area. Cooperators working with the NYS Breeding Bird Atlas have identified 83 species as confirmed breeders within this area. The Atlas block numbers in relation to the boundaries of the Blue Mt. Wild Forest Area can be found in Appendix 7.

(2) Mammals (See Appendix 8)

Important big game species within the area include the white-tailed deer and black bear. Generally, white-tailed deer can be found throughout the unit. However, the topography and forage conditions are more favorable for deer in the southern portion of the unit. Black bears are essentially solitary animals and tend to be dispersed throughout the unit. Occasionally, individuals congregate around

f. Climate

The Adirondack region climate is characterized with short cool summers and long cold winters. Elevation differences produce considerable variation in climate and wide ranges in both daily and annual temperature. Annual total precipitation averages range from 48 to 50 inches per year. Of this precipitation, snowfall normally averages between 140-180 inches annually and covers the ground from December through March.

Climatological factors, such as snow cover and rain affect seasonal use trends, trail locations, accessibility and public use management. The amount of snowfall and length of snowcover have a direct bearing on public use of snowmobile and cross country ski trails in the unit.

2. Biological

a. Plant Life

The lands within the Blue Mt. Unit are almost entirely forested. Plant communities vary depending on differences in site factors, including soil type, soil moisture, and climatic conditions determined by elevation, slope, and aspect. The unit falls within the temperate deciduous forest biome. This biogeographical classification is characterized by a moderate climate and dense forests.

The influence of logging during the nineteenth century along with a number of natural forces have wrought visible effects on the vegetative cover of the unit. Major wildfires in 1903 and 1908 have impacted portions of the Blue Mt. Unit.

(1) Vegetative Cover Types*

The predominant, broad vegetative types occurring within the Blue Mt. Unit are northern hardwoods, mixed woods, pine, and upper spruce slopes. Information on wetland covertypes (hardwood and coniferous swamps, bogs, etc.) and common associated plants was covered in Section II-A-1-e.

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*At present no detailed inventory or vegetative mapping is available for the Blue Mountain Wild Forest Area. The names of the plant communities were drawn from the vegetative cover-types identified in Twenty/Twenty Vision, 1988; along with information by Carol Reschke of the New York State Natural Heritage Program from Ecological Communities of New York State, 1990.

The Northern Hardwood type, occupying the rich, well-drained soils up to approximately 2,500 feet, consists predominantly of a climax association of sugar maple, American beech, and yellow birch. Associated species include white ash, black cherry, and scattered conifers. White pine occurs on the drier sites, with red spruce and hemlock more common in damp locations. The hemlock component is characteristic of north facing slopes and cool areas along streams, narrow valleys, ponds, and lakes. Pioneer hardwoods (aspen, pin cherry, and paper birch) are often found in early successional stages associated with old burns, blowdowns, and other areas of forest disturbance. The ground cover is composed primarily of maple and beech seedlings with scattered shrubs and herbaceous plants.

The Mixed Woods type occurs on the moist, lower slopes, generally between the coniferous swamps and northern hardwoods. Predominant species include red spruce, balsam fir, red maple, and yellow birch. Scattered individual white pine trees tower above the forest. Ground cover can be profuse, often consisting of viburnum and dogwoods, along with various ferns, grasses, and wildflowers.

The Pine forest cover type characterizes the less fertile dry, sandy soils. Individual trees are often of the same age, seeding in after a natural or man-made catastrophe such as fire or windthrow. White pine is a major species with undergrowth limited to a few ferns, herbs, and scattered shrubs.

There are scattered plantings of red pine, Scotch pine and Norway spruce in the southern portion of the unit (Rock Lake Area). These plantations were established by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the early 1930's. Shade-tolerant species such as red spruce, sugar maple and American beech are slowly becoming established in the understory of these plantations and will eventually take over the site.

The Upper Spruce Slopes begin at approximately 2,500 feet in elevation. These forests are dominated by balsam fir and red spruce. Ground cover is sparse, primarily due to the dense shading and harsh growing conditions. Club mosses and lichens occur on exposed ground and near rock outcrops (Blue Mt. Summit). As one travels down the slope, red spruce replaces the balsam fir and sugar maple, yellow birch and American beech can be found. Continuing lower in elevation, red spruce becomes a minor species and gradually disappears as the northern hardwood type dominates the site.

(2) Rare Plants and Ecological Communities

A recent review of the Natural Heritage Program files (Larry Brown, 1992) did not reveal the presence of any threatened or endangered plant species within the unit. However, a historical record identified Clinton's Clubrush (Scirpus clintonii), last observed in 1952, as potentially within the area. The Blue Mt. Unit does not contain any known exemplary vegetative communities (Twenty/Twenty Vision, 1988).

(3) Unforested Areas

A few areas comprising limited acreage are unsuitable for the growth of trees due to exposed bedrock, shallow infertile soils, ledge areas, etc. These locations (Blue Mt. Summit, etc.) support limited plant species with fragile patches of moss and lichens.

local landfills or during the mating season. Other larger mammals known to inhabit the area include beaver, river otter, fisher, coyote, bobcat, raccoon, red fox, gray fox, pine marten, muskrat, striped skunk, porcupine, and snowshoe hare. A variety of small mammals can be found in the unit, including a number of species of shrews, bats, moles and mice, along with the short-tailed and long-tailed weasel, mink, eastern chipmunk, and red squirrel.

The deer population size can be directly correlated to habitat conditions. From early spring (April) to late fall (November), deer are distributed generally throughout this area on their "summer range". When snow accumulates to depths of 20 inches or more, deer travel to their traditional wintering areas. This winter range is characteristically composed of lowland spruce-fir forests.

Most of the wildlife species are distributed evenly throughout the unit with populations of weasel, mink, muskrat, otter, and beaver concentrated near water. Snowshoe hare and red squirrel are mostly confined to stands of spruce and fir. Harvest records are collected for several wildlife species by town and/or wildlife management unit. This information can be useful for estimating population levels and is discussed in Section II-F-2 of this plan.

(3) Amphibians and Reptiles (See Appendix 9)

According to the observations of DEC Wildlife staff, and information obtained from "A Field Guide to Reptiles and Amphibians" by Roger Conant (1975), three species of turtles, eight species of snakes, eight species of salamanders, one species of toad, and six species of frogs are believed to be residents of the Blue Mt. Unit.

(4) Endangered, Threatened, Species of Special Concern and Other Unique Species of Wildlife

The following section indicates the protective status of some vertebrates that may be in the Unit:

Endangered: any species that is either native and in imminent danger of extirpation or extinction in New York; or is listed as endangered by the US Department of Interior. Except for seasonal migrants, there are no known historical reports of species recognized as endangered (bald eagle, peregrine falcon, and Indiana bat) residing in the unit.

Threatened: any species that is either native and likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future in New York; or is listed as threatened by the US Department of the Interior. Among the threatened species of wildlife that may be residents of the area are the osprey and red-shouldered hawk. Osprey nesting activity has been observed on neighboring Blue Mt. Lake and South Pond.

Of Special Concern: native species not yet recognized as endangered or threatened, but for which documented concern exists for their continued welfare in New York. Unlike the first two categories, they receive no additional legal protection under the Environmental Conservation Law; but, they could become endangered or threatened in the future and should be closely monitored. Species of special concern that may be present include the spotted salamander, wood turtle, common loon and raven. The common loon has been observed on Rock Lake, Tirrell Pond and Third Lake. Ravens have been seen in the Blue Mountain Area.

There are a number of wildlife species found in New York State whose habitat requirements include extensive areas of forest relatively undisturbed by human development. Often these are northern species that find the habitat conditions of the Central Adirondacks similar to the boreal spruce-fir forests of Canada. A list of species whose range in New York is generally confined to the Adirondacks and may be found within the unit include:

Birds	Mammals
Osprey	Black Bear
Northern Raven	Fisher
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Marten
Mourning Warbler	
Rusty Blackbird	
Evening grosbeak	

(5) Extirpated Species (See Section III-A-2-d)

The moose, timber wolf, cougar, Canada lynx, bald eagle, golden eagle, and peregrine falcon all inhabited the Adirondacks at one time. All of these species disappeared from the Adirondacks, mostly as a result of the unregulated harvest and habitat destruction during the nineteenth century. More recently some birds fell victim to the widespread use of DDT. Within the last decade a small moose population has regained a foothold within the Adirondack Park and projects to reestablish the peregrine falcon, bald eagle, and Canada lynx have been implemented.

Moose occasionally have migrated from the north and east into the Adirondack region for decades. Since 1980, they have arrived in numbers that may lead to establishment of a scattered resident population. Recent estimates range between 25 and 30 individuals.

Canada lynx have been released into the Adirondack park by the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry as a part of their Adirondack Wildlife Program. Several releases, totalling 83 animals, have been made between 1989 and 1991. Wide dispersal from the release area has been

observed and mortality has been high, especially mortality caused by vehicle collision.

Efforts to reestablish the peregrine falcon and the bald eagle through "hacking" programs began in 1981 and 1983, respectively. Some of these restoration efforts were successful in portions of the Adirondacks.

(6) Significant Habitats

The Significant Wildlife Habitat Unit and NY Natural Heritage Program files were reviewed (Larry Brown, 1992) for biological information on the Blue Mt. Unit. The DEC Bureau of Wildlife identified these sensitive areas:

(a) Deer Wintering Areas (See Appendix Map 6)

Deer populations fluctuate annually with winter starvation losses representing the most significant mortality factor. When snow depths accumulate to 20 inches or more, deer congregate in specific wintering areas. These sites are used typically every winter and are usually areas of spruce-fir forest. The carrying capacity of deer wintering areas essentially controls the carrying capacity of their entire annual range.

Six deer wintering areas are wholly or partially contained within the unit, mostly identified by the watersheds with which they are associated:

NAME	ID NUMBER	TOWN
Cedar River	DC 16-229	Newcomb
Lake Durant	DC 21-142	Indian Lake
Tirrell Pond	DC 21-143	Indian Lake
Little Mill Mountain	DC 21-147	Indian Lake
Moose Island	DC 21-103	Long Lake
Pickwacket Pond	DC 21-113	Long Lake

(b) Common Raven Nesting Sites

The raven generally is confined to the more remote areas of the Adirondack Park. It is a mountain bird, favoring areas with cliffs and crags suitable for nesting locations. While ravens have been seen in the Blue Mt. area and nested at the Blue Ledge (south side of the Hudson River) in the 1970's, specific nest sites have not been documented within the unit. The numerous rock outcrops and mountain ledges within the unit offer potential nesting sites.

(c) Waterfowl Nesting Areas

Shoreline characteristics of certain waters (Tirrell Pond, Rock Lake, etc.) can provide suitable nesting areas for loons and other waterfowl.

(d) Raptor Nesting Areas

While osprey nesting has occurred adjacent to the unit (Blue Mt. Lake and South Pond), nesting activity has not been documented within the Wild Forest Area. The following raptors were confirmed breeders in the unit: Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Great Horned Owl, and Barred Owl.

(e) Heron Rookery

A great blue heron rookery is located east of Rock Lake. Such rookeries are uncommon in the Adirondacks.

c. Fisheries (See Appendix 4-Classification of Fish Fauna)

The aquatic communities of the Adirondacks are a result of geological and human influences. Prior to human influences relatively simple fish communities were common. Human caused changes in habitat and introduction of fishes have altered those natural communities. Nonnative fishes are now widespread and many native species are more widely distributed than historically. Other natives, notably brook trout and round whitefish, have declined.

Geological History

The Fishes of the Adirondack Park, a DEC publication (August 1980) by Dr. Carl George of Union College, provides a summary of geological events which influenced the colonization of the Adirondack ecological zone by fishes. A limited number of cold tolerant, vagile, lacustrine species closely followed the retreat of the glacier. Such species presumably had access to most Adirondack waters. About 13,000 B.P. (Before Present), glacial retreat exposed much of the southern Adirondacks. Formation of glacial Lake Albany and inundation of the great falls at Cohoes, Glens Falls, Hudson Falls and other barriers resulted in recolonization of the Upper Hudson watershed by cold-tolerant Atlantian and eastern Boreal fishes. Around 12,000 B.P. the St. Lawrence Valley and the Laurentian

Corridor opened for recolonization of the Adirondacks via the Raquette River. Barriers and high gradient streams kept some lowland boreal species, such as northern pike, lake whitefish and burbot from colonizing the area. In general, waters low in the watersheds would have the most diverse communities. The number of species present would have decreased progressing towards headwater, higher elevation sections. Chance and variability in habitat would have complicated the trends. Consequently, a diversity of fish communities, from no fish to monocultures to numerous species, occurred in various waters.

Human Influences

Detailed documentation of the historic fish communities in the Blue Mountain Wild Forest is not available. Extensive fishery survey data was first collected in the 1930's, decades after the massive stockings and introductions of the late 1800's. Reviewing work by Mather (1884) and others from the late 1800's, George (1980) has summarized what is known. Appendix 4 presents information on species known to be native, native-but-widely-introduced (NBWI), and non-native.

Brook trout, however, were particularly successful at colonizing and thrived in the relative absence of competing and predacious fishes. George (1980) states:

"Under primeval conditions, the brook trout was nearly ubiquitous in the Adirondacks. Its agility, great range in size and facility in rapidly flowing water allowed it to spread widely, perhaps even concurrently with the demise of the glaciers, thus explaining its presence in unstocked waters above currently impassible waterfalls."

Acid Precipitation

Acid precipitation is a serious threat to the aquatic communities of certain areas of the Adirondacks, but does not appear to be a problem in the BMWF. In the 19 ponds with chemistry data, Ph values range from 5.7 to 7.85 and most ponds have a pH more than 6.0. The two waters having pH's below 6.0 (Stonystep Pond and Unknown Pond) contain at least 6 fish species each. Acid sensitive minnow species such as blacknose dace, cutlips minnow and pearl dace (Gallagher and Baker, 1990) have disappeared in some BMWF ponds. However, the affected ponds all have pH's above 6 and their native fish communities have been impacted by the introduction of nonnative species. Thus, it is unclear whether acid precipitation has contributed to the disappearance of sensitive minnow species.

Brook Trout Distribution

Brook trout fisheries occur in eight BMWF ponds including Tirrell Pond, Grassy Pond, Little Grassy Pond, Bullhead Pond, Pine Lake, Barker Pond, First Lake, and Unknown Pond. Clear Pond is an example of a water in the BMWF in which interspecific competition has eliminated a formerly good brook trout fishery. Marginal trout populations in Lake Durant, Rock Lake and Unnamed Pond (UH-P635) may also have been lost due to interspecific competition from NBWI and nonnative species.

Fish Distribution (other than brook trout)

Lake trout occur in three BMWF waters. Occasionally, lakers are caught in Lake Abanakee, but these fish are emigrants from Indian Lake. They survive in a deep basin near the mouth of the Indian River at the southern end of the lake. Clear Pond has a small lake trout population which was not reported in a 1932 survey. Accidental stocking of the species sometime prior to 1965 probably established the population. First Lake of the Essex Chain has a naturally reproducing lake trout population. This water was privately owned for many years and it is not known whether lake trout were introduced to the system.

Streams

A 1.6-mile segment of the Indian River below the dam on Lake Abanakee lies within the BMWF. This river stretch has been designated as "recreational" (See Section VIII-D). The Indian River aquatic ecosystem is affected by water level fluctuations related to:

(1) Water level control on Indian Lake by the Hudson River-Black River Regulating District (HRBRRD). Particularly fall drawdowns of Indian Lake and spring flood control measures.

(2) Water level control on Lake Abanakee by the Town of Indian Lake, often in response to measures undertaken upstream at the Indian Lake dam by HRBRRD.

(3) Water released from Lake Abanakee by the Town of Indian Lake to supplement flows for rafting purposes in the spring and fall months.

A stream survey conducted on this stretch of the Indian River in 1962 documented the adverse effects of severe water level fluctuations on the invertebrate populations in the river. Noted in particular was the stranding and desiccation of thousands of larval caddisflies. Such losses degrade the overall productivity of the river. This section of the Indian River is annually stocked with brown trout

and supports emigrant rainbow trout stocked into the Hudson River downstream. A good fishery exists for both salmonid species when river flows are low enough in the late spring to permit angling. Occasionally, brook trout are also caught, but these are probably emigrants from the tributary system. Smallmouth bass are present in good numbers, but seldom reach 12 inches in length.

About 8.6 miles of the Cedar River lies within the Blue Mountain Wild Forest (from river mile 2.2 to river mile 10.8). Approximately seven miles of this stretch has been designated as "wild", while the remaining mileage is designated "recreational" (See Section VIII-D).

The Cedar River has dark, stained water and a normal summer flow of 200 cubic feet per second. The river varies between 100-200 feet wide and changes in character from slow-moving with deep pools at the upstream end to sections of rapids and boulders farther downstream. Discharge is too low in the summer months for dependable canoeing. Rafting is limited to a few weeks in the spring. Brown trout are stocked in the upstream end of the section and provide a fair spring and fall fishery. The few brook trout caught in the river originate in the tributary system. Summer water temperatures can be too warm for trout in the Cedar River. A July 1970 survey found trout congregated near the mouths of cool tributaries and no trout in the main river (which was 80°F). Smallmouth bass, fallfish, creek chub, common shiner, blacknose dace, longnose dace, cutlips minnow and northern sculpin were also caught in the 1970 survey. Habitat limitations and a marginal temperature regime limit the potential of this river as a trout fishery.

The Rock River is a tributary of the Cedar River. Virtually its entire 8.1 mile watercourse lies within the unit. Most of the river is designated as "scenic" (Section VIII-D). The Rock River is the outlet stream for Lake Durant and effectively originates at the dam on that waterbody. Rock Lake lies in the course of the stream about 2.3 miles downstream of Lake Durant. The stream averages 30-70 feet wide during normal summer flows and has a mixed substrate of sand, rubble and boulders. It's water is lightly stained. Flows can be very low during the summer, which contributes to water temperatures that commonly exceed the range required by trout. A brook trout stocking policy was canceled in 1973 after an electrofishing survey confirmed these features. Survey biologists captured

or observed smallmouth bass, pumpkinseed, blacknose dace, cutlips minnow, longnose dace, creek chub, stonecat, central mudminnow, golden shiner and white sucker. Tiger muskellunge emigrating from Lake Durant utilize the Rock River to reach Rock Lake.

3. Visual/Scenic Resources

Blue Mountain, rising directly from the eastern shore of Blue Mountain Lake, dominates the area rising to an elevation of 3,759 feet above sea level. This mountain has been one of the most frequently climbed Adirondack peaks for over a century. A trip to the summit is well worth the short, fairly steep, 2.2 mile hike. Partial views are possible from the flat-topped summit, but the spectacular scenery of this unit and the neighboring area are best seen from the Blue Mt. fire tower. From the observation booth numerous lakes and ponds are visible as well as a panorama of the High Peaks to the northeast, including Mt. Marcy, highest peak in the State, and Snowy Mountain, highest peak in Hamilton County, to the south.

Until recently this State-maintained facility was manned from late spring until fall. The fire tower observer would educate the public in addition to other job responsibilities. Since 1991 this position has not been funded. See Sections VIII-C and VII-C-2-a-(1).

There are no maintained scenic vistas within the Blue Mt. Unit. Aesthetic observation points are isolated and may require a bushwack to achieve, with numerous rock outcrops affording fine views. In addition, NYS Routes 28 and 30 represent major scenic travel corridors. The following locations provide good viewpoints of the wild forest interior and adjoining areas:

a. Blue Mountain Summit

b. Mallard Point Overlook

c. Mt. Sabattis

d. McGinn Mountain

4. Unique and/or Historical Areas

a. Unique Natural Areas

(1) Sand Beaches - northwest shoreline of Tirrell Pond, small sections of Rock Lake.

(2) Islands - several small islands in Lake Durant, Lake Francis, Rock Lake, Lake Adirondack, Pine Lake, Rock River, and Elm Island on the Cedar River.

(3) Waterfalls - Pasley Falls on the Cedar River.

(4) Gorge - Cedar River.

b. Historical Areas

Generally, the lands within this unit have been primarily used for forest-oriented recreational or logging purposes. There were a number of logging and/or hauling camps built in the area, particularly in the vicinity of Tirrell and Salmon Ponds. These buildings were temporary in nature with evidence of their existence generally disappearing a few years after their use ceased. No historic structures listed at the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) or National Register were identified within the unit. Areas with a unique history are few; however, the most notable include (Aber and King, 1965):

(1) Tracy Shanty Clearing

(2) Blue Mountain was called To-War-Loon-Da by the Indians, meaning "Hill of Storms". It was later named Mt. Clinch after a state assemblyman and Mt. Emmons in honor of Professor Ebenezer Emmons, an eminent geologist who explored many of the Adirondack ranges. It was from the summit of Blue Mt. that Verplank Colvin and his crew, in 1876, set off bright explosions at 9:00 p.m on clear evenings. This permitted triangulation by Adirondack survey crews.

(3) Rock Lake was previously named Lake Maria and described by Emmons in his fifth annual report:

"It is a beautiful sheet of water with a island which we named Pine Island, and on which we encamped for a few days, while we explored its neighborhood. Northwest from this lake and at the distance of five or six miles is Mount Emmons. This name I find necessary to adopt in consequence of its having become current, and in use by those who have occasion to pass through the wilderness. The inlet and outlet of this lake is to the west or southwest of Pine Island, and in close proximity."

Rock River has been called the Canonquet or Connetquet River and was used by Indians travelling between the Hudson and St. Lawrence Valleys.

(4) Log driving had its origin in the Adirondacks. Within the Blue Mt. Unit lumbermen brought logs from the surrounding areas to 34 Marsh that served as a banking ground. After the logs left 34 Dam,

they travelled down upper Rock River into Rock Lake, thence down lower Rock River to its confluence with the Cedar River and along the Cedar River to its confluence with the Hudson. This segment of about 12 miles was known as Ordway's Rock River drive. In the 1880's along this drive there were three shanties in which the camp crews slept and ate. The first was located at 34 Dam, the second at the outlet of Rock Lake, and the third at the mouth of the Indian River. Another camp was located at the mouth of Dun Brook on the Rock River. In 1936, 34th Flow was renamed Lake Durant and a plaque was dedicated, bearing the inscription:

Lake Durant
Named In Honor Of
William West Durant
1850-1934
Who devoted much of his life to
developing the Adirondacks and making
known their beauty.

(5) At Tirrell Pond, there was an early Irish settlement (1853) and early guest house (circa 1890). Clearings can still be observed. The 2-acre Irish immigrant settlement is listed under the DEC Forest Preserve inventory of historic areas. Portions of the LaPrairie guest house foundation are still evident.

(6) In 1878, a road connecting Indian Lake to Blue Mt. Lake was improved and made passable for stage-coaches. The Adirondack Stage Company ran covered coaches with four horse teams from North River to Blue Mt. Lake. This route was advertised as:

"Exceeded by none on the American continent for the boldness and magnificence of its mountain views, the domes of Marcy, Skylight, Haystack, McIntyre, and many others nearly their equals, rising in plain view at several points on the stage road."

The present day State Route 28/30 from Indian Lake to Blue Mt. Lake follows, for a large part, this historic travel corridor. A few sections of this old roadway are still in evidence today within the Blue Mt. Unit. An excerpt from Township 34 (Hochschild, 1952) further describes portions of the existing old road (based on Route 28/30 as it was prior to new construction completed in 1961):

"The original road left State Route 28/30 about two miles southeast of the present Forest House, skirted the eastern and northern shores of Rock Lake and rejoined the present Route 28/30 at a point one mile above the Forest House and four miles east of Blue Mountain Lake . For the next one and three-tenths miles, the original road followed the present route to a point which, from 1935 to 1938, was the site of a Civilian Conservation Corps camp, about one-quarter mile northwest of the dam at the foot of Lake Durant. There the road turned northwest, ran along the base of a slope of Blue

Mountain, and rejoined the present Route 28/30, approximately one mile east of the community of Blue Mountain Lake. This old road along the slope now makes a pleasant trail or bridle path through the forest."

c. Archaeological Areas (See Section VII-A)

A site file search was conducted at the NYS Museum for archaeological sites located within the Blue Mt. Unit. One site is reported in the southern portion of the unit, with two additional sites located adjacent to the State land within the unit. According to an evaluation of archaeological sensitivity for prehistoric (Indian) sites there is a mixed probability of the existence of prehistoric cultural material within the study area. This rating is based on the physiographic characteristics of the unit. Areas in the vicinity of streams and swamps in the study area would suggest a higher than average probability of prehistoric occupation or use. These would have been potential food and water sources for prehistoric people who may have inhabited the area. Areas of steep slope would suggest a low probability of prehistoric occupation or use, except in exposed rock faces which could have functioned as rock shelters.

A site file search was also conducted at the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (Julia Stokes, 1992). An additional prehistoric site was identified within the southern portion of the unit. Objects such as projectile points, chert flakes and other stone tools were found. Information for this section was obtained with the assistance of Frank Schieppati, Cultural Resources Section (1989) and Karen Hartgen, New York Archaeological Council (1992). Specific site locations are confidential.

d. "Non Forest Preserve" Lands (See Appendix 10)

Certain unit lands administered by DEC that were gifted to NYS for other than Forest Preserve purposes include:

Town/County	Location	Acres	Date	Authority
GIFT [A]: Indian Lake/ Hamilton	Township 19 T&C Purchase	1,251	1956	Sub. 7, Sec.50 Conservation Law
GIFT [B]: Indian Lake/ Hamilton	Township 19 T&C Purchase	1,369	1962	Sub. 2, Sec. 361 Conservation Law

B. Man-Made Facilities (see Appendix-Existing Facilities Map 3)
Pt: Indicates all or a portion of facilities on [Private lands]

1. Barriers (Permanent-P, Administrative-A, Controlled Access-C)

a. Road (4)

(1) A pipe gate (C) on O'Neil Flow Rd. at NYS Route 30

(2) A pipe gate (C) on Salmon Pond Rd. (west gate)Pt

(3) A pipe gate (C) on Salmon Pond Rd. (east gate)Pt

(4) A pipe gate (C) on Long Lake Reservoir Rd.

b. Waterway Access Site (1)

(1) Rock barrier (P) on the Indian River put-in site

c. Fencing (1)

(1) Long Lake Reservoir

d. Boom (1)

(1) Floating Log Boom - Adirondack Lake, (This Town-maintained facility is allowed (under temporary revocable permit) to anchor on State land in order to prevent small, floating bogs from entering the navigable portion of the lake.)

2. Bridges/Trail Hardening Facilities
(■-Facilities constructed and inventoried by the Adirondack Mountain Club, N/A-information not available)

a. Foot Bridges (7)

(1) On the Northville-Lake Placid Trail across Sandy Creek between Long Lake/Route 28N Trailhead and the Long Lake Reservoir Rd., 30'x4'

(2) On the Northville-Lake Placid Trail across Shaw Brook, 10'x3'

(3) On the Northville-Lake Placid Trail across a stream between Tracy Shanty Clearing and the Salmon Pond Rd., 35'x4'

(4) On the inlet at the north end of Tirrell Pond crossing between the leanto area and the beach, 30x4'

(5) On the Rock Lake Trail across a small tributary of Johnny Mack Brook, 6'x4'

(6) Across the outlet of Pine Lake, 12'x3'

(7) On the Northville-Lake Placid Trail across Sandy Creek, upstream from the Long Lake Reservoir, 35'x8'

b. Boardwalks

(1) Walkways on the Northville-Lake Placid Trail across tributaries of O'Neil Flow, 90'x4', 30'x4'Pt

(2) Walkways on the Northville-Placid Trail in the vicinity of Sandy Creek, N/A

c. Drytread (■)

(1) Blue Mt. Trail, 286'Pt

(2) Northville-Placid Trail (Salmon Pond Area), N/A

d. Ditching (■)

(1) Blue Mt. Trail, 89'Pt

(2) Northville-Placid Trail (Salmon Pond Area), 650'Pt

e. Step Stones (■)

(1) Blue Mt. Trail, 17Pt

(2) Northville-Placid Trail (Salmon Pond Area), 15Pt

f. Rock Stairs (■)

(1) Blue Mt. Trail, 7Pt

(2) Northville-Placid Trail (Salmon Pond Area), 16Pt

g. Waterbars (■)

(1) Blue Mt. Trail: Rock,9; Wood,1Pt

(2) Northville-Placid Trail (Salmon Pond Area), N/A

h. Road Bridges Covered by Temporary Revocable Permit (2)

(1) On the Salmon Pond Rd. across the Salmon River, 43'x10'

(2) On the O'Neil Flow Rd. across the Rock River, 45'x10'

i. Snowmobile Bridges (9)

(1) Across Johnny Mack Brook, 6'x36'

(2) Three snow support bridges on the trail south of Rock Lake.

(3) Between Unknown Pond and the Rock River Trail, 10'x6'

(4) Between Unknown Pond and the Cedar River, 8'x5', 8'x5'

(5) On the Rock River Trail before the junction with the Rock Lake section, 12'x6'

(6) Across a feeder stream of Rock Lake, 15'x5'

3. Camping Sites (Primitive Tent) (36 sites)
(Partial information from 1984 Campsite Inventory-Amy Smith)

a. Bullhead Pond, 3, non-designated

b. First Lake, 2, non-designated

c. Indian River, 5, non-designated

d. Lake Durant, 3, non-designated
Lake Durant, 2, designated [Old Route 30]

e. Northville-Lake Placid Trail; Salmon River, 1, non-designated

f. Northville-Lake Placid Trail; Sandy Creek, 1, non-designated

g. Northville-Lake Placid Trail; Shaw Brook, 1, non-designated

h. Northville-Lake Placid Trail; Tracy Shanty Clearing, 1, non-designated

i. Northville-Lake Placid Trail; Old Stage Road, 1, non-designated

j. Northville-Lake Placid Trail; North of Route 28/30, 1, non-designated

k. Pine Lake, 2, non-designated

l. Rock Lake, 5, non-designated

m. Rock River, 1, non-designated

n. Tirrell Pond, 6, non-designated

o. Unknown Pond, 1, non-designated

4. Communication Facility

The summit of Blue Mountain is the site of radio communications facilities serving NYS (Department of Environmental Conservation, State Police, Department of Transportation), the Hamilton County Sheriff, Emergency Medical Service and Highway Departments, and a public radio station (WSLU). Facilities include equipment affixed to the fire tower (repeater incorporated in the base of the tower) and a separate antenna tower with associated buildings also housing repeater equipment. The site is served by a 12,000 foot access road and power/telephone lines.

5. Dams (1 existing, Lake Durant Dam is not addressed in this UMP)

a. Long Lake Reservoir

b. Rock Lake (remains of old wooden dam)

c. Tirrell Pond (remains of old logging dam)

6. Docks (4) - user created

a. First Lake, 2

b. Pine Lake, 2

7. Fireplaces (3)

a. O'Neil Leanto

b. Tirrell Pond Leanto

c. Benton Road/Cedar River area (1)

8. Gravel Pit

a. Ball Diamond Area - Closed

b. Tarbell Hill Road - Closed

9. Historic Locations, Memorials, and Plaques

a. W. Durant Plaque/NYSDOT Parking Area, Route 28/30, Blue Mountain Lake, Education Department

b. Aluminum Plaque at the mouth of Dunn Brook in honor of Paul Regan, killed in a hunting accident at that site.

10. Leantos (2)

a. O'Neil Flow, south end of Tirrell Pond - Built 1937

b. Tirrell Pond, north end - Rebuilt 1987

11. Pit Privies (5)

a. Ball Diamond, 2

b. Lake Durant, [Old Route 30], 1

c. Tirrell Pond, (associated with leantos), 2

12. Roads

a. Public Road (## State Land adjacent to highway)

(1) Maintained - 13.2 miles

NAME	JURISDICTION	APPROX. MILES##
BENTON ROAD	TOWN OF INDIAN LAKE	.2
CHAIN LAKES ROAD	TOWN OF INDIAN LAKE	1.5
ROUTE 19 (Durant Rd.)	HAMILTON COUNTY	.2
ROUTE 28N	NYS	.5
ROUTE 28/30	NYS	10.3
OLD ROUTE 28	TOWN OF INDIAN LAKE	.1
TARBELL HILL ROAD	TOWN OF LONG LAKE	.4

(2) Limited maintenance - 1.0 mile

OLD ROUTE 30	TOWN OF INDIAN LAKE/NYS	.8
BLUE MT. LAKE CEMETERY RD.	NYS	.2

b. Motor Vehicle Trail (Roads over NYS lands that originate from old logging roads, access ways and abandoned roads. Occasionally semi-improved.)

(1) Open Trail (Public motor vehicle use permitted)

(a) Blue Mt. Lake Cemetery Road - .2 mi.
This road runs south from Hamilton County Route 19 at Blue Mt. Lake along the edge of the cemetery and continues to Lake Durant.

(b) Old Route 30 - .8 mi.

(2) Closed Trail (Public motor vehicle use prohibited)

(a) Clear Pond Road (Right of Way over NYS land needs to be determined) - .7 mi.

(b) Salmon Pond Road (Right of Way over NYS land under investigation, limited use by TRP) - .9 mi.

(d) Tyrrell (sic) Pond Road

c. Private Road (Legally maintained by private individuals, public motor vehicle use prohibited)

(1) Easement Road

(a) Long Lake Reservoir Road (Town of Long Lake) - 1.1 mi.

(b) O'Neil Flow Road* (Legal Right of Way over NYS land) - .8 mi.

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*This easement consists of two separate sections of road. A map showing a survey of this road as traverses State lands was prepared by DEC and filed with the Judgement on Consent.

13. Trail Signs

There are numerous signs and trail markers within the unit with major DEC trailhead identification signs located at the Northville-Lake Placid and Blue Mountain trailheads. Additional NYS Department of Transportation signs along State Route 28/30 indicates the opportunity for hiking and snowmobiling on unit trails in the vicinity of Rock Lake.

14. Trail Facilities (Current Status; See Appendix 12 for additional information)

Trails within the unit are marked with round discs, three inches in diameter, in red or blue colors. Four inch orange markers designate snowmobile trails.

a. Trails (± 44.4 miles - marked) [See Section I-E]Pt

(1) Foot (± 29.9 miles)

Trails are classified based on present condition and level of use. Categories of trails range from Type-I (Unmarked Route) to Type-V (Trunk Trail). See Appendix 11 for trail standards.

(a) Marked (± 24.4 miles)

1. **Northville-Lake Placid Trail** (Type-V, Blue markers)- total of 15.2 mi.Pt
From the outlet of Lake Durant across NYS 28/30 to the NYS 28N parking area; From the Tarbell Rd. trailhead turning easterly to High Peaks Wilderness Area boundary (Lot 61, Township 22). An additional .7 of a mile of this trail is along the public highway (Tarbell Hill Road).

2. **Tirrell Pond Trail** (Type-IV, Red markers) - 3.3 mi.Pt
From NYS 28N to the Northville-Lake Placid Trail intersection.

3. **Blue Mt. Trail** (Type-V, Red markers) - 2.2 mi.Pt
From NYS 28N to the 3759' summit.

4. **Rock Lake Trail** (Type-IV, Blue markers & Snowmobile) - 0.7 mi.
From NYS 28/30 to Rock Lake.

5. **Rock River Trail** (Type-III, Blue markers & Snowmobile) - 3.0 mi.
From NYS 28/30 to the Rock River.

(b) Unmarked (Approx. 5.5 miles - scaled from USGS maps)

Includes the following major trails: Barker Pond from O'Neil Flow Road, Stony Step Pond from Old Route 28, First Lake to Grassy Pond, Old Stage Road, and Pine Lake to the Rock and Cedar River confluence.

(2) Snowmobile (± 17.5 miles - scaled from USGS maps)

Trails are classified based on present condition, level of use, and relationship to adjacent trail sections, communities or facilities. Categories of trails on NYS lands range from Type-B to Type-D (See Appendix 11; OPRHP, Snowmobile Trail Plan). Sections that have been groomed (G) are identified.

● Also marked as a foot trail

(a) Marked (± 17.5 miles)

1. **Lake Durant-Rock Lake Trail** (G, Type-B/C) - 3.0 mi.
From Lake Durant Campground to Rock River Trail.

2. **Rock Lake Trail** (Type-C) - 0.5 mi.●
From NYS Route 28/30 to Rock Lake (West of Johnny Mack Brook).

3. **Rock River Trail** (G, Type-C) - 3.0 mi.●
From NYS Route 28/30 to the Rock River.

4. **Unknown Pond Trail** (Types-C/D) - 5.5 mi.Pt
From Rock River Jct.-Unknown Pond (G, Type-C/D) - 3.0 mi.
From Unknown Pond to Cedar River (G, Type-C) - 2.0 mi.
Indian Lake Landfill-Cedar River (G, Type-C) - 0.5 mi.Pt

(A combination of rocks, poor topography, and trail flooding limits the ability to groom or improve this section of trail.)

5. **Elm Island Trail** (G, Type-C) - 3.6 mi.Pt
From the Indian Lake landfill to Elm Island.

6. Unnamed Spur Trail (G, Type-C) - 0.7 mi.Pt
From the Adirondack Lake Rd. to Elm Island Trail.

7. Unnamed Spur Trail (G, Type-C) - 0.2 mi.
From Elm Island Trail to Adirondack Lake.

8. **Benton Road Trail** (G, Type-B/C) - 0.5 mi.
From Benton Rd. to NYS boundary. Additional trail segments cross private lands from the landfill to the golf course and NYS 28/30 crossing.

9. **Powerline Trail** East Inlet Mt. Section (G, Type-B/C) - 0.5 mi.
From NYS Route 28/30 to Mt. Sabattis, mostly on private lands.Pt

(b) Unmarked (± 4 miles)

Including snowmobile activity on Rock Lake, Old Route 30, Lake Durant, and the Blue Mt. Lake Cemetery and Benton roads.

(3) Nordic Ski Trail (± 2.5 miles - scaled from USGS maps)

(a) Marked

1. **Pasley Falls Trail** - 2.5 mi.Pt
From Pelon Rd.-Elm Island Snowmobile Trail Jct.

(4) Horse Trails

There are no officially designated horse trails in this unit.

b. Trailheads (major)

(1) With Maintained Parking (6)

(a) Route 28/30 at the beginning of the Rock River Trail (vehicle capacity: 6)

(b) Route 28/30 at the beginning of the Rock Lake Trail (vehicle capacity: 6)

(c) Route 28/30 at the crossing of the Northville-Lake Placid Trail, northside (vehicle capacity: 6), south-side (vehicle capacity: 6)

(d) Route 28N at the crossing of the Northville-Lake Placid Trail (vehicle capacity: 12)

(e) Tarbell Hill Road - This section of the Northville-Lake Placid Trail enters the High Peaks Wilderness Area (vehicle capacity: 12)

(f) Route 28/30 at the beginning of the Blue Mountain and Tirrell Pond trails (vehicle capacity: 20)Pt

2) Without Maintained Parking

(a) Blue Mt. Cemetery Road on the northwest side of Lake Durant (serves the Cascade Pond Trail within the Blue Ridge Wilderness Area)

(b) The following locations are where snowmobile trails cross public roads and, although they provide access to State land, they are not designed primarily for that purpose:

1. Adirondack Lake Road Pt

2. Route 28/30 at Lake Durant

3. Indian Lake Landfill [Town of Indian Lake]Pt

4. Benton Road

5. Route 30 at Deerland

c. Registers (6)

(1) Northville-Lake Placid Trail (northside of Route 28/30)

(2) Northville-Lake Placid Trail (Tarbell Hill Road)

(3) Northville-Lake Placid Trail (Route 28N)

(4) Rock Lake Trail (Route 28/30)

(5) Blue Mountain Trail (Route 28N/30)Pt

(6) Waterway Access Site (Chain Lakes Road)

d. Trail/Recreational Easements (3)

(1) Easement over private lands situated in Lot 18, Township 19, Totten and Crossfield's Purchase, Town of Indian Lake. This easement is over a part of the Northville-Lake Placid Trail. Recorded in the Hamilton County Clerk's Office, December 30, 1969, in Book 148 of Deeds at page 358.

(2) Easement over private lands situate in Lots 7, 8, 9, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17, Township 19, Totten and Crossfield's Purchase, Town of Indian Lake. This is an easement over the red trail from a point on Route 30, at the height of land between Blue Mountain Lake and Deerland, to the northerly end of Tirrell Pond. The remainder of the trail easement is over a part of the Northville-Lake Placid Trail from the outlet of Tirrell Pond crossing Lots 7,8, and 9 to lands of the State in Lot 10 near the northerly edge of O'Neil Flow. Recorded in the Hamilton County Clerk's Office, December 30, 1969, in Book 148 of deeds at page 354.

(3) The former Rocco Denino property located adjacent to the Indian River Waterway Access Site, was sold in 1994 to the Federal Government and the Town of Indian Lake. A right-of-way 25 feet in width and a conservation easement on 141 acres of land were conveyed to the United States under a Forest Legacy* project. The Town acquired 17 acres to be used for parking, camping, and picnicking in addition to a staging area for whitewater users. The Town has underlying fee title and timber rights to the remaining 141 acres with the exception of certain rights (development and recreational) on the parcel. NYS is granted the stewardship and administration of the 141 acre conservation easement by the Federal Government as a result of this proposal. Use of the easement area by the public is described in Appendix 28.

A forest stewardship plan was prepared by DEC (Jeff Meuwissen, 1993; See Appendix 26). This plan details management recommendations for the natural resources and recreational potential of the area.

15. Towers and Appurtenances (Fire and Radio)

a. Blue Mountain Fire Tower

This 35 foot high tower was built in 1917. The steel structure encloses the 9'x 9' Hamilton County radio and generator building at its base. The large L-shaped foundation at the foot of the tower was the site of a radar station used during the Cold War. The three slabs are where the emergency generators were in case the power went off. The rusted disc was the base of the antenna mast which was higher than the tower.

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*The Forest Legacy Program was authorized in the 1990 Farm Bill. The Program was designed to protect and manage important forest areas that are threatened by conversion to nonforest uses through conservation easements. It is strictly a volunteer program; States must want to participate and landowners must voluntarily offer to sell their land or interests in land to the program.

b. Blue Mountain Radio Tower
A separate radio tower is located in the vicinity of the summit with an associated 12'x 18' cement block building.

c. Other Facilities
The small square foundation on the opposite side of fire tower was the site of the original small observer cottage. The "new" observer's cabin was built in the 1970's.

Small iron disks are benchmarks for surveying. The original benchmark was put in by Verplank Colvin in the 1890's. It is approximately 75 feet north of the tower. The benchmark at the foot of the tower was put in during the 1942 survey and marks the "official" summit of the mountain. Other benchmarks are scattered on the mountaintop with arrows pointing to the summit. An access road with NYSEG electric poles and line, and DEC telephone wire are also located in the summit area.

16. Waterway Access Site

a. Chain Lakes Road - provides access to the Indian and Hudson Rivers for recreational purposes.

SIGNAGE:

Location	Size	Wording
Side of Chain Lakes Road near Lake Abanakee Dam	2'x 4'	DANGER WATER RELEASE 10AM TO 12AM DAILY

Location	Size
Indian River Waterway Access Site	2'X 3'

Wording

Indian River Waterway Access Site
CAUTION!
DANGEROUS RAPIDS DOWNSTREAM
If you are unsure of your ability, or your watercraft,
you should utilize the services of a river outfitter.
A list of river outfitters is available
at the Indian Lake Town Hall.
PLEASE REGISTER

17. Water Supply (See Section II-D-2-d)

a. Town of Long Lake Reservoir on Sandy Creek.

(1) Pipeline, 10 inch cast iron buried in Right-of-Way, 1.2 acres

(2) Reservoir enclosure, 1.5 acres

(3) Access road Right-of-Way, 1.3 acres

18. Water/Fisheries Structures

a. Fish Barrier Dam, Bullhead Pond, reconstructed 1991.

C. Cultural

The past cultural resources within the Blue Mt. Unit were limited to early travel routes, logging history, and the establishment of a number of hunting camps and "inns", along with a short lived settlement on Tirrell Pond. Many of these locations were identified in the previous history sections (I-F and II-A-4-b). Physical evidence of past use in these areas has faded with time, but sections of an old stage road are still evident north of Lake Durant and in the vicinity of Rock Lake. An examination of the library at the OPRHP indicates that no cultural resource surveys have been conducted within the unit (Karen Hartgen, 1992).

1. Land Ownership Patterns and Tax Base

The State lands within the unit are located in three towns in Hamilton and Essex Counties. These towns represent a total land area of approximately 1/2 million acres. Blue Mt. Unit lands comprise only seven percent of the combined township acreage. The State of New York pays funds to localities in lieu of town, county, and school taxes.

2. Land Use Regulations

a. Local Land Use Controls

Zoning, subdivision regulations, and historic district laws can directly and indirectly protect open space and historic structures. The Town of Indian Lake has enacted a zoning ordinance while the Town of Long Lake is still in the process of developing a zoning plan. Land use ordinances affect private land uses and any associated impacts to adjacent NYS lands and waters.

b. State Administered Land Use Controls

State administered environmental and land use controls including the regulations of the Adirondack Park Agency, Freshwater Wetlands Act, and Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers programs require setback of development from important environmental resources thus protecting open space.

D. Economic and Physical Impacts

1. Impact of State Ownership on Adjacent Private Lands

The economic base of the general area that includes the Blue Mt. Unit is influenced to a large degree by tourism, outdoor recreation, and forestry. The early settlers were attracted to the area by its natural beauty and abundant fish and wildlife resources. Some individuals capitalized on these natural assets by providing services to the "tourists" who followed. This business has been an important part of the

local economy ever since and is dependent, in part,.on nearby undeveloped State lands.

Various local businesses such as motels, gas stations, restaurants, food stores, and establishments which sell or rent goods or services benefit from the influx of white water rafters, hikers, campers, hunters, fishermen and other recreationists attracted by nearby State lands and waters.

a. Land Resources

To date there have been few economic studies on the impact of State ownership as it affects adjacent private lands or local communities. In many cases, property values of private land next to State holdings are increased by advertising the many benefits of forest preserve lands (Kay, 1985). Landowners seeking privacy and solitude have protection from development of adjacent NYS lands. State lands also provide the unique opportunity of having a "backyard" with no maintenance costs or taxes but with access to various recreational experiences.

Attractions such as the Blue Mt. Trail, Northville-Lake Placid Trail and Lake Durant Campground draw numbers of people into the nearby communities. Public purchase of local goods and services generates recreation dollars whose multiplier effect is felt throughout the surrounding area.

Some negative situations do exist occasionally where private lands adjoin State lands. Noise pollution, trespass, and littering are annoyances that may occur where trailheads and parking lots are in close proximity to private holdings.

b. Wildlife

The economic importance of the game portion of New York's wildlife resources is reflected in the expenditures of sportsmen, the income from furs and hides, and the meat value of game. Additional nonconsumptive use of wildlife (photography, bird watching, etc.) can augment recreational dollars spent in the local area.

c. Fisheries

Quantitative angler use estimates and their economic impact for the Blue Mountain Wild Forest are not available. Angling-related expenditures contribute to the economy of the area and have probably remained stable or increased in the last decade. Pine Lake, First Lake, and Tirrell Pond are popular

fly-in lakes for bush pilots. To date, the Northwoods Club and the Gooley Club, which own or lease portions of the shorelines of Pine Lake and First Lake, have not objected to angler use.

d. Water Resources

Within the Blue Mt. Unit, the most significant water related activity consists of commercial whitewater rafting during the spring and fall seasons. This form of recreation attracts large numbers of people to the local area.

The put-in point for rafting is in the Blue Mt. Unit (Chain Lakes Rd.), while most of the thrill and beauty of the trip occurs on the Hudson River as it flows through the adjacent Hudson Gorge Primitive Area. The financial impacts on the economy of Indian Lake, North Creek, and other nearby communities can be significant. In recent years as many as 22 companies at one time have operated on the route beginning at the Lake Abanakee dam and passing through the Hudson Gorge, conducting between 10,000 and 12,000 customers down the river each year. In 1993, customers paid as much as $80 each for a trip. Currently, up to 1,000 commercial customers (rafters per day) utilize the area primarily on weekends during April to early June. A survey of rafting customers revealed that, on the average, 1-2 days are spent in the area in the course of taking a rafting trip.

The Town of Indian Lake receives revenues from the rafting companies to cover expenses of operating the dam and for insurance coverage. Local people are hired and trained to work as rafting guides, as well. Lake Abanakee shore owners have asserted that water level fluctuations associated with rafting have damaged waterfront property. Local sportsmen complain that northern pike fishing has diminished in Lake Abanakee since the advent of rafting. They blame low water levels in the spring for stranding pike spawn (See Section IV-C-2-b). Rafting is discussed in more detail within the Hudson Gorge Primitive Area Unit Management Plan.

In addition selected waterbodies provide important landing and drop off locations for the float plane pilots in the area. See Section II-E-6-d.

Long Lake Reservoir*: The reservoir site, pipeline.and access roadway encumbers approximately four acres of Forest Preserve lands. An annual rental charge is applied to the Long Lake Water District. Ownership of the underwater land and access road is with the State of New York. Any improvement or rehabilitation requires a DEC permit.

2. Impact of Adjacent Private Lands on State Holdings

a. Land Resources

The private sector's lack of intensive development and commercialism have posed few if any conflicts with nearby State land. Approximately 75 miles of boundary line (50 miles adjacent to one landowner) within the unit abuts private land. Adequate marking on a 5-10 year schedule is necessary in order to prevent timber trespass or illegal structures and roads. An additional 20 miles adjoins public highways or waters and requires forest preserve signage.

Three roads exist over BMWF lands that provide access to adjacent private lands. Use of the Salmon Pond Road has been allowed by DEC under the terms and conditions of a TRP**. Permission has been granted for vehicular use strictly for the ingress and egress of Company officials, employees and duly authorized representatives acting in an official capacity for the purpose of administration of the forest resources or for the removal of timber products from these private lands. A portion of the Clear Pond Road crosses NYS lands and is maintained and utilized by the adjoining private landowner and members of the Gooley Club. Additional information on these roads can be found in Section IV-D-3.

The Adirondack Museum, a nationally acclaimed regional museum of history and art is visited by approximately 100,000 people a year. The close proximity of the Blue Mt. and Tirrell Pond trailhead to this local attraction may encourage increased use of these marked hiking trails.

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*Section 15-1509 of the Environmental Conservation law calls for an annual payment based on a charge of 6% per annum on the value of the State owned lands and rights used. This value to be determined by the DEC and redetermined at ten year intervals. This charge is in addition to an annual charge paid to the State as a reasonable return for services rendered.

**Pursuant to Section 9-0105, Subsection 15, of the Environmental Conservation Law, the DEC can issue temporary revocable permits (TRP's) for the use of forest preserve land for a limited length of time. This landowner has filed a suit-of-action to establish a right-of-way over the Salmon Pond Road.

Several trails within the unit originate on and/or cross private lands. Cooperation with private landowners has resulted in public parking areas with deeded trail easements for certain trails crossing their lands and appropriate public use on trails not covered by easement.

b. Wildlife

Changes in wildlife habitats occur constantly due to natural processes such as succession, blowdown, and disease or human activities such as logging and residential development. These events can impact wildlife species both within and adjacent to the unit.

c. Fisheries

A portion of the trail leading to Bullhead Pond originally crossed posted private land. In 1994 a Forest Legacy project (See Section VIII-F) was completed providing public access to Bullhead Pond.

d. Water Resources

Private land uses on waterfront adjacent to State lands may impact the aquatic resources and water quality of a few lakes within the unit. Problems such as excess weed and algae growth, erosion, sewage, and conflicts between different types of recreational use need to be addressed.

(1) Long Lake Reservoir

The Long Lake Reservoir is located on NYS land in the northern portion of the unit, northwest of Burnt Mt. in the Sandy Creek drainage. This reservoir, under Section 15, Article 1509 of the Environmental Conservation Law, is a legally defined public water supply for the Hamlet of Long Lake. It services approximately 800 people.

This 1.5-acre reservoir is fence-enclosed and includes a cement shelf and dam with water line controls. Ten foot right-of-ways (ROW) exist for the water pipe line (5,225 feet) and access road (5,825 feet) as they cross NYS land.

(2) Lake Abanakee Dam

The dam at Lake Abanakee is operated and controlled by the Town of Indian Lake. Unpredictable releases of water are made in spring and fall months in response to upstream releases of water from the Indian Lake dam by the Hudson River-Black River Water Regulating District. Scheduled releases of water are also made in the spring and fall to accommodate whitewater recreation. Either type of release can dramatically raise water levels in the Indian River and to a lesser extent, in the Hudson River. Sudden increases in water levels may negatively impact stream invertebrate populations and can pose a safety concern for wading anglers.

(3) Lake Adirondack

A local ordinance prohibits the moving of bog mats on Lake Adirondack except to place them behind the log boom (anchored to NYS land under a TRP) in the northwest portion of the lake.

E. Public Use

The proximity to major corridors (Route 28, 30, etc.), central location within the Adirondack Park, and general attractiveness of the area have all contributed to promote public use of the Blue Mt. Unit. A wide variety of recreational opportunities exist with intensity of use dependent on both the type of activity and season of the year.

There are five register booths that sample public use within the Blue Mt. Unit. These facilities are located along two major highways (NYS Route 28/30 and 28N) and are adjacent to marked hiking trails with the exception of the register at the Indian River put-in site. An additional register booth (Tarbell Hill Road) collects information primarily for the High Peaks Wilderness Area.

Public use statistics have been collected from these booths for several years. Although this is the best source of information currently available, register figures tend to be inaccurate due to the reluctance of some users to sign in at trailhead locations. Voluntary trail register compliance percentages can vary depending on register location, time of visit (season, day of week), entry hour, length of stay and group size. The following chart was developed from register logs of the past seven years and provides the only documented use figures. Actual use## is not known.

Marked Trail	Register Location	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993
Northville-Lake Placid	NYS 28N	780	732	691	612	351#	877	721
Blue Mt.	NYS 28N	8595	8696#	6022#	9663	11,013	11,917	11,021
Rock Lake	NYS 28/30	1985	1262	1319	1990	2361	2276	2062
Northville-Lake Placid	NYS 28/30	1349	1026	1040	1329	1400	1574	1465

#This information is incomplete due to missing register pages.
##There are numerous access points along the perimeter of the unit with no accurate way to measure public use via unmarked trails, waterways, bushwhacking, etc.

In the past, the majority of recreational activity occurred in the spring, summer and fall. More recently the area receives use throughout the year as more people enjoy snowmobiling, cross-country skiing and other winter activities.

1. Land Resources

With the exception of the Northville-Lake Placid Trail and the Tirrell Pond area the northern portion of the unit receives only minimal use due to a combination of limited access, rugged terrain, and lack of waterbodies. Public use is primarily concentrated in the southern portion of the unit where most of the facilities are located. The marked and maintained trails receive varying amounts of use depending on the season, day of the week, etc.

2. Wildlife

Data regarding public use of the wildlife resource within the Blue Mt. Unit is generally lacking. This use can be described in two categories; consumptive use in the form of harvest for meat or fur by hunters and trappers, and nonconsumptive use in the form of observations associated with hiking and photography.

Species of wildlife that may be hunted and/or trapped are identified in the Environmental Conservation Law (ECL), Section 11-0903 and 11-0908. The DEC has been given the authority to set season dates and bag limits for all species that may be taken legally. Antlerless deer harvest is prohibited during the regular firearm season but is permitted during the archery season and muzzleloading special season.

With the exception of early bear season and the more readily accessible areas, the northern portion of the unit is not as heavily used by sportsmen during the hunting and trapping seasons. However, the southern portion, with its easier topography and abundance of waters and wetlands, is utilized more consistently every year by people who own camps nearby or by parties that camp in the interior.

Information on harvest is collected for deer, bear, and selected furbearers (beaver, bobcat, coyote, fisher, marten and otter). Appendix 13 lists harvest records for these eight species by township and county. The percentage of Blue Mt. Unit lands within each respective township can be found in Section I-D, Acreage. Since the distribution and abundance of wildlife is habitat related, harvest figures by town are generally not representative of actual harvest or use within the unit. The posting of adjacent private lands would encourage use of nearby public lands.

Past studies by DEC indicate that few sportsmen stop at trailhead registers. This, combined with the fact that many hunters and trappers traditionally use unmarked trails, waterways, float planes, bush-wacking, etc., to enter state lands, prevents an accurate estimate of total visitor use. Information regarding non-consumptive use of wildlife is generally lacking. For the most part, observations of wild-life enhance the recreational experience of the general public.

3. Fisheries

Information about the numbers of anglers who visit the waters of the BMWF is not currently available. However, it is known that fishing ranks as one of the more popular activities in selected waters. Fishing pressure is generally higher on the more readily accessible water bodies with angler use of the unit's streams estimated to be light. The majority of stream fishing activity occurs on the Indian River.

After the trout season opens on April 1, fishing pressure typically peaks in intensity in May when trout can still be found in the cool water near the surface of a pond. Fishing activity declines from late spring through the summer due to formation of a thermocline which causes fish to move to deeper water. The decline of fishing activity which occurs as the summer progresses coincides with an increase in pond use by hikers and campers. Angling on brook trout ponds ceases altogether after the trout season closes on September 30. Warmwater angling on Lake Durant, Lake Adirondack, Lake Abanakee, Lake Francis and Rock Lake peaks in July-August. Ice fishing for tiger muskellunge is practiced on Lake Durant and Rock Lake. Northern pike and yellow perch are sought in the unit's other warmwater lakes during the winter months.

4. Water Resources

Public use of this resource consists of numerous activities that occur throughout the year. The aesthetic qualities of some of interior water bodies (Tirrell Pond, Rock Lake, etc.), along with established tent sites, contributes to the popularity of swimming and camping opportunities during the summer and fall seasons. Watercraft recreation (canoes, boats, etc.) occurs within the unit, with the more readily accessible lakes and ponds (Lake Durant, Lake Adirondack, and Lake Abanakee) generally

receiving the greatest variety and amount of use. The frozen water surface of Lake Durant, Rock Lake, and Lake Adirondack are utilized by snowmobilers for access to the snowmobile trail system.

a. Flatwater

Except for Tirrell Pond, the southern portion of the Blue Mt. Unit contains all the potential recreational water bodies. Current limitations on public use of the forest preserve waters within the unit include the prohibition of mechanically propelled vessels on Rock Lake and Tirrell Pond, storage of personal property (boats, etc.) on State lands, along with other applicable rules and regulations.

Public use information regarding flatwater recreation within the unit has not been collected by DEC. Numerous sites for hand-launching are available on the more popular waters adjacent to the unit (Lake Durant, Lake Abanakee, and Lake Adirondack), with a developed public boat launch site at the Lake Durant Campground (day use fee). Additional use from adjacent private landowners or leasees contributes to the overall use of ponds and lakes within the unit.

b. Whitewater (Additional information in Section VIII-D)

Two watercourses in the southern portion of the unit offer seasonal whitewater recreational opportunities:

(1) Cedar River

Only a portion of this watercourse traverses the unit between the NYS 28/30 bridge to the State boundary near Pine Lake. This river drops 190 feet in its fourteen mile descent to the Hudson River. There are Class III rapids after the junction of the Rock River. Private lands in Essex County along with the lack of a suitable take out point limits the overall recreational potential of this river. The end of the Benton Road can be used for a take-out site for individuals that entered the river from NYS lands adjacent to the Cedar River Road approximately 1.5 miles upstream from the NYS 28/30 bridge. The end of the Benton Road could also serve as a parking area and put-in for a Class III whitewater trip downstream into the Hudson River.

(2) Indian River/Hudson Gorge (From HGPA Draft UMP, 1993).

A vertical drop of more than 500 feet over the 16-mile ride yields class III, IV, and V rapids. With its rare combination of challenging white water and spectacular scenery, this river corridor now attracts customers from several surrounding states and Canada.

Use of the Blue Mt. Unit by commercial rafting outfits is incidental as the wild forest lands and Indian River only provide access to their goal, the Hudson Gorge. For several years, the Town of Indian Lake has kept detailed records of the number of rafting customers who have entered the Hudson Gorge from the waterway access site. According to those figures, use levels peaked in 1986 at more than 12,000 for the year. Since then use has declined slightly and has leveled out between 9,000 and 11,000 customers per year.

The number of customers in a raft on a weekend day averages around seven or eight. Therefore a daily use level of 1,000 people, the maximum allowable under the terms of the current agreement between the Town and DEC, translates to a maximum of about 120 rafts. Commercial use occurs primarily from April through early June on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday corresponding with a two hour water release. Over the spring rafting season, when use levels are much higher than in the fall, weekday use levels seldom exceed 100 customers per day, while on weekend days the average is much higher. On Saturdays the maximum daily limit of 1,000 is often reached, while Sunday levels are usually between one-half and two-thirds the Saturday numbers.

In step with the rise of commercial rafting, the use by privately-owned canoes, kayaks, and rafts continues to increase. After early June, when the Town no longer makes scheduled dam releases, private craft account for nearly all river traffic until scheduled releases begin again in the fall.

The intensity of the use of the area by rafters is largely a matter of access. Of the sites open for public use, the one most easily accessible from a public highway is located off the Chain Lakes Road within the Blue Mountain Wild Forest Area. Although a long stretch of the Indian River is accessible from this town road, the site currently in use is the most practical one and has been designated a waterway access site in accordance with ASLMP guidelines. The Town of Indian Lake manages the waterway access site under a written agreement with DEC (Appendix 14). The Town of Indian Lake purchased 17 acres of land adjacent to the access site for developed public parking and a whitewater staging area. The Town assures that privately-owned river craft may be launched at any time between commercial rafts.

The only other access site used by rafters entering the Indian River is located near the public site on land which is owned by one of the major outfitters. This outfitter launches all his rafts from this private land site. Access to the Hudson River is also possible from Newcomb.

The following chart was developed from register sheet information and official town records for the past six years:

	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
Commercial use	10,171	10,658	9,672	10,927	10,616	10,512
Other use#	376##	471	354	##	##	##

#Approximately 30% of recorded use is from other recreational uses not dealing directly with whitewater trips. Fishing was popular during the spring and summer seasons with day hiking and camping occurring predominantly in the summer and fall. The number of private watercraft is not included in the limit of 1,000 people per day allowed by the Town in accordance with their agreement with DEC.

##This information is incomplete due to missing register pages and/or lack of data.

5. Length of Stay

a. Day Use

Day hiking, picnicking and sightseeing are some of the most popular activities within the unit. Day use can be significant with the greatest amount of activity occurring on the Blue Mt. Trail and along the Indian River during whitewater rafting seasons. The popularity of snowmobile use has declined on some area trails due to the lack of trail grooming recently due to weather and trail conditions (rough rocky sections, flooding from beaver activity, etc).

b. Overnight Use

The majority of camping activity within the unit consists of small groups and occurs at popular waterfront locations; primarily on summer and fall weekends. An additional portion of public camping activity is regulated by DEC permit. An accounting of this overnight use includes:

(1) Group Camping Permits (within the Blue Mt. Unit)

Groups of ten or more camping on State land one or more nights, are required to obtain a camping permit. These permits for the 1989* camping season are summarized below:

Number of Groups (Permits Issued): 13

Number of Visitors: 152

Duration of Stay: Range: 1-39 nights
(Stays exceeding 14 days occurred in the fall.)

Group Size: Range: 10-16 individuals

Permits are issued by individual ranger districts on a first come, first served basis. Forest rangers direct groups to camp in specific areas where they will impart the least environmental impact. Interior group campsites are few in number and limited by useable terrain. Regional policy limits group size in wild forest areas to no larger than 20 individuals. Occasional requests from larger groups will be addressed under a TRP.

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*Overall, group camping occurred mainly in the summer and was concentrated near Tirrell Pond. The majority of this use was from Deerfoot Lodge, a youth camp.

(2) Individual Camping Permits (within the Blue Mt. Unit)

Small groups (less than ten individuals) camping in the same location four or more consecutive nights also require a Department permit. In 1989*, 14 individual camping permits were issued. Popular camping locations included:

PONDS	LAKES	RIVERS
Corner	Lake Durant	Indian
Tirrell	First Lake	Rock
Pine Lake		
Rock Lake		

6. Recreational activities (See Level of Use Section; Additional public use involving the fish, wildlife and water resources was discussed in the previous sections)

a. Hiking/Backpacking

This activity is fairly popular with marked trails in both portions of the unit. The greatest amount of use occurs on the Blue Mt. Trail; with additional use on portions the Northville-Lake Placid Trail, Tirrell Pond Trail, and the Rock Lake Trail.

b. Snowmobiling

With the exception of a small segment of trail near Deerland, public snowmobiling on State land is limited to the southern portion of the unit where the marked trails are located. Parts of the existing trails have rocky sections and places with steep grades. Over the last few years, this combination of rugged trail conditions, poor snowfall, and flooding from beaver activity has limited the grooming activity by the Town of Indian Lake. The lack of maintenance has discouraged public use with only a small number of snowmobilers estimated to use the main trail segment from Indian Lake to Lake Durant. Registered use statistics are not available due to the lack of registration booths in the Indian Lake or Lake Durant areas.

c. Nordic Skiing

The only marked cross-country ski trail within the unit begins in the vicinity of the Indian Lake

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*The majority of these permits occurred in September, October and November, the months of the early black bear and regular big game seasons.

Landfill and ends below the summit of McGinn Mountain. The lack of adequate maintenance (blowdown removal, missing markers, poor location, etc.) on sections of this trail has tended to discourage use. Additional skiing activity occurs on the hiking and/or snowmobile trails in the vicinity of Rock Lake, Blue Mt., and the Cedar River.

d. Float planes

Many of the remote waterbodies within the Blue Mt. Unit receive virtually no foot traffic due to their distance from public roads. Aircraft can provide an alternate type of entry into these otherwise inaccessible areas. Float plane use occurs predominantly during the spring fishing and fall hunting seasons on Tirrell Pond, Pine Lake, and First Lake.

Commercial float plane operators in the Adirondack Park have a good reputation for encouraging their passengers to be respectful of the environment. The majority of this use is from local bush pilots who provide outfitter service, but some private aircraft utilize the area. The presence of float planes can aid in detecting forest fires and dealing with other emergencies in situations where land vehicles are useless. They are also utilized on a contractual basis in the maintenance of remote facilities and to fly aerial fire detection flights when necessary.

e. Other Uses

There are no marked horse trails within the unit, with trail riding (snowmobile trails, old roads, unmarked paths) occurring infrequently in the southern portion of the unit. The rugged topography and the lack of suitable trails in the northern portion of the unit has discouraged public use by both horseback and/or all terrain bicycle riders.

7. Level of Use

As compared to overall public use within the Adirondack Park, intensity of use within the unit can best be described as light to moderate. An examination of level of use within the unit follows.

a. Areas sustaining apparent low use include:

(1) Fishing Brook Range

(2) East Inlet Mt. Range

b. Areas sustaining apparent light to moderate use include:

(1) Northville-Lake Placid Trail (NYS 28/30-Tarbell Hill Rd.)

This section of trail follows stream courses, lake basins and steep ridges. Approximately 12% of this "long trail" traverses the Blue Mt. Unit. A combination of steep rugged terrain, limited access, and lack of lakes and ponds may explain the overall low public use of this trail section. The majority of use consists of day use, with some overnight camping occurring in the vicinity of Tirrell Pond. It is estimated that between 200 to 400 people hike through the unit on the trail annually.

(2) Lake Durant Area (Old Route 30, Ball diamond area)

These areas within the unit in close proximity to Lake Durant have been popular locations for camping and day use activities. Car top launching of watercraft also occurs.

(3) Chain Lakes Road

Seasonal camping activity occurs on primitive tent sites located between the road and the river. Fishing activity is also popular in the spring and early summer.

(4) Benton Road Day Use Area

Overnight camping is prohibited in this area. See Section V-1-b-(1). Current use of the area consists of picnicking, swimming, and other day use activities.

(5) Ponds along the Essex/Hamilton County line

First Lake, Pine Lake, and Grassy Pond are not accessible from any marked trails or public highways. Float plane flights enable public recreation to occur on these remote NYS lands and waters.

(6) Pelon Road (Indian Lake Landfill)

The lack of public use data regarding access via town and private lands prevents an accurate estimate of use from this location. The majority of use occurs in the winter on the marked snowmobile and Nordic Ski trails. Public use to the north is affected by the unbridged crossing of the Cedar River.

c. Areas sustaining apparent moderate to heavy use include:

(1) Blue Mt. Summit (Data from 1987 register sheets, more recent information was incomplete or not available for examination.)

An examination of the register pages for the Blue Mountain Trail indicated that at least 8595 people utilized this trail in 1987. The prime season extended from 6/1/87 through 10/1/87 and accounted for 80% of the yearly use figure. Overall, day-use figures for this 120-day season were low in early summer with the greatest use occurring on the weekends and holidays. Upwards of 300 individuals signed in on peak days. Actual use on these popular days may have ranged from 500 to 600 people. Information from Chris Saunders (1994 Blue Mt. Summit seasonal Intern/Guide) documented that most visitors arrive between 11 am and 2 pm with Friday, Saturday and Sunday being peak days. People from every state except Alaska were observed along with several nationalities; especially Canadians. Approximately 80% of visitors were tourists, 17% summer people and 3% locals.

(2) Tirrell Pond

This area is a popular swimming, camping, fishing, and hiking location. The concentration of public use particularly at the north end of this pond results from the combination of attractive natural setting and developed facilities. Several primitive tent sites are located near the water with leantos on both the north and south sides of the pond.

The area receives use not only from hikers on the Northville-Lake Placid and Tirrell Pond trails, but recreationists from nearby camps on private land in addition to float plane trips.

(3) Rock Lake

Access to this large interior waterbody is readily available by either a .7 or 1 mile hike from NYS Route 28/30 via the Rock Lake Trail or the Rock River Trail respectively. Several primitive tent sites can be found.

(4) Indian River (seasonal)

While camping activity occasionally occurs on the primitive tent sites near the Chain Lakes Road, the area adjacent to the put-in site receives the greatest public use activity due to commercial rafting.

8. Public Easements

Public use of some adjacent private lands is provided through easements and is limited to specific trail corridors. In addition, certain activities such as camping, building of fires, fishing, and hunting are not permitted on these lands.

The easements are subject to the landowners right to:

"use the premises at any and all times for the purpose of conducting logging or lumbering operations for the removal of logs and wood from the premises" or to suspend the easement "during any period of time when the exercising thereof shall unduly subject the forests, thru which the said described trail passes, to danger from destruction by fire."

Upon notification of forest harvesting activity signs are erected on these trails to inform the public.

SUMMARY

Determination of public use is based upon a combination of register information, camping permits, and field observations. Information collected for 1993 indicated that over 15,000 people registered for some type of activity within the unit. An additional 10,000 are known to have utilized the Indian River either on commercial rafting trips or private recreational activity. Actual use within the Blue Mt. Unit may approach upwards of 50,000 individuals per year.

F. Capacity of the Resource to Withstand Use

Carrying capacity is defined as (Hendee, 1990): "The amount, kind, and distribution of use that can occur without leading to unacceptable impacts on either the physical and/or biological resource or the available experience."

This capacity of the resource to withstand use is very much site related and is dependent on a variety of factors (type and intensity of use, physical conditions, biological resources, etc.) at any specific location. The presence of trails, bodies of water or waterways, and scenic qualities tend to concentrate use within a given area of land. Evidence of extensive litter, erosion, compacted soils, obliterated ground cover or the absence of certain wildlife and fish species, all signs of overuse or improper use, are generally lacking within the unit.

One or more such conditions have been identified in some of the more popular locations. However these impacts tend to be limited to small areas. It can be concluded that, with few exceptions, the level of use within the Blue Mt. Unit is not presently exceeding the capacity of the natural resources to withstand use.

1. Land Resources

Public use and associated impacts over the total acreage of State lands within the unit is minimal. Potential problem areas include:

(1) Blue Mountain

A combination of factors (lack of parking, private land conflicts, etc.) resulted in a trail relocation for the beginning portion of the Blue Mt. Trail in 1983. The natural process of erosion was aggravated by soil compaction and disturbance due a combination of insufficient drainage control and increasing public use on the thin soils. The volume and velocity of water runoff quickly damaged portions of the trail treadway. Recent trail stabilization and reconstruction efforts in 1988 and 1989 has helped mitigate these resource impacts.

Vandalism to the observer's cabin and firetower occurred in 1992. DEC presence at the summit has been limited in recent years due to the lack of funding for a firetower observer position. In 1994 a student intern worked from July 5 through August 21 as a summit guide on Blue Mountain.

(2) Tirrell Pond

Natural sand beach areas tend to attract both campers and day users to the northwest portion of the pond. The pond is utilized by large groups camping in the area throughout the summer. Human waste disposal is a concern at this location, with minimal suitable camping or privy locations available nearby. Problems such as loss of vegetation, soil compaction, and illegal tree cutting occur in the vicinity of both leantos. There is also concern over illegal camping and fires on the beach area at the north end of the pond.

(3) Rock Lake

Easy access, attractive setting, and a good fishery have encouraged public use of this waterbody. Resource impacts have been minimal.

(4) Indian River Put-in Site

Under current conditions, the only area within the unit impacted by rafting activity which is susceptible to physical damage is the launch site on the Chain Lakes Road. Because it is the only practicable public launch site, it sustains heavy use. The Town of Indian Lake manages the site under agreement with DEC and is authorized to maintain it against erosion by applying wood chips and/or installing water bars. Current use of the access site appears to be within the ability of the resource to withstand use.

In the past commercial rafting customers were bussed to the launch site to assure that no parking problem developed near the access site. The few shoulder parking areas available were utilized by the private boat owners who must also use the same access site. On busy weekends as many as 50 vehicles have been parked along Chain Lakes Road at one time. The availability of safe parking was limited and did not accommodate use levels. The recent acquisition of 17 acres by the Town of Indian Lake across from the access site will provide suitable facilities for public parking.

(5) Lake Durant Area

Of some concern is the increasing use of the old highway section on the north shore of Lake Durant. Existing water levels and wetlands adjacent to both sides of the road, limit any appropriate pit privy locations. Designation of primitive tent sites has controlled some past problems associated with overnight use of the area.

(6) Benton Road Day Use Area

The prohibition of overnight camping has eliminated most of the past problems associated with improper use of the area. Minimal maintenance has contributed to the deterioration of the pit privy and fireplaces. There continues to be a concern over litter at this location.

2. Wildlife

The impact of public use on most wildlife species within the unit is unknown. While impacts appeared to be minimal for the handful of game species monitored, some wildlife species can be vulnerable to disturbance associated with public recreational activity. One species in this category is the common loon.

Nests along shore or on islands are more susceptible to human disturbance if boats or canoes can be carried readily into lakes occupied by loons. Nests along shore are more susceptible to human disturbance where trails follow the shore of a lake (Titus, 1978). However, nest desertion or mortality of newly hatched young will only occur when the incubating adult is forced to leave the nest or newly hatched young are inconsiderately harassed by people. At present, loons are known to nest on Rock

Lake and Third Lake. Feeding adults are sometimes observed on other ponds in the unit.

The Bureau of Wildlife monitors the populations of game species partly by compiling and analyzing harvest statistics, thereby quantifying the effects of consumptive wildlife use (Appendix 13). The narrow range of variation in annual harvest numbers, along with regular season regulations (bucks only), demonstrate little impact on the reproductive capacity of a deer population. Overall, deer populations within the unit are capable of withstanding current and anticipated levels of consumptive use. An analysis of black bear harvest figures, along with a study of the age composition of harvested bears, indicates that hunting has little impact on the reproductive capacity of the bear population. Under existing regulations, the unit's bear population is capable of withstanding current and anticipated levels of consumptive use.

Several legislative changes have occurred during the past several years that likely have had impacts on use of the area by hunters. Both hunting of bears by using bait and by using dogs have been prohibited, probably lowering use by bear hunters. Use by deer hunters probably has increased because of two legislative changes, one allowing successful archers to purchase a second tag for use during the regular firearms season and similar legislation allowing successful muzzleloader hunters the same privilege.

The Bureau of Wildlife monitors furbearer harvest by requiring trappers to tag the pelts of beaver, bobcat, coyote, fisher, marten, and otter. Beaver and fisher can be susceptible to over-harvest to a degree directly related to market demand and ease of access.

While detrimental impacts to game populations over a large area is unlikely, wildlife biologists continually monitor harvests, with special attention to beaver, fisher, and marten. Specific regulations are changed when necessary to protect furbearer populations.

3. Fisheries

DEC angling regulations are designed to preserve fish populations in individual waters by preventing over exploitation. In addition to angling regulations, factors at work in the BMWF which serve to limit use include the remoteness of ponds from roads and the seasonal nature of angling in cold-water ponds.

The abundance of competing and predacious fish species has limited natural brook trout production in some BMWF waters (see Section II-A-2-c). Tirrell Pond, Grassy Pond, and Little Grassy Pond are the only waters in the unit with sufficient natural reproduction to maintain viable brook trout populations. Under existing angling regulations, the trout populations of stocked and NSA ponds are capable of withstanding current and anticipated levels of angler use.

The warmwater species found in the unit have proven to be able to sustain themselves under existing regulations without the need for stocking, except for tiger muskellunge in Lake Durant.

DEC monitors the effectiveness of angling regulations, stocking policies and other management activities by conducting periodic biological and chemical surveys. Based on analysis of biological survey results, angling regulations may be changed as necessary to protect the fish populations of the BMWF.

4. Water Resources

In addition to the social and economic impacts, physical changes due to fluctuating water levels, sewage problems, and excessive weed or algae growth can impact the biological component of this natural resource. A genuine need exists to safeguard this resource by insuring that the scale and intensity of water-oriented uses are within the capabilities of the resource to withstand this use. Appropriate sections and corridors of wild, scenic, and recreational rivers within the unit will be managed in accordance with ASLMP guidelines.

a. Flatwater

The socially acceptable "carrying capacity"* of a body of water is that point, beyond which the number of boats on the water's surface, on an instantaneous basis, begins to degrade the aesthetic qualities of the boating experience for all.

Actual carrying capacity varies with the biological capabilities, environmental setting, adjacent land uses, user characteristics, and management intent of each waterbody. In the absence of an analysis of these factors a minimum of five to 10 acres per craft (Wenger, 1984) will be used as a guideline for

*Various State and National studies indicate that the boating experience begins to degrade from an acceptable level with a range of boat densities from one craft for each seven and one-half to 20 acres of water surface (Draft EIS and UMP; Broadalbin Boat Launch Facility, 1989).

waters in a forested setting that share mixed recreational use. This guideline allows for safety, while minimizing user conflicts and shoreline impacts.

(1) Lake Durant

The shoreline of this lake is state owned with portions of the lake containing numerous small wild forest islands. The southern shoreline is classified as wilderness on the west and intensive use (Lake Durant Campground) on the east. Assuming an acceptable level of boat density of one watercraft per ten acres of water surface (Wenger, 1984), the carrying capacity for Lake Durant (293 acres) would be approximately 29 boats. Present observed use has been lower than this level, with the majority of boat entry from the adjacent state campground. Use of the developed boat launch is subject to a service charge when the campground is in operation. Numerous small islands, submerged rocks, stumps, etc., and other navigational hazards limit the safe use of larger boats and motors in this lake.

Specific carrying capacities have not been determined for the other larger waterbodies that adjoin the Blue Mt. Unit. The shorelines of Lake Abanakee and Lake Adirondack are mostly privately owned, with water-oriented recreation generally regulated by local ordinance and zoning.

b. Whitewater

Impacts associated with rafting on the physical resources of the Indian and Hudson river corridor, and on the wild character of the area have become subjects of controversy. A permitted maximum of 1,000 rafting customers per day was established in 1985. See Section III-A-4-b.

(1) Indian River/Hudson Gorge

The areas along Chain Lakes Road and the Indian River receive heavy seasonal day use from whitewater recreationists. The daily release of water from the Lake Abanakee dam which occurs during the spring and fall rafting seasons may also impact the ecology of the river corridor, affecting shoreline plants, fish populations and the safety of fishermen.

Because the dam releases only last for two hours, the entire daily river traffic of up to 1,000 customers is confined to that time. While such concentration of use maximizes the rate at which rafts pass a given point on the river, it also confines raft encounters to a limited time, so that except for the occasional passage of individually owned craft, the river returns to normal after the bubble following the dam release subsides.

(2) Lake Abanakee

Local sportsmen have blamed springtime-rafting water releases for ruining the northern pike fishery on Lake Abanakee. A 1992 DEC fisheries survey of Lake Abanakee does not support this contention. However, regional fisheries staff are opposed to any extension of the current rafting season because bass and sunfish spawning may be impacted (See Section IV-C-2-b).

5. Length of Stay

The following assumptions and calculations were made to obtain an approximation of public use capacity within the Blue Mt. Unit. Day use and overnight activity were used as the major indices.

a. Day Use Capacity

Unlike overnight capacity, the ASLMP has no guidelines for day use activities. Day use generally does not impact an area at the same level as overnight use. However, specific areas close to access points and popular physical attractions can be significantly impacted. Signs of overuse include overcrowded parking, widespread litter and trampled vegetation. Within the unit, the trail to the Blue Mountain Fire Tower and the summit itself; along with the Indian River put-in site receive the heaviest day use. Both areas have received management attention to stabilize the resource to accommodate use.

b. Overnight Capacity

The overnight capacity of the unit is almost entirely water related and has not been inventoried. A calculated inventory follows:

(1) Small bodies of water, here defined as less than 100 surface acres in size, had hypothetical camping sites assigned, taking into account total surface acreage, shoreline irregularity and campsite location practicality, usually relating to site wetness.

(2) Large bodies of water, 100 surface acres or more in size, were assigned hypothetical camping sites utilizing the ASLMP guidelines.

(3) Hypothetical camping sites were assigned along suitable shoreline areas of the Indian, Rock and Cedar Rivers.

Using these procedures, 30 bodies of water and three rivers were evaluated taking into account the two existing leanto sites. A total of 60 potential primitive campsites were hypothetically identified. The Adirondack State Land Master Plan definition for primitive tent sites limits camping groups to a maximum of eight people per tent site. These sites can be grouped to accommodate for a maximum of 20 individuals in suitable locations. If a full complement of 8 people camped overnight on all the hypothetical tent sites, a total of 480 individuals could be accommodated in the Blue Mt. Unit on any

given night. However, when one considers specific sites and average group sizes of three to four individuals, the expected overnight use for this area would be reduced.

The majority of general overnight use within the unit occurs on summer weekends. The area also receives significant camping activity mid-week by organized youth groups such as Deerfoot Lodge. The most popular location is Tirrell Pond.

6. Recreational activities

a. Hiking/Backpacking

Intensive trail maintenance facilities (bog bridging, dry tread, etc.) on problem areas enable this activity to occur on marked DEC trails with few if any environmental impacts.

b. Snowmobiling/Nordic Skiing

The carrying capacity for snowmobile trails is more subjective. Within the unit the present observed snowmobile use on the 17.5 miles of marked trails is well below use in neighboring areas like Speculator, Long Lake, etc. The majority of this use is by local residents and landowners. The lack of use has been due in part to the current trail conditions (rocky, beaver activity, poor snowfall) discouraging grooming activity by the town. The lack of grooming has subsequently lowered snowmobile use on specific trail sections within the unit.

A cushion of snow tends to prevent resource degradation, with snowmobile impacts generally limited to sociological factors such as improper use, noise, safety, and conflicts with other recreational activity (cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, etc.).

c. Float plane Use

The use and management guidelines (ASLMP) allow appropriate float plane use in wild forest areas. Negative impacts such as noise pollution tend to be minor and of short duration. The limited number of local float plane pilots along with a selection of suitable waterbodies in other units tend to prevent overuse of any specific water.

d. Rafting/Angler Interaction

Although anglers reported being surprised by rapid rises in river level when the Town began making regular dam releases to accommodate rafting, most fishermen have adapted to the predictable rises in river level during the rafting season. In addition, the town has posted a warning sign on Chain Lakes Road for the benefit of fishermen and others who would enter the unit.

e. Other Uses

The number of horse and/or all terrain bicycle* users is not known, but is estimated to be small. Although the number of individuals participating may be insignificant in terms of total visitor use, resource impacts and/or user conflicts can be proportionately high when compared to other recreational activities.

III. MANAGEMENT PHILOSOPHY

Since the creation of the Forest Commission in 1885, the Adirondack Forest Preserve has been administered by the predecessors of the Department of Environmental Conservation. Within the Preserve, the activities of this succession of State agencies included protection against forest fires and timber trespass, management of fish and game, and the development of recreational facilities such as trails and leantos.

The current management of the natural resources within the Blue Mt. Unit must conform to a number of constitutional, legislative, and policy constraints affecting the Forest Preserve in general and designated "wild forest"** areas in particular.

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*The quality and suitability of ATB use (Kellogg, 1991) relates to resource impacts, safety, and user conflicts. Potential environmental damage can occur on susceptible soils or on slopes in excess of 15 percent. Of some concern is the effect of lineal tracks which can lead to increased channelling and water runoff. Safety may be a concern where trails are steep, winding, or have limited visibility. User conflicts can occur on popular trails utilized by other recreationists.

**With the passage of the Adirondack Park Agency Act in 1971, the Adirondack Park Agency was authorized to classify state lands and establish management guidelines for each particular classification. APA is responsible for reviewing unit management plans prepared by the DEC for compliance with Adirondack State Land Master Plan guidelines.

[1] Section one of Article XIV of the NYS Constitution

[2] The New York State Environmental Conservation Law and associated rules and regulations

[3] The Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan

[4] Established DEC policies and procedures

[5] The State Environmental Quality Review Act

A. Past and Present Management

1. Land Resources

The initial management activities undertaken by the DEC in this area were to protect the Forest Preserve from fire and trespass. The fire observation tower on the summit of Blue Mountain was constructed in 1917 as the DEC improved its forest fire suppression activities with early detection capabilities.

Recreational management soon followed as the Adirondack Mountain Club, in 1922 or 1923, laid out and marked the Northville-Lake Placid Trail, a portion of which crosses this unit. The original trail through this section went along the unpaved, dusty road from Blue Mt. Lake to Long Lake. When the road was paved, the present trail was developed. Trail work was done by the Boy Scouts of the Schenectady Council under the supervision of the Conservation Department (Now the DEC). The two original leantos, one on either end of Tirrell Pond, were erected in 1937. The leanto on the north end was replaced in 1987.

The 1950 blowdown, which created severe fire danger conditions, led to an attorney general's opinion that the down material could be sold to lessen the fire hazard. This opinion gave rise to Chapter 6 laws of 1951 allowing controlled salvage of wind damaged trees. Construction of low standard access roads in the vicinity of Salmon Pond, Tirrell Pond, Lake Adirondack and Mt. Sabattis followed. These roads were utilized for blowdown removal and subsequently were closed. Evidence of these roads along with changes in vegetative cover types where the blowdown created large openings are still visible in the area.

In 1957, the US government appropriated Forest Preserve lands* on the summit of Blue Mountain to construct a radar facility used in the national defense. This facility was closed and the lands returned to the State in 1968. The improvements were removed and the site was converted to a communications facility presently used by DEC Law Enforcement, Fire Management, and Administration, the Division of State Police, Department of Transportation, the Hamilton County Sheriff, Emergency Medical Services**, and Highway Departments and a public radio station WSLU.

Snowmobiling became popular in the early 1960's and trails were soon laid out and marked for this use. As recreational use grew, parking became a problem and informal parking areas developed through use. Developed locations were later constructed as follows:

Route 28/30 (3) - 1976

Blue Mountain - 1984

Tarbell Hill Road - 1978

Route 28N - 1978

A DEC brochure (Trails in the Blue Mountain Lake Region) was developed and recently updated (December, 1991). This publication (See Appendix Insert 7) identifies some unit trails along with facilities on adjacent NYS land.

Interior Maintenance

Traditionally, monitoring, management and enforcement of DEC rules and regulations, and the maintenance of interior facilities had been the responsibility of the forest ranger force. Reorganization of the Conservation Department in 1972 created the DEC with all maintenance and rehabilitation projects then transferred to the new Department's Division of Operations.

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*One parcel of .22 acre was used for the radar installation, and another two acres included the road and right-of-way for access. The adjoining landowner deeded a perpetual easement and right-of-way from Route 10 to the NYS lands. The station was under the jurisdiction of 764th Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron, St. Albans Air Force Station, St. Albans, Vermont. The lands and right-of-way over the private landowner were later transferred to NYS.

**A TRP was issued in 1992 to allow for the installation of an emergency medical service radio repeater on the DEC radio tower. This temporary permit is contingent upon the completion of a tower loading study to assess any impacts to the structure or interference with existing communication equipment.

The Division of Operations continues its maintenance responsibilities for the Blue Mt. Unit from a work center in Indian Lake. Budget constraints and manpower restrictions have limited maintenance in recent years to necessary repairs or replacement of leantos, pit privies and bridges, along with the brushing and signing of trails.

Volunteer trail work has been accomplished at various times in the past. Recent work projects by the Adirondack Mountain Club have occurred on the Blue Mountain Trail (1988 and 1989) and the Northville-Lake Placid Trail (1990, 1991 and 1993). In 1990 both leanto's within the unit were placed in the ADK Adopt-a-leanto program. In addition the towns of Indian Lake and Long Lake (under a TRP) have performed limited maintenance and grooming on some area snowmobile trails.

2. Wildlife

The foundation for wildlife management in New York is embodied in Article 11 of the Environmental Conservation Law. Article 11 authorizes DEC to insure the perpetuation of wildlife species and their habitats and to regulate hunting and trapping through the issuance of licenses, the establishment of hunting and trapping seasons and manner of taking, and the setting of bag limits. On Forest Preserve lands, natural processes alone may determine the characteristics of wildlife habitat; therefore, the only wildlife management activities which may be conducted are: (a) regulation of hunting and trapping; (b) control of nuisance wildlife; (c) surveys and inventories; and (d) species reintroduction.

a. Hunting and Trapping Regulations

Regulations controlling season dates, method of taking, and bag limits for wildlife have been the principal wildlife management techniques applied to unit lands. Early regulations were written consistent for all of northern New York (equivalent to the Northern Zone). More recently, DEC has subdivided the state into numerous Deer Management Units (DMU) for big game and Wildlife Management Units (WMU) for small game and furbearers. Each unit was defined according to its distinctive ecological and social characteristics. The Blue Mt. Unit lies within DMU 28 and 22 and WMU 24., Decisions concerning wildlife management are ordinarily based upon these management units which are typically larger than individual forest preserve units. The Blue Mt. Unit occupies a

relatively small portion of the larger forest stands and landforms within DMU 28 and 22 and WMU 24.

Waterfowl seasons are largely established by Federal authority, but states have some flexibility for season modifications within the Federal framework.

b. Nuisance Wildlife Policy

The Bureau of Wildlife investigates nuisance wildlife complaints on a case-by-case basis. However, the DEC does not actively control nuisance wildlife except when the behavior of wildlife is deemed to threaten the lives of visitors.

No major conflicts between visitors to the unit and resident wildlife have been reported. Beaver activity occasionally floods trails in the unit. Visitors must find suitable routes around obstructed trails.

c. Surveys and Inventories

Over the years, both game and non-game species of wildlife and significant wildlife habitats have been the subjects of various surveys and inventories conducted by DEC and others.

Annual flights through the Adirondacks to inventory active osprey nests and to determine nesting success are conducted by the Bureau of Wildlife. Periodically, DEC and private agencies have surveyed common loon populations in the State. DEC's last loon survey was completed in 1985.

A cumulative effort from 1980 to 1985 conducted by numerous individuals resulted in the compilation of The Atlas of Breeding Birds in New York State.

Maps showing the locations of rare species and exemplary natural communities have been created and are continually updated by New York's Natural Heritage Program. Significant habitats within the unit are described in Section II-A-2-b-(7).

d. Species Restoration

A number of wildlife species once native to the Adirondacks were extirpated either directly or indirectly as a result of human activities. In recent years, recognizing the desirability of at least partially restoring the composition of wildlife species originally present in the Adirondacks, DEC and others have launched projects to reintroduce the peregrine falcon, bald eagle, and Canada lynx.

DEC began an effort to reintroduce the peregrine falcon to the Adirondacks in 1981 by implementing a method of artificially rearing and releasing young birds to the wild called "hacking." Between 1983 and 1985, 55 bald eagles were also hacked within the Adirondack region. No nesting activity by either species has been discovered within the unit since the start of the hacking program.

The SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, through the Adirondack Wildlife program, has initiated an experimental project to reintroduce the Canada lynx to the Adirondack High Peaks region. Lynx were first released in 1989; with a total of 83 animals released by the spring of 1991.

3. Fisheries

Fish management in the BMWF has emphasized brook trout restoration through reclamation and stocking programs.

Blue Mountain Wild Forest waters have been subject to the general angling regulations of the state. The use of fish as bait has been prohibited in area trout ponds to minimize the likelihood of bait pail introduction of competing and/or exotic fish species. Bullhead Pond was reclaimed with rotenone in 1951 and 1991. No unit waters have been limed. Five named ponds in the BMWF were surveyed by the Adirondack Lake Survey Corporation in 1987. Additionally, the DEC surveyed 10 waters in 1991. Historical data is available for 16 waters in the unit. Section VII-D and Appendices 2 and 3 present pond-specific survey and management data for all BMWF waters.

Very little active fishery management has been undertaken on streams within the BMWF other than stocking of the Indian and Cedar Rivers. Few streams in the unit have received biological surveys.

4. Water Resources

In the late 1960's, the New York State Water Resources Commission sought to construct dams; Gooley No. 1 near the confluence of the Indian and Hudson Rivers, and Kettle Mountain Dam, a few miles downstream. These dams would have flooded approximately 14,500 acres of land, including 30 miles of the Hudson River, and portions of the Town of Newcomb, to provide water for the New York City area. This proposal was defeated and Article 15 of the Environmental Conservation Law now

prohibits the construction of any dams on the upper Hudson :

"...no reservoirs for any purpose shall hereafter be constructed on the Upper Hudson River in the Adirondack Park between Luzerne and the river's source, the Boreas River from its mouth to Durgin, the Indian River from its mouth to Abanakee Dam, and the Cedar River from its mouth to the Cedar River Flow, by the State or by any river regulating board".

a. Flatwater

Several waterbodies within the Blue Mt. Unit are the result of man made impoundments. In 1931, a reservoir to supply the village of Long Lake was established. Dams were also constructed on Lake Adirondack and Lake Durant in the 1930's, while the dam at Lake Abanakee was not finished until 1951. Lake Abanakee was developed by the Town of Indian Lake for water supply and recreational use with the dam located approximately one mile north of NYS Route 28.

b. Whitewater (Information from 1992 Draft HGPA-UMP, Rick Fenton)

People in rubber rafts began braving the Hudson River Gorge as early as the 1950's. The popularity of white water boating did not blossom until, in 1979, a rafting company from Maine turned the thrill of riding the springtime rush of the Hudson River* into a paying proposition. From then on the guided white water rafting business grew into one of the area's major tourist businesses. In 1985, 22 companies with headquarters as far away as Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maine, and Canada conducted more than 10,000 people on the 16-mile trip from the Indian River to the hamlet of North River.

The Town of Indian Lake operates a dam on the Indian River which impounds Lake Abanakee. The Indian River flows into the Hudson River three miles from the dam. Originally the Town made periodic releases from the dam as necessary to regulate the level of Lake Abanakee in coordination with releases from the Indian Lake dam upstream. After the first rafting companies approached the Indian Lake Chamber of Commerce, the Town agreed to schedule daily dam releases to accommodate the rafting business.

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*As the early river drivers knew, the natural flow of the Hudson River in the spring is powerful and unpredictable. The early spring flows are too dangerous to be attempted by watercraft of any kind. However by late spring, the water level can be too low. Because large rafting companies rely upon customer reservations often made months in advance, the unregulated Indian/Hudson Rivers probably could not have supported this business. Fortunately for the rafting companies, a solution to the problem of fluctuating water levels was found.

In the spring of 1980 the Town began opening the flood gates on weekends for a period of two hours each morning, creating a "bubble" which increased the water level of the Indian River about two feet and raised the Hudson River about six inches. Rafting companies could now rely on a schedule of daily flow levels sufficient for rafting, allowing them to book trips far in advance. As word spread and the popularity of rafting on the Hudson River increased, more rafting companies arrived to share in the business. Increasing business led to greater competition between companies over the order at the "put-in" site during the two-hour release period, and increased pressure on the Town to keep the dam open longer.

In 1981 the rafting outfitters, the Town of Indian Lake, and DEC met to discuss rafting issues. As a consequence the outfitters voluntarily joined to form the Hudson River Professional Outfitters Association, cooperating to set training standards for white water guides, establishing the order of entry at the put-in site, and setting a limit for each member outfitter. The Association paid the Town for operating the Lake Abanakee dam. Despite these early cooperative efforts, some conflicts and congestion occurred at the put-in*, compelling the Town to move for regulating access to the river.

After meetings and discussions between 1982 and 1985 including DEC, the Town, and the rafting companies, a number of additional actions were taken in an effort to improve the management of rafting activity. In 1982, DEC issued a temporary revocable permit granting the Town authority to control the use of the access site. In 1985, the launch site (Lot 132, Township 17, T&C Purchase) was officially designated a waterway access site (Appendix 14) in order to allow it to be better managed and regulated.

*The most practical launch site; the one at which virtually all traffic enters the Indian River, is located on Blue Mt. Wild Forest lands. The Town expressed interest in exercising control over the use of the launch site. This was due to the fact that the Town operated the Lake Abanakee Dam. Indian Lake also benefits by the influx of rafters directly by collecting fees from the rafting companies and indirectly in the increased trade which rafting customers generated for local businesses.

In 1985, DEC authorized the Town's control of the waterway access site under the terms of a written agreement. The current agreement* between the Town and DEC does not discuss the length of the spring and fall rafting seasons. The agreement between the outfitters and the Town does specify a spring season lasting until the third weekend in June and a fall season beginning the first week in September. The outfitter/Town agreement has varied over the years and is renegotiated every three years. Some outfitters have expressed a desire to extend the rafting season throughout the summer months. DEC does not support such an extension due to deleterious effects this may have on late-spring/early-summer spawning fish populations (See Section IV-C-2-b).

5. Citizens' Advisory Committee

In 1986 a citizens' advisory committee composed of up to 13 members representing a wide variety of interest groups met several times to discuss the Blue Mountain Wild Forest and the Hudson Gorge Primitive Area. The two units were joined due to their geographical proximity and because the major launch site for Hudson Gorge rafting trips is located on lands within the Blue Mountain Wild Forest Area. The committee was charged with identifying issues needing management action and making management recommendations to the DEC. A listing of the committee recommendations follows:

a. Establish a cross-country ski trail in the vicinity of the Northville-Lake Placid trailhead on Route 28N. Construct a leanto at the southern end of the proposed trail.

b. Provide information and education facilities in conjunction with the Blue Mt. Trail.

c. Acquire permanent easements on all trails crossing private lands.

d. Investigate the possibility of handicapped facilities at Rock Lake and Lake Durant.

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*The agreement set forth a limit of 1,000 rafting customers per day. In that year the Town passed an ordinance, tied to DEC's authorization of Town control, requiring rafting outfitters to abide by restrictions on the use of the access site. As a result the Town has entered into a agreement with each rafting company which formalizes the responsibilities of both parties, including the results of the annual allocation of customer "slots" to each company. The allocation system is similar to the one originally devised voluntarily by the rafting companies and is based upon a desire to distribute business fairly and to prevent one or a few companies from monopolizing the business. See Appendix 15.

A daily total of 1,000 rafting customers was chosen as a reasonable maximum number that could be accommodated by the two-hour dam release bubble and would limit physical impacts along the river corridor. Two hours was determined to be the longest release period which would maintain the water level at least one inch above the spillway of the Lake Abanakee dam. This was necessary to protect the rights of waterfront property owners and to insure continued flow to the Indian River.

e. Provide for continued float plane use on Tirrell Pond, Pine Lake, and First Lake. Clarify rules and regulations.

f. Investigate trophy fishing on sections of the Cedar River.

g. Improve existing cross-country facilities in the Indian Lake area adjacent to the Cedar River.

h. Insure private river users appropriate access to the put-in site on the Indian River during commercial rafting seasons.

i. Provide for continued use of the "ball diamond" area on Lake Durant by designating sites and improving parking facilities.

j. Consider use of electric motors on Tirrell Pond.

k. Continue to maintain all existing snowmobile trails and investigate relocation of the trail between Rock River and the Durant Road.

l. Improve and maintain existing Department marked foot trails in the area.

m. Investigate the possibility of controlling public use at the Old Route 30 area adjacent to Lake Durant.

6. Additional Public Input

The Draft UMP was distributed in the winter of 1993-1994 to the APA, the Forest Preserve Advisory Committee, local governments, various interest groups or organizations, and individuals. A DEC News Release was sent to various newspapers to advertise a public meeting scheduled for January 27, 1994. The meeting was held in two sessions and was attended by a total of 30 people. Written comments were received until February 28, 1994.

The draft plan was amended as a result of comments from the meeting and correspondence from the public. A summary of the public comments on the draft plan can be found in Appendix 1. This comment and response section was developed to address specific concerns or to clarify answers to questions that were brought up at the public meeting or through letters to the DEC. In some cases, this public input resulted in the proposal of new facilities within the unit, that were not identified in the draft document.

B. Goals

1. Land Resources

a. Preserve and protect the natural resources in accordance with Article 14 of the NYS Constitution and the ASLMP.

b. Provide for a variety of outdoor recreational opportunities without impairing the wild forest character.

c. Improve public access where necessary.

2. Wildlife

a. Perpetuate indigenous wildlife as part of the various ecosystems within the unit to assure that all wildlife populations are of appropriate size to meet all the demands placed upon them.

b. Provide the opportunity for the diversified utilization and enjoyment of the wildlife resources to assure that the public desire to use wildlife for hunting, trapping, and observation is met.

c. Manage the wildlife resources so that their numbers and occurrences are compatible with the public interest to assure that people are not caused to suffer from wildlife or the users of wildlife.

d. Assure that the public's desire for information about wildlife and its conservation, use and enjoyment is met, together with their desire for understanding the relationships among wildlife, humans and the environment.

e. Preserve and protect unique, critical and significant wildlife habitats essential to the perpetuation of wildlife.

3. Fisheries

a. Perpetuate and enhance a diverse, high-quality fishing experience in accordance with sound biological management practices.

4. Water Resources

a. Preserve and protect water quality and associated aquatic resources within the unit.

b. Improve public access where necessary.

C. Objectives

1. Land Resources

a. Maintain boundary lines to identify public ownership and discourage trespass on forest preserve lands.

b. Adequately identify through signing; important trailheads, access and easement locations, day-use areas, and other special management areas. Continue to maintain area identification signs showing NYS ownership along public highways and waterways.

c. Reduce soil erosion and/or stream siltation occurring from lack of proper trail maintenance by preparing and analyzing a trail inventory and developing a plan for trail maintenance; and prioritizing, scheduling, and budgeting for trail maintenance and/or rehabilitation in the future.

d. Promote camping within the unit and designate primitive tent sites where necessary to manage public use and reduce resource degradation.

e. Mitigate soil compaction and/or vegetative loss at primitive tent sites during the next five years.

f. Attempt to acquire or secure easements on adjacent private lands in compliance with the Open Space Plan and Region 5 Land Acquisition Advisory Committee. This will consolidate State holdings and provide improved public access or otherwise enhance the area.

g. Develop a combined brochure for this unit and the adjoining Hudson Gorge Primitive Area.

h. Continue to monitor the intensity and type of public use within the unit. Obtain more comprehensive use data by installing additional trail registers.

i. Develop a location and inventory record of rare and endangered species of plants or unique communities as they are found within the unit.

j. Maintain all existing facilities in the time frame and manner outlined in Section VII of this plan.

2. Wildlife

a. Re-establish self-sustaining wildlife populations of species that are extirpated, endangered, threatened or of special concern in habitats where their existence will be compatible with other elements of the ecosystem and human use of the area.

b. Prevent the establishment of wildlife species in habitats where their existence will be incompatible with other elements of the ecosystem.

c. Maintain and perpetuate annual hunting and trapping seasons as legitimate uses of the wildlife resources compatible with outdoor recreation.

d. Control nuisance species, as required, to prevent unreasonable damage to man's interests.

e. Review and analyze proposals for major actions likely to alter natural habitats in order to minimize adverse effects and maximize benefits for wildlife and the users thereof.

f. Provide technical advice and consultation to individuals, organizations or agencies interested in wildlife management or whose programs affect the wildlife resources.

g. Regulate the recreational and commercial use of wildlife to assure that such uses are compatible with the capacity of the wildlife resource to withstand use.

h. Provide optimum access for public use of the wildlife resources consistent with the management of the area and the ability of the resource to withstand use.

i. Identify and publicize public opportunities for hunting, trapping and enjoyment of the wildlife resource.

j. Maintain maximum beaver population levels compatible with range carrying capacity and land uses for associated recreational, economic, and ecological benefits.

k. Control nuisance wildlife only when necessary, feasible, and when it is the most effective alternative to prevent unreasonable damage to the public interest.

3. Fisheries

a. Maintain and enhance the diversity of coldwater and warmwater fish populations in the unit.

b. Maintain the populations of wild, self-sustaining brook trout in Grassy Pond and Little Grassy Pond.

c. Restore brook trout populations to Tirrell Pond and Pine Lake. Reclamation will eliminate competitive nonnative and native-but-widely-introduced (NBWI) fish species and enhance fishing opportunities for quality brook trout within a wild forest unit.

d. Maintain the population of wild, self-sustaining lake trout in First Lake.

e. Encourage and promote angler use of the waters in the unit through routine fish management practices including hotlines, correspondence, and contact with the public by Department staff.

f. Maintain brook trout populations in Barker Pond and Bullhead Pond. Reclaim ponds if additional nonnative or NBWI fish species establish and negatively impact the trout populations.

4. Water Resources

a. Monitor public use of popular shoreline camping locations to prevent overuse and subsequent shoreline degradation.

b. Ensure that commercial rafting in the Indian River corridor is consistent with the wild forest character of the lands and does not unduly impede non-commercial river use.

c. Monitor the biological impacts and angler concerns of the fluctuating water levels on Lake Abanakee and the Indian River.

d. Change regulation prohibiting use of mechanically propelled vessels on Tirrell Pond to allow use of electric motors of 5 hp or less.

IV. UNIT ISSUES AND CONCERNS

The following list of issues was developed as a result of the meetings of the citizens' advisory committee, deliberations of DEC staff, and additional public input.

A. Access

Most state lands and water bodies within the unit are within three miles of a road and are generally accessible by the public. Exceptions include the Fishing Brook Range which is mostly surrounded by private lands and ponds in the vicinity of the Essex chain of lakes (accessible primarily by float plane flights). The lack of a bridge over the Cedar River hampers access to NYS lands northeast of the Pelon Road.

B. Trespass*

Some NYS property lines have not been painted or resurveyed in recent years resulting in some indistinct boundary lines. In an effort to make all State boundaries readily identifiable the condition of existing lines within the Unit was investigated. Known areas where painting and/or surveys are necessary include but are not limited to the locations near the Blue Mt. Lake Cemetery, Blue Mt., Corner Pond, Clear Pond, Cedar River, Salmon Pond and the Indian Lake landfill.

In the past efforts were made to survey those lands where the potential for timber trespass was likely to occur. To assist forest harvesting operations on private land, real property staff surveyed the western line of Great Lot A along the Hamilton/Essex county line. More recently, in 1994 the south and west sides of Lot 81, Township 17, T&C Purchase were surveyed. Problems with windblown garbage from the Indian Lake landfill and wooden docks on Lake Adirondack were observed along the western line of Lot 81. Building and driveway encroachments, underground oil tank, and dug well were found on NYS lands along the southern line of Lot 81 and 94. A survey map documenting these encroachments has been turned over to the Regional Attorney for resolution.

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*In some cases privately constructed structures of a more temporary nature are found on NYS land. These illegal structures (docks, tree stands, hunting camps, etc.) deny free use by the public and constitute a taking, and are therefore unconstitutional.

C. Environmental Concerns

1. Wildlife

Impoundments created by beaver activity can have both positive and negative impacts on outdoor recreational activities. Expansive flooded areas have aesthetic values while public trails that are inundated with water are often difficult or inconvenient to traverse. Although few such problems were detected during the inventory of this unit, area streams will be monitored and any problems will be handled according to existing Division of Fish and Wildlife policies.

2. Fisheries

a. Acid Precipitation*

At the present time, the phenomenon of acid ion deposition, popularly known as "acid rain", has had little discernable impact on the fisheries resources of the unit. Liming is not proposed for any waters in the BMWF.

b. Lake Abanakee water level fluctuation

Region 5 Fisheries staff conducted a survey of Lake Abanakee in 1992. This survey was scheduled because local sportsmen have complained that northern pike fishing has diminished in Lake Abanakee since the advent of rafting. They blame low water levels in the spring for stranding pike spawn (See Section II-D-1-d). Results of the 1992 survey were compared to a similar study conducted in 1975, prior to rafting's surge in popularity. In both studies, northern pike younger than age 3 were not caught. Water levels in the impoundment have always fluctuated dramatically in the spring due to the nature of water releases from the Indian Lake dam. The slow growth of adult pike in Lake Abanakee further suggests that food (not reproduction) is limiting in the lake. The 1992 survey captured few soft-rayed forage fishes, such as golden shiner and white sucker, of a size suitable as forage for pike. Good pike fishing experienced during the late 1950's and early 1960's can be attributed to nutrients released

*In 1989 a TRP was granted to Queen's University Dept. of Biology; Kingston, Ontario to place sediment traps in several Adirondack waters (Rock Lake included) to collect phytoplankton remains and test the use of such traps in the long term monitoring of waters. Data will be used to enhance existing models for lake acidification.

after the impoundment was created in 1951. This "bloom" effect is typical for new impoundments. Lake Abanakee now resembles a typical low productivity Adirondack lake. There is no reason to expect that a cessation of rafting activities in the spring would enhance the northern pike population in Lake Abanakee.

The 1992 survey of Lake Abanakee captured significantly more largemouth bass than the 1975 survey. Largemouth bass are now the dominant gamefish in the lake. Bass spawn sometime between early-June and mid-July in Lake Abanakee at depths of 2-8 feet. Redbreast sunfish and pumpkinseed spawn around the same time in depths as shallow as six inches. The current rafting agreement specifies that rafting can extend through the third week in June and begin again in early September. This season minimizes the effects of water level changes on spawning bass and sunfish. DEC regional fisheries staff do not support further extensions of the spring rafting season to late-June or July, as has been requested by some outfitters. Such an extension would jeopardize several fish populations in the lake. Discharge and refill rates can be slow during summer low-flow conditions, thus water releases for rafting would have prolonged effects on spawning fish and newly hatched fry.

3. Water Resources

a. Floating Bogs/Vegetation

Floating bogs and aquatic weeds in Lake Adirondack have been troublesome to area residents since the 1950's. The shallowness of the lake combined with underlying organic, bog type soils contribute to the development of these problems. Lakeshore residents documented these concerns and other problems (mucky bottom, stumps, etc.) associated with this man made waterbody. An Aquatic Weed Management Plan (Myers and Peverly, 1989) was prepared by the Soil Conservation Service and Cornell University. This plan identifies existing aquatic vegetation, management needs, and environmental concerns for the lake.

A floating log boom is maintained by the Town of Indian Lake under a TRP. This facility is anchored to State land and prevents small, floating bogs from entering the navigable portion of the lake.

b. Water Quality

Highway sand/salt applications in areas where roads are located adjacent to waterbodies may have negative impacts on the water resources. Data documenting the stresses imposed on the aquatic ecosystem is generally lacking. A list of highway segments where sanding practices affect stream and river sections as a result of sedimentation from road runoff was developed by DEC for some counties. Within the Blue Mt. Unit, Lake Durant was identified (The Adirondacks in the Twenty-First Century Technical Reports, Volume One) as an impacted waterbody, with a portion of NYS 28/30 (County Route 19 junction to Rock River Bridge) affecting the lake.

D. Adjacent Land Use and Access

1. Old Route 30

In the early 1960's, the highway from Blue Mt. Lake to Indian Lake was improved and widened. This project utilized a majority of the old road bed. However, certain sections were relocated to eliminate curves or problem areas. These portions of the old road were later abandoned by the State with title being transferred to the town. One such section is located along the north shore of Lake Durant and has been a popular camping, picnicking, and day use area for many years. The road (.8 miles) is scenic and provides ready access to the lake. Current facilities consist of primitive tent sites and one pit privy. Major concerns and problems associated with the area include human waste disposal, litter, and overcrowding. Noise related to camping in this area sometimes conflicts with the solitude of the nearby Lake Durant Campground users.

2. Indian Lake Landfill*

The town of Indian Lake operates a consolidation landfill at the end of the Pelon Road. A portion of the landfill is adjacent to the northwest part of NYS lot 81, Township 15, Totten and Crossfield's Purchase. Occasionally litter is windblown onto this adjacent State land. Any such garbage or debris

*The Indian Lake landfill is serving as a consolidation landfill site for the towns of Indian Lake, Long Lake, and Inlet until a county landfill is on line or other countywide disposal plan developed. The landfill has been operating under a modified Order on Consent since June 17, 1994. This Order provides that the town must operate its landfill in conformance with the requirements set forth in 6 NYCRR Part 360 to the fullest extent practicable and fully comply with the deadlines and requirements of the Order.

will be removed by the town.

Another concern at this location is the lack of a parking facility on NYS land. Users of the marked trails originating from this location currently park on the road shoulder.

3. Private Land Access Rights (See Section VIII-I-1)

A large adjoining private landowner has proven a prescriptive easement over the O'Neil Flow Road. See Section I-E-4-c. The terms of the Judgement on Consent clarify that the use of the roadway is not limited to logging purposes. No TPR is required for the use or maintenance of the road, but will be required for tree cutting or for bridge repairs. The status of Salmon Pond Road is being investigated. Use and maintenance of the Clear Pond Road needs to be resolved.

E. Non Forest Preserve Lands (See Appendix 10 for detailed map)

[A] These lands are steep and were gifted to the State for forestry purposes in 1956, prior to the passing of Section 361, Sub. 2 (now 11-2103, Sub 2) of the Conservation Law.

[B] These lands were gifted to the State for silvicultural research and fish and wildlife management. Prior to granting this area in 1963, the private landowner harvested many of the accessible portions. The cutting was heavy, resulting in a very low stocking level. The forest cover is northern hardwoods with areas of white pine and scattered red spruce. Steep areas were generally not cut. Old logging roads interlace the area with the Northville-Lake Placid Trail crossing in the northwest corner on one of these roads. Vehicular access to the area is limited to a road, which crosses private lands (northwest corner of Township 19) and State lands in the vicinity of Salmon Pond.

Descriptions of these lands were presented in the previous Sections I-B, II-A-4-d. Additional information and excerpts from McKinney's Consolidated Laws of New York covering these lands can be found in Appendix 18. Section 9-0107 allows the DEC to accept gifts of lands for silvicultural research. This allows forest practices when such activities are "beneficial to the economy of the State and the health, welfare, and comfort of the people".

The grant or deed to the State of any such lands must recite that it is given for acceptance under the provisions of this subdivision and section.

"Property so accepted shall be under the jurisdiction of the Commissioner and his successors in office and, until otherwise provided by law, shall be dedicated for use only for the purposes of silvicultural research and experimentation in the science of forestry, including purposes incidental thereto, under the care, custody,.control and management of the department and its successors in office and shall not become a part of the forest preserve. Under such conditions as it may deem consistent with the purposes aforesaid, and upon such terms as it may deem to be in the best interests of the state, the department may sell trees, timber and other products on any such lands."

Article XIV of the New York State Constitution states:

"The lands of the State, now owned or hereafter acquired, constituting the Forest Preserve as now fixed by law, shall be forever kept as wild forest lands. They shall not be leased, sold or exchanged, or be taken by any corporation, public or private, nor shall the timber thereon be sold, removed or destroyed."

These legal sources seem to be a contradiction in terms. The gift land law has existed for some thirty years and may be sufficient for managing these lands and others, under the guidelines stipulated in the gift language. The precedence of the Constitution or the law in this matter needs to be legally determined if the purposes stated in the acquisition transaction are to be realized to the fullest. The question to be answered is:exactly what is the Forest Preserve "as now fixed by law"? Is it lands acquired for addition to the Forest Preserve or is it all State lands acquired inside the Park boundary?

The relevance of the purpose of acquisition was addressed by the Court in Matter of Indian Lake, et al. v. State Board of Equalization and Assessment, 257 NYS 2d 301 (S. Ct., Albany Co. 1965), aff. 271 NYS 2d 501 (3d. Dept. 1966). The question before the Court was whether two parcels within the Forest Preserve counties were part of the Forest Preserve and, therefore, should be included in the list of State-owned lands on which the State was liable for taxes. The first parcel (Symbol A, 1251 acres) was acquired under a statute permitting the Conservation Department to acquire land in furtherance of any of its purposes. The second parcel (Symbol B, 1369 acres) was acquired under a statute permitting the acquisition of land for fish and wildlife purposes and silvicultural research. The deed for the second parcel specifically stated that the land was being acquired for such purposes.

The lower court ruled that the statutes under which the parcels in question were acquired did not change the definition of Forest Preserve in the law. Therefore, the court ruled that the parcels were part of the Forest Preserve. The Appellate Division, however, reversed the decision of the lower court with respect to the parcel acquired for silvicultural research on the basis of the specific statements in the statute excepting parcels acquired thereunder from the Forest Preserve. The Appellate Division affirmed the inclusion of the first parcel in the Preserve because of the failure of the deed to indicate the specific purpose for which the parcel was acquired as the statute required.

The summary of a paper entitled Article XIV by Ralph Semerad, Professor of Law in Albany N.Y. suggests that:

"Article XIV has been construed as permitting uses of the preserve that are not accompanied by substantial destruction of its physical features, that do not effect any change in its wild character and that are not consistent with that character. Borderline situations should be resolved against the use and in favor of the strict mandate of Article XIV, which was designed to protect the preserve against all activity that might destroy it. Only a constitutional amendment should change that mandate."

Excerpts from the "Future of the Adirondack Park" (Temporary Study Commission-1970) concerning these lands are as follows:

"The Conservation Law gifts present a different problem. There are those who argue that the gift sections are unconstitutional. Constitutionality aside, the gift sections provide a useful acquisition tool. They also allow the Department to practice silvicultural, fish and wildlife research that can contribute to scientific knowledge. As long as such acquisitions are confined to gifts, there is a place for them in the Adirondack Park."

The controversy and debate over the constitutionality of non-forest preserve lands is beyond the scope of this management plan. Until this classification is further clarified or management policies addressed, no management projects involving silvicultural research or fish and wildlife management* will occur on these lands during the next five years. Additional research by the Albany Office (DEC - Legal Affairs) will be essential in determining the constitutionality of these gifts and any future implications thereof. By acceptance of the court rulings of the mid 1960's, only the second parcel (Map Symbol B - 1369 acres) should be regarded as non-forest preserve land (in regards to NYS payments in lieu of taxes) within the Blue Mt. Unit.

If the constitutional issue is resolved favoring the Environmental Conservation Law, this unit plan should be amended to allow the marking of boundary lines around the gift lands. A forest inventory would also be necessary prior to any other future management considerations. This inventory would assure that vital information is available for making sound management decisions and aid in the development of short and long range management strategies.

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*In an area characterized by mature forest with a closed canopy, openings created by manipulation of forest stands would create greater diversity of plant species and habitats which in turn would benefit many wildlife species. Possible vertebrates that would benefit would be snowshoe hares, red foxes, coyotes, white-tailed deer, black bears, ruffed grouse, and a variety of songbirds and small rodents.

V. RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND CONSTRAINTS

The Blue Mountain Wild Forest Area will be managed to allow visitors to enjoy all appropriate forms of outdoor recreation with as few restrictions as possible. When unacceptable impacts resulting from public use are discovered, the least restrictive management actions necessary to reverse the impacts will be applied.

A. Management Strategies

In the performance of its obligation to provide for recreational pursuits within the Constitutional limitations relating to the Forest Preserve, the DEC with the advice of the Attorney General has evolved a recreational management policy based on the following premises:

[1] No one shall have exclusive use of any portion of NYS land.

[2] No one shall be allowed to claim any particular tent site or leanto from year to year.

[3] State property shall not be used for commercial purposes or private profit.

1. Land Resources

a. Site Designation

All camping will be addressed by 6NYCRR 190.3(b), which states, "camping is prohibited within 150 feet of any road, trail, spring, stream, pond or other body of water except at camping areas designated by the DEC". Historical overnight use along popular waterfront locations has led to established camping areas that are often in violation of this rule. Sites that have been established through repeated use will be evaluated in terms of screening from trails and bodies of water, distance between sites, and the level of impact on vegetation and soils. As a result of the evaluation, these sites will either be (1) officially designated, (2) closed and replaced by properly located sites, or (3) closed and not replaced.

Closed sites will be rehabilitated by breaking up the soil, fire rings, and revegetating to discourage future use. New primitive tent sites will be created in conjunction with the closure of an existing site or where appropriate to direct additional camping use to desirable locations. Areas where site degradation has occurred or is likely to occur will be closed to overnight use through appropriate signage.

This system of site designation (See Appendix 12) will be instituted where public overnight camping use is significant enough to demand it. The management of these camping areas will comply with ASLMP guidelines for primitive tent sites. All new primitive tent sites will be located so as to be reasonably screened from trails and bodies of water and, unless impractical because of severe terrain restrictions, at least one-quarter mile from adjacent sites.

Overnight camping (less than ten individuals) will be allowed in most locations as long as the "150 foot" rule is observed. This will accommodate occasional overflow camping away from the shoreline, trails, and waters during peak weekends and holidays. The following chart depicts the more heavily used camping areas with the current and projected status of existing sites over the next five years:

PRIMITIVE CAMPING SITES

Location	Existing	Close	To Designate	Marked##
Tirrell Pond	6	2	6	-
Rock Lake	7	1	6	-
Chain Lakes Rd.	5	3	2	1
Lake Durant	7	2#	5	2

Forest Ranger, Greg George closed two of these sites in 1992.
Forest Ranger, Greg George designated these sites in 1992.

Small groupings of primitive tent sites designed to accommodate a maximum of 20 people per grouping are allowed under group camping conditions at carefully selected locations in wild forest areas, even though each individual site may be within sight or sound and less than approximately one-quarter mile from any other site within such grouping. Efforts will be made to locate suitable group sites in the unit.

(1) Old Route 30

The majority of overnight camping occurs directly on the Town-owned scarified road bed and adjoining right of way. This activity should occur only at designated sites. The management of this aesthetic corridor involves cooperation between the Town of Indian Lake and DEC. New pit privy locations in combination with current enforcement efforts in the area will prevent overcrowding and future resource degradation.

b. Day Use Areas

(1) Cedar River Area (Benton Rd.)

This location (Lot 56, Twp. 17, T&C Purchase) has been a public picnicking, camping, canoeing, and swimming area for many years. Recently, some individuals have created frequent disturbances at this site along with illegal tree cutting and littering.

In 1988, at the suggestion of town officials, the site was closed to overnight camping. This restriction eliminates the major amount of abuse caused by overnight parties, while still allowing day use and maintaining the essentially wild character of the site.

(2) Lake Durant Islands

Several small islands are located in Lake Durant. Some of these islands are too close to the adjacent Lake Durant Campground and would be poor locations for primitive camping.

The small size of the islands, along with the lack of suitable sanitation sites, combine to limit appropriate public use to day activities. This will maintain the wild character of these islands and eliminate potential conflicts with nearby campground users.

(3) Blue Mt. Summit Area

The summit of Blue Mountain is located entirely on State land and is listed as a special management area (scenic) in the ASLMP. The aesthetic values of this area should receive appropriate publicity with particular attention given to interpretive signing.

Overnight camping will be prohibited in the vicinity of the tower and summit area. This action will help prevent vandalism and potential conflict with day users; while preserving the scenic qualities in this heavily used portion of the unit.

(4) Other Locations

Enforcement of the 150 foot rule in conjunction with "no camping" signs will control problems associated with public activity in a few specific locations. The beach area on the north end of Tirrell Pond and the north side of Rock Lake will be closed to camping and fires. The area near the Indian Lake landfill will be posted against camping.

c. Public Easements

Trail easements across adjoining private lands were identified in Section II-B-14-d. The public may use the trail corridor but camping, building of fires, fishing, trapping, and hunting are not permitted on the private lands. Public use of the conservation easement lands is discussed in Section VIII-I-3-a.

d. Group Use and Camping Policy

In the past, any large group of 10 or more, could obtain a camping permit as required by DEC rules and regulations prior to overnight use on NYS lands. A DEC review of overnight group use was initiated in 1992 and a policy is being developed to regulate group use in accordance with the guidelines of the Adirondack State Land Master Plan.

Group camping activity will still be allowed in wild forest areas, but permits will not be issued for groups of more than 20 persons. These groups will only be allowed to camp at designated group camping sites or at other locations deemed suitable by the area forest ranger.

e. Facilities and access for mobility impaired persons*

The ASLMP has a policy statement which recognizes:

"...the identification of measures that can be taken to improve access to and the enjoyment of these lands, and associated structures and improvements, by the physically handicapped."

In 1986 the Adirondack Council recommended the construction of a handicapped access/self-guiding interpretive trail to Rock Lake. In 1988 a portion of the trail and Lake Durant Campground were examined. Dan McLain, a consultant from the Resource Center for Independent Living, Inc., suggested that use of the current site and facilities at Lake Durant be monitored and the suitability of additional accessible fishing sites be investigated in the area.

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*Some roads and designated trails within the unit may provide mobility impaired persons facilitated access to NYS lands. During the next five years DEC will examine unit facilities to determine the suitablilty and potential for access by the physically impaired. Current policy (NR-94-1) may allow a certified mobility impaired person (non-ambulatory, except with the use of a mechanized aid or is permanently unable to move except short distances without assistance from another person or an artificial aid) to use a motor vehicle (including ATV's) as an aid in access to NYS land. This use will only be allowed on roads and established trails where such use will not have a deleterious effect on the road or trail or the area's natural resource values or will not unnecessarily conflict with other uses. Terrain constraints, private land crossings, and wild river classification eliminate from consideration many of the trails within this unit.

f. Temporary Revocable Permits

In order to standardize and facilitate the issuance of these permits a DEC policy and procedure for TRP's was developed. These permits provide for temporary use of State lands within stated guidelines and legal constraints, while protecting such lands and associated resources against damage or inappropriate use. Information on activities or uses which may be permitted or are specifically prohibited can be found in Appendix 20.

2. Wildlife

a. Rare and Endangered Species

The DEC will work closely with the New York Natural Heritage Program to locate and protect the occurrences of rare, threatened, and endangered species. If necessary, public use will be diverted to less environmentally sensitive areas.

3. Fisheries

a. Signing*

Most BMWF trout ponds are closed to bait fishing with the use of minnows. Forest Rangers and fisheries personnel will be asked to post and check signage reflecting the no bait fish regulation during routine visits to trout waters.

b. Fishing Use

Fishing pressure on BMWF waters is average for Adirondack lakes due to ease of access on warmwater lakes and the frequency of float plane trips made to Pine Lake and First Lake. Some trout ponds receive only light pressure due to remoteness. Native fish populations are not threatened by over-exploitation from sportsmen, rather, they are endangered by the presence of nonnative and NBWI competing species. Bait fishing with minnows is already illegal in most BMWF trout ponds, but such regulations should be reinforced in the minds of the public.

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*Conservation law enforcement is critical to the successful implementation of fish and wildlife regulations. Environmental Conservation Officers and Forest Rangers should routinely patrol area waters, particularly waters with recent management actions. Enforcement officials should be kept abreast of management actions and be fully informed of the ecological/social reasons for such actions and for the regulations they enforce.

4. Water Resources

Commercial rafting is a unique recreational activity within the Adirondack Forest Preserve. In consideration of the substantial economic benefits to the local economy conferred by the rafting industry, as well as the rare opportunity for rafting customers to experience a wild and scenic area of the Forest Preserve, the Indian River corridor within the unit will be considered a special recreational opportunity zone. Visitors should expect a relatively high frequency of interpersonal encounters with other recreationists.

Commercial whitewater recreation will continue to be considered a legitimate activity within the unit and the adjoining Hudson Gorge Primitive Area. The level of use will continue to be limited to the current maximum of 1,000 rafting customers per day during the spring and fall rafting seasons. The DEC will encourage the Town and outfitters to maintain the current seasons for rafting and avoid extending rafting into the summer months. Individual boaters who wish to use the waterway access site will be allowed access to the river at any time. DEC will monitor use levels and will require detailed annual use summaries from the Town.

a. Indian River (Put-in site)

This waterway access site receives considerable public use, most notably in the spring commercial rafting season. The put-in site is located on a sheltered section of the Indian River where natural river conditions are ideal for whitewater access. Overnight camping will be discouraged (enforcement of the 150 foot rule) at this location, with suitable primitive tent sites located along the nearby Chain Lakes Road or on adjacent town land.

b. Use Constraints

(1) NYS Rules and Regulations

Pursuant to Section 196.5 of NYS Rules and Regulations, no person shall operate a mechanically propelled vessel on Tirrell Pond and Rock Lake. DEC will seek to change the regulation pertinent to Tirrell Pond to permit the use of electric motors of 5 hp or less. Since float planes can and do land on this waterbody it is illogical to bar electric motors. The regulation change complies with the

wishes of the Citizen's Advisory Committee and is consistent with permitted uses on all other unit lakes.

(2) Environmental Conservation Law (Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers Act)

Within the Adirondack Park DEC is responsible for administering this Act for rivers which flow on NYS lands. In the administration and enforcement of this Act, primary emphasis shall be given to the protection and enhancement of the natural, scenic, ecological, recreational, aesthetic, botanical, geological, hydrological, fish and wildlife, historical, cultural, archaeological and scientific features of designated rivers and river areas.

(3) Adirondack State Land Master Plan (Guidelines for management and use)

Wild Rivers: Wild rivers and their river areas will be managed in accordance with the guidelines for wilderness areas except that no new, reconstructed or relocated structures or improvements will be permitted other than: foot and horse trails, foot trail bridges constructed of natural materials, primitive tent sites with fire rings, and pit privies. Public use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment, and aircraft is prohibited on those portions of the Cedar River and river area classified as wild.

Scenic Rivers: The use of motorboats or aircraft is not normally permitted but may be allowed by DEC, where such use is already established, is consistent with the character of the river or river area, and will not result in any undue adverse impacts upon the natural resources of the area. Currently the use of motorboats is prohibited on Rock Lake and portions of Rock River.

Recreational Rivers: The use of motorboats on recreational rivers may be permitted as determined by DEC.

Additional information on these designated rivers can be found in Section VIII-D.