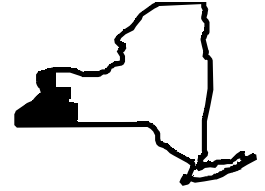




NEWS

REGION 9, Gerald E. Mikol, Regional Director
Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie,
Niagara and Wyoming counties



New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

George E. Pataki, Governor
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DEC PROPOSES MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR CHAUTAUQUA CO. STATE FORESTS Public Meeting to Be Held January 16, 2002

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Region 9 Director Gerald Mikol today announced the release of a draft Unit Management Plan for the Chautauqua Management Unit. The Chautauqua Unit includes approximately 3,037 acres of forest land in the Chautauqua Gorge, Mount Pleasant and Stockton State Forests in the towns of Chautauqua, Sherman, Westfield and Stockton in Chautauqua County.

“Our Department has developed a Unit Management Plan (UMP) for these forests that takes into account the public's recreational and resource needs while being mindful of our mandate as environmental stewards to care for these properties,” Mikol said. “Public involvement in the UMP is essential for the success of this planning effort.”

DEC develops a Unit Management Plan for each “unit” of land it manages to assess the natural and physical resources present within the unit, identify opportunities for recreational use and consider the ability of the resources and ecosystems to accommodate public use.

A team of DEC staff developed the plan, including staff from the Divisions of Lands and Forests, Fish and Wildlife, Mineral Resources, and Operations. The draft plan also incorporates many concerns and ideas received from a survey of neighboring property owners, local government, organized groups and others interested in these forests.

The UMP will guide future use of the lands and includes an analysis of their natural features and their ability to accommodate various types of uses. These three forests are currently managed for multiple uses including wildlife management, timber production, oil and natural gas production, and various recreational uses.

The draft UMP plan is available for public review at DEC Regional Offices in Allegany, Buffalo and Falconer, as well as the Mayville Library. The document is also available on DEC's web page at: www.dec.state.ny.us/website/dlf/publiclands/ump.

DEC is holding a public meeting to gather comments about the plan on Wednesday, January 16, 2002 at 7:00 p.m. in the Chautauqua Lake Central School large group instruction room. DEC also will accept written comments on the plan until February 18, 2002. For more information or to submit written comments, contact Stephen A. Smith, DEC Lands & Forests, 215 South Work Street, Falconer, NY 14733, phone (716) 665-6111.

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