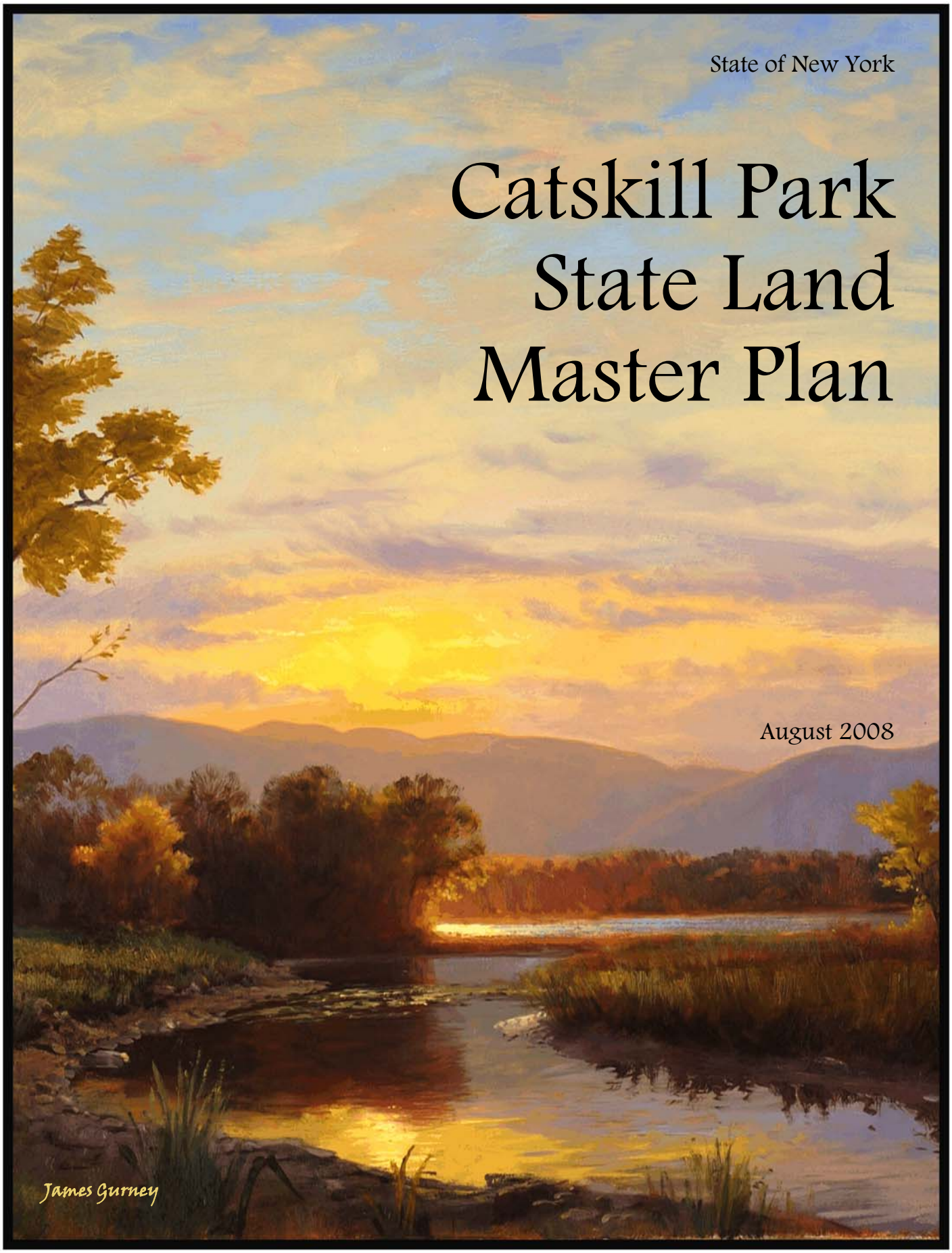
State of New York

Catskill Park State Land Master Plan

August 2008



The following land management units have been added to the Master Plan's area descriptions (see Section VII. Descriptions of Management Units) pursuant to land reclassifications approved by the Commissioner of DEC, dated August 27th 2008 as a part of the plan.

Hunter - West Kill Wilderness
Windham - Blackhead Range Wilderness

Colgate Lake Wild Forest
Delaware Wild Forest
Elm Ridge Wild Forest
Rusk Mountain Wild Forest

Diamond Notch Primitive Bicycle Corridor
Dutcher Notch/Colgate Lake Primitive Bicycle Corridor
Mink Hollow Primitive Bicycle Corridor
Overlook Turnpike Primitive Bicycle Corridor

The table below explains which management units were either combined, renamed or reclassified to form new management units.

1985 Land Management Unit	***2008 Land Management Unit***
Big Indian - Beaver Kill Range Wilderness	*Big Indian Wilderness*
West Kill Wilderness, Ox Clove Wild Forest and portion of Hunter Mountain Wild Forest	*Hunter - West Kill Wilderness*
Plateau Mountain - Indian Head Mountain Wilderness	*Indian Head Wilderness*
Slide Mountain - Panther Mountain Wilderness	*Slide Mountain Wilderness*
Blackhead Range, and North Mtn. Wild Forests, and portions of the former Windham High Peak and Black Dome Valley Wild Forest	*Windham - Blackhead Range Wilderness*
Jocky Hill - Morgan Hill Wild Forest	*Bluestone Wild Forest*
Black Dome Valley Wild Forest (portion)	*Colgate Lake Wild Forest*
Cherry Ridge - Campbell Mountain & Middle Mountain - Mary Smith Hill Wild Forests	*Delaware Wild Forest*
Windham Peak Wild Forest (west end)	*Elm Ridge Wild Forest*
Hunter Mountain Wild Forest (west end)	*Rusk Mountain Wild Forest*
Shandaken - Pine Hill, and Peck Hollow Wild Forests	*Shandaken Wild Forest*
Claryville - Sundown - Sholam, and Peekamoose Valley Wild Forests	*Sundown Wild Forest*

Cover artwork "Sunset Over the Catskills" by James Gurney

CATSKILL PARK STATISTICS SIZE (Approximate Figures)
CATSKILL PARK: 1,102 sq. mi. or 705,500 acres
PUBLIC FOREST PRESERVE LANDS WITHIN THE PARK: 287,500 acres (41%)
NEW YORK CITY OWNED WATERSHED LANDS WITHIN THE PARK: 40,500 acres (6%)
PRIVATE LAND WITHIN THE PARK: 381,070 acres (53%)
PUBLIC FOREST PRESERVE LANDS OUTSIDE THE PARK: 6,740 acres

FOREST PRESERVE ACREAGE, BY COUNTY:

County	Acreage	County	Acreage
Delaware	42,000	Sullivan	18,800
Greene	79,200	Ulster	154,200

FOREST PRESERVE MANAGEMENT UNITS

Classification (# of Units)	Acres
Wilderness (5)	143,000 (51%)
Wild Forest (14)	130,000 (47%)
Intensive Use (11)	5,580 (2%)
Administrative (6)	824 (0.3%)
Primitive Bicycle Corridor (4)	156
Conservation Easements (3)	514

STATE RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AND ASSETS

Facility/Asset	Number	Facility/Asset	Number
Campgrounds	7 (738 Campsites)	Hiking Trails	303 miles
Alpine Ski Centers	1 (33 trails)	Snowmobile Trails	80 miles
Day use Areas	2	Horse Trails	34 miles
Fishing Access Sites	21	Lean-Tos	33
Public Fishing Rights	60 miles	Primitive Campsites	187

ANNUAL FOREST PRESERVE PUBLIC USE

Classification	Visitors/Year*
Wilderness	34,000
Wild Forest	66,000
Intensive Use	448,000
Administrative	5,000
Total	**553,000**

* Estimates based on year 2002 Trail Registers, Camping Permit and lift ticket sales

DEC OFFICES

Central Office	Region 3	Region 4
625 Broadway Albany, NY 12233-4254 518-473-9518	21 S. Putt Corners Rd. New Paltz, NY 12561 845-256-3000 (Ulster and Sullivan Counties)	1130 North. Westcott Rd. Schenectady, NY 12306 518-357-2070
		65561 State Hwy 10, Suite 1 Stamford, NY 12167 607-652-7365 (Delaware & Greene Counties)

FOREWORD

"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 . . ."

Article 14, Section 1 of the New York State Constitution

The People of the State of New York have demonstrated a deep and abiding concern for the Catskill region for over a century. Following exploitation of the region during the 19th century by a series of natural resource-based industries, including the leather tanning industry which used hemlock bark, the wood products industry, acid factories and the bluestone industry, the citizens of the state demanded protection for the region. They were particularly concerned that intense timber harvesting had jeopardized the area's tremendous water resources on which they were so dependent. This led to the creation of the Forest Preserve, by statute, in 1885. It was one of the earliest attempts at land preservation in the United States. In 1894, an amendment to the State Constitution gave constitutional protection to Forest Preserve lands, providing that they be "forever kept as wild forest lands and directing that 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." This mandate, now Article XIV, Section 1 of the New York State Constitution, ensures lasting protection for one of the state's most valuable resources.

Since 1885, the Catskill Forest Preserve has grown from 34,000 acres to over 290,000 acres. It serves as a watershed, wildland recreation area and ecological and scenic reserve. While the Constitution's Forever Wild clause has both protected and directed management of these lands for nearly a century, public use and interest has steadily increased. To cope with this ever-increasing demand, the Department of Environmental Conservation developed a Catskill Park State Land Master Plan (Plan) in 1985 to provide overall guidance for consistent and uniform management of the Catskill Forest Preserve. This revision is based on the continued employment of the basic guidance principles encompassed in the 1985 version, and expands the plan to address the increased level and diversity of use by recreationists, including more recent uses such as mountain or off-road bicycling. In addition, current federal and State mandates, policies and regulations are addressed, including the Americans with Disabilities Act, to direct management for the anticipated increase in use and enjoyment of the Forest Preserve for all citizens.

An initial draft revision of the plan was released for public comment in 2003. Extensive comments were received, principally regarding mountain bicycling use. The Department facilitated a dialogue between several environmental/hiking groups and two bicycling groups to determine if a compromise could be reached regarding bicycling. Building on this dialogue, the Department made several changes to the 2003 draft revision, including the creation of a new land classification, Primitive Bicycle Corridor, to address the concerns raised in 2003. A second revised draft Plan was released for public comment in April 2008. This final Plan incorporates public comments received in both 2003 and 2008.

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DAVID A. PATERSON
GOVERNOR

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

ALEXANDER B. GRANNIS
COMMISSIONER

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Record

FROM: Alexander B. Grannis

DATE: AUG 2 7 2008

SUBJECT: Revision of the Catskill Park State Land Master Plan

The revision of the Catskill Park State Land Master Plan has been completed. The Plan is consistent with guidelines of the State Constitution, Environmental Conservation Law, and Department Rules, Regulations and Policies. The plan is hearby approved and adopted.

Alexander B. Grannis, Commissioner

AUG 2 7 2008

Date

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CATSKILL PARK STATISTICS i

FOREWORD iii

LOCATION MAP x

I. INTRODUCTION 1
- A. A Brief History of the Catskill Forest Preserve 1
- B. Other Public Lands 4
- C. Private Ownerships 5
- D. Regional Economics 5

II. OPEN SPACE PROTECTION 8

III. CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM 10

IV. MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES 12
- **A. Guidelines for All Classifications** 12
  - The Constitution and the Law - The Authority for Forest Preserve Management 12
  - Tree Cutting in the Forest Preserve 13
  - Invasive Species Management 13
  - Public Information, Education, and Interpretation 14
  - A Balanced Approach to Recreational Development 15
    - Trails 16
    - Linking Management Units 18
    - Fish and Wildlife Recreation 19
    - Access for People With Disabilities 19
    - Temporary Revocable Permits 21
  - Natural Resource Inventory 22
  - Fisheries Management 22
  - Wildlife Management 22
  - Bird Conservation Areas 23
  - Rare and Extirpated Species 24
  - Design Standards 24
    - Trailheads - Parking Areas 24
    - Directional and Informational Signs 25
  - Historic Sites 26
  - The Unit Manager and the Unit Management Team 27
    - The Unit Manager 27
    - The Unit Management Team 28
  - Funding and Staffing Support 28
  - Partnerships 28
- **B. Wilderness Guidelines** 31
  - Definition 31
  - Basic Guidelines for Wilderness Management and Use 31
  - Wilderness Recreational Use 31
  - Special Wilderness Recreational Activity Guidelines 32
  - Wilderness Structures and Improvements 33

Motorized Uses and Bicycles in Wilderness 35
Temporary Revocable Permits 35
Roads in Wilderness 35
Wilderness Vistas 36
Wilderness Flora and Fauna 36
Wilderness Fisheries Management 36
Species 36
Habitat Improvement Structures 37
Wilderness Wildlife Management 37
Wilderness Boundary Marking 37
Designation of Wilderness Areas 37
C. Wild Forest Guidelines 38
Definition 38
Basic Guidelines for Wild Forest Management and Use 38
Recreational Use in Wild Forest 38
Wild Forest Structures and Improvements 39
Motorized Uses in Wild Forest 41
Public Use 41
Administrative Use of Motor 42
Roads in Wild Forest 42
Snowmobile Trails in Wild Forest 42
Horse Trails in Wild Forest 43
Bicycle Trails in Wild Forest 43
Vistas in Wild Forest 44
Flora and Fauna in Wild Forest 45
Fisheries Management in Wild Forest 45
Species Management 45
Management Practices 45
Habitat Improvement Structures 45
Wildlife Management in Wild Forest 45
Designation of Wild Forest Areas 45
D. Primitive Bicycle Corridor 46
Definition 46
Basic Guidelines for Primitive Bicycle Corridor Management and Use . . . 46
Recreational Use in Primitive Bicycle Corridor 46
Primitive Bicycle Corridor Structures and Improvements 47
Designation of Primitive Bicycle Corridors 47
E. Intensive Use Area Guidelines 48
Definition 48
Basic Guidelines for Management and Use 48
Intensive Use Area Structures and Improvements 48
Campgrounds 49
Ski Center 52
Proposed Visitor Information Center 52
Day Use Areas 52
Fishing Access Sites 53
Recreational Use 53
Off-Season Use 53
Designation of Intensive Use Areas 54
F. Administrative Area Guidelines 55
Definition 55
Guidelines for Management and Use 55
Designation of Administrative Areas 55

V. UNIT MANAGEMENT PLAN DEVELOPMENT 56

VI. MASTER PLAN REVISION AND REVIEW 59

VII. DESCRIPTIONS OF MANAGEMENT UNITS 60
A. Wilderness Areas 60
B. Wild Forest 64
C. Primitive Bicycle Corridors 71
D. Intensive Use Areas 72
E. Administrative Areas 75

VIII. ACTIONS NECESSARY TO IMPLEMENT THE CPSLMP 76

APPENDIX A: ARTICLE XIV OF THE NEW YORK STATE CONSTITUTION 78

APPENDIX B: GENERAL DEFINITIONS 79

APPENDIX C: LONG DISTANCE TRAIL DESCRIPTIONS 83

APPENDIX D: DEPARTMENT POLICIES RELATING TO THE FOREST PRESERVE . 85

APPENDIX E: PUBLIC USE 86

APPENDIX F: STATE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY REVIEW 88

APPENDIX G: REFERENCES 96

APPENDIX H: CATSKILL HIGH PEAKS BIRD CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT GUIDANCE SUMMARY 98

APPENDIX I: RESPONSIVE SUMMARY - PUBLIC COMMENTS ON THE 2003 DRAFT PLAN 101

APPENDIX Ia: RESPONSIVE SUMMARY - PUBLIC COMMENTS ON THE REVISED 2008 DRAFT PLAN 106

APPENDIX J: CATSKILL FOREST PRESERVE MAP 109

TABLES

TABLE 1. Catskill Park Statistics i
TABLE 2. Taxes Paid on Catskill Forest Preserve Land 7
TABLE 3. Authorized Uses on Marked Trails 18
TABLE 4. Detached Parcels 71
TABLE 5. Campground Statistics 73
TABLE 6. Catskill Forest Preserve Public Use 87

LOCATION MAP

I. INTRODUCTION

This document is a master plan for Forest Preserve and other lands administered by the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC or Department) within the Catskill Park, as well as Forest Preserve land outside the Park within Ulster, Greene, Delaware and Sullivan Counties. The Catskill Park State Land Master Plan (CPSLMP) establishes geographic management units, and classifies each unit based on the area's characteristics and level of public use. The CPSLMP directs the Department to develop management plans (UMPs) for all units and requires that all UMPs conform to the guidelines for the area's land classification as set forth in this plan. Each UMP will provide specific information on the facilities, natural characteristics and public use of the unit, as well as specific management objectives and a schedule of actions needed to meet those objectives.

This master plan is not intended to be a comprehensive public lands plan for all lands within the Catskill Park. It applies only to state lands administered by the Department. Lands managed by other State agencies and the City of New York are not governed by the CPSLMP. The preparation of master plans for other publicly and privately owned lands is beyond the authority of the department. However, other State agencies and the City of New York are encouraged to cooperate with the Department in land acquisition and management efforts to enhance the recreational and other natural benefits of the Catskill Park, and to develop plans for the management of their lands in conformance with the policy and guidelines of this plan.

While the legislature has not mandated development of a master plan for management of State lands in the Catskill Park as it has for those in the Adirondack Park, the Department recognizes that such a plan must be developed and adopted if the public demand for recreational use of the Catskill Forest Preserve is to be met without degrading the forest environment. A master plan is also necessary to ensure that Forest Preserve lands are developed and managed in a consistent manner.

Appendix B contains a glossary of the terms used in this document.

A. A Brief History of the Catskill Forest Preserve

The following chronology lists, by date, some of the most important developments in the history of the Forest Preserve.

1885: The Catskill Forest Preserve is created on May 15, when Governor David B. Hill signs legislation requiring that “all lands now owned or which may hereafter be acquired by the State of New York . . . in eleven Adirondack and three Catskill counties . . . be forever kept as wild forest lands. They shall not be sold nor shall they be leased or taken by any person or corporation, public or private.” A three-person Forest Commission is also created to administer the then 681,000-acre Adirondack Forest Preserve and the 33,894-acre Catskill Forest Preserve.

1887: A log observatory tower is erected on the summit of Balsam Lake Mountain by the Balsam Lake Club.

1888: Delaware County is added to the three counties where state lands constitute the Catskill Forest Preserve. State lands in the same four counties -- Delaware, Greene, Sullivan and Ulster -- still make up the Preserve.

1890: The first specific appropriation for acquisition of land to increase and expand the Forest Preserve provides $25,000 to “... purchase lands so located within such counties as include the forest preserve ...”

1892: First fiscal allocation ($250) is made to construct a “public path” in the Forest Preserve to the summit of Slide Mountain, the highest in the Catskills. From this path has evolved a major recreational trail network of foot, horse, ski, and more recently bicycle and snowmobile trails.

1894: The Forest Preserves is afforded Constitutional protection by Article VII (now Article XIV, Section 1) of the New York State Constitution.

1904: The Catskill Park is created by Chapter 233 of the Laws of 1904, encompassing 576,120 acres. New park boundaries are delineated on a map by a blue line -- continuing a tradition begun with establishment of the Adirondack Park in 1892, that these boundaries be generally shown on official state maps in this manner. The Catskill Forest Preserve is expanded to 92,708 acres through land purchases and tax sale acquisitions.

1905: The first Forest Fire Observation Station in New York State is established on the summit of Balsam Lake Mountain in the Town of Hardenburgh, Ulster County.

1909: Two more Forest Fire Observation Stations are established in the Catskills. On Belleayre Mountain an 85 foot high steel tower is erected by the summer resort owners of the region. On Hunter Mountain in Greene County, a tower is erected by the state at a cost of $100.

1912: The description of the Catskill Park is revised to include all lands within the blue line in the Park designation, instead of just state lands. A Forest Fire Observation Station is established on Slide Mountain.

1916: Voters approve at general election a $7.5 million bond issue to acquire and add lands to the Forest Preserve, adding nearly 49,000 acres to the Catskill Forest Preserve over the next ten years.

1917: A fire observation tower is erected on the summit of Tremper Mountain in the Town of Shandaken, Ulster County.

1920: A fire observation tower is erected on the summit of Red Hill in the Town of Denning, Ulster County.

1924: Voters approve at general election a $15 million bond issue expanding state parks and $5 million allocated to acquire lands for the Forest Preserve in the Adirondack and Catskill Parks. Funds provided for addition of 72,000 acres to the Catskill Forest Preserve over the next 20 years.

1926-31: First public campsites (now called public "campgrounds") established in the Catskill Forest Preserve with a campsite ranger on the premises to manage each of them (1929).

- Devil's Tombstone in Greene County (1926)
- Woodland Valley in Ulster County (1926)
- Beaverkill in Sullivan County (1928)
- North Lake in Greene County (1931)

1928: First edition of recreation circular #9, Catskill Trails published by the Conservation Department.

1933: Newly formed Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) provids an enthusiastic work force and undertakes various conservation projects, including construction of many campground facilities. New York State has over 200 CCC camps, several located in the Catskills.

1947: Voters approve a Constitutional amendment authorizing the purchase of lands and the use of some existing Forest Preserve in Ulster and Delaware Counties for a ski center on Belleayre Mountain.

1950: A fire observation tower is erected on the summit of Overlook Mountain in the Town of Woodstock, Ulster County.

1957: Catskill Park enlarged eastward to include the Ashokan Reservoir and to the

south to include additional areas of Sullivan and Delaware Counties -- a total of 705,500 acres.

1960: Joint Legislative Committee on Natural Resources, asked in 1952 to recommend solutions to problems affecting the Forest Preserve, begins studying the possibility of designating certain parts as wilderness areas. A year later, the Committee recommends establishing four such areas within the Catskill Forest Preserve.

A $75 million Park and Recreation Land Acquisition Bond Act is approved at the 1960 General Election. This funding and a supplemental $25 million approved in 1962 set aside $451,000 to acquire 12,000 acres for the Catskill Forest Preserve.

1967: Mongaup Pond Campground in the Town of Rockland, Sullivan County established. On premises is a 122-acre lake, the largest body of water in the Catskill Park other than New York City's Reservoirs.

1968: Little Pond Campground in Delaware County opens, providing additional opportunities for camping, swimming and boating.

1971: Temporary State Commission to Study the Catskills created by the Legislature and charged with studying ". . . the necessity of strengthening policy regarding management, acquisition and use of public land . . ."

1972: $15 million made available by 1972 Environmental Quality Bond Act (EQBA) for acquisition of lands to consolidate and provide additional access to the Forest Preserve. This is used to acquire nearly 36,000 acres in the Catskills.

1975: Temporary State Commission to Study the Catskills submits its final report. Commission recommends that Forest Preserve lands in the Catskill Park be classified into areas of wilderness, wild forest and intensive use according to their characteristics and capacity to withstand such uses. It specifically urges establishing four wilderness areas identified in 1961 by the Joint Legislative Committee.

1979: DEC opens a seventh Catskill campground, the Kenneth L. Wilson Park Campground in the Town of Woodstock, Ulster County.

1985: DEC completes a Catskill Park State Land Master Plan implementing the Catskill Study Commission recommendations.

1986: EQBA funds used to acquire over 3,490 acres of Catskill Forest Preserve land, as well as 514 acres of use easements.

1987: Constitutional amendment to widen and increase the mileage of the ski trails at Belleayre Mountain is approved.

1990: State Legislature authorized development of New York State's first Open Space Conservation Plan.

1992: Working together, DEC and Office of Parks Recreation and Historic Preservation along with nine regional citizen advisory committees, completes first Open Space Conservation Plan. The plan proposes which open space should be protected for New York State's future and describes how open space resources can be conserved and managed in a sensible, affordable way. It also identifies the Forest Preserve as a major resource category, and sets a mechanism for adding Catskill Forest Preserve lands and acquiring conservation easements within the Park. It specifically proposes a dedicated funding source to implement many of the plan's recommendations.

1993: The Legislature enacts the Environmental Protection Act, which establishes the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) for State Open Space Conservation Projects; continues local park,

historic preservation, and heritage area matching grants programs; establishes county-based farmland protection matching grants; funds biodiversity research and identification; promotes local waterfront revitalization plans and coastal rehabilitation projects as well as authorizes funding for other environmental projects.

1995: Governor Pataki approves an updated and revised Open Space Conservation Plan.

1996: Governor Pataki proposes and voters approve a $1.75 billion Clean Water/Clean Air Bond Act, including $150 million for open space, $50 million for municipal park, historic preservation and heritage area programs, $50 million to enhance outdoor recreational opportunities in state parks, and $200 million to clean up municipal brownfields for future uses, including open space.

1997: New York City Department of Environmental Protection (NYCDEP), the Coalition of Watershed Towns, EPA, the State of New York, and various environmental groups, sign a Memorandum of Agreement detailing a cooperative framework for land and watershed management within the New York City Watershed.

1998: Governor Pataki approves an updated and revised Open Space Conservation Plan.

1999: DEC completes a Catskill Forest Preserve Public Access Plan which proposes strengthening the connection between the Forest Preserve and local communities, improving the public's understanding of and access to the Forest Preserve, and creating a "Sense of Park."

2002: Governor Pataki approves an updated and revised Open Space Conservation Plan.

2006: Governor Pataki approves an updated and revised Open Space Conservation Plan.

2008: NYSDEC and NYCDEP announce a cooperative agreement for the opening of thousands of acres of City lands adjacent to state lands, for hunting, hiking, fishing, and trapping without the need for a City access permit.

The Attorney General and the Courts have strictly construed Article XIV, and have restricted public use and Department management to recreation that is compatible with preserving the land as wild forest. Since 1895, nearly 200 amendments to Article XIV have been introduced in the Legislature. Only 29 of these actually have been presented to the state's voters, and only 20 amendments have been approved.

Today, approximately 287,500 acres of Forest Preserve land lie within the Catskill Park. This amounts to nearly 41 percent of all land within the Park boundary. Outside the Park there are over 6,700 acres of "detached" Forest Preserve parcels.

In addition to Forest Preserve, the Department has jurisdiction over several parcels within the Catskill Park classified as non-Forest Preserve: the Catskill Fish Hatchery, the DeBruce Environmental Conservation Education Camp, the Vinegar Hill Wildlife Management Area, the Simpson Ski Slope and the Belleayre Mountain Day Use Area.

B. Other Public Lands

The Department of Transportation (DOT) has jurisdiction over state highways, storage areas and maintenance facilities within the Park. DOT also administers a Scenic Byway program that communities within the Catskill Park can utilize to help protect and enhance the elements of highways that are important to them. DEC will work cooperatively with DOT and local communities, should they express interest to develop corridor management plans for highway corridors in or

passing through the Catskill Park. Corridor plans can include design and maintenance standards for road corridors, including consideration for utilities within the corridor. Corridor plans and projects should promote social needs, economic development needs, and transportation effectiveness while maintaining the ecological character, scenic values, and overall environmental sustainability of the Catskill Park

New York City manages approximately 58,000 acres of reservoir lands. In January of 1997, Catskill towns and counties, the United States Environmental Protection Agency, the Ad Hoc Environmental Coalition, the State of New York, and the City of New York signed a Memorandum of Agreement regarding New York City watershed issues. The agreement lays the foundation for cooperation to protect New York City's water supply, including a major land acquisition effort by the City. The City's current holdings contribute significantly to the undeveloped character of the Catskill Park and future acquisitions will expand the acreage of undeveloped land. New York City is encouraged to continue a cooperative relationship with the Department in its land acquisition efforts to insure common goals are achieved through a coordinated land acquisition policy. In addition, cooperation in the management of the City's current and future land holdings will enhance the recreational opportunities available within the Catskill Park. The Department and New York City have recently agreed to cooperatively manage City lands which are adjacent to DEC lands. The public will not need City access permits to hike, hunt, fish, or trap, on these lands, with DEC assisting in enhanced enforcement.

C. Private Ownerships

Public and private lands are intermingled in the Catskill Park, with most of the Forest Preserve lands at higher elevations and in the less accessible areas of the Catskills. The tracts of land owned by the state are not neat and rectangular; rather, their borders are interrupted with private holdings, and many smaller pieces of Forest Preserve are detached from the large tracts and are scattered throughout the Park. This land relationship, with its advantages and disadvantages, has been considered in the development of this State Land Master Plan, and will be addressed in individual unit management plans.

D. Regional Economics

Besides its many intrinsic values, the Catskill Forest Preserve is an important economic asset for the Catskill Region. Both indirectly, as a powerful attraction to tourists and a positive influence on private land values, and directly in terms of property tax payments to local governments, the Forest Preserve makes substantial contributions to the local economy and serves to enhance the quality of life of residents.

Seven developed campgrounds, an alpine ski center and day use area, numerous fishing access sites and an extensive trail network attract more than 500,000 visitors each year. While some are serious hikers, hunters and anglers who spend all their time on state land, most are day users who consider a Forest Preserve outing just one of many reasons to take a trip to the Catskill region. They may combine a walk on a trail with visits to local shops and restaurants and an overnight stay at an inn or motel. Others are drawn to the area simply to enjoy the impressive mountain scenery of Forest Preserve lands. Though these visitors may never set foot on a trail, the contribution that they make to the local economy is partly due to the existence of the Forest Preserve.

The Forest Preserve also provides extensive undeveloped forest land, ideal for protecting high water quality, thus benefitting a significant portion of the New York City

reservoirs' watersheds. Protection of water quality is a high priority for the management of the Forest Preserve. In addition, the extensive City lands complement the State lands and provide additional recreational opportunities for the public.

The indirect effects on tourism and private land values in the Catskill region that result from the existence and use of the Forest Preserve, while significant, have not been quantified. To assist in improving local and regional planning additional research is needed to accurately characterize indirect economic effects.

The economic benefits directly conferred on the region by the payment of property taxes can be quantified. "All wild or forest lands owned by the state within the Forest Preserve" are subject to taxation for all purposes in accordance with Section 532A of the Real Property Tax Law. The New York State Office of Real Property Services (formerly Equalization and Assessment) keeps records of taxes levied on state land within the Catskill Forest Preserve. The projected taxes for taxable state land in Catskill Forest Preserve counties amounts to over $9 million dollars annually. This equates to approximately $32 dollars/acre/year. Table 2 sets forth the type of taxes paid on state land in the four counties of the Catskill Park by county, town, school and special district.

State government pays the same taxes on unimproved forest lands as private landowners. State government land holdings are assessed by local government assessors. The tax rate that is established by each local government jurisdiction is applied to the assessment and determines the taxes on the parcel. The procedure is the same as for private landowners and the property tax must be comparable to rates on similar private land holdings.

TABLE 2. TAXES PAID ON CATSKILL FOREST PRESERVE LAND

County Name	2002 Forest Preserve Acreage	2002 County Taxes	2002 Town Taxes	2002 School Taxes	2002 Special District Taxes	2002 Total Taxes
Delaware	42,016	251,222	171,141	574,676	27,658	1,024,697
Greene	79,213	456,093	363,863	1,363,830	64,617	2,248,403
Sullivan	18,825	156,734	132,182	411,179	22,170	722,265
Ulster	154,188	743,813	1,095,589	3,455,191	100,483	5,395,076
Total	**294,244**	**1,607,862**	**1,762,775**	**5,804,876**	**214,928**	**9,390,441**

Note: acreage figures are based on Office of Real Property Services and are not identical to DEC mapping.

II. OPEN SPACE PROTECTION

"The quality and character of the lives of the people of New York depend upon the quality and character of the land on which we live. Our mountains, lakes, rivers, forests and coastline, our natural landscapes, urban parks and historic resources shape the way we spend our leisure time, affect the long term strength of our economy, determine whether we have clean air and water, support the web of living things of which we are a part, and affect how we think about ourselves and relate to other New Yorkers."

So reads *Conserving Open Space in New York State (OSP)*, the 2006 update of a plan developed jointly by DEC and the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP). As a great natural landscape "to be forever kept as wild forest lands," the Catskill Forest Preserve is one of the most important open space resources in New York State.

Within the Catskill Park, the enhancement of existing Forest Preserve lands and the protection of additional lands with outstanding open space values will be pursued in accordance with the provisions of the most recent revision of the OSP. The primary strategy for achieving open space protection goals will be the establishment of partnerships with local governments, the federal government, not-for-profit organizations, the private sector, and individual property owners. The acquisition of lands and conservation easements by the State is a part of this strategy. Available funding will be devoted to the protection of the "Priority Conservation Projects" listed in that document. In the case of a listed project that encompasses numerous ownerships, or parcels in the "small projects" category, individual parcels will be reviewed using the most appropriate "resource value rating systems" in the Open Space Plan. The pursuit of open space protection goals by the Department will take place through negotiations with willing sellers. The power of eminent domain will only be used in extraordinary situations, and then only as a last resort as outlined in ECL 49-0203, State land acquisition policy.

The OSP identifies several "Priority Conservation Projects" in the Catskill Mountain region, where open space protection efforts should be focused. Priority Conservation Areas in the Catskills include:

1) Protection of the Catskill's unfragmented forests;

2) Protection of the Catskill's river and road corridors;

3) Protection of New York City Watershed lands.

In some cases, the goals of open space protection may best be served through means other than fee title acquisition. Specifically, open space needs may often be combined with the best interest of landowners through conservation easements. For instance, a conservation easement may be tailored to protect the natural appearance of an important part of the Catskill landscape and secure public recreational access while the landowner retains the right to harvest forest products. As another example, the protection of a rare plant or animal community might require the management of vegetation in a way that would not be possible if the parcel were to become a part of the Forest Preserve. Again, a conservation easement would be the most appropriate tool. Depending on the circumstances of an individual project, DEC may hold an easement while another party retains fee title, or hold fee title subject to an easement held by another party. Because they may be specifically designed to

satisfy open space protection needs while meeting the goals of individual landowners, conservation easements will be considered when appropriate over fee title acquisition by
the state within the Catskill Forest Preserve counties.

The following guidelines conform with the OSP and should be considered within Catskill Forest Preserve Counties:

1. Future land acquisition by the Departmetn within the Catskill Park will be restricted to acquiring new Forest Preserve lands and conservation easements. The Department will avoid acquiring lands in fee for non-Forest Preserve purposes within the park.

2. The Department will avoid acquiring Forest Preserve lands outside the Catskill Park.

3. The acquisition of rights-of-way across private lands that effectively prevent access to important blocks of State land should be pursued, except where such acquisition would exacerbate or cause problems of overuse or inappropriate use of State lands.

4. Because the forest products industry is an important part of the economy of the Catskill region, the open space values of large parcels of productive forest land within the Catskill Park should be protected, where appropriate through conservation easements. In addition, DEC will consider the impacts of fee title acquisition of parcels within the park that contain rare plants or animals or significant wildlife habitat whose perpetuation would require the cutting of trees and, when appropriate protect those biological resources through a conservation easement.

5. Future land acquisitions will be classified through the unit management process, or an amended or revised Master plan, as discussed in Section III, "Classification System."

6. From time to time, persons or organizations may offer gifts of land, in fee or easement, to DEC within the Catskill Park. Such offers will be reviewed, and those meeting the guidelines herein, and the provisions of the Open Space Plan, may be accepted for inclusion in the Forest Preserve.

7. Special consideration will be given to the acquisition of lands suitable for the development of recreational opportunities that would be accessible to families and people with disabilities.

III. CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

The Catskill Forest Preserve contains lands with varying degrees of wildness ranging from remote and trail-less mountain peaks and picturesque streams to extensively-used camping areas and trails. The Preserve is composed of a variety of terrain, soil and forest cover types with differing capacities to sustain and recover from recreational use.

Constitutional restrictions on the management of the Forest Preserve do not specifically consider the varying characteristics of the land. Through the classification of the lands of the Catskill Forest Preserve according to their characteristics and capacity to withstand use and the preparation of management guidelines for each classification, comprehensive unit management plans (UMPs) for the future administration of the Catskill Forest Preserve will be developed. UMPs have been completed for most units in the Catskills, and some UMPs have also been revised or amended.

A fundamental determinant of land classification is the physical characteristic of the land or water that affects the capacity of the land to accept human use. Soil, slope, elevation and water are the primary elements of these physical characteristics and are found in widely varied associations. For example, fertility, erosiveness and depth of soil, severity of slopes, elevational characteristics reflected in microclimates, and temperature, chemistry, volume and turnover rate of streams or lakes all affect the carrying capacity of the land or water both from the standpoint of the construction of facilities and the amount of human use the land or water can absorb. By and large, these factors highlight the essential fragility of certain portions of state lands within the park, particularly those found at higher elevations, as well as low-lying areas such as wetlands, rivers, streams, lakes and ponds.

Biological considerations also play an important role in the structuring of the classification system. Many of these are associated with the physical limitations just described. For instance, many plants at high altitudes are less able to withstand trampling than species associated with lower elevation life zones. Wetland ecosystems frequently are finely balanced and incapable of absorbing material changes resulting from construction or intensive human use. In addition, wildlife values and wildlife habitats are relevant to the characteristics of the land and sometimes determine whether a particular kind of human use should be encouraged or prohibited, such as the impact of snowmobiles on deer wintering yards, the effect of hikers or campers near the nesting habitat of threatened or endangered species like the bald eagle or the problems associated with motorized access to bodies of water with wild strains of native trout.

Another significant determinant of land classification involves certain intangible considerations that have an inevitable impact on the character of land. Some of these are social or psychological - such as the sense of remoteness and degree of wildness available to users of a particular area, which may result from the size of an area, the type or density of its forest cover, the ruggedness of the terrain or merely the views over other areas of the park from some vantage point.

Finally, the classification system takes into account the established facilities on the land, the historic and current uses by the public, and the policies followed by the department. Many of these factors are self-evident: the presence of an existing campground or ski area requires the classification of intensive use. The extent of existing facilities and uses which might make it impractical to attempt to recreate a wilderness or wild forest atmosphere is also a consideration. This is not to imply that when present uses or facilities are degrading the resource they should be continued, but their presence cannot be ignored. The unique mixture of public and private land within the

Park also requires recognition of facilities and uses on contiguous or nearby private lands.

The above described factors are obviously complex. Nonetheless, the Department of Environmental Conservation believes that the classification system described below reflects the character and capacity to withstand use of all Department-administered State lands within the park.

Five basic classifications are established in this Plan:

1. Wilderness
2. Wild Forest
3. Primitive Bicycle Corridor
4. Intensive Use
5. Administrative

The Primitive Bicycle Corridor is a new classification in this final version of the Plan.

The unifying theme of this classification system is that the protection and preservation of the natural resources of the Catskill Forest Preserve will be paramount. Human use and enjoyment of those lands should be permitted and encouraged, so long as the resources in their physical and biological context and their social or psychological aspects are not degraded beyond a limit of acceptable change.

New additions to the Forest Preserve will be classified in accordance with classification criteria set forth in this Plan. Parcels will be classified to match the units to which they will be attached, or which are in closest proximity. Initial classification, or re-classification to a more restrictive classification will be accomplished either through the development, revision, or amendment of a UMP or by an amendment to, or revision of, this Plan. Re-classification of lands to a less restrictive classification may only be accomplished by an amendment to, or revision of, the this Plan. A map of the Catskill Forest Preserve showing the name and location of each planning unit can be found in Appendix I.

IV. MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

This section of the plan sets forth general guidelines for all Forest Preserve lands. It also sets forth specific guidelines for each major land classification and provides various special management guidelines for unique resources within these major classifications. These guidelines are subject to any future legal rulings further restricting uses of the Forest Preserve and they are not to be considered as attempts to make determinations as to the constitutional appropriateness of any such structures, improvements or uses. From a constitutional perspective, this Plan should be regarded as neutral in character.

In addition, the designation of administrative areas in this Plan should not be taken as lending weight to the constitutional appropriateness of the general treatment of these lands by the state, either legislatively or administratively, as non-Forest Preserve.

Nothing in the guidelines for lands within each major classification shall be deemed to prevent the Department from applying more restrictive management where necessary to comply with constitutional requirements or to protect the natural resources of such lands.

A. Guidelines for All Classifications

The guidelines given in this section apply to all lands whose management is governed by the Master plan.

The Constitution and the Law - The Authority for Forest Preserve Management

The acquisition, management and use of Forest Preserve lands is directly attributable to the will of the people through the New York State Constitution and several sections of the Environmental Conservation Law. These Constitutional provisions and statutes and interpretations by the courts and several Attorney General opinions have been the basis for Forest Preserve policy since its inception in l885.

Article XIV, Section l, of the New York State Constitution provides the over riding legal authority by stating, in relevant part, that *"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."*

Section 9-0101 of the Environmental Conservation Law defines the "Forest Preserve" [in the Catskills] as all those lands owned or hereafter acquired by the state within the counties of Delaware, Greene, Ulster and Sullivan except;

a. Lands within the limits of any village or city;

b. Lands not wild lands and not situated within the Catskill Park acquired by the state on foreclosure of mortgages made to loan commissioners; and

c. Lands acquired under provisions of ECL Section 9-0107 (gifts for parks and for silvicultural research) and 9-0501 (power to acquire reforestation areas outside the Catskill Park).

Sections 3-0301 (1) (d) and 9-0105 (1) of the Environmental Conservation Law place the responsibility for the care, custody and control of the Forest Preserve in the Department of Environmental Conservation.

By statute (Section 9-030l [1] of the Environmental Conservation Law), these lands have been reserved and maintained for the free use of all the people, except that a fee can be charged for the use of facilities.

Section 9-0l0l [2] of the Environmental Conservation Law defines the Catskill Park to include all lands located in the Counties of Delaware, Greene, Sullivan, and Ulster within described boundaries generally referred to as the Catskill "Blue Line." As discussed previously, the Catskill Park includes private as well as public lands.

The Biodiversity Act of 1993 mandates that DEC identify, manage and conserve plants, animals and ecological communities that are rare in New York State, and that are located on State-owned lands under the jurisdiction of the Department. The Act also establishes within DEC the New York Natural Heritage Program to identify, locate, rank and maintain records on the status of rare plants, animals and ecological communities, for the purpose of conserving and managing the State's biological diversity. The act also "recognizes that active management of ecosystems can enhance biodiversity."

See Appendix D for a list of additional policies which govern DEC's care, custody and control of the Forest Preserve.

Tree Cutting in the Forest Preserve

Article XIV of the Constitution specifically states that the timber on the Forest Preserve shall not "... be sold, removed or destroyed." Over the years it has been necessary to occasionally cut a limited number of Forest Preserve trees in the interest of public safety, overall protection of the Preserve and for the development of facilities. Such cutting has been sanctioned through Constitutional amendment, court decision or by Opinion of the Attorney General.

In 1984 the DEC Commissioner established a policy regarding the cutting, removal or destruction of trees and other vegetation on all Forest Preserve lands. The policy requires the approval of the Director of the Division of Lands and Forests for all projects that involve cutting, removal or destruction of trees or other vegetation in the course of construction of new facilities and the expansion or modification of existing facilities. It also delegates responsibility for approval of all routine maintenance projects involving the cutting, removal or destruction of trees or other vegetation to the Regional Forester. In that same year, the Division of Lands and Forests established administrative procedures to implement this policy (L&F 84-2). The Commissioner's policy was amended in 1986 to provide for adequate notice to the public. In 1991 the Division revised L&F 84-2. In establishing administrative procedures for any vegetative manipulation occurring within the Forest Preserve, L&F 91-2 directs the department to consider alternatives to tree cutting wherever feasible. For example, instead of cutting trees to build a bridge, the Department should first consider relocating the trail to avoid the need for a bridge, utilizing rock stepping stones instead of a bridge, or carrying in logs from another non-Forest Preserve location. This policy also ensures that appropriate mitigation measures will be undertaken when tree cutting is necessary. Mitigation measures include lopping tops, cutting stumps flush to the ground, and leaving a buffer between the trail or facility and the tree to be cut.

Any action involving the cutting, removal or destruction of trees on Forest Preserve lands will be in accordance with Commissioner's Organization and Delegation Memorandum #84-06 relating to the construction of new facilities, the expansion or modification of existing facilities and routine maintenance projects on lands of the Forest Preserve (as amended in 1986); and Lands and Forests Policy 91-2: Cutting, Removal or Destruction of Trees and Endangered, Threatened or Rare Plants on Forest Preserve lands.

Invasive Species Management

Invasive species (as defined under Federal Executive Order 13112 see definitions), may injure, kill, or displace native plants or

communities growing on Forest Preserve lands. Currently, Japanese knotweed is an invasive plant species sometimes found on Forest Preserve lands. Mile -A-Minute vine is a concern, although not currently prevalent. Other species of some concern include purple loosestrife, common reed, giant hogweed and garlic mustard. In addition, several plant pathogens, such as Asian long horned beetle, hemlock wooly adelgid, emerald ash borer, sirex wood wasp and sudden oak death, among others, pose significant threats to the different tree species. There are also several aquatic species that may be problematic to functioning natural aquatic ecosystems.

The introduction of alien species occurs frequently throughout the US and New York State; however, only a small percentage actually become invasive and pose a threat to a natural functioning ecosystem. Although in the context of a global society, the transfer of species from one location to another may be viewed as part of a "natural process," there may be occasions when this relocation of non-native species becomes unacceptable and an active response is warranted.

The Department has recently created a new Office of Invasive Species to work with various universities, state agencies and non-profit groups in coordinating a response to invasive species. The Department will also work with the new Catskill Region Invasive Species Partnership (CRISP) to work on education, inventory, research, control protocol, and control of invasive species. An inventory and analysis of the current distribution of invasive species on Forest Preserve lands will provide the necessary information on the present extent of invasive exotics and provide the basis for long term decision making.

Irrespective of a completed inventory and analysis, the Department will take necessary actions to control invasive species where there is potential for significant degradation to the native ecosystem. These actions can include mechanical control, biological control, and the use of pesticides, and will require compliance with applicable laws including the State Environmental Quality Review Act notice in the Environmental Notice Bulletin (ENB) and approval by the Director of the Division of Lands and Forests.

Public Information, Education, and Interpretation

New York State residents and visitors see the Catskill Forest Preserve in a variety of ways. Most people are aware of the Catskill Mountains as the scenic backdrop of Catskill highways and communities and know something of their history as a setting for large vacation resorts, however, relatively few have a clear idea of what the Forest Preserve is or how Forest Preserve lands intermingle with private lands and communities to form the unique relationship that characterizes the Catskill Park. Even the thousands of people each year who stay at Forest Preserve campgrounds or travel the trails of the Forest Preserve are not fully aware of its rich history, natural resource values, recreational opportunities, and importance to the economy of the Catskill region.

To better serve the interests of New Yorkers, with particular attention to the residents of the Catskill Park, the Department will develop a visitor information system for the Catskill Forest Preserve. Primary goals of the visitor information system will be to increase public understanding and enjoyment of the Forest Preserve while contributing to the protection of its natural resources for future generations. These goals will be achieved by encouraging visitors to discover less well-known recreational opportunities, educating them about the proper use of Forest Preserve lands, and enhancing their experience as they travel the scenic byways of the Catskill Park.

A major component of the information system will be a strategy to interpret the natural and cultural history of the Forest Preserve and the

many ways that the "forever wild" lands of the Catskills benefit the people of the region and the state. The primary contact point to introduce the public to the Park is the proposed Catskill Interpretive Center (CIC), to be built on lands along State Route 28 in the Town of Shandaken, Ulster County, just west of the hamlet of Boiceville. The proposed CIC will interpret the region's natural and cultural resources through a variety of educational programs and services. The CIC will direct visitors to outdoor recreation, historical and cultural opportunities throughout the region, including local communities and services they offer.

DEC campgrounds, day use areas and the Belleayre Ski Center will become Forest Preserve "information stations," distributing publications and presenting informational displays to visitors. The information system will be designed to blend environmental and open space protection with economic development and will be implemented in partnership with local governments and organizations.

The details of the visitor information system are presented in the Catskill Forest Preserve Public Access Plan adopted in 1999.

A Balanced Approach to Recreational Development

There is a long history of recreational use of the Forest Preserve. In the late nineteenth century, those who argued for the creation of the Forest Preserve recognized its value as a place where city dwellers could engage in healthful exercise and find spiritual renewal. Since the construction of the trail to the summit of Slide Mountain in 1892, over 300 miles of trails have been constructed. The Devil's Tombstone and Woodland Valley Campgrounds, opened in 1926, were the first of seven Catskill Forest Preserve campgrounds. The facilities that now exist on the Forest Preserve afford opportunities for a variety of recreational activities.

Campgrounds provide basic amenities and easy access for camping, picnicking, swimming, and other outdoor activities in a social setting. Visitors who are looking for solitude far from roads and cities can hike into the interior of the Forest Preserve to observe plants and animals in their natural environment and to camp, hunt, and fish. But Forest Preserve managers are being challenged by a steady increase in the demand for recreation by visitors with a wide variety of interests and abilities.

In the early years, most people entered the Forest Preserve on foot. Some traveled on horseback. More recently, new trail uses have become popular at the same time that levels of traditional uses have climbed. While in some cases the increased interest in trails by equestrians, cross-country skiers, snowmobilers, and bicyclists has led to the development of specialized trails, more often different uses have been combined on existing trail systems. The increased pressure for shared use has elevated the potential for conflicts between users. Allowing new uses on existing trails can also lead to increased physical impacts. DEC faces the challenge of accommodating increasing levels of trail use, without altering the wild character of Forest Preserve lands and maintaining the quality of the recreational experience.

The recent steady increase in public use in the Catskill Forest Preserve has been most dramatic in areas that are attractive and easily accessible. The short trail to Kaaterskill Falls is climbed by thousands of people each year. The use of the Peekamoose Valley primitive camping area for day use and camping became so popular in the early 1980's that a strong law enforcement presence was required to keep use levels in line with the capacity of the area. Similar challenges existed in the Russell Brook area. The popularity of these places illustrates the demand for expanded recreational access for people who are not inclined or physically able to travel into the backcountry. Because much of the Forest Preserve land in the Catskills is steep and

separated from public highways by private lands, accessible opportunities for outdoor recreation are limited, especially for families and people with disabilities. DEC recognizes this gap in the array of existing recreational opportunities and intends to focus on improving access and increasing recreational opportunity for all those interested in exploring the Forest Preserve.

Within the towns and villages of the Catskill Park, 50,000 people live and work. Tourism makes a large contribution to the economy of Catskill communities. With its great scenic qualities and abundant opportunities for outdoor recreation, the Catskill Forest Preserve plays a significant part in attracting those who visit local tourist businesses. Therefore, the way that recreation on Forest Preserve lands is developed and managed can have important ramifications for the Catskill economy. To assure that the management of the Forest Preserve is coordinated with Catskill communities, the Department will maintain open communication with local governments and residents in all aspects of Forest Preserve planning.

The primary goal of Forest Preserve management is the perpetuation of Forest Preserve lands in a wild state. In conformance with constitutional and legal constraints, protection of the natural resources, as well as the management guidelines established for each classification, DEC will manage the lands of the Catskill Forest Preserve to provide significant opportunities for a variety of recreational activities for people of all abilities. Through partnerships with local governments, organizations, and individuals, DEC will provide for the use and enjoyment of Forest Preserve lands in ways that will support the economy of the Catskill region while protecting the wildness that is essential to the character of the Forest Preserve.

Opportunities for Forest Preserve recreation will be developed and managed in accordance with the following guidelines:

Trails

- The location of "family trails" will be planned and constructed for the purpose of improving recreational access, enjoyment, and understanding of the Forest Preserve for all people. In locating family trails, preference will be given to places accessible from major highways in Wild Forest and Intensive Use areas where the land through which the trail passes or the destination of the trail has high scenic, ecological, or historical interest. In general, family trails will be foot trails two miles or less in length, or bicycle trails three to five miles or less in length that traverse gentle terrain, and provide firm, dry footing or trail tread. They will be easily identified from the road, clearly marked, and well maintained. Sufficient parking will be provided at the trailhead to accommodate anticipated use. The ecological and historical features of family trails will be interpreted through trailhead signs, wayside exhibits, and publications. In suitable locations, trails and associated structures will be designed and constructed to be accessible for people with disabilities. Where possible, family trails will be developed and maintained in partnership with local governments, organizations, and residents.

- Forest Preserve lands will be linked with nearby communities through trail connections where feasible, appropriate, and supported by local governments, residents, and landowners. Priority will be given to trail linkages that tie into existing public transportation, reduce the need for new structures and improvements -- such as parking lots and access roads -- on

Forest Preserve lands, support local economic development plans, and foster the development of interpretive and educational programs.

- Only those trail uses appropriate to the classification of the unit and compatible with the physical characteristics and natural resource setting of the trail will be allowed.

- Conflicts between different types of trail use will be minimized. If possible, different types of trail use will be separated. Because they occur in different seasons, some uses--such as snowmobiling and mountain bicycling--can be temporally separated, even though they are allowed on the same trail.

- Most of the trails in the Forest Preserve were constructed for use by those traveling on foot. Hiking and access for hunting, fishing and trapping have always been the primary trail uses on Forest Preserve lands. Selected trails considered especially important for foot travel will not be considered for other types of trail use. Trails, or portions of them, to be reserved for foot travel will be identified in unit management plans.

- If demand exists for a type of trail use in an area where it is appropriate but can not be separated from other trail uses, the use will be allowed on existing trails where shared use will not lead to unacceptable conflicts between trail users or unacceptable physical impacts.

- On trails shared by different types of trail use, the Department will work to gain public acceptance of trail sharing by informing visitors about the types of trail uses allowed and promoting the principles of trail-sharing etiquette through trailhead signs, publications, and personal contact. Trail use will be monitored. Should monitoring reveal that the addition of a new type of trail use has caused unacceptable levels of conflict between trail users or unacceptable physical impacts to a trail, appropriate management action will be taken to reduce such conflicts or impacts. Action may include elimination of a type of trail use from the trail, or the creation of new trail, through the UMP process, to help maintain the various recreational opportunities that are currently present.

- Development of long-distance trails that cross the boundaries of management units and DEC regions will be encouraged as a type of recreational opportunity appropriate for Forest Preserve lands. Routes of long-distance trails will incorporate existing trails where feasible and appropriate. However, long-distance trails will not be located where anticipated levels of use on new or existing trails or increased access to adjacent areas will have unacceptable impacts on natural resources, the recreational experiences of visitors, or lands outside the Forest Preserve. Because most long-distance trails cross both public and private lands, DEC managers will coordinate with private landowners, the managers of other involved public lands, and trail organizations in the development and management of long-distance trails. Descriptions of three long-distance trail projects -- the Long Path, the Finger Lakes Trail, and the proposed New York State Snowmobile Corridor Trail #2 are given in Appendix C.

- Proposals to construct new trails, allow new uses on existing trails, or eliminate uses on existing trails will not be implemented unless they are included in adopted unit management plans.

However the area manager may close trails or eliminate a use at any time, when necessary to protect natural resources or the safety of the public. The minimum tool concept - using the least disruptive measure to accomplish the goal - will be employed. No one use will be considered paramount to any other, when considering solutions to serious conflicts or physical impacts. When a trail or use is eliminated, when feasible every effort will be made to identify new opportunities, through the UMP process, to insure a comparable recreational experience is maintained.

Table 3 shows the various trail types and the uses that are legally authorized on trails marked for each use:

TABLE 3. AUTHORIZED USES ON MARKED TRAILS

TYPE OF TRAIL	HIKING	HORSE	BICYCLE	X/C SKI	SNOWMOBILE
FOOT	X	-	X[3]	X	-
HORSE	X	X	-	X	-
BICYCLE	X	X	X	X	-
X/C SKI	X	X[2]	X[3]	X	-
SNOWMOBILE	X	X[2]	X[2]	X	X[1]

NOTES:
1. Only when covered with snow. 2. Only when not covered with snow or ice. 3. Not in wilderness.

Linking Management Units

Intensive Use Areas are easily accessible parts of the Forest Preserve where relatively large numbers of people enjoy types of outdoor recreation that do not require the level of physical fitness and the degree of self-sufficiency generally needed for travel into wilderness and wild forest areas. Although the recreational potential of most intensive use areas has been developed to a considerable extent, additional opportunities exist. Especially in those intensive use areas that are situated adjacent to wild forest lands, trails could be developed that would expand accessible recreational opportunity for visitors. Short trails to scenic outlooks, loop trails for mountain bicycles, and interpretive trails could make a family trip to a campground more enjoyable and informative. New recreational opportunities within intensive use areas and trails linking intensive use areas with adjacent lands will be identified and proposed for development, with special emphasis on opportunities for family groups and people with disabilities. New proposals will be implemented once they are included in the adopted unit management plans for the affected areas.

Fish and Wildlife Recreation

Most recreationists visiting the Forest Preserve will observe wildlife incidentally to whatever activity they are pursuing. Seeing wildlife enhances the overall outdoor experience. Some individuals, however, do frequent the Forest Preserve for the express purpose of observing wildlife. Bird watchers are an example.

Deer hunters are one of the primary users of the Forest Preserve during the big game hunting seasons. The remoteness of Forest Preserve lands in the Catskills and the fact that most of these lands are along ridgetops and on mountain summits means that access is very limited and the harvest is somewhat minimized. The deer hunter who hunts the Forest Preserve is an individual who wants to get into an area where hunter densities are low, someone who likes the remoteness and rugged conditions afforded by a “wilderness” hunting experience. Most hunter access is at trailheads; however, some direct access from adjacent private property also occurs. While some people hunt specifically for black bears in the Catskills, most are harvested incidentally to deer.

A considerable amount of trapping occurs in the Forest Preserve. The remoteness of the area lends itself to trapping; the risk of encountering free-ranging domestic animals is very slim. The larger fur-bearers trapped in the Forest Preserve include beaver, coyote, bobcat, fisher and otter. The smaller, more numerous and frequently trapped species are racoons, weasels, skunks, mink, muskrats and gray and red foxes.

Fishing is somewhat limited in the Forest Preserve, especially at the higher elevations. Some opportunity exists for brook trout and wild browns and rainbows, but many of the streams are very small and frequently seasonal in nature. These small streams provide a very important function, however, in that they are often nursery grounds for trout which move down into the larger lakes and streams and enhance the fishing opportunities the Catskills are so famous for.

Access for People With Disabilities

The Federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) has implications for the management of all public lands, including the Forest Preserve. The ADA requires, in part, that each service, program and activity offered by state agencies be made accessible to and useable by people with disabilities, unless doing so would result in a fundamental alteration of the nature of the service, program or activity or an undue financial and administrative burden. Although not yet adopted, recommended guidelines for satisfying the mandates of the ADA in the areas of new construction and alteration to outdoor recreational facilities have been developed by the Regulatory Negotiation Committee for the U.S. Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board as 36 CFR Part 1195. Land managers are required by the ADA mandate to use the best possible information in developing, enhancing and improving recreational facilities. As the proposed guidelines provide the most recent and best available information on this subject, they will be employed to address accessibility issues in the Catskill Forest Preserve.

Over the years, an extensive network of trails, a ski center and day use area, and several campgrounds have been developed on Catskill Forest Preserve lands to provide recreational opportunities for the public. However, because of its character as an undeveloped natural area, the interior of the Forest Preserve has been largely inaccessible to people with disabilities. In campgrounds, DEC has made a number of improvements. Rest rooms, camping and picnic areas, fishing sites and other structures are designed and constructed or modified for accessibility. Numerous boat launches also have been made accessible. But the accessibility of the areas of the Forest

Preserve now classified as “wild forest” and “wilderness” remain limited.

DEC has solicited the advice and recommendations of federal and state government experts on the ADA, people with disabilities, environmental and recreational interests and others to develop the best approach toward meeting the requirements of the ADA on the Forest Preserve. In 1997, DEC adopted policy CP-3, Motor Vehicle Access to State Lands under Jurisdiction of the Department of Environmental Conservation for People with Disabilities, that establishes guidelines for issuing temporary revocable permits allowing qualified people with disabilities to use motor vehicles on designated routes on certain state lands. According to the policy as it applies to the Forest Preserve, on lands classified as “Wild Forest” and “Intensive Use,” people with qualifying disabilities may obtain permits to use motor vehicles in certain specified locations. This plan is subject to the provisions of that policy. A person with a qualifying disability may also obtain a permit to hunt from a motor vehicle.

Policy CP-3 reflects an interpretation of the ADA in terms of the “fundamental nature” of each Forest Preserve classification. Wilderness areas are managed to preserve their natural conditions, minimize human disturbance, and offer outstanding opportunities for solitude. Therefore, no use of motor vehicles is allowed. In comparison with wilderness areas, wild forest areas are managed, in general, to accommodate a greater variety of recreational activities and a higher intensity of recreational use. While the preservation of their wild character remains the primary management goal, the use of motor vehicles may be allowed to a limited extent. CP-3 sets forth the Department’s policy for affording people with disabilities opportunities for motor vehicle use in wild forest areas.

Intensive Use classification is given to areas managed to provide an array of outdoor recreational opportunities for people with a multitude of interests and abilities. Because most structures and improvements can easily be reached by automobile, intensive use areas are or can be made the most accessible parts of the Forest Preserve. The guidelines for management of intensive use areas provide the greatest flexibility in improving accessibility through physical modifications to the land.

The need to protect the wild character of the Forest Preserve lands and the difficulties presented by their rugged terrain set limits on the degree of physical modification that can be undertaken to improve their accessibility. Each unit management plan will contain an assessment of accessibility that will include the identification of accessible recreational opportunities. Actions to improve existing opportunities and create new ones where appropriate will also be proposed.

Improving accessibility of trails may require some modifications to the trail structure, i.e., surfacing, tread width, etc, in accordance with the proposed guidelines. In addition, trailhead signs should present information about trail surface type, length, average grade, average cross slope, maximum grade and slope, trail width, and hazards such as rocks, ruts, and roots that might be encountered on the trail. Information could also be provided in a simple pocket guide with a map showing the trail and the locations of obstacles. Providing information about trail accessibility would allow a visitor to make an informed decision about their ability to use the trail. Physical modifications will also be made to improve accessibility. Parking, bridge surfaces and approaches, sanitary facilities, trails and other parts of the built environment will be developed, enhanced or improved where necessary to ensure accessibility.
To ensure DEC’s management efforts will effectively meet accessibility guidelines and recommendations while conforming with the

legal and natural resource constraints that affect the management of Forest Preserve lands, DEC managers will involve experts in universal design and representatives of the community of people with disabilities in the preparation of unit management plans.

Temporary Revocable Permits

Temporary Revocable Permits (TRPs) will be issued by the Department pursuant to ECL§9-0105 (15), as a management tool for certain activities which are otherwise allowed on Forest Preserve lands but, because of their nature, may have significant adverse impacts on such lands unless carefully managed. Flacke v. Town of Fine, 113 Misc. 2d 56 (St. Lawrence County Supreme Court, 1982) upheld the Department's authority to issue TRPs for activities which might result in such impacts, noting the Department's custodial responsibility over the constitutionally protected Forest Preserve. Furthermore, the State holds the fee of Forest Preserve lands in trust for the people of the State. Thus, the Department's use of TRPs to manage recreational and administrative activities (even those activities exercised pursuant to a legal right such as an easement as discussed below) aid in the Department's stewardship of this public trust.
TRPs may be used to authorize a variety of activities, such as group hiking, camping, motor vehicle access on existing roads by people with disabilities pursuant to Policy CP-3, weddings and other group gatherings, footraces, fishing tournaments, and maintenance of roads and utility lines. The issuance of such TRPs will ensure that Forest Preserve lands are protected in compliance with applicable law and that the activities will not subsequently become the subject of enforcement actions. TRPs will not be issued to authorize any activity which violates constitutional, statutory or regulatory provisions.

Property which the Department manages under the Master plan is occasionally encumbered by easements, rights-of-way, ways of necessity, riparian rights, or other legal rights which pre-existed State acquisition. State acquisition does not extinguish these rights unless the State has either bought them from a willing seller or acquired them by eminent domain. The Department will monitor activities taken pursuant to any such encumbrances to ensure that the activities stay within the scope of activities authorized by the encumbrances, have no adverse impacts on Forest Preserve lands, and do not result in environmental degradation. Issues involving such encumbrances will be referred by the Division of Lands and Forests to the Division of Legal Affairs for legal review. Maintenance or construction activities related to such encumbrances (such as gravel work, culvert replacement, dock construction, road widening, ditch digging or widening, tree trimming and cutting, brush cutting, or the use of herbicides) will be managed by Department staff through the issuance of TRPs.

Once issued, it is incumbent on Department staff to ensure that permit holders comply with TRP terms and conditions and that no unexpected environmental degradation occurs. Thus, Department staff will periodically monitor activities which are authorized by TRPs. The frequency of such monitoring will be commensurate with the significance of the activity allowed by the TRP. TRPs will be modified, suspended or revoked where necessary to protect Forest Preserve lands or prevent environmental degradation. Department staff will also visit the work site when the work authorized by the TRP has been completed to ensure compliance with the terms of the TRP.

Natural Resource Inventory

To continue to build a foundation for sound management decisions, the Department will strive to undertake or facilitate comprehensive inventories of plants, animals, ecological communities and other natural resources on

Forest Preserve lands. Priority will be given to the inventory of rare plant and animal species, significant habitats, and exemplary communities. DEC planners will consult records of the Natural Heritage Program, the Breeding Bird Atlas, the New York State Amphibian and Reptile Atlas and other available information to assemble records for Forest Preserve units in unit management plans. The results of inventory work for individual units could be combined for use in broad-based ecosystem management initiatives.

Fisheries Management

Aquatic resource management will strive to protect and perpetuate the fish resources and habitat supporting those resources within the Catskill Park. Aquatic resource management in the Catskill Park will emphasize the quality of the angling experience over quantity of use. Aquatic resources in wilderness and wild forest areas will be protected and managed so as to preserve, enhance and restore, where necessary, their natural conditions. Aquatic resource management, including stocking of game and nongame fishes, and pond reclamation, may be necessary to achieve and perpetuate natural aquatic ecosystems. Pond reclamation and liming will be practiced as appropriate to prepare or maintain waters in wilderness and wild forest areas, but only for the restoration or perpetuation of indigenous fish communities.

Fishing in the Park, as in the rest of the State, is regulated by open seasons, size and catch limits and manner of take as specified in 6 NYCRR Part 10, as authorized by Sections 11-1303 and 11-1305 of the Environmental Conservation Law.

Wildlife Management

Within the Forest Preserve, animals live in a natural environment relatively free of human development and disturbance. DEC's management of wildlife on Forest Preserve lands consists of hunting and trapping regulations, the monitoring of wildlife populations, fostering wildlife research, and the occasional limited intervention that might be undertaken to ensure the survival of threatened and endangered species. It does not include the manipulation of habitat. Some field work (browse surveys, winter mortality surveys, and bear collaring and monitoring) is conducted in the Forest Preserve but little else is done in the way of active management. The influences of natural conditions on wildlife populations, such as predation or seasonal changes in the food supply, as well as the effects of wildlife behavior on elements of the natural environment or man-made structures and improvements, are accepted on these lands where natural processes are allowed to determine the course of events.

Protected wildlife species which are hunted or trapped in the Forest Preserve are managed, in large part, solely through the season setting process. Season dates for wildlife species are set statewide for large blocks of land known as Wildlife Management Units. These geographic areas have distinct habitat types and land use characteristics. The impact of hunting seasons on small game species is generally insignificant; harvest replaces or is compensatory to natural annual mortality which results from disease, starvation, accidents and weather related events. This is especially true for large, remote blocks of land with limited access. Deer and bear are probably the only species whose numbers are somewhat controlled by a hunting season.

Occasionally the behavior of wildlife in the Forest Preserve conflicts with the recreational activities of visitors. Black bears may lose their fear of people and frequent popular camping areas looking for food. The construction activities of beaver may lead to the flooding of trails. The management goal in dealing with conflicts between animals and

people in the Forest Preserve will be to educate visitors that they are entering an area managed to minimize human influence over the natural environment. They will be informed about how to store food properly to keep bears from becoming problems in camping areas. An action to remove a bear from an area will only be taken if the bear poses a serious threat to human safety. In general, the response to the flooding of a trail due to beaver activity will be to relocate the trail, not remove the beaver or the beaver dam. Direct action to control beaver will only be undertaken if the structures or improvements affected by beaver activity are determined by the department to be essential to management of the area, and if their relocation would not be physically practical or cost effective.

The Forest Preserve serves an important function for migrant neotropical birds. It is a large block of undisturbed forest habitat that provides a stop-over spot for species that migrate thousands of miles between wintering grounds in South America and breeding habitats in the northern latitudes. Much of the countryside is being fragmented by development; suburban sprawl is reaching further and further into the lands surrounding urban areas, likely causing significant, negative impacts to the traditionally rural landscapes used by migrating birds. Isolated locations like the Forest Preserve, which still maintain their original, undisturbed character, help make it possible for these species dependent on large blocks of undisturbed habitat to continue to survive.

Bird Conservation Areas

In September of 1997, §11-2001 of the Environmental Conservation Law of New York was established creating New York State's Bird Conservation Area Program. The program is designed to safeguard and enhance bird populations and their habitats on selected state lands and waters. Also established was ECL §11-2003, creating a Bird Conservation Area (BCA) Program Advisory Committee composed of representatives from numerous conservation agencies and organizations. The Committee advises state agencies on the designation, management, educational research and utilization of the sites identified as part of the BCA program. An area may be designated as a BCA if it is determined to be important for one or more species. In general, a site is nominated because of its importance to large numbers of birds, species at risk, or its importance as a bird research site.

In June of 1999, New York State designated several Catskill peaks over 3,500 feet containing dense subalpine coniferous forests, as the Catskill High Peaks Bird Conservation Area. The Catskill High Peaks BCA includes peaks over 3,500 feet in the Windham - Blackhead Range Wilderness, the Rusk Mountain Wild Forest, the Indian Head Wilderness, the Slide Mountain Wilderness and the Hunter - West Kill Wilderness. Three criteria were referenced in establishing the Catskill High Peaks as an important bird area: a diverse species concentration site, an individual species concentration site, and a species at risk site (ECL §11-2001, [3][f], [g], and [h]). Particular bird species of interest include Bicknell's Thrush and Blackpoll Warbler.

The vision for the Catskill High Peaks BCA is to maintain the wild character of the area while facilitating recreational opportunities in a manner consistent with the conservation of the distinctive assemblage of bird species nesting in the Catskill High Peaks. There is little known about the effects of normal recreational use on the nesting activities of subalpine birds. Additional research and education and outreach efforts are needed. The Department has drafted a Management Guidance Summary to identify education and research needs and to outline operational management considerations (See Appendix H). Specific research needs include conducting a detailed inventory and initiating

standardized monitoring for the area. Management considerations state that operational activities shall consider potential impacts on the BCA. For example, trail maintenance and construction activities may have an adverse impact on breeding and nesting activity. Therefore, it may be appropriate to conduct these activities at other times during the year. Sensitivities and alternative management strategies will be identified and addressed by appropriate planning teams during the development of individual unit management plans.

Rare and Extirpated Species

Active management of ecosystems on Forest Preserve lands is limited by Article XIV, Section 1 of the New York State Constitution. Whenever rare plants, animals or ecological communities are found on Forest Preserve lands, they will be protected from the effects of public recreational use. For example, a new trail will not be located in the vicinity of an endangered plant or the nesting site of a threatened bird. New structures or improvements will not be constructed in their vicinity. Where public use of existing trails or facilities endangers rare plants, animals or communities, these trails or facilities will be modified, relocated or closed. For example, a foot trail passing through a wetland could be hardened with a rock treadway or bridged with log puncheon or bog bridges to encourage people to stay within the trail corridor. An immaterial amount of tree cutting and vegetative manipulation will be permitted when necessary to ensure the survival of an endangered species found on Forest Preserve lands.

Efforts will be made to restore extirpated species as long as the restoration of the species is socially acceptable, biologically desirable and feasible, and the success of the restoration effort would not require the modification of the wild character of Forest Preserve lands.

Design Standards

Many different types of structures are found on Forest Preserve lands in the Catskills. Pit privies, lean-tos, foot, horse and snowmobile bridges, trail register boxes and bulletin board structures are developed and maintained on Forest Preserve land for public use in wilderness and wild forest areas. In Intensive Use areas, bath houses, pavilions, lodges and other large structures exist or may be planned. To create a "Forest Preserve" look when installing new structures or rehabilitating old ones, it is desirable to have consistent design standards for all Forest Preserve facilities. Forest Preserve design standards need to be developed. Since no formal Forest Preserve design standards exist at this time, Forest Preserve planners will refer to existing documents such as the "Interior Use Manual" and the "Adirondack lean-to plan," when designing new structures or rehabilitating old ones. If no specific guidance is available for a structure, it will be designed to incorporate the use of natural materials such as round wood, wood shingles and native stone. The appearance of Forest Preserve structures will be made to conform to the natural environment through the use of colors such as subdued greens, browns and other "earthtones."

Trailheads - Parking Areas

Because they are the places where most people leave the highway to enter Forest Preserve lands, trailheads, fishing access sites and general access parking areas make excellent locations for providing visitor information and orientation. In turn, trailhead registers are important for providing information about backcountry use to DEC. Visitors who sign in, help protect themselves in case of emergency and leave valuable records of public use levels and trends.

Visitors receive their first impression of the Forest Preserve area they are about to experience from the nature and condition of

the trailhead/parking facility. For highway travelers, trailheads and/or parking areas are often the only indication that they are passing through Forest Preserve lands. Accordingly, DEC considers the design and maintenance of trailheads, fishing access sites and general access parking areas a matter of prime importance.

To allow visitors to readily identify the many separate parcels of the Forest Preserve as parts of a single entity and provide complete information in a consistent format, trailhead designs will be standardized. A limited number of standard designs will be developed to make necessary information available to visitors, provide a trail register where needed, and eliminate the problems of supplementary signs and informational clutter. To assure consistent design standards, the duty of coordinating trailhead management will be given to the area manager.

Directional and Informational Signs

Along the highways of the Catskill Park, DEC signs indicate the entrances to the park and the locations of Forest Preserve lands, trails, and trailheads. These brown wooden signs with yellow lettering have come to symbolize the Adirondack and Catskill Parks. Combined with detailed maps of the Forest Preserve, roadside signs are helpful to highway travelers. In addition, DEC produces and posts a great variety of signs that give information about regulations, recommendations, directions and distances to destinations, and resource conditions to those who visit the Forest Preserve. These signs are posted at trailheads as well as interior locations.

To maintain a consistent look to the Forest Preserve, dimensions, materials, colors, and wording of DEC signs should be standardized. To be sure the public will be able to easily locate Forest Preserve lands and recreational facilities, the following guidelines will apply to the design and erection of signs:

- All roadside directional signs, trailhead identification signs and interior guideboards will be made of wood and will be brown with yellow lettering.
- Informational “posters” may be made of metal or plastic and generally will be brown with yellow lettering, although other unobtrusive color combinations may be used, such as yellow or white with dark green lettering, or white with black lettering. Posters or signs intended to draw attention to obstacles or hazardous conditions may be red and white.
- The name of the Forest Preserve management unit, along with its classification, will be given in all roadside directional signs and trailhead identification signs.
- Standard Forest Preserve boundary signs indicating the classification of the land being identified will be posted every one-tenth mile along all highways that pass through or adjacent to Forest Preserve lands and at other strategic locations, such as points on trails where they pass from private onto state lands.
- All signs removed through vandalism or other causes will be promptly replaced.

It is essential that Forest Preserve lands be clearly identified. However, it is also important that signs are used in ways that are appropriate to the wild character of the Forest Preserve. Also, so that a sign will be effective, it should convey as much information as necessary for visitors to understand the reasons behind the message in a tone that will not elicit an adversarial reaction.

To protect the wild character of Forest Preserve lands, and to more effectively inform the public and manage public use, DEC signs in the Catskill Forest Preserve will adhere to the following additional guidelines:

- Signs will carry a positive message. Rather than simply citing a regulation, a sign should explain the reasons behind the message.

- Managers will use the smallest number of signs necessary to accomplish an informational or regulatory objective.

- Signs will be clustered on a single sign post or bulletin board placed where they are most likely to be seen by visitors.

- The posting of Forest Preserve signs in wilderness and wild forest areas by all DEC divisions will be coordinated through the Unit Manager.

- As a general rule, in wilderness and wild forest areas, informational signs will be posted on the periphery of a management unit rather than in the interior.

Historic Sites

The New York State Historic Preservation Act of 1980 (SHPA, Article 14 of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Law) and its implementing regulations (9 NYCRR Parts 426, 427 and 428) created the State Register of Historic Places and recognizes the National Register of Historic Places. The statute further obligates State agencies to act as stewards of historic properties (buildings, structures, objects and archaeological sites) under their jurisdiction, and requires that agencies identify, evaluate and mitigate impacts to historic properties that might be affected by actions they undertake, fund or permit. Each agency is required to have a designated Historic Preservation Officer who is responsible for SHPA compliance and the stewardship of historic resources under agency control.

The Department is committed to the appropriate treatment of historic resources within the Catskill Forest Preserve as well as leadership among State agencies in the care of historic properties under its jurisdiction.

The Department is also specifically charged with providing historic sites and services within the Catskill Park in ECL Sections 9-0109 and 41-0105.

Several historic properties within the Catskill Forest Preserve are eligible for or listed in the State and National Register's of Historic Places. These include:

- Coykendall Lodge & Fish Hatchery at Alder Lake (Hardenburgh/Ulster County)
- Balsam Lake Mountain Fire Tower (Hardenburgh/Ulster County)
- Hunter Mountain Fire Tower (Hunter/Greene County)
- Red Hill Fire Tower (Denning/Ulster County)
- Tremper Mountain Fire Tower (Shandaken/Ulster County)

With the above few exceptions, no systematic inventory of historic properties has been undertaken within the Catskill Forest Preserve. An inventory performed in implementation of ECL Section 9-0109 was neither systematic or comprehensive as it was limited to literature and anecdotal data. Few prehistoric archaeological resources are recorded within the Catskill region, primarily due to the lack of systematic investigations.

The inventory, evaluation and development of mitigation measures required by the State Historic Preservation Act will be accomplished in the context of the development and implementation of individual unit management

plans. Prior to the undertaking of any development of recreational, administrative or other facilities, or major rehabilitation of such facilities, the department will complete any necessary surveys, inventories or other investigations to assure the identification and protection of historic and archaeological properties. Unit Managers, in consultation with the Agency Historic Preservation Officer and the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation will determine the appropriate treatment for historic and archaeological resources affected by a development or maintenance project.

Except as provided for in ECL Section 9-0109, the maintenance of historic properties, particularly standing structures, is considered to be inconsistent with the wild forest character of the Forest Preserve.

The Unit Manager and the Unit Management Team

Historically, the management of Forest Preserve lands by DEC has been divided along the lines separating program divisions. The individual responsibilities of the Divisions of Lands and Forests, Operations, and Fish, Wildlife and Marine have been only loosely coordinated. In addition, the jurisdiction of the staff within each division has been delineated by county lines rather than the boundaries of Forest Preserve management units. Making the Forest Preserve unit the focus of management and improving coordination among program divisions will benefit the public by giving them a single contact for information about the unit and making the unit more identifiable as an entity with a consistent recreational atmosphere. The changes will benefit the department by allowing staff to work more cooperatively in meeting Forest Preserve management goals.

The Unit Manager

To make management of Forest Preserve lands as efficient and consistent as possible, and to facilitate communication with the public about Forest Preserve management, all management activities within each unit will be coordinated by a Unit Manager. The Unit Manager will be appointed by the appropriate regional director and typically will be the appropriate regional or supervising forester. For each unit under his or her jurisdiction, the Unit Manager will be responsible for:

- Overseeing the preparation, periodic update and revision, amendment, and implementation of unit management plans;
- Coordinating the preparation of budget requests;
- Assuring that the management activities of all DEC divisions comply with applicable laws, regulations, policies, the master plan, and unit management plans;
- Coordinating trailhead management and all department signage within the unit; and
- Fostering communication about management activities within DEC and between DEC and the public.

In turn, staff from all DEC program divisions with Forest Preserve management responsibilities will keep the Unit Manager informed about planned activities, natural resource conditions, and anything else that would have a bearing on Forest Preserve management or public communication.

The Unit Management Team

As another measure to advance the cause of coordinating Forest Preserve management, a management team will be appointed by the appropriate regional director for each Forest Preserve unit. The activities of the team will be overseen by the Unit Manager. For each

unit, the unit management team will be composed of:

- The Unit Manager;
- One forester;
- Staff from the Office of Public Protection to include at least one forest ranger, and if appropriate, an environmental conservation officer;
- One fisheries biologist;
- One wildlife biologist;
- The operations supervisor in whose working circle the unit falls; and
- One representative of the Bureau of Real Property.

Regional and Central Office staff from the Division of Environmental Permits will be available to assist the unit management team in satisfying the requirements of the State Environmental Quality Review Act. Regional and Central Office Staff from the Division of Legal Affairs will review the proposals contained in unit management plans for consistency with the New York State Constitution, applicable statutes and regulations, and the CPSLMP. Legal Affairs staff also will assist in the resolution of legal issues related to Forest Preserve management, such as the status of Forest Preserve roads.

The unit management team will be responsible for:

- Preparing, periodically updating and revising, amending, and implementing the unit management plan;
- Monitoring resource conditions and public use and assessing the effectiveness of the unit management plan in addressing resource and public use needs;
- Preparing budget requests for the unit; and
- Communicating regularly with each other, their program divisions, the Unit Manager, and the public.

Funding and Staffing Support

The Preserve, with its great scenic, recreational, educational, and natural resource values, is an important asset to the people of the Catskill region and the State. Through active management, access to the wide range of recreational opportunities available on Forest Preserve lands can be improved for the full spectrum of Forest Preserve visitors. New efforts to link recreational development on the Forest Preserve with Catskill communities can give substantial support to local economic development. Programs to inform and educate the public will increase public understanding and appreciation of Forest Preserve resources and opportunities.

Partnerships

For many years DEC has enjoyed the support and assistance of numerous organizations, local governments, educational institutions, and individuals whose efforts have supported and supplemented the ability of the Department to meet the challenges of Forest Preserve management.

Since the early years of the Forest Preserve, outdoor clubs have assisted the state in developing and maintaining trails in the Catskill Forest Preserve. The efforts of these organizations have been critical to the development of a high quality trail system. Volunteers from the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference (NY-NJ TC) have assisted the Department in trail maintenance for many years. Initial efforts were limited to

construction and maintenance of the Long Path. In 1989 the Department asked the Conference to expand their trail maintenance role in the Catskills. In 1990 the Department and the NY-NJ TC signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which created a volunteer "Adopt-A-Trail" Program for the routine maintenance of Catskill Trails. Over 170 miles have since been adopted by NY-NJ TC. In 1993 the MOU was expanded to include an Adopt-A-Lean-to Program as well. The routine maintenance of over 20 lean-tos is now undertaken by Trail Conference volunteers.

The Department has developed similar trail maintenance agreements with several other Forest Preserve user groups. The Finger Lakes Trail Conference has adopted over 20 miles of trail which serve as a route for the Finger Lakes Trail in the Catskills. The Fats in the Cats Bicycle Club has undertaken the development and maintenance responsibilities of several miles of trail in the Bluestone Wild Forest under an Adopt-A-Natural Resource Agreement with the Department. The Paul A. Nickle Memorial Trail Crew of Mt. Tremper maintains 7.5 miles of foot trail over Panther Mountain. The Sullivan County Trails Association and the Delaware Valley Ridge Riders maintain over 50 miles of snowmobile trails, and the Kaaterskill Snowmobile Club maintains the Roundtop snowmobile trail in the Kaaterskill Wild Forest. Also, the Catskill Outdoor Education Corporation from SUNY Delhi maintains the Huckleberry loop trail in the Dry Brook Ridge Wild Forest in Delaware County. The Department and the public also benefit from parking lot maintenance and construction efforts from the Towns of Hunter, Jewett and Lexington, and from the NYS DOT. SWCDs, local federations and Trout Unlimited have assisted the Department in stream restoration and fish stocking.

In 1984, the Department began contracting with the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) to undertake major trail maintenance projects, such as construction of natural rock staircases, with a professional trail crew. In 1987, AMC expanded their trail maintenance efforts to include a Volunteer Trail Maintenance Program. During a typical six-week season, AMC volunteers constructed waterbars, brushed out overgrown trails, rerouted trails with severe erosion problems and even helped to construct new trails. In 1995, after twelve successful years, the AMC discontinued their Catskill trail program to provide more support for a growing program in the Delaware Water Gap.

The Adirondack Mountain Club (ADK) began assisting with Catskill Forest Preserve facility maintenance in 1992 with a modest volunteer trail maintenance crew. When funding allows, the Department has also been able to enter into a contractual relationship with the club for professional trail crew services. In recent years, the club has been able to undertake substantial trail maintenance and new trail construction projects via contract with the Department, made possible with funding from the 1996 Clean Water/Clean Air Bond Act.

The Catskill Forest Preserve has also benefitted from the volunteer efforts of individual chapters of the Adirondack Mountain Club. For example, the Mid-Hudson Chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club has adopted the Balsam Lake Mountain Wild Forest via the Department's Adopt-A-Natural Resource Program. Through this agreement, the Chapter provided funding and volunteers to construct a new lean-to, funding to print a brochure, and volunteer efforts to maintain some of the trails in the area. The Ramapo Chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club has provided funding and volunteers to assist in the construction of a new lean-to on Table Mountain.

The Catskill 3500 Club has assisted in the maintenance of the Peekamoose-Table foot trail for many years, and recently undertook the construction of a new lean-to on Balsam Lake Mountain.

Information about the trails of the Forest Preserve is also provided by outside sources. Privately published trail guides and maps are essential companions of every visitor to the Forest Preserve. DEC has produced some of its own informational publications through the assistance of private companies.

Since 1997, the Catskill Center for Conservation and Development and local Fire Tower Committees have been working with the Department to restore and maintain historic fire towers on Balsam Lake Mountain, Hunter Mountain, Red Hill, Tremper Mountain and Overlook Mountain.

The Department has worked extensively with NYCDEP regarding land acquisition, recreation, and land management. As outlined in the history section, the Department and NYCDEP are working cooperatively in a new initiative to open up city-owned lands adjacent to DEC lands for hiking, hunting, fishing, and trapping without the need for the normal NYCDEP access permit. This will provide for enhanced and easier public access to thousands of acres.

Over the years, numerous educational institutions have turned to the Forest Preserve for research. With its long-term protection as an undisturbed natural area, the Forest Preserve is an ideal setting for ongoing studies of plant and animal communities in a wild state. An example is the Olive Natural Heritage Society's Catskill flora project. Topics in the field of forest recreation also have been regular subjects of study. In addition to basic research, colleges have contributed to Forest Preserve management through direct assistance in planning. In the future, educational institutions will continue to play an important role in Forest Preserve planning while conducting additional research on topics ranging from the effects of acid precipitation to the impact of the public use of the Forest Preserve on local economies.

DEC and its predecessor agencies have long valued the benefits gained through partnerships. To continue to improve the management of public use and increase understanding about the resources of the Forest Preserve, the Department will strengthen existing partnerships and reach out to establish new ones. The help of individuals, organizations, educational institutions, local governments, and other State agencies will enhance the ability of the State to realize the recreational and economic development potential of the Forest Preserve while assuring its preservation for future generations.

B. Wilderness Guidelines

Definition

A wilderness area, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man--where man himself is a visitor who does not remain. A wilderness is further defined to mean an area of State land or water having a primeval character, without significant improvements or permanent human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve, and where necessary, enhance and restore, its natural conditions, and which (1) generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable; (2) offers outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation; (3) has at least ten thousand acres of contiguous land and water or is of sufficient size and character as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition; and (4) may also contain ecological, geological or other features of scientific, educational, scenic or historic value.

Basic Guidelines for Wilderness Management and Use

The primary wilderness management guidelines will be to achieve and perpetuate a natural plant and animal community where man's influence is not apparent.

In wilderness areas:

- Additions or expansions of non-conforming uses will not be allowed.
- Non-conforming uses which may exist will be phased out as rapidly as possible on a scheduled basis to be established by the Department.
- New non-conforming uses will not be allowed.
- Construction of additional conforming structures and improvements must comply with wilderness standards for primitive and unconfined types of recreation.
- No new structures or improvements in any wilderness area will be constructed except in conformity with finally adopted unit management plans. However, new temporary structures may be constructed where necessary to protect public health and safety following a catastrophic event. This guideline will not prevent maintenance or rehabilitation of conforming structures or improvements, minor trail relocation, or the removal of non-conforming uses.
- All conforming structures and improvements will be designed and located so as to blend with the surrounding environment and to require only minimal maintenance.
- All management, administrative action and interior facilities in wilderness areas will be designed to emphasize the self-sufficiency of the user to assume a high degree of responsibility for environmentally-sound use of such areas and for their own health, safety and welfare.

Wilderness Recreational Use

In wilderness, opportunities will be provided for the kinds of recreational activities that depend for their full enjoyment on the condition of solitude in an environment free of unnatural sights and sounds. Activities that

involve the public's use of motorized or mechanized vehicles or equipment will not be permitted. Visitors to wilderness areas will be encouraged to minimize their impacts on physical and ecological resources and the recreational experiences of other wilderness visitors by traveling and camping in small groups. Hiking, camping, mountaineering, hunting, fishing, trapping, snowshoeing, ski-touring, nature study and other forms of primitive and unconfined recreation will be encouraged in wilderness as long as the degree and intensity of such uses will not unacceptably degrade the wilderness resource.

Special Wilderness Recreational Activity Guidelines

- **Camping** will not be permitted above 3,500 feet in elevation from March 22nd to December 21st each year to protect the fragile high elevation environment. To further protect natural resources and the quality of the recreational experiences for visitors, camping will be prohibited within 150 feet of trail, road and water, except at sites designated by the Department.

- **Campfires** built using dead and down wood from within the wilderness area will be allowed as long as the building of campfires in a given location does not lead to excessive damage to vegetation or structures or impair the natural appearance of the site. Wood brought in from outside the area is discouraged, but is allowed, as long as it conforms to all DEC regulations pertaining to the movement of firewood. Movement of firewood poses a significant risk for the introduction of invasive species. Campfires will be prohibited on all lands above 3,500 feet in elevation.

- **Groupsize.** To provide opportunities for solitude, users will be encouraged to pursue the above described wilderness recreational opportunities in small groups, the recommended group size being 4 to 6 individuals. The maximum group size allowable in wilderness will be 12 persons per group. The department will not issue camping permits for groups larger than 12 persons in wilderness areas.

- **Fishing, hunting and trapping.** In wilderness areas, recreational fishing, hunting and trapping will be encouraged as long as the degree and intensity of use does not endanger the wilderness resource itself. The management of these pursuits in wilderness areas will emphasize the quality of the experience over quantity of use. A quality wilderness sporting experience involves more than a quest for fish and game; it is enhanced by unique natural surroundings and limited contact with other people.

  Fishing, hunting and trapping in wilderness, as in the rest of the state, are regulated by open seasons, size and catch limits, and manner of take as specified in 6 NYCRR Part 10 (fishing), 6 NYCRR Part 1 (hunting) and 6 NYCRR Part 5 (trapping), as authorized by §11-1303, §11-0903, and §11-1103, respectively, of the Environmental Conservation Law of New York.

- **Administrative Action**. Where the degree and intensity of permitted recreational uses threaten the wilderness resource, appropriate administrative and regulatory measures will be taken to limit such use to the capacity of the resource. Such administrative and regulatory measures may include, but need not be limited to:

1) When a group needs a camping permit or TRP for an activity, directing those users to a more appropriate area where the wilderness resource is not threatened by overuse.

2) Where the resource degradation is extreme, the Department will study the possibility of temporarily closing all or portions of wilderness areas to allow rehabilitative measures to occur.

An intensified educational program to improve public understanding of backcountry use, including an anti-litter and pack-in/pack-out campaign, will be undertaken. Provision for such programs will be made in unit management plans.

Wilderness Structures and Improvements

The structures and improvements listed below conform to wilderness standards. Their maintenance, rehabilitation and construction will be permitted.

- Scattered Adirondack type lean-tos and individual designated primitive campsites with fire rings below 3,500 feet in elevation.
- Pit privies below 3,500 feet in elevation.
- Bear-proof vaults or pole and cable systems to secure food from bears.
- Foot trails, cross-country ski trails, and horse trails, except that no new trails will be constructed to, or within, one half mile (horizontal distance) of the summit of a trail-less peak over 3,500 feet in elevation unless a trail is needed to eliminate resource degradation and the trail is specified in an approved unit management plan for the area. New horse trails will only be developed by conversion of appropriate abandoned roads.
- Foot trail bridges and ladders constructed of natural materials unless a less obtrusive structure can be constructed using artificial materials.
- Horse trail bridges and hitching rails constructed of natural materials, unless a less obtrusive structure can be constructed using artificial materials.
- Fish habitat improvement structures.
- Trout spawning structures.
- Existing dams on established impoundments, except that in the reconstruction or rehabilitation of such dams natural materials will be used wherever possible and no new dams will be constructed.
- Directional, information and interpretive signs made of wood or of a character consistent with the Forest Preserve and in limited numbers.
- Trail markers and informational posters made of wood, plastic, or metal.
- Parking areas, fishing and waterway access sites, picnic areas, ranger stations or other facilities for peripheral control of public use, and, in limited instances, snowmobile trails may be accommodated within 500 feet of a public highway.
- Minimal facilities for information, such as nature interpretation or user instructions, and trail registers may be constructed at access points to wilderness areas, when such improvements are deemed essential

and are included in the appropriate unit management plan.

- Register boxes on trail-less peaks, when such are maintained under an approved Adopt-A-Natural Resource agreement, as authorized by Section 9-0113 of the Environmental Conservation Law. The continued use of register boxes will be reviewed during the UMP process.

- Wildlife management and research structures shall be permitted providing:

  - Such structures are approved by the Commissioner based on a demonstration of need for purposes essential to the preservation of wilderness values and resources, that no feasible alternative exists, and that such use will entail minimal intrusion into the wilderness setting;

  - Such structures are constructed solely to support research, management or reintroduction of existing or reintroduced wildlife species;

  - The construction shall be minimal to achieve the purpose, and shall be located as much as possible away from human view or presence;

  - Such structures shall be temporary and shall be removed completely when no longer needed; if a structure must be used longer than one year, reapproval, based upon justification by the Commissioner, shall be required annually; and

  - Such structures shall not be considered as conforming structures, but shall be permitted as necessary solely for purposes essential to the preservation of wilderness wildlife values and resources.

All other structures and improvements will be considered nonconforming and, where existing, will be phased out as rapidly as possible on a scheduled basis to be established by the department. These include but are not limited to:

- Lean-to clusters;
- Lean-tos and privies at locations above 3,500 feet in elevation;
- Horse barns;
- Boat docks;
- Storage sheds and other buildings;
- Fire towers and observer cabins;
- Telephone and electrical lines;
- Snowmobile trails;
- Bicycle trails;
- Administrative roads;
- Roads;
- Helicopter platforms;
- Ranger and caretaker stations; and
- Mines. However, bedrock, sand, gravel, shale, rocks, boulders, or other naturally occurring or naturally deposited materials removed from the site of a conforming structure or improvement solely for the purposes of constructing or maintaining that structure or improvement may be used in the construction and maintenance of other conforming structures or improvements on the same or other parcels of Forest Preserve land. In addition, limited amounts of sand, gravel, shale, rocks, boulders, or other naturally deposited material needed for use in the construction and maintenance of a trail may be

removed from the immediate vicinity of that trail, and boulders needed for the construction of a barrier may be removed from the immediate vicinity of that barrier.

Motorized Uses and Bicycles in Wilderness

Public use of motor vehicles, snowmobiles, motorboats, motorized equipment, aircraft, bicycles, and other wheeled or mechanized transportation devices used for transporting people (for example an all terrain skate board), will be prohibited. However, a mechanized aid, such as a motorized wheelchair, is considered part of a person with a disability, and as such is allowed in wilderness.

Administrative personnel will not use motor vehicles, snowmobiles, motorized equipment, bicycles or aircraft for day-to-day maintenance or patrol of state lands designated wilderness.

Administrative use of motorized equipment or aircraft may be permitted for maintenance, rehabilitation, construction, fish stocking or research projects involving conforming structures or improvements, or the removal of nonconforming structures, during two off-peak seasons each year. Administrative use of aircraft shall comply with Commissioner Policy 17. These "windows" will run from May 1 - June 15 and October 15 - November 15, excepting weekends. Work that cannot be scheduled within these windows may be permitted on the approval of the Commissioner.

Temporary Revocable Permits

Irrespective of the above guidelines, use of motorized equipment or aircraft, but not motor vehicles, for a specific major research project will be permitted by the use of a temporary revocable permit (TRP) if such project is for purposes essential to the preservation of wilderness values and resources, no feasible alternative exists for conducting such research on other state or private lands, and such use is minimized. The project has to be specifically approved by the Commissioner, in addition to the normal TRP approval process.

Irrespective of the above or any other guidelines in this Master plan, use of motor vehicles, snowmobiles, motorized equipment and aircraft will be permitted, by or under the supervision of appropriate officials, in cases of actual and ongoing emergencies involving the protection or preservation of human life or intrinsic resource value - for example; search and rescue operations, forest fires or large scale contamination of streams, ponds and lakes.

Roads in Wilderness

No new roads will be allowed. Existing roads (there are very few) are generally not passable and will be phased out as rapidly as possible on a scheduled basis to be established by the Department so as to:

- Close such roads to motor vehicles as are now open to the public.
- Prohibit all administrative use of such roads by motor vehicles.
- Block such roads by logs, boulders or similar means other than gates.

<u>During the phase out period:</u>

- The use of motorized vehicles by administrative personnel for transportation of materials and personnel will be limited to the minimum required for proper interim administration and the removal of non-conforming uses.
- Maintenance of such roads will be curtailed and efforts made to

encourage revegetation which will prevent erosion.

Within wilderness areas, all roadways which are not publicly maintained will be closed. Roads so closed shall be blocked by the most effective means possible.

Wilderness Vistas

Recognizing that the geography and forest types in the Catskills either minimize or obscure natural viewpoints, man-made vistas provide the user with exceptional panoramas. And yet while recognized for its visual aesthetics and lauded for its inspiration by painter and poet alike, the creation and/or maintenance of a vista in a wilderness area must be balanced with both the philosophical as well as physical limitations of the area.

Existing vistas may be maintained where only an immaterial amount of tree cutting is necessary on an occasional basis. The preferred method of vista maintenance is side trimming of lower branches. Vistas may be temporarily obscured to allow small trees to grow high enough to permit branch trimming. Vistas to be maintained will be identified in UMPs. No new vistas may be created.

Wilderness Flora and Fauna

There will be no intentional introduction of species of flora or fauna in wilderness areas which are not historically associated with the Catskill environment except: (i) species which have already been established in the Catskill environment or (ii) as necessary to protect the integrity of established native flora or fauna.

Wilderness Fisheries Management

Fishery management efforts will focus on maintaining, protecting and restoring self-sustaining communities of indigenous species. Actions to provide for natural propagation and the maintenance of desirable species will be conducted within ecological limits and in accordance with sound management practices.

Species

Wilderness waters will be managed for species indigenous to the Catskills, such as brook trout, chain pickerel and lake trout, as well as species that have been introduced and are historically associated with the Catskill Region. Introduced coldwater species include brown trout, rainbow trout and landlocked Atlantic salmon. Smallmouth bass, largemouth bass, and walleye are warmwater species historically associated with the Catskill Region. These historically associated species may be included in the management and stocking regime of specific wilderness waters where indigenous fish communities cannot be protected, maintained, or restored. Fish species other than indigenous species and species historically associated with the Catskill area will not be stocked in the waters of wilderness areas.

Note: At present, there is only one ponded waterbody in wilderness: Echo Lake (12.8 acres) in the Indian Head Wilderness. It has a self-sustaining population of native brook trout.

Recreational fishing is an important activity on many wilderness waters, and the department recognizes that, on some of the more significant waters, enhancement or restoration measures occasionally are necessary. Organization and Delegation Memo #93-35: Fisheries Management in Wilderness, Primitive and Canoe Areas (Appendix D), affirms that “Fish management practices, such as fish stocking, pond reclamation, pond liming, barrier dam construction and maintenance, and resource survey and inventory, are permitted when conducted within guidelines for wilderness, primitive and canoe area management and use.” Policy documents and Environmental Impact Statements containing specific

guidelines for these management practices are referenced in the O & D memo.

Habitat Improvement Structures

Enhancing gamefish spawning habitat through use of spawning boxes or stream channel modifications are techniques that may significantly improve recruitment of wild fish, and thus preclude the need for stocking. Spawning boxes are typically used within the pond itself and involve siphoning water from adjacent spring or stream sources into gravel filled boxes within the pond. Stream channel modification would include adding suitable sized bed material (e.g. gravel) to adjacent tributary streams to increase available spawning habitat. Trout spawning complexes in pond/tributary/spring systems and in-pond spawning facilities are generally unobtrusive or completely out-of-sight. Reservoirs in pond tributaries, constructed to direct water to in-pond spawning boxes, can be built with native materials to weather and blend with surroundings. These structures will be used where appropriate to maximize reproduction of wild brook trout in ponds.

Other forms of habitat improvement occasionally may be used, such as bank stabilization or creating pools. Bank stabilization provides in-stream shelter, protects habitat downstream and minimizes on-site erosion. Habitat restoration or improvement structures will be designed to blend in with the natural setting and will utilize native materials for construction. Such structures will be specifically intended to improve conditions for indigenous or "historically associated" fish species.

Other management actions may be required. Log jams, caused by floods or high winds, may need to be removed from streams for public safety and protection of natural resources.

Wilderness Wildlife Management

The guidelines for wildlife management in all areas of the Forest Preserve are given in the section, "Guidelines for All Classifications."

Wilderness Boundary Marking

Special wilderness area boundary markers will be installed at major access points to enhance public recognition of wilderness boundaries and wilderness restrictions.

Designation of Wilderness Areas

Using the wilderness definition and criteria described above, the Department has designated five wilderness areas in the Catskill Forest Preserve. These areas encompass approximately 143,000 acres or about 51 percent of the Forest Preserve within the Catskill Park. Wilderness areas are listed and described in Section VII, Description of Management Units.

C. Wild Forest Guidelines

Definition

A wild forest area is an area of Forest Preserve land whose character as a natural plant and animal community receives the same degree of protection under Article XIV of the Constitution as in areas classified as wilderness, but which differs from wilderness in that generally:

- The physical characteristics of wild forest areas are capable of withstanding higher levels of recreational use;
- Wild forest areas convey less of a sense of remoteness and provide fewer outstanding opportunities for solitude for visitors, and therefore;
- Wild forest areas are managed to provide opportunities for a greater variety of recreational activities and a higher intensity of recreational use.

Basic Guidelines for Wild Forest Management and Use

In wild forest areas:

- No additions or expansion of existing nonconforming uses will be permitted and
- Existing nonconforming uses will be phased out as rapidly as possible by the Department.
- No new nonconforming uses will be permitted.

Recreational Use in Wild Forest

As in wilderness areas, the primary management guideline for wild forest areas will be to preserve the physical and biological resources in a wild state. In addition, Wild Forest areas will be managed to provide opportunities for a greater variety of recreational activities and a higher intensity of recreational use than are afforded in wilderness areas. However, types and levels of use that would degrade the wild character of wild forest areas will not be permitted.

Whereas Wilderness areas are managed to favor those primitive outdoor recreational activities where the opportunity for solitude is critical to the experience, wild forest lands will be managed to provide opportunities for recreational activities that do not depend on a wilderness atmosphere for their enjoyment. Activities such as snowmobiling, mountain bicycling, and group camping are considered appropriate in wild forest areas and will be encouraged in the context of the principal of non-degradation stated in the previous paragraph.

No single unit should necessarily provide opportunities for all types of recreational use. Unit management plans will undertake the careful analysis necessary for the Department and the public to make informed decisions about what recreational activities can be accommodated in each unit.

All types of recreational uses considered appropriate for wilderness are compatible with wild forest. In addition, regulated snowmobiling, motor boating, all terrain bicycling and group camping are permitted if those uses will not adversely affect the essentially wild character of the area.

Certain wild forest areas offer better opportunities for a more extensive horse trail system than wilderness areas. Horse trails and associated facilities in these areas will be considered where appropriate.

Fishing, hunting and trapping in wild forest will be encouraged. However, as in wilderness areas, the management of the majority of wild

forest waters will emphasize the quality of the angling experience.

Fishing, hunting and trapping in wild forest areas, as in the rest of the state, is regulated by open seasons, size and catch limits, and manner of take as specified in 6 NYCRR, and by Article 11 of the Environmental Conservation Law of New York.

Although the nature of most Wild Forest areas indicates that they are not as sensitive to recreational over use as Wilderness areas, care must nonetheless be taken to avoid over use. The relatively greater intensity of use allowed by the Wild Forest guidelines should not be interpreted as permitting or encouraging unlimited or unrestrained use of Wild Forest areas.

As in wilderness, camping will not be permitted above 3,500 feet in elevation from March 22nd to December 21st each year to protect the fragile, high elevation environment. To further protect backcountry resources, camping is also prohibited within 150 feet of trail, road and water, except at sites designated by the Department. Campfires will not be permitted on lands above 3,500 feet in elevation throughout the year.

Because large groups have a greater impact on wild forest lands, especially when camping, group camping permits will be limited to 20 persons or less. Should groups of more than 20 persons wish to camp in a Wild Forest area, the Department may accommodate such groups on a limited basis where natural resources will be protected and provisions for sanitation are provided, through the issuance of a Temporary Revocable Permit.

Wild Forest Structures and Improvements

The following structures and improvements are permitted.

- Individual or small groupings of Adirondack type lean-tos and individual campsites with fire rings, below 3,500 feet in elevation.
- Pit privies below 3,500 feet in elevation.
- Bear-proof vaults or pole and cable systems to secure food from bears.
- Foot trails, cross-country ski trails, and nature/interpretive trails, except that no new trails will be constructed to, or within one half mile (horizontal distance) of the summit of a trail-less peak over 3,500 feet in elevation unless a trail is needed to eliminate resource degradation and the trail is specified in an approved unit management plan for the area.
- Bridges and ladders constructed of natural materials unless a less obtrusive structure can be constructed using artificial materials.
- Fish habitat improvement structures.
- Trout spawning structures.
- Existing dams on established impoundments, except that in the reconstruction or rehabilitation of such dams natural materials will be used wherever possible and no new dams will be constructed.
- Directional, information and interpretive signs made of wood, or of a character consistent with the Forest Preserve, and in limited numbers.
- Trail markers and informational posters made of wood, plastic or metal.
- Minimal facilities for information, such as nature interpretation or user

instructions, and trail registers may be constructed when such improvements are included in the appropriate unit management plan.

- Register boxes on trail-less peaks, when such are maintained under an approved Adopt-A-Natural Resource agreement, as authorized by Section 9-0113 of the Environmental Conservation Law.

- Fire towers and appurtenances. At present, there are five fire towers in the Catskill Forest Preserve:

  Balsam Lake Mountain,
  Hunter Mountain,
  Overlook Mountain,
  Red Hill, and
  Tremper Mountain.

  These have been re-opened for public use and should be retained and maintained for as long as needed for protection of the forest resource or for recreational, educational, informational, or historic preservation purposes.

  In 1994, a letter of resolution relating to fire towers and their appurtenances was negotiated between DEC and the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation pursuant to the New York Historic Preservation Act of 1980. This agreement identified four fire towers within the Catskill Forest Preserve as being eligible for inclusion in the State and National Registers of Historic Places: Balsam Lake Mountain, Hunter Mountain, Red Hill and Tremper Mountain. These fire towers are considered significant because of their association with the history and development of the Forest Preserve as well as the architectural tradition they represent. Specific plans for the management and preservation of the four fire towers designated as eligible for the State and National Registers will be developed in the context of unit management planning for the Forest Preserve units in which they are located. These should reflect natural resource management, historic preservation and recreational needs as well as a comprehensive approach to historic fire towers on Forest Preserve lands.

- Communication systems necessary for administrative purposes of the Department of Environmental Conservation.

- Rustic buildings necessary for administrative purposes below 3,500 feet in elevation.

- Existing lean-tos above 3,500 feet in elevation may remain.

- Trailhead construction and related parking facilities adjacent to public highways or public access lanes, including fisherman parking near streams.

- Cartop boat access sites adjacent to public highways.

- Motor vehicles, motorized equipment and aircraft as set forth below.

- Roads as set forth below.

- Snowmobile trails as set forth below.

- Horse trails as set forth below.

- Bicycle trails as set forth below.

Motorized Uses in Wild Forest

The use of motor vehicles by the general public in Wild Forest areas will not be encouraged. However, the department will provide opportunities for individuals with qualifying disabilities to access recreational programs on Wild Forest lands with motor vehicles through permits issued by the department pursuant to policy CP-3. New snowmobile trails may be created to the extent that they do not degrade the wild forest character of the unit.

When public access to and enjoyment of Wild Forest areas is inadequate, appropriate steps to improve access will be taken to encourage public use consistent with the wild forest character.

Public Use

In Wild Forest areas, the use of motor vehicles, snowmobiles, motorboats, motorized equipment and aircraft by the general public will be permitted as follows:

Motor Vehicles

- On roads under the jurisdiction of the State Department of Transportation or County or Town Highway Departments that are legally open to public motor vehicle use.

- On designated roads under the jurisdiction of the Department of Environmental Conservation. Roads will be designated for public motor vehicle use only if such designation will provide appropriate access to recreational opportunities without leading to unacceptable physical, ecological, or social impacts. There are very few of these roads in the Catskills.

- By individuals with a qualifying disability in specific locations that are not open to motor vehicle use by the general public through the issuance of a permit by the Department pursuant to policy CP-3.

Snowmobiles

- On trails designated by the department in conformance with the guidelines given in “Snowmobile Trails in Wild Forest.”

- On frozen lakes and ponds, when access to them may be gained by public highway or by designated snowmobile trail.

Motorboats

- On designated lakes and ponds.[1] Lakes and ponds within Wild Forest areas will be managed for the kinds of water-oriented recreation traditionally associated with the Forest Preserve, namely camping, swimming, canoeing, rowing, and fishing. The use of watercraft with powerful motors, such as jet skis or boats used for water skiing, will not be permitted. On larger ponds and lakes where the use of boats with motors would be desirable and appropriate for transportation or trolling for fish, the following guidelines will apply:

  - To minimize noise, electric motors will be preferred over internal combustion engines.

  - To minimize speed and wake, motors exceeding five horsepower generally will not be allowed.

[1] Currently, electric motors are permitted on Alder Lake, Crystal Lake and Waneta Lake.

Motorized Equipment

- Where it will not degrade the Wild Forest environment.

Aircraft

- Aircraft will not be allowed to touch down anywhere on Wild Forest lands or waters.

Temporary Revocable Permits

Temporary revocable permits (TRPs) will only allow the use of motor vehicles on existing roads and the use of snowmobiles on existing roads and trails. See Section IV, Management Guidelines, for a discussion of TRPs.

Administrative Use of Motor Vehicles

Motor vehicles, snowmobiles, motorboats, motorized equipment and aircraft may be used by administrative personnel where necessary for maintenance and construction of conforming structures and improvements, search and rescue and fire control, and for other administrative purposes. However, such motorized uses will be minimized to the extent practicable, and will not be allowed when suitable non-motorized alternatives exist.

In January 2000, the department instituted Commissioner's Policy 17: Record keeping and Reporting of Administrative Use of Motor Vehicles and Aircraft in the Forest Preserve (CP-17). The stated purpose of the policy is "to recite existing guidelines and provide record keeping and reporting requirements for administrative use of motor vehicles on roads not open to public motor vehicle use and of aircraft use on Forest Preserve lands within the Adirondack and Catskill Parks, with the intent of minimizing such use."

Roads in Wild Forest

- On the lands that comprised the Catskill Forest Preserve when the original master plan was adopted in 1985, there will not be any increase in the number or length of roads that were open to motor vehicle use by the general public in 1985.

- Existing roads in newly-acquired state lands classified as wild forest may be kept open to public motor vehicle use at the discretion of the department, as long as such use is compatible with the wild forest character of the area.

- Existing access roads officially open to the public may remain open for motor vehicle use, if compatible with the wild forest character of the area, at the discretion of the Department.

- All maintenance, rehabilitation, widening, relocation and the construction of roads shall adhere to CP-38 Forest Preserve Roads Policy standards and procedures.

Snowmobile Trails in Wild Forest

Snowmobile trails and appurtenances will be designed and located in a manner which will not adversely impact adjoining private landowners or the wild forest environment. In particular:

- Trails will not run through important areas of ecological significance, such as the habitats of endangered species, or within one half mile (horizontal distance) of a trail-less peak above 3,500 feet in elevation. Snowmobile trails will not be located or constructed above 3,100 feet in elevation.

- To the extent possible new snowmobile trails will be located to the

periphery of the unit. Through the UMP process existing trails will be evaluated to determine if they can also be relocated to the periphery of the unit.

- Appropriate opportunities to improve or expand the snowmobile trail system may be pursued where the existing wild forest environment will not be degraded. Examples of such opportunities include: (i) placing snowmobile trails adjacent to but screened from public highways within the park to aid access between communities where alternative routes are not available, (ii) combining snowmobile and horse trails or in some instances, foot trails, provided such combination is safe, and (iii) creating or adding to loop trail systems.

- The Department will work to facilitate connections between Forest Preserve snowmobile trail networks and snowmobile trails on other lands within the Catskill Park

- Appurtenances to snowmobile trails such as bridges will be constructed of natural materials, unless a less obtrusive structure can be constructed using artificial materials.

- Assembly/parking areas will be provided at snowmobile trailheads.

- Existing snowmobile trails in newly-acquired state lands classified as wild forest may be kept open to public snowmobiling at the discretion of the Department, as long as such use is compatible with the wild forest character of the area.

Horse Trails in Wild Forest

Horse trails and appurtenances will be designed and located in a manner which will not adversely affect the wild forest environment. In particular:

- Appropriate opportunities to improve and expand the horse trail system will be pursued where the impact on the wild forest environment will be minimized, such as, (i) designating suitable abandoned woods roads as horse trails, (ii) designating suitable existing snowmobile trails as horse trails, and (iii) occasional cutting of new trails to establish the desired loops for new trails.

- New horse trails will not be developed on or within one half mile (horizontal distance) of the summit of a trail-less peak over 3,500 feet in elevation.

- Appurtenances to horse trails such as bridges and hitching rails will be constructed of natural materials, unless a less obtrusive structure can be constructed using artificial materials.

- Adequate parking for vehicles with horse trailers will be provided near the trailhead.

Bicycle Trails in Wild Forest

Bicycle trails and appurtenances will be designed and located in a manner which will not degrade the wild forest environment. In particular:

- Bicycle use by the general public will be authorized on roads, state truck trails, and old roadways, unless such use is deemed unsuitable as specified in individual unit management plans.

- Bicycle use by the general public will be authorized on foot trails, snowmobile trails, cross country ski trails, and horse trails, unless such use is deemed unsuitable as specified in individual unit management plans. Trailhead signage will be used to notify users that bicyclists may be on the trail to help reduce potential user conflicts.

- Bicycle use by the general public will be authorized on trails designated and marked by the Department in conformance to the guidelines below.

Appropriate opportunities to develop bicycle trails will be pursued where the impact on the wild character of the area will be minimal. There are several wild forests that afford good bicycling opportunities and the Department intends to investigate and pursue these additional opportunities. These include but are not limited to: Bluestone Wild Forest (WF), Colgate Lake WF, Elm Ridge WF, Delaware WF, Sundown WF, and Willowemoc WF. In addition, the Department will investigate the use of bicycles on the Taylor Hollow administrative access roadway with the private landowner north of the Colonel's Chair trail, in the Rusk Mountain Wild Forest. This could allow a loop trail utilizing the Spruceton Truck Trail, the Colonel's Chair, and Taylor Hollow, with the Hunter Fire tower as a designation.

The Department has also begun discussions with the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (NYCDEP), regarding lands they currently own in the NYC watershed which could provide additional bicycling opportunities. It is anticipated the Department will initially obtain a Land Use Permit for at least one large parcel, which will allow for its management by the Department and allow for bicycling. Eventually, the Department may obtain fee title to these land(s), and incorporate them into the appropriate land classification, principally State Forests outside the Catskill Park.

These opportunities may include single use bicycle trails in addition to bicycle use on shared use trails where compatible with other users. New bicycle trails would be one of two differing designs; a hardened surface and a natural surface. Any hardened surface trail would be limited to abandoned roads, railroad grades, or other suitable facilities where minimum grading or immaterial tree cutting would be required. The hardened surface would be of natural materials, i.e. crushed stone, sand or gravel, that will blend with the natural environment but not of asphalt or concrete. Natural surface trails may incorporate hardening of the surface for short distances, as necessary, to minimize impacts to the trail.

- Bicycle trails will not be developed on or within one half mile (horizontal distance) of the summit of a trail-less peak over 3,500 feet in elevation.

- Appurtenances to bicycle trails such as bridges or ladders will be constructed of natural materials, unless a less obtrusive structure can be constructed using artificial materials.

- Assembly/parking areas will be provided at bicycle trailheads.

Vistas in Wild Forest

Existing vistas may be maintained. Opportunities for new vistas may be considered at locations where only an immaterial amount of tree cutting is required. All vistas to be maintained or created must be authorized in an approved UMP.

Flora and Fauna in Wild Forest

As in Wilderness, there will be no intentional introduction of species of flora or fauna in Wild Forest areas which are not historically associated with the Catskill environment except: (i) species which have already been established in the Catskill environment or (ii) as necessary to protect the integrity of established native flora or fauna.

Fisheries Management in Wild Forest

As in Wilderness areas, fishery management efforts in Wild Forest will focus on maintaining, protecting and restoring self-sustaining communities of indigenous species. Actions to provide for natural propagation and the maintenance of desirable species will be conducted within ecological limits and in accordance with sound management practices. In a few selected waters, management practices as described below may also be used to increase the numbers of targeted species to enhance fishing, particularly on waters that are readily accessible.

Species Management

In Wild Forest areas aquatic resource management will focus on the protection and perpetuation of naturally occurring aquatic species and their habitats. However, in selected situations, management practices will include the stocking of non-native species such as tiger muskellunge and grass carp.

Management Practices

Management actions that may be taken in wilderness areas, such as stocking, pond reclamation, pond liming, barrier dam construction and resource survey and inventory, will also be permitted on wild forest waters. Also, in some larger ponded waters, there may be a need to improve conditions for shoreline launching of smaller boats. Suitable facilities for vehicle access and parking would be provided as needed to complement the launching improvements.

Policy documents and Environmental Impact Statements containing specific guidelines for these management practices are referenced in O & D Memorandum #93-35: Fishery Management in Wilderness, Primitive and Canoe Areas, see Appendix D.

Habitat Improvement Structures

The habitat improvement structures and practices permitted in wilderness areas also will be permitted in wild forest areas.

Wildlife Management in Wild Forest

The guidelines for wildlife management in all areas of the Forest Preserve are given in the Section, “Guidelines for All Classifications” on page 19.

Designation of Wild Forest Areas

Application of the wild forest definition and criteria described above results in the designation under the Master plan of fourteen management units encompassing over 130,000 acres of wild forest land, comprising approximately 47 percent of the Forest Preserve within the Catskill Park. A wide variety of terrain and ecosystems are represented in these areas. Additionally, over 6,000 acres of detached parcels of Forest Preserve land outside the Park are classified Wild Forest.

Wild Forest areas are listed and described in Section VII, Description of Management Units.

D. Primitive Bicycle Corridor

Definition

A Primitive Bicycle Corridor is a linear area of Forest Preserve land, adjacent to or going through, a Wilderness Area, where bicycles are permitted, but which is otherwise managed as wilderness. This is a new land classification and was not identified in the original 1985 Master plan. The physical character of this corridor is usually an old road, often used as a foot trail, which has historic bicycling use, as allowed according to the 1985 Master plan. The Primitive Bicycle Corridor is 100 feet wide, 50 feet each side from the center line of an existing trail. The trails within the corridor have been located with differential GPS, and are digitally located on area maps. The width of this corridor will allow for minor relocations of the trail when environmental conditions warrant such relocations. Maintenance may be minimal in nature; these trails within the corridors will not be made “smooth” bike paths, but substantially left in their current condition – often rocky and rough. However, maintenance activities for erosion control will be allowed. In addition, trailhead signage will be used to notify users that bicyclists may be on the trail to help reduce potential user conflicts.

Basic Guidelines for Primitive Bicycle Corridor Management and Use

Management planning for the Primitive Bicycle Corridors will occur in conjunction with the unit management plan prepared for the wilderness area they traverse through. A separate UMP will not be developed for these corridors.

The use of aircraft and motorized equipment, but not motor vehicles, will be allowed, utilizing the same constraints as a Wilderness, during two off-peak seasons each year. These “windows” will run from May 1 - June 15 and October 15 - November 15. Work that cannot be scheduled within these windows may be permitted on the approval of the Commissioner.

Activities involving the use of snowmobiles, motor vehicles, and motorized equipment, except as outlined above, with the exception of mechanized aids for people with disabilities, will not be permitted. Irrespective of the above guideline, the use of motor vehicles, snowmobiles, motorized equipment and aircraft will be permitted, by or under the supervision of appropriate officials, in cases of actual and ongoing emergencies involving the protection or preservation of human life or intrinsic resource values.

Recreational Use in Primitive Bicycle Corridor

The primary management guideline is to preserve the physical and biological resources in a wild state. Bicycle use has occurred in these Primitive Bicycle Corridors and has not adversely affected the wild character of the surrounding Wilderness.

Hiking, including hunting, fishing and trapping, bicycling, cross country skiing, and snowshoeing will be allowed. Currently, the trails, except the north end of Mink Hollow, contained within these corridors are marked foot trails, and the use of horses is not allowed, except where designated. Through the UMP process, the opportunity to review these foot trails for horse use will be considered.

Camping is not allowed, unless specifically posted for, as specified in 6 NYCRR prohibiting camping within 150 feet of a trail.

Primitive Bicycle Corridor Structures and Improvements

The following structures and improvements are permitted.

Foot trails, cross country ski trails, and nature/interpretive trails. Trails specifically designed, constructed and maintained for bicycle use will not be permitted in Primitive Bicycle Corridors. The use of bicycles on the trails defining these corridors will be permitted.

Bridges and ladders constructed of natural materials unless a less obtrusive structure can be constructed using artificial materials.

Directional, informational and interpretive signs made of wood, or of a character consistent with the Forest Preserve, and in limited numbers.

Trail makers and informational posters.

Minimal facilities for information, such as nature interpretation or user instructions, and trail registers may be constructed.

Trailhead construction and related parking facilities adjacent to public highways or public access lanes.

Designation of Primitive Bicycle Corridors

Application of the primitive bicycle corridor definition and criteria described above results in the designation under the Master plan of four management units encompassing approximately 156 acres of land, comprising less than 0.1 percent of the Forest Preserve within the Catskill Park. A description of each Primitive Bicycle Corridor identifying principal features and facilities is contained in Section VII, Description of Management Units.

E. Intensive Use Area Guidelines

Definition

An Intensive Use Area is an area of State land where the department may: (1) offer opportunities for an array of outdoor recreational activities that are appropriate to a wild forest setting, and (2) develop recreational facilities that will accommodate relatively high densities of visitors while conforming in design and intensity of development with the wild character of the Forest Preserve. Intensive Use Areas include campgrounds, day use areas, fishing access sites, ski centers and visitor information centers.

Basic Guidelines for Management and Use

The primary management guidelines for Intensive Use Areas will be to provide the public opportunities for group and family camping, picnicking, swimming, fishing, boating, skiing and similar outdoor recreation in a setting and on a scale in harmony with the wild and undeveloped character of the Forest Preserve and Catskill Park. All intensive use facilities will be located, designed and managed to blend with the Catskill environment and to have the minimum adverse impact on surrounding state lands and nearby private holdings. Such facilities will be adjacent to or serviceable from existing public road systems within the Catskill Park.

Further additions to the intensive use category will come either from new acquisitions or the reclassification of appropriate wild forest areas. In all cases such additions will be subject to a site specific determination of significance and be fully addressed in the appropriate unit management plan. Intensive use areas will not be expanded beyond the capacity of the resource to withstand use. Sanitary facilities at intensive use areas range from chemical vault toilets at Devil's Tombstone Campground to centralized sewerage treatment systems at the larger facilities. Solid waste is removed by department crews, or by contract, and is transported to the local sanitary landfill. The state contributes to the maintenance of local landfills by payment of local real property taxes on all Forest Preserve land and by dump use fees.

Intensive Use Area Structures and Improvements

All structures and improvements permitted under the guidelines covering Wild Forest Areas will be allowed in Intensive Use Areas. In addition, the maintenance, rehabilitation and construction of all infrastructure items necessary for the operation of campgrounds, day use areas, and fishing access sites including those listed below will be allowed: [Note: Belleayre Ski Center and its appurtenances are allowed by Constitutional Amendment and therefore not enumerated below.]

- Beach facilities, including lifeguard chairs, floating lines and docks
- Dams and flood control structures
- Boat ramps and access piers
- Motor vehicle bridges
- Picnic tables and picnic table pads
- Fireplaces/picnic grills
- Improved cross-country ski trails
- Pavilions
- Playgrounds
- Flag poles
- Solid waste facilities
- Pay phones

- Utility lines, poles, transformers, and service entrance

- Wastewater treatment facilities, including bath and shower buildings, septic tanks, leach fields and dumping stations

- Water supply systems, including reservoirs, pumps, stand pipes, spigots, chlorinators and air compressors

- Fuel storage tanks and fuel pumping stations

- Mines - in intensive use areas, no new mines may be created. Mining in intensive use areas may occur, but only in conformance with the following guidelines:

  - The material to be mined may only be used for the construction and maintenance of conforming structures and improvements that are situated within the same intensive use area on which the mine is situated; and

  - The material to be mined may be removed from an existing, active mine. An active mine is defined as a mine from which material has been removed at any time during the ten years previous to the time of a proposed mining operation; and

  - The mining of the material may not entail the destruction of trees to a material degree; and

  - The amount of material removed from any mine may not exceed 1,000 tons within a period of twelve successive months.

  Mines from which all useable material has been removed, and mines of which no further use is anticipated will be reclaimed within two years of the cessation of mining. The mine site will be graded so that no part of the area has a slope exceeding 1:2, and vegetated with a permanent cover of native trees or grasses.

Campgrounds

During the early 1900's, under the direction of the Conservation Commission, the first Forest Preserve campgrounds began to take shape. In its 1920 report, the Commission commented on the need to increase campsites and trails in the Adirondack Preserve. Many small campsite areas were being established along traveled roadways to provide overnight camping facilities for travelers. In the words of the Commission, "It is difficult to estimate the great good that will be accomplished by a consistent development of such facilities of our Adirondack and Catskill Parks." It noted that the Forest Preserve was the property of all the people and that, therefore, it was the duty of the Commission to do everything it could to make the Preserve more accessible and to furnish facilities so that the taxpayers could more fully enjoy what they owned. The Commission was careful to point out that the development work was necessary to localize the fire hazard created by a large number of people in the woods.

In the 1922 report, the Conservation Commission commented that because the Constitution prohibited the cutting of timber, the main value of the preserve was in its use by the public for health and recreation.

Again, the Commission reasoned that development of additional campsites and trails had been made with the chief aim toward decreasing the fire hazard.

By 1923, use of camping areas had increased to the point where the Commission reported that over 100,000 individuals used the sites. Heavy use prompted cries for further development and larger campsites. It decided to concentrate on the development of large campground areas, complete with proper sanitary facilities and adequate drinking water. By 1925, ten fully developed facilities had been established. The public was able to more fully enjoy the outdoor pursuits of camping, hunting, fishing, canoeing, hiking and mountain climbing from locations where rules and regulations had been established by the commission "to insure the conservation of the forests and wildlife."

Constitutional questions were first presented in the early twenties when the commission brought up the subject of constitutional change to allow the leasing of campsites to private individuals. The "bobsled case," Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks v. MacDonald, 253 N.Y. 234 (1930) brought constitutionality to the forefront. Although the Conservation Department lost the case, the Court of Appeals decision included dicta which can be interpreted as sanctioning limited tree cutting for, among other things, campground development. The decision stated, "The Adirondack Park was to be preserved, not destroyed. Therefore, all things necessary were permitted, such as measures to prevent forest fires, the repairs to roads and proper inspections, or the erection and maintenance of proper facilities for the use by the public, which did not call for the removal of the timber to any material degree."

In 1932, further legal guidance came in the form of an Attorney General's opinion. The question from the Conservation Department had been whether or not there was a right to implement a service charge to persons using public campgrounds. The opinion stated. "It was my view that the Conservation Department has ample authority to issue permits for the use of the Forest Preserve for the purposes concerning which you (Conservation Department) write and to exact a reasonable charge therefore; that such permit, in contemplation of the law, is a license only; that it may be either written or by parol and may include such reasonable charge."

With the advent of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in 1933, a ready resource existed to further expand and improve the campground system. The CCC continued campground expansion and included improvements for water supply and sanitary facilities for nine years until the Corps left the Forest Preserve in 1942.

Several of the campgrounds within the Catskill Forest Preserve were developed, expanded or improved by the Civilian Conservation Corps between 1933 and 1942. Some campgrounds originally were CCC camps which were later converted to public campgrounds. Others were developed initially as campgrounds by CCC crews. This period of development resulted in the distinctive architectural style and appearance now associated with the structures and landscape features of Forest Preserve campgrounds. The campgrounds associated with this period are:

Beaverkill
Devils Tombstone
North-South Lake
Woodland Valley

These facilities retain many of the buildings, landscape features and the layout of their

original designs making it likely that they are eligible for inclusion in the State and National Registers of Historic Places. To date, no formal evaluation of the significance of these resources has been completed.

In 1948, following several years of declining use, attendance at campgrounds climbed to the prewar year levels and a call for expansion started again.

The Department has frequently made application for and received Land and Water Conservation Fund grant awards to develop and improve many of the campgrounds which come under its management responsibility. The Land and Water Conservation Fund is a federal grant-in-aid program providing 50 percent reimbursement for the acquisition and/or development of public outdoor recreation facilities. These grants have, in some instances, been used in the original development of various campsites. In other instances, fund monies have enabled the department to upgrade and improve existing recreation facilities. These federal funds have been, and continue to be, an important component in the development and modernization of New York State recreational facilities. The National Park Service requires post-completion inspections on a periodic basis to assure that the grant projects funded continue to be used as specified in the grant award.

The number of recreational facilities continued to increase as capital and bond act monies responded to user needs. Today, there are seven campgrounds within the Catskill Park.

There is a need to periodically redesign and rehabilitate campground facilities, including individual campsites, to meet health codes, to provide for current recreational needs of the camping public and to protect the environment. Any expansion or new developments will be made through the unit management planning process. All new construction or reconstruction of structures will incorporate designs, colors and materials that are compatible with the Forest Preserve and which reinforce the feeling of the camping experience. This includes the use of traditional stone or masonry fireplaces rather than metal fire rings, a burnt umber color scheme, log or waney-edged siding on structures, and the use of natural materials wherever possible in construction. Any newly planted trees and other landscape plants should be native to the Catskill region.

Evaluations of the historic significance of potentially significant campgrounds will be undertaken in the context of the development or revision of unit management plans, as appropriate.

The Department currently offers two staffed recreation interpretive programs in the Catskills. The Nature Recreation Program provides organized activities at North/South Lake and Mongaup Pond Campgrounds. The Junior Naturalist Program, an activity in which children from five to twelve years old can earn a patch by completing a journal of interpretive activities, is offered at most Catskill Campgrounds. These programs enhance the recreational experience of campers and provide an opportunity for Department staff to communicate with the public. The recreational/interpretive program will be expanded as funding permits.

Recreational opportunities and facilities will be kept compatible with the management and protection of the Forest Preserve. Department staff will consider development of trails which emanate from the campgrounds where the opportunity and need exists. These may include short loop hiking trails, interpretive trails, mountain bicycle trails, and horse trails. This may

also include preparation of interpretive materials, such as trail guides, for the identification of features on trails. Development of new trails or facilities will be done through the unit management planning process.

Ski Center

The Belleayre Ski Center is the only ski center authorized by the State Constitution on Forest Preserve land within the Catskill Park. A 1947 constitutional amendment authorized the construction of 20 miles of ski trails 20 to 80 feet wide on Belleayre Mountain in Ulster County.

In 1988, Article XIV, Section 1 of the State Constitution was amended to allow 25 miles of ski trails, 30 to 200 feet wide, on the slopes of Belleayre Mountain, provided that no more than 2 miles shall be in excess of 120 feet wide.

In addition to the structures and improvements permitted in all intensive use areas, all those facilities necessary for the operation of a ski center will be allowed, including ski chair lifts, ski lift towers, snowmaking systems, and lodges.

The Belleayre Ski Center should be modernized to the extent physical resources allow and within the constraints of the amendment to Article XIV, Section 1 of the State Constitution authorizing its establishment.

Proposed Visitor Information Center

The proposed Catskill Interpretive Center was designed to fulfill the twin functions of providing information to visitors to link the Catskill Forest Preserve to local communities throughout the region, and interpreting the region's natural and cultural resources through a variety of educational programs and services. The plans for the 63-acre project on land on Route 28 in Shandaken, Ulster County, included a 17,000 sq. ft. building, hiking trails, a picnic area and related amenities. It was estimated at the time the project was designed that the facility would draw 150,000 visitors annually who would contribute an estimated $2 million in direct and indirect expenditures to the regional economy.

In 1988, the Department leased 63 acres of land on Route 28 in the Town of Shandaken from the Catskill Center for Conservation and Development and the Trust for Public Land for 99 years (renewable). The state purchased two additional parcels totaling 52 acres adjacent to the site as a buffer to protect open space values. A contract for site development has been completed including site clearing, grading, construction of a 35 foot bridge, and construction of an access road. The site is now open for day use for the public offering self-guided interpretive nature trails and picnic tables.

Future progress will require identification of funding sources and innovative partnerships with other government agencies, local governments and the private sector. There may be other future opportunities to combine or consolidate the Catskill Interpretive Center with projects being proposed in the surrounding area. A single structure that served multiple purposes would be a cost-efficient solution to the need for a Catskill Interpretive Center.

Day Use Areas

As with other intensive use areas, day use areas will be managed to provide the public opportunities for picnicking, swimming, fishing, boating, hiking, bicycling, cross-country skiing and similar outdoor recreational activities in a setting compatible with the Catskill Park. They may include interpretive and/or educational facilities which will orient visitors and enhance their experience in the Catskills.

Fishing Access Sites

The Department has acquired fee title to numerous small properties (generally 1 to 5 acres in size) within the Park, specifically to provide access to lakes and streams for fishing. In the Catskills, they have most often been acquired along streams where the Department has acquired public fishing rights. Development can vary from the construction of a small parking lot for foot or car-top boat access to a larger parking lot with a launching ramp for small boats, depending on the size of the water body and public interest.

Recreational Use

As places that are more accessible and highly developed than wilderness and wild forest areas, intensive use areas form an important component of the recreational opportunity spectrum represented by this Plan's classification system. The management of intensive use areas complements the management of lands of other classifications. For instance, as areas designed to accommodate higher densities of camping use, campgrounds can serve as bases for excursions into nearby wilderness and wild forest areas and thereby alleviate camping pressure on interior locations less capable of withstanding concentrated use. However, where permitted recreational uses endanger the physical or biological resources of an area, appropriate administrative and regulatory measures will be taken to limit such use to the capacity of the affected resource. Measures may include but need not be limited to:

- The prohibition of overnight camping within a specified distance of a designated intensive use area to avoid overflow camping on adjacent undeveloped state lands
- Temporarily closing all or portions of a designated intensive use area to permit rehabilitation of the area.

Off-Season Use

Intensive Use Areas are managed primarily for the kinds of public recreational use that are in demand during appropriate seasons. Campgrounds are open for camping from late spring through fall, and the Belleayre Mountain Ski Center is open for skiing during the winter months. Nevertheless, in many instances demand exists for the recreational use of intensive use areas during the "off-season" months. For example, currently the North/South Lake and Mongaup Pond Campgrounds are made available during the winter months for cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, and ice fishing as well as hiking and bicycling. The Belleayre Mountain Ski Center is the setting for musical events in the summer, as well as hiking and bicycling.

Intensive use areas will be managed to encourage public recreational use during off-season periods. Off-season use will be allowed at a particular intensive use area if:

- There is sufficient demand for one or more kinds of recreational use.
- Off-season recreational use of the area:
  - Will be safe for visitors.
  - Will not have the potential for unacceptable damage to the area's natural resources or the structures and improvements existing for regular season use.
  - Will be compatible with the use and management of surrounding state and private lands, including but not limited to the constitutional

requirements for Forest Preserve lands.

Designation of Intensive Use Areas

The Intensive Use Areas include 26 fishing access sites, seven campgrounds, the Belleayre Mountain Day Use Area (Pine Hill Lake), and the Belleayre Mountain Ski Center. These areas encompass approximately 5,570 acres or about two percent of the Forest Preserve within the Catskill Park.

A description of each Intensive Use Area identifying principal features and facilities is contained in Section VII, Description of Management Units.

Future development of intensive recreational facilities is anticipated to take place primarily on private lands. Demand for developed recreation opportunities that are not present on state lands will need to be met through entrepreneurial ventures seeking to capitalize on the public's expressed desire for such opportunities.

F. Administrative Area Guidelines

Definition

An Administrative Area is an area of State land within the Catskill Park under the jurisdiction of the Department of Environmental Conservation, which was acquired and is managed for other than Forest Preserve purposes.

Guidelines for Management and Use

The primary consideration in managing an administrative area will be the purpose for which the area was acquired.

Facilities constructed on an administrative area should be located, designed and managed to blend with the Catskill environment and to have a minimum adverse impact on surrounding state lands and private holdings.

Designation of Administrative Areas

Six Administrative Areas encompassing 824 acres are listed and described in Section VII, Description of Management Units. It should be noted that portions of the Belleayre Mountain Day Use Area (35 acres) and the entire Kenneth L.Wilson Campground (546 acres), though not acquired for Forest Preserve purposes, are managed according to Intensive Use Area guidelines and are included in the UMPs for those areas.

V. UNIT MANAGEMENT PLAN DEVELOPMENT

A two-tier system for management planning exists for Department-administered lands in the Park. The Master plan provides the policy, classifications and guidelines. Unit Management Plans (UMPs) are mechanisms that refine and apply the criteria in the master plan to specific conditions on the ground at a level of detail appropriate to administration and management. A UMP identifies a specific land unit and provides direction for the management and use of the unit within the constraints of Article XIV of the State Constitution, the Environmental Conservation Law, New York Codes, Rules and Regulations and the Catskill Park State Land Master Plan.

The Department will develop individual UMPs for each land unit under its jurisdiction classified in the master plan, based on a priority listing. However, Primitive Bicycle Corridors will not have individual UMPs developed, but their management planning will be incorporated into the Wilderness Area they traverse through. UMPs will conform to the guidelines and criteria set forth in the Master plan. Additional Division of Lands and Forests, Division of Operations, and Division of Fish, Wildlife and Marine program specific standards and guidelines will be used to develop appropriate plan sections. They will be prepared as follows:

Each UMP will begin with the appointment of a unit management team by the Regional Director of the region in which the land unit is located. The team will collect and assemble the following data:

- The location of the planning unit
- An inventory, at a level of detail appropriate to the area, of the natural, scenic, fish and wildlife (including game and non-game species) and other appropriate resources of the area as well as an analysis of the ecological role of the unit in the context of the surrounding public and private lands. The inventory will include rare plants, animals and ecological communities that are known to be within the boundaries of the unit. Unit Management Planners will seek the assistance of the New York Natural Heritage Program in obtaining inventory information on specific Forest Preserve units. When more detailed information is needed regarding a rare plant, animal or ecological community that is found on a unit, a request for funding to carry out a detailed study will be put into the implementation schedule of the unit management plan. Information regarding the specific location of endangered or threatened species will not be published in the UMP.
- An inventory of the historic and archaeological resources of the area.
- An inventory of the types and extent of actual and projected public use of the area;
- An assessment of the impact of actual and projected public use on the resources, ecosystems and public enjoyment of the area with particular attention to portions of the area threatened by overuse and,
- An assessment of the physical, biological and social carrying capacity of the area with particular attention to portions of the area threatened by overuse in light of its resource limitations and its classification under the Master plan,

- An evaluation and plan to implement the Limits of Acceptable Change model by employing carrying capacity concepts as a prescription of the desired resource and social conditions that should be maintained to minimum standards, regardless of use.

- Relationship of the unit with the local community

Each unit management plan will also set forth a statement of the management objectives for the protection and rehabilitation of the area's resources and ecosystems and for public use of the area consistent with its carrying capacity. These management objectives will address, on a site-specific basis as may be pertinent to the area, such issues as:

- Actions to minimize adverse impacts on the resources of the area;

- The rehabilitation of such portions of the area as may suffer from overuse or resource degradation;

- The regulation or limitation of public use such that the carrying capacity of the area is not exceeded and the types of measures necessary to achieve that objective;

- The preservation of aquatic and terrestrial habitats of the area;

- The preservation and management of the fish and wildlife resources (including game and non-game species) of the area;

- The preservation and management of the lakes, ponds, rivers and streams of the area, with particular attention to all proposed or designated wild, scenic and recreational rivers;

- The preservation and management of special interest areas such as the habitats of rare, threatened or endangered species and areas with the potential for the reintroduction of extirpated species, and unique geological areas;

- The evaluation, preservation and interpretation of historic and archaeological resources;

- The identification of needed additions or improvements to, and plans for providing for further appropriate public use of, the area consistent with its carrying capacity;

- The removal of such nonconforming uses as may remain; and,

- The identification of measures that can be taken to improve access to and enjoyment of Forest Preserve lands, and associated structures and improvements, by people with disabilities.

Unit management plans will also address the administrative actions and the minimum facilities necessary on a site-specific basis, as may be pertinent to the area to attain the stated management objectives of such area. Special consideration should be given to effecting the protection of environmentally sensitive areas from overuse or inappropriate uses. Such areas include but are not limited to steep slopes, shallow or fragile soils, stream corridors, lake and pond shores, spring seeps, talus slopes, ridge tops, ledges, peat bogs, and rare or endangered species habitats. These areas are not capable of supporting the level of use that other areas can accommodate, and management proposals for them should reflect this.

Schedules for achievement of plan objectives will be included in each unit management plan. The land characteristics

and the recommended objectives for each area will be related to and integrated with the characteristics and management objectives for adjacent public and private land areas. General recommendations for future acquisition will be included as appropriate.

An initial draft of the unit management plan for each state land area including alternative management objectives, where appropriate, will be circulated throughout the department for review and comment, prior to the preparation of the final draft plan for public review.

The requirements of the State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) will be met.

Opportunity will be made for review and comment on the draft unit management plans by the public and other interested parties, and a public meeting or meetings will be convened as appropriate for that purpose.

Final unit management plans will be prepared by the Department after due consideration of all comments and recommendations made on the public review draft. The Commissioner of the Department will adopt each final unit management plan.

Any material modification in adopted unit management plans will be made following the procedure for original unit plan preparation.

UMPs will be reviewed and modified when necessary and should be revised every ten years.

VI. MASTER PLAN REVISION AND REVIEW

Amendments to this Plan shall be made utilizing the same process as was used for initial adoption of the Plan. Revisions will be undertaken as needs dictate. Requests from other state agencies, local governments or private citizens or organizations for Master Plan amendments or revisions will be given due and fair consideration. Such revisions may be proposed by the Department and will be the subject of public hearings within and outside the Park.

Even in the absence of acquisitions or changes in land classification or guidelines requiring modification of this Plan, periodic reviews of the Plan will be undertaken. The Department will review the Plan when necessary to address such issues as the classification of recent acquisitions, modest boundary adjustments, minor technical changes, clarification or corrections and similar matters. Major reviews of the Plan should take place every ten years.

Public involvement in the process of revision and review will be encouraged. Appropriate publicity and sufficient notice about proposed changes to the Master Plan are also necessary to permit maximum public participation. In addition, the Department will make every effort to publish and disseminate, through print and increasingly through electronic media, including the internet, copies of the Master Plan and to take other measures to foster greater public appreciation of the resources of the Catskill Park and the nature of the planning process.

VII. DESCRIPTIONS OF MANAGEMENT UNITS

A. Wilderness Areas

Big Indian Wilderness

(Formerly Big Indian - Beaverkill Range Wilderness Area)

This wilderness is located in the Towns of Hardenburgh, Denning and Shandaken in Ulster County. It lies generally west of Oliverea and the Frost Valley Road, south of Belleayre Ski Center, east of Seager and Hardenburgh and north of Willowemoc and Claryville. The area ranges in width from 1 to 5 miles, is about 19 miles long and contains approximately 33,500 acres of land.

Elevations range from 1,500 feet in McKenley Hollow to 3,840 feet where the state boundary crosses Doubletop Mountain. The mountains in the northeastern portion of the area are quite rugged, while those to the south and west are more characteristic of high hills. Water from the area flows into three New York City water supply reservoirs and the Delaware River Basin. Nine mountains or ridges with elevations of over 3000 feet make up the area.

Peaks

Doubletop*	3,860'	Haynes	3,420'
Big Indian	3,700'	Spruce	3,380'
Fir	3,620'	Eagle	3,600'
Hemlock	3,240'	Balsam*	3,600'
Beaver Kill Range	3,377'		

* Maximum elevations given are not necessarily located within the Wilderness Area.

The forest cover is predominantly hardwood mixtures in various associations. Spruce and fir, while present at some of the higher elevations, are less noticeable here than in other Catskill wilderness areas.

Interior facilities consisting of foot trails and lean-tos are generally considered adequate.

Area statistics:

Approximate Area	33,500 Acres
Roads (non conforming)	1.4 Miles
Foot Trails	29.4 Miles
Lean-tos	6
Designated Campsites	5
Parking Lots	5
Public Use (visitors/year)	4,500
Exterior Boundary Line	67 Miles
Minimum Elevation	1,500'
Maximum Elevation	3,840'

Non-conforming uses:

Motor vehicle use of Black Bear Road from the wilderness boundary to Fall Brook Lean-to.

A UMP for this area was completed in June of 1993.

Hunter - West Kill Wilderness

(Formerly West Kill - North Dome Wilderness, Ox Clove Wild Forest, and a portion of the former Hunter Mountain Wild Forest)

The unit generally lies within the following boundaries: New York State Route 42 on the west, the Shandakan Wild Forest and NYS Route 28 to the south, and NYS Route 214 on the east. The northern extent of the unit is County Route 6, and continues along a line 100' parallel to, and south or east of, the edge of Spruceton trailhead parking area and the centerline of the Spruceton Truck Trail, to the junction of the Colonel's Chair Trail. A corridor, 100 feet either side of the center line of the Spruceton Truck Trail, from the Colonel's Chair Trail to the summit of Hunter Mountain, culminating in a circle 175' in radius from the center of the chimney on the

observer's cabin shall be within the Rusk Mountain Wild Forest.

The unit contains approximately 27,000 acres of land, and inside it's boundaries are found the named mountain peaks of Balsam, Sherrill, North Dome, West Kill, Sheridan, Hunter and Southwest Hunter. Hunter Mountain is the second highest peak in the Catskills at 4,040 feet, and portions of it's summit, along with a fairly extensive area on the summits of West Kill, North Dome and Sherrill Mountains are within the Catskill High Peaks Bird Conservation Area, and are of special significance in that they provide habitat for high elevation spruce-fir inhabitants such as Bicknell's Thrush and the Blackpoll Warbler, among others.

There are currently two lean-to's on the unit, the Diamond Notch lean-to located just off the Diamond Notch Trail, and the Devil's Acre Lean-to off of the Devil's Path Trail.

Waters from this unit drain into Schoharie and Esopus Creeks and then into the Schoharie and Ashokan Reservoirs, which are in the New York City water supply system.

Area statistics:

Approximate Area	27,000 Acres
Foot Trails	18 Miles
Lean-to's	2
Parking Lots	5
Minimum Elevation	920'
Maximum Elevation	4,040'

Indian Head Wilderness

(Formerly Plateau Mountain - Indian Head Mountain Wilderness Area)

This wilderness is located in the Town of Hunter, Greene County and the Towns of Saugerties and Woodstock, Ulster County. It lies generally west of the east boundary of the Catskill Park, south of Platte Clove, east of Devil's Tombstone Campground and north of Lake Hill and Shady. The area ranges from 1½ miles to 3½ miles in width, is eight miles long and contains approximately 16,800 acres.

Elevations range from 900 to 3840 feet and the four major mountains in the area are visible against the skyline from all directions. Echo Lake, the only natural lake in a Catskill wilderness, is located in the east-central portion of the area. Water from this eastern section flows into the Kingston and Saugerties water supply reservoirs, while drainage from the central and western section flows into two New York City water supply reservoirs. Six named mountain peaks over 3,000 feet in elevation dominate the area.

Peaks

Plateau	3,840'	Indian Head	3,573'
Sugarloaf	3,800'	Olderbark	3,440'
Twin	3,640'	Plattekill	3,100'

The forest cover varies from extensive oak stands on the eastern most slopes to mature spruce-fir on top of Plateau Mountain. An excellent mature stand of northern hardwood and hemlock occupies the slopes south of the Saw Kill.

Echo Lake, unique to the Catskill wilderness, is very popular for undeveloped camping. A small number of scattered primitive tent sites with fire rings have been established and public camping is limited to their capacities.

Public access is provided by several foot trails entering the area, including the old road from Meads to Overlook Mountain.

Area statistics:

Approximate Area	16,800 Acres
Roads	6.6 Miles
Foot Trails	24.1 Miles
Cross-country Ski Trails	5.6
Lean-tos	3
Designated Campsites	10
Parking Lots	1
Public Use (visitors/year)	8,000

Length of Boundary	33 Miles
Minimum Elevation	900'
Maximum Elevation	3,840'

A UMP for this area was completed in October of 1992.

Slide Mountain Wilderness

(Formerly Slide Mountain - Panther Mountain Wilderness Area)

This wilderness is located in the towns of Shandaken, Denning and Olive in Ulster County. It lies generally south of NYS Route 28, west of West Shokan, north of the Peekamoose Road (County Route 42) and east of the Frost Valley Road (County Route 47). It surrounds the Woodland Valley Campground and abuts the Sundown Wild Forest to its south. This area ranges from 1 to 10 miles in width, is about 13 miles long, and contains approximately 47,500 acres of land. The wilderness boundary is 118 miles long.

The terrain is rugged and steep with elevations ranging from 1,100 to 4,180 feet. All water draining from the area eventually reaches three New York City water supply reservoirs by way of the East and West Branches of the Neversink River, Rondout Creek and Esopus Creek. Twelve named mountain peaks with elevations over 3000 feet exist in the area. Of these, six may still be considered trail-less to the extent that they have no marked and maintained trails.

Peaks with Trails

Slide	4,180'	Peekamoose	3,843'
Cornell	3,860'	Wittenberg	3,780'
Table	3,847'	Panther	3,720'

Trail-less Peaks

Lone	3,721'	Rocky	3,508'
Friday	3,694'	Van Wyck	3,206'
Wildcat	3,340'	Balsam Cap	3,623'

The forest cover consists of nearly every possible mixture and association of hardwood and softwood trees native to the mountain region. While hardwoods predominate higher elevations are often covered with red spruce and balsam fir.

This area receives more public use than any other Catskill wilderness. Superb vistas are found on Slide, Wittenberg, Cornell, Giant Ledge and Panther Mountains. Access via foot trails is available from the north, south, east and west.

Area statistics:

Approximate Area	47,500 Acres
Foot Trails	35.3 Miles
Lean-tos	3
Parking Lots	10
Designated Campsites	29
Public Use (visitors/year)	23,000
Length of Boundary	118 Miles
Minimum Elevation	1,100'
Maximum Elevation	4,180'

A UMP for this area was completed in March of 1987 and revised in October of 1998.

Windham - Blackhead Range Wilderness

(Formerly Blackhead Range, and North Mountain Wild Forests, and portions of Windham High Peak, and Black Dome Valley Wild Forests)

The combination of these Wild Forest areas creates the Windham - Blackhead Range Wilderness Area, which lies within the Greene County towns of Cairo, Hunter, Jewett, Windham and Durham. The classification of these former Wild Forest areas was changed to

Wilderness because their combined area comprises approximately 17,100 acres and contains rugged, high elevation land that clearly exhibits wilderness character. This newly classified area has seven named mountain peaks over 3,000 feet in elevation. They are:

Peaks

Black Dome	3,980'	Windham High Pk	3,520'
Blackhead	3,940'	Stoppel Point	3,420'
Thomas Cole	3,940'	Burnt Knob	3,180'
Acra Point	3,100'		

The unit also contains six unnamed peaks over 3,000 feet, which range from 3,040 feet to 3,540 feet in elevation. Of the five highest peaks in the Catskills, three - Black Dome, Thomas Cole and Blackhead - are in this unit. This concentration of 13 peaks over 3,000 feet, within an area of approximately 28 square miles, with limited access, structures and improvements (30 miles of maintained foot trails and two lean-to's) make the Windham - Blackhead Range Unit an area with excellent wilderness character.

A fairly extensive area of old growth forest can be found on this unit at the higher elevations, along the ridge stretching from an area west of Thomas Cole Mountain to Blackhead Mountain, and on Windham High Peak. The presence of this old growth forest, with its distinctive flora and fauna, add to the wilderness character of the unit. The unit also includes the headwaters of the Batavia Kill and, to the south over the Blackhead Range, the headwaters of the East Kill. Both of these rivers flow into Schoharie Creek, and are an integral part of the New York City Watershed system.

The western boundary of this unit shall be the east side of the Elm Ridge Trail, Black Dome Trail leaving it within the Elm Ridge Wild Forest, continuing north along the drainage to the Catskill Park boundary. The southern boundary of the unit shall be the Escarpment Trail approximately one half mile south of Stoppel Point to a point on the Escarpment Trail where it comes closest to the eastern Forest Preserve boundary. Both North Point and Stoppel Point will be within the Wilderness area. Lands to the south of the south edge of the Escarpment Trail in this area, will be in the Kaaterskill Wild Forest.

Because the Windham - Blackhead Range Wilderness surrounds the smaller Colgate Lake Wild Forest Unit, and because they are linked together by public use, the Unit Management Plans for the two units shall be contained in one document.

Area statistics:

Approximate Area	18,0000 Acres
Foot Trails	30 Miles
Lean-tos	2
Parking Lots	1
Minimum Elevation	980'
Maximum Elevation	3,980'

B. Wild Forest

Balsam Lake Mountain Wild Forest

This unit is located in the western part of Ulster County in the Town of Hardenburgh. Access is gained via a limited number of county and town roads off NYS Routes 17 and 30. It consists of approximately 13,500 acres and includes the Millbrook Ridge, several brooks, a few ponds and Alder Lake, as well as the headwaters of the Beaverkill. The area provides a variety of recreational opportunities, including hiking trails, a cross-country ski trail loop in Kelly Hollow, and camping and fishing at Alder Lake. A fire tower, the oldest existing fire tower in the state, is open to the public at the summit of Balsam Lake Mountain. The unit is also home to Coykendall Lodge, a large mansion built in the early 1900's overlooking Alder Lake and recently listed on the state register of historic places.

Area statistics:

Approximate Area	13,500 Acres
Foot Trails	16.8 Miles
Cross-country ski trails	5.5 Miles
Lean-tos	5
Parking Lots	6
Designated Campsites	15
Fire Tower	1
Public Use (visitors/year)	5,000
Minimum Elevation	1,740'
Maximum Elevation	3,723'

A UMP for this area was completed in June of 1989, and revised in February of 1996.

Bluestone Wild Forest

(Formerly Jockey Hill - Morgan Hill Wild Forest)

This unit is located in the Towns of Hurley and Kingston, Ulster County west of the City of Kingston. It consists of numerous individual parcels of state land totaling approximately 2,895 acres. The terrain is hilly with outcroppings of sedimentary rock, including several old bluestone quarries and Onteora Lake. The area is readily accessible via numerous town roads.

Area statistics:

Approximate Area	2,895 Acres
Foot Trails	4.5 Miles
Bicycle Trails	4.5 Miles
Parking Lots	2
Length of Boundary	30.2 Miles

Most of the Bluestone Wild Forest lands are forested hilltops and hillsides of oak, white pine, and pitch pine. Scattered hemlock groves are found in the valleys and along streamsides. Shallow soils are found throughout much of the area, and stormwater runoff from the area is rapid, resulting in rather dry conditions during the summer months.

The larger streams passing through the unit are the Saw Kill River, Praymaher Brook and Englishman’s Creek. Onteora Lake is a warm water lake, less than 20 feet deep at it’s deepest point. The lake is a popular icefishing destination and is primarily known for its panfish.

A UMP for this unit was completed in May of 1997.

Colgate Lake Wild Forest

(Formerly a portion of the Black Dome Valley Wild Forest)

This unit is approximately 1,500 acres in size, 1,375 acres in the contiguous area of Colgate Lake, and 125 acres in 3 other parcels. It lies at the eastern end of County Route 78 in the town of Jewett, Greene County. It was formerly a portion of the Black Dome Valley Wild Forest. The name has been changed to identify this unit with its most prominent feature, Colgate Lake. The unit is bordered by the Windham - Blackhead Range Wilderness

on the north, east and south, and by private land on the west. The boundaries of this unit encompass a 200 acre "inholding" of state land under the jurisdiction of the State Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (Camp Harriman) that is currently leased to the New York City based Association for the Help of Retarded Children. The unit is on a relatively flat higher elevation valley floor, with an average elevation of 2,100 feet.

There are three ample parking areas on the unit, and approximately one and a half miles of foot trail, which continues off the unit into the Windham - Blackhead Range Wilderness. In addition to the main access over County Route 78, a currently undeveloped access point exists on County Route 25, north of its junction with County Route 23C.

This unit is a popular attraction due to the presence of Colgate Lake, and is an entry point into the Windham - Blackhead Range Wilderness area. Currently (fall of 2007 and spring/summer of 2008) the dam at Colgate Lake is being replaced. Because the Windham - Blackhead Range Wilderness surrounds the Colgate Lake Wild Forest, and because they are linked together by way of public use, the unit management plans for the two units shall be contained in one document.

Delaware Wild Forest

(Formerly Cherry Ridge-Campbell Mountain, and Middle Mountain-Mary Smith Hill Wild Forests)

This 27,800 acre unit is located in the towns of Colchester and Andes in Delaware County, in the town of Hardenburgh, Ulster County and in the town of Rockland, Sullivan County. It is a newly named unit which combines the former "Cherry Ridge-Campbell Mountain" and "Middle Mountain-Mary Smith Hill" Wild Forests. The two units were combined and renamed primarily for administrative purposes to facilitate unit management planning. Mountainous terrain characterizes this unit, with grades ranging from moderate to steep. At least four large ponds are found on the unit. Mud Pond and Trout Pond are in the western end of the unit, as is Russell Brook, a scenic and intensively used camping and picnicking spot. Huggins Lake is found in the central portion of the unit, and Big Pond is in the eastern portion of the unit. Little Pond Campground adjoins the eastern portion of the unit. The unit is accessible by way of the many public roads that cross through it. There are approximately 33 miles of foot trails and 22 miles of trails designated for snowmobile use. Ample opportunity exists for solitude and a multitude of recreational experiences on this wild forest unit.

A UMP for the Cherry Ridge-Campbell Mountain portion of this unit was completed in March of 1987. A UMP for the Middle Mountain portion of this unit was completed in 1988.

Dry Brook Ridge Wild Forest

This 8,900 acre unit is located in the Towns of Andes and Middletown, Delaware County and Hardenburgh, Ulster County. The area is mountainous with the majority of land being moderate to steep in grade. Features and facilities include the Dry Brook Ridge Trail, which starts near Margaretville and heads south to Balsam Lake Mountain. A small picnic and camping area is located along the Upper Huckleberry Brook Road. Due to the rugged topography of the unit, access is limited to several public roads.

A two acre area on Huckleberry Brook Road is being reclassified as Administrative, to accommodate current infrastructure used by the Office of Public Protection.

A UMP for this area was completed in 1988.

Halcott Mountain Wild Forest

This 4,760 acre unit lies on the ridge between the Towns of Lexington and Halcott and includes all the Forest Preserve within the park's boundary west of NYS Route 42. The most prominent feature is 3,537 foot Halcott Mountain.

Area statistics:

Approximate Area	4,760	Acres
Length of Boundary	20	Miles
Parking Lots	4	
Foot trails	0	
Lean-tos	1	
Minimum Elevation	1,700'	
Maximum Elevation	3,537'	

Soils on the unit are shallow and extremely acid, with low water capacity. Rock outcroppings are common.
The entire unit is forested, primarily with northern hardwoods. A small amount of Norway spruce plantation exists, as well as a stand of very large hemlock.

A unit management plan for this unit was completed in August 2001.

Elm Ridge Wild Forest

(Formerly a portion of Windham High Peaks Wild Forest)

This 1,355 acre Wild Forest unit lies at the northernmost edge of the Catskill Forest Preserve in the Green County town of Windham. It is bordered by Old Road and NYS Route 23 on the north, and the eastern edge of the Elm Ridge Trail on the east, thereby putting the Elm Ridge Trail inside the Wild Forest. This smaller Wild Forest unit is adjacent to the Windham - Blackhead Range Wilderness to the east. It is on this unit that the northern end of the Escarpment Trail begins. It then heads east for approximately one and one half miles before entering the Windham - Blackhead Range Wilderness.

This unit is a relatively low elevation one, where elevations range from 1,700 feet at NYS Route 23 to approximately 2,400 feet on Elm Ridge. There are two parking areas that serve the unit, one on NYS 23 to the north and the other at the end of Peck Road at the south end of the unit. There are roughly two and one half miles of foot trails on the unit, consisting of a portion of the Escarpment Trail mentioned above, and the 1.1 mile Elm Ridge Trail. There are opportunities for increased bicycle use within this unit. This unit includes a "detached" parcel of Forest Preserve land located to the west of County Route 296 and east of Cave Mountain.

Kaaterskill Wild Forest

This 8,550 acre unit is bounded on the north by the Windham - Blackhead Range Wilderness at the Escarpment Trail, and on the south by Platte Clove Road (County Route 16). The southern portion of the North Mountain Wild Forest has been incorporated into this unit, causing the unit to now surround the North-South Lake Campground. The largest portion of the unit lies within the town of Hunter, with smaller portions in the towns of Cairo and Catskill (all within Greene County). A small portion of the unit lies in the Ulster County town of Saugerties. The area is highly scenic and extrmely rugged. Elevation ranges from 900 feet in Palenville to 3,655 feet at the summit of Kaaterskill High Peak over a distance of two miles. The south end of the Escarpment Trail lies within this unit and continues north into the Windham - Blackhead Range Wilderness. This unit receives heavy use from both backpackers and hikers of the Escarpment Trail and from day users and campers coming from North-South Lake. Vistas of the Catskill Mountains and the Hudson Valley are numerous and exceptional from the Escarpment Trail. The Long Path enters the southern end of the unit from Platte Clove Road (County Route 16) and proceeds north until it coincides with the Escarpment Trail. The Long Path leaves the unit in the north, at the boundary of the Windham -

Blackhead Range Wilderness. An approximately 12.5 mile looped snowmobile trail is present on the unit, and is situated below Kaaterskill High Peak and Roundtop Mountains.

Kaaterskill Falls is an accessible attraction on the unit and is heavily visited. Steep slopes and cliffs, combined with high use by hikers and heavy runoff events, cause trail erosion which requires continuing annual maintenance.

The proximity of this unit to the heavily visited North-South Lake Campground, causes the trails on the unit to be heavily used. Heavy use on marked trails, and the development of "herd paths" in many areas, have created challenges to trail maintenance on the unit. Extensive trail maintenance, trail re-routes, etc. have been done over the years to correct problems and control erosion. These types of activities will, no doubt, have to continue into the future, and should be addressed in future Unit Management Plans for this unit.

A UMP for this area was completed in March of 1987.

Overlook Mountain Wild Forest

This 590 acre unit is located in the Town of Woodstock, Ulster County. A parking lot on Meads Mountain Road, north of the village of Woodstock, provides access from the south. Access from the north is by hiking trail from the Indian Head Wilderness Area. The area is mountainous. Superb vistas exist in all directions from the summit of Overlook Mountain from and near the fire tower.

Soils on the unit are boulder-strewn, full of rock outcroppings, and range from 2 to 32 inches in depth. Water is held only briefly by the soil, and ponded water drains rapidly.

Area statistics:

Approximate Area	590 Acres
Exterior Boundary	2.7 Miles
Parking Lots	1
Fire tower	1
Foot trails	2.4 miles
Maximum Elevation	3,140'

A UMP for this area was completed in May of 1999.

Phoenicia - Mt. Tobias Wild Forest

This unit is located in the Town of Hunter, Greene County and the Towns of Shandaken and Woodstock, Ulster County. It consists of five parcels totaling approximately 7,315 acres, including Mt Tremper, Mt Tobias, Carl Mountain and Torrens Hook. The closest main roads are New York State Routes 28, 212 and 214. The lands are near the hamlets of Phoenicia, Mt. Tremper, Willow and Lanesville. The topography ranges from hilly to mountainous. The Tremper Mountain fire tower, now over 80 years old, is a point of interest for hikers and is open to the public.

Area statistics:

Approximate Area	7,315 Acres
Foot Trails	11 Miles
Lean-tos	2
Parking Lots	1
Designated Campsites	0
Fire Tower	1
Minimum Elevation	780'
Maximum Elevation	3,000'

A UMP for this area was completed in March of 1994.

Rusk Mountain Wild Forest

(Formerly a portion of Hunter Mountain Wild Forest)

This unit is a portion (west end) of what was originally the Hunter Mountain Wild Forest. It is approximately 3,900 acres in size and extends from the east side of the Spruceton Truck Trail on the east, westward along a ridge of land which includes Rusk and Evergreen mountains, and Pine Island and Packsaddle Mountains. There are currently no trails within this unit other than the Spruceton Truck Trail and the Colonel's Chair Trail on the unit's eastern boundary, and access is limited. The Spruceton Truck Trail is the primary access to this unit. From the Truck Trail's junction with the Colonel's Chair Trail, the unit narrows to a 200 foot wide corridor (100 feet either side of the Truck Trail's center line) extending to the summit of Hunter Mountain, culminating in a circle 175' in radius from the center of the chimney on the observer's cabin.

Michael Kudish, in his book; The Catskill Forest - A History, characterizes the ridge that runs east - west in this unit as, "... ridge hardwood - spruce fir on Rusk Mountain, but northern hardwoods on the remaining peaks to the west: Evergreen, Pine Island, and Packsaddle. First growth clothes the high elevations on Rusk and Evergreen Mountains, with a small tract on Packsaddle."

The summit of Hunter Mountain is home to the recently refurbished fire tower and observers cabin. The Hunter Mountain fire tower is the highest in elevation in the state of New York, and is a 70 foot Aeromotor Company steel structure. The tower was erected in 1917, and is currently open to the public. A 360 degree panoramic view of the Catskills can be seen from the tower. The Hunter Mountain fire tower, along with the observers cabin and the Spruceton Truck Trail, are on the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

A UMP for the Hunter Mountain Wild Forest was completed in November of 1995.

Shandaken Wild Forest

(Formerly Shandaken - Pine Hill and Peck Hollow Wild Forests)

This unit is located in the Town of Shandaken, Ulster County and the Town of Lexington, Greene County. It consists of four (4) parcels totaling approximately 5,376 acres of Forest Preserve. The largest parcel, encompassing Rochester Hollow, Seneca Hollow and the southern slopes of Rose Mountain, is traversed, in part, by a wood road now closed to motor vehicle use. The Department maintains a parking lot at the southern end of this road, on Matyas Road in Big Indian.

The Peck Hollow parcel includes all Forest Preserve lands east of New York State Route 42, north of New York State Route 28 and west of Broadstreet Hollow Road in Ulster County, as well as lands at the north end of Peck Hollow which provide access to a private inholding on the southern slopes of Mount Sherill in Greene County. It directly abuts the West Kill Mountain Wilderness to the north. The Peck Hollow Wild Forest was combined with the Shandaken-Pine Hill Wild Forest for ease of administration.

The Allaben parcel is a small parcel along the north side of New York State Route 28 which also directly abuts the West Kill Mountain Wilderness. It encompasses an area whose previous owner had planned a modest housing development. A road accessing the area and a small pond were constructed before the state purchased most of the development. One lot remains in private ownership. The last parcel is located at the end of Lower Birch Creek Road in Pine Hill, and borders Upper Birch Creek Road to the north. This parcel, locally known as the estate of Dr. Otto Reisser, has an old farmhouse and barn, along with several outbuildings, that are currently being utilized by trail crews for equipment and material storage.

Area statistics:

Approximate Area	5,375 Acres
Exterior Boundary	32.3 Miles
Foot Trails	0 Miles
Parking Lots	4
Designated Campsites	10
Ponded waters	2
Historical Markers	1
Minimum Elevation	900'
Maximum Elevation	2,900'

A UMP for this area was completed June of 2005.

Sundown Wild Forest

(Formerly the Claryville - Sundown Sholam, and Peekamoose Valley Wild Forests)

This unit is located in the Town of Neversink, Sullivan County and the Towns of Denning, Wawarsing, Rochester and Olive, Ulster County. This wild forest consists of several parcels of separated Forest Preserve lands totaling approximately 29,500 acres. Access is via numerous county and town roads. The topography ranges from hilly to mountainous and includes Red Hill, Denman Mountain, and Ashokan High Point. A fire tower is located on top of Red Hill, providing a 360 degree view of the surrounding area. Numerous streams including the Vernooy Kill and the Rondout Creek flow through the area. The adjoining Peekamoose Valley Wild Forest has been added to this unit for ease of administration.

Area statistics:

Approximate Area	30,500 Acres
Foot Trails	11 Miles
Snowmobile Trails	18 Miles
Lean-tos	0
Parking Lots	11
Designated Campsites	60
Fire Tower	1 @ Red Hill
Maximum Elevation	3,080'
Exterior Boundary Lines	129 miles

A UMP for this area was completed in April of 1996. A UMP for the Peekamoose Valley portion of this unit was completed in 1990. With the acquisition of nearly 5,000 acres of the former Lundy Estate adjacent to this unit in 2002, the Department initiated a revision of the 1996 UMP in 2003. The revision will add that portion of the Lundy Estate in the Catskill Park to the Sundown Wild Forest. The lands outside the Park will comprise the newly created Vernooy Kill State Forest, a 3,700 acre reforestation area. The revised UMP will include both management units.

Willowemoc Wild Forest

(Formerly the Willowemoc - Long Pond Wild Forest)

This 15,900-acre unit is located in the Towns of Neversink and Rockland, Sullivan County, and the Towns of Denning and Hardenburgh, Ulster County. The topography is generally less mountainous here than it is in other parts of the region and encompasses several small ponds, including Waneta Lake. It includes several tributaries, as well as the headwaters of the Willowemoc Creek, an important trout fishery in the region. The area offers a variety of recreational facilities including 29 miles of snowmobile trail suitable for horse and mountain bicycle use as well, 26 miles of hiking/cross-country ski trails and a leanto at Long Pond.

Area statistics:

Approximate Area	15,900 Acres
Foot Trails	15 Miles
Snowmobile Trails	33 Miles
Lean-tos	2
Parking Lots	7
Designated Campsites	12
Ponded waters	4
Maximum Elevation	3,100'

A UMP for this area was completed in October of 1991, and amendments were approved in March of 2001 and April of 2006.

Detached Parcels

In addition to the Forest Preserve lands inside the blue line of the Catskill Park, many detached parcels of Forest Preserve land lie outside the blue line in Sullivan, Ulster, Greene and Delaware Counties.

These lands will be classified and managed as wild forest lands, until such time as a unit management plan is developed, in which case a reclassification could be proposed via the UMP process.

DEC will identify, inventory, and prepare unit management plans for detached parcels outside the blue line upon completion of all UMPs in the Catskill Park. While some large, unique or significant parcels may require an individual UMP, most will be combined on a county or multi-town basis. Parcels under 100 acres may be identified for disposal, transfer, or rededication as provided by Article XIV, Section 3 of the State Constitution and the laws of the State of New York. Such parcels will be segregated and action proposed on a parcel by parcel basis.

Crystal Lake Wild Forest

Crystal Lake Wild Forest is a detached parcel comprising 497 acres in the Town of Freemont, Sullivan County. It includes Crystal Lake, a 32-acre, man-made lake, which is surrounded by rolling hills that are forested with second growth northern hardwoods. Elevations range from 1450 to 1980 feet above sea level. Unlike most detached parcels, Crystal Lake Wild Forest was acquired in 1963 with money from the 1960 Park and Recreation Bond Act. Due to the area's popularity, a UMP was completed for this area in 1987 and revised in 1993. Crystal Lake supports a unique and high quality brook trout fishery. It is easily accessible from Tennanah Lake Road, with a parking lot close enough to the lake to allow cartop boats. Only electric motors are allowed.

Table 4 provides a summary of the approximate acreage of detached parcels, in Catskill Forest Preserve counties.

TABLE 4. DETACHED PARCELS

COUNTY	NUMBER OF PARCELS 0-10 ACRES	TOTAL ACRES	NUMBER OF PARCELS 10-100 ACRES	TOTAL ACRES	NUMBER OF PARCELS 100+ ACRES	TOTAL ACRES
Delaware	---	---	10	744.13	9	2946±
Greene	5	9.25	9	363.00	3	695±
Sullivan	10	5.78	4	237.00	5	623±
Ulster	106	261.62	26	578.03	2	273±
TOTAL	121	276.65	49	1922.16	19	4537±
GRAND TOTAL 6,736 ± Acres						

C. Primitive Bicycle Corridors

Mink Hollow Primitive Bicycle Corridor

The Mink Hollow Bicycle Corridor is located in the Town of Hunter Greene County, with a very small portion in the Town of Woodstock, Ulster County. The corridor is approximately 3 miles long and 100 feet wide, encompassing about 36 acres. It goes through the Indian Head Wilderness. This corridor is the middle section of a historic town road connecting the Elka Park region of Greene County with State Route 212 in the Lake Hill area west of Woodstock. The north and south ends of Mink Hollow road are active, maintained town roads. The corridor follows the Mink Hollow Foot Trail, from its intersection with the Devils Path south which is the abandoned portion of the old road through Forest Preserve lands. North of this intersection it follows the abandoned town road bed to the snowplow turn around on Mink Hollow Road. The management planning for this corridor will be included in the Indian Head Wilderness UMP.

The Mink Hollow lean-to is located within the corridor. There is a parking lot at the south end of the corridor.

Diamond Notch Primitive Bicycle Corridor

The Diamond Notch Primitive Bicycle Corridor traverses the Hunter - West Kill Wilderness. It is located in the Town of Hunter, Greene County and is about 3 miles long and 100 feet wide. It is approximately 36 acres. The Diamond Notch Foot Trail is located within the corridor and from the south connects the Diamond Notch Road in Lanesville to the Spruceton Road to the north. The portion of this foot trail on Forest Preserve is an abandoned town road. The management planning for this corridor will be contained in the Hunter - West Kill Wilderness UMP.

The Diamond Notch lean-to is located within the corridor. There is parking at both the north and south terminus of the trail.

Dutcher Notch/Colgate Lake Primitive Bicycle Corridor

This Primitive Bicycle Corridor is located in the Towns of Cairo and Jewett, Greene County. The corridor is about 2.4 miles long and 100 feet wide, covering approximately 29 acres. It is bounded on the west by the Colgate Lake Wild Forest and traverses through the

Windham - Blackhead Range Wilderness. The foot trail is an old road that continues from the end of town maintenance on the east at Storks Nest Road and continues to the Colgate Lake Trail on the west to its intersection with the wild forest. The Department has a right-of-way from the end of Storks Nest Road to the State land and the beginning of the corridor. The management planning for this corridor will be contained in the Windham - Blackhead Range Wilderness UMP.

The corridor intersects the Escarpment Foot Trail where the Dutcher Notch Foot Trail meets the Colgate Lake Foot Trail. There are no other facilities within the corridor.

Overlook Turnpike Primitive Bicycle Corridor

This Primitive Bicycle Corridor is located in the Town of Woodstock, Ulster County and the Town of Hunter, Greene County. There is historic bicycle use of this corridor and the Department recently entered into an agreement with the Town of Hunter to maintain an extension of Prediger Road until it meets Forest Preserve lands to allow motor vehicles to access a new 25 car parking lot on Forest Preserve lands, thus allowing for bicycle use.

The corridor is about 4.5 miles long and 100 feet wide, covering about 55 acres. It is bounded on the south by Overlook Mountain Wild Forest and traverses through the Indian Head Wilderness Area. The Overlook Trail within the corridor follows the old Overlook Turnpike from Overlook Mountain across the eastern slopes of Plattekill Mountain to Prediger Road.

The management planning for this corridor will be contained in the IndianHead Wilderness UMP. The new parking lot at the end of Prediger road, and Devils Kitchen lean-to are located within the corridor.

D. Intensive Use Areas

Campgrounds:

The Department currently operates seven campgrounds with 738 camping sites within the Catskill Forest Preserve, as described in Table 5 below.

TABLE 5. CAMPGROUND STATISTICS

Campground (Town, County)	Number of Sites	Camping Capacity	Picnic Capacity	Beach (Linear Ft)	Boat Launch-ing*	Area (Acre)
Beaverkill (Rockland, Sullivan)	109	654	300	---	---	242
Devil's Tombstone (Hunter, Greene)	24	144	276	---	---	80
Kenneth Wilson (Woodstock, Ulster)	76	456	150	300	Yes	546
Little Pond (Andes, Delaware)	75	450	200	290	Yes	466
Mongaup Pond (Rockland, Sullivan)	163	978	450	150	Yes	680
North-South Lake (Hunter, Greene)	219	1314	3,591	640	Yes	1,100
Woodland Valley (Shandaken, Ulster)	72	432	60	---	---	170
TOTALS	**738**	**4,428**	**5,087**	**1,480**	**4**	**3,284**

Note: * Launching facilities are for small boats without motors.

Fishing Access Sites (26)

Esopus Creek	5
Woodland Valley Stream	2
Beaverkill	5
Willowemoc Creek	10
Mongaup Creek	2
East Branch Delaware River	1
Schoharie Creek	1

Ski Center

Belleayre Mountain Ski Center is the only ski center on Forest Preserve land in the Catskill Park. The Center encompasses approximately 2,211 acres on the north and east slopes of Belleayre Mountain in the Town of Shandaken, Ulster County. Constitutional provisions allow for the construction and maintenance of not more than 25 miles of ski trails 30 to 200 feet wide, together with appurtenances thereto. A UMP for this area was completed in 1985 and revised in 1998.
During the 2002-2003 ski season the Center experienced over 175,000 skier days.

Day Use Area

The Belleayre Mountain Day Use Area is a 38-acre property which encompasses Pine Hill Lake, a 6-acre artificial lake constructed for water supply to Belleayre Mountain Ski Center for snowmaking purposes in 1988. The property has since been developed to provide opportunities for picnicking, swimming and fishing. An addendum to the UMP for the Belleayre Ski Center covering this area was completed in 1990.

Visitor Information Center

A visitor information center is proposed to be built on land leased by DEC along State Route 28, near Boiceville, in the Town of Shandaken, Ulster County. This center will provide visitors with interpretive information on the various natural resources and points of interest in the park, both state and private. A small 37.4-acre parcel adjacent to the VIC site and the Esopus Creek is classified intensive use to support this facility.

Establishment of a permanent Information Center must be a combined effort by state and local government agencies and private organizations. Renewed planning efforts have recently begun on the design of the VIC, with the anticipation it will be established in the next few years.

E. Administrative Areas

Vinegar Hill Wildlife Management Area
The Vinegar Hill Wildlife Management Area in the Town of Lexington, Greene County, was gifted to the Department piecemeal during the years l969 through l973, for the express purpose of establishing a wildlife refuge. It contains approximately 400 acres and is managed for wildlife and limited recreational use, including hiking and cross-country skiing. Hunting and trapping are prohibited.

Catskill Fish Hatchery

The hatchery property totals 395 acres and is located near the Village of DeBruce, in the Town of Rockland, Sullivan County. It was purchased in two acquisitions in 1946 and 1949 specifically as a site for the establishment of a fish hatchery. The hatchery now produces an average of 120,000 pounds of brown and brook trout yearly for stocking the waters of New York State. The hatchery is regularly toured by groups of school children and attracts an estimated 5,000 visitors each summer.

The DeBruce Conservation Education Camp, located on the hatchery property, accommodates 50 youths per week for eight weeks during July and August of each year. This highly successful program has been in operation at the DeBruce site since 1948. Also located on the hatchery property is a regional operations sub-headquarters. The operations unit is responsible for vehicle, equipment, campground, building and road maintenance in addition to new construction and related duties.

Simpson Ski Slope

This ski slope is part of the old Simpson Ski Center located about ½ mile from the Village of Phoenicia on the road to Woodland Valley. The area consists of 6.94 acres that were given to the state for park purposes.

Esopus Creek Fish and Wildlife Management Parcel

A 14-acre parcel bordering the Esopus Creek in the Town of Shandaken, Ulster County, southwest of Phoenicia, was gifted to the department in 1992. It was acquired under Subdivision 2 of Section 11-2103 of Environmental Conservation Law which allows the Department to acquire real property by gift for fish and wildlife management purposes.

Huckleberry Brook Administrative Area

(Formerly a portion of Dry Brook Ridge - Huckleberry Brook Wild Forest)

A two acre portion of the Dry Brook Ridge Wild Forest is being reclassified as Administrative to accommodate the presence of buildings used by the Office of Public Protection.

Lower Birch Creek Administrative Area

This 5.8 acre area, surrounded by the Shandaken Wild Forest at the end of Lower Birch Creek Road in the Town of Shandaken, Ulster County, includes a farm house and associated out buildings and grounds, including two small ponds. It functions as a trail maintenance support facility.

VIII. ACTIONS NECESSARY TO IMPLEMENT THE CPSLMP

ACTION	HOW TO ACCOMPLISH
1. Improve access to the Forest Preserve	Through the UMP process, develop "family trails" in appropriate locations. Evaluate existing trails and provide universal access information. Make some trails and facilities accessible for people with disabilities. Regional staff.
2. Promulgate a regulation prohibiting the use of bicycles in wilderness areas.	Central Office staff develop and adopt. **GOAL**: Complete by June 2009
3. Promulgate a regulation prohibiting the use of motorized equipment in wilderness.	Central Office staff develop and adopt. **GOAL**: Complete by June 2009
4. Abandon and close roads in wilderness to motor vehicles and block with an effective barrier.	Commissioner to order the abandonment of Town highways passing through lands wholly owned by the State and identified in UMPs via Section 212 of the Highway Law. Barriers to be erected by regional staff. **GOAL:** Close wilderness roads to motor vehicles by December 2009
5. Strengthen existing partnerships, reach out to establish new ones.	Regional and Central Office staff to "reach out" by seeking public involvement in implementing UMPs, the Public Access Plan and other initiatives.
6. Increase funding for Forest Preserve Management.	Provide an accurate assessment of funding needs in UMPs; work with organizations and individuals concerned about the Forest Preserve. Regional and Central Office staff.
7. Develop design standards for Forest Preserve structures and improvements.	Form a committee of DEC regional and Central Office staff. Provide opportunities for public input, especially user groups. **GOAL:** Complete by December 2009

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: ARTICLE XIV OF THE NEW YORK STATE CONSTITUTION

Section 1. 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 . . .

Nothing herein contained shall prevent the state from constructing, completing and maintaining any highway heretofore specifically authorized by constitutional amendment, . . .

. . . nor from constructing and maintaining not more than twenty-five miles of ski trails thirty to two hundred feet wide, together with appurtenances thereto, provided that no more than two miles of such trails shall be in excess of one hundred twenty feet wide, on the slopes of Belleayre Mountain in Ulster and Delaware counties . . .

. . . nor from relocating, reconstructing and maintaining a total of not more than fifty miles of existing state highways for the purpose of eliminating the hazards of dangerous curves and grades, provided a total of no more than four hundred acres of forest preserve land shall be used for such purpose and that no single relocated portion of any highway shall exceed one mile in length . . .

Section 3(2). As to any other lands of the state, now owned or hereafter acquired, constituting the forest preserve referred to in section one of this article, but outside the Adirondack and Catskill parks as now fixed by law, and consisting in any case of not more than one hundred contiguous acres entirely separated from any other portion of the forest preserve, the legislature may by appropriate legislation, notwithstanding the provisions of section one of this article, authorize: (a) the dedication thereof for the practice of forest or wildlife conservation; or (b) the use thereof for public recreational or other state purposes or the sale, exchange or other disposition thereof; provided, however, that all moneys derived from the sale or other disposition of any of such lands shall be paid into a special fund of the treasury and be expended only for the acquisition of additional lands for such forest preserve within either such Adirondack or Catskill park.

APPENDIX B: GENERAL DEFINITIONS

As used in this plan, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

Aircraft - a device for transporting personnel or material that travels through the air and is propelled by a non-living power source contained on or within the device.

All Terrain Bicycle - a non-motorized bicycle designed or used for cross-country travel on unimproved roads or trails.

Bike or Bicycle - a device having two wheels one behind the other, with a seat, handles and pedals for propulsion by human muscle power.

Campground - a concentrated, developed camping area with controlled access, which is designed to accommodate a significant number of overnight visitors and may incorporate associated day use facilities such as picnicking.

Camping - the erecting of a tent or shelter of natural or synthetic material, preparing a sleep bag or other bedding material for use, parking of a motor vehicle, motor home or trailer, or mooring of a vessel for the apparent purpose of overnight occupancy.

Campsite - a specific location where an individual tent, trailer or other vehicle suitable for overnight accommodation may be set up. Included are individual sites within a campground and sites found at various locations within Wilderness and Wild Forest areas. Within a campground every campsite is specifically designated, and consists of a clearing which may contain a fireplace, a picnic table, and an accommodation for parking a motor vehicle. Occupancy of a campground campsite is limited to six individuals, unless designed and designated for group use. Within Wild Forest and Wilderness areas, a campsite may or may not be designated, and consists of a small clearing that may contain a fire ring. Campsites in Wild Forest may be large enough to accommodate 20 people, where as in Wilderness a campsite may only accommodate 12 people.

Cross-Country Ski Trail - a marked and maintained path or way for cross-country ski or snowshoe travel, which has the same dimensions and character and may also serve as a foot trail, designed to provide reasonable access in a manner causing the least effect on the surrounding environment, not constructed, maintained or groomed with the use of motor vehicles.

Day-Use Area - a developed facility designed to accommodate a significant number of visitors on a day-use basis only.

Designated Campsite - a campsite marked with a department sign or round, yellow campsite marker.

Detached Parcels - parcels of Forest Preserve land located within the counties of Ulster, Sullivan, Greene, and Delaware, but outside the Catskill Park boundary, or “blue line.” Generally they were obtained by the state as a result of tax default many years ago.

Fireplace - a permanent structure constructed of stone and concrete designed to contain and control camp fires.

Fire Ring - a temporary cluster of rocks designed to contain and control camp fires which may contain, in fire-sensitive or heavily-used areas, a cement slab.

Fish Barrier Dam - a man made device or structure used to prevent the upstream or downstream migration of fish for the purpose of protecting a high-value fishery or population of fish indigenous to the protected body of water.

Foot Trail - a marked and maintained path or way for foot travel located and designed to provide for reasonable access in a manner which minimizes impacts on the surrounding environment.

Horse Barn - a rustic structure open on at least two sides designed to provide temporary shelter for a small number of horses.

Horse Trail - a path marked and maintained for travel by horse, located and designed to provide for reasonable access in a manner which minimizes impacts on the surrounding environment.

Improved Cross-Country Ski Trail - a marked and maintained path for cross-country ski use designed for competitive or intensive use conditions which may be constructed, maintained or groomed with the use of motor vehicles.

Improvement - any change in or addition to land, that materially affects the existing use, condition or appearance of the land or any vegetation on it. Improvements include but are not limited to foot and horse trails, roads, jeep trails, state truck trails, cross-country ski trails, improved cross-country ski trails, snowmobile trails, trail heads, picnic areas and campsites.

Invasive Species - means an alien species whose introduction does or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health. "Alien species" means, with respect to a particular ecosystem, any species, including its seeds, eggs, spores, or other biological material capable of propagating that species, that is not native to that ecosystem (Federal Executive Order 13112).

Lean-to - an open front shelter made of natural materials suitable for temporary or transient residence, constructed according to a standard Department of Environmental Conservation Plan and located so as to provide shelter in a manner least intrusive on the surrounding environment.

Lean-to Cluster - more than two lean-tos within sight or sound of each other and generally separated by a distance of less than one-quarter mile.

Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) - how much change will be allowed to occur before it is too late to initiate management actions to maintain or restore desired conditions.

Mechanized Aid - a non-motorized or motorized wheelchair, or other similar devices such as a three wheeled mobility device, designed solely for use by a mobility impaired person for locomotion that is suitable for indoor use in a pedestrian area as well as outdoor use by a person with a disability. A non-motorized or motorized wheelchair is considered as a part of the person with a disability and not a motor vehicle.

Mine - A place from which bedrock, sand, gravel, shale, boulders, or other naturally occurring or naturally deposited materials is removed. Stockpiles of material that have been mined and transported from another location at any time are not considered mines.

Motor Vehicle - a device for transporting personnel, supplies or material that uses a motor or an engine of any type for propulsion and has wheels, tracks, skids, skis, air cushion or other contrivance for traveling on, or adjacent to land, water or ice. The term includes such vehicles as automobiles, trucks, jeeps, motorbikes, all-terrain vehicles, duffle carriers, snowcats, bulldozers and other earth moving equipment, but does not include snowmobiles or mechanized aids.

Motorboat - a device for transporting personnel or material that travels over, on, or under the water and is propelled by a non-living power source on or within the device.

Motorized Equipment - machines not designed for transporting personnel, supplies or material, or for earth moving, that use a motor, engine or other non-living power source to accomplish a task. The term includes such machines as chainsaws, brushsaws, rotary or other mowers, rock drills, cement mixers and generators.

Natural Materials - construction components drawn from the immediate project site or materials brought into the construction site that conform in size, shape and physical characteristics to those naturally present in the vicinity of the project site. Such materials include stone, logs and sawn and treated timber. Natural materials may be fastened or anchored by use of bolts, nails, spikes or similar means.

Non-conforming Use - any structure, improvement or human use that does not comply with the guidelines specified in the Master plan for the land classification where it exists or would take place.

Playground - a playground is an appurtenance to an intensive use area designed to facilitate children's outdoor activities. Playgrounds may include equipment such as swing sets and slides. The facilities will be designed and located to blend with the surrounding environment.

Puncheon - a split log with the face smoothed.

Ranger Stations or Ranger Cabins - enclosed buildings constructed or maintained by the Department of Environmental Conservation suitable for human habitation and occupied seasonally or year round by administrative personnel to help administer lands and public use under the jurisdiction of the department.

River - any section, portion or tributary of a flowing body of water, including a river, stream, creek, run, kill, rill, branch or lake.

River Area - a river and its immediate surroundings, including river banks and the land on both sides or the river.

Road - an improved way designed for travel by motor vehicles and:

(i) either under the jurisdiction of a state agency or a local government and open to the general public; or

(ii) maintained by private persons or corporations primarily for private use but which may also be partly or completely open to the general public on a discretionary basis; or

(iii) maintained by the Department of Environmental Conservation and open to the public on a discretionary basis; or

(iv) maintained by the Department of Environmental Conservation for its administrative use only.

Snowmobile - motorized vehicle designed primarily to travel on snow or ice by means of skis, skids, tracks or other devices.

Snowmobile Trail - a marked trail designed by the Department of Environmental Conservation on which snowmobiles are allowed to travel when it is covered by snow or ice.

Structure - any object constructed, installed or placed on land to facilitate land use, including but not limited to bridges, buildings, ranger stations or ranger cabins, sheds, leantos, pit privies, picnic tables, horse barns, horse hitching posts and rails, fire towers, observer cabins, telephone and electric light lines, mobile homes, campers, trailers, signs, docks, dams and stream improvement structures.

Trail Register - a rustic structure, typically a box with a roof and a door, large enough to accommodate a notebook used by visitors to record their use of the trail(s). It may also be used to provide information.

Trailhead - a point of entrance to state land which may contain some or all of the following: vehicle parking, trail signs and visitor registration structures.

Untrammeled - not confined or limited: not hindered.

Vista - a natural or created break in trees or vegetation permitting a view of the distant landscape.

Wildlife Management Structure - a structure or device designed solely for inventory or research purposes or for the protection or restoration of endangered species, including but not limited to animal enclosures or exclosures, traps, raptor hacking towers, nesting towers or boxes, that does not materially alter the natural character or resource quality of the land and that is made of natural materials whenever possible.

APPENDIX C: LONG DISTANCE TRAIL DESCRIPTIONS

THE LONG PATH

The Long Path is a continuous hiking trail marked, managed and maintained by the New York/New Jersey Trail Conference which originates in Fort Lee, New Jersey and extends northward through the Catskills to John Boyd Thatcher State Park in Albany County, New York. The Long Path was originally conceived of in the early 1930's as a long distance unmarked hiking corridor. The goal was to create a continuous route from the George Washington Bridge in New York City to the High Peaks in the Adirondacks. Early enthusiasm for the project dwindled until the New York/New Jersey Trail Conference revived the project in 1960. Volunteers have since constructed and now maintain most of the present 328 mile pathway. Although most of the trail is marked and maintained by the New York/New Jersey Trail Conference, within the Catskill Park the Long Path uses hiking trails marked and maintained by the Department of Environmental Conservation (approximately 90 miles). While some of the maintenance of the Long Path as it passes through the Catskills is being adopted by the New York/New Jersey Trail Conference, the ultimate responsibility for these trails will continue to rest with the Department. All Department hiking trails will continue to be marked with traditional DEC trail markers. The Long Path logo will be limited to trailheads and trail junctions.

While there now exists a defined route through the Catskills for the Long Path, the Department will try to accommodate route changes to move more of the trail onto public land and thus reduce road walking. Any proposed changes will be considered in the appropriate unit management plan(s).

The Long Path presents a unique recreational opportunity for visitors to the Catskills. It provides a continuous route for hikers wishing to undertake a north/south traverse of the Park. At present, the trail passes through nine different forest preserve management units including four wilderness areas, four wild forests and two campgrounds.

THE FINGER LAKES TRAIL

The Finger Lakes Trail is a primitive foot trail which on completion will connect the Allegheny Mountains with the Catskills by passing through remote areas of the Southern Tier of New York State. While not all sections of the trail have been defined, most of the main trunk trail to the Catskills has been completed. Within the Catskill Park, the Finger Lakes Trail now has a continuous marked route through Delaware County, and an initial route through Ulster County has been identified, linking the Finger Lakes Trail with the Long Path at Denning in the Slide Mountain-Panther Mountain Wilderness. Future proposals to move the Finger Lakes Trail off roads and onto public land will be considered in the appropriate unit management plan(s).

The Finger Lake Trail is marked, managed and maintained by the Finger Lakes Trail Conference. However, within the Catskill Park the Finger Lakes Trail uses hiking trails marked and maintained by the Department. While the Finger Lakes Trail Conference is in the process of adopting some of the maintenance responsibilities associated with these trails, the ultimate responsibility for all trails traversing forest preserve lands will continue to rest with the Department. All Department hiking trails used as a route for the Finger Lakes Trail will continue to be marked with traditional DEC trail markers. The Finger Lakes Trail logo will be limited to trailheads and trail junctions.

The Finger Lakes Trail provides a unique opportunity for people to traverse nearly the entire length of New York State by foot in a relatively primitive setting. The Catskill Park presents a mountainous, wilderness environment which adds to the trail's diversity. At present, the trail passes through the Delaware Wild Forest, the Balsam Lake Mountain Wild Forest, the Big Indian Wilderness, and the Slide Mountain Wilderness.

THE NEW YORK STATE SNOWMOBILE TRAIL PLAN

In October of 1989, the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation completed a snowmobile trail plan for New York State. Overall goals of the plan are to provide a statewide snowmobile trail system for the enjoyment of snowmobile owners, while protecting the environment and properly addressing the concerns of the non-snowmobiling public. The plan is intended as a guide for the development and maintenance of a cohesive statewide system. Local sponsors will bear the responsibilities of planning, developing and managing the systems within their jurisdiction.

The plan proposed nine corridor trails (through trails connecting villages, towns, cities, counties and/or state parks similar to the interstate highway system) throughout the state. These proposals are conceptual in nature, to be used for design and planning purposes only. One of these proposed corridor trails passes through the southern Catskills, connecting Pine Bush with Binghamton. The specific route of this corridor will be determined via a series of local plans, including unit management plans when state lands are involved. An 18 mile segment of this corridor trail has been developed in the Willowemoc Wild Forest (see the UMP for this unit, completed in October, 1991).

By creating a system of interconnecting corridor trails throughout the state, snowmobilers will have access to a greater variety of areas within the state. Other trail users such as hikers or bicyclists may also benefit through the off-season use of trails developed on public lands. Guidelines for establishing trail corridors developed in the State Snowmobile Trail Plan will be used to minimize any adverse environmental impacts.

APPENDIX D: DEPARTMENT POLICIES RELATING TO THE FOREST PRESERVE

Departmental Policies

CP-3: Motor Vehicle Access to State Lands under Jurisdiction of the Department of Environmental Conservation for People with Disabilities
CP-17: Record keeping and Reporting of Administrative Use of Motor Vehicles and Aircraft in the Forest Preserve
CP-38: Forest Preserve Roads

Commissioner's Organization & Delegation Memoranda

#84-06: Tree Cutting in the Forest Preserve as amended (7/86)
#93-35: Fishery Management in Wilderness, Primitive and Canoe Areas - amended 11/02/93

Natural Resources

NR 86-3 Acquisition of Conservation Easements
NR 90-1 Administration of Conservation Easements
NR 90-2 State Land/Facility Naming
NR 95-1 Boundary Line Maintenance

Fish and Wildlife

F & W 83-1 Liming Policy, revised 6/91

Lands and Forests

L & F 91-2: Cutting Removal or Destruction of Trees and Endangered, Threatened or Rare Plants on Forest Preserve lands

FOREST PRESERVE POLICY:

Trail Construction and Maintenance Manual
Fireplace and Fire Rings
Dams
Foot Bridges
Foot Trails
Primitive Campsites
Road Barriers
Snowmobile Trails
Sanitary Facilities
Trailheads

APPENDIX E: PUBLIC USE

In creating a Master plan for management of Catskill Forest Preserve lands it is necessary to know who uses and enjoys the land for what purposes today and what future demands for use might create additional management pressures and problems.

Visitor Use

No overall census of visitor use of Catskill Forest Preserve recreational facilities has ever been undertaken. The only facilities for which visitation statistics are systematically collected are the state campgrounds, day use areas and the ski area.

The direct use of undeveloped Forest Preserve lands is estimated based on visitor sign-ins at trailheads. Though DEC staff strongly encourage visitors to sign trail registers, signing in is not mandatory. The actual number of visitors entering the Catskill Forest Preserve from trailheads is estimated to be over 150,000 per year. Trail register information is supplemented with information taken from camping permits. Estimates of the use of Forest Preserve lands by hunters, trappers and anglers has never been undertaken, but is certainly significant.

Table 6 presents visitor use statistics for management units within the Catskill Forest Preserve. This plan does not include information on private facilities. It must be recognized, however, that the tourism facilities, infrastructure and attractions provided by the private sector are a significant component of recreation in the Catskill Park.

With the exception of the Belleayre Mountain Ski Center, most public use of Forest Preserve lands and facilities occurs from May through October. Most of the campgrounds are open from mid May through Columbus Day weekend in October. In general, most people visit the Forest Preserve on weekends, with peak use occurring on holiday weekends, especially Memorial Day, Labor Day and Columbus Day weekends. Camping and hiking are by far the most popular activities pursued on Forest Preserve lands. Fishing, hunting, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing are also popular. Most of the campgrounds and the Belleayre Mountain Day Use Area also provide swimming opportunities which are very popular. Opportunities for snowmobiling, horseback riding and mountain bicycling are generally limited to a few isolated areas within the Catskill Forest Preserve.

TABLE 6. CATSKILL FOREST PRESERVE PUBLIC USE

Land Classification	Year						
	1990	**1992**	**1994**	**1996**	**1998**	**2000**	**2002**
Wilderness	30,848	31,540	35,063	32,074	36,605	33,628	34,000
Wild Forest	47,829	49,414	57,285	46,439	67,146	65,139	66,000
Backcountry subtotal	80,667	82,946	94,342	80,509	105,749	100,767	100,000
Campgrounds	266,767	247,540	266,824	232,906	252,457	227,104	259,920
Belleayre Ski Center	95,944	76,157	91,470	71,209	84,042	141,886	175,000
Pine Hill Lake	0	0	14,000	14,170	14,653	14,082	12,913
Intensive Use Area subtotal	362,711	323,697	372,294	318,285	351,152	383,072	447,833
Administrative Areas	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Grand Total	448,378	411,643	471,636	403,794	461,901	488,839	552,833

APPENDIX F: STATE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY REVIEW

12-12-79 (3/99)-9c **SEQR**

State Environmental Quality Review
NEGATIVE DECLARATION
Notice of Determination of Non-Significance

Identifying # 2008-FPM-3-4-37

Date June 20, 2008

This notice is issued pursuant to Part 617 of the implementing regulations pertaining to Article 8 (State Environmental Quality Review Act) of the Environmental Conservation Law.

The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation as lead agency, has determined that the proposed action described below will not have a significant environmental impact and a Draft Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared.

Name of Action: Adoption and Implementation of the Revised Catskill Park State Land Master Plan

SEQR Status: **Type 1** X
Unlisted ___

Conditioned Negative Declaration: ___ **Yes**
X **No**

Description of Action: Adoption and implementation of a revised Catskill Park State Land Master Plan (CPSLMP), originally prepared and adopted by the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) in 1985. The CPSLMP sets forth management guidelines for all State lands administered by DEC within the Catskill Park, as well as parcels of Forest Preserve land situated within the counties of Ulster, Greene, Delaware, and Sullivan but outside the Park boundary. The scope of the revision includes reorganization of the document, updating technical information, expanding the jurisdiction of the document to include parcels of Forest Preserve land outside the Catskill Park boundary, adding a new land classification, changing the classifications of some State land management units, combining some management units into larger units, changing the names of some management units, providing new guidelines for types of State land use that were not addressed in the original CPSLMP, changing existing management guidelines, and providing additional detail to existing management guidelines.

Major Changes in the Revised CPSLMP Include:

1. Creation of a new wilderness area, the Windham - Blackhead Range Wilderness, through the reclassification of the Blackhead Range Wild Forest and portions of the Black Dome Valley Windham High Peak Wild Forest units. The remaining portion, the Windham High Peak Wild Forest is being renamed the Elm Ridge Wild Forest, and the remaining portion, the Black Dome Valley Wild Forest is being renamed the Colgate Lake Wild Forest.

2. Expansion of the West Kill Wilderness to include most of the Hunter Mountain Wild Forest, renaming the remaining portion of the Hunter Mountain Wild Forest, the Rusk Mountain Wild Forest.

3. Elimination of the provision requiring that all wild forest lands and waters above 2,700 feet in elevation be managed in accordance with wilderness guidelines.

4. Prohibition of the use of bicycles on all lands classified as wilderness, restricting the use of bicycles to roads and trails on lands classified as wild forest.

5. Creation of a new land classification, Primitive Bicycle Corridor.

6. Allowing for the development of snowmobile trails below 3,100 feet in elevation (rather than 2,700 feet) in wild forest areas.

7. Limiting the size of camping groups to 12 in wilderness areas and 20 in wild forest areas.

8. A change in the definition of wild forest and intensive use lands

9. Conforming the guidelines for acquiring new Forest Preserve lands and easements in the Catskill Forest Preserve counties with *Conserving Open Space in New York State*, commonly known as the *Open Space Plan*.

10. Expanding the jurisdiction of the document to include parcels of Forest Preserve land outside the Catskill Park boundary and applying wild forest guidelines to their management.

11. New sections providing guidance related to:

    - Public information, education, and interpretation
    - A balanced approach to recreational development
    - Design standards
    - Partnerships

12. Lists of conforming and nonconforming structures in intensive use areas.

Location: (Include street address and the name of the municipality/county. A location map of appropriate scale is also recommended.)
The revised CPSLMPapplies to all State lands administered by DEC within the Catskill Park, as well as parcels of Forest Preserve land situated within the counties of Delaware, Greene, Sullivan and Ulster but outside the Catskill Park boundary.

Reasons Supporting This Determination:
(See 617.7(a)(c) for requirements of this determination; see 617.7(d) for Conditioned Negative Declaration)As a part of the development of the original CPSLMP in 1985, an Environmental Impact Statement was prepared. The EIS addressed the potential impacts of adopting the

CPSLMP. The present determination of significance, because it pertains to the revision of the original CPSLMP, only addresses the changes in the revision.

In fundamental terms, the revised CPSLMP will not change the concept of management for the Catskill Forest Preserve. The basic framework of land classifications and the approach toward managing public use embodied in the management guidelines given for each classification remain essentially unchanged. Article 14, Section 1 of the New York State Constitution, which requires that the Forest Preserve be forever kept as wild forest lands, as well as existing laws and regulations, are reflected throughout the revision. Two new public use limitations are proposed: prohibiting the use of bicycles in wilderness areas and the imposition of camping group size limitations in wilderness and wild forest areas. The restrictions on the use of bicycles will necessitate the establishment of new regulations. These new limitations are considered to be consistent with the approach to Forest Preserve management embodied in the original CPSLMP. Specific projects such as the development of snowmobile, horse and/or bicycle trails will be proposed in individual unit management plans or amendments to existing unit management plans that will be subject to a site specific environmental review under SEQR.

While most of the changes in the revision are elaborations or refinements of the guidance given in the original CPSLMP, there are some important differences. Major changes and their environmental implications are described below:

1. **Creation of the Windham - Blackhead Range Wilderness** - The new wilderness area, containing about 17,100 acres, will be created by reclassifying existing Forest Preserve lands currently classified as wild forest. Because there are more limitations on facility development and public use in wilderness areas, the reclassification will be more protective of the area's natural resources, thus having a positive impact on the environment.

2. **Expansion of the West Kill Wilderness** - The expanded Hunter - West Kill Wilderness Area, containing nearly 27,000 acres, will be created by reclassifying about 7,000 acres of existing Forest Preserve lands currently classified as wild forest (a large portion of the Hunter Mountain Wild Forest). Because there are more limitations on development and public use in wilderness areas, the expansion/reclassification will be more protective of the area's natural resources, thus having a positive impact on the environment.

3. **Elimination of the 2,700-Foot Elevation Provision** - Elimination of the elevation provision will afford managers more flexibility in providing opportunities for types of recreation that are appropriate in wild forest areas, but not permitted in wilderness. The New York State Constitution charges DEC with the protection of the wild character of Forest Preserve lands, regardless of their classifications. As a consequence, wild forest guidelines, as set forth in the original CPSLMP and the revision, are sufficiently strict to assure that no new recreational development proposals would be made as a result of the elimination of the elevation provision that would have significant adverse impacts on the environment.

   The provision applying wilderness guidelines to upper elevation lands in wild forest areas arose from the intent to give special recognition and protection to those lands, thought generally to have qualities that imparted more "wilderness character" and made them more vulnerable to impacts from recreational use than areas at lower elevations.

Attributes cited in arguments supporting greater protection for upper elevation lands included:

a. **Old Growth Forests** - Stands of "old growth" occur generally above 3,000 feet.

b. **History of Minimal Human Disturbance** - For the most part, farming and road building did not occur above 2,900 feet.

c. **Thin Soils** - Bedrock is generally closer to the surface at higher elevations.

d. **High Peaks** - In the Adirondacks, all but one of the "high peaks," those above 4,000 feet in elevation, are in wilderness areas. On the other hand, ten of the 35 Catskill high peaks--those above 3,500 feet–were in Wild Forest, as classified in the 1985 CPSLMP. In the revised Master plan, 25 of the high peaks are in wilderness, two are partially in wilderness, partly on private land, one is completely on private land, five are in Wild Forest and two are in state forest (outside the Catskill Park).

e. **Concentrated Recreational Use** - Because mountain summits are popular trail destinations, concentrated human activity can cause excessive physical and social disturbance.

The application of wilderness guidelines to upper elevation wild forest lands has, in effect, applied the wilderness classification to these areas. The reason that they were not formally classified as wilderness appears to be that they were not large enough to meet the 10,000 acre minimum size requirement contained in the wilderness definition.

Wilderness treatment has afforded strong protection to the wild character, as well as the physical and biological resources of upper elevation wild forest lands. However, experience with the CPSLMP since its adoption has shown that, with the elevation provision in place, some desirable proposals for types of recreational development that are appropriate in wild forest areas, such as new snowmobile and horse trails, could not be carried out. With the ban on bicycle use in wilderness, the development of bicycle trails also would be restricted. The blanket protection of upper elevation wild forest lands afforded by the current CPSLMP constitutes a blanket restriction on all but pedestrian and some horse use on most trails. Because much of the land of the Catskill Forest Preserve is steep and occupies higher elevations, opportunities are limited for the development of trails of any length that would not cross the 2,700-foot contour at some point. In practical terms, therefore, the retention of the elevation provision would eliminate the possibility of constructing new snowmobile, horse, and bicycle trails on approximately 53,000 acres of wild forest land. On the other hand, by restoring wild forest management guidelines to all wild forest lands, DEC would be afforded the flexibility to offer appropriate new recreational opportunities for snowmobilers, equestrians, and bicyclists. Managers could make detailed management decisions based on site-specific information rather than being constrained to treat a large, diverse area according to a single set of uniformly restrictive guidelines. Actually, many areas above 2,700 feet are as capable of withstanding recreational use as lower elevation areas. And despite the potential for new impacts related to new structures, improvements, and types of recreational use, the restoration of wild forest guidelines to upper elevation wild forest lands would not constitute a significant reduction in their level of protection.

Although some types of structures are permitted in wild forest areas that are not permitted in wilderness, it is unlikely that the elimination of wilderness guidelines from wild forest lands above 2,700 feet would result in the construction of any new structures. The most potentially significant change would be the creation of opportunities for the limited construction of new horse trails, as well as the designation of existing roads and trails or the limited construction of new trails for use by snowmobilers and bicyclists. In reality, however, there are few opportunities for the designation or construction of snowmobile, horse, or bicycle trails in areas above 2,700 feet. Snowmobile trails will not be designated or constructed above 3,100 feet to prevent impacts to high elevation spruce-fir forest communities as well as to reduce user conflicts. Additionally, just as for lower elevations, any proposals involving new types of trail uses at higher elevations would be made only after their potential impacts on physical and biological resources and the recreational experiences of visitors had been assessed. Only the types and levels of use that would not degrade the wild character and natural resources of wild forest lands would be promoted. DEC would protect fragile resources at all elevations in wild forest areas by tailoring management actions to areas specifically identified through the unit management planning process. State Environmental Quality Review Act requirements for specific management proposals would also be addressed as part of the process of preparing unit management plans.

4. **Prohibition of Bicycle Use in Wilderness**, **Restricting the Use of Bicycles to Roads and Trails on Lands Classified as Wild Forest** - The 1985 CPSLMP does not restrict the use of bicycles on the Forest Preserve. The prohibition of their use in wilderness, as well as their restricted use in wild forest areas will protect the recreational atmosphere appropriate to wilderness and reduce user conflicts and potential erosion in wild forest areas, thus having a positive effect on the environment.

5. **Creation of a New Land Classification, Primitive Bicycle Corridor** - This new classification creates four corridors of forest preserve land 100 feet wide on lands formerly classified as wilderness that will allow for the continued use of bicycles, but which will otherwise be managed as wilderness. The existing trails within these corridors, all of which are old wood roads currently marked and maintained as foot trails, will not be marked, enhanced or in any other significant way modified for bicycles. They will continue to be maintained as foot trails that provide a challenging wilderness experience for bicyclists. They were selected because they have been and continue to be used by experienced backcountry bicyclists as links to broader bicycling opportunities within the Park. As with all other marked trails, they will be maintained using water bars, drainage dips, and other erosion control techniques. Trailhead signage will be used to notify users that bicyclists may be on the trail in an effort to reduce user conflicts.

6. **Allow for the Development of Snowmobile Trails Below 3,100 Feet in Elevation in Wild Forest Areas** - The 1985 Master plan prohibits the use of snowmobiles in areas above 2,700 feet in elevation (with one exception). As discussed in issue #3, elimination of the 2,700-foot elevation provision, the revised Master plan raises this blanket snowmobile prohibition to allow for consideration of appropriate new recreational opportunities for snowmobilers at a more realistic elevation given the very nature of the region. Regardless of elevation, any new snowmobile trail proposal would be made only after the potential impacts on physical and biological resources and the recreational experiences of visitors had been assessed on a site specific basis.

Note: snowmobiles are restricted to designated trails throughout the Forest Preserve, and both the current and revised Master plan prohibit the development of snowmobile trails on lands classified as wilderness, regardless of elevation.

7. **Limiting Group Size** - The 1985 CPSLMP does not restrict the size of groups who use the Forest Preserve. The limitation of the size of camping groups to 12 in wilderness areas and 20 in wild forest areas would reduce the physical and sociological impacts caused by large groups, thus conferring a positive environmental impact.

8. **A Change in the Definition of Wild Forest and Intensive Use Lands** - The new definitions more concisely conveys the sense of the original definitions. They are not intended to change the original in any substantive way, but rather to make them more easily understood and interpreted.

9. **Conforming Acquisition Guidelines with the *Open Space Plan*** - *Conserving Open Space in New York State*, commonly known as the *Open Space Plan*, in part sets forth the official State policy that guides the addition of lands to the Catskill Forest Preserve and the acquisition of conservation easements in the Catskill Park. The revised CPSLMP has been updated to reflect that policy. State Environmental Quality Review Act requirements were addressed as part of the preparation of the *Open Space Plan*.

10. **Detached Parcels** - Parcels of Forest Preserve land outside the Catskill Park boundary but within the four Catskill Forest Preserve counties are commonly referred to as "detached parcels." Currently their management is not governed by any official guidelines. Including detached parcels in the CPSLMP and applying wild forest guidelines will give direction and consistency to their management. No adverse environmental impacts are anticipated as a result of this change.

11. **New Sections**

- **Public Information, Education, and Interpretation** - The new guidance provided in this section could lead to the production of new publications and programs designed to increase public understanding and appreciation of the Forest Preserve, as well as the installation of occasional roadside signs and interpretive displays. Though some increase in public use of Forest Preserve trails could result, better education about the proper use of Forest Preserve lands would minimize impacts. Information about currently little-known recreational opportunities would be designed to increase use of these areas within their capacity to withstand use while reducing use pressures on areas currently sustaining high use levels. Significant environmental impacts are not anticipated as a result of the addition of the new guidelines.

- **A Balanced Approach to Recreational Development** - The new guidance provided here could lead to the improvement of existing recreational opportunities and the creation of new ones that would entail physical alterations to existing trails, parking areas, and other structures and improvements to make them more accessible to the public, as well as the construction of new structures and improvements. The new guidelines are not expected to result in significant environmental impacts. In fact, the new guidelines specify in part: limiting trail uses to those appropriate to the unit classification and compatible with the natural resources of the area; minimizing user conflict; and reserving selected trails for foot travel only. The

environmental impacts related to specific proposals will be addressed as part of the unit management planning process.

- **Design Standards** - This section is intended to assure that Forest Preserve structures and facilities will have a consistent look appropriate to a natural setting. Because the application of the new guidelines would result in an improvement in the appearance of the Forest Preserve to highway travelers and Forest Preserve users, the addition of this section will have a positive environmental effect.

- **Partnerships** - Besides acknowledging the Forest Preserve management assistance provided for years by other government agencies, educational institutions, private organizations, and individuals, this section calls for increasing emphasis on establishing and maintaining partnerships as a way of furthering Forest Preserve management goals. The establishment of the new guidelines will not have a significant impact on the environment.

- **Invasive Species** - Provides a brief discussion of this evolving threat and directs the Department to consider necessary actions to control exotic invasive species, where there is potential for significant degradation to the native ecosystem. Actions can include mechanical control, biological control, and the use of pesticides. The environmental impacts related to specific proposals will be addressed in work plans and appropriate SEQR review. Mechanical, biological control and pesticide use will be noticed in the Environmental Notice Bulletin.

12. **Lists of Conforming and Nonconforming Structures in Intensive Use Areas** - The list of structures that may and may not be constructed in intensive use areas provide better guidance about the nature of the facilities that may exist on Forest Preserve lands for this classification. The list will help assure that the development of intensive use areas is appropriate in their Forest Preserve setting and consistent in their appearance and character. The addition of these lists will thus have a positive environmental impact.

If Conditioned Negative Declaration, provide on attachment the specific mitigation measures imposed, and identify comment period (not less than 30 days from date of publication in the ENB)

For Further Information:

Contact Person: William Rudge, Natural Resources Supervisor

Address: New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
21 South Putt Corners Road
New Paltz, NY 12561

Telephone Number: (845) 256-3092

For Type 1 Actions and Conditioned Negative Declarations, a Copy of this Notice is sent to:
Appropriate Regional Office of the Department of Environmental Conservation
Chief Executive Officer, Town/City/Village of
Other involved agencies (if any)
Applicant (if any)
Environmental Notice Bulletin - NYS DEC - 625 Broadway - Albany, NY 12233-1750
(Type One Actions Only)

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APPENDIX H: CATSKILL HIGH PEAKS BIRD CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT GUIDANCE SUMMARY

New York State
Bird Conservation Area Program
Management Guidance Summary

Site Name: Catskill High Peaks BCA

State Ownership and Managing Agency: Department of Environmental Conservation

Location: Greene and Ulster counties; Catskill peaks over 3,500 feet in elevation, located in the Windham-Blackhead Range Wilderness, the Rusk Mountain Wild Forest, the Hunter-West Kill Wilderness, the Indian Head Wilderness, and the Slide Mountain Wilderness.

Size of Area: approximately 3,700 acres

DEC Regions: 3, 4

General Site Information: Catskill high peaks over 3,500 feet in elevation, in particular those with dense subalpine coniferous forests. Bicknell's Thrush prefer dense thickets of stunted or young growth of balsam fir. Found less frequently in young or stunted spruce and heavy second growth of fir, cherry, birch.

Vision Statement: Continue to maintain the wild character of the area, while facilitating recreational opportunities in a manner consistent with conservation of the distinctive assemblage of bird species nesting in the Catskill High Peaks. Promote further research at the site, particularly on Bicknell's Thrush.

Key BCA Criteria: Diverse species concentration site; individual species concentration site; species at risk site (ECL §11-2001, 3.f, g and h.). Bird species of interest include Bicknell's Thrush (special concern) and Blackpoll Warbler.

Critical Habitat Type: Montane red spruce-balsam fir forest.

Operation and Management Considerations:

- *Identify habitat management activities needed to maintain site as a BCA.*

  None currently identified.

- *Identify seasonal sensitivities; adjust routine operations, accordingly*.

  Access to the Catskill High Peaks BCA is limited to foot trails and non-motorized access trails, and use in most areas is currently minimal. There has been little research on what effect normal use of hiking trails have on nesting activities of sub-alpine birds (in particular, Bicknell's Thrush). Further study or research would help to assess impacts of recreational activities on nesting sub-alpine species. The need for protective measures will be discussed and incorporated into the appropriate individual Unit Management Plans for the Forest Preserve Areas that contain the Catskill High Peaks.

Maintenance and construction of trails is done on foot, by hand-held equipment, without the use of motorized equipment (motorized equipment may be used in exceptional circumstances with the Commissioners' approval) during the nesting season. Maintenance and construction activities should be accomplished outside of the breeding season, when possible. Construction of new trails, their location, timing, and potential effects on sub-alpine bird species will be addressed in the appropriate individual Unit Management Plans for the Forest Preserve Areas that contain the Catskill High Peaks.

• *Identify state activities or operations which may pose a threat to the habitat types above; recommend alternatives to existing and future operations which may pose threats to those habitats*.

Ensure bird conservation concerns are addressed in the Catskill Park State Land Master Plan, the Catskill Forest Preserve Public Access Plan, individual unit management plans and other planning documents/efforts.

• *Identify any existing or potential use impacts; recommend new management strategies to address those impacts.*

More research is needed to determine effects of current levels of recreational use on nesting success of subalpine bird species.

Education, Outreach and Research Considerations:

• *Assess current access; recommend enhanced access, if feasible.*

The Catskill High Peaks are remote locations and access is currently limited to foot trails. Public use of motorized vehicles is not allowed. The Unit Management planning process will assess the effects of current levels of recreational use, and the need for new trails (including placement, timing, and construction method), on sub-alpine bird species within the Catskill High Peaks.

• *Determine education and outreach needs; recommend strategies and materials.*

Continue partnerships with the National Audubon Society, Northern Catskill Audubon Chapter, Adirondack Mountain Club and other groups involved in education and conservation of birds of the Catskill High Peaks.

• *Identify research needs; prioritize and recommend specific projects or studies.*

A detailed inventory and standardized monitoring of state-listed species is needed for the area; all peaks above 3,500 feet with appropriate habitat (particularly dense spruce/fir forests) should be surveyed for Bicknell's Thrush. More research is needed on the effects of acid precipitation on nesting success. More study of the effect of current levels of recreational use on breeding success is needed.

Other Issues:

Slide Mountain is of historical interest as the type locality for Bicknell's Thrush.

Contacts:
Peter Innes, DEC Region 4 Natural Resources Supervisor, phone: 518-357-2066
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Ted Kerpez, DEC Region 3 Wildlife Manager, phone: 845-256-3066
Richard Henry, DEC Region 4 Wildlife Manager, phone: 607-652-7366

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Date BCA Designated: 6/10/99

Date MGS Prepared: 8/28/00

APPENDIX I: RESPONSIVE SUMMARY - PUBLIC COMMENTS ON THE 2003 DRAFT PLAN

The Department received hundreds of comments on the draft Catskill Park State Land Master Plan revision, released in August 2003. Comments were received at the public meetings, via letter and e-mail, by resolution and petition, and phone calls. The comments are summarized into five main categories and a sixth of miscellaneous.

This responsive summary is organized into these six categories. Most of the comments in a group are similar in nature, and will be answered in summary form.

Bicycles

The proposals in the draft Plan regarding bicycles generated the most comments and reflected the spectrum of views. They are summarized as:

1) No evidence of adverse ecological affects from bicycle use.
Response: There is conflicting or inconclusive evidence in the literature on comparing the adverse effects of bicycles to the damage done by hikers. However, the principal reason bicycles are not allowed in Wilderness areas is philosophical, the idea being to prohibit mechanical transportation devices in Wilderness. This is consistent with Wilderness management in the Adirondacks and for federal lands classified as Wilderness.

2) No evidence of a safety issues.
Response: See above, bicycle restrictions are principally philosophical in nature. There are indications of conflicts in areas outside the Catskills, with high densities of hikers and bicyclers. Currently this is not an issue for the Catskills.

3) Increase opportunities for bicycle use.
Response: The Plan has several changes that provide for increased bicycle use. In Wild Forests, bicycles will be allowed on trails, roads, and old wood roads, unless specifically prohibited in a UMP, or due to an imminent or current threats to safety or the environment. This type of restriction applies to all trails and users. This is a change from trails only being open if signed contained in the draft release.

There is a reduction in the acreage dedicated to Wilderness were bicycling is prohibited. The Colgate Lake Wild Forest was expanded to provide increase bicycling opportunities.

This plan creates a new land classification - Primitive Bicycle Corridor (PBC) - which allows bicycle use within the corridor. The PBCs traverse through Wilderness Areas primarily on old roads, and the management of them is similar to Wilderness except for allowing bicycles. There are 4 corridors: Mink Hollow, Diamond Notch, Overlook Turnpike, and Dutcher Notch/Colgate Lake. The continued use of bicycles on Overlook Turnpike was frequently requested in the public comments.

4) Continue to restrict bicycle use as proposed in the draft Plan.
Response: see above. Creation of the PBCs and the reduction in the lands to be classified as Wilderness will have minimal impact on the resource, yet provide for better balance of recreational opportunities.

2,700‘ “Rule” - Wilderness Guidelines

The Plan provides details on the former Master plan’s 2,700' rule, where wilderness guidelines applied to lands above 2,700' in elevation in Wild Forest Areas.

1) Retain the 2,700' Rule.
Response: Article 14 protects the Forest Preserve and does not distinguish between Wilderness and Wild Forests. This elevation does not have a biological basis. The extent of most human disturbance was not limited to 2,700' nor is there a forest stand or community change at this elevation. Sensitive areas need to be reviewed carefully for any potential recreational development, no matter what their classification is. There are unique areas below 2,700', as well as above. This rule limited potential appropriate recreational opportunities, limiting the flexibility for effective management.

There is no similar elevation limitation in the Adirondacks. The Department strives for consistency in management of the Forest Preserve in both its geographic locations.

2) There were several comments under the general theme of accepting the elimination, as long as the proposed increases in Wilderness acreage are retained.
Response: The vast majority of reclassifications proposed in the draft Plan, have been retained. This includes the expansion of the West Kill Wilderness to include a significant portion of the Hunter Wild Forest, to create the Hunter - West Kill Wilderness and the creation of the Windham - Blackhead Range Wilderness.

3) Eliminate the 2,700' rule.
Response: Agreed. This was in the minority of comments received on this subject.

Snowmobile/ATV / Motor vehicle

Comments varied from, no ATV or snowmobiles allowed in Forest Preserve, to there should be designated trails for snowmobiles, ATV**,** and four wheelers.

1) No ATVs or snowmobiles in the Park.
Response: The use of snowmobiles in Wild Forest Areas, below 3,100' in elevation (a new provision in this Plan) is consistent with the management and historical use of these lands for varied recreational uses. Snowmobiles are used on frozen ground, so there is minimal impact to the tread surface. Above 3,100' terrain limitations and more sensitive habitats occur, where snowmobiles could have unacceptable adverse impacts.

ATV Use - There are no roads or trails open for ATV use in the Catskill Forest Preserve. Commissioner Policy 3 (CP3) allows for vehicle use on limited roads via special permit for individuals who are mobility impaired. Currently there are no roads designated under CP3.

2) Support increased enforcement.
Response: The Department's Forest Ranger staff routinely patrol areas, and also utilize special concentrated patrols for areas. In addition, the Environmental Conservation Officers have special off-road enforcement teams that assist the Rangers in concentrated enforcement.

3) Increase the opportunities for snowmobile and ATV use.
Response: The elimination of the 2,700' rule provides for increased opportunities in Wild Forest areas for snowmobile trails. This Plan prohibits their use above 3,100' in Wild Forest areas. Although there is an increase in the acreage in Wilderness classification (with the creation of Hunter - West Kill and Windham - Blackhead Range WA), there is a decrease in acreage of lands managed according to wilderness guidelines, with the elimination of the 2,700' rule. Generally, the new areas in Wilderness are not conducive to snowmobiling because of their steep terrain.

Snowmobile use in Wilderness Areas is inconsistent with the management of these areas. Since the adoption of the Wilderness classification, snowmobile and motor vehicle use has been prohibited.

Group Size Limitations

Comments predominantly reflected the potential impact group size limits might have on organized groups, i.e. boy scouts, although there were some comments to maintain or reduced numbers.

1) Group size limits will impact organized group's ability to utilize the Forest Preserve: *Response: Group size limits are imposed for two reasons, to reduce the impacts on the resource and to improve the sense of remoteness or solitude in Wilderness. The limits allow for a 5 to 1 ratio of leaders to participants (i.e scouts), with a minimum of 2 leaders for a total group size limitation of 12 in Wilderness. This is actually more than the "Leave no Trace" guidelines that the national Boy Scout organization has adopted.*

2) Reduce Group size limits.
Response: As noted above, the size limits were established to minimize adverse impacts to organized groups while providing for resource protection and limited numbers for a wilderness experience.

Economic

There were several comments received about the economic impact this Plan would have on the area.

1) Negative economic impact from increasing restrictions on use (primarily bicycle use).
Response: This Plan does not address the economic impact to the local area and its analysis is beyond its scope. In general terms, the Forest Preserve is a direct tourism destination, providing positive impacts to the local economy. Indirectly, the scenery and open space protection afforded by State ownership, provides a large positive impact to visitors who come to the area and enjoy the scenery.

As noted above, changes allowing more bicycling opportunities in northern Greene County will help mitigate the decrease in bicycling opportunities in other areas.

2) Proposed changes in the draft plan are inconsistent with the 1997 New York City Watershed Agreement.
Response: The MOA provides for increased cooperation between NYC and DEC on management of adjacent lands. This Plan recognizes this, particularly in regards to land acquisition. Where priorities and available funding permit, DEC acquires lands compatible with our management guidelines. This provides for a more consistent experience for the recreational user. In addition, as noted, the Plan has been changed to provide more recreational opportunities.

Miscellaneous

Miscellaneous comments covered such subjects as new trails, canisters, trailess peaks, public participation, acquisition outside the blue line, Interpretive Center, among others.

1) Provide new trails, bridges i.e. Connect Delaware system to Slide Mountain trail, among others.
Response: New trails and other infrastructure are evaluated through the Unit Management Planning process.

2) Support canisters on trailess peaks, and the converse, do not support canisters. *Response: The Plan allows for continued use of canisters, but has the provision, their continued use will be evaluated on an individual basis through the UMP process.*

3) Remove language which would allow trails within ½ mile of trailess peaks through the UMP process.
Response: The Plan was amended to include the provision that new trails could only be proposed if there is serious environmental degradation, i.e. multiple herd paths.

4) Increase local community involvement in the planning process.
Response: Noted. The next revision will include more local government notification and input. There has been a great deal of discussion with local interest groups from the release of the draft until this final Plan.

5) Do not limit Forest Preserve acquisition to the boundaries of the Catskill Park (blue line) and extend the blue line.
Response: The boundaries of the Forest Preserve are established by law. Acquiring Forest Preserve lands outside the boundaries would be inconsistent and limits the other traditional uses of state lands, i.e. harvesting forest products, habitat manipulation, and increased recreational opportunities not available in the Forest Preserve.

6) Increase language or support for a Catskill Interpretive Center.
Response: Continued partnership with local, private, and other state agencies is the necessary mechanism to gain sufficient support for a Visitor Center.

7) Provide more guidance on invasive species management.
Response: A new section has been added to the Plan, which provides the flexibility necessary for control, as warranted.

8) Rebuild the incline railways, reopen a bluestone quarry, tannery, etc. so the public can get a better feel for the area's history. *Response: These actions need to be reviewed in the UMP process. However, the constraints of forever wild, would likely prevent their development.*

9) Master plan should not support hunting.
Response: Hunting is a traditional and appropriate activity on DEC state lands, including the Forest Preserve.

10) What gives the DEC the right to define my wilderness experience.
Response: The principals of wilderness management are founded in the 1964 Wilderness Act, ongoing academic research, and public opinion. It is the obligation of the DEC to manage the Forest Preserve consistent with Article 14, and an acceptable standard, as referenced to the above parameters. This management will not meet everyone's objectives or concerns.

11) Status of Coykendall Lodge.
Response: The UMP for this area details the plans for this structure.

12) Permitting (camping) process needs to be changed.
Response: Not a Master plan issue; it is a process issue.

13) Excessive state land is a loss of property taxes, natural resources. There is enough state land for expansion of ski/bike areas. Protecting wilderness is not the single purpose of state land.
Response: The State pays all property taxes on Forest Preserve lands, over $9 million in 2002. There could be a reduction in local diversity with a significant increase in Forest Preserve lands. This reduction is offset by a more landscape view of the Allegheny Plateau. There is an under representation of uncut forest land in the Catskills and in the larger landscape, which the Forest Preserve provides as unique habitats.

Expansion of commercial uses (ski centers) in the Forest Preserve requires a Constitutional Amendment. As required by Article 14, the management of Forest Preserve is forever wild.

14) Provide for adequate resources for stewardship (trails, lean-tos, campgrounds, etc).
Response: The Department has a variety of funding sources for stewardship, including General Fund and EPF.

15) The Plan should include policy requiring a water-quality conservation easement on lands sold within the NYC watershed. *Response: Only small detached parcels of forest preserve lands are infrequently authorized for sale.*

Although not a Plan component, this idea will be reviewed when lands are surplussed within the watershed.

16) Increased technology of mechanized aids may have a negative impact on Wilderness, by being almost equivalent to ATVs.
Response: Mechanized aids are defined as being for use indoors. A gas powered wheel chair does not fit this definition. Other mechanized aids that do, are by law, legal.

17) Gas stoves should be encouraged over campfires in the Catskills.
Response: Good suggestion; however, no ban anticipated. Encouragement will take the form of information and education.

18) Support continued scenic vista tree cutting.
Response: The Plan allows for an immaterial amount of tree cutting associated with minimum vista clearing. This is consistent with legal rulings.

There were additional comments regarding specific actions or conditions which are appropriate when the UMP for that unit is completed, as well as more comments then outlined above on support for various aspects of the plan, and one that opposes the Plan in its entirety.

APPENDIX Ia: RESPONSIVE SUMMARY - PUBLIC COMMENTS ON THE REVISED 2008 DRAFT PLAN

The Department received hundreds of comments on the 2008 draft Catskill Park State Land Master Plan (plan or Master plan) Revision, many of which were a few similar letters focusing on bicycle use. The general comments of these similar letters were:

1) Support for the Plan and for the increase bicycling opportunities by the creation of Primitive Bicycle Corridors (PBC) and the change in wild forest bicycle use to open unless signed closed.
Response: Agree, the creation of additional bicycling opportunities reflects a balanced approach to recreational opportunities and ecological protection while maintaining a wilderness experience. See also Appendix I.

2) Support for the Plan and for the increase in wilderness by designation of the Hunter - West Kill and Windham - Blackhead Range Wilderness Areas.
Response: Agree, no significant changes were made from the 2003 draft Plan (and no change from the 2008 draft) in the Wilderness boundaries.

3) Opposition to the creation of the Primitive Bicycle Corridors and/or bicycling on foot trails.
Response: As noted above, and in Appendix I, the creation of PBCs will have minimal impact on the resource, yet provide for better balance of recreational opportunities. PBCs are appropriate for this Plan and do not provide a precedent for either the Adirondacks nor federal wilderness lands.

4) Support for the Plan, and in general, the idea of Primitive Bicycle Corridors, but only if proposed for lower elevations; the four proposed are incompatible with hiking.
Response: As noted above, minimal impact expected. The Department is not aware of a history of user conflicts with current bicycle use, which under the 1985 Plan, is unrestricted.

Some of the other comments received were almost identical to those submitted following the 2003 Draft. Please see Appendix I for: 1) Oppose elimination of the 2,700 foot rule, 2) Prohibiting bicycles in Wilderness, 3) Allowing hunting, 4) Allowing snowmobiles and outboard motors, 5) Save Coykendall Lodge, and 6) Reclassification of Wild Forest to Wilderness.

Other miscellaneous comments received were:
1) Allow a dry hydrant as a conforming structure in Wild Forests.
Response: The Department strives for consistent management of the Forest Preserve in both the Adirondacks and Catskills. The Department has already determined in the Adirondacks, a dry hydrant is not an appropriate structure in the Forest Preserve. This Plan will be consistent with that decision and not include it as a conforming structure.

2) Oppose the creation of Rusk Mountain Wild Forest, instead of reclassifying it as Wilderness.
Response: Although most of this wild forest is higher elevation terrain, its size and shape preclude its designation as Wilderness. In addition, the public has supported the retention of the Hunter Mountain Fire Tower, which would be nonconforming if the entire former Hunter Wild Forest was reclassified as Wilderness.

3) Concern for enforcement of various regulations including use of ATVs, snowmobiles, and bicycles.
Response: Noted, however, enforcement is not a Master plan issue. The Department strives for consistent and effective enforcement so users may enjoy the Forest Preserve, see also Appendix I.

4) Eliminate lean tos above 3,500 feet in Wild Forests.
Response: Lean tos are not allowed in Wilderness above 3,500 feet, but their very infrequent occurrence above this elevation in Wild Forests does not pose a problem in the Preserve.

5) Logging for Wildlife Habitat.
Response: Not consistent with the Constitution. Only an immaterial amount of tree cutting associated with specific projects (trails, vistas, E/T/R species..) is deemed appropriate.

6) Allowing the Escarpment Trail Run:
Response: The change in classification from Wild Forest to Wilderness for most of the lands where the Escarpment trail run is conducted, will not affect this race. There is no overnight camping associated with this race.

7) Specific trail questions regarding maintenance and potential user conflicts:
Response: As noted above the Department has not received significant complaints regarding bicycle use, as allowed in the 1985 Plan. Other specific issues are appropriate under the UMP process and not the Master plan.

8) Creation of additional PBCs - Devils Path and Hunter Trail.
Response: PBCs were created on mainly old road systems and where there was historic use. Most of the Devils Path trail from its intersection with Diamond Notch to the Hunter Trail does not follow an old road and has significant sections that are narrow and steep, having washed cobble, and are unsuitable for a shared use trail. Without the Devils Path, the designation of the Hunter trail is not applicable. Bicycles will still be able to ride the Spruceton and Colonels Chair trials.

9) Retain a larger portion of Southeast Hunter and Hunter as Wild Forest.
Response: The wilderness attributes associated with the - West Kill Wilderness apply to this area.

10) Redefine Invasive Species and Invasive Species Associated with PBCs.
Response: Agree with the suggestion for a better definition of invasive species. The Department will increase its monitoring of the PBCs for invasive species and take appropriate action when documented.

11) Include or expand language on information and education, the Catskill Interpretive Center, the NYC Watershed Agreement and water quality protection, background on 2003 Draft, the Public Access Plan, and Signage.
Response: Agree, additional information is included in the Plan.

12) Provide details on specific time lines and goals, along with environmental monitoring, maintenance schedules, and the limits of acceptable change (LAC) criteria.
Response: These items are more appropriately addressed in the specific UMPs for the individual units and not in the Master plan.

13) Increase discussion on the water quality attributes of the Preserve and include protection measures for each classification:
Response: Undeveloped forest land is the best land use to ensure high water quality, thus the Preserve provides the best protection for water quality. Individual UMPs will address water quality protection for their management actions.

14) Discuss carbon sequestration.
Response: The Plan does not go into details of carbon sequestration, this topic is beyond the scope of this document. It is recognized that uncut forest lands lock up large quantities of carbon; however, the Preserve's increasing age structure does not maximize this due to the declining tree growth of older trees.

15) Decrease the human element in determining Wilderness Classifications.
Response: The Constitution does not distinguish between classifications. Appropriate protections are also taken for

management actions in Wild Forest lands. The human component, especially the sense of remoteness, is an important factor in the classification system.

16) Why is the Primitive Bicycle Corridor very specific versus simply allowing their use in a Wilderness.
Response: See comments above on bicycles in Wilderness.

17) Acquiring Forest Preserve lands outside the Catskill Park and Expand the Park.
Response: The Catskill Park boundaries are set by legislation. The Department will manage lands within the Park as Forest Preserve, as was the intention on the Park's creation, including any possible legislative expansion.

18) Expand the Department's forest insect and disease control (FIDC) efforts.
Response: The Governor and Legislature eliminated this Bureau within the Division of Lands and Forests in the mid 1970s. As staffing and budgets allow, the Department has an active FIDC program.

19) Trail Maintenance by user groups.
Response: The Department enters into Adopt a Natural Resource Agreements and MOUs with user groups. We welcome and encourage working with the public to help maintain our infrastructure.

20) More details on Priority Conservation Projects and note that most UMPs have been completed when discussing the classification system.
Response: Discussed in the Open Space Plan, not a Master plan topic. Agree on noting most UMPs competed, language added.

21) Include elected or local resident for UMP teams.
Response: Local input is received during the public review process. In addition, local input is often obtained through informal discussions as the UMP progresses.

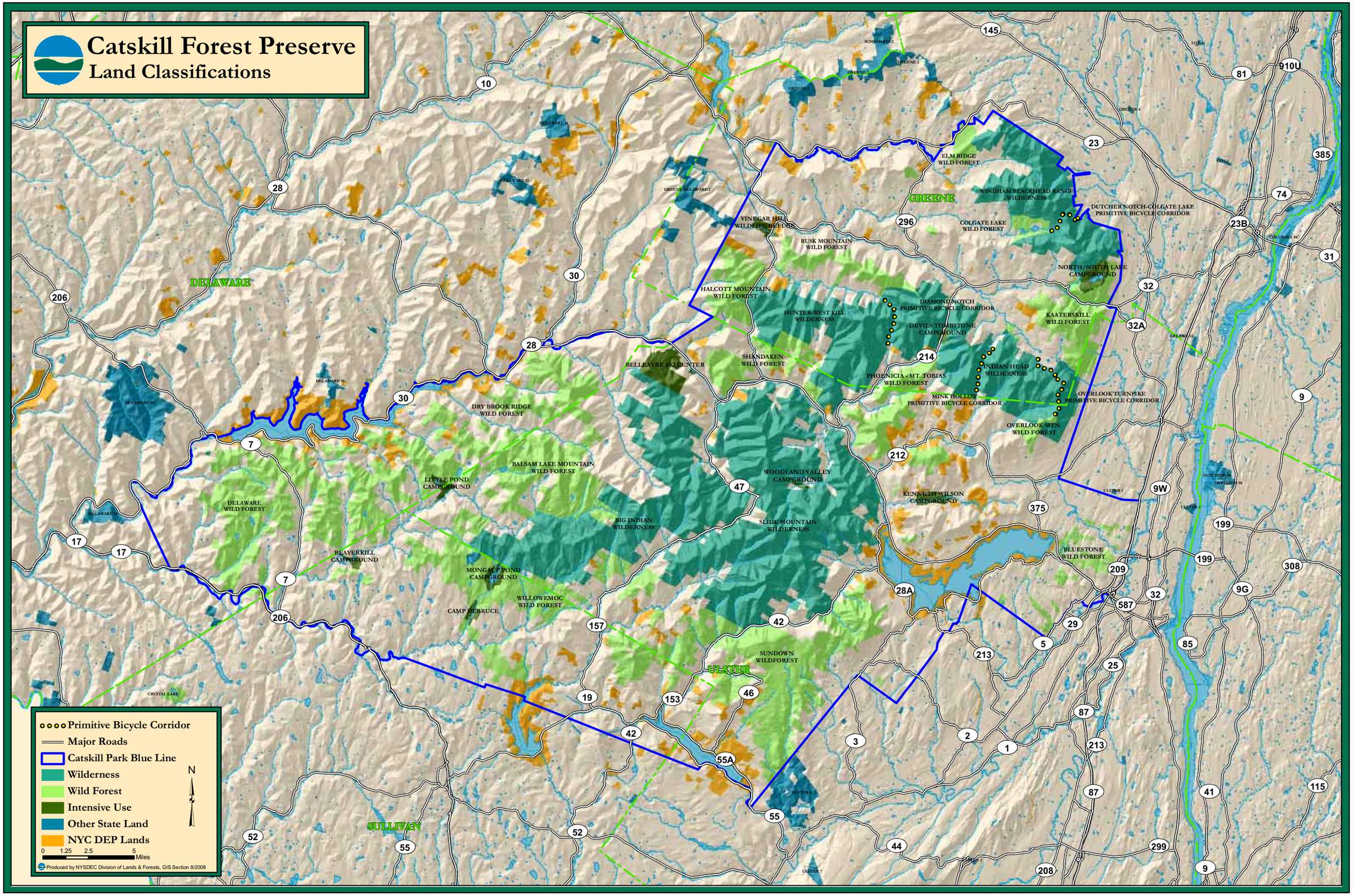
22) Family Trails should not be created in areas with significant wilderness values.
Response: Creation of all new trail takes into account the biological components and uniqueness of an area.

23) Include Trout Unlimited in Partnership Discussion.
Response: Agreed, language added.

24) Oppose proposed Belleayre acquisitions and expansion.
Response: Not a master plan issue.

APPENDIX J: CATSKILL FOREST PRESERVE MAP

Catskill Forest Preserve
Land Classifications



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DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

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