



New York State
Department of Environmental Conservation

Division of Lands & Forests
Region 4

**Elm Ridge Wild Forest
Amendment**

to the

**1994 Windham High Peak Wild Forest
Unit Management Plan**

Towns of Cairo, Durham, and Windham
Greene County

January 2009

David A. Paterson, Governor

Alexander B. Grannis, Commissioner

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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: FEB 27 2009

RE: Windham High Peak Wild Forest Unit Management Plan Amendment

The Unit Management Plan Amendment for the Windham High Peak Wild Forest has been completed. The amendment is consistent with guidelines and criteria for the Catskill Park State Land Master Plan, the State Constitution, Environmental Conservation Law, SEQRA, and Department Rules, Regulations and Policies. The Windham High Peak Wild Forest Unit Management Plan Amendment for the establishment of multi-use trails and parking capacity expansion is hereby approved.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alexander B. Grannis', written over a horizontal line.

Alexander B. Grannis
Commissioner

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PREFACE

Article XIV of the New York State Constitution provides a basic guideline for management of the State's Forest Preserve lands in the Adirondacks and Catskills. Furthermore, the Environmental Conservation Law places responsibility for the care, custody and control of the Forest Preserve on the Department of Environmental Conservation.

The 2008 Catskill Park State Land Master Plan establishes five classifications of State land: wilderness, wild forest, intensive use, administrative areas, and primitive bicycle corridors, each representing a different level of protection and public use. The Plan provides for establishment of geographic units, each falling into one of the four classifications. Unit management plans will be developed for each unit.

A Unit Management Plan identifies a segment (unit) of this Forest Preserve and provides direction for the management and use of that Unit.

The Elm Ridge Wild Forest (formerly part of the Windham High Peak Wild Forest) is identified as such a Unit. A Wild Forest is a section of Forest Preserve where the resource, though protected, can withstand a higher degree of human use than a wilderness area; it can accommodate present and future public recreation needs in a manner consistent with Article XIV of the State Constitution and it lacks the sense of remoteness of a wilderness.

Protection and controlled use of this wild Forest Unit is necessary for full public enjoyment without degradation of a quality user-experience and the natural resources.

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INTRODUCTION

The Windham High Peak Wild Forest Unit Management Plan (UMP) was approved by Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC or the Department) Acting Commissioner, Langdon Marsh, in 1994. Since that time, the popularity of mountain biking has increased, as has the interest in developing mountain bike trails in the Forest Preserve. While the UMP does identify a 1.9 mile length of trail suitable for designation as a bicycle route, the plan goes on to state that this stretch of trail is too short to act as a stand-alone bicycle trail, and that the designation should be done as part of a larger network of bicycle trails.

A proposal to develop such a system of trails was received in early 2006 from local mountain bike enthusiasts. A decision was made to revise the Windham High Peak Wild Forest UMP after evaluating the proposal and its compatibility with the guidance for developing facilities in Wild Forest areas. A public information meeting was held on May 20, 2006 as a preliminary step for the UMP revision process. After that meeting, the Department decided to treat changes in the Windham High Peak Wild Forest UMP as an amendment rather than a revision.

In addition to mountain bike trail development, this amendment also makes recommendations to address other issues raised at the public information meeting including the need for multi-use trails and additional parking at the Peck Road parking area.

A New Classification: Elm Ridge Wild Forest

On August 27, 2008 the Department finalized the revision of the Catskill Park State Land Master Plan (CPSLMP). In the revised CPSLMP, the Windham High Peak Wild Forest was reclassified to be part of two new units - the Elm Ridge Wild Forest and the Windham Blackhead Range Wilderness.

All of the proposed management actions in this amendment are to take place within what is now classified as the Elm Ridge Wild Forest. In order to be consistent with this new land classification, however, this amendment also includes all portions of the 1994 Windham High Peak UMP that now pertain to the new Elm Ridge Wild Forest. Any figures or statistics that have changed due to the modified unit boundary are corrected here, and the cost figures in section V have been adjusted to reflect current (vs. 1994) costs. The name of the unit has been changed from the Windham High Peak Wild Forest to the Elm Ridge Wild Forest.

Substantial new additions to the text relating to trail development and parking lot expansion are marked with the phrase “**update to original text**”. These are found in **section III – Management and Policy, Section IV – Projected Use and Management Proposed, and section V – Schedule for Implementation/Budget.**

I. UNIT LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

A. *Location*

The Elm Ridge Wild Forest Unit consists of 1,355 acres of New York State Forest Preserve and is situated at the northern-most edge of the Catskill Park, to the west of 3,520' Windham High Peak. Windham High Peak is in the northeast corner of the great eastern escarpment of the Catskill Mountains which rise abruptly to high elevation from the Hudson River and Catskill Creek valleys.

This Wild Forest is located in Greene County, primarily in the Towns of Windham and Jewett.

Town of Windham 1,235 acres

Town of Jewett 120 acres

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. It is on this unit that the northern end of the Escarpment Trail begins. 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, the Long Path 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.

B. *Description*

1. General

The northern terminus of the 23 mile Escarpment Trail begins at NY Route 23 in East Windham and travels one mile to the junction of the Elm Ridge Trail. Elevations range from 1,700 feet near the north western extent of the Unit to 3,180 feet at the summit of Cave Mountain. A well-developed network of highways provides visitors with easy access to this Unit. This, along with abundant tourist-related services increases the Unit's popularity among hikers and other recreationists. The easy to moderately difficult hiking opportunities and the panoramic views available from the Escarpment Trail ascending Windham High Peak, add much to this popularity.

2. Wildlife

The Elm Ridge Wild Forest Unit lies at the northern edge of the Catskill Peaks ecozone. The area consists mostly of steep forested slopes with some areas of spruce and fir at the highest elevations. The extensive northern hardwood forests of the area provide habitat for a variety of wildlife species. In general, species which require open land and early successional forest stages would be less abundant in the Unit than species which use the older age forest. Chambers, in his handbook, Integrating Timber and Wildlife Management, 1983, (available at DEC Wildlife Offices in Stamford and Schenectady), compiled an extensive list of wildlife presumed to live within the Catskill Peaks ecozone, and further qualified his list by categorizing species by forest type, forest stage, and special habitat needs. Based on these criteria, 51 species of mammal and 39 species of reptiles and amphibians may be found in the Unit (Appendix B).

Records compiled from 1980-1985 for The Atlas of Breeding Birds in New York State (1988) list 116 bird species for the area which includes Elm Ridge Wild Forest. Sixty-five (65) species are listed as confirmed breeders, 32 as probable breeders, and 19 as possible breeders (Appendix B.)

White-tailed deer are an important component of the Unit's fauna. The DEC collects data from returned tags from successful hunters to determine the number of deer which were taken each hunting season. The five-year average buck take for the Town of Windham is 2.60 bucks per square mile and for the Town of Cairo, 2.48 bucks/sq. mi. Because of the mix of habitat and topography in the Towns, the deer herd is not uniformly distributed. Fewer deer would be expected in the mature forest of the Unit than in the mixed open and forest land at lower elevations where they would find more understory browse.

The Unit is within the occupied portion of the northern Catskill Black Bear range. Bears are regularly harvested by big game hunters in the Unit and adjacent lands. Over-harvest is prevented by season timing and duration. Large tracts of state-owned land such as the Elm Ridge Wild Forest Unit are becoming more important to black bears as other areas become increasingly developed.

Fishers were transferred into the Catskills throughout a five year (1976-1980) trap and transfer program with the goal of establishing a self-perpetuating fisher population. Since the inception of a limited-bag trapping season in 1985, several fishers have been taken in the area. Sightings in the Town of Hunter suggest that fisher may presently inhabit this Unit also.

3. Fisheries

The streams passing through or bordering the Unit, totaling 2.2 miles, are part of the Batavia Kill and East Kill systems which are tributaries to Schoharie Creek. Most of these waters are high gradient streams which may

be dry for a part of the year. Nevertheless, all have the potential to serve as trout spawning and nursery waters while they are flowing. Tributary 17 of the Batavia Kill, in the northwestern part of the area, is an important spawning tributary for brown trout from the main Batavia Kill. The Batavia Kill system is also inhabited by blacknose and longnose dace, creek chubs, white suckers, brown bullhead, slimy sculpin and pumpkinseed.

4. Forests

The Unit is entirely forested with a wide diversity of plant species. This diversity is determined by type and depth of soils, topography, climate, natural disturbance and human use. We can identify some of these determining factors more specifically:

- Topography on the Unit ranges from 1,700 feet to 3,180 feet;
- The area of the Unit was lumbered repeatedly and part was cleared for agriculture;
- The entire area was glaciated;
- Annual rainfall is significantly less than that of the mountains of the Catskills to the immediate south;
- The exposed peaks are prone to wind damage;
- Some of the area was reforested through planting of trees.

A historical reference¹ notes that the forests of this eastern Catskill area (from Overlook Mountain to Windham High Peak) have had a long and complex history of burns, logging and bark-peeling. People have disturbed the resources of this area more severely than in any other part of the Catskills. Much of this unit is going through the successional process of re-vegetation from cut-over woodland and open grazing land to dense woodland. Nature does reclaim the land through re-vegetation but the process takes decades. Most of the wooded area on this Unit is of the northern hardwood forest type.

The area adjacent to NY Route 23 and Elm Ridge is in the early stages of reversion to woodland; much brush and pioneer hardwoods, such as paper birch, black and pin cherry, hophornbeam and aspen, are re-vegetating this area. The pioneer hardwood type of forest blends with an older forest of northern hardwoods on the adjacent steeper slopes where sugar maple, American beech, yellow birch and some hemlock are prevalent. Farther up the slopes, the northern hardwoods blend with balsam fir, red spruce and hemlock in a boreal forest - most frequently called the "ridge forest". The

¹ Kudish, Michael: Vegetational History of the Catskill High Peaks, 1971.

ridge forest of the Catskills is significant because it is an area which has been relatively undisturbed by man. It is found generally above 3,000 feet in elevation. The ridge forest does not exist on Elm Ridge because of chronic blowdown there. Red spruce once existed here but in time was eliminated by the climate; this species will not dominate a summit where exposure to wind and periodic drought is severe. Scattered balsam fir does exist here, along with scrubby hardwoods composed of paper and yellow birch, black cherry, beech, and sugar maple.

In 1934, there was a farm with open fields on Elm Ridge, where the unmaintained Ridge Road crosses over Elm Ridge.

5. Soils

All of the Catskill Mountains were glaciated.

Most of the soils in this Unit are of the Arnot-Oquaga-Rock Outcrop Association. The Cave Mountain parcel is also in this Association which covers about 44% of Greene County and about 80% of this Unit.

The ridge tops and slopes are upland landscapes controlled by bedrock which is mostly within 10 to 40 inches of the surface. Rock outcrops are prominent features in some locations. The soils have formed in thin deposits of medium-textured glacial till derived from sandstone, siltstone, shale and some limestone. These are shallow to moderately deep soils and are excessively to moderately well-drained. Permeability is also moderate. Slopes range from nearly level on the thin-soiled ridges (Elm Ridge and Cave Mountain) to the very steep slopes of the same peaks. Historically, these soils have remained primarily in woodland and some upland pasture: elevation and steepness have been the deciding factors. The soils are entirely covered by woods today.

At the base of the steep slopes, where the land form becomes gently sloping, lies the Wellsboro Association, a deep soil with a fragipan developed in glacial till. These soils are derived from sandstone, siltstone and shale. They are deep, but drainage varies from well-drained to poorly-drained, depending on the depth of the fragipan. This hard layer in the soil impedes drainage and rooting and is from one foot to three feet in depth in the Wellsboro Association. About 9% of the soils in Greene County and 15% of the soils in this Unit are of the Wellsboro Association. Historically, this land was used as hayland, pasture and orchard land, depending upon slope and drainage. Most is in young forest today. On this Unit, this Soil Association is found on the land with gentle topography that is parallel to NY Route 23 and north of the Batavia Kill east of Maplecrest.

C. *Area History*

1. Human Impact on the Resource

A history of the land unit itself is not complete without gaining some knowledge of the history of the surrounding valleys and hamlets. Whether farmers, tanners or lumbermen, the settlers who moved into the Catskill Mountains were oriented toward using the land and its resources as the means of obtaining wealth and social growth. Thus, as the more accessible land was occupied and its forests cut down, settlement and industry eventually reached the seemingly remote mountain areas.

No long lasting significant impact was left on the Windham area by prehistoric Native Americans who fished and hunted here nor by trappers, hunters, native Americans or mineral prospectors of more recent historic times. These were people who visited temporarily for specific purposes but who did not settle.

The farmer-settler of the 1600's in the Hudson Valley did not need to ascend to the upland valleys of the Catskills for livelihood or trade. In fact, any expansion was most likely to be on the Mohawk and upper Hudson Valleys.

In 1767, and again in 1772, under a royal bounty for veterans of the French and Indian Wars, Crown Lands were offered for settlement and development. What better way to keep England's frontier under control than to encourage skilled military men to settle there? In the Windham area, these lands were not immediately settled; many of the grantees used this wild land for speculation and for resale. Settlement began after the War for Independence. In 1781, the first settler arrived in what is now the hamlet of Windham. Others soon followed and settled mainly in two areas: North Settlement in the north of Windham Town and in Big Hollow in the Black Dome Valley. Lieutenant Lemuel Hitchcock, and his son, Thomas, walked into the mountains in 1794 to take possession of a square mile of land at the headwaters of the Batavia Kill; a house was built the next year in the vicinity of what is now Peck Road. Hitchcock descendants still live in the Catskills of Greene County (part of a Hitchcock farm became part of this Wild Forest Unit in 1934).

On the north side of the ridge, in the area of what is now East Windham to Brooksbury, came other settlers. Major Cornelius Fuller cleared a farm that was later owned by Linus Peck. In 1788, Captain Peter Van Orden built a pioneer home on a 200-acre site nearby. Another owner later built an inn on that property which continued in operation under several succeeding owners until the late 1880's.

The 1790's saw a major influx of new settlers—Yankee farmers and businessmen from Massachusetts and Connecticut. Their New England influence on place names and on architecture in the northern Catskills of Greene County still remains today and pleasantly surprise many new visitors and travelers to the area.

Typically, the flatter, gentler landscape was cleared for farms, and the driest land near streams was cleared for human habitation and hamlets. Naturally, the water-dependent businesses built along streams wherever topography and water volume allowed. Sawmills and gristmills were common along all the streams in the area from the earliest settlement through those in the late 1800's. In 1810, a sawmill was built by Isaac Payne on the Batavia Kill in Big Hollow, east of Peck Road; it reportedly was the first sawmill in Big Hollow. Beers' 1884 Atlas of Greene County shows a sawmill on Harriet Creek between Silver Lake and Brooksburg on what is now NYS land; its site is documented but no ruins remain.

The tanning industry caused the first extensive human disturbance in the mountain area. Hemlock was cut and its bark peeled; the bark was then used in tanning leather. Tanning began on a small scale around 1800, but the period 1820 through 1860 brought growth of a huge industry that had a great impact on the forests of the Catskills and the economic growth of local communities. The hemlock logs were usually a glut on the market and often were left to rot in the woods. Much of the cut area was burned, some accidentally and some deliberately. Five tanneries eventually operated in the Windham area. One, the F. Holcomb Tannery, was located in the area of the upper Batavia Kill and operated from 1827 to 1854. It consumed 53,000 cords of bark in its 27-year operation. Three to ten trees, depending on size, were required to produce one cord of bark. The Holcomb Tannery was not the only tannery, nor the largest. Obviously, the industry had a large impact on the forest resources.

The lumber industry overlapped the last 20 years of the tanning industry. It was another big impact on the forest resources that changed the landscape and the character of the land and local communities. In 1845, there were reportedly 22 sawmills in Windham and they were mainly small one-man operations. No official census was taken of sawmills in the Catskills in the 19th Century; one unsubstantiated record says that there were over 200 sawmills in the Catskills between 1870 and 1900. Windham had wood-turning and other wood products mills by 1850 and these lasted until the end of the Century.

Originally, agriculture had brought the earlier settlers and New England Yankees here. Cutting of the woods for tanbark and for logs assisted in opening more of the hill and mountain areas to an expansion of agriculture. Although the narrow valleys contained excellent soils for farming, the upper, formerly wooded slopes were marginally suited to agriculture other than grazing for livestock. The late 19th Century brought a decline in agriculture here, as it did in the rest of New York State. Farming stopped first in the less productive mountain areas, which then began reverting to forest.

Use of natural resources was changing again. Agriculture and cutting of timber for commercial use still existed, but at a much lower level. A new commercial era began—one that was based on the area's natural and man-made scenic resources. Windham was recognized as an area that could offer city dwellers a short escape to an idyllic landscape of quiet towns, small

farms and wooded mountains. However, Windham's smaller family-oriented resorts differed greatly from the large luxury hotels of the rest of the Catskills. Windham's resorts were aimed at another market, catering to a less affluent clientele with simpler tastes. Some of these family-oriented resorts still exist today. Spectacular scenery, relative solitude and year-round recreational opportunities still attract the tourists and new residents to the area.

2. The Forest Preserve

The Forest Preserve was established in 1885 for the practical reasons of conserving land and water. Although other values of wild-land preservation and the concept of wilderness had nothing to do with the formation of the Adirondack and Catskill preserves, development of these ideas have been nurtured by the existence of the Preserve and its "forever wild" mandate in the New York State Constitution.

New York State didn't begin to acquire lands for Forest Preserve in the Elm Ridge Wild Forest until the twentieth century. No original Forest Preserve lands existed in this vicinity. The 203-acre Cave Mountain parcel was the first land to be acquired and was purchased in 1908; no other land was ever added to it to improve its accessibility. Elm Ridge was purchased in 1924. By the time of the Great Depression, the State owned about 1,000 acres of the highest ridge land in the area, and nearly all of the Elm Ridge Wild Forest. The Depression saw many farmers more than willing to turn little-used land and forest into immediate cash. The most recent acquisition in the Elm Ridge Wild Forest was in 1976.

Trails in this area before 1962 were non-existent except to experienced hikers who could walk the ridges and who knew the old, long-abandoned access roads. The segment of the Escarpment Trail that goes through the heart of this Unit from NY Route 23 at East Windham to the Elm Ridge Trail, was built in 1962 (Dennis Martin, the DEC Forest Ranger for this part of the mountaintop at this time was, in 1962, a member of the trail crew that built the original trail). Connecting trails were built about the same time: the road bed of Ridge Road was a natural trail. A foot trail and snowmobile bridge at Route 23 in East Windham was built in 1979.

II. INVENTORY OF FACILITIES

A. *Trailheads with Maintained Parking (2)*

1. NY Route 23 near East Windham. North terminus of the Escarpment Trail. Also serves the snowmobile trail. Accommodates 30± vehicles.
2. Peck Road near Maplecrest. Accommodates 12± vehicles.

B. *Bridges (1)*

1. Foot
 - a. NY Route 23.

C. *Trails (2.65 miles)*

1. Foot Trails - 2.65 miles

The blue-marked Escarpment Trail travels 1 mile from East Windham to the Elm Ridge Trail.

The 0.9-mile yellow-marked Elm Ridge Trail goes from Peck Road to the junction with the Escarpment Trail near the Elm Ridge lean-to. The newly-constructed 0.75 mile blue-marked Long Path Extension starts at the NY Route 23 parking area and travels northeasterly to Old Road where it leaves State land.

The Escarpment Trail in this Unit serves as part of "The Long Path" of the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference, a trail conceived in the 1930's to go from the George Washington Bridge to the Adirondacks; it now extends north of this Unit through other State and private lands on its way to the Mohawk River.

The Trail Conference volunteers have adopted basic maintenance on all 2.65 miles of foot trail

D. *Public Roads*

1. New York Route 23 travels through the northwest corner of the Unit for 1.25 miles.

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2. Cross Road (Town of Windham highway) crosses the same northwest corner for 0.6 mile.
 3. Old Road (Old NY 23) is the Unit's northwest boundary for about 0.4 mile.
 4. County Route 56 in the Black Dome Valley passes through the Unit for 0.3 miles.
 5. Ridge Road, an un-maintained Town of Windham Road (reportedly), travels through the Unit and across Elm Ridge for 1.5 miles; most of it is part of the foot trail system.
 6. Slater Road (Town of Windham highway) is bordered by Forest Preserve for \pm 100 feet.

E. Trail Registers (3) and Informational Bulletin Boards (2)

1. NY Route 23 at East Windham at the north end of the Escarpment Trail. Bulletin board at parking lot is new; a smaller, older board will be removed. The register for Long Path extension is 100' north of Cross Road. Register for Escarpment Trail is 0.2 miles south of NY Rte. 23.
2. Peck Road at the south end of the Elm Ridge trail. Bulletin board is at the parking lot; trail register is 0.1 mile north on the trail.

F. Signing (1)

Directional signs (see Appendix).

G. Scenic Vistas(1)

Forest Preserve access parking lot on NY Route 23 in East Windham.

H. Spring (1)

Yellow-marked Elm Ridge trail from Peck Road. The spring is located 0.65- mile toward junction with the Escarpment Trail (0.25- mile south of the Escarpment Trail).

I. Private Easements

A private parcel of land off the end of Slater Road has the right to pipe water from a spring on State land in Lot 89 of the State Land Tract. Rights were given through a 1934 Deed (267/315) when the land was purchased by NYS. Map No. 1927. Present owner is Mamaroneck Fish and Game Club.

J. *Exterior Boundary Lines*

There are 11.1 miles of exterior boundary in the Unit.

III. MANAGEMENT AND POLICY

A. *Special Constraints and Issues Affecting the Planning Area*

1. General Constraints

- a. Legal - This Unit Management Plan has been developed within the constraints set forth by Article XIV of the State Constitution, Article 9 of the Environmental Conservation Law, Title 6 of the Codes, Rules and Regulations of the State of New York, the Catskill Park State Land Master Plan, and established policies for the administration of Forest Preserve lands.
- b. Policy (update to original text) - Catskill Forest Preserve Public Access Plan (Access Plan), August 1999. The Access Plan was adopted five years after the Windham High Peak Wild Forest UMP was developed. It provides policy guidance in which certain goals were listed, including the following:
 - To encourage cooperation between the public and private sectors in enhancing the use, enjoyment and protection of the forest preserve.
 - To support and encourage forest preserve uses that contribute to the economies of local communities in a manner consistent with the Catskill Park State Land master Plan and Article XIV of the New York State Constitution which declares the forest preserve "forever wild," and,
 - To provide additional guidance for forest preserve planning by taking a preserve-wide perspective on the management of public use and natural resources.
- c. Rugged topography is a constraint to the development or extension of allowable uses within the Unit.
- d. Wildlife - The "forever wild" clause of Article XIV of the New York State Constitution limits the possibility of manipulating vegetation for wildlife habitat on Forest Preserve lands. On other state-owned lands administered and managed by the Department of Environmental Conservation, it is legally possible to devise and conduct habitat modification to favor specific wildlife species. The forest vegetation of Forest Preserve lands progresses through a natural succession of plant life, often ending eventually in an aging, mature forest. Wildlife populations may not be diverse under these conditions. Because the Forest Preserve concept provides a strategy of land management that places emphasis on the protection of natural processes (passive

management), it, therefore, favors species that frequent mature forests.

Deer Management is not specific to the Wild Forest Unit, but is governed by the objectives of the Deer Management Unit (DMU) of which it is a part. All of the Elm Ridge Forest Unit lies within DMU 55. The current management objective for DMU 55 is to maintain a deer population which produces an annual harvest of 2.0 bucks per square mile. Because the number of female deer determines the potential size of the population, management is accomplished by regulated hunting of female deer as well as bucks.

Availability of quality deer winter habitat is one of the more critical factors influencing the population. Management efforts at this population level are directed towards preventing starvation and maintaining deer in good health and physical condition. A healthy deer population provides important recreational values and contributes highly to the state and local economies.

- e. Fisheries - Fishing in waters of this Unit is regulated by statewide seasons, size and creel limits specified in 6NYCRR 10, as authorized by 11-1303-7 of the Environmental Conservation Law of New York.

2. Special Issues Considered in this Plan

- a. Rugged topography restricts use to limited areas of the Unit. In turn, the most easily accessible parts of these limited areas are most intensely used. This gives rise to concentration of erosion, soil compaction, vegetative disturbance, noise, sanitation problems, safety hazards and general vandalism in relatively small, heavily used areas. The same topography has a reverse effect on the majority of the area in the Unit by keeping human use to a minimum in the less accessible portions.
- b. General misuse can spoil the recreational experience and aesthetic sense of most users. Camping too close to waterways and trails, indiscriminate littering and violations of rules for sanitation cannot be entirely eliminated, but careful planning and budgeting can significantly reduce them. Misuse primarily occurs in specific areas. The Elm Ridge lean-to, being very accessible to users, is heavily used. There is a littering problem at the East Windham trailhead.
- c. Water Quality. All small streams in this Unit are tributaries to either the Batavia Kill or East Kill. Maintenance of good water quality of these tributaries is necessary for the continued good quality of trout fisheries in the receiving water. Recreational uses and projects within the Forest Preserve portion of these watersheds must not compromise the quality of the water.

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- d. Vista cutting. Cutting of new vistas and the proper maintenance of old vistas are issues here, as they are in most management units.
 - e. Snowplowing and parking areas. Use of the Unit in winter is increasing and the Department has never budgeted for or funded snowplowing of trailhead parking areas.
 - f. Land acquisition. Key, pre-selected parcels are desirable and necessary to provide better access and consolidation. Access is desirable to the 203-acre Cave Mountain parcel. Considerable development of residential subdivisions in the area is a serious threat to the integrity of the Unit as Wild Forest. Both fee acquisitions and conservation easements should be made, but only from willing sellers.
 - g. Pull-off, NY Route 23. This pull-off, a section of the old highway, lies south of Route 23 between Old Road and Cross Road. It is a convenient motorist rest area but it attracts considerable trash. Jurisdiction of the area can be determined for maintenance purposes or D.O.T. can be requested to abandon and barricade it.
 - h. Ridge Road is heavily eroded and has not been maintained by the Town for over 60 years. It crosses the Unit from north to south across Elm Ridge, west of Windham High Peak. Access to the lean-to area by four-wheel drive motor vehicles is too easy. Alternatives of management are: retain the status quo, barricade the road against motor vehicle use, or request an official abandonment of the road.
 - i. Establish new multi-use trails (update to original text) - constructed to accommodate mountain biking and Nordic skiing. The 2008 Catskill Park State Land Master Plan (CPSLMP) allows mountain biking as an activity; mountain bikes are permitted in Wild Forest areas in the Catskill Park unless specifically prohibited. The Access Plan notes that very few trails are developed specifically for mountain bike use. "A 6-mile trail at Wilson campground and a 2-mile trail in the Bluestone Wild Forest are the only existing designated bicycle trails in the preserve". And further, "most foot trails traverse terrain unsuitable for the average bicycle rider, or would present an unacceptable conflict with hikers, there are some wood roads which could provide an adventurous bicycling opportunity". The Access Plan offers guidance where new opportunities for mountain biking may be developed, identifying ideal sites as "having gentle terrain, an abundance of old roads, and light use by hikers." The CPSLMP considers all-terrain bicycling as a conforming use in Forest Preserve classified as Wild Forest. Newly designated multi-use trails will be located on old wood roads/farm lanes where appropriate. When these old roads are oriented straight up a slope and/or are heavily eroded, it's more prudent to leave them idle and establish new, sustainable trails to avoid trail erosion. These new trails will be oriented across the contours and have an out-sloped tread to allow surface water to move off the trails rather than run down their length. They will be located to

avoid wet, low lying areas, or areas that are too flat to provide good drainage. Ideally, the slope along the trails' length will not exceed ½ the side-slope of the hill side. An average maximum slope of 10% will also help minimize trail erosion. The trail tread should be approximately two feet wide with a cleared width of four to six feet.

- j. Expand parking capacity at the Peck Road trailhead (update to original text) – The Windham Highway Department has cleared snow from the Peck Road trailhead for several years in exchange for use of the trailhead as a snowplow turnaround. Because of the parking area's limited size, parked vehicles interfere with snow removal. By expanding this parking area to include an additional 5 to 10 parking places, both winter recreationists and a snowplow turnaround can be accommodated.
- k. Establish snowmobile trails on the unit (update to original text) – This proposal was made by members of a local snowmobile group during the information meeting. The proposal was dependent on the group's negotiations with the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to establish snowmobile trails on DEP lands near the Elm Ridge Wild Forest. The CPSLMP does allow for snowmobile trails on Wild Forest, especially if they are necessary to connect designated trails that are separated by Forest Preserve. It is preferable that they be established on old roads. A written proposal was never received for this action, and the unit contains no corridor trails mapped by New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. Therefore, no action will be taken to establish snowmobile trails on the Windham High Peak Wild Forest.

3. Natural Heritage Data

- a. Plant - Because the Unit hasn't yet been surveyed, the existence of any endangered or threatened plant species and natural communities is unknown. Before any major work is initiated, such as relocation of a trail or dispersed camping sites, the proposed site will be surveyed and inventories for environmental assessment purposes to ensure that no such species of plant or natural community will be destroyed. Locations of endangered or threatened species will not be disclosed in order to protect those species from collectors and the general public.

There are some uncommon wet-site species worth mentioning: Ilex verticillata (winterberry holly), Dryopteris cristata (Crested shield fern) and Senecio aureus (Golden ragwort). (Kudish)

- b. Animal - None of the currently listed endangered or threatened species (ECL 6NYCRR 182.5) are known to reside on the area. The peregrine falcon and bald eagle (Endangered) and the red-shouldered hawk (Threatened) may pass over the area during migration.

Species of Special Concern are those which are not yet recognized as endangered or threatened, but for which documented concern exists for their continued welfare in New York. No additional legal protection is derived from their listing. One such species, the eastern blue bird, has been "confirmed" as a breeder either in or adjacent to the Unit in the Breeding Bird Atlas. Other special concern species which may occur in the Unit are so noted in Appendix B.

The National Audubon Society's Blue List (indicating species for which there appear to be non-cyclical population declines or range contractions) includes the hairy woodpecker, which is a confirmed breeder in the Unit. Other species on the Blue List are noted in Appendix B.

The peaks of mountains over 3,500 feet within the Unit with red spruce-balsam fir-paper birch forest are considered potential habitat for the subspecies of the gray-cheeked thrush called Bicknell's thrush.

- c. **Community (update to original text)** - A Dwarf Shrub Bog has been identified south of Elm Ridge near the Type II wetland H-8. It is described as "A very small dwarf shrub-dominated bog, less than one acre in size, located within Catskill Park, in the Windham High Peak Wild Forest". The bog is immediately surrounded by a band of spruce-fir swamp that grades into mature hemlock-northern hardwood forest. The larger landscape includes agricultural and residential development within the Black Dome Valley and the village of Maplecrest to the south. Areas to the north, east, and west are largely forested, made up of beech-maple mesic forest, hemlock-northern hardwood forest, and Appalachian oak-hickory forest. The bog is located on the edge of a natural landscape of more than 30,000 acres.

Management Objective: Maintain a buffer between the bog and human activities, such as construction of roads or trails, to protect against sedimentation and the introduction of invasive species. Regular monitoring would allow managers to discover and curtail a potential future invasion of exotic species in the early stages. Please note that logging on the Forest Preserve is not permitted under Article 14 of the NYS Constitution, and is therefore not a use and management proposal in this amendment of the UMP.

4. **Significant Habitat Data**

- a. **Deer Winter Concentration Area** - Three deer concentration areas are located partially within the Unit. Locations are: northwest of Windham High Peak; southeast of Cave Mountain and west of NY Route 296; north of Slater Road.

-
- b. Wetlands - One protected wetland has been identified on the Greene County Wetlands Maps. This 22 acre wetland (H-8) is located southeast of Elm Ridge. It is potential habitat for beaver and it is likely that the site will be occupied by beaver from time to time.

5. Unique Ecosystems

- a. Cliffs and escarpments - The summit of Elm Ridge is particularly notable for its many magnificent vistas because of its exposure and rock outcrops.

6. Cultural Resources

There are no known State or National Register listed historic sites within the Wild Forest Unit. Neither are there any known archaeological sites, although there are numerous known sites along the Batavia Kill stream outside the Wild Forest. Although no cultural resources survey has been conducted within the study area, the NYS Museum thinks there's a higher than average probability of prehistoric occupation or use for hunting and fishing in some low lying areas. There is evidence of more recent agricultural settlement remaining in the form of stone walls and building foundations of the 19th and 20th century; some sites are within the State ownership.

7. Primary Public Use

The primary public use is recreation. The Unit's high scenic quality and its proximity to a good transportation system in a tourist area draw many serious hikers annually. Use is expected to increase in the future as the surrounding area continues to develop.

The "Long Path" of the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference passes through the Unit on its way from the George Washington Bridge to (eventually) the Adirondacks. The Long Path traverses 1.75 miles of the Escarpment Trail in the Wild Forest including a newly-constructed extension for 0.75 miles north of the NY Route 23 parking area.

Use is roughly measured from trail register statistics which indicates the number of people in a hiking party, their length of stay (days, overnight, several nights) and destination. Signing-in at registers is voluntary so figures can be assumed to be on the conservative side; and also registers and register sheets are periodically vandalized. The register tally shows, however, approximate numbers of users and especially indicates trends over a period of time. (See Table I.)

Table 1. Elm Ridge Wild Forest Trail Register Tally

Days of Use (Day-users plus overnights)				
<u>Register</u>	<u>1989</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>1991</u>	<u>1992</u>
East Windham (NY 23)	1473	1948	2542	2351
Peck Rd. (Elm Ridge)	785	998	1144	1250
Burnt Knob-Acra Point	683	786	705	824
Long Path Extension (new)	--	--	--	* 52
*(3 months only)				

East Windham figures appear low; all users are not signing the registration sheets. There also has been more vandalism than expected to this register in the last three years.

8. Impacts of Land Use

- a. Private lands - Adjacent to the Elm Ridge Wild Forest, these lands have generally become desirable properties because of their relative privacy and solitude. Public lands offer a "backyard" of open space on which no maintenance costs or taxes need be paid, yet are available for use by the bordering private owner and will never be extensively developed. The State pays full property taxes to local governments based on the value of undeveloped land. Occasional negative impacts do exist where the adjacent public lands are used as trailheads for hikers and snowmobiles. Trespass, littering and noise pollution are annoyances that can occur, though infrequently.
- b. Fully developed and/or incompatible private development adjacent to public lands may have a negative impact on them. Problems of littering, trespass, boundary disputes, conflicts with public users and dilution of recreational experience are all potential negative impacts.

9. Economic Impact

People are attracted to this area for a variety of recreational and cultural uses. These visitors have a positive impact on hotels, motels, campgrounds, grocers, service stations, restaurants and sporting goods stores. Many of the resorts in Greene County use the mountains indirectly as a passive setting for their recreational enterprises. Private campgrounds and resorts adjacent to public lands also benefit directly by using facilities provided on these public lands.

B. Goals and Objectives

1. Broad goals for the Unit are to:
 1. Protect the natural setting of the Wild Forest as defined by the Catskill Park SLMP.
 2. Accommodate and provide for the broadest spectrum of public uses compatible with Wild Forest land-use criteria and in keeping with recognized legal and environmental constraints.
 3. Identify and actively protect any special unique and fragile areas within the Unit. This includes critical or unique plant and animal habitat, endangered or threatened plants or animals, highly scenic areas, historic sites, special geologic formations, archaeological sites, etc.

2. Objectives
 - a. Land Management Objectives
 1. Adequately protect the Unit from wildfire.
 2. Pursue an active boundary line maintenance program to maintain the integrity of public ownership and to discourage trespass.
 3. Selectively acquire lands and conservation easements from willing sellers on the peripheries of the Unit that will consolidate and protect unique natural features, enhance access and recreational opportunity and minimize administrative problems.
 4. Identify critical habitat for rare or endangered species of plant or animal. Resulting records are to be used for scientific purposes only and will not be distributed to the general public not identified in this plan.
 5. Prior to site disturbance for maintenance or modification of recreational facilities it will be policy to: examine all areas involved for critical plant and animal habitat or species and investigate the nature and extent of archaeological resources that may be present.
 6. Prevent and alleviate soil erosion and vegetative loss while conducting regular annual facilities management or when relocating any facilities.

-
7. Maintain, modify and construct facilities in strict conformance with legal NYCRR rules and regulations and with Department policies and procedures.
 8. Pursue alternatives to remove motor vehicle use on Ridge Road where it passes through the Unit.
- b. Wildlife Management Objectives
1. Maintain all native wildlife species at levels compatible with their natural environment.
 2. Maintain hunting, trapping and other wildlife-related recreational activity.
- c. Fisheries Management Objectives
1. Perpetuate fish as part of the wild forest environment in all streams within the Unit.
 2. Maintain fishing as a valid recreational opportunity.
- d. Public Use Management Objectives
1. Control adverse and illegal uses through enforcement of the Environmental Conservation Law and Department rules and regulations.
 2. Educate users to the appreciation, value, enjoyment and management of the public land and its scenic and unique resources.
 3. Maintain appropriate recreational facilities to facilitate access to and enjoyment of the Unit lands. This will be accomplished with existing staff and the use of volunteer maintainers.
 4. Monitor the intensity of public recreational use and the condition of recreational facilities with the objective of preventing overuse or degradation of the Unit.
- e. Water Quality Management Objectives
1. Maintain the water quality of streams emanating from the Unit.
 2. Protect the waters of the Unit from pollution by controlling public uses of the stream corridors.

IV. PROJECTED USE AND MANAGEMENT PROPOSED

A. *Facility Development and/or Removal*

Action 1

Place new informational bulletin boards at the East Windham and Peck Road trailheads similar to the one at the Big Hollow trailhead. Remove old board at East Windham near Escarpment Trail register box. (Completed, with the exception of removing the informational bulletin board near the trail register.)

Action 2

Place a "Forest Preserve Access" directional sign where State land borders County Route 56 about 1.1 miles east of Peck Road. On Slater Road, the proper posting of State-owned land will suffice to identify the ownership. (Completed)

Action 3

Eliminate snowmobile use on the existing trail between East Windham and Peck Road. The trail is only 1.75 miles in length and doesn't meet even the minimum criteria for snowmobile trail designation. (Completed)

Action 4

Remove the 3-car parking area where State land borders County Road 56 on the north (1.1 mile east of Peck Road). This has a limited and steep access to parking, is severely eroded, is difficult to maintain and is infrequently used. (Completed)

Action 5

Designate the 1.9 mile trail between NY Route 23 and the Peck Road parking area as a cross-country ski trail and maintain it to standards.

Action 6

Leave open the future option, within the 5-year life of the UMP, to possibly designate this same 1.9 mile section of trail for mountain bicycle use if needed as part of a larger bicycle route; the trail is too short to stand as a bike trail on its own. All other existing trails in the Unit are topographically unsuitable for good biking.

Action 7 (update to original text)

Designate multiple use trails to be shared for hiking, mountain biking, and cross country skiing. Action 5 in the 1994 UMP calls for the designation of the 1.9 mile trail between NY Route 23 and Peck Road parking area, as a cross country ski trail and specifies that it be maintained "to standards." Action 6 suggests that the Department leave open the future option, within the five year life of the UMP, to possibly designate this same 1.9 mile section of trail for mountain bicycle use if needed as part of a larger bicycle route. It also states that the trail is too short to stand as a bike trail on its own, and that all

other existing trails on the unit are topographically unsuitable for good biking. Over the ensuing years, experience has refined what is considered to be a good trail for mountain biking, which can be very subjective depending upon equipment, skill/experience level of the rider, and the type of mountain biking experience sought.

Action 7 will tie in the recommendations made in actions 5 and 6 with additional multiple use trails that take off from the Escarpment and Elm Ridge Trails and run southwest around Elm Ridge and then back to an intersection with the aforementioned trails.

Alternative A (Action 7)

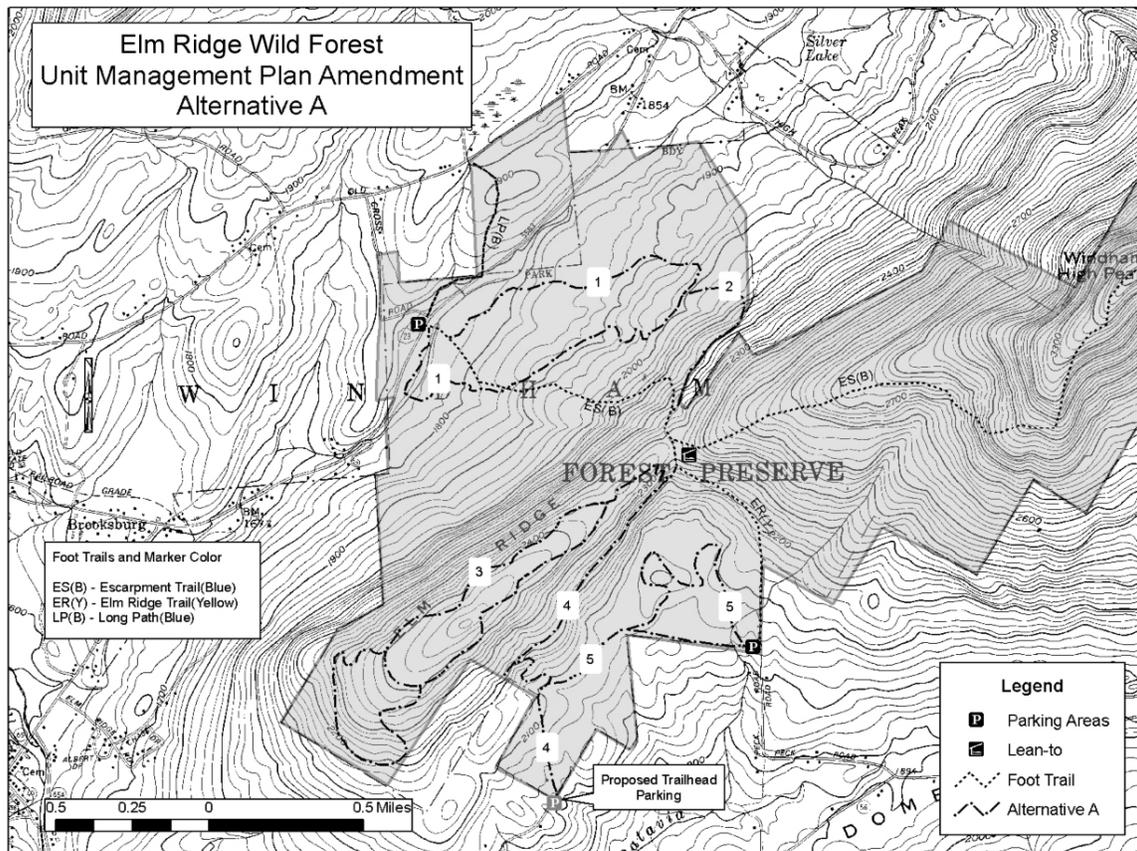
Trail #1 - Located near the northern end of the Escarpment Trail, it forms an east-west loop. It uses a bridge to cross the stream and joins the Escarpment Trail using a short portion of it to complete the loop. The trail will use portions of old farm roads and trails as well as new trail construction to complete it.

Trail #2 - This trail connects the Escarpment Trail with Trail #1. It lies on a portion of the old Ridge Road and will require new trail construction to make this connection.

Trail #3 - This trail exists as two loops on Elm Ridge. They are currently used primarily for mountain bicycling, but are not designated as trails by the Department.

Trail #4 - A portion of this trail is located on the old road, south of, and parallel to Elm Ridge. It is in relatively good condition and is used for mountain bicycling and illegal ATV access from neighboring private land. Part of this proposal includes a new trailhead parking area located near the snowplow turnaround on Slater Road, and new trail construction to connect this trailhead to the western end of the old road.

Trail #5 - The eastern end of this proposed trail is located at the Elm Ridge trailhead parking at the end of Peck Road. Its western end will connect with Trail #4, and will have a loop passing near the beaver ponds, and will use a bridge to cross the stream flowing between them. None of the trails proposed in this segment currently exist.



Alternative A - Analysis

Trail #1 - This trail offers opportunities for less strenuous activity in a variety of forest cover, ranging from early succession forest to mature mixed conifers and hardwoods, the potential to use existing old farm and woods roads, gentle to moderate terrain, and well drained soil, all positive characteristics. Portions of it aren't desirable because it lies too close to the highway, is located on flat, poorly drained soils, and will require a second bridge to cross the stream, within several hundred feet of the current one.

Trail #2 - This trail, although located substantially on an existing old road, isn't completely on Forest Preserve, forming a common boundary between the Elm Ridge Wild Forest and private land. Any new trail designated by the Department should be located completely on Forest Preserve.

Trail #3 - This trail has been established over at least the past decade through repeated travel using mountain bicycles, and will make a good multiple-use trail. Generally, it is in good condition although some portions of the trail are poorly drained, braided, or eroded. The problem areas of the trail may be corrected through a combination of trail re-routes, hardening and water bars.

Trail #4 - The portion of this trail located on the old road is suitable for a multiple-use trail. The soils are rocky and poorly drained in the area where new trail construction is proposed from Slater Road to the old road and has been identified as a historic deer yard in the 1994 UMP. The new trail construction is not recommended because of the unsuitable site conditions that would require stone and gravel fill. The new trailhead parking will not be needed to provide access without the new trail.

Trail #5 - All of this trail proposal would require new construction. It is not a recommended addition to the trails in the Elm Ridge Wild Forest because its location crosses a wetland, and the upper soil layers are relatively high in organic matter. These conditions would require stone and gravel fill to provide a hardened surface. The proposed route comes very close to the dwarf shrub bog and closely parallels the boundary between the Wild Forest and private land. It is also part of the historic deer yard north of Slater Road.

Preferred Alternative

Designate the Elm Ridge Trail, and Escarpment Trail, from Route 23 to its intersection with the Elm Ridge Trail, as multiple use trails, for cross country skiing, mountain bicycling and hiking. Both trails may require short re-routes and rehabilitation of eroded portions of the trails, trail hardening and improvement/installation of waterbars or other devices to divert water from the trail. This will provide approximately 1.9 miles of multiple-use trail.

Adopt Trail #1 with a modified layout, eliminating the new bridge. Trail #1 will be located more southerly and upland than the original proposal and is approximately 3 miles long. The area south and west of the new trail is suitable for future expansion, and can be added to Trail #1, forming another loop.

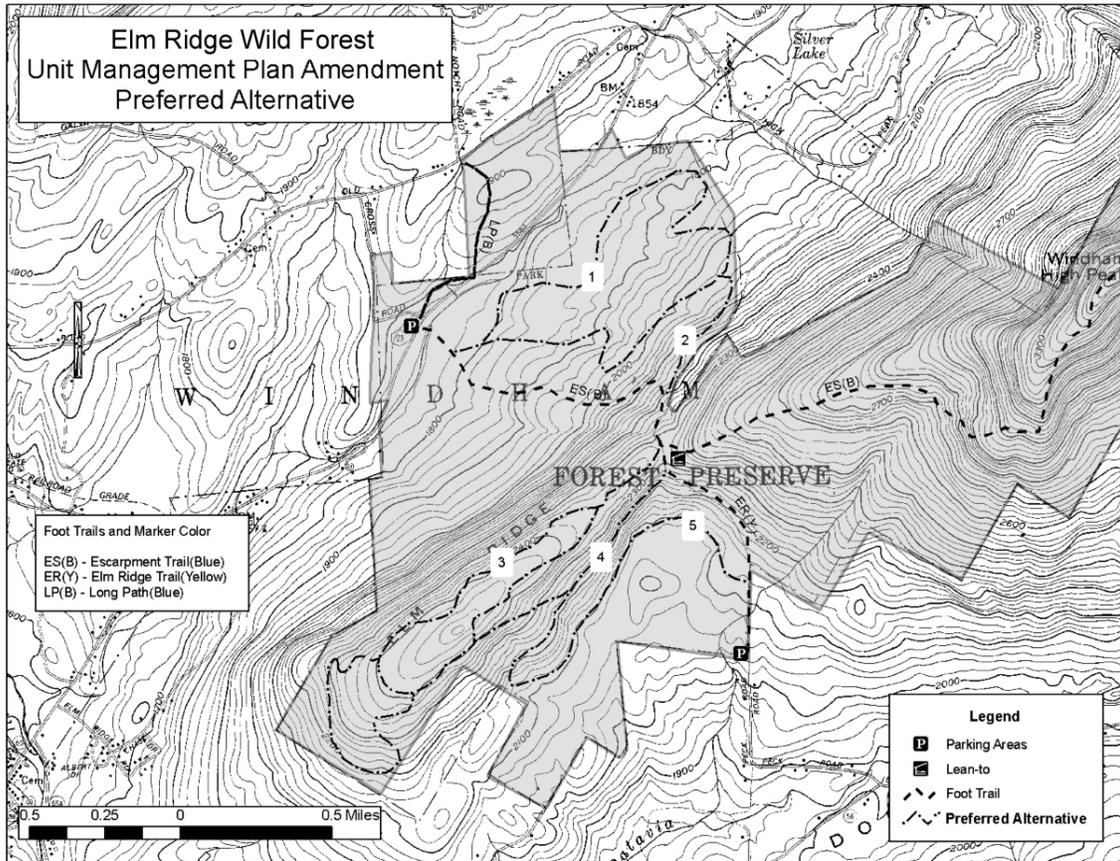
Adopt Trail #2 with a minor change, moving the trail off the old road and constructing it entirely on Forest Preserve. This trail segment is approximately 0.5 miles long.

Adopt Trail #3 as an extension of the Elm Ridge trail. It will join the Elm Ridge Trail near the junction of the Escarpment Trail and the current Elm Ridge Trail. This trail segment is approximately 3.5 miles long.

Adopt the portion of Trail #4 that currently exists as the old road and connect it to Trail #3, approximately 1.3 miles long.

Establish Trail #5 further upland out of the poorly drained soils. It will connect to Trail #4 and the Elm Ridge Trail. Its estimated length is 1.5 miles.

All together, there will be approximately 12 miles of multiple use trail designated on the Elm Ridge Wild Forest.



Action 8 (update to original text)

Inspect the Trailhead parking at Peck Road with the Town of Windham Superintendent of Highways. The Peck Road Trailhead may be expanded to accommodate 5 to 10 more vehicles to accommodate snow removal and parking to access to the Elm Ridge Wild Forest.

B. Maintenance and Rehabilitation of Facilities

Action 1

Rehabilitate the spring on the yellow trail to Peck Road. (Completed)

Action 2

Budget for limited snowplowing of two parking areas, East Windham and Peck Road. An alternative is to pursue agreements with governmental jurisdictions responsible for plowing adjacent roads, i.e., the Town of Windham and NYS Dept. of Transportation. (The Town of Windham plows the Peck Road parking area and Bureau of Recreation plows the Route 23 parking area.)

Action 3

Maintain all existing trails. Add no new trails at this time. Continue the cooperative agreement with the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference for maintenance of the trails and lean-to.

Action 4

Continue to maintain all existing vistas and add no new ones. Some unmarked vistas will be lost because several years of vegetation growth has occluded the views.

C. *Public Use Management and Control*

Action 1

Eliminate motor vehicle use along the un-maintained section of Ridge Road passing through this Unit. Barricade the south end of the Road next to the Peck Road parking area. Discuss alternatives with the Town of Windham. If barricading is approved, do so with a gate so that the Ridge Road can still be used as an administrative access for purposes of periodic facility maintenance, law enforcement patrol and emergency uses only. (A large boulder was placed to block motor vehicle access at the end of Peck Rd. in 2005, but it was pushed out of the way)

Action 2

Continue Forest Ranger and seasonal Assistant Forest Ranger patrols to educate and to control actions of users.

Action 3

Contact the NYS Department of Transportation regarding the Route 23 pull-off (see Issues) and determine a mutually agreeable solution for litter and dumping control. Options for discussion will be Departmental jurisdiction, maintenance responsibility and outright abandonment.

D. *Fish and Wildlife*

Fisheries

Action 1

Continue to manage all waters within this Unit under current statewide regulations.

Action 2

Continue to stock the Batavia Kill with brown trout.

Wildlife

Manage and protect wildlife species through enforcement of the Environmental Conservation Law and pertinent Rules and Regulations.

Because of Forest Preserve constraints on traditional habitat management, active management of game wildlife populations will be accomplished primarily through hunting and trapping regulations developed for broad Wildlife Management Units and Deer Management Units.

E. Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers

There are no water courses in this Unit classified under the provisions of Title 15, Article 27, of the Environmental Conservation Law (Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers Act).

F. Fire Management

The DEC is charged with protection from fire of all lands under its jurisdiction and by provisions of Article 9 of the Environmental Conservation Law. Department policy is to extinguish all wild fires regardless of land classification. This policy will dictate the fire management program for this Unit.

G. Staffing (Administrative)

There are adequate Lands and Forest supervisory staff to oversee this and other Forest Preserve Units within the Region.

The Division of Fish and Wildlife staff is currently adequate to handle the management activities of this Unit.

Forest Ranger staff (permanent) is insufficient to enforce the ECL in this and other Units. Maintenance or expansion of the Assistant Forest Ranger seasonal program will help.

The Division of Operations staff that administers all of the interior Forest Preserve work (with other duties) in Region 4 is presently a two-person team, one full-time and the other seasonal. This is inadequate to maintain this and other Units. Expand the Operations workforce by adding one full-time employee for interior work. Continue and improve upon the existing volunteer maintenance program with the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference.

H. Education

Action 1

Develop a brochure describing the Unit. It will include a map, rules of public use, sanitation and low-impact camping techniques. It will be for public distribution and for posting at trailhead information boards.

Action 2

Fully utilize any trailhead bulletin board to dispense any information about this Unit.

These Actions are supplemental to the personal contact of Forest Rangers and Assistant Forest Rangers.

I. Land Acquisition

Parking and public access are generally better in this Unit than in most of the Preserve. An exception is the separate Cave Mountain parcel which is surrounded by private lands and inaccessible to the public.

Action 1

Acquire key parcels of private land from willing sellers when these become available. Meanwhile, maintain contact with owners of these parcels.

Action 2

Acquire a permanent easement or a parcel of land in fee for access to the Cave Mountain parcel.

J. SEQR Requirements

The provisions of the State Environmental Quality Review Act have been met. Actions proposed in this UMP will not result in any significant environmental impact. A negative declaration has been filed. A copy of the Environmental Assessment Form (EAF) and the Negative Declaration can be found in the Appendices.

K. Relationship of Unit to Other Forest Preserve and Adjacent Areas

The Blackhead Range Wild Forest joins this Unit on the east. All other lands adjacent to this Unit are privately-owned rural lands and partially developed subdivisions.

L. Proposed Rules and Regulations

None

V. SCHEDULE FOR IMPLEMENTATION/BUDGET

A. *Recurring Annual Maintenance Costs*

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>COST</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>
Parking lot maintenance (includes mowing, litter p/u drainage, etc.2 existing main- tained lots)	\$1,050	Annual
Litter pickup and disposal	300	Annual
Foot trail maintenance (2.65 miles) (includes spring and bridge)	2,500	Annual
Sign and register maintenance	200	Annual
Information bulletin board maint.	200	Annual
Boundary line maintenance-painting and posting (11.1 miles on a 7-year rotation)	1,000	Annual
Assistant Forest Ranger (seasonal-4 month) patrols	4,700	Annual

B. *Non-Recurring Costs*

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>COST</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>
Add Information Bulletin Boards (2)-E. Windham and Peck Road	\$1,200	Year 1
Rehabilitate spring	150	Year 1
Barricade Ridge Road	1,000	Year 1
Develop and print brochure	300	Year 1
Land Acquisition	Variable (Not a main- tenance cost).	Year 1 - 5

The following three items are an update to original text, following a new schedule beginning 2009.

Design and Construct Expanded Trailhead Parking at Peck Road	5,000	Year 1
Mark new multi-use trails, erect directional signs (trails 3 and 4)	Volunteers	Year 1
Layout and construct new multi- use trails (trails 1, 2, 5 and con- nector between trail 3 and trail 4	Volunteers	Year 2

C. *Administrative Costs*

There are Actions that will be accomplished by existing full-time personnel as a part of regular program duties. Thus, these costs will not be shown as part of the management costs in the Unit. The Actions pertain to administration of:

- law enforcement
- fire control
- wildlife management
- fisheries management
- Forest Preserve management, including volunteer coordination
- real property management

D. *Cost Summary*

1.	Maintenance-Annual Cost	\$ 9,950
	TOTAL 5 Years	\$49,750
2.	Costs of planned projects (Actions)	
	TOTAL 5 Years	\$7,650

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Appendix A – Response to the Public Comments

Prepared by the Department of Environmental Conservation – October 2008

Verbal Comments from the April 30, 2008 Meeting

Several comments were voiced about the Draft Revision of the Catskill Park State Land Master Plan. They haven't been included in the summary below unless they are relevant to the Windham High Peak Wild Forest.

COMMENT: Are more trails possible in the future?

RESPONSE: New trails are being implemented in this amendment of the Unit Management Plan.

COMMENT: Bike specific destination area should have inter-weaving trails with various levels of difficulty, and other routes, rather than a one-way hike up and down a mountain.

RESPONSE: The proposed trails in this UMP amendment have been evaluated as multiuse, or shared-use, trails for hiking, mountain bicycling and cross-country skiing, not solely as mountain bicycling trails.

Written Comments

Written comments were received from eleven correspondents, seven of whom were speaking for organizations or government agencies. Several letters shared similar comments which have been consolidated below. All comment letters are attached to this summary of comments and responses.

COMMENT: Oppose the operation of mountain bicycles and snowmobiles in the Windham High Peak Wild Forest.

RESPONSE: The policies that guide management and use, on Forest Preserve classified as Wild Forest, recognize the recreational use of snowmobiles and mountain bicycles on trails so designated in the CPSLMP as appropriate or conforming uses. The UMP Amendment doesn't propose to designate snowmobile trails in the Wild Forest. The designation of trails for use by hiking, mountain bicycling and X-C skiing are also considered appropriate recreational uses for areas classified as Wild Forest and will be implemented through this UMP Amendment.

COMMENT: Support for the proposals in the Draft UMP Amendment, and support for the proposals in the Draft UMP Amendment, except for shared mountain bicycle and hiking on the Escarpment Trail, from its northern end to the Elm Ridge Trail junction

RESPONSE: Broad support for the proposed amendments was voiced at the meeting on April 30 at the Windham Town Hall and in the written comments. Several individuals stated their willingness to volunteer their labor on the new trail construction. The comments

opposed to mountain bicycle trail designation on the Escarpment Trail, as proposed in the draft amendment, included one with overall support of the draft amendment and one opposed to mountain bike designation on any of the trails. The portion of the Escarpment Trail in question is relatively short and will intersect new trails for hiking, mountain bicycling and cross-country skiing, consistent with Action 6 in “A. Facility Development and /or Removal” of the 1994 Windham High Peak Wild Forest Unit Management Plan.

COMMENT: No analysis has been made of the potential impacts of mountain bike use in the Windham High Peak Wild Forest. One of these potential impacts is the greater potential for the introduction of invasive species to the interior portion of the forest. Bicycles are a much greater vector for invasive species transmission than feet.

RESPONSE: The trails proposed by the advocates for an expanded multi-use trail system were analyzed for their potential impacts as discussed on page 7 in **A. Facility Development or Removal, Action 7**. The analysis of **Alternative A** identified site conditions that weren't suitable for locating a trail because of potential negative impacts on wildlife habitat, poor soil drainage, and a relatively unique plant community. The potential introduction of undesirable plant species, or invasive exotic plant species, was one of the factors considered to protect the dwarf shrub bog, where no invasive exotic plants were observed.

Mountain bike use has been identified as an appropriate recreational use in Wild Forests in the Catskill Forest Preserve Public Access Plan, the 2008 Catskill Park State Land Master Plan and the Wild Forest Principles. Hiking and mountain bicycling have similar impacts on trails, including soil compaction and damage to vegetation. Regular monitoring of trail conditions and rehabilitation of trail sections needing repair are important maintenance activities. The relative impacts of the two activities have been debated and studied with various conclusions.

During the past seven years no reports of conflicts between hikers and mountain bicyclists were received by the Forest Preserve Managers or passed on to Forest Rangers patrolling the Windham High Peak Wild Forest. It's possible that conflicts may occur but kiosks will advise all trail users of the shared uses of the trails. Mountain bicyclists will be encouraged to adopt the “Rules of the Trail” promoted by the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA), and yield right of way to all other trail users. New trail registers will attempt to monitor the number and types of users.

New trails increase the potential transmission of invasive exotic plants into areas of the forest that previously haven't been traversed regularly by foot traffic or mountain bicycles. Several sources offer guidance to prevent the spread of invasive exotic plants and provide the following recommended practices.

- Avoid moving through patches of undesirable vegetation
- Wash boots before going to a new area, clean equipment and clothing
- Wash mud from bicycles
- Maintain trailheads free of undesirable vegetation
- Post information at kiosks about how to prevent the spread of undesirable vegetation

These practices will be adopted to the extent possible. None of the guidelines attribute a greater potential to spread seeds of invasive exotic plants to bicycles.

COMMENT: Illegal ATV access and use may increase through improvements to Trail #4.

RESPONSE: Forest Rangers patrol the area and interact with Forest Preserve recreationists and neighboring landowners, and often receive information about illegal ATV use on the area. If a Forest Ranger observes illegal ATV use, the person involved in that activity may receive a ticket and face penalties in a Justice Court. Typically, a neighboring landowner who operates an ATV on Forest Preserve will cease that activity if advised of the rules and regulations concerning its use, and the Forest Ranger promises to enforce them with tickets. Additionally, signs are posted that warn against illegal ATV use where Trail #4 crosses the boundary line between private land and Forest Preserve.

The illegal use on Trail #4 has been observed for several years, and no sign of recent activity is apparent. It's not anticipated that improving the trail for hiking, mountain bicycling or cross-country skiing will increase the use by ATV's, and if it does, there may be more chance of it being observed and reported to the Forest Rangers for enforcement of the regulation against their use.

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

Identifying # _____

Date September 16, 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: Amendment of the Windham High Peak Wild Forest Unit Management Plan

SEQR Status: **Type 1** X
 Unlisted

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

Description of Action:

The Windham High Peak Wild Forest Unit Management Plan will be amended so that trails or portions of trails can be designating as multiple use trails for hiking, mountain bicycling and cross country skiing. In addition, trailhead parking will be expanded. These projects will involve layout, design and construction activities. An additional 12 miles of trails will be designated on this unit. Parking will be increased by approximately 30 spaces.

Location: (Include street address and the name of the municipality/county. A location map of appropriate scale is also recommended.)

Towns of Windham, Durham, Jewett and Cairo in Greene County

Reasons Supporting This Determination:

(See 617.7(a)-(c) for requirements of this determination; see 617.7(d) for Conditioned Negative Declaration)

Regarding design and layout, the trails will be located on old wood roads/farm lanes where appropriate. Often, these old roads are oriented straight up a slope, and are heavily eroded. It's often more prudent to leave them idle and establish new trails that are sustainable. A sustainable trail is oriented across the contours and has an out-sloped tread to allow surface water to move off the trail rather than run down its length. It will be located so that it avoids wet, low lying areas, or areas that are too flat to provide good drainage. Ideally, the slope along the trail's length will not exceed ½ the side slope of the hill side. An average maximum slope of 10% will also help to stabilize a trail. The trail tread should be approximately two feet wide with a cleared width of four

to six feet. During trail construction, activities such as excavation will be timed to avoid wet and muddy conditions. When trees or branches are cut for a trail clearing, they will be pulled beyond it and lopped to lie flat on the ground to hasten their decay. Stream crossings will be used that have low, stable banks, firm stream bottom and gentle approach slopes. They will be at right angles to the stream and construction will be during periods of low or normal flow. Stream bank stabilizing structures will be made of natural materials such as rock or wooden timbers and natural materials will be used to blend the structure into the natural surroundings.

The parking area construction and expansion projects will incorporate the use of Best Management Practices. The parking areas are located away from streams and on relatively flat, stable and well drained sites.

There will be some pruning of branches and a limited amount of tree cutting required for clearing of trails and construction of new portions of existing trails and parking areas. All tree cutting activities will be in compliance with Commissioner Policy LF-91-2, on Cutting, Removal or Destruction of Trees and Other Vegetation on Forest Preserve Lands. All construction will take place during periods of low to normal rainfall, avoiding wet, muddy conditions. Trail improvements will involve the use of hand tools. Some gravel may be added to surfaces as needed. Regular monitoring of trail conditions will minimize user impacts such as compaction to soil and damage to vegetation.

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: Frank Parks, Senior Forester

Address: NYS DEC - Lands and Forests, 65561 State Hwy 10, Stamford, NY 12167-9503

Telephone Number: (607) 652-3698

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)

Appendix C

State Environmental Quality Review

FULL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FORM

Purpose: The full EAF is designed to help applicants and agencies determine, in an orderly manner, whether a project or action may be significant. The question of whether an action may be significant is not always easy to answer. Frequently, there are aspects of a project that are subjective or unmeasurable. It is also understood that those who determine significance may have little or no formal knowledge of the environment or may not be technically expert in environmental analysis. In addition, many who have knowledge in one particular area may not be aware of the broader concerns affecting the question of significance.

The full EAF is intended to provide a method whereby applicants and agencies can be assured that the determination process has been orderly, comprehensive in nature, yet flexible enough to allow introduction of information to fit a project or action.

Full EAF Components: The full EAF is comprised of three parts:

- Part 1:** Provides objective data and information about a given project and its site. By identifying basic project data, it assists a reviewer in the analysis that takes place in Parts 2 and 3.
- Part 2:** Focuses on identifying the range of possible impacts that may occur from a project or action. It provides guidance as to whether an impact is likely to be considered small to moderate or whether it is a potentially-large impact. The form also identifies whether an impact can be mitigated or reduced.
- Part 3:** If any impact in Part 2 is identified as potentially-large, then Part 3 is used to evaluate whether or not the impact is actually important.

DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE -- Type 1 and Unlisted Actions

Identify the Portions of EAF completed for this project: Part 1 Part 2 Part 3

Upon review of the information recorded on this EAF (Parts 1 and 2 and 3 if appropriate), and any other supporting information, and considering both the magnitude and importance of each impact, it is reasonably determined by the lead agency that:

- A. The project will not result in any large and important impact(s) and, therefore, is one which **will not** have a significant impact on the environment, therefore **a negative declaration will be prepared.**
- B. Although the project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect for this Unlisted Action because the mitigation measures described in PART 3 have been required, therefore **a CONDITIONED negative declaration will be prepared.***
- C. The project may result in one or more large and important impacts that may have a significant impact on the environment, therefore **a positive declaration will be prepared.**

*A Conditioned Negative Declaration is only valid for Unlisted Actions

Windham High Peak Wild Forest Unit Management Plan Amendment

Name of Action

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

Name of Lead Agency

Paul Trotta

Print or Type Name of Responsible Officer in Lead Agency

Regional Forester

Title of Responsible Officer

Paul Trotta

Signature of Responsible Officer in Lead Agency

Frank Parks

Signature of Preparer (If different from responsible officer)

February 11, 2008

Date

PART 1--PROJECT INFORMATION
Prepared by Project Sponsor

NOTICE: This document is designed to assist in determining whether the action proposed may have a significant effect on the environment. Please complete the entire form, Parts A through E. Answers to these questions will be considered as part of the application for approval and may be subject to further verification and public review. Provide any additional information you believe will be needed to complete Parts 2 and 3.

It is expected that completion of the full EAF will be dependent on information currently available and will not involve new studies, research or investigation. If information requiring such additional work is unavailable, so indicate and specify each instance.

NAME OF ACTION Windham High Peak Wild Forest Unit Management Plan Amendment		
LOCATION OF ACTION (INCLUDE STREET ADDRESS, MUNICIPALITY AND COUNTY) Route 23, Towns of Windham, Cairo, Durham, and Jewett, Greene County		
NAME OF APPLICANT/SPONSOR New York State Department of Environmental Conservation		BUSINESS TELEPHONE (607)652-7365
ADDRESS 65561 State Highway 10		
CITY/PO Stamford	STATE NY	ZIP CODE 12167-9503
NAME OF OWNER (IF DIFFERENT) N/A		BUSINESS TELEPHONE ()
ADDRESS		
CITY/PO	STATE	ZIP CODE
DESCRIPTION OF ACTION Amend the Windham High Peak Wild Forest Unit Management Plan for designation of multiple use trails for hiking, mountain bicycling, and cross country skiing. This will include layout, design, and construction activities. Expansion of trailhead parking will include design and construction activities. Both of these actions will require minor tree cutting within the guidelines of LF-91-2, Policy for Cutting and Removal of Trees in the Forest Preserve.		

Please Complete Each Question--Indicate N.A. if not applicable

A. SITE DESCRIPTION

Physical setting of overall project, both developed and undeveloped areas.

1. Present Land Use: Urban Industrial Commercial Residential (suburban) Rural (non-farm)
 Forest Agriculture Other _____

2. Total acreage of project area: <u>4,250</u> acres.	PRESENTLY	AFTER COMPLETION
APPROXIMATE ACREAGE	acres	acres
Meadow or Brushland (Non-agricultural)	_____ acres	_____ acres
Forested	<u>4,228</u> acres	<u>4,228</u> acres
Agricultural (Includes orchards, cropland, pasture, etc.)	_____ acres	_____ acres
Wetland(Freshwater or tidal as per Articles 24,25 of ECL)	<u>22</u> acres	<u>22</u> acres
Water Surface Area	_____ acres	_____ acres
Unvegetated (Rock, earth or fill)	_____ acres	_____ acres
Roads, buildings and other paved surfaces	_____ acres	_____ acres
Other (Indicate type) _____	_____ acres	_____ acres

3. What is predominant soil type(s) on project site? Halcott and Willowemoc
- a. Soil drainage: Well drained 25 % of site Moderately well drained 60 % of site.
 Poorly drained 15 % of site

- b. If any agricultural land is involved, how many acres of soil are classified within soil group 1 through 4 of the NYS Land Classification System? N/A Acres (see 1NYCRR 370).
4. Are there bedrock outcroppings on project site? YES NO
a. What is depth to bedrock? (in feet) 1.5 to 5
5. Approximate percentage of proposed project site with slopes: 0-10% 10 % 10-15% 15 %
 15% or greater 75 %
6. Is project substantially contiguous to, or contain a building, site, or district, listed on the State or National Registers of Historic Places? YES NO
7. Is project substantially contiguous to a site listed on the Register of National Natural Landmarks? YES NO
8. What is the depth of the water table? 2.5 -6 (in feet)
9. Is site located over a primary, principal, or sole source aquifer? YES NO
10. Do hunting, fishing or shell fishing opportunities presently exist in the project area? YES NO
11. Does project site contain any species of plant or animal life that is identified as threatened or endangered? YES NO
According to: Natural Heritage Database
Identify each species: N/A
12. Are there any unique or unusual land forms on the project site? (i.e., cliffs, dunes, other geological formations)? YES NO
Describe: Rock outcrops are fairly common along the Escarpment Trail on Windham High Peak and a Dwarf Shrub Bog is located within the boundary of the Wild Forest.
13. Is the project site presently used by the community or neighborhood as an open space or recreation area? YES NO
If yes, explain Residents and non-residents use the Wild Forest for outdoor activities that include hiking, hunting, mountain bicycling and other forms of unconfined outdoor activity.
14. Does the present site include scenic views known to be important to the community? YES NO
15. Streams within or contiguous to project area: Bowery Creek and Batavia Kill
a. Name of Stream and name of River to which it is tributary Bowery Creek (Hudson River) Batavia Kill(Mohawk River)
16. Lakes, ponds, wetland areas within or contiguous to project area:
a. Name: H-8 (Type 2 Wetland)
b. Size (in acres): 21.6
17. Is the site served by existing public utilities? YES NO
a. If YES, does sufficient capacity exist to allow connection? YES NO
b. If YES, will improvements be necessary to allow connection? YES NO
18. Is the site located in an agricultural district certified pursuant to Agriculture and Markets Law, Article 25-AA, Section 303 and 304? YES NO
19. Is the site located in or substantially contiguous to a Critical Environmental Area designated pursuant to Article 8 of the ECL, and 6 NYCRR 617? YES NO
20. Has the site ever been used for the disposal of solid or hazardous wastes? YES NO

B. Project Description

1. Physical dimensions and scale of project (fill in dimensions as appropriate).
- a. Total contiguous acreage owned or controlled by project sponsor 4,250 acres.
- b. Project acreage to be developed: 0.5 acres initially; 0.5 acres ultimately.
- c. Project acreage to remain undeveloped 4,249.5 acres.
- d. Length of project, in miles: 12 (if appropriate)
- e. If the project is an expansion, indicate percent of expansion proposed N/A %
- f. Number of off-street parking spaces existing 40 ; proposed 70

21. Will project result in an increase in energy use? YES NO
 If yes, indicate type(s) _____
22. If water supply is from wells, indicate pumping capacity N/A gallons/minute.
23. Total anticipated water usage per day 0 gallons/day.
24. Does project involve Local, State or Federal funding? YES NO
 If yes, explain: **State funding for salaries, equipment and materials to implement the projects in the Unit Management Plan amendment.**

25. Approvals Required:

	YES	NO	TYPE	SUBMITTAL DATE
City, Town, Village Board	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
City, Town, Village Planning Board	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
City, Town Zoning Board	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
City, County Health Department	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Other Local Agencies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Other Regional Agencies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
State Agencies	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	NYS DEC Commissioner	?
Federal Agencies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____

C. Zoning and Planning Information

1. Does proposed action involve a planning or zoning decision? YES NO
 If Yes, indicate decision required:
 Zoning amendment Zoning variance New/revision of master plan Subdivision
 Site plan Special use permit Resource management plan Other _____

2. What is the zoning classification(s) of the site? Forest Preserve - Wild Forest
3. What is the maximum potential development of the site if developed as permitted by the present zoning?

Forest Preserve - Wild Forest

4. What is the proposed zoning of the site? Forest Preserve - Wild Forest
5. What is the maximum potential development of the site if developed as permitted by the proposed zoning?

Forest Preserve - Wild Forest

6. Is the proposed action consistent with the recommended uses in adopted local land use plans? YES NO
7. What are the predominant land use(s) and zoning classifications within a ¼ mile radius of proposed action?

Residential and recreation/open space

8. Is the proposed action compatible with adjoining/surrounding land uses with a ¼ mile? YES NO
9. If the proposed action is the subdivision of land, how many lots are proposed? N/A
 a. What is the minimum lot size proposed? _____
10. Will proposed action require any authorization(s) for the formation of sewer or water districts? YES NO
11. Will the proposed action create a demand for any community provided services (recreation, education, police, fire protection)? YES NO
 a. If yes, is existing capacity sufficient to handle projected demand? YES NO
12. Will the proposed action result in the generation of traffic significantly above present levels? YES NO
 a. If yes, is the existing road network adequate to handle the additional traffic. YES NO

D. Informational Details

Attach any additional information as may be needed to clarify your project. If there are or may be any adverse impacts associated with your proposal, please discuss such impacts and the measures which you propose to mitigate or avoid them.

E. Verification

I certify that the information provided above is true to the best of my knowledge.

Applicant/Sponsor Name Paul Trotta Date February 11, 2008

Signature Paul Trotta Title Regional Forester

If the action is in the Coastal Area, and you are a state agency, complete the Coastal Assessment Form before proceeding with this assessment.

PART 2 - PROJECT IMPACTS AND THEIR MAGNITUDE

Responsibility of Lead Agency

General Information (Read Carefully)

- In completing the form the reviewer should be guided by the question: Have my responses and determinations been **reasonable**? The reviewer is not expected to be an expert environmental analyst.
- The **Examples** provided are to assist the reviewer by showing types of impacts and wherever possible the threshold of magnitude that would trigger a response in column 2. The examples are generally applicable throughout the State and for most situations. But, for any specific project or site other examples and/or lower thresholds may be appropriate for a Potential Large Impact response, thus requiring evaluation in Part 3.
- The impacts of each project, on each site, in each locality, will vary. Therefore, the examples are illustrative and have been offered as guidance. They do not constitute an exhaustive list of impacts and thresholds to answer each question.
- The number of examples per question does not indicate the importance of each question.
- In identifying impacts, consider long term, short term and cumulative effects.

Instructions (Read carefully)

- Answer each of the 20 questions in PART 2. Answer **Yes** if there will be **any** impact.
- Maybe** answers should be considered as **Yes** answers.
- If answering **Yes** to a question then check the appropriate box(column 1 or 2)to indicate the potential size of the impact. If impact threshold equals or exceeds any example provided, check column 2. If impact will occur but threshold is lower than example, check column 1.
- Identifying that an Impact will be potentially large (column 2) does not mean that it is also necessarily **significant**. Any large impact must be evaluated in PART 3 to determine significance. Identifying an impact in column 2 simply asks that it be looked at further.
- If reviewer has doubt about size of the impact then consider the impact as potentially large and proceed to PART 3.
- If a potentially large impact checked in column 2 can be mitigated by change(s) in the project to a small to moderate impact, also check the **Yes** box in column 3. A **No** response indicates that such a reduction is not possible. This must be explained in Part 3.

IMPACT ON LAND

1. Will the Proposed Action result in a physical **NO** **YES** change to the project site?

Examples that would apply to column 2

Any construction on slopes of 15% or greater, (15 foot rise per 100 foot of length), or where the general slopes in the project area exceed 10%.
 Construction on land where the depth to the water table is less than 3 feet.
 Construction of paved parking area for 1,000 or more vehicles.

Construction on land where bedrock is exposed or generally within 3 feet of existing ground surface.
 Construction that will continue for more than 1 year or involve more than one phase or stage.

	1 Small to Moderate Impact	2 Potential Large Impact	3 Can Impact be Mitigated by Project Change
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Y <input type="checkbox"/> es <input type="checkbox"/> No
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Excavation for mining purposes that would remove more than 1,000 tons of natural material (i.e., rock or soil) per year. Construction or expansion of a sanitary landfill.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Construction in a designated floodway.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Other impacts Trailhead parking expansion, new trail construction	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Y <input type="checkbox"/> es <input type="checkbox"/> No
2. Will there be an effect to any unique or unusual land forms found on the site? (i.e., cliffs, dunes, geological) Specific land forms: _____	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

	1 Small to Moderate Impact	2 Potential Large Impact	3 Can Impact be Mitigated by Project Change
IMPACT ON WATER			
3. Will Proposed Action affect any water body designated as protected? (Under Articles 15, 24, 25 of the Environmental Conservation Law, ECL) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES			
Examples that would apply to column 2			
Developable area of site contains a protected water body.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Dredging more than 100 cubic yards of material from channel of a protected stream.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Extension of utility distribution facilities through a protected water body.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Construction in a designated freshwater or tidal wetland.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Other impacts _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
4. Will Proposed Action affect any non-protected existing or new body of water? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES			
Examples that would apply to column 2			
A 10% increase or decrease in the surface area of any body of water or more than a 10 acre increase or decrease.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Construction of a body of water that exceeds 10 acres of surface area.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Other impacts _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
5. Will Proposed Action affect surface or groundwater quality or quantity? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES			
Examples that would apply to column 2			
Proposed Action will require a discharge permit.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Proposed Action requires use of a source of water that does not have approval to serve proposed (project) action.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Proposed Action requires water supply from wells with greater than 45 gallons per minute pumping capacity.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Construction or operation causing any contamination of a water supply system.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Proposed Action will adversely affect groundwater.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Liquid effluent will be conveyed off the site to facilities which presently do not exist or have inadequate capacity.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Proposed Action would use water in excess of 20,000 gallons per day.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

	1 Small to Moderate Impact	2 Potential Large Impact	3 Can Impact be Mitigated by Project Change	
Proposed Action will likely cause siltation or other discharge into an existing body of water to the extent that there will be an obvious visual contrast to natural conditions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Proposed Action will require the storage of petroleum or chemical products greater than 1,100 gallons.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Proposed Action will allow residential uses in areas without water and/or sewer services.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Proposed Action locates commercial and/or industrial uses which may require new or expansion of existing waste treatment and/or storage facilities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Other impacts _____				
6. Will Proposed Action alter drainage flow or patterns, or surface water runoff?			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES				
Examples that would apply to column 2				
Proposed Action would change flood water flows	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Proposed Action may cause substantial erosion.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Proposed Action is incompatible with existing drainage patterns.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Proposed Action will allow development in a designated floodway.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Other impacts _____			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
IMPACT ON AIR				
7. Will Proposed Action affect air quality?				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES				
Examples that would apply to column 2				
Proposed Action will induce 1,000 or more vehicle trips in any given hour.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Proposed Action will result in the incineration of more than 1 ton of refuse per hour.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Emission rate of total contaminants will exceed 5 lbs. per hour or a heat source producing more than 10 million BTU's per hour.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Proposed Action will allow an increase in the amount of land committed to industrial use.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Proposed Action will allow an increase in the density of industrial development within existing industrial areas.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Other impacts _____			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
IMPACT ON PLANTS AND ANIMALS				
8. Will Proposed Action affect any threatened or endangered species?				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES				
Examples that would apply to column 2				
Reduction of one or more species listed on the New York or Federal list, using the site, over or near the site, or found on the site.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Removal of any portion of a critical or significant wildlife habitat.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Application of pesticide or herbicide more than twice a year, other than for agricultural purposes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Other impacts _____				

	1 Small to Moderate Impact	2 Potential Large Impact	3 Can Impact be Mitigated by Project Change	
			Yes	No
<p>9. Will Proposed Action substantially affect non-threatened or non-endangered species?</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES</p> <p>Examples that would apply to column 2 Proposed Action would substantially interfere with any resident or migratory fish, shellfish or wildlife species. Proposed Action requires the removal of more than 10 acres of mature forest (over 100 years of age) or other locally important vegetation.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
IMPACT ON AGRICULTURAL LAND RESOURCES				
<p>10. Will Proposed Action affect agricultural land resources?</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES</p> <p>Examples that would apply to column 2 The Proposed Action would sever, cross or limit access to agricultural land (includes cropland, hayfields, pasture, vineyard, orchard, etc.) Construction activity would excavate or compact the soil profile of agricultural land. The Proposed Action would irreversibly convert more than 10 acres of agricultural land or, if located in an Agricultural District, more than 2.5 acres of agricultural land. The Proposed Action would disrupt or prevent installation of agricultural land management systems (e.g., subsurface drain lines, outlet ditches, strip cropping); or create a need for such measures (e.g. cause a farm field to drain poorly due to increased runoff). Other impacts _____</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
IMPACT ON AESTHETIC RESOURCES				
<p>11. Will Proposed Action affect aesthetic resources? (If necessary, use the Visual EAF Addendum in Section 617.20, Appendix B.)</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES</p> <p>Examples that would apply to column 2 Proposed land uses, or project components obviously different from or in sharp contrast to current surrounding land use patterns, whether man-made or natural. Proposed land uses, or project components visible to users of aesthetic resources which will eliminate or significantly reduce their enjoyment of the aesthetic qualities of that resource. Project components that will result in the elimination or significant screening of scenic views known to be important to the area. Other impacts _____</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
IMPACT ON HISTORIC AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES				
<p>12. Will Proposed Action impact any site or structure of historic, prehistoric or paleontological importance?</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES</p> <p>Examples that would apply to column 2 Proposed Action occurring wholly or partially within or substantially contiguous to any facility or site listed on the State or National Register of historic places. Any impact to an archaeological site or fossil bed located within the project site.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

Proposed Action will occur in an area designated as sensitive for archaeological sites on the NYS Site Inventory.

Other impacts _____

	1 Small to Moderate Impact	2 Potential Large Impact	3 Can Impact be Mitigated by Project Change	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
IMPACT ON OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION				
13. Will Proposed Action affect the quantity or quality of existing or future open spaces or recreational opportunities? <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES				
Examples that would apply to column 2 The permanent foreclosure of a future recreational opportunity.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
A major reduction of an open space important to the community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Other impacts It will increase recreational opportunities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
IMPACT ON CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL AREAS				
14. Will Proposed Action impact the exceptional or unique characteristics of a critical environmental area (CEA) established pursuant to subdivision 6NYCRR 617.14(g)? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES				
Examples that would apply to column 2				
Proposed Action to locate within the CEA?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Proposed Action will result in a reduction in the quantity of the resource?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Proposed Action will result in a reduction in the quality of the resource?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Proposed Action will impact the use, function or enjoyment of the resource?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Other impacts _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
IMPACT ON TRANSPORTATION				
15. Will there be an effect to existing transportation systems? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES				
Examples that would apply to column 2 Alteration of present patterns of movement of people and/or goods.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Proposed Action will result in major traffic problems.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Other impacts _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
IMPACT ON ENERGY				
16. Will Proposed Action affect the community's sources of fuel or energy supply? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES				
Examples that would apply to column 2				

	1 Small to Moderate Impact	2 Potential Large Impact	3 Can Impact be Mitigated by Project Change	
Proposed Action will replace or eliminate existing facilities, structures or areas of historic importance to the community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Development will create a demand for additional community services (e.g. schools, police and fire, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Proposed Action will set an important precedent for future projects.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Proposed Action will create or eliminate employment.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Other impacts _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

20. Is there, or is there likely to be, public controversy related to potential adverse environment impacts?

NO YES

If Any Action in Part 2 Is Identified as a Potential Large Impact or If you Cannot Determine the Magnitude of Impact, Proceed to Part 3

Part 3 - EVALUATION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF IMPACTS

Responsibility of Lead Agency

Part 3 must be prepared if one or more impact(s) is considered to be potentially large, even if the impact(s) may be mitigated.

Instructions

Discuss the following for each impact identified in Column 2 of Part 2:

- Briefly describe the impact.
- Describe (if applicable) how the impact could be mitigated or reduced to a small to moderate impact by _____ project change(s).
- Based on the information available, decide if it is reasonable to conclude that this impact is **important**.

To answer the question of importance, consider:

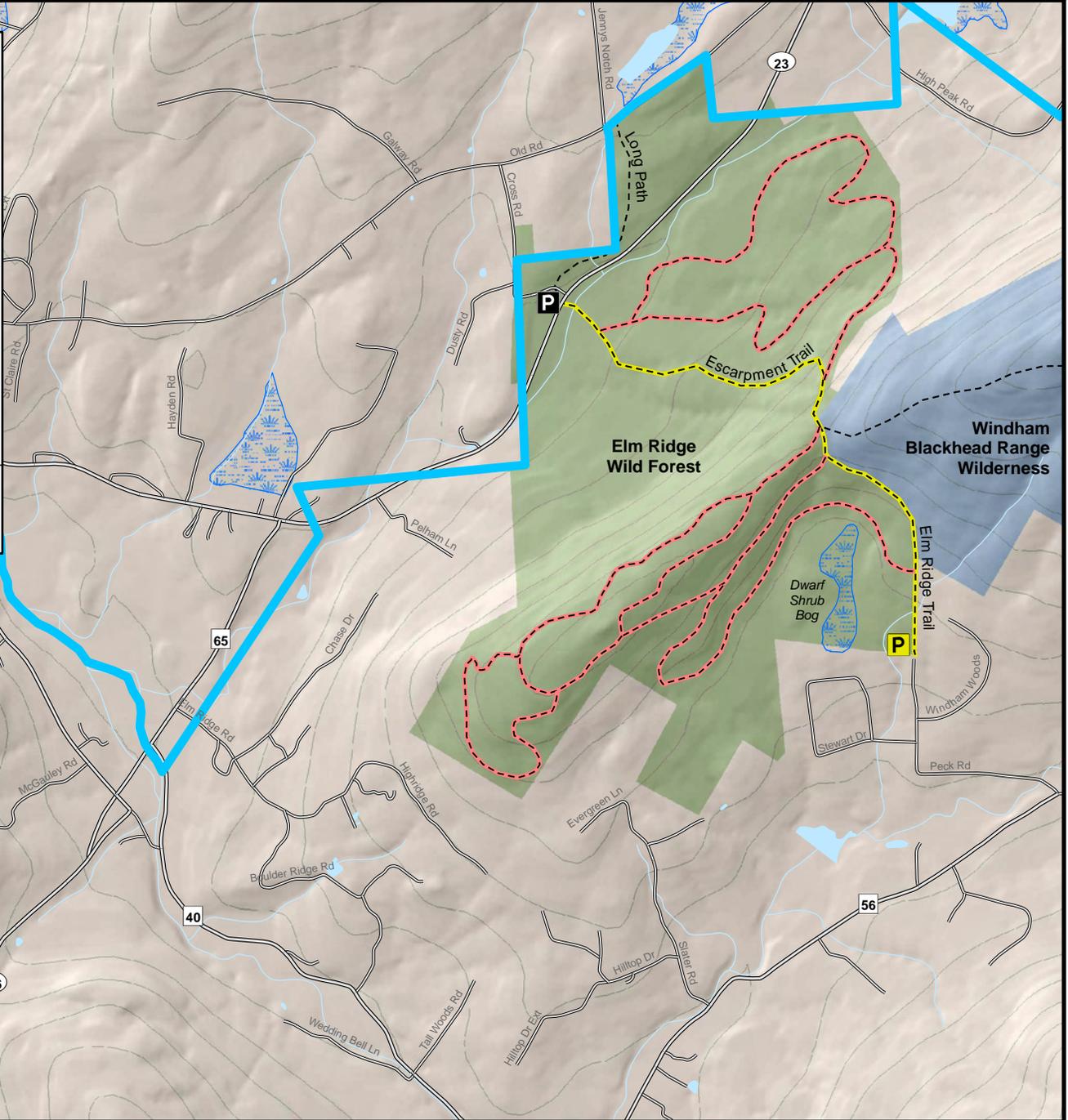
- The probability of the impact occurring
- The duration of the impact
- Its irreversibility, including permanently lost resources of value
- Whether the impact can or will be controlled
- The regional consequence of the impact
- Its potential divergence from local needs and goals
- Whether known objections to the project relate to this impact.

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- - - Existing Hiking / X-Country Ski Trail
- - - Existing Hiking / X-Country Ski Trail with Proposed Mtn. Bike Use
- - - Proposed Hiking / X-Country Ski / Mtn. Bike Trail
- P** Existing Parking Area
- P** Existing Parking Area with Proposed Expansion
- DEC-Regulated Wetland
- Public Road
- Stream
- Lake or Pond

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles



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