



Department of
Environmental
Conservation

Division of Lands & Forests

Grass River Conservation Easement

Draft RECREATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

County of St. Lawrence
Towns of Clare, Clifton and Colton

September 2016

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Grass River Conservation Easement
Draft Recreation Management Plan
September, 2016

REVIEW DECLARATION

NYSDEC has responsibility for managing public access and recreation on the Grass River Conservation Easement property, in accordance with the content of the conservation easement. The Parties agree that this Recreation Management Plan is consistent with the terms, conditions, and purposes of the conservation easement and reviewed/approved for implementing the public recreation program on the Grass River Conservation Easement.

Robert K. Davies, Director
Division of Lands & Forests

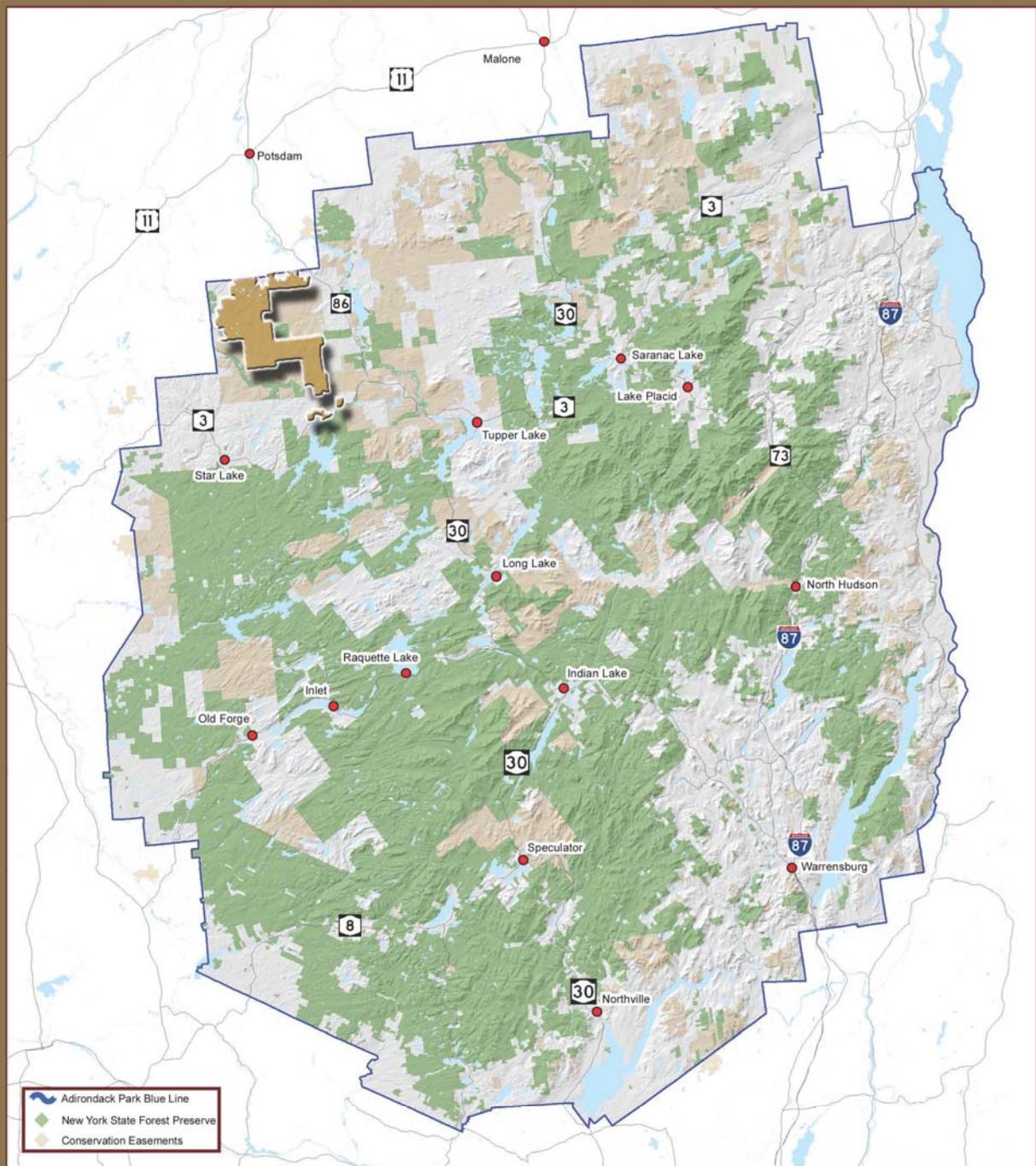
Date

This RMP has been reviewed/approved by the Property Owner or designee:

Ken Sewell, COO
The Molpus Woodlands Group

Date

Grass River Conservation Easement
Draft Recreation Management Plan
September, 2016



New York State
Department of Environmental Conservation
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Contents

PREFACE	8
Use of Conservation Easements	8
I. INTRODUCTION	9
A. Purpose of the Recreation Management Plan (RMP).....	9
II. PROPERTY OVERVIEW.....	10
A. Geographic Information.....	10
1. Property Description and Access	10
2. Tract, Parcel or Compartment Descriptions.....	10
B. DEC Grass River Management Unit.....	12
1. Landscape Relationships to other Management Units.....	12
2. Relationship of Public Recreation between Management Units.....	13
III. NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES	13
A. Physical Resources.....	13
1. Terrain/Topography	13
2. Geology and Soils.....	14
3. Water.....	16
4. Wetlands.....	17
B. Biological Resources	17
1. Fish and Wildlife	17
2. Vegetation	18
3. Natural Heritage Program Elements of Occurrence.....	19
4. Invasive Species	19
C. Cultural Resources	20
1. Cultural and Archaeological.....	20
2. Visual/Scenic Resources	20
3. Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers	20
IV. LANDOWNER MANAGEMENT AND USE	21
A. Property History	21
B. Current Forestry Uses	21
1. Forest Management Activities.....	21
2. Logging Closure Zones.....	22
C. Current Non-Forestry Uses of the Property.....	22
1. Recreational Leases	22
D. Property Infrastructure	22
1. Existing Infrastructure	22
2. Forestry Structures and Other Infrastructure.....	23

V. RELATIONSHIP OF PROPERTY TO ADJACENT LANDS	23
VI. CONSERVATION EASEMENT AFFIRMATIVE RIGHTS	23
A. Recreation Access and Use Rights	24
1. Non-motorized Access - Use and Activities	24
2. Motorized Access - Use and Activities	25
B. Public Use of Existing Infrastructure	25
C. Recreation Signs	27
D. Construction of New Infrastructure	28
E. Other CE Provisions Affecting Public Use	28
1. Barriers, Gates, and Locks	28
2. Boundary Line Marking	28
3. Search, Rescue, Fire, Emergency Response, and Law Enforcement.....	28
F. Current Public Recreation Use.....	29
VII. PUBLIC USE ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT	29
A. Administration.....	29
1. Laws, Policies, and Memoranda	29
2. Management Authority, Staff and Responsibility	30
3. Regulatory Requirements, Approvals and Procedures	31
B. Public Recreation Management Principals, Goals and Objectives.....	33
1. Management Principles.....	33
2. Management Goals and Objectives.....	33
3. Best Management Practices.....	34
4. Guidelines and Standards.....	35
C. Public Input.....	36
D. Recreation Use Opportunities and Constraints.....	36
1. Potential Activities and Opportunities.....	36
2. Specific Recreational Activities.....	37
3. Management and Natural Resource Constraints	38
VIII. PROPOSED RECREATION MANAGEMENT ACTIONS.....	39
A. General Recreation Management Actions.....	39
1. Boundary Identification:.....	39
2. Recreation Enforcement:	39
3. Recreation Monitoring	39
B. Specific Public Use Management	39
C. Recreational Support Facilities.....	42
1. Trailheads:	42
2. Boat Launches.....	42

3.	Roads:.....	42
4.	Parking Lots:	42
5.	Camp Sites:.....	42
6.	Bridges:.....	42
7.	Information Kiosks and Entrance Signs:	43
8.	ADA Accessible Structures:	43
9.	Signage.....	43
IX.	IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE AND ESTIMATED BUDGET	43
X.	COMPLIANCE	46
XI.	APPENDICES	47
A.	SEORA.....	47
B.	Public Use Access.....	49
C.	Inventory and Condition of Shared Roads, Trails, and Facilities: (see Baseline Report)	53
D.	Shared Road and Infrastructure Maintenance	54
E.	Road and Trail Standards and Specifications.....	55
F.	CE Public Recreation Road & Trail Sign Guidance Manual	58
G.	Public Comments and Response Summary to Draft Plan (Reserved)	86
H.	References: Exhibits 1 – 8 as presented in the Grass River Conservation Easement Document	87
I.	Overall Recreation Maps	97

PREFACE

Use of Conservation Easements

The Legislature of the State of New York has declared the public policy of the State to be the conservation, preservation, and protection of its environmental assets and natural and man-made resources. In addition to purchasing conservation lands on behalf of the People of the State, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC or DEC) also protects land and natural resources by acquiring less than full interests in land, using a permanent legal agreement called a conservation easement. Conservation easements are used widely across the United States by government and non-profit land conservation organizations to protect a variety of properties with important natural resources and other landscape values such as water quality, wildlife habitat and sensitive ecosystems, wetlands and riparian areas, scenic areas such as meadows and ridgelines, agricultural land, working forests, and historic sites. The primary function of easements is to limit or eliminate future development and undesirable land uses on a property, while allowing for continued private ownership and traditional management. Some conservation easements allow public access to the protected property and some do not.

New York State acquires conservation easements primarily on properties that buffer existing State lands, provide additional public recreational opportunities, and/or maintain large working forests. There are now hundreds of thousands of acres of land in New York that are protected by conservation easements acquired by the State. Most of that land consists of large tracts of commercial timber land in the Adirondack and Tug Hill regions; however DEC also holds easements on a variety of other properties across the State.

On most large working forest conservation easement properties, the State has acquired some level of public recreation rights in addition to development and land use restrictions. In some cases, a wide range of public recreational use is permitted, and in others public access is very limited. The amount of public access depends largely on the goals and objectives of the landowner and the State at the time the easement was negotiated. All of these lands are actively managed for forest products, and many of the companies who own the land also rely on income from private hunting and fishing club leases.

This recreation management plan will explain the combination of public recreational rights the State acquired through the conservation easement and how these rights are to be implemented on the property in a compatible way with the rights (forest management, private recreation activities) which were retained by the landowner.

I. INTRODUCTION

This Recreation Management Plan applies to those lands subject to a conservation easement held by DEC within St. Lawrence County, in the Town(s) of Clare, Clifton, and Colton, referred to herein as the Grass River Conservation Easement (also referred to in this RMP as the “Protected Property”, “Property”, “GRCE”, or “Easement Property”). This was Acquisition Project #45-268.

A. Purpose of the Recreation Management Plan (RMP)

The Grass River Conservation Easement grants the State of New York specific legal interests in the easement property, including a guaranteed right to permit public access (with certain limitations) to some of the lands for participation in certain natural resource-based outdoor recreation activities.

Public recreation access to privately-owned conservation easement lands is guided by a Recreation Management Plan (RMP) that is developed for each easement property. Preparation of this RMP is required in accordance with some Conservation Easements. It is the position of the Department to develop an RMP for each conservation easement property and provide a copy to the property owner (“the Landowner”) for review even if the Easement may not require the DEC to do such. This RMP addresses the State’s role in planning, implementing, and managing for public access and recreation rights on the Grass River Easement property. It also describes DEC’s planning process and provides opportunities for stakeholders to participate in that process.

This RMP has been developed pursuant to, and is consistent with, relevant provisions of the Environmental Conservation Law (ECL), Executive Law, NYSDEC rules and regulations, NYSDEC policies and procedures, the NY State Environmental Quality and Review Act (SEQRA), *DEC/APA MOU Concerning State-owned Conservation Easements on Private Lands within the Adirondack Park* (if applicable) and the terms and conditions of the recorded Conservation Easement document that apply specifically to this Property. The Landowner has been consulted during the public recreation planning process and has had an opportunity to review and comment on this RMP. A Full Environmental Assessment Form (EAF) has been prepared for this RMP in accordance with SEQRA.

The purpose of a RMP is to establish a planned and written management scenario, to implement the State's rights and protect the property rights of the private fee owner, as specified in the Conservation Easement. It is intended that such management document remain consistent and in effect over time, despite changes in agency personnel or private land ownership. The RMP integrates consideration of pertinent legislation, legal codes, rules and regulations, policies, easement-specific requirements and conditions, and property-specific information into a single document. Provided in the RMP will be a description of the property and past and present uses; relevant public recreation opportunities and limitations; how public access and recreation will be implemented and managed; who will have responsibility for various management tasks; identification of public recreation facilities that may already exist on the property; new public recreation facilities and improvements proposed to be constructed and maintained; and how public access is anticipated to interact with other uses of the property such as active forest management and private leasing programs. The RMP preparation process and resulting document provides a means for discussing and clarifying pertinent issues, clearly stating management goals and

mechanisms, review of the proposed public recreation activities and actions, and implementing public recreation on the easement property. Periodically RMPs may be revised, updated, or amended.

II. Property Overview

A. Geographic Information

1. Property Description and Access

The Grass River Conservation Easement (GRCE), centered at 74059'W, 44023'N, lies within the greater Grass River Management Unit (GRMU). The area occupies a geologic / ecologic transition zone between the Adirondack Mountains to the southeast and the St Lawrence River Valley to the north. Most of the lands within the boundary of the Unit are part of the Grass River watershed, thus yielding the name for the overall unit and easement. The 288-square mile GRMU is located completely within the Adirondack Park. All watercourses within the area flow into the St. Lawrence River via the Grass and Raquette Rivers.

The property lies within the townships of Clare, Clifton and Colton. The easement acreage by township is shown below:

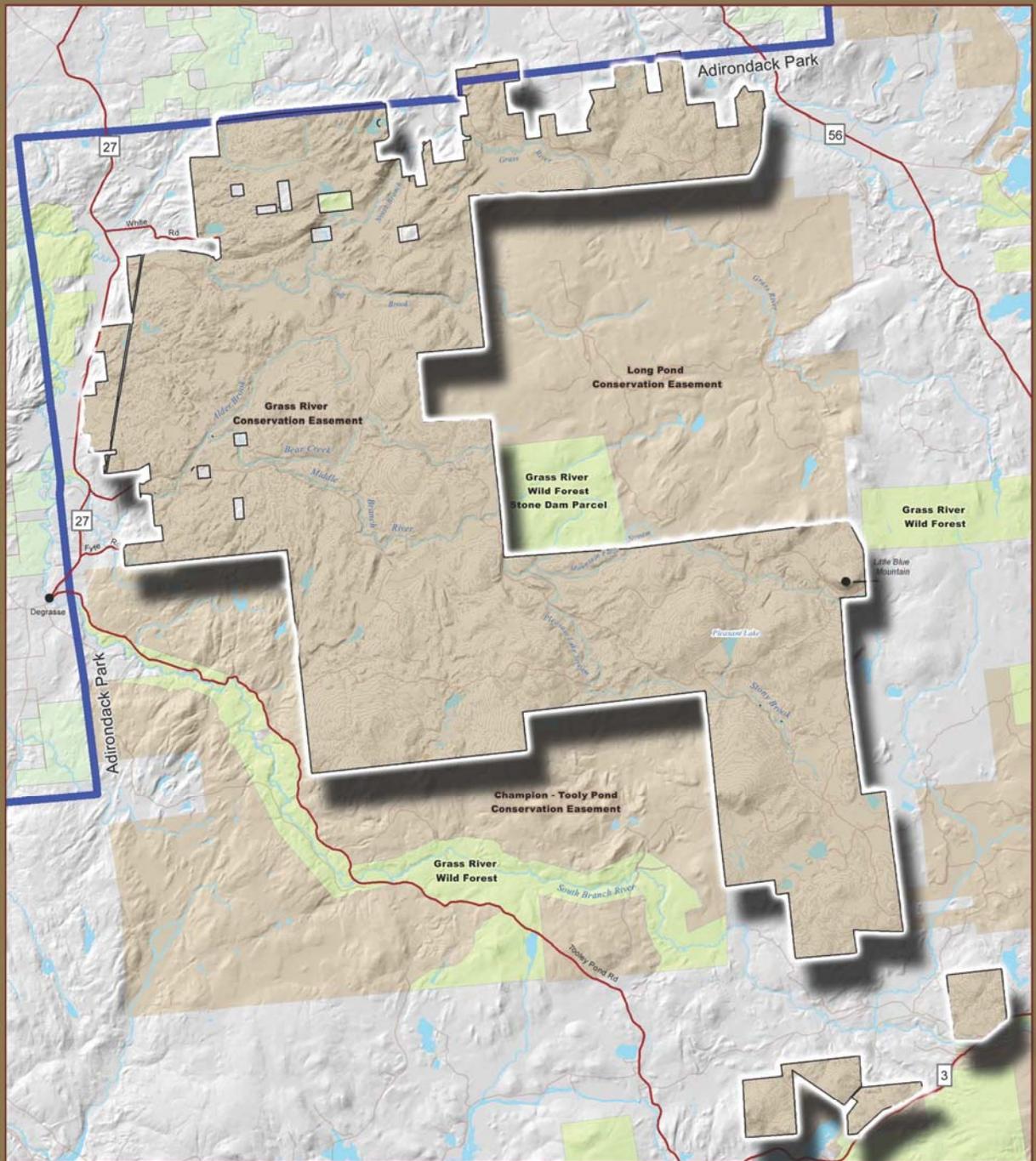
Approximate acres by Town (based upon mapped acres within current DEC GIS System)

County	Town	Acres
St Lawrence	Clare	30,510
	Clifton	13,816
	Colton	7,624
Total		51,950

Access to the easement is available from Tooley Road in DeGrasse, from Dean and White Roads off County Highway 27, at entrances along State Route 3 on the south, and along State Routes 68 and 56 via Orbed, Little John, and Cayey Roads in the north. Interior access is provided by more than 50 miles of improved or partially improved gravel roads.

2. Tract, Parcel or Compartment Descriptions

Within the larger land unit, the Grass River Easement comprises a large contiguous parcel of 50,262 acres and two smaller parcels south of the main section, 1,122 and 566 acres in size. The Property is managed as one unit and is not divided into tracts.



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B. DEC Grass River Management Unit

The Grass River Management Unit encompasses Forest Preserve parcels and easement lands bounded on the east by SH 56, on the south by SH 3 and the Oswegatchie River, and the west and north by the Adirondack Park boundary. The Unit, located in the northwestern corner of the Adirondack Park, includes approximately 13,000 acres of Forest Preserve and about 106,000 acres of conservation easements located in the Towns of Clare, Clifton, Colton and Fine in St. Lawrence County.

There are five separate Forest Preserve parcels ranging from about 1300 acres to a little over 6000 acres. Seven isolated Forest Preserve parcels ranging from about 5 acres to approximately 100 acres are also included in the unit.

There are four large easements on corporate owned lands in the unit; Tooley Pond, Long Pond, Sevey's, and Grass River. There is one small family easement, the Silver Lake Easement north of Cranberry Lake. There is also an easement for a trail across the Roaring Brook Tract, a private property formerly owned by Lassiter Inc. and now owned by MWF Adirondacks, LLC, which allows for a foot trail connecting the Church Pond and Leonard Pond Forest Preserve parcels. A small portion of the Emporium Easement north of SH 3, though technically in the GRMU, is considered in the Cranberry Lake MU since the bulk of the ownership is in that unit.

1. Landscape Relationships to other Management Units

Within the boundaries of the GRMU, the GRCE has natural resource based relationships with other eased properties, parcels of Forest Preserve, and privately owned lands. The Unit's namesake, the Grass River, flows in two branches (North and Middle) through the easement property. The North Branch of the Grass River originates from Church Pond and the more than 300 acres associated with Fox Marsh located to the east of GRCE. It connects the GRCE to the Middle Branch section of Forest Preserve located outside the northwest corner of the protected property. The Middle Branch of the Grass River emanates from a confluence of smaller tributaries within the GRCE, and flows through the Stone Dam parcel of the Forest Preserve which lies immediately adjacent to the GRCE boundary.

Lying directly adjacent to the Long Pond CE and the northern tract of the Tooley Pond CE, the GRCE shares similar land cover types and wetland complexes with these other properties. Deciduous, evergreen, and mixed forest lands occur in common on all connected lands. The GRCE shares the Bother Ponds, Tooley Pond, Degrasse, and Albert Marsh wetlands with its neighboring tracts too. The Church Pond parcel of the Forest Preserve connects with the GRCE in the east via the Brother Ponds wetland complex as well. These various natural resource commonalities suggest wildlife habitat and natural processes relationships between the easement property and the adjoining lands.

Externally, the GRMU directly borders, from west to east, the: Aldrich Pond, Cranberry Lake, Raquette Boreal, and Whitehill Management Units, sharing geologic, hydrologic/riparian, upland community, and habitat connectivity with each as well as with the non-contiguous Bog River Unit to its southeast.

2. Relationship of Public Recreation between Management Units

Due to its size and central location, the GRCE plays a vital role in the connectivity of recreational opportunities within the Grass River Management Unit. Snowmobiling constitutes the primary public recreational use of GRMU lands. Major internal and connector routes make the GRCE and surrounding tracts an important nexus for the regional snowmobile trail system.

Non-motorized recreation within the Unit utilizes the variety of existing trails and roads. The foot trail on Church Pond parcel has not been used enough to maintain, because of the wetlands it crosses. An alternative route will be sought so that the public can use the area in an environmentally sound manner.

The GRMU is also a central component of the proposed St. Lawrence County Multi-Use Trails System. This proposal would incorporate existing snowmobile trails, easement haul roads; routes currently open only to lessee ATV traffic, and connectors within the GRMU to provide public recreational use for ATVs, snowmobiling, biking, skiing, hiking and other permitted uses. As proposed, the trail system would involve Forest Preserve and Conservation Easement lands.

Public use of the watercourses and designated roads and trails within the GRCE will be from December 16th through September 30th annually. During the period from October 1st to December 15th, the landowner has reserved recreation rights to the land with two exceptions: access to Little Blue Mountain continues through October 10th annually, and there is year-round use of a road into the Stone Dam Forest Preserve parcel adjacent to this property.

III. NATURAL and CULTURAL RESOURCES

The Natural and Cultural resources within the GRCE and surrounding GRMU are discussed in detail in the Grass River Wild Forest Unit Management Plan, the Grass River Conservation Easement Baseline Report, and the RMPs for other CEs in the GRMU. For purposes of this Recreation Management Plan, an overview of the properties resources as they pertain to Public Recreation will be given.

A. Physical Resources

1. Terrain/Topography

The GRCE lies in the northwestern fringe of the Adirondack Mountains of northern New York State. The Adirondack Mountain Region, which covers nearly 20% of the State, is a rugged mountain system composed of metamorphic and igneous rock. Glaciers have removed the majority of the mineral soil from the mountain region and deposited it in low-lying areas such as the St. Lawrence River Valley and associated foothill regions. The resulting areas of gravel and sandy loam enabled the forest growth and agricultural activities which have shaped the human and natural histories of the Grass River Easement and surrounding region.

Detailed information on area topography can be found on the following USGS topographic maps: Brothers Pond, Tooley Pond, Albert Marsh, Stark, West Pierrepont, Cranberry Lake, Newton Falls, South Edwards, Oswegatchie, Fine, Childwold, and Degrasse.

Elevations within the GRCE range from over 1860' on Little Blue Mountain to just under 1000' along sections of the Grass River.

All watercourses within the area flow into the St. Lawrence River via the Grass and Raquette Rivers.

2. Geology and Soils

As the predominant public recreational uses on the tract (i.e. hiking, biking, snowmobiling, etc) occur on established roads and trails designed for forest management activities, geology and soil data required for recreational planning are minimal. The information becomes more tangible when considerations are being made for the proposed St. Lawrence County Multi-Use Trails System as it entails the use of ATV's on sections of the property not currently seeing the types of impacts associated with motorized use.

The major geologic formation in the Grass River Management Unit is called the fall zone. This zone is a transition from the St. Lawrence River valley, known as the Grenville or Northwest lowlands, and the terraces of the Adirondack foothills. The fall zone is a belt, about 8-10 miles wide, parallel to and southeast of the Grenville lowlands. In St. Lawrence County this belt lies between the Grenville lowlands and the Childwold terrace, but to the north and south the terrace is absent and the fall zone merges directly into the Adirondack mountain section. The predominant rock underlying the belt is granite gneiss. Meta-sedimentary rocks of the Grenville series are below that.

Soil types inform, to some extent, the types of management and recreation types an area can sustain. Current and proposed recreational activities on the GRCE should be designed and managed consistent with the natural resources unique to the area. Soil Types found within the GRCE include:

The Tunbridge Series:

The Tunbridge series consists of moderately deep well drained soils on glaciated uplands. They formed in loamy till. Saturated hydraulic conductivity is moderately high or high throughout the mineral soil. Slope ranges from 0 through 75 percent. Mean annual precipitation is about 40 inches, and mean annual temperature is about 44 degrees F. Tunbridge soils are on nearly level through very steep glaciated uplands. They are on mountain side slopes, mountain tops, mountain ridges, hill tops, and hill slopes. Slope ranges from 0 through 75 percent. The soils formed in loamy till of Wisconsin age derived mainly from micaceous schist, gneiss, and phyllite. Mean annual precipitation ranges from about 30 through 50 inches, and the mean annual temperature ranges from 38 through 46 degrees F. The frost-free season ranges from 60 through 160 days. Elevations range from 5 through 2500 feet above mean sea level. Most areas are wooded. The common trees are American beech, white ash, yellow birch, paper birch, northern red oak, sugar maple, eastern white pine, eastern hemlock, red spruce, white spruce, and balsam fir. A few areas have been cleared and are primarily used for hay and pasture. Some cleared areas are used for cultivated crops. Areas are well drained. Potential runoff is very low to high.

The Potsdam Series:

The Potsdam series consists of very deep, well drained soils on till plains. They are nearly level to steep soils formed in an eolian or water deposited mantle that overlies dense till. Saturated hydraulic conductivity is moderately high through high in the layers above the substratum and moderately low through moderately high in the substratum. Slope ranges from 3 through 60 percent. Mean annual temperature is 44 degrees F, and mean annual precipitation is 40 inches. Potsdam soils occupy undulating to steep, typically convex landforms of till plains and glaciated mountain sides. Slope ranges from 3 through 60 percent. The regolith is fine sandy loam through loamy sand till from sandstone, schist, or granite gneiss overlain by a 16 to 40 inch eolian or lacustrine mantle containing 50 to 80 percent silt plus very fine sand. Mean annual temperature ranges from 40 through 45 degrees F, mean annual precipitation ranges from 35 through 55 inches, and mean frost-free days ranges from 90 through 145 days. Elevation ranges from 500 through 2000 feet above sea level. Many areas have been cleared and used for growing hay, oats, and limited acreage of corn for silage; however, most cleared areas have reverted to brush or woodland. Woodlots contain sugar maple, American beech, black ash, white ash, hop hornbeam, eastern hemlock, red oak, and eastern white pine. Areas are well drained. The potential for surface runoff is low to very high.

The Adams Series:

The Adams series consists of very deep, excessively and somewhat excessively drained soils formed in glacial-fluvial or glacio-lacustrine sand. Slope ranges from 0 through 70 percent. Mean annual temperature is 6 degrees C. and mean annual precipitation is 970 millimeters. Adams soils are on nearly level to very steep sand plains, kames, moraines, benches, eskers, deltas, and terraces. These soils formed in sandy glaciofluvial or glaciolacustrine deposits from predominantly crystalline rock or meta-sandstone. Mean annual temperature ranges from 3 to 8 degrees C., mean annual precipitation ranges from 760 to 1270 millimeters, and mean annual frost-free period ranges from 70 to 160 days. Elevation ranges from 91 to 915 meters above sea level. Extensive areas are idle and support aspen, birch, and pine seedlings or sweet fern, spirea, and brambles. Uncleared areas support maple, beech, spruce, and pine. Farmed areas are used mainly for hay or pasture with limited acreages of corn and small grain. Areas are somewhat excessively drained. Runoff is very slow to medium. Saturated hydraulic conductivity is high or very high in the mineral surface layer and upper part of the subsoil and very high in the lower part of the subsoil and substratum.

The Colton Series:

The Colton series consists of very deep, excessively drained soils formed in glacio-fluvial deposits. They are on terraces, kames, eskers, and outwash plains. Slope ranges from 0 through 70 percent. Estimated saturated hydraulic conductivity is high or very high in the solum and very high in the substratum. Mean annual temperature is 42 degrees F. and mean annual precipitation is 40 inches. The soils formed in water-sorted sand, gravel, cobbles, and stones of predominantly granite rocks with lesser amounts of sandstone. Mean annual temperature ranges from 38 through 46 degrees F., mean annual precipitation ranges from 30 through 50 inches, and mean annual frost-free days ranges from 90 through 160 days. Elevation ranges from 5 feet through 3000 feet above sea level. Large areas are idle and support seedling birch and pine, bracken fern, and blueberries. Farmed areas are used mainly for grass hay or pasture with some corn and oats. Forests include sugar maple, eastern white pine, red pine, and white spruce. Areas

are excessively drained. The potential for surface runoff is very low to medium. Estimated saturated hydraulic conductivity is high or very high in the solum and very high in the substratum.

The Searsport Series:

The Searsport series consists of nearly level very deep, very poorly drained soils formed in thick sandy deposits in pockets and depressions on outwash plains, deltas, and terraces. Slope ranges from 0 to 3 percent. Mean annual precipitation is about 41 inches, and mean annual temperature is about 45 degrees F. at type location. These soils formed in thick sandy deposits. Mean annual air temperature ranges from 38 to 46 degrees F., and mean annual precipitation ranges from 34 to 50 inches. The frost-free season ranges from 80 to 160 days. Elevation ranges from 5 to 3000 feet above sea level. Lands are typically idle or forested. Common wetland shrubs are alders, spirea (hardhack), leatherleaf, Labrador-tea, mountain holly, highbush blueberry, lowbush blueberry, bog cranberry, huckleberry, and sheep laurel. Woodland trees are red maple, elm, black spruce, northern white cedar, balsam fir, tamarack, eastern white pine, and gray birch. Areas are very poorly drained. Potential for runoff is very high or negligible. Estimated saturated hydraulic conductivity is high or very high in the mineral horizons. The water table is at or above the surface from 6 to 12 months of the year, usually dropping below the surface for a short period of time in late summer.

The Dawson Series:

The Dawson series consists of very deep, very poorly drained soils formed in herbaceous organic material 16 to 51 inches thick overlying sandy deposits in depressions on outwash plains, lake plains, ground moraines, end moraines and floodplains. Permeability is moderately slow to moderately rapid in the organic material and rapid in the sandy material. Slopes range from 0 to 2 percent. Mean annual precipitation is about 29 inches, and mean annual temperature is about 43 degrees F. Dawson soils are in depressions within outwash plains and lake plains, ground moraines and end moraines. In some places, Dawson soils are on flood plains. Slope gradients range from 0 to 2 percent. The uplands surrounding these soils are commonly acid sands. The mean annual precipitation ranges from about 22 to 35 inches, and the mean annual temperature ranges from about 40 to 45 degrees F. Very little commercial use is made of these soils, because of the extreme acidity, shallowness of the organic deposit, and the high water table. Tree vegetation is sparse with black spruce and tamarack comprising the major species. Ground cover is composed of bog rosemary, cranberries, laurel, leatherleaf, sphagnum mosses, and blueberries. Areas are very poorly drained. The representative depth to wet soil moisture status is at the surface to 1 foot below the surface at some time throughout the year. The representative depth of ponding is from 0 to 1.0 foot at some time throughout the year. Surface runoff is very low or negligible. Permeability is moderately slow to moderately rapid in the organic material and rapid in the sandy mineral portion.

3. Water

The protected property contains eleven ponds and lakes: Clear Lake, Pleasant Lake, Cranberry Pond, Long Pond, Mile Pond, Horseshoe Pond, Parmater Pond, Mile Pond, Tracy Pond, Slouch Pond, Wolf Pond, and Brothers Ponds. There are also numerous streams and brooks including: Alder Brook, Gulf Brook, Bear Creek, Pleasant Lake Stream, Stoney Brook, and Blue Mountain Stream. The tract's predominant watercourses, the Middle and North Branches of the Grass River, are designated Scenic

Rivers. All watercourses within the Grass River Management Unit area flow into the St. Lawrence River via the Grass and Raquette Rivers.

One of the central public recreation features of the GRCE are the fishing corridors along the Grass River and its tributaries. The North Branch of the Grass River has its headwaters at the outlet of Church Pond and runs ~25 miles to the Adirondack Park / GRCE boundary along the town line between Clare and Russell, NY. The Middle Branch of the Grass River begins at the confluence of Blue Mountain Stream and Pleasant Lake Stream. It runs ~15 miles from its headwaters to the property boundary. A comprehensive list of Fisheries activities and species types can be found in the Grass River Wild Forest UMP, but anglers can expect to find native and non-native trout as well as other desirable game fish in these classified waters.

The Grass River, as it runs through the Protected Property, is navigable but challenging due to its variable depth and fluctuating water levels. A car top boat launch would facilitate paddling opportunities on Pleasant Lake.

4. Wetlands

The wetlands within the GRCE possess great ecological, aesthetic, recreational and educational value. Wetlands have the capacity to receive, store and slowly release rainwater and meltwater, and protect water resources by stabilizing water flow and minimizing erosion and sedimentation. Many natural and man-made pollutants are removed from water entering wetland areas. Also, because they constitute one of the most productive habitats for fish and wildlife, a greater diversity of plant and animal species are found in association with most wetlands. For the visitor, expanses of open space provide a visual contrast to the heavily forested setting.

There are seven significant Wetland Complexes within the GRCE. One of them, Albert Marsh, is classified as a Mega Wetland by APA. It is a 430 acre area characterized as being located in a large bowl-shaped depression associated with the North Branch of the Grass River and bisected by an abandoned railroad grade. It is a complex of deciduous shrub swamp and coniferous forested swamp. The presence of the railroad grade is significant from a planning perspective as the sensitivities of wetlands must be accounted for when managing for recreational activities within the property. Other wetlands within the GRCE include the: Brother Ponds, Cranberry Lake, Degrasse, Stark, Tooley Pond, and West Pierrepont complexes. All wetlands within the GRCE are Palustrine, Riverine, or Lacustrine and dominated by trees, shrubs, persistent emergents, emergent mosses or lichens. Wetlands within the GRCE are either saturated, seasonally flooded, or permanently flooded and often subject to the works of beavers.

B. Biological Resources

1. Fish and Wildlife

Wildlife present within the area are typical of those found in the western Adirondack foothills eco-zone. Common large mammals include white-tailed deer and black bear, and although uncommon, moose are increasingly present. Typical fur-bearing species represented in Department harvest data for the area

include beaver, coyote, fisher, otter, pine marten and bobcat. Recent growth in birding (Cordell, Herbert, and Pandolfi, 1999) suggests that the established populations found within the GRCE provide opportunities for recreation managers and public alike. Avian diversity in the area is representative of northern hardwood and spruce/fir forested habitats. Breeding Bird Atlas data for the GRMU from the 2000-2005 censuses identified 115 confirmed, probable and possible breeding bird species in the blocks covering the unit. Although no systematic survey of the area has been conducted for reptiles and amphibians, a volunteer based "Herp Atlas" sponsored by the Department through the decade of the 1990s, identified 24 species occurring on or adjacent to the GRCE. Nuisance wildlife issues within the GRCE are largely limited to beaver induced flooding.

Fish communities in these watersheds were historically characterized primarily as Adirondack brook trout communities. These communities included brown bullhead, white suckers, native minnows, as well as brook trout. The North and Middle branches of the Grass River, along with their feeder and tributary streams, also contain: Brown Trout; Rock, Large, and Smallmouth Bass; Pumpkinseed; Shiners; Chub and Dace. Pleasant Lake and some of the smaller ponds hold: Brown Bullhead, Creek Chub, Pumpkinseed and White Sucker.

Within the GRMU there are 15 winter deer yards identified by the Department. One major yard is located just outside the boundary but has two finger-like extensions that reach into the area. A deer yard or deer wintering area is any location where deer tend to concentrate during the winter months. Deer yards typically have features which provide thermal benefits and/or mobility advantages during periods of cold and deep snow. In the Adirondacks, deer yards are often associated with dense conifer cover which helps to reduce rapid snow accumulation, provides shelter from winds, and limits radiational cooling during the evening. South-facing slopes are also used by wintering deer; lesser snow accumulation and favorable sun exposure provide similar benefits. Better quality deer yards also have adjacent regenerating hardwood components which provide available woody browse during milder conditions. In the Adirondacks, deer use the same yarding areas annually, although the boundaries change over time with succession. Deer use within yarding areas will also change annually in response to winter severity. The maintenance and protection of winter deer yards remains a concern of wildlife managers, particularly in the Adirondacks, as they fulfill a critical component of the seasonal habitat requirements of white-tailed deer.

Habitat suitable for spruce grouse is found in two locations within the GRCE. No confirmed sightings of the bird have been recorded since 2002. Within the boundary of the GRMU, there are four historical sites, two of which have not been surveyed extensively enough to confirm the species' absence. Moreover, the core of the spruce grouse's remaining population center is within 4 miles of the GRMU boundary and is located within the spruce grouse conservation focus area as defined by the Draft Spruce Grouse Recovery Plan (Ross and Johnson 2011). As an important location relative to remaining healthier populations, the GRCE may represent an area where significant conservation efforts may take place to aid in the species' recovery in New York State.

2. Vegetation

The easement lies within two ecozones found in the northern parts of New York State (Reschke, 1990). The majority of the property is in the Western Adirondack Foothills, while the two smaller

non-contiguous parcels south of the main section lie in the Central Adirondack zone. The DEC database suggests that there are five Land Cover types present on the property: Evergreen Forestland, Deciduous Forestland, Mixed Forestland, Forested Wetland, and Non-forested Wetlands. These cover types are represented by four Forest-type Groups which compose the majority of the timberland on the property: Hemlock -Northern hardwoods, White and Red Pines, Ash - Red Maples, and Aspens - Birches. Also, a wide variety of small trees (i.e., American Hornbeam, Striped Maple, Alternate Leaved Dogwood, etc) and ground cover species (i.e., star flower, common wood-sorrel, painted trillium, intermediate wood fern, etc) are common to the area.

3. Natural Heritage Program Elements of Occurrence

The Natural Heritage Program of New York State lists one significant plant species and one significant animal species as present on the property: the Fir Clubmoss, an endangered vascular plant; and the Spruce Grouse, an endangered vertebrate. Another endangered plant species, Drummond's Rock-Cress can be found in an area bordering the easement. Research/observation by State biologists suggests that Spruce Grouse habitat is also critical for several other bird species of great conservation need: the Cape May Warbler, the Tennessee warbler, the American Three-Toed Woodpecker, Olive-Sided Flycatcher, and the Rusty Blackbird.

4. Invasive Species

As global trade and travel have increased, so have the introduction of non-native species. While many of these non-native species do not have adverse effects on the areas in which they are introduced, some become invasive in their new ranges, disrupting ecosystem function, reducing biodiversity and degrading natural areas. Invasive species have been identified as one of the greatest threats to biodiversity, second only to habitat loss. Invasive species can damage native habitats by altering hydrology, fire frequency, soil fertility and other ecosystem processes.

Terrestrial invasive plant species documented in, or within proximity to, the GRCE include the following: Purple loosestrife, Common reed, and Garlic mustard. Japanese knotweed is also known to exist within the GRMU. In general, Japanese knotweed reproduces vegetatively and is common to disturbed areas throughout the state. It is not shade tolerant, and consequently, is unable to invade forests (Van Driesche, 2002) but there may be other small populations of this and other invasive-exotic plants along roadsides and other disturbed areas (Camps, log landings, etc) within the easement area.

Invasive insects currently threatening or predicted to impact areas within the GRMU include: Emerald Ash Borer, Pine False Webworm, Sirex Wood Wasp, and White Pine Weevil.

Diseases known to affect forest health in the region containing the GRCE include: Beech Bark Disease, Butternut Canker, Chestnut Blight, Dutch Elm Disease, and White Pine Blister Rust.

Through the endangered species task force, DEC will investigate use of appropriate educational signage at points of entry, camping, parking, fishing and waterway access sites within GRCE to mitigate or prevent the spread of harmful non-native species and invasive plants.

C. Cultural Resources

1. Cultural and Archaeological

The nineteenth and twentieth centuries saw unprecedented impacts on the forested landscape of the Adirondack foothills. The timber harvesting practices of the time showed little regard for what was believed to be an unlimited resource. Today, the lands in and around the GRCE still show evidence of the past exploitation, but modern practices and a more conservation-based philosophy suggest a sustainable future. Nonetheless, the GRCE area changed substantially through the activities of people in the past. Logging and mining were primary local industries, and their impact is extensive and evident today. Logging in particular changed the character of the forest dramatically, which in turn influenced the human and animal communities associated with it.

Timber for charcoal, mine timbers, railroad ties, lumber, fuel wood and many other necessary items were harvested locally. Roads and railroads were pushed into area forests to extract timber for supplies as well as ore and to distribute the finished products. The Emporium Forestry Company, owned by the Sykes family, extended the Mohawk and Malone Railway 17 miles from Conifer Junction to Cranberry Lake Village in 1911. The GRCE lies at the heart of this network. Spur lines of the Grass River RR stretched almost to Clare on the North Branch of the Grass River. The tracks and spurs of this tram line totaled forty miles in length. Many of these former lines remain today in the forms of roads and trails open to Public Recreation. Rivers and streams were also used to transport timber. A so called "splash dam" was constructed on the Middle Branch of the Grass River. The impounded water was released in the spring to float logs downstream to a sawmill at Lampson Falls, down river from the GRCE boundary. All of this activity has combined to shape the property as it is today and the property's status as a working forest under the current easement continues this process.

There are no substantial archaeological sites reported for the Unit.

2. Visual/Scenic Resources

The view southerly from 1860' Little Blue Mountain is considered extraordinary for this part of the Adirondacks, with an unobstructed view of greater than 180 degrees. The primary other scenic areas are along the streams, rivers and ponds on the property.

3. Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers

Both the North Branch and Middle Branch of the Grass River are designated as Scenic where they run through the Protected Property.

IV. LANDOWNER MANAGEMENT AND USE

A. Property History

The natural history of the Western and Central Adirondack regions can be traced back to the recession of the last glaciers from the northeast. Typical milestones along this lineage mark the devastation and loss of the area's great forests through lumbering, pulp production, harvesting for charcoal makers, dam construction, and agriculture throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century's. Concern over these losses led to the creation of the Forest Preserve in 1885 and the Adirondack Park in 1892 (McMartin, 1994). The Grass River Easement, which lies within the Park, shares in this history. Beginning in the mid to late 1800's, demand for timber prompted large-scale operations in the region and attracted a series of timber-based businesses to the area. During the time of ownership by the Emporium Lumber Company a system of railroads and trams was built to facilitate operations and connect the tract with company facilities (i.e., mills, drying kilns, etc), in Cranberry Lake, Conifer, and Childwold. A rail system known as the North Tram ran from Cranberry Lake to areas along the North Branch of the Grass River, beyond the current property line. The bed for this tramline serves as the main haul road through the property today. The Cranberry Mill operated until 1927 and cut 200 million board feet during its tenure.

Despite fluctuations in timber markets through the years, logging and forest management operations have continued in the region. Today, Molpus Woodlands F Adirondacks, LLC continues that tradition. MWF also provides for the historical use of hunting camps and leases. The easement agreement permits the continuation of these uses and allows for public recreational access as well. Public use of the watercourses, designated roads, and trails is permissible from December 16 through September 30 annually. During the period of October 1 to December 15, the landowner has reserved recreation rights to the land, with two exceptions: access to Little Blue Mountain will continue through October 10 annually, and there will be year-round use of a road into the Stone Dam Forest Preserve parcel adjacent to this property. Several gates and control points exist throughout the property with keys only in the possession of State personnel, the landowner and land manager, and authorized lessees. Public motorized recreation (e.g., snowmobiles, ATVs) is confined to specific Linear Recreation Corridors. Snowmobile access to the easement connects existing trails and networks. ATV use is managed in a manner designed to prevent damage to the natural resources and biological diversity of the tract. Non-motorized use of the property can include hiking, biking, horseback riding, and camping in designated sites. The public has the right to fish and trap along designated river corridors, but public hunting on these easement lands is not allowed.

B. Current Forestry Uses

1. Forest Management Activities

A major purpose of the conservation easement on this Property is to ensure that the forest resource will continue to be available to the current and future landowners for viable, sustainable forest management and the associated long-term production of forest products. The Landowner actively manages specific forest stands according to a forestry certification program approved by DEC. It is common to see foresters, loggers, and logging equipment on the Property. Members of the public who plan to utilize the

Property for recreation can expect to encounter this type of activity during a typical visit. Those driving, snowmobiling, or cycling on the roads, parking in designated sites, wading along streams and fishing corridors, or exercising any other designated right should use all due caution and conform to posted warnings and closures.

2. Logging Closure Zones

Easement language makes allowances for Logging Operation Closure Zones and Recreation Corridor Relocations. Such closures shall not exceed eighteen (18) months in duration and not occupy in the aggregate more than ten percent (10%) of the Protected Property at any one time unless otherwise mutually agreed upon by the parties. The Land Owner and DEC will, whenever practicable, provide for alternative routes and accommodations for public recreation. It is always advisable to inquire ahead of time with the local DEC field office regarding potential closures and alternatives. To date, the landowner has not closed any of the property to public use during harvesting operations.

C. Current Non-Forestry Uses of the Property

1. Recreational Leases

There are currently 57 camps and associated outbuildings on the property. These outdoor recreation structures correspond to 17 leases (called "licenses" by MWF Adirondacks, LLC) held by members or lessees. There are also three leased areas containing no camps or structures located on the easement.

Public recreation on the tract shall accommodate the private recreation leases and shall not interfere with the enjoyment of the lessees. Public recreational use shall be prohibited within 300' of the principle structure(s) of any leased recreation camp. The only exceptions will be where there is a linear recreation corridor, river corridor or public fishing rights corridor within 300' of the principle structure(s), in which case the top of the nearest stream or river bank or the closest edge of a linear recreational corridor or town road will define the boundary of public use.

The easement document details the rights retained by the Landowner and how these Reserved Rights relate and differ from those afforded the public by the State's Affirmative Rights. This relationship and its details are addressed in Section D below, titled "Property Infrastructure" as the rights primarily relate to public access, road use, motor vehicle and ATV use.

There are no Public Hunting Rights on the GRCE.

D. Property Infrastructure

1. Existing Infrastructure

There are four public highways associated with the property. County Route 27 borders a portion of the property on the west. State Route 3 borders two of the southern detached parcels. White Road and Dean Road, both Town roads, penetrate the property from the west.

The easement's internal infrastructure consists of roads, trails, bridges, culverts, and gates or control points. There are 98 miles of private forest roads and 10 bridges associated with both the public and private roads. There are 28 gates in place controlling access to forest roads and trails on the property. The condition of each road, trail, and corridor was established in the January 2011 Baseline Report prepared for this property.

2. Forestry Structures and Other Infrastructure

A right of way, one hundred fifty (150) feet in width, for an electric transmission line, was originally conveyed to Northern New York Utilities Inc. and recorded in St. Lawrence County, July 15, 1927. The power line now owned by National Grid, Inc., is still in use and goes through the Protected Property from south to north on the west side.

3. Gravel Pits

There are twenty-seven (27) existing gravel pits which were developed in the construction of logging and recreation roads on the protected property. The area of active gravel mining is estimated at 10 acres based on digitizing gravel pit locations from 2003 ortho-photography. Gravel pit acreage is far below the 250 acres allowed by the terms of the easement.

Sand and gravel may be used on the Protected Property only for the maintenance and construction of roads allowed by the easement. Neither party shall allow the total area affected to exceed two hundred and fifty (250) acres in size without first abandoning and reclaiming areas already mined.

Parties shall not open or construct any new sand and gravel pits within any of the following buffer areas or any other special treatment areas:

- Lake and Pond Buffers
- Perennial Stream Buffers
- Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers Buffer
- Visual Buffers along Paved Public Highways

V. RELATIONSHIP OF PROPERTY TO ADJACENT LANDS

See Section II. B. DEC Grass River Management Unit

VI. CONSERVATION EASEMENT AFFIRMATIVE RIGHTS

The Conservation Easement that pertains to the Property covered by this RMP grants the State of New York a legal interest in the Protected Property, sets forth terms, restrictions, and rights with respect to the Property, and establishes a framework for administering the public recreation access rights acquired by the State. The specific terms of the Easement were developed through negotiations between the State and the Landowner and have resulted in a guaranteed right for the State to permit limited or, in some cases,

full public access to the Property and participation in certain outdoor recreation activities. This public access, it should be noted, stems from a suite of rights that were acquired under the conservation easement. This does not mean that every right acquired will automatically be made available for use of the public. Road rights, in particular, may not be exercised immediately, as roads must meet certain standards before use by the public, including signage. Roads open to the public then must be at least partly maintained by the Department, and the cost of that additional maintenance must be considered since our resources to maintain facilities are limited. To understand what rights are, or are proposed to be, open to the public, please refer to section VII.D.

A. Recreation Access and Use Rights

See: Overall Recreation Maps, Appendix I

The conservation easement grants the People of the State of New York a permanent right of access to the Property for outdoor recreational use, subject to the specific terms in the recorded conservation easement document agreed to by the State and the Landowner. All management actions on the Property, as implemented through this Recreation Management Plan, will be conducted in accordance with those specific easement terms and will consider and strive to be consistent and compatible with, the reserved rights of the Landowner. Permitted public recreational activities, as proposed in this RMP, are designed to have limited impacts on the natural resources of the Property, on the Landowner's management of the Property for forest products, and on private lessees, if any.

The following affirmative rights, subject to specific terms, conditions, requirements, limitations, and restrictions stated in the Easement and described in Section VI.B below, have been granted to the State of New York and apply directly to the development and implementation of this Recreation Management Plan for public use:

1. Non-motorized Access - Use and Activities

DEC has the right to provide public access to limited portions of the property for a variety of dispersed, non-motorized outdoor recreational activities, such as: hiking, bicycling, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, photography, bird watching, wildlife observation, picnicking, boating(with car-top watercraft such as canoes, kayaks, or rowboats), swimming, camping at designated campsites, horseback riding, dog-sledding, fishing, hunting, and trapping.

The following use rights are year round:

- Non-motorized use of the trail located along the northern boundary of the tract north of Little Blue Mountain to connect the Church Pond Forest Preserve Parcel with the Long Pond Easement

The following are permitted Dec. 16 through Sept. 30:

- Non-motorized use by the public on linear recreational corridors and designated river corridors
- Camping at designated campsites
- Fishing on designated river corridors and designated public fishing rights corridors

- Trapping on designated river corridors

The following are permitted Dec.16 through Oct. 10:

- Non-motorized use of the road and trail to Little Blue Mtn

All Non-motorized activities must be conducted in accordance with applicable State laws and regulations.

2. **Motorized Access - Use and Activities**

DEC has the right to allow public motor vehicle access to the Property via certain designated routes. These routes will be signed accordingly as being open to only certain types of motor vehicles, such as passenger vehicles, snowmobiles, motor boats, or all-terrain vehicles. Speed limits and other restrictions or safety information may also be posted.

The following are permitted year round:

- Motor vehicle access to the Stone Dam Parcel via the Stone Dam Road from the end of town maintenance on the Dean Road

The following are permitted Dec. 16 through Sept. 30:

- ATV use only on designated ATV corridors
- Snowmobile use on designated linear recreational corridors
- Motor vehicle access on seasonal access roads

The following are permitted Dec.16 through Oct. 10:

- Motor vehicle access on the road to the trail head for Little Blue Mountain

Public motorized use is contingent on weather conditions (in particular mud season) and Logging Operation Closure Zones. All motorized activities must be conducted in accordance with applicable State laws and regulations

B. Public Use of Existing Infrastructure

DEC acquired, along with the rights discussed above for public recreational use, rights to use and provide infrastructure to facilitate use of the public recreation rights. These rights include the ability to designate, and in some cases construct, roads and trails on the Property for public access and use, including universally accessible trails for people with disabilities, along specific routes agreed to by the Landowner (if agreement is required in the CE). The Easement specifies, as Affirmative Rights, that DEC (the Grantee) is allowed to provide public access to the properties existing infrastructure in a variety of ways. The Easement contains language and appendices (Exhibits 1 through 8) which delineate this access as follows:

- The right to establish Motor Vehicle parking areas as shown on Exhibits 3 and 4, or at alternate locations as established with the agreement of the Grantor;
- The right to use a certain Linear Recreational Corridor for public recreational use of All Terrain Vehicles as shown on Exhibit 6 or on alternate routes as established in this Recreation Management Plan;

- The right to use certain Linear Recreational Corridors for public recreational use of snowmobiles as shown on Exhibit 5, or on alternate routes as established with the agreement of the Grantor;
- The right to permit the public seasonal access by motor vehicle on the Seasonal Access Roads identified on Exhibit 3 or on alternate roads as established with the agreement of the Grantor;
- The right to permit the public seasonal access by motor vehicle along the portion of the Stone Dam Road as it runs easterly from the intersection of the Stone Dam Forest Preserve parcel and the Protected Property to the overlook on the Little Blue Mountain, as shown on Exhibit 3 from October 1st to October 10th of each year.
- The Grantee may permit the public access by motor vehicle throughout the year via the improved road that leads to the Stone Dam Forest Preserve parcel;
- The Grantee may permit the public motorized access over the portion of the southerly extension of the Little John Road located within the Protected Property leading to the lands subject to the Grantee's Long Pond Conservation Easement or on alternate roads

Exhibit 6 depicts allowable access for ATVs on the property. Exhibit 6 is a key element for the planning of a proposed St. Lawrence County Multi-Use Recreational Trails System. The proposed system incorporates existing town and county roadways, logging roads, and off-road trails on county and GRCE parcels of land, to form a network of trails covering a large expanse of the county.

In addition to access, the DEC has secured public recreation rights dependent upon roads/infrastructure as follows:

- Public Camping Facilities: The Grantee may permit the public to use designated campsites within the River Corridors on the Protected Property as shown in Exhibit 1.
- Public Fishing and Trapping: The Grantee may permit the public access for fishing and trapping in accordance with applicable laws and regulations and subject to the Grantor's Reserved Rights herein within the designated River Corridors.

MWF Adirondacks, LLC (the Grantor), pursuant to Easement Language, has Reserved certain Recreational Rights for itself and its Lessees as follows:

- The Grantor may enjoy all recreation rights that the Grantee may permit to the public pursuant to Easement Language;
- The Grantor reserves the right to additional recreational uses provided that no reduction in amenities or opportunities for public recreation result and that dangerous conditions not arise;
- Any recreational use of the Protected Property shall not interfere with the Grantee's rights to provide for public recreational use;
- Any recreational use shall be consistent with the purposes of this Conservation Easement;
- Any recreational use shall not diminish or damage the recreational amenities established by the Grantee;
- Any use of a motorized recreational vehicle shall be on roads and trails suitable for such use;

- Additionally, care shall be taken while engaging in any motorized activities to avoid creating a dangerous condition for the public.

The use of roads and infrastructure by both the landowner and public necessitates a system of shared accountability for the monitoring, maintenance, and supervision of travel corridors within the protected property. The Easement Document addresses this issue as follows:

Public Recreational Amenities and Improvements:

- The Grantee may construct, use, and repair, maintain, improve, relocate or abandon recreational amenities appurtenant or accessory to the public recreational uses permitted;
- The Grantee shall determine if any recreational amenities installed by the Grantee for public recreational use, including parking areas, campsites or similar recreational amenities, may also be used by the Grantor for the Grantor's forest management activities.;
- Any roads determined to be suitable for use by the Grantor for the Grantor's forest management activities shall be identified;
- The Grantee shall install / construct and maintain all necessary signage to indicate uses allowed for the public on the Protected Property.

Management of Public Recreational Rights and Associated Costs:

- The location and condition of trails, parking areas, campsites, Linear Recreation Corridors and other recreational amenities shall be reviewed at least annually.
- All-Terrain Vehicle Use: Annually, the Grantor and Grantee may evaluate the condition of the Protected Property affected by public All-Terrain Vehicle use and determine if All Terrain Vehicle use of a particular linear recreational corridor merits suspension;
- Grantor's Recreation Leases: Public recreation use on the Protected Property shall accommodate the Grantor's private recreation leases. Public recreational use shall be prohibited within three hundred (300') feet of the perimeter of the principle structure of any leased Recreation Camp or the top of the nearest stream bank or the closest edge of a linear recreational corridor or town road, whichever is smaller.

C. Recreation Signs

For purposes of Public Recreation, the Grantor and Grantee shall mutually agree to the content and location of signs installed or constructed on the Protected Property by the Grantee

Notwithstanding the above, the Grantee is responsible for installing, constructing and maintaining all necessary signage to indicate the allowed public parking areas, various forms of public access, and appropriate roads, trails or Linear Recreational Corridors open for public Motorized and Non-Motorized Recreational Activities.

- See Appendix F: Conservation Easement Public Recreation Road & Trail Sign Guidance Manual -

D. Construction of New Infrastructure

DEC may construct new improvements, amenities, or limited facilities necessary to support permitted and approved public access and use of the Property.

As such: The Grantee may construct, use, repair, maintain, improve, relocate or abandon Recreational Amenities which facilitate or support allowable Public Recreational Uses. Such Recreational Amenities shall include roads, trails, public parking areas, Linear Recreational Corridors, boat launches, campsites, lean-tos or other similar small recreational structures that are intended for shelter from weather conditions, along with associated outhouses and similar structures. Also included are signs, barriers, fences and gates used in connection with or to facilitate the management of the Public Recreational Uses of the Protected Property.

Because much of the infrastructure within the property is shared by DEC and the Landowner, the parties shall identify shared roads, trails, bridges, culverts and other such improvements and establish appropriate standards and guidelines for their maintenance; and develop a method of equitably sharing the cost and responsibility for routine maintenance of such improvements.

-See Appendix E: Roads and Trails Standards and Specifications-

E. Other CE Provisions Affecting Public Use

1. Barriers, Gates, and Locks

DEC, in concurrence with the Landowner, has the right to install barriers and gates to control public motor vehicle access. The installation and maintenance of control points within the GRCE will be a key component to the proposed St. Lawrence County Multi-Use Recreational Trails System. It is essential that ATV access be limited to routes specified in Exhibit 6, or as otherwise agreed upon with the landowner. Gates, locks, and barriers will facilitate Public Recreation as permitted by the Easement and protect the rights of the Landowner and its lessees.

2. Boundary Line Marking

Conservation Easement Language usually allows the Department to identify, mark, and maintain boundary lines. Signs may be installed as appropriate but only if in compliance with CE language.

3. Search, Rescue, Fire, Emergency Response, and Law Enforcement

DEC and the Landowner have the right to undertake emergency actions necessary to preserve and protect private property interests, public recreation amenities, and human health and safety in response to natural disasters, environmental hazards, or other threats. The DEC, Environmental Conservation Police, Forest Rangers, State Police, and other emergency response personnel will have full access to the property. Emergency response for search, fire, and rescue on the Property, as on State lands, will be coordinated by the NYS Forest Rangers at (518) 408-5850, though a response may include other emergency responders.

4. Infrastructure Maintenance and Specifications

- Appendix D - Shared Road and Infrastructure Maintenance Plan, Schedule and Estimated Budget
- Appendix E - Road and Trail Standards and Specifications

F. Current Public Recreation Use (See Appendix B – Public Use Access and Appendix I - Overall Recreation Map)

1. The Public currently has recreational access to the property in the form of seasonal motorized use of recreational corridors. This allows for snowmobile use in winter and motor vehicle access to designated river corridors for fishing and trapping.
 - Snowmobile use of the property is extensive and well documented by the St. Lawrence County Snowmobile Association;
 - Use of the property by anglers is harder to quantify. Anecdotal evidence suggests that anglers do access the property and that use levels recommend actions to expand the use of roads within the property as proposed by this plan in sections VII and VIII. The establishment of a parking area and campsite at Pleasant Lake is viewed as a highly desired opportunity;
 - Use of the road into the Stone Dam Forest Preserve parcel by public motor vehicles has been one of the more common uses of the property. Previous to this CE the public route into this parcel was very poor and legally questionable, so the CE has made motor vehicle access to this parcel much easier;
 - There is also anecdotal evidence to suggest that non-motorized recreation such as camping, mountain biking, and horse riding would expand if appropriate opportunities existed.

VII. PUBLIC USE ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

A. Administration

NYSDEC has responsibility for managing public access and recreation in a manner consistent with the terms and provisions of the conservation easement. DEC will retain this underlying authority and responsibility even in situations in which it may approve another organization to serve as a partner in recreation management. Successful implementation of this RMP will require frequent communication among all parties involved in the management of public recreation and access on the Property, including DEC, the Landowner, and partners.

See Appendix I - Overall Recreation Map for details.

1. Laws, Policies, and Memoranda

This RMP has been developed within the constraints and guidelines set forth by Article 9 of the Environmental Conservation Law; Parts 190 -199 of Title 6 NYCRR of the State of

New York; established DEC policy; and the terms and conditions of the conservation easement(s) that encumber the Property

a. DEC Policies:

1. Motor Vehicle Access to State Lands Under the Jurisdiction of DEC for People with Disabilities (CP-3)
2. Adopt-A-Natural Resource (ONR-1)
3. Temporary Revocable Permits for State Lands and Conservation Easements (ONR-3)

b. State-Administered Land Use Controls

1. Freshwater Wetlands Act
2. Wild, Scenic, and Recreational Rivers Act
3. Regulations of the Adirondack Park Agency

c. DEC/APA MOU

August 13, 2010; *MOU Concerning State-Owned Conservation Easements on Private Lands within the Adirondack Park*. See section X. F.

2. Management Authority, Staff and Responsibility

The Regional Natural Resources Supervisor is the Manager of regional staff in the DEC Division of Lands and Forests and the Division of Fish, Wildlife and Marine Resources, and the Division of Mineral Resources. The DEC Division of Lands and Forests has primary responsibility for managing public use of the lands subject to this RMP, including development of this Plan, development of individual work plans and schedules, and coordination of all activities with the Landowner, partners, and other DEC Divisions. The Division of Operations, at the direction of the Division of Lands and Forests, will oversee construction and maintenance of facilities approved by this Recreation Plan. The Regional Forester in the DEC office in Watertown, NY has overall responsibility for these matters. Reporting to the Regional Forester is a Supervising Forester, in the Potsdam, NY DEC office responsible for forestry and land management programs. Reporting to the Supervising Forester are a conservation easement specialist and conservation easement technician that have primary responsibility for preparing and/or implementing this Plan. The Regional Fisheries Manager and Regional Wildlife Manager are responsible for all Division of Fish and Wildlife activities. An Aquatic Biologist and a Wildlife Biologist have been assigned planning responsibilities for fisheries and wildlife concerns related to this Property. The Office of Public Protection will be responsible for enforcement of laws and DEC rules and regulations. Forest Rangers have primary responsibility for monitoring and enforcement of public use of the easement Property. Environmental Conservation Officers may also help with this responsibility, as well as general enforcement of the Environmental Conservation law and rules & regulations on the Protected Property. A Land Manager will be designated by the Regional Forester as the lead DEC staff person for developing and implementing this and subsequent Plans for the easement property.

The Land Manager will be responsible for:

- 1) Overseeing the coordination and preparation of the RMP, as well as periodic updates, revisions, or amendments.
- 2) Coordinating the implementation of this and subsequent RMPs.
- 3) Overseeing the budget outlined in the RMP.
- 4) Assuring that management activities of all DEC Divisions, as they relate to this RMP, comply with applicable laws, regulations, policies, and easement terms.
- 5) Monitoring resource conditions and public use; addressing conflicts; and assessing the effectiveness of the RMP in addressing resource protection and public needs.
- 6) Fostering communication about management activities within DEC, between DEC and the Landowner, and between DEC and the public. The land Manager will be the primary liaison with the Landowner regarding public access and use issues.

The development of this RMP has primarily involved DEC, Molpus Woodlands Group, LLC, and the Landowner's land management staffs. Communication and coordination of planning efforts between the parties have been critical to formulating management objectives and proposals. Consistent administration and communication is extremely important in preparing and implementing this RMP and adhering to the terms of the conservation easement. DEC staff will regularly communicate with the Landowner to review completed activities, address concerns or problems, and coordinate future work.

3. Regulatory Requirements, Approvals and Procedures

Some of the guiding laws, policies, and legal documents outlined above specify certain requirements and approvals that must be met in the management of land and public recreation, and is pertinent to the formulation and implementation of this RMP.

a. Americans with Disabilities Act and Americans with Disabilities Accessibility Guidelines Application of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) for Conservation Easements

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), along with the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 (ABA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; Title V, Section 504, have had a profound effect on the manner by which people with disabilities are afforded equality in their recreational pursuits. The ADA is a comprehensive law prohibiting discrimination against people with disabilities in employment practices, use of public transportation, use of telecommunication facilities and use of public accommodations. Title II of the ADA requires, in part, that reasonable modifications must be made to the services and programs of public entities, so that when those services and programs are viewed in their entirety, they are readily accessible to and usable by people with disabilities. This must be done unless such modification would result in a fundamental alteration in the nature of the service, program or activity or an undue financial or administrative burden.

Title II also requires that new facilities, and parts of facilities that are newly constructed for public use, are to be accessible to people with disabilities. In rare

circumstances where accessibility is determined to be structurally impracticable due to terrain, the facility, or part of facility is to be accessible to the greatest extent possible and to people with various types of disabilities.

Consistent with ADA requirements, the Department incorporates accessibility for people with disabilities into the planning, construction and alteration of recreational facilities and assets supporting them. This Recreation Management Plan (RMP) incorporates an inventory of all the recreational facilities or assets supporting the programs and services that were negotiated with the landowner to be available on the easement. The level of accessibility that exists or may be developed to the programs, services and facilities on the easement is also assessed. In conducting this assessment, DEC employs guidelines which ensure that programs are accessible, including buildings, facilities, and vehicles, in terms of architecture and design, transportation and communication to individuals with disabilities.

Any new facilities, assets and accessibility improvements to existing facilities or assets proposed in this RMP are identified in the section containing proposed management actions.

The Department is not required to make each of its **existing** facilities and assets accessible as long as the Department's programs, taken as a whole, are accessible.

For copies of any of the above mentioned laws or guidelines relating to accessibility, contact the DEC Universal Access Program Coordinator at 518-402-9428 or UniversalAccessProgram@dec.ny.gov

b. CP-3 Permits

In 1997, DEC adopted "Commissioners Policy – 3 (CP-3) Motor Vehicle Access to State Lands under the Jurisdiction of the Department of Environmental Conservation for People with Disabilities". This policy establishes guidelines for issuing temporary revocable permits allowing qualified people with disabilities to use motor vehicles to gain access to designated routes on certain state lands. DEC is not required to make each and every of its existing facilities and assets universally accessible. The facilities or assets proposed to be universally accessible in this RMP are identified in the "Proposed Management Actions" section.

c. Adirondack Park Agency (APA)

Land managers will need to consult with the Adirondack Park Agency where recreation management actions on land within the Adirondack Park involve activities such as: improvements or actions within or adjacent to freshwater wetlands; improvements or actions along or adjacent to the shorelines of waterbodies; and improvements or actions along or adjacent to Wild, Scenic, or Recreational Rivers. The draft RMP will be submitted to APA for review and comment consistent with the

procedures outlined in the DEC/APA MOU on Conservation Easement Recreation Management Plans. Certain proposed recreation projects and activities, as covered in the MOU, may require further APA review under Section 814 of the Adirondack Park Agency Act.

B. Public Recreation Management Principals, Goals and Objectives

1. Management Principles

The following principles, consistent with the public recreation rights acquired, will be used to manage public use of the easement Property

- Manage public recreational use and access to the property as a Composite Resource
- Assess the property's capacity to withstand use
- Protect and conserve natural resources
- Make public use compatible with active forest management
- Provide a variety of outdoor recreational uses
- Protect public safety and private property

2. Management Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives for managing public recreational use of the easement Property must consider a variety of stakeholder interests, public expectations, and the use and ownership of the Property by the Landowner. The goals presented below are general statements about desired outcomes, while the objectives are more specific and are intended to provide guidance on how to achieve the goals.

Goals:

- Provide reasonable public access to the Property for the purpose of allowing the public to enjoy the permitted range of outdoor recreational opportunities.
- Avoid or minimize any negative impacts of public recreational use on the natural resources and environmental benefits of the Property.
- Avoid or minimize conflicts between public recreational use and forest management activities conducted by the Landowner.
- Avoid or minimize conflicts between public recreational use and private lessee use of the Property, if any.
- Develop a better understanding of the natural resources, environmental benefits, and public recreation opportunities and limitations on the Property

Objectives:

- Maintain opportunities for dispersed public outdoor recreation by providing suitable marked trail opportunities and general access to areas of property open for hunting, fishing, trapping and bushwhacking.
- Maintain the quality of the public's recreational experience by separating or minimizing conflicting uses where possible.
- Provide safe and sanitary conditions for public recreation.

- Provide for multiple motorized and non-motorized recreational uses on roads and trails, except where the potential for resource impacts, risk to public safety, conflicts with forest management activities, or other conditions make such shared use unacceptable.
- Maintain and improve opportunities for motor vehicle access on designated roads, trails and other suitable areas of the property.
- Periodically assess the impacts of recreational uses on other recreational uses, forest management activities, and natural resources.
- Actively manage the type, level, and location of recreational uses to minimize significant conflicts between recreational activities and commercial forest management activities, and to minimize adverse impacts to fish, wildlife, important habitats, water quality, and other natural resources and environmental values on the Property.
- Promote partnerships with the Landowner and/or recreational constituencies and secure assistance as necessary to complete management actions.
- Assess the potential for integrating new or expanded public outdoor recreational uses on the Property in a manner that is consistent with the terms of the Easement and the goals and objectives outlined above.

3. Best Management Practices

All public recreation management activities will incorporate the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) to the greatest practical extent. BMPs are those methods, procedures, and/or devices that are designed to prevent or minimize soil erosion, water run-off, damage to natural resources or wildlife habitat, pollution, pathogens, or other negative environmental impacts when conducting various management activities. BMPs related to the implementation of public access and recreational improvements on the Easement Property may include, but need not be limited to, such considerations as:

- Locating improvements away from streams, wetlands, and unstable slopes.
- Locating improvements to minimize necessary cut and fill.
- Locating camping sites or other structures on flat, stable, well-drained sites.
- Locating trails on existing old roads or cleared, or partially cleared areas.
- Locating trails to minimize grade and avoid streams, wetlands, and unstable slopes.
- Avoiding areas where threatened and endangered species are known to exist.
- Limiting the size of parking lots and other improvements to the minimum necessary to meet the intended use.
- Minimizing tree cutting.
- Using proper drainage devices, such as water bars and broad-based dips, to prevent erosion and damage to improvements.
- Using stream crossings with low, stable banks, firm stream bottom, and gentle approach slopes.
- Constructing roads, trails, bridges and other stream crossings at right angles to the stream.

- Limiting stream crossings and construction on or near streams to periods of low flow.
- Designing, constructing, and maintaining bridges and other improvements on or near streams to avoid disrupting or preventing movement of fish and other aquatic species.
- Minimizing the use of equipment in streams.
- Using soil stabilization practices on exposed soil around construction areas, especially bridges, immediately after construction.

4. Guidelines and Standards

Development of the Recreation Management Plan and implementation of public recreational uses on the Protected Property shall be consistent with the following specific guidelines:

Standards for Public Recreational Roads and Trails. The RMP shall establish minimum standards and specifications for roads and trails designated for public use. Based on the standards and specifications, the Department shall decide whether portions of trails and roads shall be repaired, improved, relocated, or if public use shall be temporarily suspended.

Snowmobile Use. Public snowmobile use of the property will focus on two types of opportunities; 1.) Connection to a larger public snowmobile trail network where logistically possible and legally appropriate and 2.) Ungroomed riding opportunities on designated routes for the purpose of facilitating public access for other outdoor recreation activities such as hunting, fishing, trapping, etc. Trail design and maintenance standards shall conform to such manuals and guidelines produced by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, or an equivalent State agency, and in general use by the agency at the time in question, except for snowmobile routes designed for public access to hunting, fishing and trapping on the property.

All-Terrain Vehicle Use. Public All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV) use on the GRCE shall be restricted solely to the dates imposed by Easement Document Language and the Linear Recreational Corridors delineated in Exhibit 6 of the Easement Document. These routes will inform all proposed ATV Use Plans such as the St. Lawrence County Multi-Use Trails System. ATV use shall be managed in a manner that prevents damage to the natural resource values and biological diversity of the tract.

Private Leases. Public recreation on the tract shall accommodate the private recreation leases and shall not interfere with the enjoyment of the lessees. Public recreational use shall be prohibited within 300' of the principle structure(s) of any leased recreation camp. The only exceptions will be where there is a linear recreation corridor, river corridor or public fishing rights corridor within 300' of the principle structure(s), in which case the top of the nearest stream or river bank or the closest edge of a linear recreational corridor or town road will define the boundary of public use.

C. Public Input

In order to make optimal use of recreational resources on the property, it is important to understand the availability of, and demand for, recreation on both the easement property and in the surrounding region, as well as public sentiment regarding various related issues. The public has offered opinions and information regarding issues of concern by mail, e-mail, and personal conversations. The following list summarizes the primary topics identified in comments received from the public.

- Involvement of the public in the planning process
- Specifics of public access and use (including vehicle/snowmobile/ATV access)
- Potential for resource degradation
- Impacts to private lease clubs or individuals
- Access for people with disabilities
- Public information

D. Recreation Use Opportunities and Constraints

1. Potential Activities and Opportunities

The Public has, in accordance with the Conservation Easement, the right to: hike, mountain bike, cross country ski, snowshoe, ride horseback, bird watch, rock climb, study nature, and engage in other forms of non-motorized recreation within identified public recreation corridors. The public may also paddle and fish on interior waterways within designated River Corridors and fish within designated Public Fishing Rights Corridors. Public camping can be permitted within designated River Corridors and along the shore of Pleasant Lake at designated campsites. Public trapping is also permitted along designated River Corridors. Individuals with mobility impairments may use mechanized means to access areas open to the public for non-motorized use and use motor vehicles on roads or trails open to the public for non-motorized use that have been designated as open to mobility impaired individuals upon issuance of a CP3 permit from the Grantee. Excluding the period of time from October 1st to December 15th of each year, public motorized use is allowed on designated Public Motor Vehicle Access corridors.

Public suggestions received regarding recreation opportunities include: greater access to fishing opportunities, improved access to the North Branch of the Grass River and Pleasant Lake, and seasonal motorized access to Little Blue Mountain. Public desires to include the property in a county wide multi-use trail system are also common.

The Department may not be able to provide, in the immediate future, public use of all the rights acquired in the easement. Road rights, in particular public motor vehicle rights, may not be exercised immediately, as roads must meet certain

standards before use by public motor vehicles, including signage. Roads, once opened to the public, must be at least partly maintained by the Department, so the cost of that additional maintenance must be considered since our resources to maintain facilities are limited.

An additional constraint is that public use must not significantly impact the private landowner's use of the property for forest management. Some roads and areas may have to be closed periodically when timber harvesting operations are underway. Alternative routes will be considered in such situations to minimize the inconvenience to the recreating public, but there will be times when parts of the property will not be as accessible as normal in order to protect the safety of the public and allow forest management activities to take place.

2. Specific Recreational Activities

The Grass River Conservation Easement utilizes eight specific maps (Exhibits 1-8) to describe and delineate potential Public Recreation Opportunities on the Protected Property. See these Exhibits in Appendix H.

a) **Public Recreation Use Areas:** See [Exhibit 1](#) - Map of Identified River Corridors, Public Fishing Rights Corridors and Campsites; [Exhibit 2](#) - Map of Year-Round Public Access Roads; [Exhibit 3](#) - Map of Seasonal Public Motor Vehicle Access Roads, Public Parking and Control Points; [Exhibit 4](#) - Map of Linear Recreational Corridors for Non-Motorized Public Access and Public Parking Areas; [Exhibit 5](#) - Map of Linear Recreational Corridors for Permissible Public Snowmobile Use; [Exhibit 6](#) - Map of Linear Recreational Corridors for Permissible Public All Terrain Vehicle Use

b) **Linear Recreation Corridors:** See [Exhibit 4](#) - Map of Linear Recreational Corridors for Non-Motorized Public Access and Public Parking Areas; [Exhibit 5](#) - Map of Linear Recreational Corridors for Permissible Public Snowmobile Use; [Exhibit 6](#) - Map of Linear Recreational Corridors for Permissible Public All Terrain Vehicle Use

c) **Motor Vehicle Access to Recreational Activities:** See [Exhibit 1](#) - Map of Identified River Corridors, Public Fishing Rights Corridors and Campsites; [Exhibit 2](#) - Map of Year-Round Public Access Roads; [Exhibit 3](#) - Map of Seasonal Public Motor Vehicle Access Roads, Public Parking and Control Points

d) **Snowmobiles, ATVs and Boats:** See [Exhibit 5](#) - Map of Linear Recreational Corridors for Permissible Public Snowmobile Use; [Exhibit 6](#) -

Map of Linear Recreational Corridors for Permissible Public All Terrain Vehicle Use

e) **Fishing and Trapping:** See Exhibit 1 - Map of Identified River Corridors, Public Fishing Rights Corridors and Campsites

f) **Hiking, Biking, X-C Skiing:** See Exhibit 4 – Map of Linear Recreational Corridors for Non-Motorized Public Access and Public Parking Areas

g) **Horseback Riding and Dog Sledding:** See Exhibit 4 – Map of Linear Recreational Corridors for Non-Motorized Public Access and Public Parking Areas

h) **Camping:** See Exhibit 1 - Map of Identified River Corridors, Public Fishing Rights Corridors and Campsites

3. Management and Natural Resource Constraints

The Department may not be able to provide, in the immediate future, public use of all the rights acquired in the easement. Road rights, in particular public motor vehicle rights, may not be exercised immediately, as roads must meet certain standards before use by public motor vehicles, including signage. Roads, once opened to the public, must be at least partly maintained by the Department, so the cost of that additional maintenance must be considered since our resources to maintain facilities are limited.

An additional constraint is that public use must not significantly impact the private landowner's use of the property for forest management. Some roads and areas may have to be closed periodically when timber harvesting operations are underway. Alternative routes will be considered in such situations to minimize the inconvenience to the recreating public, but there will be times when parts of the property will not be as accessible as normal in order to protect the safety of the public and allow forest management activities to take place.

Central to recreation management planning for the Grass River Management Unit, as noted above St. Lawrence County has proposed a Multi-Use Recreational Trails System which will incorporate existing town and county roadways, logging roads, and off-road trails on county, state, and private parcels of land. The 120 mile project, part of a cross county trail from Lewis to Franklin County, would provide public recreational use for ATVs, snowmobiling, biking, skiing, hiking and other permitted uses. The multi-use trail would include ATV use from approximately May 1 to Sept. 15 and be managed consistent with state,

department, agency, and municipal rules and regulations. Segments of the trail are proposed to cross NYS fee and easement land including the Grass River, Long Pond, and Tooley Pond easements, Greenwood Creek State Forest and , approximately 900 feet of existing road through the Tooley Pond Forest Preserve area south of the Tooley Pond Road. Each of the CE segments will need to be incorporated into the appropriate RMP or unit management plan to obtain final approval.

VIII. PROPOSED RECREATION MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

A. General Recreation Management Actions

- 1 **Boundary Identification:** Easement language permits the Landowner and the DEC to post boundaries within and along the Protected Property. The DEC will post and sign all aspects of Public Recreation (i.e., Fishing Access Corridors, Motorized Access Corridors, etc) within the property and maintain an informational kiosk on the Dean Road.
- 2 **Recreation Enforcement:** DEC's Office of Public Protection will work with the Land Owner and DEC Lands and Forests to provide recreation enforcement on the Protected Property.
- 3 **Recreation Monitoring:** DEC will monitor the Protected Property in a manner specified by a Monitoring Plan developed and based upon Easement Language.

B. Specific Public Use Management

(See Appendix B – Public Use Access and Appendix I - Overall Recreation Map)

Roads: The public currently has motorized access to approximately 10 miles of seasonal access roads. This plan proposes to open approximately 18 miles more. As with any historic Adirondack parcel, roads within the GRCE are known by a variety of different names. This plan refers to them, when possible, by their common name and tries to correlate with road names used in the GRCE Baseline Report. As such: access to the northern portions of the tract begins at the White Road in the town of Clare. The North Branch of the Grass River is accessed via the North Branch Road as a continuation of the White Road. Access to the properties interior will be via the Dean Road and the improved Stone Dam Road. In order to provide access to the Little Blue Mountain and Middle Branch river corridors and other public fishing rights corridors, the Rainbow and Packard roads, along with portions of the Buckhorn and Stillwater roads, will be opened seasonally. When finalized, the SLC Multi-use Trail will utilize the main east-west haul road (known as Rt. 8D on the snowmobile maps) through the property and proceed north via the Packard Road.

The Old Stone Dam Access Road

The Stone Dam parcel of Forest Preserve has traditionally been accessed by the public and DEC staff via an old road in poor condition off the end of the Town of Clare maintained Dean Road. The old road extends about 2 miles to the Stone Dam parcel thru the GRCE. Forest Preserve roads, which are generally low maintenance seasonal roads, are a means of providing the public with access to recreational programs on Forest Preserve lands. Roads on or adjacent to Forest Preserve generally provide adequate public access to the unit; most of the access is from town roads, or Forest Preserve roads maintained by the Department. There are some roads with questions about their legal use by the public as well as roads being used that are not designated for public motor vehicle use. The status of the Stone Dam Road has been in question for a long time. It has not been regularly maintained, as the Town of Clare does not claim it as a town road, and the underlying landowner prior to Molpus ownership stopped its maintenance after building a separate road to access their own land. Since the acquisition by DEC of an easement on the surrounding land has opened this new road as an alternative route, there is no need to maintain the old road to provide access. While some members of the public continue to prefer it for traditional access, it should not, in its current condition, remain open for public motor vehicle use. The old road will now be signed as a foot trail for access into the Stone Dam parcel. Skiing, snowshoeing, and other non-motorized uses will be permitted.

Hiking: The Public currently has access to approximately 55 miles of non-motorized public recreation corridors and 35 miles of fishing and river corridors, both of which are open to hiking between 12/15 and 10/1 each year. This plan proposes additional access to the summit of Little Blue Mountain, the North Branch of the Grass River, and a trail of approximately 3 miles to Church Pond on the neighboring Forest Preserve Parcel of the same name. All new and existing trails will be signed and marked.

Boating: Between 12/15 and 10/1 each year, paddlers and other non-motorized users have access to approximately 55 miles of River and Public Fishing Rights Corridors, as well as Pleasant Lake. This plan will establish a car-top boat launch at Pleasant Lake. Motorized access to rivers and streams will be provided with parking areas along Gulf Brook, Bear Brook, Alder Brook, and Blue Mountain Stream. The Middle Branch of the Grass River will be accessible at several signed locations and the North Branch can be reached with the completion of a new trail leaving the White Road near Cranberry Pond and a parking area located on the northern border of the Long Pond easement.

Mountain Biking: Between 12/15 and 10/1 each year, cyclists are able to use the existing non-motorized public recreation corridors and will have access to the proposed St. Lawrence County Multi-use Trail route. Specifically, this plan will designate and sign two loops: One will run approximately 9 miles from the Stone

Dam parking area crossing the Middle Branch of the Grass River twice. The other emanates from the proposed parking area at Pleasant Lake, tracing a figure-8 of approximately 14 miles, offering the option of two smaller loops of approximately 7 miles each.

Cross Country Skiing & Snowshoeing: After 12/15 of each year, winter recreationists have access to approximately 55 miles of non-motorized public recreation corridors and use of the proposed St. Lawrence County multi-use Trail system. Access can come from the Dean and Tooley Pond roads which are town maintained. Campsites at Pleasant Lake, Gulf Brook, Bear Creek, Blue Mountain Stream, and the North and Middle branches of the Grass River will be available for winter use.

Fishing: Between 12/15 and 10/1 each year anglers have access to approximately 25 miles of River and 10 miles of Public Fishing Rights Corridors, as well as Pleasant Lake. Access will be provided with parking areas along Gulf Brook, Bear Brook, Alder Brook, and Blue Mountain Stream. The Middle Branch of the Grass River will be accessible at several signed locations and the North Branch can be reached with the completion of a new trail leaving the White Road near Cranberry Pond.

Camping: This plan will designate 11 campsites on the protected property: Two at Pleasant Lake, one on Gulf Brook, one on Bear Creek, one on Blue Mountain Stream, and three each on the North and Middle branches of the Grass River. Additional seasonal motorized access will be designated to access eastern portions of the North Branch of the Grass River to accommodate campers. All other sites occur along year round or seasonal motorized recreational corridors. Where practical, campsites will meet ADA standards and design.

Snowmobiling: Approximately 60 miles of established trails afford snowmobilers extensive access to the property. Trails are groomed and maintained in accordance with an Adopt a Natural Resource agreement with the St. Lawrence County Snowmobile Association.

ATV use: St. Lawrence County has proposed a 120 mile multi-use trail system that would involve approximately 16 miles of roads and trails on the GRCE. The multi-use trail would include ATV use from approximately May 1 to Sept. 15 and be managed consistent with State, department, agency, and municipal rules and regulations. The designated route would need to be signed for the public and a number of gates erected on roads leading off the route to restrict access to areas not open to public ATV use.

C. Recreational Support Facilities

1. **Trailheads:** A year round trail will be constructed to provide access to the Church Pond Forest Preserve parcel. The trail will be located along the boundary of Grass River easement and the adjacent Long Pond easement.
2. **Boat Launches:** A car top boat launch will be developed at Pleasant Lake.
3. **Roads:** Interior access to the property is provided by more than 50 miles of improved or partially improved gravel roads. Roads designated as recreational corridors by the easement document may be opened to the public for motorized and non-motorized use. This plan specifies, in section VIII B, which roads the DEC proposes to designate for public access. Based upon standards and specifications established by this plan, the Grantor and Grantee shall decide whether portions of trails and roads shall be repaired, improved, relocated or if public use upon them shall be temporarily suspended.

4. **Parking Lots:** Parking shall be restricted to those locations designated for such use.
Existing: There are currently no designated public parking areas within the tract
Proposed: Parking will be provided by DEC at the following general locations; Bear Creek, Alder Brook, Stony Brook, Little Blue Mountain, Gulf Brook, Middle Branch Grass River and Pleasant Lake.

Parking on the shoulder of the Dean and White Roads will be at the discretion of the Town of Clare.

Parking areas will generally be built to accommodate four or five cars and include one universally accessible space

5. **Camp Sites:**
Camping is restricted to designated campsites.
Existing: There are no designated public campsites within the tract
Proposed: Eleven campsites are proposed to be phased in at the following general locations; one along Gulf Brook, three along the North Branch Grass River, one along Blue Mountain Stream, three along the Middle Branch Grass River and two at Pleasant Lake. The eventual number and time frame for establishing these campsites will be based upon this plans implementation table and observed use. It is possible that the recreational needs for the property can be met with fewer sites.
6. **Bridges:** There are ten bridges on the Protected Property several of which facilitate Public Recreation.

7. **Information Kiosks and Entrance Signs:** An information kiosk has been installed along the Dean Road near the bridge over the Middle Branch Grass River. This plan proposes that another be placed near the parking facility at Cranberry Pond.
8. **ADA Accessible Structures:** As it constitutes a central location for a variety of activities on the protected property and adjacent Stone Dam parcel of Forest Preserve, an ADA compliant parking area will be constructed east of the Rainbow Clubs main lodge on the improved Stone Dam / Dean Road. ADA accessible facilities will be sited at Pleasant Lake, along the North Branch of the Grass River, and along the Middle Branch of the Grass River.
9. **Signage:** Boundary signs will be placed along all Public Motorized Recreation Corridors and all River Corridors open to public use and along all streams with Public Fishing Rights.

See Appendix F: Conservation Easement Public Recreation Road & Trail Sign Guidance Manual

IX. IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE AND ESTIMATED BUDGET

The following tables outline a schedule for implementation of the proposed management actions and their estimated costs. The estimated costs of implementing these projects are based on historical costs incurred by the Department for similar projects. Values for some projects are based on costs for service contracting. These cost estimates do not include capital expenditures for items such as equipment, nor do they include the value of program staff salaries or actual staff time required to complete that task.

Annual		
	Project	Est. Cost or Staff Days
1	Routine maintenance of roads, boundaries, and public recreation facilities	\$5,000
Total Annual Cost		\$5,000
Year One		
	Project	Est. Cost or Staff Days
1	Construct three parking areas, one at Little Blue Mountain, one at Pleasant Lake, and one adjacent to the old route to the FP Stone Dam parcel	\$8,500
2	Placement of eleven gates to facilitate public use of roads to Pleasant Lake and Little Blue Mountain	\$16,500
3	Install signs on gates, parking areas, and roads	\$3,000
4	Establish ADA access at Pleasant Lake	\$4,000
5	Establish public boat launch at Pleasant Lake	\$1,200
6	Preparation of public information on use of the property in the form of brochures, website pages and similar	\$1,000
7	Construct information kiosk on White Road	\$2,500
Total One Cost		\$36,700
Year Two		
1	Placement of 18 gates to facilitate proposed Multi-use Trail and protect landowner interests	\$27,000
2	Construct the Long Pond Easement ATV trail connection	\$30,000
3	Establish parking area along Gulf Brook	\$2,500
4	Establish campsite at Gulf Brook	\$4,000
5	Install signs on gates, parking areas, and roads	\$4,400
6	Develop and post the year round trail to the Church Pond Forest Preserve parcel along the MWF easement boundary from the adjacent Long Pond easement	\$9,000
Total Year Two Cost		\$76,900
Year Three		
1	Establish three Primitive Campsites along the North Branch of the Grass River	\$12,000
2	Establish three Primitive Campsites along the Middle Branch of the Grass River	\$12,000
3	Develop and post a trail from existing parking area near Cranberry Pond (FP) southerly to access the North Branch of the Grass River	\$29,000
Total Year Three Cost		\$16,000

Year Four		
1	Establish Parking areas along Bear Creek and Blue Mountain Stream	\$5,000
2	Establish Primitive Campsites at Bear Creek and Blue Mountain Stream	\$5,000
Total Year Four Cost		\$10,000
Total Cost		\$167,100

X. COMPLIANCE: This Recreation Management Plan is compliant with the following policies, regulations, and laws

- A. October 2011 - Conservation Easement Recreation Management Plan Guidance
- B. State Environmental Quality Review Act
- C. Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers System Act on Private Land
- D. Freshwater Wetlands Act
- E. APA/DEC MOU Concerning State Owned Conservation Easements on Private Lands within the Adirondack Park

XI. APPENDICES

A. SEQRA

The State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) requires the consideration of environmental factors early in the planning stages of any proposed action(s) that are undertaken, funded or approved by a local, regional or state agency. A Full Environmental Assessment Form is used to identify and analyze relevant areas of environmental concern based upon the management actions in the draft unit management plan. For this plan, SEQRA review has been initiated with the preparation of both the EAF and Negative Declaration. Upon review of the information contained in the EAF, there will not be a significant impact on the environment. Any changes that are made to this draft plan, based upon public comments, will be considered in the EAF and determination of significance prior to completing the final plan.

B. Public Use Access

Table 1: A Summary of Access Rights

Current Facilities Open for Public Use

Facility	Mileage / number	Activity Type	Reference
Roads: Seasonal Motorized Access;	10 Miles	Access to: Snowmobile, fish, trap, hike, mountain bike, cross country ski, snowshoe, ride horseback, bird watch, rock climb, study nature, and engage in other forms of non-motorized recreation	Appendix H & Page 38
Non-Motorized Public Recreation Corridors;	55 Miles		
Snowmobile	60 Miles		
Trails	0	Mountain biking / Hiking / Access	Pages 38 & 39
Boat Launch	0	Fishing / Access	Page 40
Campsites	0	Camping	Page 40
Parking Areas	0	Parking / Access	Page 40

Additional Facilities Proposed to Be Open for Public Use in this Plan

Facility	Mileage / number	Activity Type	Reference
Roads: Seasonal Motorized Access;	18 Miles (28 total)	Access to: Snowmobile, fish, trap, hike, mountain bike, cross country ski, snowshoe, ride horseback, bird watch, rock climb, study nature, and engage in other forms of non-motorized recreation	Appendix H & Page 38
Non-Motorized Public Recreation Corridors;	0 Miles (55 total)		
Snowmobile	0 Miles (60 total)		
Trails	25 Miles	Mountain biking / Hiking / Access	Pages 38 & 39
Boat Launch	1	Fishing / Access	Page 40
Campsites	Up to 11	Camping	Page 40
Parking Areas	Up to 9	Parking / Access	Page 40

Table 2: Public Use Rights for Specific Roads and Trails

Road	Mileage	Access	Associated Exhibit (App. G)
Power Line Road	4.5	Non-motorized Public Linear Recreation Corridor, Snowmobile	4, 5
White Road - town portion - easement portion	3.9 3.0 0.9	Public Year Round Motor Vehicle Access Corridor, Non-motorized Public Linear Recreation Corridor, Snowmobile	2, 4, 5
Gleason Road	2.0	Seasonal Public Motor Vehicle Access Road, Non-motorized Public Linear Recreation Corridor, Snowmobile	3, 4, 5
Rock Pond Road	12.0	Seasonal Public Motor Vehicle Access Road, Non-motorized Public Linear Recreation Corridor, Snowmobile, ATV Corridor	3, 4, 5
Featherbed Road	1.5	Public Year Round Motor Vehicle Access Corridor, Non-motorized Public Linear Recreation Corridor, Snowmobile, ATV Corridor	2, 4, 5, 6
Featherbed Connector Road	0.75	Public Year Round Motor Vehicle Access Corridor, Non-motorized Public Linear Recreation Corridor, Snowmobile	2, 4, 5
Gulf Brook Road	2.0	Non-motorized Public Linear Recreation Corridor, Snowmobile	4, 5
Middle Branch Road	5.0	Seasonal Public Motor Vehicle Access Road, Non-motorized Public Linear Recreation Corridor, Snowmobile	3, 4, 5
Bridge Road	3.5	Non-motorized Public Linear Recreation Corridor, Snowmobile	4, 5
Dean Road As Town Road	4.5 4.5	Public Year Round Motor Vehicle Access Corridor, Non-motorized Public Linear Recreation Corridor, Snowmobile	2, 4, 5
Fyfe Road	3.5	Non-motorized Public Linear Recreation Corridor, Snowmobile	4, 5
Stone Dam Road	3.25	Public Year Round Motor Vehicle Access Corridor, Non-motorized Public Linear Recreation Corridor, Snowmobile	2, 4, 5
Rainbow Road	4.5	Seasonal Public Motor Vehicle Access Road, Non-motorized Public Linear Recreation Corridor, Snowmobile	3, 4, 5
Outpost Road	5.0	Seasonal Public Motor Vehicle Access Road, Non-motorized Public Linear Recreation Corridor, Snowmobile, ATV Corridor	3, 4, 5, 6
Outpost Road Ext.	0.6	Seasonal Public Motor Vehicle Access Road, Non-motorized Public Linear Recreation Corridor, Snowmobile, ATV Corridor	
Little Blue Road	4.0	Non-motorized Public Linear Recreation Corridor, Snowmobile	4, 5

Little Blue Road Ext.	0.6	Non-motorized Public Linear Recreation Corridor, Snowmobile	4,5
Little Blue Mtn. Trail	0.5	Non-motorized Public Linear Recreation Corridor, Snowmobile	4, 5
Buckhorn Road	6.0	Seasonal Public Motor Vehicle Access Road, Non- motorized Public Linear Recreation Corridor, Snowmobile	3, 4, 5
Buckhorn Road Connector	0.5	Seasonal Public Motor Vehicle Access Road, Non- motorized Public Linear Recreation Corridor, Snowmobile	3, 4, 5, 6
Lem Pond Connector Road	0.5	Non-motorized Public Linear Recreation Corridor, Snowmobile	4, 5
Brother Ponds Road	2.5	Non-motorized Public Linear Recreation Corridor, Snowmobile	4, 5
Packard Road	2.0	Seasonal Public Motor Vehicle Access Road, Non- motorized Public Linear Recreation Corridor, Snowmobile, ATV Corridor	3, 4, 5, 6
Tracy Pond Road	4.0	Non-motorized Public Linear Recreation Corridor, Snowmobile, ATV Corridor	4, 5, 6
Slouch Pond Loop	3.25	Non-motorized Public Linear Recreation Corridor, Snowmobile	4, 5
Carpenter Brook Loop	4.0	Non-motorized Public Linear Recreation Corridor, Snowmobile	4, 5
Mile Pond Road	2.0	Non-motorized Public Linear Recreation Corridor, Snowmobile	4, 5

C. Inventory and Condition of Shared Roads, Trails, and Facilities: (see Baseline Report)

D. Shared Road and Infrastructure Maintenance

The conservation easement provides general guidance on how the costs for maintaining improvements are to be shared. The Department and the landowner will share the expense of any maintenance or replacement of improvements in public use based on the proportionate amount of use and benefit that each party derives from the open and accessible improvement (except for shared bridges which the parties will share equally in the cost of replacement). An annual maintenance plan that represents each parties share of the maintenance cost will be developed by both parties individually with due consideration to their respective annual budgets and work-plans, and shall be agreed to each year at the annual meeting.

When considering cost-sharing arrangements, it is important to mention that neither the Department, nor the landowner, is responsible for assuming a cost that is not commensurate with the interest they have in a particular shared improvement. With that in mind, the Department is solely responsible for incurring costs unique to providing for public access and use; likewise, the landowner is solely responsible for incurring costs unique to providing for their reserved rights in the property. Any damage caused by public recreational activities shall be the responsibility of the Department to repair. Any damage caused by the Landowners activities (for example logging operations or the lease holders) shall be the responsibility of the Landowner to repair.

When roads and trails are constructed by the Department, they will be generally built to the standards the Department uses on State forest lands (DEC Unpaved Forest Road Handbook, August, 2008). In addition, roads and trails will be constructed and maintained with deference to the conservation easement road standards that have been mutually agreed to by the landowner and the Department. During construction and maintenance, Best Management Practices (BMPs) will be utilized to protect the natural resources (see BMP Field Guide at DEC website):
http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/lands_forests_pdf/dlfbmpguide.pdf.

The public's use of roads, trails, recreational amenities or any improvement may be subject to temporary or permanent closure, removal or relocation if the Department determines that the use is having a negative impact on natural resources, the landowner's forest management, Department administration of the property, or is contributing to substantial conflicts with other users or lease holders.

E. Road and Trail Standards and Specifications

ROAD/TRAIL SPECIFICATION FACTOR	MOTOR VEHICLE ROAD VOLUME CLASS ¹			ATV TRAIL VOLUME CLASS ₁			SNOWMOBILE TRAIL VOLUME CLASS ₁		
	LOW	MED	HIGH	LOW	MED	HIGH	LOW	MED	HIGH
# of TRAFFIC LANES	1	1	1+	1	1	2	1	1	2
MINIMUM CURVE RADIUS w/o signage(feet)	50	50	50	n/a	35	50	n/a	40	50
MAXIMUM GRADE % (sustained/ short stretch)	10/15	10/15	10/15	n/a	10/15	10/15	n/a	20/20+	20/20+
MINIMUM SHOULDER WIDTH, EACH SIDE (feet)	n/a	3to4	4 to 5	n/a	1to 2	2 to 3	n/a	n/a	n/a
TRAVELED SURFACE WIDTH(feet)	8	10	12/14	4	6	10	6	10	12
MINIMUM TURNOUT SPACING	n/a	½ mi	1/4 mi	n/a	n/a	1/2mi	n/a	n/a	1/2mi
SURFACE SPECIFICATIONS	BMP's ₂	BMP's	BMP's	BMP's	BMP's	BMP's	BMP's	BMP's	BMP's
DITCHING	BMP's	BMP's	BMP's	BMP's	BMP's	BMP's	BMP's	BMP's	BMP's
CULVERT INSTALLATION SPECIFICATIONS ³	BMP's	BMP's	BMP's	BMP's	BMP's	BMP's	BMP's	BMP's	BMP's
MIN. SIGHTING DISTANCE w/o SIGNAGE(feet)	100	150	250	n/a	100	150	n/a	50	150
VEGETATION CONTROL	cut/remove surface only	cut/remove shoulder/ surface	cut/remove shoulder/ surface	cut/remove surface only	cut/remove shoulder/ surface	cut/remove shoulder/ surface	cut/remove surface only	cut/remove surface only	Cut//remo ve surface only
PITCH(maximum)	<10%	4" crown	4" crown	N/A	20%	15%	n/a	20%	15%
STREAM AND WETLAND X-ING SPECS	BMP'S	BMP'S	BMP'S	BMP'S	BMP'S	BMP'S	BMP'S	BMP'S	BMP'S
SENSITIVE AREA SET BACKS	BMP'S	BMP'S	BMP'S	BMP'S	BMP'S	BMP'S	BMP'S	BMP'S	BMP'S

SIGNAGE STANDARDS ⁴	Minimal	Basic	Moderate	Minimal	Basic	Moderate	Minimal	Basic	Moderate
GATE LOCATIONS	as agreed	as agreed	as agreed	as agreed	as agreed	as agreed	as agreed	as agreed	as agreed
SEASONAL USE SPECIFICATIONS ⁵	surface	surface	surface	surface	surface	surface	winter/snow	Winter/snow	Winter/snow
MAINTENANCE STANDARDS & SURFACE CONDITIONS	Minimal/cleared	as needed/graded	Regular/graded	Minimal/cleared	as needed/cleared	Regular/graded	minimal/cleared	as needed/cleared	Regular/cleared groomed
ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS ⁶	APA/DEC	APA/DEC	APA/DEC	APA/DEC	APA/DEC	APA/DEC	APA/DEC	APA/DEC	APA/DEC
INSURANCE STANDARDS ⁷	NYS REG	NYS REG	NYS REG	NYS REG	NYS REG	NYS REG	NYS REG	NYS REG	NSY REG
ENFORCEMENT ⁸	DEC	DEC	DEC	DEC	DEC	DEC	DEC	DEC	DEC

1 VEHICLE VOLUME SPECS:

LOW: <50 ROUND TRIPS/MONTH

MEDIUM: <300 ROUND TRIPS/MONTH

HIGH: >300 ROUND TRIPS/MONTH

HIGH VOLUME ATV & SNOWMOBILE TRAILS ARE USUALLY DESIGNATED ON EXISTING ROADS.

2 BMPS ARE PER THE NYS FORESTRY BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR WATER QUALITY: BMP FIELD GUIDE

3 ALL CULVERTS SHALL BE PROPERLY HEADED WITH STONE, WOOD, OR STEEL/PLASTIC COLLARS

4 SIGNAGE STANDARDS:

MINIMAL - SIGNS FOR IDENTIFYING ROAD NAME WHERE BEGINS AND FOR HAZARDOUS SITUATIONS SUCH AS BARRIERS/KNOWN HAZARD PREVENTING PASSAGE AHEAD, STOP SIGN INDICATING INTERSECTION WITH A MODERATE OR HIGHER VOLUME ROAD

BASIC - SAME AS MINIMAL PLUS BRIDGE APPROACH SIGNAGE, SHARP CURVE SIGNS, OR ADDITIONAL AS OTHERWISE NEEDED AND AGREED UPON BY DEC AND LANDOWNER (EG. SUCH AS SUGGESTED SPEED LIMIT IF IT IS THE FIRST ROAD INTO A PROPERTY

MODERATE - SAME AS BASIC PLUS SUGGESTED SPEED LIMIT (UNTIL IT BECOMES A REGULATION), TURNOUT DISTANCES, OR ADDITIONAL AS OTHERWISE NEEDED AND AGREED UPON BY DEC AND LANDOWNER

5 "SURFACE" MEANS THE CONDITION AND TYPE OF THE SURFACE WILL SET STANDARDS FOR SEASONAL USE. GENERALLY CLOSED DURING MUD SEASON(AS POSTED) TO PUBLIC MOTOR VEHICLE AND LOG TRUCK USE, BY AGREEMENT OF DEC AND LANDOWNER; "WINTER" MEANS WINTER USE ONLY

MAINTENANCE STANDARDS:

MINIMAL - CONDITION CHECKED ANNUALLY, ROUTINE MAINTENANCE SUCH AS GRADING, DITCH CLEANING POTHOLE/WASHOUT REPAIR GENERALLY NEEDED ONLY EVERY THREE OR FOUR YEARS

AS NEEDED- SAME AS MINIMAL BUT DUE TO HIGHER USE LEVELS WILL LIKELY NEED SOME ROUTINE MAINTENANCE ANNUALLY OR EVERY OTHER YEAR

REGULAR - ANNUAL ROUTINE MAINTENANCE LIKELY NEEDED

- 6 APA/DEC REGULATIONS ON WETLANDS, STREAM CROSSING, ETC.
- 7 NYS REGULATIONS ON INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS FOR VEHICLES
- 8 LANDOWNER IS RESPONSIBLE FOR INFORMING LESSEE'S OF RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR USE OF TRAILS AND RELATED RETAINED RECREATION RIGHTS; DEC HAS LEGAL AUTHORITY FOR ENFORCEMENT OF DEC REG'S WITH MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC, INCLUDING LANDOWNER LESSEES WHEN THEY ARE RECREATING AS MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.
9. UPON MUTUAL AGREEMENT OF THE PARTIES, THE ABOVE TRAIL AND ROAD SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE ALTERED FOR SPECIFIC ROADS AND TRAILS IN SITUATIONS, WHERE IMPLEMENTING THOSE SPECIFICATIONS WOULD CAUSE ENVIRONMENTAL (OR OTHER) DAMAGE AND WHERE ADEQUATE SAFETY PRECAUTIONS ARE MAINTAINED, SIGN STANDARDS MAY BE ADJUSTED FOR ROADS AND TRAILS WITH ALTERED SPECIFICATIONS.
10. MINIMUM STANDARDS CAN BE EXCEEDED BY MUTUAL AGREEMENT, INCLUDING AGREED UPON MITIGATION STANDARDS.
11. MAXIMUM SPEED UNLESS OTHERWISE POSTED – 25 MILES/HOUR.

F. CE Public Recreation Road & Trail Sign Guidance Manual



Department of Environmental Conservation
State of New York

Conservation Easement Public Recreation Road and Trail Sign Guidance Manual

Division of Lands & Forests | Conservation Easements Program

Grass River Conservation Easement
Draft Recreation Management Plan
September, 2016

Introduction

The following manual provides standardized signs¹ proposed for management of public recreation use on conservation easement properties. It is intended for the landowner and DEC to agree that the uniform type, design and content of the signs in this manual are for common placement at locations on these properties with public recreation use and are consistent with provisions of the Conservation Easement and with DEC Regulations for Conservation Easements, applicable sections for posting listed below.

The approved signs in this manual are meant to assist field foresters representing both parties in streamlining the implementation processes: for meeting provisions of the conservation easement; when a demonstrated need for signs is determined through recreation planning; or when the need for signs become evident based on situations that arise in the field. It is intended that the placement of these signs at property locations will be determined at the local level by the respective land managers for the properties.

Other uncommonly used signs necessary to address property-specific management issues and concerns are not presented in this plan. Sign needs commensurate with these particular circumstances will be addressed on a case-by-case basis by the respective land managers, with sign content and location to be mutually agreed upon at that time.

This manual is designed to provide guidance on universal signs and signing for public recreation management of conservation easement properties. It may be amended or modified, consistent with provisions for a specific conservation easement property, location in the State or as determined by the parties to that conservation easement. However, roads and trails open to motor vehicle and snowmobile use for public recreation on all Conservation Easements must be posted for such use, section I provides uniform signs for meeting that regulation.

§190.0 Introduction

"a. Except as otherwise provided, the provisions of this Part shall apply to all persons entering upon or using State lands under the department's jurisdiction that are administered by the Division of Lands and Forests, the Division of Operations, or both, including but not limited to such lands as ... and to those rights owned and managed by the State as conservation easements as defined in §190.12 of this title. ..."

k. No person shall operate a vehicle on any State truck trail or road maintained by the Department of Environmental Conservation on State reforestation areas at a speed in excess of 25 miles per hour."

m. Use of motor vehicles on State land under the jurisdiction of the Department of Environmental Conservation outside the forest preserve is prohibited, except where specifically permitted by posted notice or by permit issued by the department. ..."

¹ Signs featured in this manual have been developed through the past collaborative efforts of representatives of both DEC and the Lyme Timber Company (a CE Landowner) in 2010. It reflects sign usage for Conservation Easements in the Adirondack Park. Other CE property locations throughout the State may require appropriate color, content and style adjustments to signs used for public recreation in those areas. Revisions to signs were made to adjust recommended sign size to DEC sign shop standard sizes.

Grass River Conservation Easement
Draft Recreation Management Plan
September, 2016

§190.12 Conservation Easements

"a. *Applicability.* This section applies only to conservation easement lands to which the public has a right of access. Unless specified otherwise in this section, the **following sections of this Part apply to persons using conservation easement lands** under the jurisdiction of the department's Division of Lands and Forests: §190.0, §190.1, §190.2, §190.3, §190.4 and §190.8.

b. General. Unless specified otherwise in this section, the following regulations also apply to persons using conservation easement lands.

1. No person shall deface, mutilate, remove or destroy any sign or structure of the landowner, lessee or the department.
2. No person shall erect any sign, structure, gate, barrier or other improvement unless specifically authorized in the conservation easement.
3. No person other than the landowner, its invitees, or lessees, or the department shall operate a motor vehicle or snowmobile on any roads or trails except those roads and trails posted for such use. ..."

DEC Sign Shop Stock Material		
SIGN SIZE	WOOD TYPE	METAL OR PLASTIC SIGNS
6"x16" - board	3/4" pine	11.25" x 11.25"
8"x24" - board	3/4" pine	7.5" x 11.25"
9"x30" - board	3/4" pine	can cut down stock to 5.625" x 5.625"
8"x12"	1/2" MDO	
16"x24"	1/2" MDO	
30"x48"	1 3/4" pine or 3/4" MDO	
48"x72"	1 3/4" pine or 3/4" MDO	
48"x96"	3/4" MDO	

Roads & Trails–Elements and Protocols for Broad Category Signs

I. The following public recreation management signs are proposed for use on all conservation easement properties that allow for public recreation. These broad category signs are intended for widespread "generic" use across the greatest practicable extent of easement properties.

- **Signs to be used uniformly on all entrances, roads, parking areas and trails open to public recreation use.**

A. Public Use Signs

1. Public Use Conditions & Rules Informational Kiosks or large signs located at critical public access points, parking lots and/or staging areas, determined in the Recreation Plan; large signs depicting public use conditions (rules & regulations) for the property and a public use map.

2, 2a. Permitted Public Motorized Use- at trail heads, parking lots, main intersections or the beginning of public use routes; intended to inform the public of what recreation uses and what types of vehicles are allowed on a specific road, trail or use corridor.

3. Trail Marker- Along the route at points where the public could go off the route (side roads, etc); intended to keep public motorized use and traffic on the route that has been designated as open for that use.

4. Camp Site- at designated camping sites.

5. Parking Area- where parking is allowed.

6. Boat Launch- where access to water is allowed.

7. Other (allowed activity)- where the activity is specifically allowed in the Recreation Management Plan;

1. Public Use Conditions and Rules:

Public Access Point Informational Kiosk

Fabricated Using DEC In-House Sign Services

Dimensions: 4' x 8'

Color Scheme: Brown Background/ Yellow Lettering

Reflective: Not Required

Construction: Wood

Kushaqua Tract Conservation Easement Lands
Privately Owned Working Forest Lands - Public Outdoor Recreation Opportunities

Public Recreation on the Property is Subject to the Following Conditions.

- Be prepared to encounter logging trucks and equipment at any time
- Speed limit on all property roads is 25 MPH— use of your headlights for visibility purposes is recommended.
- Roads and trails open to the public may be temporarily closed or rerouted due to road conditions or logging operations.
- Parking is permitted in designated parking areas, pull-offs and on road shoulders- Please do not block gates or obstruct the travel of other vehicles.
- Use of motorized vehicles, including cars, trucks, ATVs and snowmobiles, is limited to roads and trails specifically marked and designated for those uses (see map)
- Camping and campfires are permitted only at designated campsites
- Please respect the rights of the landowner, their lessees, employees and contractors.
- Don't Litter- If you carry it in....carry it out
- Camps and a 1 acre area surrounding them are private property- trespass by the public in these areas will not be tolerated.
- Private camp lessees are permitted to travel to and from their camp lots by any motorized means, regardless of the road's designated public use.
- For more information on public recreation management of the property, contact:
NYS DEC Lands and Forests: (518) 897-1200
- To report an emergency, contact:
NYS DEC Forest Ranger Dispatch: (518) 408-5850

LEAVE THIS SPACE
(APPROX 2 FEET WIDE x 3-1/2 FEET TALL)

BLANK FOR THE ADDITION OF A CUSTOM DESIGNED MAP AND/OR TRACT SPECIFIC PRACTICES/REGS POSTER CREATED BY REGIONAL OFFICE STAFF

4'

8' (FLIP PAGE OVER FOR TEXT AND GRAPHICS DIMENSIONS)

EXAMPLE

TEXT AND GRAPHICS SIZES

- DEC LOGO— 4 INCH DIAMETER LOGO WITH "NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION" WORDING AROUND THE LOGO.
- TITLE TEXT (TOP OF SIGN)— 3" HIGH, "BOLD FACE" ARIAL FONT TEXT
- "Public Recreation on the Property is Subject to the Following Conditions"— 2" HIGH, "BOLD FACE", UNDERLINED, ARIAL FONT TEXT
- BULLETED TEXT— 1" HIGH, ARIAL FONT TEXT
- TEXT SPACING— 1/4" To 1/2" Maximum

September, 2016

2. Permitted Public Motorized Use – Primary Sign

For Easement Roads and Trails

Dimensions: 11.25" x 11.25" or size enlarged at regional discretion

Color Scheme: Yellow Background/Brown Lettering

Reflective: Not Required

Construction: Preferably Metal

Other: The # of symbols on the sign will vary from one to three with the road/trail. There could be a need for up to three; ATV, Car or Truck, and Snowmobile.



2a. Permitted Public Motorized Use - Alternative Sign Option

For Easement Roads and Trails

Dimensions: 7.5" x 11.25" or size enlarged at regional discretion

Color Scheme: Yellow Background/Brown Lettering

Reflective: No

Construction: Metal or Vinyl

Font & size: Lines (L) 1-3, Aerial (A) 14 bold (b); L 4, A 12 b; L 5&6, A 14b; L 7&8, A 11 b; L 9, Times New Roman (TNR) 12 b Italicized; L 10&11, TNR 12 b.

**New York State
Department of Environmental Conservation
Conservation Easement Property**

Private Forest Management–Public Recreation Opportunities

*(name of easement label optional)
(name of road label optional)*

Permitted Public Motorized Uses Of This Road Include:



Public Motorized Access Restricted to Marked Routes Only

BE PREPARED TO ENCOUNTER LOGGING & CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT

Please Respect the Property Rights of the Landowner, Contractors & Lessees

For Emergencies (search, rescue, fire, law enforcement) Contact:
**DEC Forest Rangers
518-408-5850**

- Image shown is Not to Scale
- Public Motorized Use Activity Icons:
 - Will be applied to signs by DEC sign shop as needed on route-specific basis
 - DEC Foresters will submit individual requests to the sign shop for these signs based on their needs
 - DEC will use the above standard icons across all easement properties.
 - Icons illustrate permitted public means of motorized access and recreational use allowed on a specific route.
- Regions must supply sign shop with appropriate Ranger emergency telephone number.
- Tract Names and Road Names are optional but should be applied with adhesive label by regional office.
- Regions may choose to enlarge this sign's dimensions (customize) to meet specific needs.
- Regions may choose either the primary sign (2 above) or the alternative sign (2a above) design.

- 3. Trail Marker:** Trail Marking Blazer
- Dimensions:** 5.625" x 5.625"
- Color Scheme:** DEC Standard Colors-Brown Background/ Yellow Lettering
- Reflective:** Required - Lettering
- Construction:** Metal or Vinyl

Truck and Automobile



Route

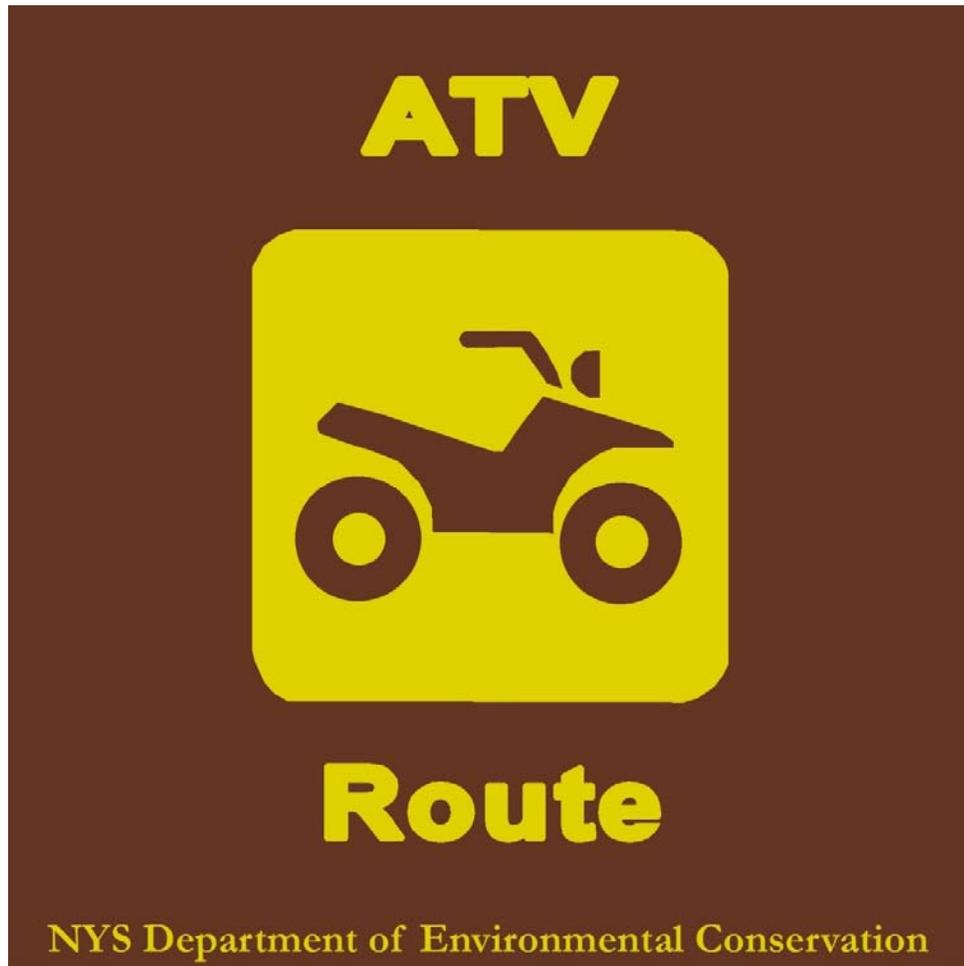
NYS Department of Environmental Conservation

Snowmobile



Route

NYS Department of Environmental Conservation



- Images shown approximately to scale.
- Mark both sides of designated travel corridor in an effort to keep public motorized traffic funneled onto the corridor and away from intersecting side roads

4. **Camp Site** (standard sign) (7.5 x 11.25)
5. **Parking Area** (standard sign) (7.5 x 11.25)
6. **Boat Launch** (standard sign) (7.5 x 11.25)
7. **Other (allowed activity)** (other universal signs)

II. Broad category signs necessary to address similar tract-specific management issues and concerns are presented below in this plan. Sign needs commensurate with these particular circumstances will be addressed on a case-by-case basis at the appropriate local management level.” These signs are also intended for widespread generic use across the greatest practicable extent of the easement properties when needed.

- **Signs to be used on Roads Open to the Public when there are specific management issues or concerns**

A. Regulatory, Prohibition and Caution Signs

1. Stop Signs- Dangerous situations where conflicting uses of the property could converge; where active timber haul roads intersect with recreational use routes; not to be employed in a general way or as a matter of routine placement on public recreation roads.

2a, 2b- Speed Limit Signs- Special situations along roads or trails; speed limits or recommended speeds should be included in the **Information Kiosk Sign** under conditions of use and on the **Permitted Public Use Signs**. If appropriate.

3. Stop Ahead- Snowmobile trails and other special situations at intersections.

4. One Lane Bridge Ahead- Special situations

5. Right Curve/Left Curve- Special situations

6. Hazard Markers- Special situations

7. Barrier 100 feet- Special situations

8. Do Not Block Gate- DEC recreation management need or reason.

9. Do Not Enter- Should be used only when there is a specific DEC need to prohibit the public from entering, not because it is a private road and the landowner wants added protection from intrusion.

10. No Parking- DEC recreation management need or reason.

1. Stop Sign

Dimensions: 18" x 18"
Color Scheme: USDOT Standard- Red and White
Reflective: Required
Construction: Metal or Vinyl



- Image shown is Not To Scale
- Stop signs will be posted at the specific location where the desired action is intended to take place (i.e. intersection)

2a. Recommended Speed Limit 15 MPH

Dimensions: 12" x 18"
Color Scheme: Yellow Background/ Brown or Black Lettering
Reflective: Required
Construction: Metal or Vinyl

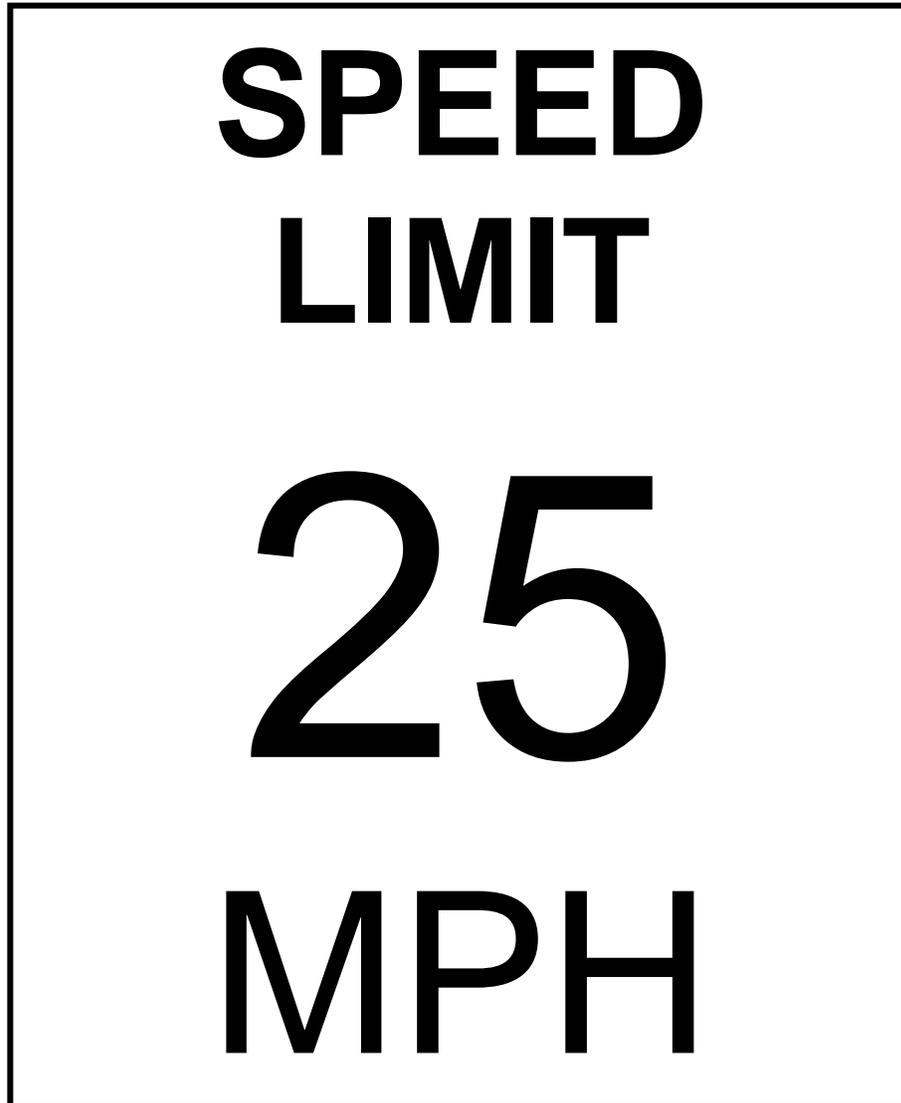


- Image shown is Not To Scale
- These signs may be posted at critical public access points to each easement property as well as intermittently along specific roads/trails that have been designated as open to public motorized use.

- Tract-specific circumstances that necessitate a recommended speed limit that is less than 25 mph will be addressed locally on a case-by-case basis with joint consultation and agreement between the landowner and DEC.

2b. Speed Limit 25 MPH

Dimensions: 12" x 18"
Color Scheme: USDOT Standard -- White Background/ Black Lettering
Reflective: Required
Construction: Metal or Vinyl



- Image shown is Not To Scale
- Same posting criteria as "Recommended Speed Limit" signs
- Part 190: Use of State lands including conservation easements as defined in section 190.12; 190.8 (k): 25 mile an hour speed limit.

- Tract-specific circumstances that necessitate a recommended speed limit that is less than 25 mph will be addressed locally on a case-by-case basis with joint consultation and agreement between the landowner and DEC.

3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8: As Shown Below

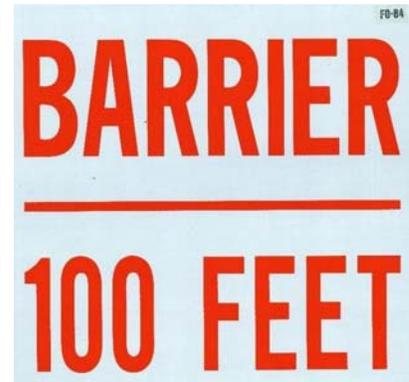
Dimensions: Hazard Markers- 6" x 12"
All Others Shown- 18" x 18"
Color Scheme: As Shown Below
Reflective: Required
Construction: Metal or Vinyl



#3



#5: Left Curve or Right Curve
(As operational needs dictate)



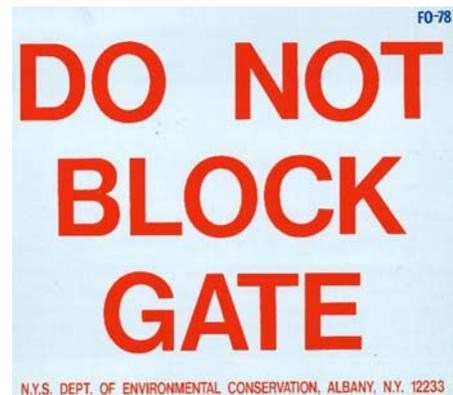
#7



#4



#6: Hazard Marker



#8

- Images shown are Not To Scale
- Hazard marker signs will be posted on both sides of the public use road corridor immediately adjacent to the identified hazard condition (bridge railings, culverts, etc.)

- In consideration of research conducted, and a recommended easement tract maximum speed limit of 25 mph in place, caution signs *other than hazard marker signs* will be posted no less than 100 feet in advance of the identified hazard. In circumstances where the road approaching an identified hazard is windy or steep, caution signs will be posted no less than 150 feet in advance of the identified hazard.

9. Do Not Enter- Road Closed to Public Motorized Vehicles and Snowmobiles

Dimensions: 18" x 18"
Color Scheme: USDOT Standard- Red and White
Reflective: Required
Construction: Metal or Vinyl



EXAMPLE

- Image shown is Not To Scale
- Sign has universal applicability for road closures—may be posted in response to either temporary or permanent management needs and goals.
- These signs will be posted at the specific location where the desired action is intended to take place (i.e. intersection)

III. Broad category informational and directional signs should be deployed on conservation easement properties with public recreation use as program resources are available to do so. The following recreation management signs are designed to enhance the public's use of the recreational resource and are intended for widespread generic use across the greatest practicable extent of the easement properties

1. **Easement Road Identification Sign**- All shared use roads
2. **Directional Signs**- Appropriate trail and road intersections and other locations.
3. **Mileage Marker Signs**- All roads and possibly trails
4. **All other Directional or information signs**

1. Sign: Easement Road Identification Sign

Dimensions:	6" x16" or other standard wood size
Color Scheme:	DEC standard colors- Brown Background/ Yellow Lettering
Reflective:	Not Required
Construction:	Wood or Vinyl

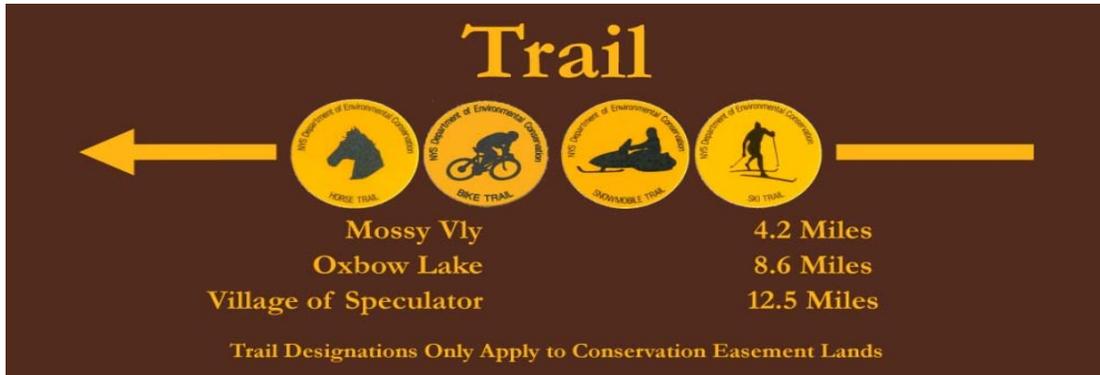


EXAMPLE

- Images shown are Not To Scale
- Easement Road ID sign content will be cross referenced to ensure consistency with road ID language found in DEC Rec Plans.
- Road ID names/numbers will be tract-specific and are at the discretion of the DEC planner, subject to consultation with the landowner as need dictates.

2. Easement Directional Signs

Dimensions: 9" x 30" or other standard wood sizes
Color Scheme: DEC standard colors- Brown Background/ Yellow Lettering
Reflective: Not Required
Construction: Wood



EXAMPLE



EXAMPLE

3. Mileage Markers

Dimensions:	5.625" x 5.625"
Color Scheme:	Brown Background/ Yellow Lettering
Reflective:	Not Required
Construction:	Metal or Vinyl



EXAMPLE

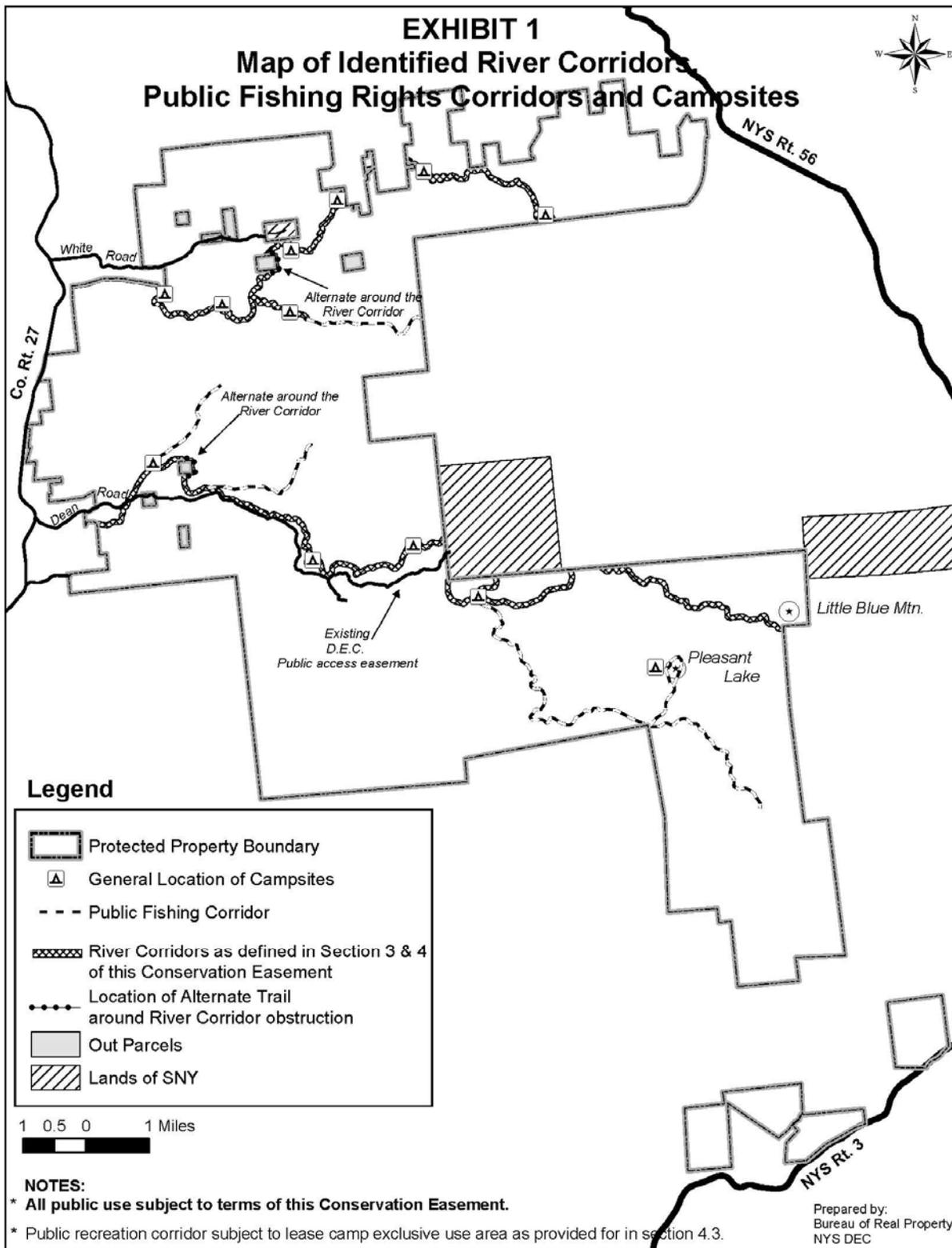
- Image shown is Not To Scale
- Mileage markers should be cross-referenced to descriptions on kiosk maps and/or brochures whenever possible
- Wide number range from 1mile to 15 miles
- Layout on road networks is subject to road ID system established by DEC recreation management plan

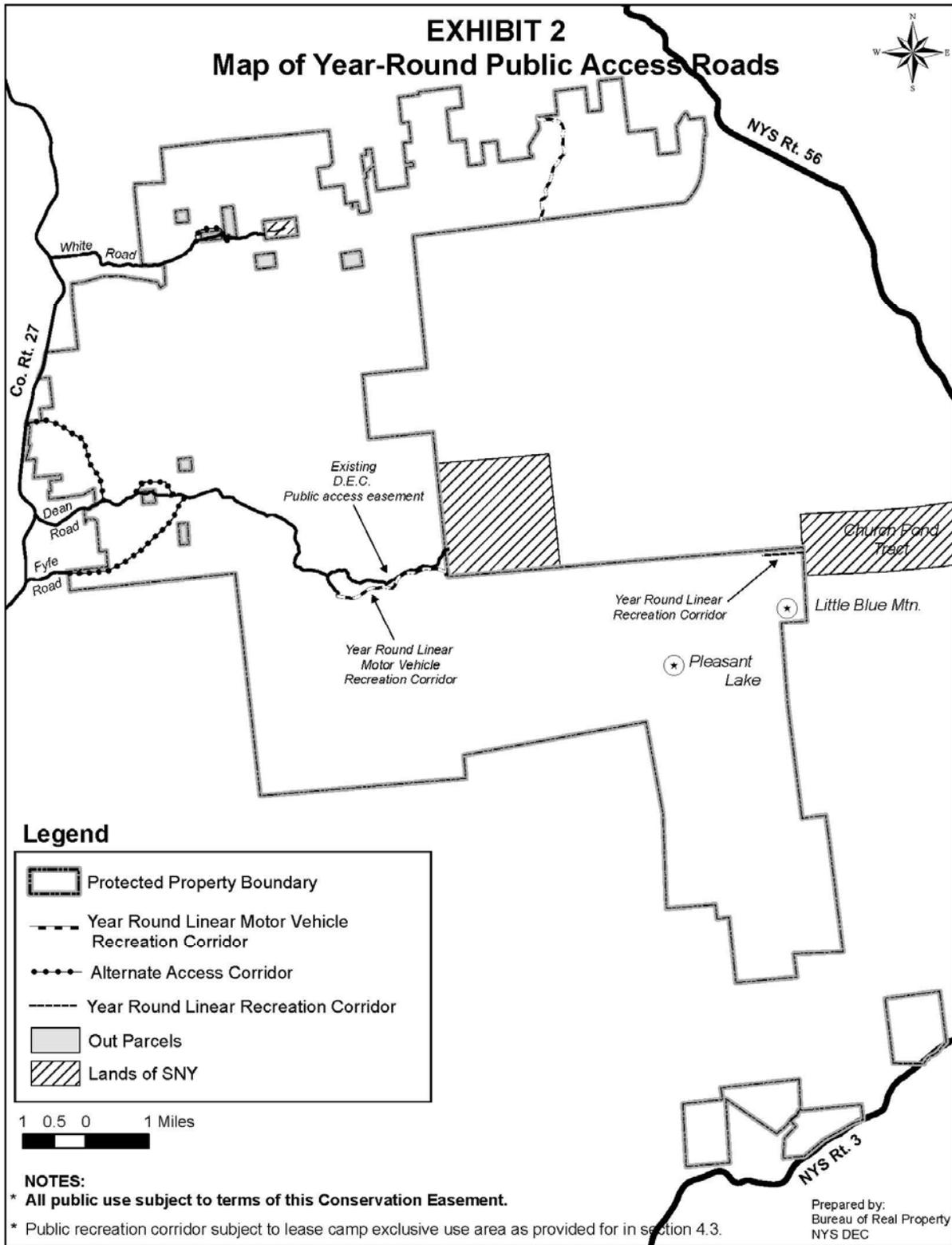
4. All other directional or informational signs

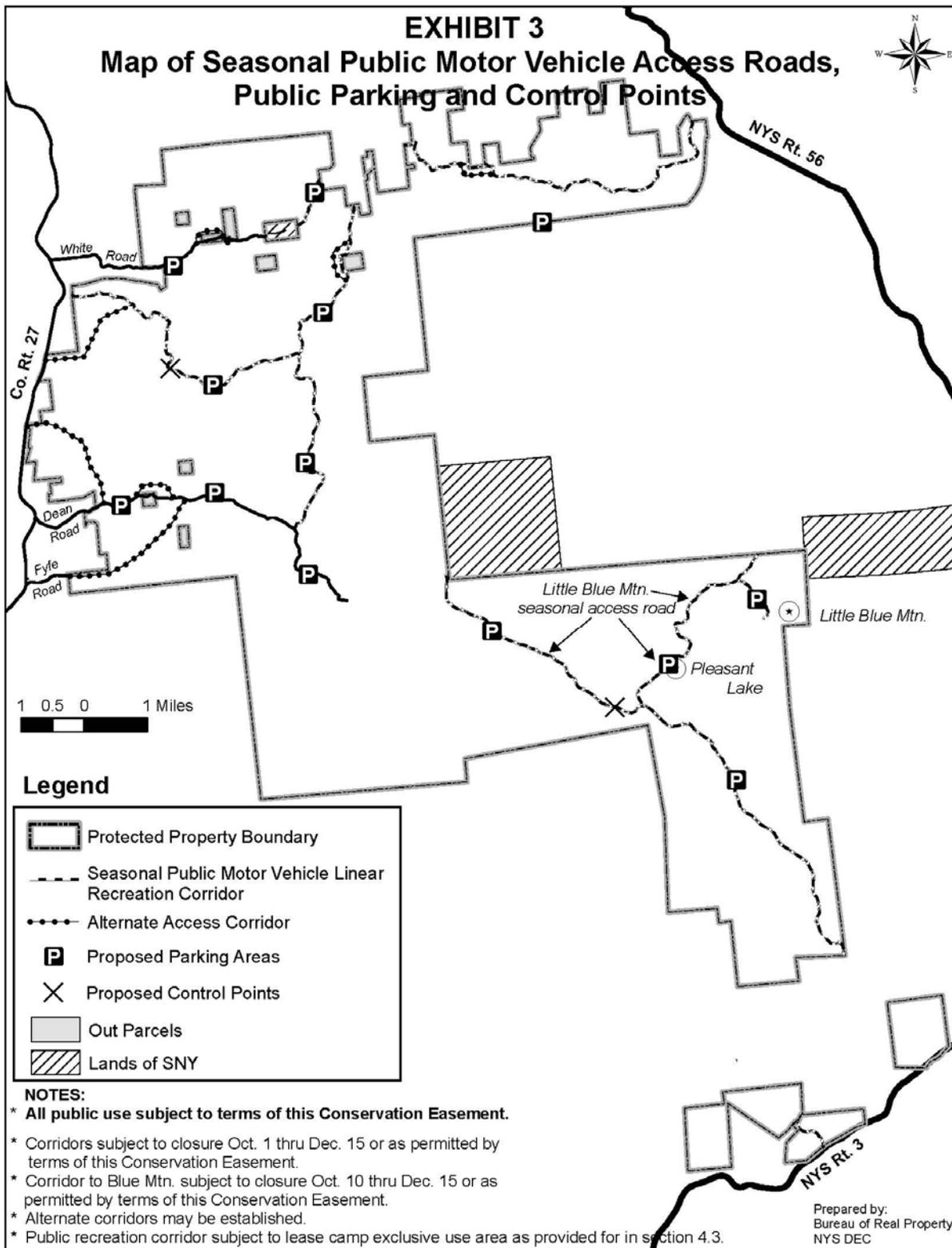
Will be developed as need dictates on a tract-by-tract basis. Signs will be custom-ordered by local DEC staff using in-house sign fabrication services. Generally speaking, directional signs will be constructed of wood and labeled with yellow lettering set on a brown background.

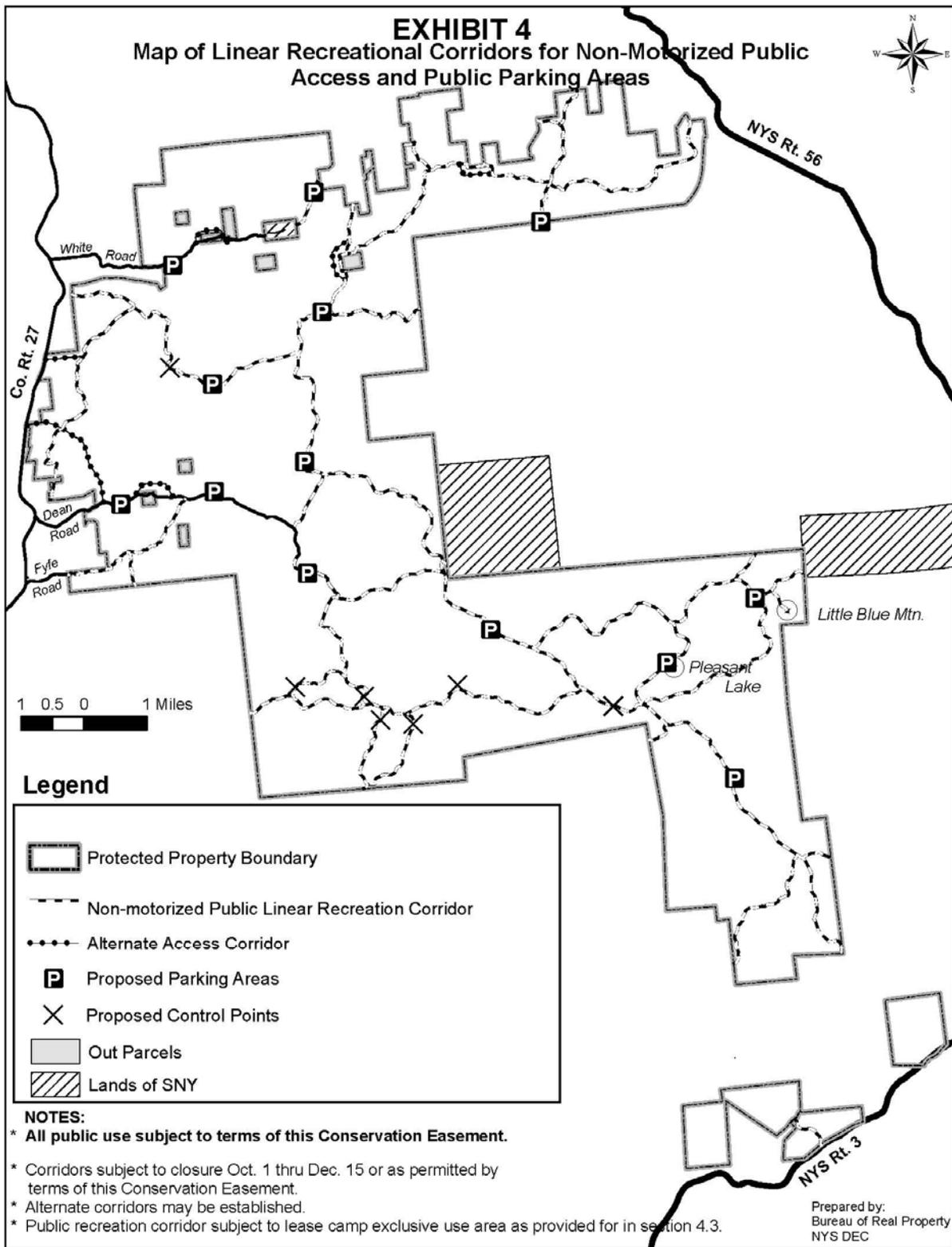
**G. Public Comments and Response Summary to Draft Plan
(Reserved)**

H. References: Exhibits 1 – 8 as presented in the Grass River Conservation Easement Document







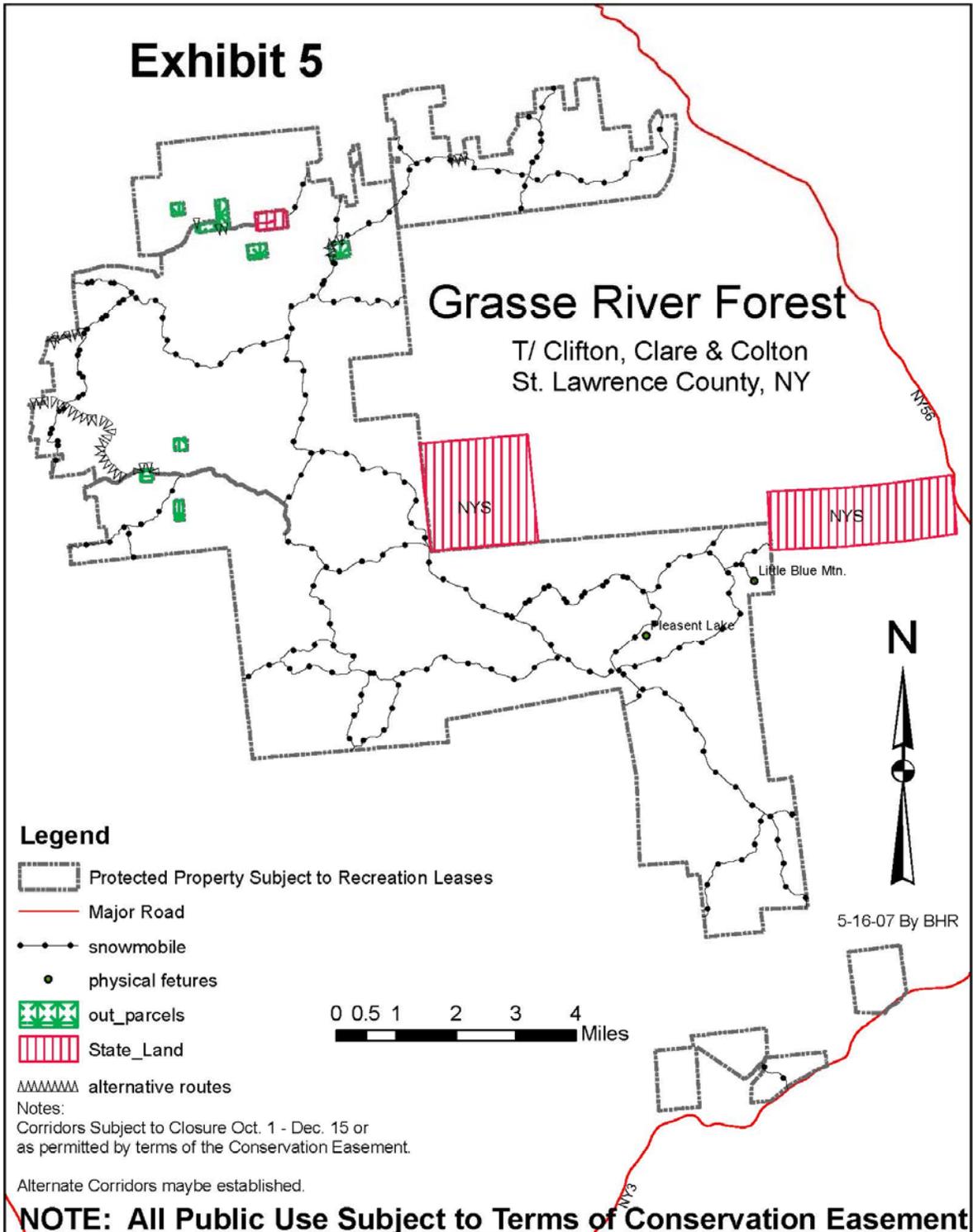


Grass River Conservation Easement
Draft Recreation Management Plan
September, 2016

Exhibit 5

Grasse River Forest

T/ Clifton, Clare & Colton
St. Lawrence County, NY



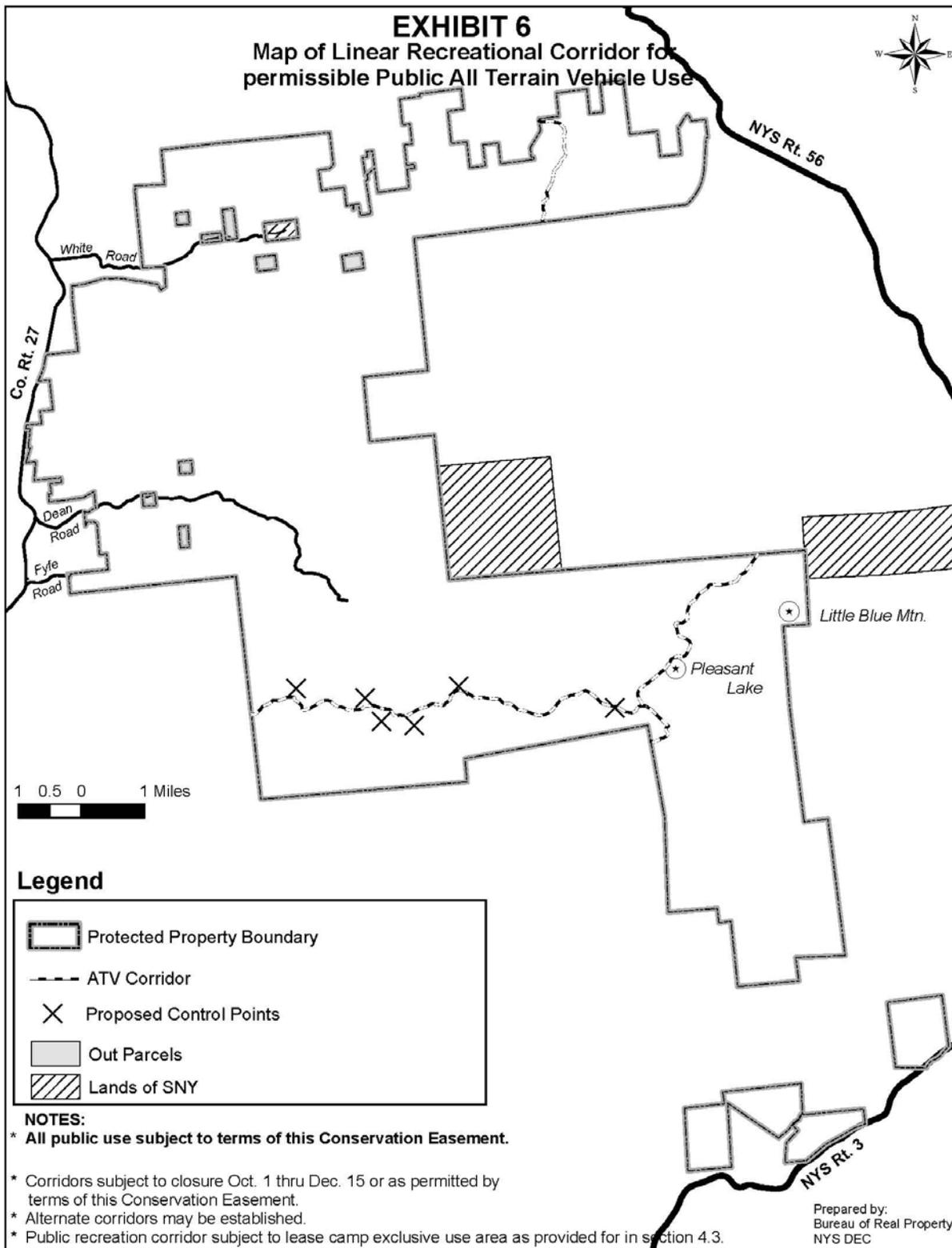
Legend

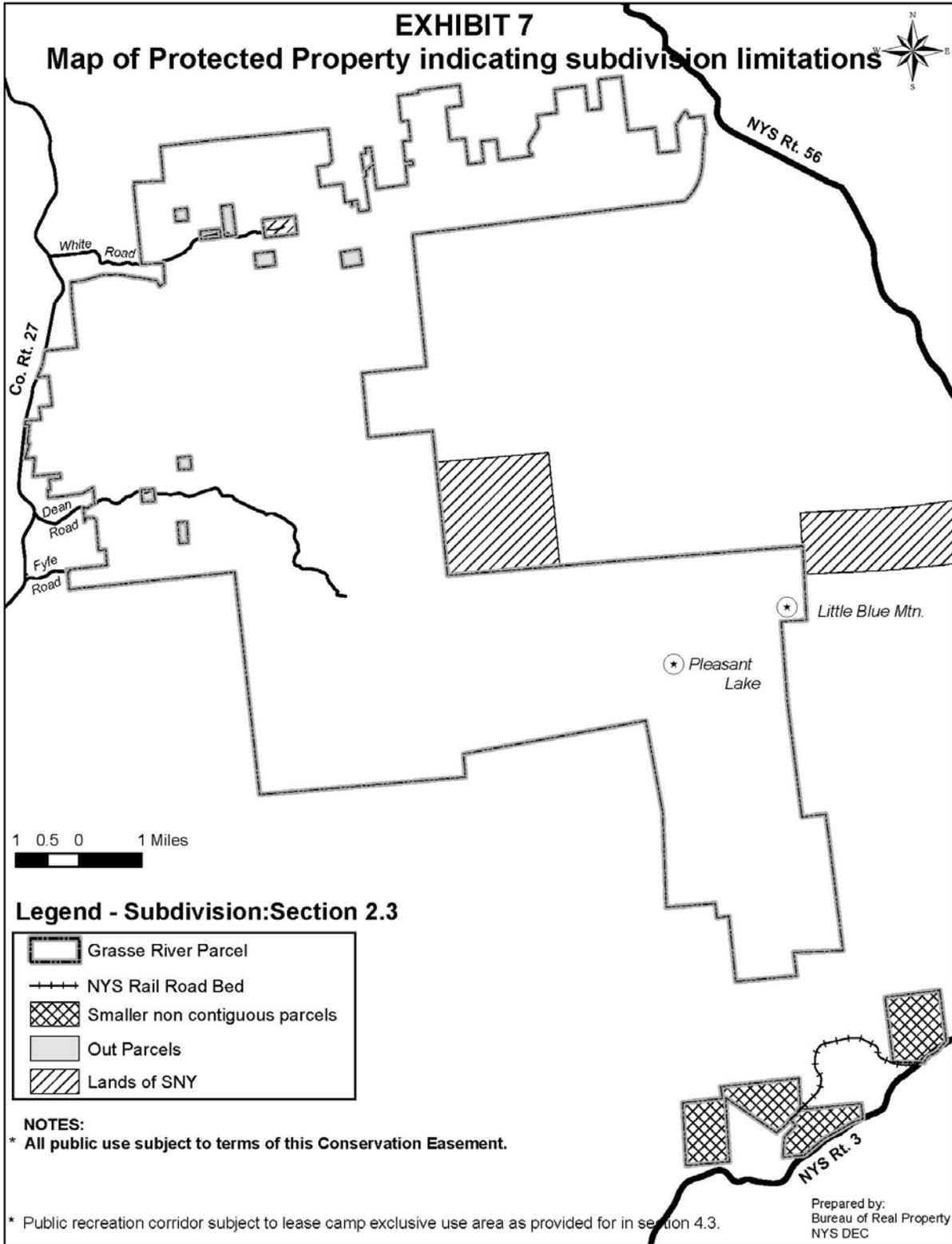
- Protected Property Subject to Recreation Leases
- Major Road
- snowmobile
- physical fetures
- out_parcels
- State_Land
- alternative routes

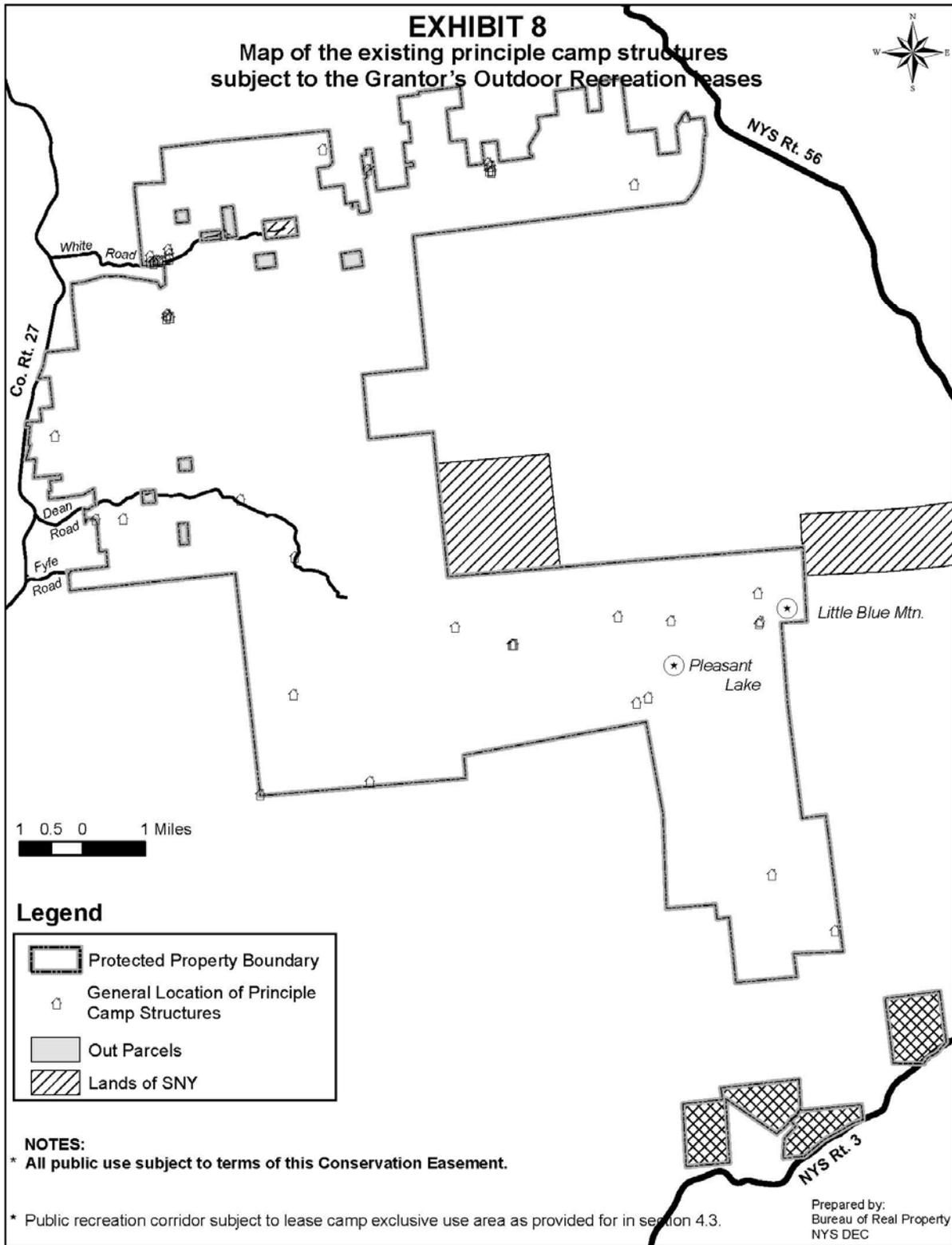
Notes:
Corridors Subject to Closure Oct. 1 - Dec. 15 or
as permitted by terms of the Conservation Easement.

Alternate Corridors maybe established.

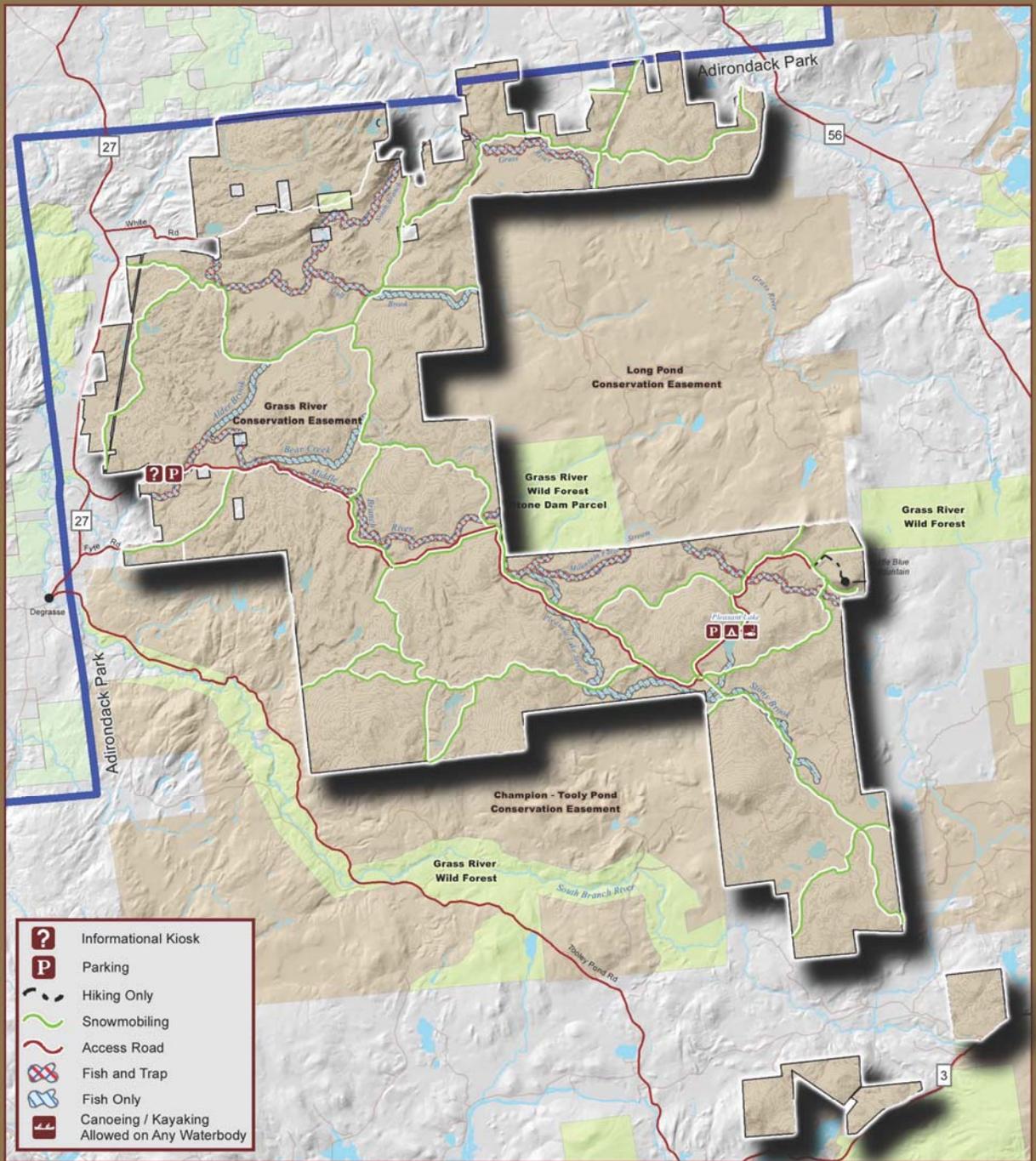
NOTE: All Public Use Subject to Terms of Conservation Easement





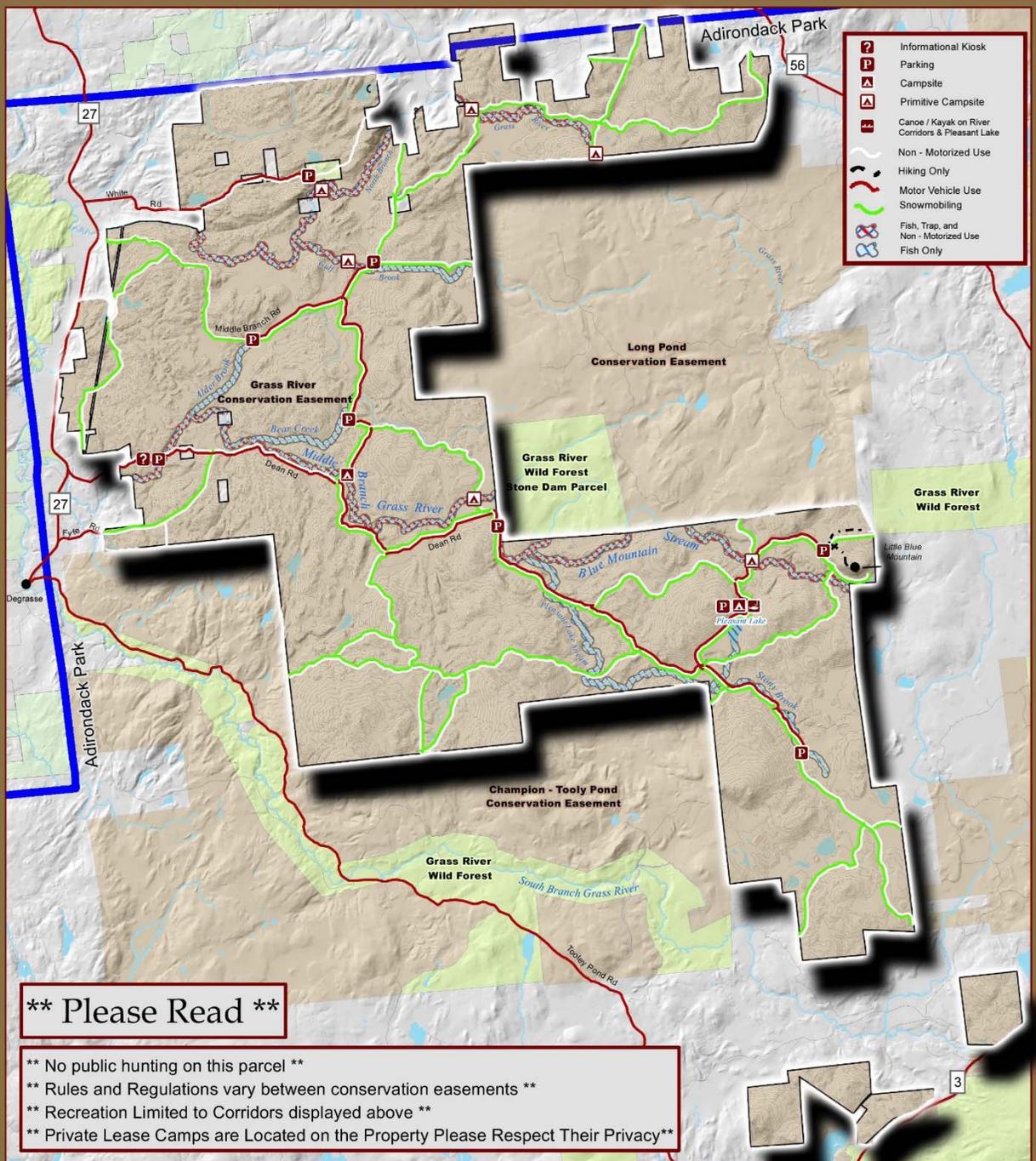


I. Overall Recreation Maps



New York State
 Department of Environmental Conservation
 Contact Information : NYS DEC Potsdam Office (315)265-3090





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