

**Interim Recreation Management Plan
Santa Clara Conservation Easement
Franklin County**

**New York State Department of
Environmental Conservation
Division of Lands & Forests
Region 5 - Ray Brook**

June, 2000

SECTION I

Introduction

In June of 1999 the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) completed one of its largest acquisition projects ever. Known as the Northern Flow River Corridors Project, the State acquired interests in 140,000 acres of lands through fee title acquisition and conservation easements. The objectives of this project are to preserve open space character, enhance public use of four northern flow river corridors (Deer, Grasse, Oswegatchie, and St. Regis) and to sustain working landscapes of adjacent timberlands.

Approximately 30,000 acres of land were acquired in fee and 110,000 acres in conservation easement from The Conservation Fund of Arlington, Virginia. These lands were formerly owned by the Champion International Corporation. The lands acquired in fee became part of the Forest Preserve with the only interests retained by the grantor being reserved rights of way. For those lands encumbered by a conservation easement, the Department acquired public recreation rights and development rights. The grantor retained fee title ownership and the right to manage the lands for the production of forest products. The Conservation Fund subsequently sold fee ownership and timber rights to Heartwood Forest Fund III of Chapel Hill, NC.

Taxes are apportioned between the Department and the fee owner based on the rights or degree of interest held in the property, expressed as a percentage (%).

The purchase comprises three non-contiguous blocks of land identified as the Santa Clara Tract, the Tooley Pond Tract, and the Croghan Tract. These tracts cover portions of 10 towns in Franklin, Herkimer, Lewis, and St. Lawrence Counties. The properties were purchased with funds provided by the Environmental Protection Bond Act of 1993 in accordance with the New York State's Open Space Plan (OSP) of 1998. Most of the former Champion lands had been closed to general public use for more than 100 years prior to this purchase.

This draft plan deals specifically with the recreational component of the conservation easement agreement for the Santa Clara Tract.

Purpose of the Easement

The easement has three primary objectives as required by the OSP:

- The primary objective of the easement is to perpetuate and sustain the productive forest resources and economics of a working forest under long-term, professional management.
- The second objective is to provide for a diversity of forest types and natural conditions necessary to conserve and perpetuate fish and wildlife habitat and other important natural features.
- The third objective is to provide for a wide spectrum of recreational opportunities

consistent with forest management and resource conservation purposes as stated in the easement and to further complement those available on adjoining forest preserve lands. The easement makes it clear that these recreational opportunities are to be structured in a manner that is consistent with forest management and resource conservation objectives of the OSP and not to be precluded by them.

Plan Intent and Purpose

The intent of this draft plan is to apply the terms and conditions of the easement to actual practice on the ground. It further provides a means to discuss and clarify issues pertinent to the easement and clearly state management mechanisms and protocol to resolve them. This is necessary to determine how the recreation resources of the easement can be managed, accessed, and used by the public as a recreational resource.

A written plan stabilizes management despite changes in personnel or the influence of multiple administrative parties to the easement where several managers and/or disciplines have different perceptions on how this easement should be administered. It is not a static document, but will be reviewed and amended periodically should resource and social conditions change.

As a public document, a draft plan introduces the public, local governments, and other interested parties to DEC's planning process and provides opportunities for all stakeholders to voice their opinion(s) on how this area should be managed in the future. Public participation is important in that it gives interested parties the opportunity to learn, evaluate, provide advice, and influence decisions how the easement should be managed within the legal context of the purchase.

Area Overview

The Santa Clara Tract is the largest of the three Northern Flow Rivers Easements. The easement covers more than 73,000 acres in essentially one single block located near the hamlet of Santa Clara, Franklin County, New York. The easement encloses both private and state forest preserve lands bordering the Deer River, East and Main Branches of the St. Regis Rivers. Public access corridors (roads) have been established across easement lands to reach state lands at various locations. Connecting appendages extend to easement lands in the Town of Hopkinton, St. Lawrence County. The Debar Mountain Wild Forest (83,000 acres) is the nearest largest block of state land and borders the easement by the west bound of NYS Route 30.

The tract is covered by a mix of northern hardwood and softwood forest types and includes numerous bogs and wetlands. Fish and wildlife present are typical of the northern Adirondacks. Soil types vary by location and include mineral derived soils, glacial tills, and outwash soils that include silts, sands, and gravel. Organically derived soils such as mucks and peats are less common. Terrain is moderate consisting of low hills and mountains. The lowest elevation is on the Main Branch of the St. Regis (1,300 feet) and ranges upwards to 2,428 feet atop Furnace Mountain.

This land was owned by the Champion International Corporation, successors to the St. Regis Paper Co. It has been maintained as a “working forest” under professional timber management since the early 1900's. Both companies had leased exclusive hunting and fishing rights to portions of the tract and permitted lessees to erect camp buildings. There were 28 active clubs on the property at time of purchase (7/1999). Presently, there are more than 400 structures ranging from multi-room camp buildings to garages and storage sheds on the easement. All buildings and structures were inventoried and building foot prints established. The easement prevents further expansion of these facilities. Private leases, subject to certain rights and provisions under the easement, may continue until 2013. For example, public hunting is not permitted on easement lands from September 1 through December 31 of each year. And, no public use whatsoever is permitted on leased properties during the Northern Zone Regular Big Game Season except on designated Rifle Season Access Corridors (RSAC's) to adjoining forest preserve lands. After 2013, all leases terminate and all buildings must be removed.

Primary Access

The Santa Clara Tract is bisected by town, county, and state highways. External access is provided by the Blue Mountain Road, the Dexter Lake Road, the Red Tavern Road, and NYS Routes 30 and 458. Interior access is provided by more than 300 miles of improved or partially improved gravel roads developed for logging and to access lease-holder camps.. They range in character from so-called “ice roads”, roads that were created for solely for winter logging traffic on frozen surfaces, to well developed maintained gravel haul roads. Most roads are in need of brushing, ditching, turn-outs for safe vehicle passage, culvert and/or bridge replacement, and gravel top- dressing.

Area Identification

Central to administration and proper use of the Santa Clara Easement is to have all boundaries identified and surveyed. This is necessary for administration and management of the easement's forest management and recreation components. The easement encompasses more than 172 square miles, borders and encloses private lands as well as state fee lands. Approximately 300 miles of control and boundary lines will be contracted in to four separate surveys over the next three years. Contract surveys will be done in the following order: Madawaska (southern quadrant), St. Regis (central and east quadrants), Red Tavern (northern quadrant) and Lake Ozonia (western quadrant). Madawaska is the first area to be surveyed because it establishes the necessary control points for the remaining three surveys

All boundary lines will be established, brushed, marked with paint, and signed. This is especially important between fee and easement lands where different rules and regulations apply. Fee lines are to be painted yellow and marked with State Land signs. Large area identification signs have been placed along main travel routes to designate easement lands. Individual boundaries will be marked every 0.1 mile by special easement signs.

Lessees (hunt clubs) may establish and post club boundary lines and one acre camp exceptions so long as they do not conflict or interfere with legal property lines or adversely affect public use under the terms of the easement

SECTION II

Natural Resource and Cultural Components

Preliminary natural resource and cultural inventories of the Santa Clara Tract have been conducted and aerial photographs reviewed. This process is on-going. Champion forest inventory maps (1991) were used to assess riparian and wetland areas, delineate significant habitats, and define road locations. Stewardship monies have been allocated to conduct more comprehensive natural resource and cultural inventories on both the easement and fee lands of the Santa Clara Tract. Requests for Proposals (RFP's) are being developed in order to contract this work for 2001. Collected information and their accompanying environmental assessments will be added to this plan. HFF III is currently conducting an updated forest inventory in preparation of an overall forest management plan for the easement.

Geological Resources

DEC has the right to utilize on-site sand and gravel resources designated by HFF III for the construction and maintenance of roads, trails, parking facilities, etc. in accordance with the easement. All such gravel or borrow pits shall be maintained in such a way so as to minimize the adverse effects of surface mining and shall be operated in accordance with all applicable rules and regulations. No gravel pits may be located within Forest Management Buffer Areas as described in the easement or within 100 feet of State or local highway. An inventory of existing and potential gravel pits needs to be updated, GPS located and GIS mapped.

Fisheries

DEC's Fisheries unit will survey and inventory all lakes, streams, ponds, and other water bodies on the easement. Field efforts will define the physical characteristics, chemistry, and biological inventories of area waters. Results will be used to evaluate the status of aquatic habitats and fish populations, and direct future management decisions regarding stocking and/or habitat management.

Wildlife

Wildlife will be managed in accordance with all State rules and regulations. Game species will be managed by appropriate hunting and trapping seasons as part of larger Wildlife Management Units (WMU's) applicable to Franklin and St. Lawrence Counties

.Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species

As required by the easement, DEC will provide and share information on status of rare, threatened, and endangered species, unique habitats or cultural and archaeological sites, and wetland and riparian buffers as they are inventoried. This is necessary so that HFF III may develop strategies to protect sensitive areas not only in specific management activities, but also its overall Forest Management Plan as prescribed by the easement.

Cultural Resources

Cultural resource identification and inventory provide an important link between the culture of

Northern New York and its use of forest resources. Traditional resource inventory efforts will be employed by DEC and/or designated contractors to develop a database and GIS layer to aid in overall forest and recreation planning.

SECTION III

Public Use Administration and Management

The easement clearly states that DEC will provide public recreation opportunities in a manner

that is consistent with its forest management and resources conservation objectives. All public use management activities must consider the reserved rights of the HFF III, its lessees, and the public defined in the easement. Consistent administration and interactive communication between all parties is extremely important to meet all the objectives of the easement. With few exceptions as noted in the easement, public use shall be managed in a manner consistent with general public use of the forest preserve.

Access

Rights of access are granted to the DEC for administrative use and public use subject to special terms and conditions:

- DEC has the right to administrative access to inspect easement property at any time, including access through all gates and/or barriers.
- All public vehicular use is restricted to Rifle Season Access Corridors (RSAC) during Northern Zone Big Game Rifle Season. RSAC afford public access to fee lands across easement lands along specifically designated routes.
- DEC has the right to construct and/or designate foot, bicycle, cross-country ski, horseback (including horse and wagon), mechanized aids for persons with disabilities, and motorized access trails along routes agreed to by HFF III.
- DEC may develop supporting access facilities, such as parking lots and trailheads in concurrence with HFF III. Any timber removed as a result of new construction is retained by HFF III.
- DEC and HFF III may mutually close any road and trail to lessee and public use due to unsafe conditions or during periods of adverse weather, such as the spring “mud season” to prevent undue damage until area roads and trails dry out and are capable of sustaining motor vehicle traffic.
- Public access and use is totally excluded from so-called 5 acre “development parcels” as defined in the easement and reserved by HFF III. Each 5 acre lot “shall not be configured in a manner that restricts access on roads or trails which would otherwise be available to the Grantee”, i.e. the People of the State of New York.
- Public use may be excluded from active logging closure zones. The easement requires HFF III to give DEC 30 days advance notice of establishing logging closure zones. Such closure zones shall not exceed 24 months duration in any one location.

Barriers, Gates, and Locks

- DEC, in concurrence with HFF III has the right to install barriers and gates to control or prohibit public use.
- Barriers will be constructed to block existing motor vehicle ways that require closure based on the joint recommendations of DEC and HFF III. These will be constructed of materials that will be highly visible and appropriately signed to DEC standards.
- All new gates and replacement gates shall meet DEC safety standards as to color, design, and signage.
- DEC will install wider gates (12+ feet) on roads designed to accommodate tractor trailer log trucks or oversize vehicles and equipment.

- All gates will have compatible locking mechanisms to accommodate State and HFF III approved locks.

Boundary Line Maintenance

- Boundary lines will be maintained and signed to DEC standards.
- Clubs may post and maintain hunting club boundaries so long as these activities do not conflict with actual boundary line surveys or provide information contrary to the easement.
- DEC has requested all clubs discontinue using yellow paint since this is the standard color used by the State of New York for all forest preserve boundaries.

Camping and Campfires

Camping is permitted on easement land subject to standard DEC rules and regulations.

- DEC, in concurrence with HFF III, may establish designated campsites as the area's transportation system, roads and trails, are opened to the public.
- Camping will be subject to section (b) Part 190, NYCRR which prohibits camping within 150 feet of any road, trail, spring, stream, pond or other body of water except at sites designated by the Department.
- No designated campsites will be established within 500 feet of any one acre leased camp exclusion zone or so-called 5 acre "development parcels" reserved by HFF III.
- No lean-tos are planned for easement lands during the interim life of this draft plan.
- Campfires are permitted in safe locations on easement lands subject to Part 190.1 NYCRR. This section reaffirms easement language that only dead and down timber may be used for on-site campfires.

Motorized and Mechanical Uses

Certain motorized and mechanical uses are authorized by the easement. These deal primarily with opening roads and trails to motor vehicles, ATV's, bicycles, and snowmobiles.

- All designations must be mutually agreed to by DEC and HFF III.
- All designated roads and trails will be constructed and maintained to agreed standards.
- HFF III lessees are subject to all motor vehicle and snowmobile regulations expected of the public.
- All motor vehicles and snowmobiles using easement lands must be registered and insured.
- All riders of ATV's and snowmobile are required to wear appropriate safety equipment.
- Roads open to motor vehicle use will be posted to a speed limit of 25 mph unless conditions warrant otherwise.

Search, Rescue, Fire, and Law Enforcement

- Emergency response to search, rescue, and fire will be coordinated by DEC.
- DEC will notify HFF III of all emergency actions and serious violations occurring on easement lands.
- HFF III will report all public use violations to DEC and file complaints through the area manager and/or regional dispatch center.
- DEC, the New York State Police, and other public law enforcement and safety agencies

will have full access to easement lands.

Signs

- The easement requires DEC to designate on all roads and trails open to the public as to type of use, mode of transportation, etc.
- Directional signs will be placed on roads and trails, and at other points that may be confusing.
- Standard DEC information, caution, and safety sign formats will be used on easement lands; especially on entry ways to all area roads and trails..

SECTION IV

Proposed Projects

The following is a discussion of proposed projects for the easement that deal with the designation, construction and maintenance of roads, trails, and other amenities considered essential to meet public use requirements. All roads, regardless of use, need some degree of maintenance to sustain

use and prevent environmental damage such as culvert wash-outs and erosion. Most area roads have not had major maintenance, rehabilitation, or improvements since timber harvesting last occurred in individual compartments. These projects, referenced by former Champion compartment block numbers, club locations, etc span a window of five years.

Cumulatively, these projects require the expenditure of approximately **\$953,500** (year 2001 dollar estimates) in equipment, labor, and materials. Project costs are based on estimates supplied by the Division of Operations, trail, and road contractors for comparable work. Additional costs will be incurred as ATV trails are reviewed for designation, rehabilitation and/or closure. Some project costs may be absorbed by HFF III in association with timber harvesting access road development.

BLOCK S-2 , COMPARTMENT 10

Club Reference: East Brook Club

Suggested Uses:

ATV
Fishing
Hiking
Mountain Biking
Snowmobiling

Discussion:

Block S-2 lies north of the Brown Tract Road and west of the Blue Mountain Road and has limited potential for motor vehicle use. A north-south road (Champion #62-20-04 leaves the Brown Track Road, crosses two private interior parcels, and exits the unit as Champion Road #54-00 at its intersection with the Lake Ozonia Road. The route needs extensive improvements and it is not clear if there is a public easement across two private parcels (Cobb Lot and others). Title investigations and ground surveys need to be completed before any work is undertaken in this block. Suggest improving 2.6 miles of this road as far as the intersection with Champion Road #54-10 and create a small parking lot (5 vehicles) there and gate all roads beyond that point.. Improvements include brushing, ditching, culvert replacements, and improved drainage. Club ATV trails need to be field checked. There are some opportunities for public fishing on Dexter Lake outlet if access is improved for foot trail use (0.9 miles) beyond the road intersection. Effect coordination with Region 6 (Stony Brook Club) to provide groomed snowmobiling opportunities on the Brown Track Road.

Summary:

ITEM	ESTIMATED COST
Improve former Champion Road #62-20-4 (2.6 miles)	\$ 39,000
Install 3 gates	3,000
Construct 5 vehicle parking lot	8,000

Improve foot trail access to Dexter Lake Outlet, 0.9 miles	5,000
Signs	2,000
TOTAL:	\$57,000

BLOCK S-3, COMPARTMENT 11
Club Reference: Stony Brook Club, Ozone Club

Suggested Uses:
ATV
Fishing
Hiking

Mountain Biking
Snowmobiling

Discussion:

This is the largest of the Santa Clara leased clubs located in St. Lawrence County. It has a well-developed road system with numerous club ATV trails. Since this area lies in St. Lawrence County, its forest management and recreation components will be administered by the DEC's R-6 Office in Potsdam. All roads and trails will be open for mountain biking and non-motorized use. The so-called "Miner's Hill or Gold Mine Trail" will not be officially designated for public use due to safety concerns in and around the former mine shaft. All club ATV trails need to be evaluated on a case by case basis for continued club and public use. A snowmobile trail (approx. 4.3 miles) over former Champion Road #62-00 from the Sylvan Falls Club Gate to the Brown Track Road will be designated as an official snowmobile trail, marked, groomed, and maintained as such. A 5 car parking lot/snowmobile groomer turn-around will be constructed on easement lands near the Stony Brook Club Gate. Former Champion Roads #62-00, 63-20, and 63-50 will be considered as an ATV trail loop. Numerous road intersections need to be evaluated for additional gate locations.

Summary:

ITEM;	ESTIMATED COST
Stony Brook Rd. (former Champion 62-00) Snowmobile Trail Improvements, brushing, culvert replacement, signing, etc. (4.3 miles)	\$34,000
Stony Brook Club Gate Parking Area/Turn-around (5 vehicles)	\$10,000
Signs	\$ 2,000
TOTAL:	\$46,000

BLOCK S-1, COMPARTMENT 12
Club Reference: Ozone Club, Blind Pond Club

Suggested Uses:

ATV
Fishing
Access for Persons with Disabilities

Hiking
Mountain Biking
Snowmobiling

Discussion:

This block lies between the Howe Road and the Lake Ozonia Road. Both provide access to the interior. The main interior road is Champion Road #57-00 that heads westerly off the Howe Road. There are opportunities for fishing in Lake Ozonia Outlet. 1.7 miles of this road should be open to public use and a 5 vehicle parking lot should be constructed to accommodate this use where this road crosses the outlet. This should be located 500 feet from a 5 acre exclusion zone. A gate should be installed beyond the parking area to limit public motor vehicle use beyond the parking area. A second 5 vehicle parking lot will be constructed on the Lake Ozonia Road to provide foot and other non-motorized access into the southwest corner of the tract. All area roads and trails will open to mountain bike and non-motorized use. Club ATV trails need to be evaluated for continued club and public use.

Summary:

ITEM	ESTIMATED COST
Champion Road #57-00 Improvements (1.7 miles)	\$25,500
Bridge Repair and Maintenance	15,000
(2) 5 Vehicle Parking Areas	20,000
Gate (1)	1,000
Signs	2,000
TOTAL:	\$63,500

BLOCK S-4 WEST, COMPARTMENT 1
Club Reference: formerly Red Tavern Club; not leased at present

Suggested Uses:

ATV
Hiking
Snowmobiling

Discussion:

This is a small block of easement lands bordering the Adirondack Nature Conservancy's Everton Falls Preserve. Fee lands on the Deer River border to the east. Access is from the Red Tavern Road. Other than general non-motorized use activities, no major public use facilities are planned for this area. Existing ATV trails will be evaluated on a case by case basis. Boundary posting will be completed when all lines are surveyed. Access to the Deer River is not needed from this unit at this time.

Summary:

	ITEM	ESTIMATED COST
Signs		\$ 2,000
	TOTAL:	\$ 2,000

BLOCK S-4 EAST, COMPARTMENT 1
Club Reference; Deer River Club, Coal Hill Club, Sugar Knoll Club

Suggested Uses:

ATV
Fishing Access
Hiking

Mountain Biking
Snowmobiling

Discussion:

Access to this block is via the Coal Hill Road (Champion#26-00) north of the Red Tavern Road. The first section is a right-of-way across private property before reaching the main gate. The latter needs to be replaced with a double-swing DEC standard gate. This road should be maintained to its intersection with the Walkerville Road, an abandoned town road. From this point, a foot trail will be developed following the former town road southerly to the Deer River. In addition, that section of the former town road heading north from the Coal Hill Road to the northern boundary of the easement lands will be improved for ATV and snowmobile use. The timing for this improvement work is contingent on resolving right of way issues across private property located north of the easement lands.

Two and one half miles of the Coal Hill Road requires improvement. This includes replacement of the Coal Hill Club gate and placement of a new gate near the intersection of Champion Road #26-20. Near this point, a 5 vehicle parking lot will constructed to serve foot trail access to the Deer River.

Champion Road #25-00, originating from the north side of the Red Tavern Road, being the former Walkerville Road was originally designated as a RSAC to the Deer River. Field investigation subsequent to the acquisition process revealed that this is not a usable route. It is the Departments intent to repeal this designation and to designate the Coal Hill Road from the Red Tavern Road to the Walkerville Road as the RSAC for this unit.

ATV trails on Mutton Ridge and in the northeast corner of this block need to be evaluated on case by case base.

Summary:

ITEM	ESTIMATED COST:
Coal Hill Road Improvements (2.5 miles)	\$37,500
Install 2 gates on Coal Hill Road	2,000
Coal Hill Road/Deer River Trailhead Parking (5 vehicles)	8,000
Develop Trail to Deer River	2,000
Improve Walkerville ATV - Snowmobile Trail	5,000
TOTAL:	\$54,500

BLOCK S-5 EAST, COMPARTMENT 3

Club Reference: Furnace Mountain Club, Mile Brook Club

Suggested Uses:

ATV
Fishing
Hiking
Mountain Biking

Snowmobiling

Discussion:

This block lies north of the East Branch of the St. Regis and has limited potential for full motor vehicle access due to deteriorating road conditions and difficult terrain. Consideration should be given to improving the Stacey Mountain-Furnace Road (Champion #24-00 and #31-20), 6.6 miles, for ATV use and snowmobiling that would provide a connector between the Cold Brook Road and the Red Tavern Road. This will require extensive brushing, relocation of 0.8 miles to avoid wet areas, a new recreational bridge across Cold Brook to accommodate ATV's and snowmobiles, and numerous culvert replacements. Construction activities in or adjacent to wetlands will require consultation with the Adirondack Park Agency. Three additional gates; one on the Red Tavern Road and two on the Furnace Mountain side to control access on road segments Champion #31-00 and #31-22.

Summary:

ITEM	ESTIMATED COST
Stacey Mountain-Furnace Mountain Road Improvements (5.8 miles)	\$87,000
Cold Brook Trail Relocation (0.8 miles)	8,000
Cold Brook Recreational Bridge/Culvert Replacement	30,000
Install 3 gates	3,000
Signs	3,000
TOTAL:	\$131,000

BLOCK S-5 WEST, COMPARTMENT 4

Club Reference: East Branch Club, Everton Club

Suggested Uses:

- ATV
- Hiking
- Mountain Biking
- Rock Climbing

Discussion:

Efforts should be made to improve the Conger Mountain Road (Champion#45-00), 1.3 miles to the base of the Pinnacle and establish a 5 vehicle parking area/trailhead there. This will also require the placement of 2 gates; one northeast of left-hand turn to the Pinnacle, and one just past the proposed Pinnacle Parking Area. A hiking trail, (0.6 miles), will be established to the summit of the Pinnacle and one along its base for rock climbers.

The Goodnow Mountain Road, also known as the Vanderwhacker Road (Champion #40-60), 1.0 miles to and along the easement boundary at a point where a northerly skid trails leads to the East Branch of the St. Regis River. A 10 vehicle parking lot will be constructed there to provide upstream access to the river. This road was used as a winter road by Champion and needs substantial improvement, brushing, drainage, grading, and graveling. Two gates will be required to control access at the intersection of Champion Road #40-50 (old Route 458) and one beyond the proposed parking area. This road is a Rifle Season Access Corridor.

Existing ATV trails need to be evaluated on a case by case basis.

Summary:

ITEM	ESTIMATED COST
Conger Mountain/Pinnacle Road Improvements (1.3 miles)	\$19,500
Install 2 gates	2,000
Pinnacle Trailhead Parking (5 vehicles)	8,000
Pinnacle Hiking Trails (0.6 miles)	5,000
Goodnow Mountain Road Improvements (1.0 miles)	30,000
Install 2 gates	2,000
Goodnow Mountain/ E. Branch Parking Area (10 vehicles)	10,000
Signs	2,000
TOTAL:	\$78,500

BLOCK S-6, COMPARTMENT 4

Club Reference: Trout Brook Club, St. Regis Club, East Branch Rod and Gun Club (west of Rte 458)

Suggested Uses:

- ATV
- Access for Persons with Disabilities
- Fishing
- Hiking

Mountain Biking
Snowmobiling

Discussion:

Public use management of this block should focus on improving the so-called “Hooker Road” (former Champion Roads #46-00 and #48-00). This is the main travel route through one of the largest Santa Clara easement blocks. This road needs significant investment in brushing, ditching, culvert replacement, and improved drainage for an approximate distance of 9.0 miles. Beaver -related washouts are common. Side roads need to be gated at four or more locations to control unwarranted motor vehicle use. This route is tied to the N.Y. and Ottawa Railroad Bed (private land) and provides existing connectors to Madawaska Pond. It lends itself to a groomed snowmobile network beginning and ending near Santa Clara. A small parking lot (10 vehicles) should be constructed near the intersection of the Hooker Road and Rte. 458 Club ATV trails need to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Summary:

ITEM	ESTIMATED COST
Improve Hooker road (former Champion #46-00 and 48-00) 9.0 miles	\$135,000
Install 4 gates	4,000
Construct 10 vehicle parking lot	10,000
TOTAL:	\$149,000

BLOCK S-7, COMPARTMENT 9

Club Reference: Beaver Brook Club, former B-S Industrial (Sun Beam), Twin Hill Club

Suggested Uses:

ATV
Access for Persons with Disabilities
Fishing
Hiking
Mountain Biking

Snowmobiling

Discussion:

Public use management of this area will be primarily directed to the former B-S Industrial lease, locally known as the Sun Beam Club. No activities are planned for the Beaver Brook Club or Twin Hill Club leases in the foreseeable future..

The Balsam Pond Road (Champion Road #60-15), 1.0 miles, will be improved to accommodate public motor vehicle use to within 500 feet of Balsam Pond and requires construction of a 5 vehicle parking lot. The remaining 500 feet to the pond, will be converted into a Universal Access Trail built to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. Future consideration should be given to construction of a dock and/or fishing/wildlife viewing platform for persons with disabilities. A gate was installed on this road in July, 2000.

Sun Beam Road (Champion Road #60-10), 1.0 miles, and the Spring Cove Road (Champion #60-15), 2.5 miles, form a loop connected to the Blue Mountain Road. This loop is known locally as the “Four Mile Road” and will maintained. The centerline of #60-15 is used as the boundary between easement and fee lands and is defined as a RSAC. Segment #60-15 runs past the Sun Beam gatehouse is not a RSAC and is subject to closure during Northern Zone Big Game rifle season. Both segments provide access to the Oxbow Canoe Carry on the Main Branch of the St. Regis River. A 5 vehicle parking lot was constructed at the intersection of these roads in 1999. Access to the roads is controlled by 3 gates; one at each end and one midway. The gates will remain open until such time this area is leased. Leasing may necessitate the seasonal closure of Road #60-10 as per the easement.

All roads will be open to mountain biking and other non-motorized uses.

SUMMARY:

ITEM	ESTIMATED COST0
Balsam Pond Rod Improvements (1.0 miles)	\$15,000
Balsam Pond Parking (5 vehicles)	8,000
Balsam Pond Universal Access Trail (500 feet)	3,000
Balsam Dock and Fishing/Wildlife Viewing Platform	15,000
Four Mile Road Improvements (2.5 miles)	37,500
Signs	2,000
 TOTAL:	 \$80,500

BLOCK S-8, COMPARTMENT 6

Club Reference: Long As We Live Club, Quebec Brook Club, The Dan Mountain Club

Suggested Uses:

ATV

Access for Persons with Disabilities

Fishing

Hiking

Mountain Biking

Snowmobiling

Discussion:

Central to public use of this block is the Madawaska Road (Champion #48-10), sometimes referred to as the Twin Gates Road. This is a designated RSAC for 5.9 miles to State forest preserve lands at Madawaska Pond. The first 0.2 miles of this road from NYS Rte. 458 crosses the Herkimer Forest Products property to which a temporary right-of-way has been secured. In July, 2000, both shoulders were cleared of brush for a distance of 4.8 miles at a cost of \$10,000. It is important to maintain this road and secure a permanent public use ROW across Herkimer Forest Products. This is currently used as a groomed snowmobile trail. A temporary easement has been obtained by the Franklin County Snowmobile Federation to access Herkimer Forest Products Co. lands and provide a trail connector to the Meacham Lake Inn.

The spur road (0.5 miles) to Wolf Pond shall be maintained to Department standards. A 5 vehicle parking lot will be constructed at the end of the road near the existing gravel pit. A Universal Access Trail for Persons with Disabilities (250 feet) will be constructed to the pond. All ATV use shall be prohibited beyond the parking area.

The Rice Mountain Road (Champion #36-00) should be upgraded for a distance of XXXX miles to a former header site on the east side of Rice Mountain. Here, a 5 vehicle parking lot will be built to serve as a trailed for Rice Mountain. A hiking trail of approximately 0.8 miles , following an existing skid road, should be constructed to the summit. Rice Mountain provides scenic views of Madawaska Pond, the Main Branch of the St. Regis River, Meacham Lake, Rice Lake, and Azure Mountain. Four or more gates are needed to limit motor vehicle use on lateral roads.

All ATV trails in this block need to be evaluated on a case by case basis.

Summary:

ITEM	ESTIMATED COST
Madawaska Road Improvements (5.9 miles)	\$88,500
Wolf Pond Road Improvements (0.5 miles)	7,500
Wolf Pond Parking (5 vehicles)	8,000
Wolf Pond Universal Access Trail (250 feet)	3,000
Rice Mountain Road Improvements (1.5 miles)	22,500
Rice Mountain Trailed Parking (5 vehicles)	8,000
Rice Mountain Trail Design and Construction (0.8 miles)	9,000
Install 4 gates	4,000
Signs	2,000
TOTAL:	\$152,500

BLOCK S-9, Compartment 8

Club Reference: Azure Mt. Club, Benz Pond Club (West)

Suggested Uses:

ATV

Fishing

Hiking

Mountain Biking

Rock Climbing

Snowmobiling

Discussion:

The primary access to this block is via a gated right-of-way from the Blue Mountain Road across the McCavanaugh Pond Club property. This is known as the Alder Creek Road (Champion #65-00) which runs east to west atop a former railroad grade. It ends at private land known as the Weller Mountain Club on the Franklin/St. Lawrence County Line. Total length is 4.6 miles.

This should be improved and open to public motor vehicle use. A parking lot/turn-around spot (5 vehicles) will be needed approximately 500 feet east of the Weller Mountain Club Gate. This road will require proper signing, additional turn-outs, culvert replacements, and railings placed on the Alder Creek Bridge. In addition to motor vehicle use, this road will be open to snowmobiling after January 1st of each year. The Franklin County Snowmobilers has tentatively agreed to assist in maintenance and grooming of this section. Discussions have been held with the St. Lawrence County Snowmobile Association to secure winter access across the Weller Mountain Club to tie-in to the St. Lawrence County snowmobile network. Completion of this network will make this segment eligible for OPRHP funding for snowmobile grooming and maintenance.

North of Alder Creek, the West Mountain Road (Champion #65-20-05) runs northerly and splits into two branches at the base of the West Mountain Group (Brushy Top, Flat Top, and Lost Mountain). This road will be improved to a point where the road forks (approximately 0.8 miles from the Alder Creek Road). A 10 car lot parking lot will be constructed there to serve a hiking trail loop to the 3 aforementioned summits. All three summits feature ledge areas with excellent views to the south. Spur trails will be built from this access point to Deer Pass and cliff areas on the western end of Flat Top Mountain to serve rock climbers. Design and construction of these routes are dependent on pending boundary line surveys with the McCavanaugh Pond Club.

County Line Mountain is an open summit southwest of Flat Top Mountain that overlooks scenic Train Pond (refer Block S-3, the Stony Brook Club and McCavanaugh Pond Club). Current access to Train Pond is from the north across the Stony Brook Club. An alternate route has been proposed from Alder Creek in a northerly direction via a hiking trail over County Line Mountain with a connectors to Deer Pass and Flat Top Mountain. A small spur road (partially overgrown) leads nearly to the foot County Line Mountain. This route needs further investigation and is dependent on boundary line surveys.

Shortly after entering the easement, Champion Road #65-10-2, bears left to the southeast and its centerline used as the boundary between the easement and the Santa Clara fee lands bordering the Main Branch of St. Regis River. Locally, this known as the Ross Line Road. and serves as the division line between the Azure Mountain and Benz Pond Clubs. This road should be open to public motor vehicle use for 0.8 miles and be terminated at 5 car parking lot to be constructed at a point approximately 1,000 feet south of the river. Here, a closed ATV trail leads to the river above Old Dam Portage and the Helo Campsite and that can be used as a canoe access site and for emergency purposes. The parking lot would be constructed atop a former log-landing site on the easement side of the line.

All roads will be open to mountain bike use unless prohibited by sign. Existing ATV trails will be evaluated on a case by case basis.

Summary:

ITEM	ESTIMATED COST
Alder Creek Road Improvements (4.6 miles)	\$69,000
Alder Creek Bridge Work (railings, etc.)	5,000
Alder Creek Road Terminus Parking (5 vehicles)	8,000
West Mountain Road Improvements (0.8 miles)	12,000
West Mountain Parking (10 vehicles)	12,000
West Mountain Trail (3 summits) Design and Construction (5.5 miles)	55,000
County Line Mountain/Train Pond Trail Feasibility Study, etc.	5,000
Ross Line Road Improvements (0.8 miles)	12,000
Ross Line Road Parking Terminus (5 vehicles)	8,000
Ross Line Terminus Gate	1,000
Signs	2,000
TOTAL:	\$189,000

Project Summary - Entire Easement

Project Type	Cost
Road Improvements (40.5 miles)	\$622,500
Parking Lots (13)	118,000
Trails, all categories (12.8 miles)	116,000
Bridge rehabilitation/replacement	35,000
Facilities for Persons with Disabilities	21,000
Gates (21)	21,000
Signs (all areas)	20,000

TOTAL:

\$953,500

SECTION V

Schedule for Implementation

The recreation components for the easement detailed in previous sections will be implemented over a five year time frame based on available resources. Target dates for implementing each management action will be arrived at considering priorities for resource protection, enhancement of recreational opportunities, and fiscal time frames and constraints which govern DEC's budget process. In many cases, roads are given the highest priority because they are the means to provide general public access to most recreational activities. The work plan for YEAR ONE is attached. This represents funding by the 2000 Bond Act. Additional projects may be listed as

funding becomes available. It is possible that not all planned actions for a particular year can be funded and implemented on schedule. Under such circumstances, implementation priorities will be adjusted.

Appendix 1

YEAR ONE - Proposed 2000 Bond Act Projects
Cost Center 922058 00
Projected Start Date - July 2001

1. Conger Mountain/Pinnacle Road Improvements (1.3 miles):
Replace 1-36" dia. culvert, clean ditches, top and side dress road surface at selected locations with 4-6" gravel. Gravel Pinnacle Parking lot; top-dress 4-6" gravel and ditch sides
\$15,000

- | | |
|--|------------------|
| 2. Cole Hill Road Improvement (1.5 miles):
Improve drainage, top dress road surface, 4-6" gravel where needed. Top-dress Deer River Trail parking lot and improve drainage. | \$20,000 |
| 3. Madawaska Road Improvements (1.5 miles):
Improve drainage on hills, top-dress road surface 4-6" gravel, remove exposed rock. | \$10,000 |
| 4. Goodnow Mountain/Vanderwhacker Road Improvements (1.0 miles):
Improve drainage, top-dress 6-8" gravel, create 10 vehicle parking area at fee boundary. | \$25,000 |
| 5. Balsam Pond Road Improvement (1.0 mile)
Replace 1-24" culvert, improve drainage, top-dress road surface 4-6", create 5 vehicle parking area 500 feet from pond. | \$10,000 |
| 6. West Mountain Road Improvements (0.8 miles)
Improve drainage, top-dress road surface 4-6" gravel. | \$10,000 |
| 7. Furnace Mountain Road Improvement (1.0 mile):
Improve drainage, replace 1-36" culvert, top-dress road surface 4-6": gravel. | \$10,000 |
| Total: | \$100,000 |

Appendix 2

Road Specifications and General Guidelines

Optimal Design Standards:

Traffic Lanes	1
Vehicles/hour	2-10
Design Speed	15-25 mph

Min. Curve Radius.	50 ft.
Maximum Grade	15%
Width - roadbed .	14 ft.
Surfacing	14 ft.
Minimum Bridge Loading	60,000 lbs.
Turnouts	Not more than 1,000 ft. aprat. 75 ft. length, tapered ends
Crowning	4" (center line, 4" higher than shoulders
Ditching	As necessary, not less than 1 % slope along center ditch line
Min. Sighting Distance	300 feet
Bridges with Guard Rails	60,000 lbs. minimum load

All bridge and culvert installations shall meet Adirondack Park Agency Guidelines and Best Management Practices standards.

Appendix 3

ATV Trail (four-wheel vehicle) Guide

Grade:

Max. Sustained	10%
Length	200 ft.
Max. pitch	20%

Cleared Width (minimum): 8 ft. *Also allows passage for snowmobiling
Cleared Height 10 ft.
Bridge/Culvert Width: 8 ft.
Minimum Bridge Capacity: 5,000 lbs.

Surface:

Smooth to relatively rough, no roots or rocks protruding more than 3" above tread plane, can be in-sloped 5% max. climbing turns, no wet holes wider than 36" nor deeper than 6".
Loose sand okay.

Avoid all wetlands and riparian areas.

Period of Use for General Public: May 15 through September 1 of each year depending on road/trail conditions following mud season or unusually wet weather.