



New York State
Department of Environmental Conservation

Division of Lands & Forests

WATSON'S EAST TRIANGLE Draft Unit Management Plan

INCLUDING

Watson's East Triangle Wild Forest
Lassiter Conservation Easement
Croghan Tract Conservation Easement
Bear Pond Primitive Corridor and
Tied Lake Primitive Corridor

Lewis County
Towns of Diana, Croghan, and Watson
Herkimer County
Town of Webb

September 2006

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“The nation behaves well if it treats the natural resources as assets which it must turn over to the next generation increased, and not impaired, in value.”

Theodore Roosevelt

PREFACE

The Watson’s East Triangle Unit (WETU) Management Plan has been developed pursuant to, and is consistent with, relevant provisions of the New York State Constitution, the Environmental Conservation law (ECL), the Executive Law, the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan, Department of Environmental Conservation (“Department”) rules and regulations, Department policies and procedures and the State Environmental Quality and Review Act.

Most of the State land which is the subject of this Unit Management Plan (UMP) is Forest Preserve lands protected by Article XIV, Section 1 of the New York State Constitution. This Constitutional provision, which became effective on January 1, 1895 provides in relevant part:

The lands of the state, now owned or hereafter acquired, constituting the Forest Preserve as now fixed by law, shall be forever kept as wild forest lands. They shall not be leased, sold or exchanged, or be taken by any corporation, public or private, or shall the timber thereon be sold, removed or destroyed.

ECL §§3-0301(1)(d) and 9-0105(1) provide the Department with jurisdiction to manage Forest Preserve lands, including the WETWF.

The Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan (“Master Plan”) was initially adopted in 1972 by the Adirondack Park Agency (“APA”), with advice from and in consultation with the Department, pursuant to Executive Law §807, now recodified as Executive Law §816. The Master Plan provides the overall general framework for the development and management of State lands in the Adirondack Park, including those State lands which are the subject of this UMP.

The Master Plan places State land within the Adirondack Park into the following classifications: Wilderness, Primitive, Canoe, Wild Forest, Intensive Use, Historic, State Administrative, Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers, and Travel Corridors, and sets forth management guidelines for the lands falling within each major classification. The Master Plan classifies the lands which are the main subject of this UMP as part of the Watson’s East Triangle Wild Forest (WETWF).

The Master Plan sets forth Guidelines for such matters as: structures and improvements; ranger stations; the use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment and aircraft; roads, jeep

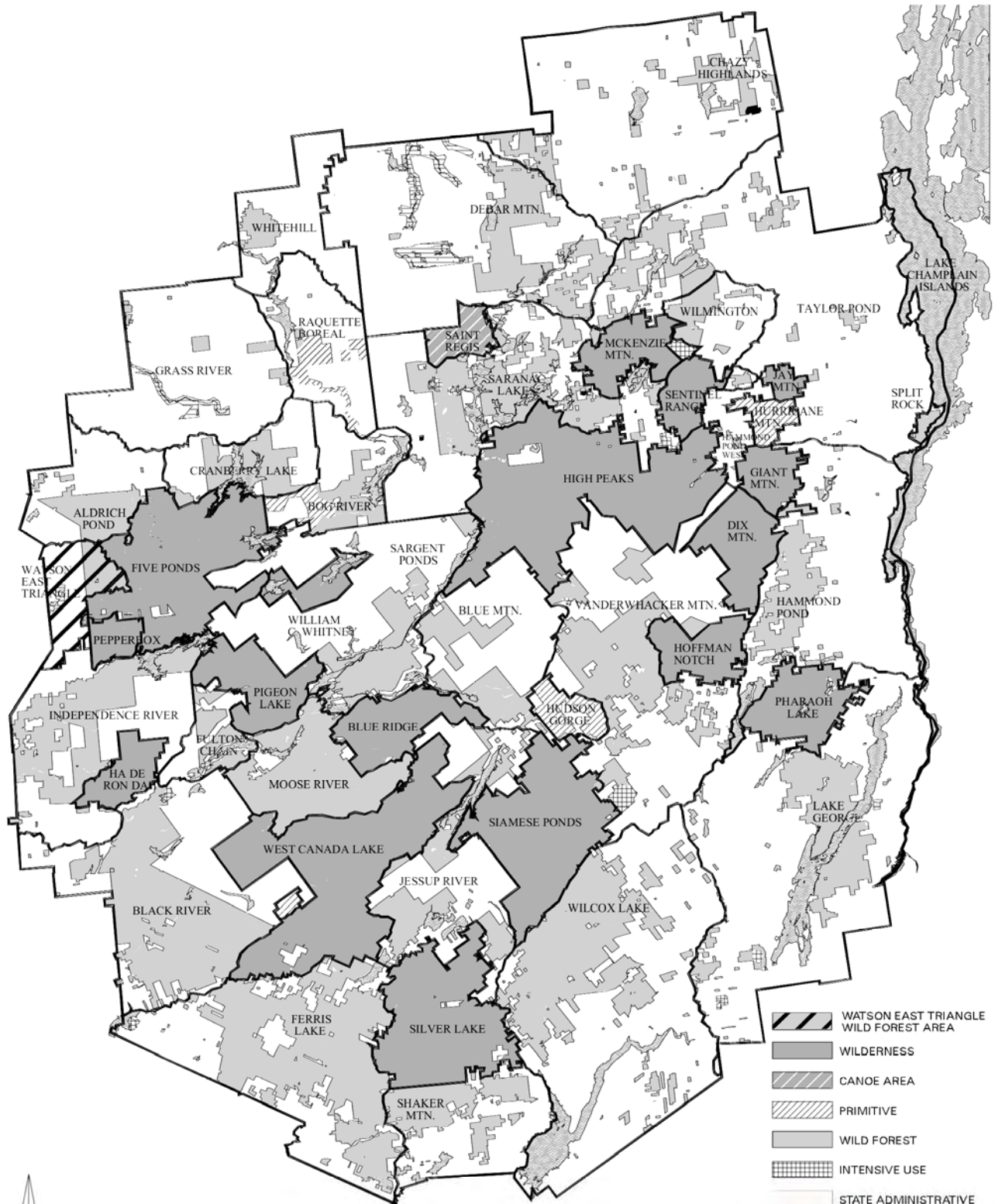
trails and state truck trails; flora and fauna; recreation use and overuse; boundary structures and improvements and boundary markings.

Executive Law §816 requires the Department to develop, in consultation with the APA, individual UMPs for each unit of land under the Department's jurisdiction which is classified in one of the nine classifications set forth in the Master Plan. The UMPs must conform to the guidelines and criteria set forth in the Master Plan. Thus, UMPs implement and apply the Master Plan's general guidelines for particular areas of land within the Adirondack Park.










Executive Law §816(1) provides in part that "(u)ntil amended, the master plan for management of state lands and the individual management plans shall guide the development and management of state lands in the Adirondack Park." Thus, the Master Plan and the UMPs have the force of law in guiding Department actions.

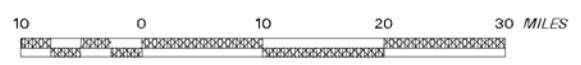
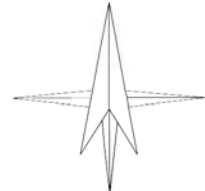
ADIRONDACK PARK

WATSON EAST TRIANGLE WILD FOREST AREA



WATSON
EAST
TRIANGLE

-  WATSON EAST TRIANGLE WILD FOREST AREA
-  WILDERNESS
-  CANOE AREA
-  PRIMITIVE
-  WILD FOREST
-  INTENSIVE USE
-  STATE ADMINISTRATIVE
-  HISTORIC
-  PENDING CLASSIFICATION



I. INTRODUCTION

A. Planning Area Overview

The Watson's East Triangle Unit is a mix of State owned Forest Preserve and privately owned lands subject to Conservation Easements. There are no unclassified State lands in the unit. Throughout this plan, the term "unit" will be used to describe the state-owned Forest Preserve lands comprising the Watson's East Triangle Wild Forest (WETWF), primitive corridors, and adjacent conservation easements. The phrase "planning area" is used to describe a larger geographic area containing both public and private land that is shown as "Management Complex Unit Boundary" on the 11"x17" maps in the Appendix. The planning area boundary is used for administrative and planning purposes and does not have any legal connotation.

A majority of the Forest Preserve lands are classified as Wild Forest while a small portion is classified as primitive corridors. The proximity of these lands to each other, as well as the similarities of their natural resources allows for planning over a broader landscape. However, ownership and classification differences necessitate the need for different management objectives and strategies for each unit. In some instances recreational uses may be compatible across all of the unit while other recreational uses depending on the type of use may be limited to specific areas of a particular unit.

The WETWF is located within the Town of Webb, Herkimer County and the Town of Croghan, Lewis County. The Bear Pond and Tied Lake Primitive Corridors are being included in this plan in order to provide continuity with the management of public motor vehicle access within and beyond the WETWF. As access to both Primitive Corridors is via the Bear Pond Road the management of public access in the WETWF will dictate current and future public use of these Primitive Corridors. Please refer to the Watson's East Triangle Facilities Map in the Appendix.

Bear Pond Primitive Corridor - This primitive corridor is located in the Town of Webb, Herkimer County, and consists of two rights-of-ways providing access to two inholdings within the Five Ponds and Pepperbox Wilderness Areas. The main fork provides access to an inholding at Bear Pond within the Five Ponds Wilderness Area. The westerly fork provides access to an inholding at Loon Hollow Pond within the Pepperbox Wilderness Area. The APSLMP area description for the Bear Pond Primitive Corridor reads in part to "avoid problems of motorized trespass on wilderness lands, this primitive corridor should be gated to public access in the immediate vicinity of the turn-off to "Old Upper South Pond Road," and access beyond this point limited to private access only"(APSLMP, 2001 update, page 73).

Tied Lake Primitive Corridor - This primitive corridor is in the Town of Webb, Herkimer County, and consist of a private right-of-way to an inholding within the Pepperbox Wilderness Area. The APSLMP area description for the Tied Lake Primitive

Corridor reads in part: “to avoid problems with motorized trespass on wilderness lands this primitive corridor should be gated to public access in the immediate vicinity of Tied Lake and access beyond that point limited to private use.” (APSLMP, pages 80-81)

Conservation Easements

A portion of the Lassiter Conservation Easement (LCE) and the entirety of the Croghan Tract Conservation Easement (CTCE) have been included within this UMP because the Department has determined as a matter of policy that discharge of its stewardship responsibilities for such lands can be facilitated by unit management planning. Including these easement lands in this UMP will fulfill the Departments requirement, as stated in the easement agreement, to complete a recreation plan for these lands. Furthermore, the relatively small size of each of the components of this unit, their proximity to one another and the common issues which must be addressed in each component make incorporation into a single management unit appropriate. These easements are located in the Towns of Croghan, Diana, and Watson in Lewis County.

On both easements the State owns most of the recreational and development rights to the property. Lassiter Properties Inc. is the fee owner for the Lassiter easement and The Heartwood Forest Land Fund III is the fee owner of the Croghan Tract Easement. Both fee holders continue to manage these lands for the production of forest products. Management of the Lassiter easement is split by the Middle Branch of the Oswegatchie River, the northern section being included in the Aldrich Pond Wild Forest UMP and the southern section being included with the Watson’s East Triangle Wild Forest. (See Appendix 16 for Conservation Easement Public Use Sections)

B. Unit Geographic Information

Watson’s East Triangle Wild Forest:

<u>Lots/Ranges</u>	<u>Tract</u>	<u>7.5 Minute Quads</u>
23-27,32-38,42,43 20-24 North, Ranges 16-19 East 23-27 GT 4 17-N, 11-E (GT-5) 18-N, 11,12-E 19-N, 12-E 20-N, 12,13-E	Watson’s East Triangle Chassanis Tract Macombs Purchase Macombs Purchase	Oswegatchie SE, SW Soft Maple, Stillwater Number Four (7.5x15 minute)

Bear Pond Primitive Corridor:

9,10,14,15,27	Watson’s East Triangle	Stillwater (7.5x15 minute)
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<u>Lots/Ranges</u>	<u>Tract</u>	<u>7.5 Minute Quads</u>
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Tied Lake Primitive Corridor:

8,16,26	Watson's East Triangle	Stillwater (7.5x15 minute)
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Croghan Tract Easement

18-N, 11-15-E 17-N, 11-14-E 16-N, 11-13-E 15-N, 11,12-E 14-N, 11-E GT 5	Chassanis Tract	Number Four
1-3, 20-22 22-26, 47-52, 73-76, 98-101, 122-124, 145 and 146	Watson's East Triangle John Brown's Tract	

Lassiter Easement

24-N, 11-15-E 23-N, 8-15-E 22-N, 9-15-E 21-N, 9-15-E	Chassanis	Oswegatchie SW, Remington Corners
14-17, 22, 23, 26(GT4)	Macomb's Purchase	

C. General Location

The Watson's East Triangle Wild Forest lies within the Town of Webb, Herkimer County and the Town of Croghan, Lewis County. The WETWF is bounded on the east by the Five Ponds Wilderness Area, the south by the Pepperbox Wilderness Area, the north by the Aldrich Pond Wild Forest and on the west by the Lassiter easement lands and several smaller private parcels. The western edge of the unit is approximately 12 miles east of the Village of Croghan.

The Bear Pond Primitive Corridor begins at the intersection of the Bear Pond Road and the Buck Pond Road, which coincides with the boundary between the WETWF, Five Ponds Wilderness Area and the Pepperbox Wilderness Area. From this point the primitive corridor follows Bear Pond Road to the inholding at Bear Pond. The westerly fork of the primitive corridor leaves the Bear Pond Road and follows a rough road to the inholding at Loon Hollow pond. The boundary between Five Ponds and Pepperbox Wilderness Areas follows Bear Pond Road to the road leading to Loon Hollow Pond and then along that road to the private inholding. The Bear Pond Primitive Corridor is open for public motor vehicle use to the gate at the intersection with Old Upper South Pond Road.

The Tied Lake Primitive Corridor begins along the Bear Pond Primitive Corridor just west of the bridge over the Greggs Pond outlet. The corridor runs south past Hog Pond

and Tied Lake and continues to the private inholding. The Tied Lake Primitive Corridor is open to public motor vehicle use to the gate at Tied Lake.

The Croghan Tract Easement lies between the Herkimer County line and the Adirondack Park blue line. The northerly portion is bounded on the north by the Prentice Road and private lands in the vicinity of Long Pond. The lands west of the Blue line are held in fee by the same owner as the Croghan Tract, however these lands are not subject to the conservation easement. The southern bounds are generally, the Fish Creek Road, Soft Maple Reservoir and other private lands. The southern portion of the easement lies south of the Soft Maple Reservoir and is bordered by private lands.

The Lassiter Easement lands are located in Lewis County, towns of Croghan and Diana. The northern boundary, for that portion of the easement covered by this management plan, is the Middle Branch of the Oswegatchie River. The Herkimer County line is the eastern boundary, the Adirondack Park blue line is the western boundary, with the exception of one small parcel which extends beyond the blue line. Private lands, as well as Forest Preserve lands, north of the Long Pond Road form the southern bounds.

D. Acreage

Watson's East Triangle Wild Forest	13,229 acres
Bear Pond Primitive Corridor	3.4 miles
Tied Lake Primitive Corridor	2.5 miles
Croghan Tract Easement	13,054 acres
Lassiter Easement	12,869 acres

E. General Access

Access to the Watson's East Triangle Wild Forest is via the Long Pond Road from the Village of Croghan. At the end of the Long Pond Road, the Bear Pond Road continues across the entire wild forest. Access to the Bear Pond Primitive Corridor and Tied Lake Primitive Corridor is via the Bear Pond Road. The terminus of the Prentice Road marks the beginning of the Main Haul Road across the Croghan Tract easement. This road becomes the boundary between easement and Forest Preserve lands in the vicinity of Sand Pond. The southern portion of the Croghan Tract is accessed from the Soft Maple and Beecher Roads.

F. General History

Human occupation of the Adirondack region took place immediately following the Wisconsin glaciation period (10,000-8,000BC). Native American artifacts representing all periods of New York prehistory have been found throughout the region, most sites being associated with water bodies. The Oswegatchie River, which is an important resource for this unit, was a boundary between the easternmost of the Iroquois nations, the Mohawks

and the Oneidas. Most of the recent history of this unit revolves around hopes and dreams of early speculators and the harvesting of timber. Unfortunately much of this history has gone undocumented. The major historical events and dates that influenced this unit are described below:

Pre 1770's- Occupied by Native American Indians

1792 - Alexander Macomb purchase nearly 4,000,000 acres in northern New York for 8¢ an acre. Shortly following this purchase Macomb was sent to debtors prison. His holdings were taken over by his partner William Constable.

1796 - James Watson acquires 61,433 acres in Herkimer and Lewis Counties comprised of two triangular pieces joined only by a narrow isthmus.

1809 - James T. Watson inherits the lands of his father, James Watson.

1854 - James T. Watson commits suicide; his holdings in the east triangle, are split among 44 surviving cousins.

1854-1907 - Through subsequent tax sales all of Watson's former lands in the east triangle come into State ownership.

1907-1912 - Through tax sales the State Comptroller sells these same lands to the International Paper Company for a total of approximately \$7,600.

1986 - The State of New York acquires title to the remaining lands of International Paper within the Watson's East Triangle.

1989 - The State acquires 6737 acres of the Lassiter Tract in fee, and purchases a conservation easement from the Nature Conservancy on 17,749 acres in Lewis County.

1999 - Champion International sells its land holdings in New York State. The State acquires a conservation easement on 110,000 acres of these lands throughout the Adirondack Park, including the Croghan Tract. The State also acquires 29,000 acres of these lands for inclusion in the Forest Preserve. The lands acquired by the State in fee consist mostly of river corridors and other ecologically sensitive areas.

2000 - The Watson's East Triangle Wild Forest is classified by the APA.

II. INVENTORY, USE AND CAPACITY TO WITHSTAND USE

A. Natural Resources

1. Physical

a. Geology

Approximately 1.3 billion years ago the Adirondack region was generally flat and covered by sedimentary rock at depths up to 30 kilometers. Extreme heat and temperatures at these depths resulted in a layer of metamorphic granite gneiss. Massive domal uplifting, followed by the erosion of the soft sedimentary covering left the Adirondack region much higher than the surrounding areas. This geologic region, known as the “Central Highlands” is part of the Grenville province which extends along the western edge of the Appalachian mountains from Labrador to Mexico. (Isachsen, 1991)

The arrival of the Pleistocene epoch or “ice age” began approximately 1.6 million years ago. During this time climates cooled and large glacial ice sheets covered the region. These sheets would advance across the region and then retreat back to the north. The last glaciation of the region began around 21,750 years ago and is known as the Wisconsinian stage. The Laurentide ice sheet which covered the region with up to 2 kilometers of ice retreated around 10,000 years ago. The result of glacial activity are the Adirondacks we know today. Characteristics of this area include gently curved ridges and valleys, long winding eskers, numerous lakes and ponds and radial drainage patterns. (Clarke, 1904)

b. Soils

All soils are formed by the chemical and physical breakdown of parent materials combined with the addition of organic material. However, like most of the Adirondacks, the soil composition within the WETU is vastly different from the bedrock beneath. The soils within the WETU are mostly derived from glacial deposits that have been moved and deposited as glaciers advanced and retreated. Soils across the planning area vary widely in degree of slope, depth to bedrock, stoniness and drainage. General meso-soil maps for the planning area are available from the Adirondack Park Agency. These depict broad soil associations relative to a particular landscape type. The maps portray soil associations as patterns of similar soils based on their properties and constituents. These are useful in the management of large forested areas and watersheds, but are not suitable for planning areas less than 40 acres in size. For specific projects in small areas, such as placement of trails, parking facilities, camping areas, etc., detailed on-site soil surveys may be required.

Soil names are usually reflective of their dominant characteristics followed by a list of minor components and limitations. For example, frequently observed soil series in the WETU include:

Colton - The Colton series consists of very deep, excessively drained soils formed in glacial fluvial deposits. They are found on terraces, kames, eskers and outwash plains. Permeability is moderately rapid to very rapid and the available water capacity is very low. Slope ranges from 0 to 70 percent. The erosion hazard and equipment limitations are rated as slight on gentle slopes, but on strongly sloping and steep areas, the erosion hazard is moderate and the equipment restrictions are severe. Reaction is strongly or very strongly acidic. Vegetation in previously disturbed areas include birch, pine, bracken fern and blueberries. Forests include sugar maple, white pine, red pine and white spruce.

Potsdam - The Potsdam series consists of very deep, well drained soils on glacial till plains. Slope varies from 3 to 60 percent and erosion hazard is moderate and increases with slope. Permeability is moderate in the layers above the substratum and slow below. Reaction is strongly acid to extremely acid. Forest vegetation includes, sugar maple, beech, ash, hornbeam, oak, hemlock and white pine.

Berkshire - The Berkshire series consists of very deep, well drained soils formed in till. Slopes range from 3 to 75 percent. Forest vegetation includes, beech, yellow birch, sugar maple, red maple, hemlock, red spruce, balsam fir, white pine, white ash and basswood.

Greenwood - The Greenwood series consists of very deep, poorly drained soils formed in organic deposits. Greenwood soils are usually located in depressions with larger areas being on outwash or lake plains. Slope ranges from 0 to 2 percent and permeability is moderate to moderately rapid. Reaction is very strongly acidic to extremely acidic. Erosion hazard is low due to lack of slope but equipment limitations are high due to surface water. Few trees except some black spruce and tamarack grow on these soils. Ground cover is blueberries, bog rosemary, laurel, leatherleaf and sphagnum mosses.

Pillsbury - The Pillsbury series consists of very deep, poorly and somewhat poorly drained soils on slopes ranging from 0 to 15 percent. Permeability is moderate and reaction is very strongly acid. Erosion hazard is low due to slope but, equipment limitations are moderate. Associated tree species include, sugar maple, white pine and red spruce.

Lyme - The Lyman series consists of shallow, somewhat excessively drained soils formed in glacial till. They are located on rocky hills, mountains and high plateaus. Depth to bedrock ranges from 10 to 20 inches. Slopes range from 3 to 80 percent and permeability is moderately rapid. Reaction is very strongly acidic to extremely acidic. Erosion hazard is rated slight but increases with slope and equipment limitations are moderate on steeper slopes. Vegetation is mainly white pine, hemlock, red spruce, birch, sugar maple, beech, fir, white ash and basswood.

c. Terrain/Topography

The terrain of this unit is generally described as rolling hills with elevations ranging from 2025 feet above sea level at an unnamed hill in the vicinity of Moncrief Creek to 1,060 feet above sea level along the Soft Maple Reservoir. Detailed topographical information can be found on the Oswegatchie SE and SW, Stillwater and Soft Maple 7.5 minute quadrangles and also on the Number Four 7.5x15 minute quadrangle.

d. Water (See 11" x 17" Hydrology Map in the Appendix)

Water in the planning area is comprised of portions of the Oswegatchie and Black River watersheds, that belong to the St. Lawrence River Drainage Basin. Overall, eighteen named lakes and ponds are located within the Watson's East Triangle Unit. Combined, these waters total 595.2 acres and individually range in size from one to 331 acres (Appendix 3). A number of small, unnamed ponds are also located within the planning area. Mud Pond (69 acres) is an impoundment of the West Branch of the Oswegatchie River. Its dam, a low level wooden structure, is located just upstream of where the river crosses the Long Pond Road.

In addition to ponded waters, the WETU unit also contains more than 43 miles of rivers and streams. These include: portions of both the West and Middle Branches of the Oswegatchie Rivers; Palmer, Massawepie, Hogs Back, Wolf, Desert, Compos, Burning, Moncrief, Fish, Cold Spring, Trout Lake, and Blue Swamp Creeks; Roaring and Shaw Brooks; and a number of smaller streams which are tributaries to the above waters.

Water quality is generally satisfactory with low productivity and fertility typical to the area. Acidification levels in WETU unit waters appear to be very similar to those found in the Five Ponds Wilderness Area, located to the north and east of this unit, where a substantial number of lakes and ponds have lost their fish populations due to the impacts of acid deposition (Simonin 1990). Based on resource inventory data, 10 (50 %) of the unit's 20 lakes and ponds (Soft Maple Reservoir was excluded since it has no wild forest or easement shoreline) have pH levels < 5.0, and are therefore considered unsatisfactory relative to fish survival (Appendix 3). Six of these acidified waters have ANC (acid neutralizing capacity) levels that are less than zero, indicating their natural acid buffering potential is non-existent. Fish populations in these waters are either absent or severely restricted. The area's 10 remaining lakes and ponds have pH levels ranging from 5.0 to a high of 6.6, indicative of waters impacted by acidification. Despite this limiting factor, area waters in this higher pH range support naturally spawning and/or stocking maintained fish populations.

The area's rivers and streams are also known to be acid impacted, but not to the degree of the lakes and ponds. Most of the area's named streams are either known or believed to support naturally spawning populations of brook trout and/or associated fish species such as black nosed dace, creek chub, white sucker, and brown bullhead. The area's larger flowing water bodies, the Middle and West Branches of the Oswegatchie River, also

support wild populations of brook trout and other associated fish species. These populations appear to be very depressed, however, due to a combination of acidification following severe spring pH depressions (associated with snow-melt) and the limiting factors caused by siltation and warming water, which are believed to be related to beaver activity.

e. Wetlands

The wetlands of this unit 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. Both Massawepie Creek Bog and Desert Swamp have been included on the recent APA map of “charismatic” wetlands. (See Hydrology Map in the Appendix)

Watson’s East Triangle WF -Wetlands cover approximately 2,239 acres or 19% of the WETWF. The largest wetland complex on the unit is associated with Desert Creek and Hogs Back Creek in the southwestern portion of the unit. This complex covers approximately 100 acres.

Croghan Tract Easement - The Croghan Tract Easement has 2,295 acres of classified wetlands. This represents approximately 17.5% of this easement. The headwaters of Fish Creek, a tributary to Soft Maple Reservoir, contains the largest wetland complex, 196 acres, on the unit.

Lassiter Easement - The Lassiter Easement lands, south of the Middle Branch, contain 2,438 acres of wetlands. This represents approximately 19% of the total acreage of this easement. The largest wetland on the Lassiter Easement covers 180 acres in the vicinity of Blue Swamp.

f. Air/Climate

Climate

The region’s climate, in general terms, is best described as cool and moist. Climatic conditions vary considerably throughout the unit and are influenced by such factors as slope aspect, elevation, distance and direction from large water bodies, seasonal temperatures, precipitation, prevailing winds, and the location of natural barriers.

Summers tend to be warm with cool nights. Maximum day-time temperatures seldom exceed 90 degrees F. Frost can occur any month of the year. Temperatures of -40 degrees F are common, often accompanied by high winds. Annual precipitation is between 40 and 60 inches per year; snowfall ranges from 120-140 inches per year.

Air Quality

Air quality in the region is good to excellent, rated Class II (moderately well controlled) by federal and state standards. The region receives weather flowing south from the Arctic Circle that tends to be cleaner than weather emanating from the west and southwest. Summit visibility is often obscured by haze caused by air pollutants when a large number of small diameter particles exist in the air. Air quality may be more affected by particulate matter blown in from outside pollution sources rather than from activities inside the Adirondack Park. The relative assimilation of outside pollutants, commonly referred to as “acid rain,” is under investigation and study by staff at the NYS Atmospheric Science Research Station located on Whiteface Mountain and other researchers. Whiteface’s preeminent feature as a high standing mountain apart from the other High Peaks, in the face of prevailing winds, and a long-term collection center of weather research data, makes it an outstanding outdoor research laboratory.

In the Adirondack Mountains from 1992 through 1999, sulfates declined in 92 percent of a representative sample of lakes, selected by the Adirondack Lakes Survey Corporation (ALSC), but nitrates increased in 48 percent of those lakes. The decrease in sulfates is consistent with decreases in sulfur emissions and deposition, but the increase in nitrates is inconsistent with the stable levels of nitrogen emissions and deposition.

Continued monitoring by collection and analysis of acid deposition will allow the monitoring network to determine if improvements will continue, or begin, as a result of reductions of SO₂- and NO_x- legislated in the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments.

Effects of Acidic Deposition on Forest Systems

At present, the mortality and decline of red spruce at high elevations in the Northeast and observed reductions in red spruce growth rates in the southern Appalachians are the only cases of significant forest damage in the United States for which there is strong scientific evidence that acid deposition is a primary cause (National Science and Technology Council Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, 1998). The following findings of the National Acid Precipitation Assessment Program (1998) provide a broad overview of the effects of acidic deposition on the forests of the Adirondacks.

The interaction of acid deposition with natural stress factors has adverse effects on certain forest ecosystems. These effects include:

- Increased mortality of red spruce in the mountains of the Northeast. This mortality is due in part to exposure to acid cloud water, which has reduced the cold tolerance of these red spruce, resulting in frequent winter injury and loss of foliage.
- Reduced growth and/or vitality of red spruce across the high-elevation portion of its range.
- Decreased supplies of certain nutrients in soils to levels at, or below, those required for healthy growth.

Nitrogen deposition, in addition to sulfur deposition, is now recognized as an important contributor to declining forest ecosystem health both at low and at higher elevations. Adverse effects occur through direct impacts via increased foliar susceptibility to winter damage, foliar leaching, leaching of soil nutrients, elevation of soil aluminum levels, and/or creation of nutrient imbalances. Excessive amounts of nitrogen cause negative impacts on soil chemistry similar to those caused by sulfur deposition in certain sensitive high-elevation ecosystems.

Sensitive Receptors

High-elevation spruce-fir ecosystems in the eastern United States epitomize sensitive soil systems. Base cation stores are generally very low, and soils are near or past their capacity to retain more sulfur or nitrogen. Deposited sulfur and nitrogen, therefore, pass directly into soil water, which leaches soil aluminum and minimal amounts of calcium, magnesium, and other base cations out of the root zone. The low availability of these base cation nutrients, coupled with the high levels of aluminum that interfere with roots taking up these nutrients can result in plants not having sufficient nutrients to maintain good growth and health.

Sugar maple decline has been studied in the eastern United States since the 1950s. One of the recent studies suggests that the loss of crown vigor and incidence of tree death is related to the low supply of calcium and magnesium to soil and foliage (Driscoll 2002).

Exposure to acidic clouds and acid deposition has reduced the cold tolerance of red spruce in the Northeast, resulting in frequent winter injury. Repeated loss of foliage due to winter injury has caused crown deterioration and contributed to high levels of red spruce mortality in the Adirondack Mountains of New York, the Green Mountains of Vermont, and the White Mountains of New Hampshire.

Acid deposition has contributed to a regional decline in the availability of soil calcium and other base cations in high-elevation and mid-elevation spruce-fir forests of New York and New England and the southern Appalachians. The high-elevation spruce-fir forests of the Adirondacks and northern New England are identified together as one of the four areas nationwide with a sensitive ecosystem and subject to high deposition rates.

Effects of Acidic Deposition on Hydrologic Systems

New York's Adirondack Park is one of the most sensitive areas in the United States affected by acidic deposition. The Park consists of over 6,000,000 acres of forest, lakes, streams and mountains interspersed with dozens of small communities, and a large seasonal population fluctuation. However, due to its geography and geology, it is one of the most sensitive regions in the United States to acidic deposition and has been impacted to such an extent that significant native fish populations have been lost and signature high elevation forests have been damaged.

There are two types of acidification which affect lakes and streams. One is a year-round condition when a lake is acidic all year long, referred to as chronically or critically acidic. The other is seasonal or episodic acidification associated with spring melt and/or rain storm events. A lake is considered insensitive when it is not acidified during any time of the year. Lakes with acid-neutralizing capability (ANC) values below 0 µeq/L are considered to be chronically acidic. Lakes with ANC values between 0 and 50 µeq/L are considered susceptible to episodic acidification; ANC may decrease below 0 µeq/L during high-flow conditions in these lakes. Lakes with ANC values greater than 50 µeq/L are considered relatively insensitive to inputs of acidic deposition (Driscoll et al. 2001). Watersheds which experience episodic acidification are very common in the Adirondack Region. A 1995 EPA Report to Congress estimated that 70% of the target population lakes are at risk of episodic acidification at least once during the year.

In addition to sensitive lakes, the Adirondack region includes thousands of miles of streams and rivers which are also sensitive to acidic deposition. While it is difficult to quantify the impact, it is certain is that there are large numbers of Adirondack brooks that will not support native Adirondack brook trout. Over half of these Adirondack streams and rivers may be acidic during spring snowmelt, when high aluminum concentrations and toxic water conditions adversely impact aquatic life.

Permanent Long-Term Monitoring (LTM) sites in and around this unit.

In 1986, the ALSC surveyed a total of eight waters in this unit (See Appendix 3). Summaries of those ponded waters data can be found at <http://www.adirondacklakessurvey.com> (see ALSC Pond Information). Since that time, the Adirondack Long-Term Monitoring (LTM) program managed by the ALSC, has been sampling chemistry in 52 lakes across the Park on a monthly basis.

g. Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers

Within and adjacent to the unit the following rivers have been designated under the Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers Act. This designation includes a corridor generally ½ mile in width on State lands and 1/4 mile in width on private lands.

Wild rivers:

- 1) Middle Branch of the Oswegatchie River - Approximately fourteen and one half miles from the north boundary of lot 27, Watson's East Triangle to a point one mile downstream of the confluence with Wolf Creek. (ECL §15-2714 (1)(d));

Scenic rivers:

- 1) West Branch of the Oswegatchie River - Approximately seven miles from the outlet of Buck Pond to a point approximately one mile upstream of Round Pond at the point where a foot and snowmobile bridge crosses the West branch. (ECL §15-2714 (2)(u));
- 2) Middle Branch of the Oswegatchie River - Approximately nine miles from the outlet of Walker Lake to the north bound boundary of lot 27, Watson's East

Triangle and approximately fourteen and two-fifths miles from a point one mile downstream of the confluence of Wolf Creek to a point where the Middle Branch intersects the Adirondack Park boundary at the southeast boundary of lot 993, township of Diana, Macomb's Purchase, great tract 4. (ECL §15-2714 (2) (t)).

Recreational rivers:

1) West Branch of the Oswegatchie River - Approximately six and 1/10 miles from a point approximately one mile upstream of Round Pond at the point where a foot and snowmobile bridge crosses the West Branch to a point where the river intersects the Adirondack Park boundary.

h. Visual/Scenic Resources

Much of the aesthetic appeal to this unit is in association with water bodies and wetlands. Some of the most attractive views on this area are associated with the Middle Branch of the Oswegatchie River. Along the Bear Pond Road at High banks one looks down upon the Middle Branch of the Oswegatchie River 60 feet below. At Rainbow Falls, on the Lassiter Easement, the river plunges nearly 60 feet in a series of falls including a 40 foot drop into a rocky gorge. Generally the higher elevations are too wooded to provide any scenic vistas. The summit of Bald Mountain on the Lassiter Easement, which has the remains of an old fire tower on it, offers some views of the surrounding area. In contrast to the surrounding forest, openings associated with wetlands provide scenic views of those areas and an opportunity to view species associated with those ecosystems.

I. Critical Habitat

The New York Natural Heritage Programs, Master Habitat Data Bank identifies two critical habitats within the planning area. The Middle Branch of the Oswegatchie River is classified as a Midreach stream, which is defined as having well defined patterns of alternating pool, riffle, and run sections. Most of the erosion is lateral and waterfalls and springs may be present. Common loon nesting sites at Sand Pond (located in the adjoining wilderness) are also identified as a critical habitat.

Eagle Canyon, which is just south of the Croghan Tract Easement has an active raven nesting site. The absence of additional records does not necessarily mean that rare or endangered elements, natural communities or other significant habitats do not exist on or adjacent to the unit, but rather that files do not currently contain any information which indicates their presence. For most sites, comprehensive field surveys have not been conducted. Existing information should not be substituted for on-site surveys that may be required for environmental assessment for specific projects.

2. Biological

a. Vegetation

The WETU represents a mosaic of plant communities that correspond to local variations in soil, temperature, moisture and past influences, both natural and man-made. A majority of the unit, 59 %, is comprised of a mixed hardwood/softwood covertype. Sugar maple, beech and yellow birch are the most prevalent hardwood species while red spruce, hemlock and balsam fir represent the majority of the softwood component. Softwood cover occupies approximately 36 % of the area and forested wetlands containing mostly softwood species, occupy another 3 %. Some of these forested wetlands are similar to the boreal forests commonly found farther to the north and contain species such as tamarack and black spruce.

Past events such as fire, wind and logging have exerted a strong influence on present day conditions. During the early 1900s when great fires swept across most of the Adirondacks, portions of this unit were not exempt from their destructive powers. Fire, combined with the history of heavy logging activity, introduced adequate sunlight to the forest floor to allow reproduction of valuable, shade intolerant species, like black cherry, to occur. Many of those larger more valuable trees that managed to escape being harvested for lumber soon fell victim to natural events. On November 25, 1950, a severe hurricane laid waste hundreds of thousands of acres of privately-owned and Forest Preserve lands, primarily in the Adirondacks. It was estimated that the timber on more than 400,000 acres in the Adirondack region had been seriously affected, with 75-100 % of the area within being leveled. On July 15, 1995 a fast moving thunderstorm of near record proportions passed through the Adirondacks. Strong winds caused extensive damage to nearly one million acres of forest land in a triangular area bounded roughly by Gouverneur, Blue Mountain Lake and Lyons Falls. Within the Watson's East Triangle Wild Forest six acres sustained severe damage, 76 acres moderate damage and 1,174 acres light damage. Although the results of these events may seem destructive, they provide opportunities for the establishment of species requiring more direct sunlight than is generally available under the closed canopy of the surrounding forest.

The Conservation Easement lands will continue to be managed for the production of forest products. This management will provide a significant amount of acreage of trees in the younger age classes, in comparison to the adjoining Forest Preserve lands. This pattern of managed and preserved forests provides for a greater diversity of plant and animal species. For example, it is expected over time that shade intolerant species such as white ash and black cherry will decrease on Forest Preserve lands as they age into climax forests. As these species require direct sunlight in order to reproduce they should remain a viable component of the managed forest lands where openings in the forest canopy are created naturally or through harvesting.

Invasive Plant Species

Nonnative, invasive species directly threaten biological diversity and the high quality natural areas in the Adirondack Park. Invasive plant species can alter native plant assemblages, often forming monospecific stands of very low quality forage for native wildlife, and drastically impacting the ecological functions and services of natural

systems. Not yet predominant across the Park, invasive plants have the potential to spread - undermining the ecological, recreational, and economic value of the Park's natural resources.

Because of the Adirondack Park's continuous forested nature and isolation from the normal "commerce" found in other parts of the State, its systems are largely functionally intact. In fact, there is no better opportunity in the global temperate forested ecosystem to forestall and possibly prevent the alteration of natural habitats by invasive plant species.

Prevention of nonnative plant invasions, Early Detection/Rapid Response (ED/RR) of existing infestations, and monitoring are primary objectives in a national strategy for invasive plant management and necessitates a well-coordinated, area-wide approach. A unique opportunity exists in the Adirondacks to work proactively and collaboratively to detect, contain, or eradicate infestations of invasive plants before they become well established, and to prevent further importation and distribution of invasive species, thus maintaining a high quality natural landscape. The Department shares an inherent obligation to minimize or abate existing threats in order to prevent widespread and costly infestations.

The Department has entered into a partnership agreement with the Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program (APIPP). The mission of APIPP is to document invasive plant distributions and to advance measures to protect and restore native ecosystems in the Park through partnerships with Adirondack residents and institutions. Partner organizations operating under a Memorandum of Understanding are the Adirondack Nature Conservancy, Department of Environmental Conservation, Adirondack Park Agency, Department of Transportation, and Invasive Plant Council of NYS. The APIPP summarizes known distributions of invasive plants in the Adirondack Park and provides this information to residents and professionals alike. Specific products include a geographic database for invasive plant species distribution; a central internet website for invasive plant species information and distribution maps; a list-serve discussion group to promote community organization and communication regarding invasive species issues; and a compendium of educational materials and best management practices for management.

Terrestrial Invasive Plant Inventory

In 1998 the Adirondack Nature Conservancy's Invasive Plant Project initiated Early Detection/Rapid Response (ED/RR) surveys along Adirondack Park roadsides. Expert and trained volunteers reported 412 observations of 10 plant species throughout the area surveyed, namely NYS DOT Right-of-Ways (ROW). In 1999 the Invasive Plant Project was expanded to include surveying back roads and the "backcountry" (undeveloped areas away from roads) to identify the presence or absence of 15 invasive plant species. Both surveys were conducted under the auspices of the Invasive Plant Council of New York "Top Twenty List" of non-native plants likely to become invasive within New York State. A continuum of ED/RR surveys now exists under the guidance of the Adirondack

Park Invasive Plant Program (APIPP).

Assessments from these initial ED/RR surveys determined that four terrestrial plant species would be targeted for Control and Management based upon specific criteria such as geophysical setting, abundance and distribution, multiple transport vectors and the likelihood of human-influenced disturbance. The four Priority terrestrial invasive plants species are Purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), Common reed (*Phragmites australis*), Japanese knotweed (*Polygonum cuspidatum*) and Garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*).

The Adirondack Park is susceptible to further infestation by invasive plant species intentionally or accidentally introduced to this ecoregion. While many of these species are not currently designated a priority species by APIPP, they may become established within or in proximity to a Unit and require resources to manage, monitor, and restore the site.

Infestations located within and in proximity to a Unit may expand and spread to uninfected areas and threaten natural resources within a Unit; therefore it is critical to identify infestations located both within and in proximity to a Unit and then assess high risk areas and prioritize Early Detection Rapid Response (ED/RR) and management efforts.

Terrestrial Invasive Plant Locations

A comprehensive inventory of terrestrial invasive plants has not been conducted on this unit. In the summer of 2006, Early Detection Rapid Response Land Stewards spent approximately 20 hours surveying parts of the Watson's East Unit, namely roads, trails, pull-offs, etc. They focused on disturbed and compromised areas as well as road fringe leading into State lands. No priority, terrestrial invasives documented within or in immediate proximity to Wild Forest lands.

Aquatic Invasive Plant Inventory

A variety of monitoring programs collect information directly or indirectly about the distribution of aquatic invasive plants in the Adirondack Park including the Department, Darrin Fresh Water Institute, Paul Smiths College Watershed Institute, lake associations, and lake managers. In 2001, the Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program (APIPP) compiled existing information about the distribution of aquatic invasive plant species in the Adirondack Park and instituted a regional long-term volunteer monitoring program. APIPP trained volunteers in plant identification and reporting techniques to monitor Adirondack waters for the presence of aquatic invasive plant species. APIPP coordinates information exchange among all of the monitoring programs and maintains a database on the current documented distribution of aquatic invasive plants in the Adirondack Park.

Aquatic invasive plant species documented in the Adirondack Park are Eurasian watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*), Water chestnut (*Trapa natans*), Curlyleaf pondweed (*Potamogeton crispus*), Fanwort (*Cabomba caroliniana*), European frog-bit

(*Hydrocharus morsus-ranae*), and Yellow floating-heart (*Nymphoides peltata*). Species located in the Park that are monitored for potential invasibility include Variable-leaf milfoil (*Myriophyllum heterophyllum*), Southern Naiad (*Najas guadalupensis*), and Brittle Naiad (*Najas minor*). Additional species of concern in New York State but not yet detected in the Park are Starry Stonewort (*Nitellopsis obtusa*), Hydrilla (*Hydrilla verticillata*), Water hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*), and Brazilian elodea (*Egeria densa*).

Infestations located within and in proximity to a Unit may expand and spread to uninfected areas and threaten natural resources within a Unit; therefore it is critical to identify infestations located both within and in proximity to a Unit to identify high risk areas and prioritize Early Detection Rapid Response (ED/RR) and management efforts.

Aquatic invasive plants are primarily spread via human activities, therefore lakes with public access, and those connected to lakes with public access, are at higher risk of invasion. Documentation of aquatic invasive plant distributions in the Park is limited by the number of lakes and ponds that have been surveyed and the frequency of monitoring. In some cases, only a portion of the water's shoreline has been surveyed. In other cases, a single specimen may have been identified without documentation as to its location within the waterbody. It follows that a negative survey result indicates only that an invasive plant has not been detected and does not preclude the possibility of its existence.

While a comprehensive survey for the presence of aquatic invasive plant species has not been completed at present, APIPP volunteers monitored sections of the following waters in proximity to the Unit: Clear Pond, Carry Falls Reservoir, and Jordan Lake. No aquatic invasive plants were detected during these surveys. The APIPP Park-wide volunteer monitoring program aims to maintain a long-term monitoring program on these and other lakes. All aquatic invasive species pose a risk of spreading via transport mechanisms which may include seaplanes, motorized and non-motorized watercraft (canoes, kayaks, jet skies, motor boats etc.) and associated gear and accessories.

b. 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 may also be present. Typical fur-bearing species represented in Department harvest data for the area include beaver, coyote, fisher, otter, and bobcat. Pine marten have also recently become established in the general area. Avian diversity in the unit is relatively high due to the transitional nature of the landscape from agricultural fringe to Adirondack forest. Breeding Bird Atlas data for the unit from the 1980 census identified 124 confirmed, probable and possible breeding bird species in the 20 blocks covering the unit. (See Breeding Bird Atlas Map in Appendix 2) Although no systematic survey of the unit has been conducted for reptiles and amphibians, a volunteer based "Herp Atlas" sponsored by the Department through the decade of the 1990s, identified 18 species occurring on or adjacent to the unit. There are no exotic species of concern known to exist within the unit, and nuisance wildlife issues are largely limited to

beaver induced flooding and forest regeneration impacts caused by deer. (Appendix 2 contains a listing of mammals, reptiles and amphibians, and breeding bird atlas data)

The Northern Harrier was the only species identified on the unit, by the Breeding Bird Atlas, which is threatened or endangered. This species has been observed in the unit, but not confirmed as nesting. The preferred habitat of the Northern Harrier includes grasslands and open wetlands.

Within the unit there are six winter deer yards identified by the Department in surveys conducted in the 1970s through the 1980s. A deer yard or deer wintering area is any piece of landscape where deer tend to concentrate during winter. 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, where lower 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 precise boundaries change over time as forest succession alters quantity and location of available deer browse. 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.

Potential Deer Wintering and Spruce Grouse Habitat (See maps in the Appendix)

A GIS model of potential deer wintering habitat based on forest type, elevation, and slope and was recently developed for the Adirondacks (J. Gagnon and S. McNulty, Adirondack Ecological Center, 2005). The GIS potential deer yard habitat model was applied to the WETU. Initial results suggest that a large portion of the potential deer wintering habitat lies outside the wild forest boundaries, primarily on nearby private land. Deer selection of wintering areas is not completely understood. However, the identification of areas of potential wintering habitat in the unit, combined with the recent findings of Horst (2004), suggest that the current sizes and locations of deer yards within the unit may not reflect historical deer yard boundaries delineated by the Department in the 1960s and 1970s. Therefore, planning for the protection of deer wintering areas relative to recreational activities in the unit should consider the dynamic nature of these areas rather than the static representation of historical boundaries, and seek to update our understanding of wintering areas currently used by deer. The model was developed for the central Adirondacks and may be inaccurate along the periphery of the Park.

In addition to deer wintering habitat, GIS models were also developed for potential spruce grouse habitat (APA/Sun Plattsburg, 2004). Although potential spruce grouse habitat was identified within the WETU, no spruce grouse have actually been observed

within the WETU based upon BBA data. The spruce grouse model is important not only for this species, but theoretically the whole suite of boreal forest birds and other wildlife that use lowland spruce-fir habitats.

c. Fisheries

The waters of the WETU support populations of both native Adirondack and non-native fish species (Appendix 3). In general, the area's waters are characterized by fish communities where brook trout are the dominant predator. Brown bullhead, the area's most common fish species, white sucker, creek chub and pumpkinseed sunfish, all native Adirondack species, are commonly associated with brook trout in these waters. Naturalized populations of both yellow perch and largemouth bass have been documented in one and three area lake(s), respectively. Fortunately, neither yellow perch nor largemouth bass, known competitors with brook trout, have been detected in any of the area's waters, which are managed as Adirondack Brook Trout Ponds.

Brook trout populations in three of the area's lakes and ponds (Mud, Buck and Wolf Ponds) are maintained by annual stocking, because natural spawning by brook trout, if occurring at all, has not been adequate to maintain populations at satisfactory densities for angling. Little Deer Pond, located on easement lands within the unit, is being considered as a brook trout stocking candidate. The recommendation is based on 2002 survey results which indicate that while brook trout are not currently present, the pond's water quality and pH appears satisfactory for brook trout survival. Anecdotal reports from local anglers suggest the pond, which only recently has become open to the public, has a history as a brook trout fishery. This new stocking will be considered experimental, pending results from a post-stocking evaluation. In addition to the above stocked populations, very low density wild brook trout populations have been identified in Desert, Lost and Little Mudhole Ponds, all located within the Desert Creek watershed. A recent inspection revealed that the ability to support trout in these waters is diminishing.

In contrast, fish in the area's rivers and streams originate entirely from natural spawning. Most of the unit's named streams are either known or believed to support naturally spawning populations of brook trout and/or associated fish species such as black nosed dace, creek chub, white sucker, and brown bullhead. Palmer Creek and its tributary streams, for example, support wild brook trout populations which are considered a heritage Adirondack genetic strain by Perkins et.al. (1993). A 2002 survey of remote sections of Wolf Creek documented wild brook trout throughout its 3.2 mile length as well. The area's larger flowing water bodies, the Middle and West Branches of the Oswegatchie River, both support populations of native brook trout and associated minnows. These populations appear to be very depressed, however, due to a combination of acidification following severe spring pH depressions (associated with snow-melt) and/or the limiting factors caused by siltation and warming water, which are believed to be the related to beaver activity.

B. Man-Made Facilities

(See 11" x 17" Watson's East Triangle Facilities Map in the Appendix)

Non-conforming Facilities Inventory (excepting occupancies) - The following is a list of known non-conforming facilities in the WETWF: One former leased camp that is scheduled for removal. All designated tentsites are conforming with APSLMP 1/4 mile spacing guidelines.

ROADS

Watson's East Triangle Wild Forest:

Table 1: Public Motor Vehicle Roads

Road	Miles	Description	Public use Open 1972 [@]	Public use Open post UMP
Bear Pond Road*	8.4	End of Town Road to Buck Pond	---	8.4
Creek Road	0.4	Bear Pond Road South to Desert Creek	---	.25
Wolf Pond Road*	0.4	Bear Pond Road north to Wolf Pond	---	0.4
Deep Cuts Road*	1.1	Bear Pond Road to campsite	---	1.1
Buck Pond Road*	.25	Bear Pond Road to Buck Pond	---	---
Tunnel Road*	0.6	County line east to "T"	---	0.6
Mullins Flow Road	.25	"T" north to old camp	---	---
No. 1 Road*	2.4	"T" southeast to dead-end	---	2.4
Spring Creek Road	0.4	Tunnel Road south to dead-end	---	---

[@]All of the wild forest classified lands in this unit were acquired after 1972, therefore there were no open roads over Forest Preserve lands in this unit previous to 1972.

Burning Creek Road	1.1	No. 1 Road south to dead-end	---	---
Wolf Creek Road West	0.5	No. 1 Road north to Wolf Creek	---	0.3
Wolf Creek Road East	.35	No. 1 Road north to Wolf Creek	---	0.2
River Road	0.2	Mullins Flow Road Southeast to old camp	---	---
Total	16.35		---	13.65

* Public motor vehicle roads open for snowmobiles

Note - The Desert Pond Road is a private ROW that crosses a portion of Watson's East Triangle Wild Forest for 1.6 miles between the Bear Pond Road and a private inholding. This road has been gated and was never open to public motor vehicle use.

Table 2: Primitive Corridor Roads

Road	Miles 2006	Description	Public use Open 1972 [®]	Public use Open post UMP
Bear Pond	3.4	Buck Pond Road to Bear Pond Club gate	.2	1.0
Loon Hollow Road	1.1	Bear Pond to Loon Hollow Pond camp	---	---
Tied Lake Road	2.5	Bear Pond Road to private inholding	---	1.1
Total	7.0		0.2	2.1

Note - Motor vehicle access across the Croghan Tract provides landowner access to a private inholding near Alder Creek in the Pepperbox Wilderness. The ROW portion over wilderness land is named the Alder Creek Primitive Area. This corridor will be addressed in the Pepperbox Wilderness UMP.

[®]All of the wild forest classified lands in this unit were acquired after 1972, therefore there were no designated snowmobile trails over Forest Preserve lands in this unit previous to 1972.

Trail	Public use Miles 2006	Description	Public use Open 1972	Public use Open post UMP	Groomed
Number One Camp Trail	2.5	Bear Pond Road north to No.1 Road S-82 and corridor C8	---	0	Yes*
Steam Sleigh Trail	1.0	Long Pond Road south to Prentise Road S50	---	1.0	Yes*
Doc Woods Trail	0.6	Long Pond Road south to Prentise Road	---	0.6	Yes*
Bald to Buckhorn Trail	1.6	Buckhorn Road to Bald Mountain Road S87C	---	1.6	Yes*
Total	5.3		---	3.2	

* Grooming occur with the following machines:

Table 4: Snowmobile Trail Grooming Equipment (Both groomers are used on all trails)

	Groomer 1	Groomer 2
Year, Make and Model #	1999 Tucker-Terra #2000	1984 Tucker sno-Cat #1342
Length	15'8"	15'8"
Max Width	8'	8'
Height	99"	89"
Weight	8500lbs	6500lbs
Drag	Mogul Master 1808	Mogul Master 1608
Length	18'	16'
Width	8'	8'
Weight	3,260 lbs	2,460 lbs

Croghan Tract Easement

Main Haul Road 7.3 miles
Blue Line Trail 4.2 miles
Coyne Trail 0.9 miles

West side Trail	2.8 miles
East side trail	<u>0.5 miles</u>
Total snowmobile trails	15.7 miles

Lassiter Easement

Bald Mountain Road	3.8 miles
Microburst Boulevard	.95 miles
Flow Road	1.85 miles
Bryants Bridge Road	0.55 miles
Tunnel road	0.5 miles
Trail S50	2.8 miles
Corridor C5 (part)	2.2 miles
Palmer Creek Road	<u>0.2 miles</u>
Total snowmobile trails	12.85 miles

BOUNDARY LINES

WETWF	69.4 miles
Croghan Tract	33.8 miles
Lassiter	35.2 miles

PARKING AREAS

	<u>Capacity</u>
Mud Pond	6 cars
Long Pond Road	2 cars
Long Pond Road	2 cars
Sand Pond	2 cars
Smith Road	4 cars

GATES

Croghan tract	12
Lassiter Easement	3
Bear Pond PC	3
Tied Lake PC	1

DAMS

WETWF	1 Mud Pond
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BRIDGES

WETWF	1
BPPC	1 (pvt)
Croghan Tract	2
Lassiter Easement	2

SIGNS

WETWF	2 Unit identification sign
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Croghan Tract	1 Regular standard
	24 Barrier ahead
	24 Stop
LCE	2 Unit identification signs

ACCESSIBLE WATERWAY ACCESS SITES

WETWF	1 Mud Pond
Croghan Tract	1 Soft Maple

PRIVATE HUNTING CAMPS

Lassiter Easement	6	(rights expire 12/31/2019)
Croghan Tract	9	(rights expire 12/31/2014)

C. Past Influences

The archaeological inventory of the WETU (Site file information provided by Charles Vandrei, 2006) reflects the known general characteristics of the area's history.

Archaeological sites are, simply put, any location where materials (artifacts, ecofacts) or modifications to the landscape reveal evidence of past human activity. Such sites can be entirely subsurface or can contain above ground remains such as foundation walls or earthwork features.

As a part of the inventory effort associated with the development of this plan the Department arranged for the archaeological site inventories maintained by the New York State Museum and the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation to be searched in order to identify known archaeological resources that might be located within or near the unit. The two inventories overlap to an extent but do not entirely duplicate one another. The purpose of this effort was to identify any known sites that might be affected by actions proposed within the unit and to assist in understanding and characterizing past human use and occupation of the unit.

The quality of the site inventory information varies a great deal in all respects. Very little systematic archaeological survey has been undertaken in New York State and especially in the Adirondack region. Therefore all current inventories must be considered incomplete. Even fewer sites have been investigated to any degree that would permit their significance to be evaluated. Many reported site locations result from 19th century antiquarian information, artifact collector reports that have not been field verified. Often very little is known about the age, function or size of these sites. This means that reported site locations can be unreliable or be polygons that encompass a large area. Should a systematic archaeological inventory be undertaken at some point in the future it is very likely that additional resources will be identified. The results of these site file checks identified no sites within two miles of the unit boundary.

1. Cultural

The WETU has been an important part of the cultural heritage of New York State. Prior to the 1900's cultural influence of this area was probably limited to that of trappers and fur traders. The influence of Native Americans in this area was likely limited to hunting parties as no evidence of Native American settlements exist on the area. Much of the existing Forest Preserve Lands, once owned by large timber companies, were leased to individuals and groups for use as traditional hunting camps. These leases still continue on the easements lands which are part of this unit and long term camping, under permit, occurs during the big-game hunting season on the Forest Preserve lands. Now, following years of timber harvesting, an opportunity exists to witness the ability of nature to revert back to a wild state. In contrast, the adjacent easement lands provide an example of managed forest and the response of the natural world to that management. The remnants of an old sawmill and lumbering camps provide a glimpse of the past roles this area has played in shaping what exists today.

2. Historical

The entire management unit has a long history of lumbering. At the site of the Old Number 1 camp are the remains of a sawmill and associated buildings. There is also an old steam boiler which was used to power the sawmill. The boiler which weighs nearly 16 tons was brought to the area by T.B. Basselin, a prominent early lumberman. As the timber supply within one area became depleted the boiler was relocated and another mill constructed.

A wooden dam exists on the West Branch of the Oswegatchie River creating Mud Pond. This dam was used for Sweet's Sawmill during the 1800s.

On the Croghan tract Easement the main building at the Sand pond camp was used during WWII as a staging area for German prisoner of war work crews. These crews worked cutting pulp wood and received some monetary compensation for their labor.

Historical recreational uses of the area have revolved mostly around hunting and fishing. Access across the road system on these areas provided access for hunting in remote areas and access to many lakes and ponds.

D. Public Use

1. Land Resources

Much of the current public use of the Forest Preserve portions of this unit are in conjunction with hunting and fishing. Some recreational use occurs in the form of snowmobiling, mountain biking and horseback riding. ATV riding as an activity on Forest Preserve roads was formally prohibited, through an administrative action by the Department, in September of 2004. This action closed motor vehicle roads that were open to ATV use. The ATV prohibition was necessary to protect the natural resources

and wild forest character of the area and to ensure that ATV use is in compliance with the Vehicle and Traffic Law and the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan. The action also prevented further degradation on these roads and illegal use of ATVs off of the roads and into interior areas in both Wilderness and Wild Forest areas.

a. Hunting

The Watson's East unit is located within Wildlife Management Unit (WMU) 6J. Primary wildlife related usage has historically centered around big game hunting, primarily for deer, although bear hunting, small game hunting and fur-bearer trapping are also prominent. On much of the easement lands contained within the unit, hunting leases were prevalent, with use intensity largely dependent on the bylaws governing each individual lease. Public hunting and trapping on the easement lands are restricted as follows:

Lassiter Easement Lands- Public hunting is not allowed on the Lassiter Easement Lands during the period from September 1 thru December 31 of each year. This restriction will run through December 31, 2019.

Croghan Tract Easement Lands- Public hunting is not allowed on the Croghan Tract Easement Lands during the period from September 1 thru December 31 of each year. This restriction will run through December 31, 2014.

While public hunting is permitted on the remaining Forest Preserve Lands it has generally been limited by poor access. The amount of time required to reach the interior portions of the unit led to the establishment of seasonal deer hunting camps. These camps generally consist of wall tents which are set up prior to the beginning of deer season and remain, under permit from the Department, until the close of big game season. In 2001, there were eight camping permits issued for the entire season and three for a camping visit of four to seven days. The local forest ranger estimates these numbers are decreasing due to improvements to the Bear Pond Road which allows for easier access to the interior. The Forest Preserve lands which are readily accessible from Town roads, may receive slightly more hunting pressure, however, their relatively small size and proximity to residences and private camps may be a limiting factor.

Chronic Wasting Disease in White-tailed Deer:

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is a rare, fatal, neurological disease found in members of the deer family (cervids). It is a transmissible disease that slowly attacks the brain of infected deer and elk, causing the animals to progressively become emaciated, display abnormal behavior and invariably results in the death of the infected animal. Chronic Wasting Disease has been known to occur in wild deer and elk in the western U.S. for decades and its discovery in wild deer in Wisconsin in 2002 generated unprecedented attention from wildlife managers, hunters, and others interested in deer. Chronic Wasting Disease poses a significant threat to the deer and elk of North America and, if unchecked, could dramatically alter the future management of wild deer and elk. However, there is no evidence that CWD is linked to disease in humans or domestic livestock other than deer and elk.

In 2005, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) received confirmation of CWD from two captive white-tailed deer herds in Oneida County and subsequently detected the disease in 2 wild deer from this area. Until recently, New York was the only state in the northeast with a confirmed CWD case in wild deer. However, CWD was recently detected in a wild deer in West Virginia.

The NYSDEC has established a containment area around the CWD-positive samples and will continue to monitor the wild deer herd in New York State. More information on CWD, New York's response to this disease, the latest results from ongoing sampling efforts, and current CWD regulations are available on the NYSDEC website: <http://www.dec.state.ny.us/website/dfwmr/wildlife/deer/currentcwd.html>

b. Fishing

The WETWF stocked brook trout ponds - Mud, Buck and Wolf Ponds, support an estimated 1,500 to 3,500 angler trips per year based on Adirondack brook trout pond angler use rates reported by Gordon (1994), and Pfeiffer (1979), and Connelly, Brown and Knuth (1996). Survival and growth of stocked brook trout in these waters is considered satisfactory, but neither of these ponds have reputations for consistently providing quality angling experiences. Mud Pond is likely the most popular of the three due to its road-side location and ease of access. Wolf Pond is considered the best of the three. It is also readily accessible via the Bear Pond Road.

Opportunities for stream fishing are readily available on the area. The small size and remoteness of most of the area's streams, however, coupled with the small sizes of the "wild" brook trout which inhabit these waters, make them generally unattractive to anglers. It is believed that the area's streams annually receive less than 50 angler hours of effort per acre.

c. Camping

Camping, other than that which is associated with hunting, has always been very sparse, with poor access being the most likely reason. Following State acquisition of Watson's East Triangle in 1986, twelve campsites were designated by the Department. Most of these sites are at locations once occupied by former lease hunting camps. As almost all of the use of these sites is during the big game hunting season, impacts associated with campsite use are minimal. All designated campsites within the WETWF conform to APSLMP guidelines for separation distances. All of these sites with the exception of the Massewepie Pond site are motor vehicle accessible.

Four traditionally used campsites on the former Champion International lands, which were acquired in 1999, have been designated by the Department. Two of these sites are located along the West Branch of the Oswegatchie River and are accessed by canoe or by short trails from two parking areas along the Long Pond Road. Two additional designated sites are located downstream on the southern shore of Mud Pond. These sites

are accessible by canoe only. All four of these sites comply with APSLMP guidelines for separation distances. Although permitted on easement lands, camping by the public is apparently not a popular use of those lands. Camping use of the WETWF is well below the areas capacity to withstand that use and is expected to remain so into the foreseeable future.

Since 2000, the only known camping to occur within the Watson's East Triangle Wild Forest has been in the form of long-term camping, under permit, during the big game hunting season. The number of permits issued annually averages between six and eight. This use occurs at currently designated primitive tentsites. Wall tents and camper trailers are generally used.

d. Mountain Biking

Although biking on the Forest Preserve lands occurs on open motor vehicle roads and snowmobile trails, numerous trails and old roads throughout the unit are suitable for bicycles, however use of this area by bikers is minimal. The use of mountain bikes on this unit will continue under 6NYCRR Part 196.7[e], which states, "The operation of bicycles is permitted on all roads and trails on Adirondack forest preserve wild forest areas except for those roads and trails posted as closed to bicycle operation" At this time all roads and trails within the WETWF are open for the use of mountain bikes. If in the future the use of mountain bikes should increase within the WETWF, additional signage along wilderness boundaries will be required as many of the existing roads and trails on this area continue into the adjoining wilderness areas.

e. Snowmobile Trails

The snowmobile trail system on this unit provides a connecting link between the Croghan-Belfort area of Lewis County and the Star Lake area of St. Lawrence County. Main corridor trails cross both easements and a portion of the Forest Preserve Lands. The Number 1 Camp Trail provides a secondary alternate route through the WETWF. This route sees an increase in snowmobile traffic when winter timber harvesting operations necessitate the plowing of the Bald Mountain Road on the Lassiter Easement. The Number 1 Camp Trail follows an old road for approximately two-thirds of its length and then connects to the Number 1 Road by following an old skid trail. Continuous illegal ATV use on the trail has caused extensive rutting in two wetland areas. These deep ruts makes grooming of the snowmobile trail difficult and during mild winters the trail is not usable.

f. Motorized Access

The road system on the Watson's East Triangle Wild Forest is a result of the area being commercial timberlands prior to state acquisition. The roads currently open for public motor vehicle use provide access not only to interior portions of this unit, but also to the Five Ponds and Pepperbox Wilderness Areas as well as the Middle Branch of the

Oswegatchie River. The Bear Pond Road, the main access road in the unit, is also subject to private right-of-ways as it provides access to inholdings within both the Five Ponds Wilderness Area and the Pepperbox Wilderness area. Most public use of the road system occurs during the late spring-early summer trout season or during the fall hunting season. Parking occurs at numerous old log landings and openings along the road system. This plan will address the need for designated parking areas in Section IV.

Illegal use of motor vehicles occurs not only within the WETWF but also onto the adjoining wilderness areas. This use occurs mostly in the form of ATVs using old logging roads to reach hunting or fishing destinations. An administrative action taken by the Department in the fall of 2004 has closed all roads within the WETWF to the use of ATVs. This action has alleviated much of the illegal ATV use on the WETWF as well as the neighboring wilderness areas. Recent site visits have confirmed some illegal ATV activity still occurs on the Steam Sleigh and Doc Woods snowmobile trails. Evidence of incursions into adjoining wilderness areas has been sporadic. A system to monitor the effects of this action will need to be developed for this unit.

g. Rock Climbing

Eagle Canyon, located on easement lands along the Beaver River has become a popular location for rock climbing. Two local youth camps as well as numerous individuals utilize the cliffs for this purpose. Although individual groups can range from 10-20 climbers, there is no evidence this use is negatively impacting the site.

h. Hiking

Very little hiking occurs within any portions of the unit that is not associated with other recreational activities. The lack of mountain peaks, scenic vistas or other hiking destinations apparently limits the public's interest in hiking in this unit.

I. Canoeing/ Kayaking

The Middle Branch of the Oswegatchie River provides some of the most challenging whitewater canoeing and kayaking in the Adirondacks. Although limited to times of high water, a trip down the Middle Branch will challenge the most experienced paddler with Class IV and V rapids.

The West branch offers some nice flatwater paddling as well as access to several ponds including, Rock, Trout and Mud ponds.

The Beaver River Canoe route can be accessed from the Croghan Tract Easement. This canoe route begins at Moshier Reservoir just below the dam at Stillwater and ends approximately 15 miles downstream at the Black River near Castorland. The main haul road on the Croghan Tract crosses Fish Creek at the point where it enters Soft Maple

Reservoir. Access to the canoe route is possible by putting in here and paddling into the main channel of the reservoir.

j . Wildlife Observation

There is currently no assessment of non-consumptive use available for the unit, although current public access provisions and facilities undoubtedly provide some direct or incidental wildlife viewing opportunities to users.

E. Recreational Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities

The Federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (“ADA”) along with the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 (ABA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, have important implications for the management of all public lands, including the WETWF unit. A detailed explanation of the ADA and its influence on management actions is provided under Section III, B; Management Guidelines. Currently there are two universally accessible improvement in the WETU. The facilities includes an accessible car-top waterway access site near the inlet to Mud Pond (includes dock, parking and accessible trail) and the accessible waterway access site at Soft Maple Reservoir. In addition, the main haul road in the Croghan Tract provides access to an accessible parking area and path to Sand Pond within the Pepperbox Wilderness.

In 1997, DEC adopted policy CP-3, Motor Vehicle Access to State Lands under Jurisdiction of the Department of Environmental Conservation for People with Disabilities, that establishes guidelines for issuing temporary revocable permits allowing people with qualifying disabilities to use motor vehicles to gain access to designated routes on certain state lands. Currently there are no designated CP-3 roads on the unit.

F. Relationship of Unit to other Forest Preserve lands

State Lands Under the Jurisdiction of DEC

Aldrich Pond Wild Forest (25,540 acres)

This unit forms the northern boundary of the WETU. Existing motor vehicle roads and snowmobile trails on the Lassiter Easement connect these two Wild Forest units. There is no description for the Aldrich Pond Wild Forest in the APSLMP.

Pepperbox Wilderness Area (22,560 acres prior to recent classifications)

The APSLMP describes the unit as follows in part:

“The area is classed as wilderness because of its remoteness and also due to the extensive wetland ecosystem involved. The flora and fauna associated with moist ecosystems, such as found in the Pepperbox, seem to exhibit more species

diversity than any others in the Adirondacks. Bird life and small mammals are especially abundant. The protection afforded wilderness tracts will insure an outdoor laboratory of significant biological importance.

...Access is moderately difficult because of the distance from public roads and the lack of a trail system. There is little or no demand for a trail system, and this offers an opportunity to retain a portion of the Adirondack landscape in a state that even a purist might call wilderness”.

Five Ponds Wilderness Area (117,978 acres)

The APSLMP describes the unit as follows in part:

“The terrain is low, rolling and interspersed with many small ponds. Swamp areas and small brooks are numerous. The forest cover varies from pole-size hardwoods in the sections that were heavily logged and burned more than forty years ago to virgin pine and spruce stands.

This is one of the few locations in the northeastern United States where stands of virgin timber can be found. ...The old growth pine and red spruce stand on the esker between Big Five, Little Five and Big Shallow, Little Shallow and Washbowl ponds is an example of this virgin timber. The pure pine stand at Pine Ridge along the Oswegatchie is another well known spot where examples of original growth timber may be seen. However, portions of the Pine Ridge stand were completely blown down in the 1950 hurricane and the timber was salvaged by a logging contractor.

The Five Ponds area is accessible to the public from the north and also from the south if one has a boat or canoe, from the east from the Lake Lila Primitive Area and along the Remsen to Lake Placid railroad. The area can also be reached from the southwest via the Raven Lake Primitive Corridor, and from the east, by boat or canoe, via the newly acquired Bog River/ Low’s Lake Tract. The western boundary in Herkimer County is accessible from the Bear Pond Road in the Aldrich Pond Wild Forest”.

The Croghan Tract Easement provides access to the western edge of the Pepperbox Wilderness in the vicinities of Spring Pond and Sand Pond. Motor vehicle access across the Croghan Tract and Alder Creek Primitive Area provides landowner access to a private inholding in the Pepperbox Wilderness.

The Lassiter Easement lands provide access to the northern portion of WETWF, the Aldrich Pond Wild Forest and indirectly to portions of the Five Ponds Wilderness. The replacement of the motor vehicle bridge over the Middle Branch of the Oswegatchie River on the Lassiter easement will again provide motor vehicle access to the northern portion of the Lassiter lands as well as the Aldrich Pond Wild Forest.

G. Relationship Between Public and Private Land

Private lands near or adjacent to this unit have the potential to both compliment and complicate DEC management. All of the private lands adjacent to this unit, with the exception of those protected through conservation easements, have the potential to be developed. Development of these properties could contribute to additional user demands on the unit. Like many regions of the Adirondack Park, this area could face a rise in development, residential and commercial, by those seeking to live in or near wild forest lands or by those who wish to exploit its attraction for recreationists for profit. Lands with recreational easement rights for the general public can also cause additional user demands on adjoining Forest Preserve lands.

In addition, six camps are located on Lassiter Conservation Easement lands within the unit. (See Section II-B.) These structures will be allowed to stay and be leased after the end of the hunting reservation period. Lessee rights with the exception of ingress and egress will be the same as the general public outside the boundaries of the camp inholdings. The five camps located on the Croghan Tract Conservation Easement will be removed upon expiration of reserved rights after 12/31/2014. (See Appendix 16 for Conservation Easement Public Use Sections)

Large Landowners

- Future Farmers of America (FFA)

FFA owns and operates a youth summer camp and educational center adjacent to this unit. The property covers approximately 1,200 acres and borders directly on Forest Preserve lands and both easement properties. A Fish and Wildlife Management Association cooperators agreement between FFA and DEC allows for public access and fishing on Long Pond, Round Pond, Rock Pond and Trout Pond, as well as the West Branch of the Oswegatchie River and its tributaries. The camp occasionally utilizes areas of both easement lands and Forest Preserve for its activities.

- Lassiter Properties

When the State acquired easement and fee lands from Lassiter in 1989, Lassiter retained fee ownership, free from easements, of the lands more suitable for future development. Although these lands are currently managed as working forests their subdivision and development would impact the unit.

- Desert Pond Club

This is an inholding within the WETWF. The property is used primarily for hunting. Some hunting from this camp occurs on Forest Preserve lands.

- Champion Realty Corp.

Holdings include large subdivisions around Soft Maple Reservoir and Eagle Falls. Although not immediately adjacent to the unit, the increasing number of summer camps could potentially have an impact on the number of potential users of the unit.

- Heartwood Forest Land Fund III Fee Lands

The lands owned by The Heartwood Forest Land Fund III (HFFIII) that lie outside of the Adirondack Park blue line are not subject to a conservation easement. These lands are adjacent to the easement lands owned by HFFIII inside of the blue line. Under the owners current management plans the HFFIII lands outside the blue line will continue to be

managed as working forests.

- Other Adjacent Landowners

Most other large privately owned tracts in the area are family owned and generally used for timber production and recreation by those owners.

- Private Right of Ways (ROWs) over Public Lands

The occurrence of private ROWs across Forest Preserve lands can complicate the management of the public's use of State land. Issues concerning maintenance, type of vehicle use and illegal motor vehicle use are often associated with private ROWs across Forest Preserve lands. The issue of maintenance generally revolves around either the extent the road can be maintained or the impacts resulting from a total lack of proper maintenance. Most deeded ROWs are for ingress and egress to and from private lands. Illegal motor vehicle use often occurs when there are routes used legally as a ROW, but which are not open to the general public. Identifying users who have a right to use a certain road, under their deeded rights, and those who are using it illegally is difficult.

H. Capacity to Withstand Use

Carrying Capacity Concepts

The WETWF cannot withstand ever-increasing, unlimited visitor use without suffering the eventual loss of its essential, natural character. The challenge for managers is to determine how much use and what type of use the area, or particular sites within it, can withstand before the impacts of use cause serious degradation of the resource or recreational experience. At suitable locations, the Department will undertake a visitor use survey. Plans to address over use, illegal use, or improper use are identified in Section IV-C.

The term carrying capacity has its roots in range and wildlife management sciences. As defined in the range management sciences, carrying capacity means "the maximum number of animals that can be grazed on a land unit for a specific period of time without inducing damage to vegetation or related resources" (Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center, 1994). This concept, in decades past, was modified to address recreational uses as well, although in its application to recreational use it has been shown to be significantly flawed when used to determine the maximum number of people allowed to visit an area such as the WETWF. After many years of study, basic research showed that there was no linear relationship between the amount of use and the resultant amount of impact (Krumpe and Stokes, 1993). For many types of activities, low levels of use can cause observable impacts. For example, in sensitive areas the elimination of ground vegetation at a campsite can become significant after only a few camping parties have occupied it. Once moderate use levels have removed nearly all the vegetation, large increases in use cause relatively little additional impact. It has been discovered that such factors as visitor behavior, site resistance and resiliency and type of use may actually be more important in determining the degree of impact than the amount of use, although the total amount of use contributes to a significant extent (Hammit and Cole, 1987).

The shortcomings of a simple carrying capacity approach have become so apparent that the basic question has changed from the old one, "How many is too many?" to the new, more realistic one: "How much change is acceptable?" Because of the complex relationship between use and use impacts, the manager's job is much more involved than simply counting, redirecting, or restricting the number of visitors in an area. Professionally-informed judgements must be made so that carrying capacity is defined in terms of acceptable resource and social conditions. These conditions must be compared to real life situations, projections must be made, and management policies and actions must be drafted and enacted to maintain or restore the desired conditions. Shaping the types of use impacting an area can call not only for education and research, but also the formulation and enforcement of a set of regulations which some users are likely to regard as objectionable.

This strategy will help insure that in the WETWF, the "essentially wild character" contained in the APSLMP definition of wild forest will be retained. A central goal of this plan is to achieve an appropriate balance between resource protection and public use in the WETWF.

Planning Approach

The approach to the development of a unit management plan for the WETWF involves a combination of two generally accepted wilderness planning methods: (1) the goal-achievement framework; and (2) the Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) model employed by the U.S. Forest Service and other agencies.

Goal-Achievement Framework

In wild forest areas, the Department is mandated by law to implement actions designed to realize the intent of the wild forest guidelines of the APSLMP. The goal-achievement framework will be used to organize this management plan to direct the process of determining appropriate management actions through the careful development of goals and objectives. Goals are general descriptions of management direction reflecting legal mandates and general conditions to be achieved or maintained in the WETWF area. Wild forest goals, along with guidance for the future of the WETWF can be found in Section III-E. Objectives are statements of more specific conditions whose achievement will be necessary to assure progress toward the attainment of the established goals and principles. In each category of management activity included in Section IV of this plan, the current management situation is assessed and assumptions about future trends and conditions are discussed. Proposed management objectives describing conditions to be achieved are presented and individual actions to meet the objectives are proposed.

However, this approach does not identify specific thresholds of unacceptable impact on particular resources or give managers or the public clear guidance as to when a particular restrictive management action is warranted. For these issues, the LAC process will be used.

Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) Process

The LAC process employs carrying capacity concepts to prescribe--not the total number of people who can visit an area--but the desired resource and social conditions that should be maintained regardless of use. Establishing and maintaining acceptable conditions depends on explicit management objectives which draw on managerial experience, research, inventory data, assessments, projections and public input. Indicators, measurable variables that reflect conditions, are chosen and standards, representing the bounds of acceptable conditions, are set, so management efforts can address unacceptable changes. The LAC process relies on monitoring to provide systematic and periodic feedback to managers.

Though generally the levels of human impact within the WETWF are relatively low, a number of management issues could be addressed by the LAC process. Such issues may be categorized as conflicts between public use and resource protection, conflicts between users, and conflicts between outside influences and the objectives for natural resource or social conditions within the unit. For instance, two goals of management are protecting natural conditions and providing public recreational access. Yet the promotion of recreational use could have unacceptable impacts to natural resources, such as the soils and vegetation in a popular camping area. The LAC process could be used to determine the thresholds of acceptable soil and vegetation impacts and what management actions would be taken to protect resources from camping use. LAC does not work in every situation. For example, managers do not need a process to help them determine how much illegal ATV use is acceptable; because existing wild forest guidelines and regulations strictly limit public motor vehicle use, all illegal motor vehicle use is unacceptable.

The LAC process involves 10 steps:

Step 1: Define Goals and Desired Conditions

Step 2: Identify Issues, Concerns and Threats

Step 3: Define and Describe Acceptable Conditions

Step 4: Select Indicators for Resource and Social Conditions

Step 5: Inventory Existing Resource and Social Conditions

Step 6: Specify Standards for Resource and Social Indicators for Each Opportunity Class

Step 7: Identify Alternative Opportunity Class Allocations

Step 8: Identify Management Actions for Each Alternative

Step 9: Evaluate and Select a Preferred Alternative

Step 10: Implement Actions and Monitor Conditions

The application of the LAC process will require a substantial commitment of staff time and public involvement. The full implementation of LAC for each unit will occur over a period of years. Of the 10 steps of the LAC process, this plan implements steps 1, 2 and 3, which apply to all the resources and conditions of the unit. The application of steps 4, 5 and 6 to selected issues is proposed for the next five years.

As a part of step two of LAC, this UMP identifies significant management issues affecting the WETWF. From the list in Section III-F, issues suitable for the application of

the LAC process will be selected. For these issues, the Department will implement the four major components of the LAC process:

- The identification of acceptable resource and social conditions represented by measurable indicators;
- An analysis of the relationship between existing conditions and those desired;
- Determinations of the necessary management actions needed to achieve and preserve desired conditions; and,
- A monitoring program to see if objectives are being met over time.

Though LAC will not be fully implemented, this plan provides resource inventory information, sets goals founded on law, policy and the characteristics of the area, identifies management issues, and lays out proposed objectives and actions designed to meet management goals. Ultimately a monitoring system will be put in place, and management actions will be revised and refined over time in response to the results of periodic evaluation to assure that desired conditions will be attained or maintained.

Impacts of Public Use

A systematic assessment of the impacts of public use within the WETWF has not been conducted. While additional information is needed about overall public use of the WETWF and the impacts of use on the area's physical and biological resources, as well as its social impacts, the planning team considered the best available information. For ease of organization, the capacity of the WETWF to withstand use is divided into three broad categories: physical, biological, and social. For each category, the definition of capacity will be followed by the known current situation within the WETWF. The management objectives and proposed management actions to deal with existing or potential future problems are presented in Section IV of this plan.

Physical capacity- May include indicators that measure visitor impacts to physical resources (e.g. soil erosion on trails, campsites and access sites) and changes to environmental conditions (e.g. air and water quality).

Biological capacity- May include indicators that measure visitor impacts to biological resources (e.g. vegetation loss at campsites or waterfront access sites) and changes in the ecosystem (e.g. diversity and distribution of plant and animal species).

Social capacity- May include indicators that measure visitor impacts on other visitors (e.g. conflicts between user groups), the effectiveness of managerial conditions (e.g. noncompliant visitor behavior), and interactions with the area's physical or biological capacity (e.g. noise on trails, campsites and access sites).

1. Physical

The physical capacity of a land area to withstand recreational use is the level of use

beyond which the characteristics of the area's soils, water and wetland resources, and topography undergo substantial unnatural changes. The capacity of a particular site is related to slope, soil type, ground and surface water characteristics, the type of vegetation that occupies the site, and the types or amount of recreational activity to which the site is subjected. In some cases physical impacts observed within the area are due to erosion brought on by inadequate or infrequent maintenance or poor layout and design, rather than actual use. In other instances impacts may be caused by illegal uses of the area.

Current user numbers for the WETU are relatively low, based on staff observations, when compared to other units on the Forest Preserve. Overuse of designated or developed facilities does not appear to be a problem on the WETU. The occurrence of illegal ATV use on the area has declined since 2004 when the Department took action to close all motor vehicle roads on the WETWF to ATV use. However, staff site visits and law enforcement actions indicate some illegal ATV use still continues.

Air quality in the region including the WETU is largely a product of forces and activities originating outside the unit. The air quality impacts resulting from the building of campfires by visitors are limited and localized. Smoke from campfires is not known to have significant ecological effects. The effects of exhaust emissions from snowmobile use within this unit have not been comprehensively studied or documented.

As the demand for public outdoor recreational opportunities continues to grow, it would be expected the number of users of the WETU would also continue to increase. Accurately estimating the extent of these future increases and trends is not always possible without devoting time and resources for monitoring those activities.

2. Biological

The biological capacity of a land area to withstand recreational use is the level of use beyond which the characteristics of the area's plant and animal communities and ecological processes sustain substantial unnatural change. A review of available information indicates that the level of use within the unit does not appear to be exceeding the capacity of the biological resources to withstand use.

Plant life

Impacts from public use to area vegetation include illegal tree cutting, removal of brush, and loss of vegetation due to expansion of campsites. Additional impacts to this resource involve tree cutting allowed by easement or road and utility line maintenance (under TRP) or tree removal associated with trail maintenance, rehabilitation, and development. Another potential impact is the introduction of invasive species into the unit.

Fish and Wildlife Resources

Wildlife:

Present wildlife use is considered to be within sustainable levels and are not anticipated to change substantially in the short to mid-term future. Most documented wildlife use is currently big game hunting related and a look at recent harvest trends suggests harvest is compatible with available resources. Annual hunting effort for these two species is fairly consistent from year to year, making the harvest trend information a relatively good indicator of population increases or decrease over time. Deer and bear harvests for the unit can be extrapolated from town data, and estimated based on the percentage of the total town area occupied by the WETU. The four towns in which the unit is located (Croghan, Diana, Watson and Webb) occupy 907 square miles, while the unit cover approximately 63 square miles, or 7% of the total. The table below shows the estimated deer and bear takes for the unit over a five year period.

Table 5: Estimated Deer and Bear Take for Watson’s East- 1997-2001

Year	Deer Harvest	Bear Harvest*
1997	101	2
1998	97	2
1999	103	2
2000	102	5
2001	84	3

Similarly, fur-bearer harvest can be estimated for the unit to illustrate population trends. Trapping effort is known to vary somewhat annually in response to weather conditions and pelt prices, but still provides some indication of population trends.

Table 6: Estimated Fur-bearer Take For Watson’s East- 1996-2000

Year	Beaver	Bobcat	Coyote	Fisher	Otter
1996	57	1	3	5	7
1997	42	1	2	5	4
1998	37	1	1	5	2
1999	45	0	1	3	4
2000	40	1	1	2	4

Although the current restrictions on public use will change in 2014 on the Croghan tract and in 2019 on the Lassiter parcel, the Department does not project a significant change in use intensity due to the low peripheral human density and relatively remote nature of the unit.

Some human uses do have the potential to affect wildlife resources on the unit, particularly relative to portions critical to deer survival in the winter. Some guidelines for use regulation in proximity to the identified deer wintering yards are listed in Section III-B-2.

Fisheries:

Currently, statewide angling regulations, which apply to all waters in the WETU coupled with annual stocking strategies, and possession of baitfish prohibited regulations which apply to the area's trout ponds, are adequate to protect area fish populations from over-harvest by anglers and the introduction of un-wanted "new" species. If future surveys indicate fisheries declines in specific waters, special regulations will be instituted to further protect these fish populations. At this time, no water resources, including the area's and their wild trout populations, are believed to be over-fished.

3. Social

The social capacity of a land area to withstand recreational use is the level of use beyond which the likelihood that a visitor will achieve his or her expectations for a recreational experience is significantly hampered. Social capacity is strongly influenced by an area's land classification, which in turn determines the management objectives for the area and the degree of recreational development possible. While solitude may be managed for in some locations, it is not as important a component of the recreational experience in Wild Forest Areas as it is in Wilderness. Social conflicts mainly occur due to recreationists seeking different experiences. A source of tension can derive from different ideas of what constitutes a camping experience; some visitors anticipate spending a quiet evening observing their natural surroundings, while others look forward to a party atmosphere.

User satisfaction from recreating is a function of both perception and expectation with the presence, number and behavior of others encountered having a direct influence on the quality of the experience. Compatibility between uses usually involves how quiet or noisy an activity is, whether it is consumptive or non-consumptive, whether it involves individuals or groups, and whether it is a traditional or newly introduced activity. A few recreationists feel that other users degrade the quality of their own experiences. Particularly controversial in this respect are motorized recreational activities to which people involved in non-motorized activities often object.

Sound related impacts can cover a large area but are generally temporary in nature with little or no physical effect on the environment. Loud noise could impact area wildlife or alter the experience of a person seeking to escape the sounds of civilization. For other users, particularly those using motor vehicles such as snowmobiles, the sound is an expected normal part of the overall recreational experience.

According to available information and the low level of reports of user conflict, the current level of public use within the WETWF is not believed to be exceeding the social capacity of the area to withstand use.

I. Education, Interpretation and Research

Currently there are no educational or interpretive activities occurring within this unit. This is a shortfall of not only this area but of many units throughout the Adirondacks. Providing information and education should be a fundamental goal of any UMP.

J. Economic Impact

The impact of the WETU on local and regional economies can be measured in a variety of ways including a review of the types of industries and jobs in the Adirondacks that are associated with this unit. Although exact dollar figures do not exist for all indicators of economic activity associated with this unit, a general picture can be drawn.

Tourism is on the rise and is one of the most important industries in the Adirondacks. There are numerous guiding services, motels, bed and breakfasts, inns, camps, clubs, gas stations, restaurants, grocery stores and equipment stores that depend on the attraction of the Adirondack Forest Preserve to draw customers. Hikers, campers, fisherman, snowmobilers and hunters, especially deer hunters and snowmobilers, who use this unit spend a certain amount of money on services and lodging facilities. However, since neither public use figures nor estimates of local expenditures are available, an overall economic impact figure associated with users of the unit cannot be precisely determined.

The proximity of private land to Forest Preserve is often a selling point in real estate sales, and coupled with road access, land availability, proximity to multiple uses and waterfront, has a beneficial impact on land values. An Adirondack landowner survey (Kay, 1985) determined that proximity to State owned Forest Preserve can boost the value of single family homes by almost \$6,000 from the median, and by \$2,000 for parcels without homes.

The continued harvest of forest products from easement lands contributes another economic benefit to surrounding communities. Forest management activities employ foresters, loggers, truck drivers, sawmill personnel and manufacturing facilities. Expenditures for these activities include fuels, parts, repair services and the contracting of labor from local workers.

There are also less tangible economic impacts provided by this unit. Due to the absence of industry and associated pollution on these lands, there are no polluting effects on downwind or downstream areas requiring costly mitigation measures. In fact, Forest Preserve lands including this unit, enhance the quality of the environment by filtering water and transported air pollutants and by providing oxygen to the atmosphere.

Additionally, the State makes substantial property tax payments to local governments. Section 532-a of the Real Property Tax Law provides in part that “all wild or forest lands owned by the State within the Forest Preserve” are subject to taxation for all purposes. The State pays the same rate of tax on unimproved forest lands as private landowners pay

on their unimproved land. Pursuant of Real Property Tax Law, Section 533, the State pays taxes on conservation easement lands located within the Catskill and Adirondack Parks, which is equivalent to the change in the value of the lands subject to the easement.

Table 7: PROPERTY TAXES FOR 2001

UNIT	ACREAGE	ASSESSMENT/ACRE	TOTAL TAX PAID
WETWF	11,680	\$5.46/ACRE	\$63,772
PREVIOUSLY UNCLASSIFIED FOREST PRESERVE	3,453	\$9.71/ACRE	\$33,528
CROGHAN	13,054	\$4.84/ACRE	\$63,181
LASSITER	12,869	\$4.27/ACRE	\$54,950
TOTAL	41,056	—	\$215,431

III. MANAGEMENT AND POLICY

A. Past Management

The administration of Forest Preserve land is the responsibility of the Division of Lands and Forests. The responsibility for the enforcement of DEC rules and regulations lies with the Office of Public Protection. The Division of Operations conducts interior construction, maintenance and rehabilitation projects. The Bureau of Recreation within the Division of Operations operates and manages the public campgrounds adjacent to the unit. The Division of Fish, Wildlife and Marine Resources manages the state's fish and wildlife resources.

1. Land Management

This is the first comprehensive management plan to be developed for the WETU. Previous management actions, or lack of them, were generally geared toward responding to potential environmental impacts and to the needs and desires of users.

Following acquisition of the Watson's East Triangle Wild Forest in 1986, and up until its classification in 1999, historic recreational uses were allowed to continue throughout the unit. Campsites were designated at locations which had been the sites of old hunting camps or that were already being used. The existing road system was left open with the exception of several roads which led into the adjoining Five Ponds Wilderness Area.

Beginning in 1999, rehabilitation of the surface of the Bear Pond Road, which provides access to a majority of the unit, was begun. In early 2000, work on the project was halted due to: wetlands violations; road work beyond ordinary maintenance, significant impacts on the wild forest character of the road corridor; and violation of the Department's tree cutting policy. A memorandum of agreement (MOA) was reached between the APA and DEC for the remediation of the area and the wetlands portion of the work was completed in 2001. As part of the MOA a detailed work plan for the restoration of the road corridor was developed (See Appendix 4). Most of the work required by the work plan was completed in 2002.

In the case of Residents Committee to Protect the Adirondacks versus Adirondack Park Agency et. al.; (Albany County Supreme Court, Index Number 6513-01), the legality of this MOA was challenged. The case was settled by the parties and so ordered by the Court on March 22, 2002. Among other things, this settlement included provisions for the scheduling of UMP development. See Appendix 8 for a copy of the full stipulation and order settling this case. The completion of this UMP will satisfy one aspect of the settlement agreement.

An interim management plan was developed for the former Champion International lands

shortly after their acquisition. Prior to classification an interim plan was developed for the Forest Preserve lands along the West Branch of the Oswegatchie River. The interim plan was mostly an inventory of existing facilities, natural resources and current uses. Several campsites were designated, two on Mud Pond and two along the West Branch of the Oswegatchie River, the latter including small parking areas on the Long Pond Road. An accessible car-top boat launch was developed near the inlet to Mud Pond, including dock, latrine, parking and accessible trail. The plastic port-a-jon was removed from the site since there was not enough use to justify the expense and maintenance pumping.

The interim management plan for the Croghan Tract easement included an inventory of natural resources and facilities. Specific proposals included reconstruction of the Main Haul Road, designation of several roads for ATV use, snowmobile trails, parking areas, water access site and one foot trail. Currently motor vehicle road standards are being developed by DEC and the fee holder for both public and lessee roads and trails.

Past management of the Lassiter easement lands has consisted of posting signs along the easement boundary, maintaining certain roads and constructing a connector road between the Bald Mountain Road and the Flow Road. In 1996 the Mullins Flow Bridge over the Middle Branch of the Oswegatchie River was closed due to structural problems. It was replaced with a new bridge in 2004. This bridge serves as the main connector between easement lands on either side of the river, as well as providing access to the Aldrich Pond Wild Forest.

Stewardship Agreements

Under the Adopt-a-Natural Resource Policy, DEC enters into stewardship agreements with organizations and individuals. Such agreements are authorized by Section 9-0113 of the Environmental Conservation Law for the purpose of preserving, maintaining or enhancing a State-owned natural resource or portion thereof in accordance with the policies of the Department. A stewardship agreement is for a period of up to five years.

Under an existing Adopt-A-Natural Resource (AANR) stewardship agreement, one snowmobile group (Long Pond Snowmobile Club) performs maintenance on selected trails in the unit. Area trails are groomed by Tucker tracked groomers. (See Table 4 in Section II-B.) In addition, the Desert Pond Club is authorized under an AANR to maintain a gate on their private ROW.

2. Wildlife Management

Wildlife management activities specific to the WETU have not been conducted. Management on the area has been accomplished as part of the statewide or Wildlife Management Unit regulatory process.

Hunting and Trapping Regulations

Regulations controlling season dates, method of taking, and bag limits for wildlife have

been the principal wildlife management techniques applied to unit lands. Early regulations were written consistent for all of northern New York (equivalent to the Northern Zone). In the past, DEC subdivided the State into numerous Deer Management Units (DMU) for big game and Wildlife Management Units (WMU) for small game and furbearers. Each unit was defined according to its distinctive ecological and social characteristics. In an effort to make hunting and trapping regulations more user friendly and easier to understand a single set of management units is now used for all species. Boundaries were adjusted when necessary and a new alpha-numeric identification system was created. Decisions concerning wildlife management are ordinarily based upon these management units which are typically larger than individual Forest Preserve units. The WETWF occupies a portion of the larger forest stands and landforms within WMU 6J, the number indicating the wildlife region generally responsible for that unit.

Waterfowl season parameters are largely established by Federal authority, but states have some flexibility for season modifications within the Federal framework.

Nuisance Wildlife Policy

The Bureau of Wildlife investigates nuisance wildlife complaints on a case-by-case basis. The DEC does not actively control nuisance wildlife except when the behavior of wildlife is deemed to threaten the lives of visitors. No major conflicts between visitors to the unit and resident wildlife have been reported. Beaver activity occasionally floods trails or roads in the unit.

Surveys and Inventories

Over the years, both game and non-game species of wildlife and significant wildlife habitats have been the subjects of various surveys and inventories.* Maps showing the locations of significant wildlife habitats have been created and are continually updated by DEC's Wildlife Resources Unit. Significant habitats within the unit are described in the Section II-A-1-I.

Annual flights through the Adirondacks to inventory active osprey nests and to determine nesting success are conducted by the Bureau of Wildlife. Eagle and peregrine falcon nests, and deer wintering areas are monitored annually. Periodically, DEC and private agencies have surveyed common loon populations in the State. DEC's last loon survey was completed in 1985. The Breeding Bird Atlas Project was conducted from 1980 to 1985 and censused breeding birds statewide. The Atlas 2000 project is currently repeating the survey to learn how breeding bird distribution has changed. As mentioned elsewhere, harvest figures are collected annually for a variety of game species.

Species Restoration

**The New York Natural Heritage Program is a cooperative effort between the Nature Conservancy and DEC to inventory and manage the occurrence of rare plants, animals, and exemplary natural communities in New York State. It is closely related in scope and purpose to DEC's Significant Habitat Program. Natural Heritage and Significant Habitats jointly issue reports and maps assessing resource conditions.*

A number of wildlife species once native to the Adirondacks were extirpated either directly or indirectly as a result of human activities. In recent years, recognizing the desirability of at least partially restoring the composition of wildlife species originally present in the Adirondacks, DEC and others have launched projects to reintroduce the peregrine falcon, bald eagle, and Canada lynx.

DEC began an effort to reintroduce the peregrine falcon to the Adirondacks in 1981 by implementing a method of artificially rearing and releasing young birds to the wild called "hacking." Between 1983 and 1985, 55 bald eagles also hacked within the Adirondack region. The peregrine and bald eagle restorations have been very successful statewide, but no nesting activity by either species has been discovered within the unit since the end of the hacking program.

The State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry, through the Adirondack Wildlife program, conducted an experimental project to reintroduce the Canada lynx to the Adirondack High Peaks region. Lynx were first released in 1989; a total of 83 animals were released by the spring of 1991. The restoration is considered to be a failure, as a lynx population has not been re-established in the Adirondacks.

Invasive/Exotic Wildlife

A Non-indigenous Aquatic Species Comprehensive Management Plan prepared by the Department in 1993 identifies strategies to eliminate or reduce environmental, public health, and safety risks associated with nonindigenous aquatic species, particularly zebra mussels.

Other Fauna/Public Health Concerns

Wildlife occasionally can impact the health or enjoyment of outdoor recreationists. In some cases, area waters are treated with Bti to help reduce the numbers of black flies. This activity falls within the scope of Article 15 of the Environmental Conservation Law and an aquatic pesticide application permit and TRP are required under NYCRR Part 329. The more common potential health concerns include:

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in White-tailed Deer - Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is a rare, fatal, neurological disease found in members of the deer family (cervids). It is a transmissible disease that slowly attacks the brain of infected deer and elk, causing the animals to progressively become emaciated, display abnormal behavior and invariably results in the death of the infected animal. Chronic Wasting Disease has been known to occur in wild deer and elk in the western U.S. for decades and its discovery in wild deer in Wisconsin in 2002 generated unprecedented attention from wildlife managers, hunters, and others interested in deer. Chronic Wasting Disease poses a significant threat to the deer and elk of North America and, if unchecked, could dramatically alter the future management of wild deer and elk. However, there is no evidence that CWD is linked to disease in humans or domestic livestock other than deer and elk.

In 2005, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) received confirmation of CWD from two captive white-tailed deer herds in Oneida County. Until recently, New York was the only state in the northeast with a confirmed CWD case in wild deer. However, CWD was recently detected in a wild deer in West Virginia.

The NYSDEC has established a containment area around the CWD-positive samples and will continue to monitor the wild deer herd in New York State. More information on CWD, New York's response to this disease, the latest results from ongoing sampling efforts, and current CWD regulations are available on the NYSDEC website: <http://www.dec.state.ny.us/website/dfwmr/wildlife/deer/currentcwd.html>

Giardiasis - This intestinal illness sometimes called "beaver fever" is caused by a microscopic parasite called *Giardia lamblia*. Even though many animals other than man can act as hosts, including the beaver, improper disposal of human excrement is one of the primary reasons for the increased numbers of this parasite in the interior.

Lyme disease - This infection is caused by the bite of a deer tick carrying a bacterium, that often infects deer, field mice, humans and household pets.

West Nile Virus - Is a relatively new viral disease that is carried by birds and can be transmitted to humans, in particular, through mosquito bites. It is often fatal to some species of birds, such as crows, but in most species it is not fatal. It can be fatal in humans, especially in those with compromised immune systems. The use of insect repellent will help reduce exposure.

Rabies - Rabies is a viral infection that affects the nervous system of all mammals, including humans. It is usually transmitted by the bite of an infected animal to another. Like other viral infections, it does not respond to antibiotics and is almost always fatal once the symptoms appear. Major carriers of rabies include raccoons, skunks, bats and fox species but all mammals can be potential carriers.

3. Fisheries Management

Active management of fisheries in the WETU began with the Biological Survey of 1932. Subsequent activities have included survey and inventory, fish stocking, pond reclamation and management of angler harvest by regulation. The above activities have intensified since the acquisition of public access to the lands in the 1980s.

B. Management Guidelines

1. Guiding Documents

This unit management plan has been developed within the guidelines set forth by Article XIV, Section 1 of the New York State Constitution, Article 9 of the Environmental Conservation Law, Parts 190-199 of Title 6 NYCRR of the State of New York, the APSLMP, and established Department policy.

The lands of the WETWF are Forest Preserve lands protected by Article XIV, Section 1 of the New York State Constitution. This Constitutional provision, which became effective on January 1, 1895, provides in relevant part:

The lands of the state, now owned or hereafter acquired, constituting the forest preserve as now fixed by law, shall be forever kept as wild forest lands. They shall not be leased, sold or exchanged, or be taken by any corporation, public or private, nor shall the timber thereon be sold, removed or destroyed.

ECL §§3-0301(1)(d) and 9-0105(1) provide the Department with jurisdiction over Forest Preserve lands.

The APSLMP was initially adopted in 1972 by the State Legislature and signed into Law by the Governor, with advice from and in consultation with the Department, pursuant to Executive Law §807, now recodified as Executive Law §816. The APSLMP provides the overall general framework for the development and management of State lands in the Adirondack Park, including those Forest Preserve lands which are the subject of this UMP.

The APSLMP places State land within the Adirondack Park into the following classifications: Wilderness, Primitive, Canoe, Wild Forest, Intensive Use, Historic, State Administrative, Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers, and Travel Corridors, and sets forth management guidelines for the lands falling within each major classification. Guidelines are set forth for such matters as: structures and improvements; ranger stations; the use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment and aircraft; roads, jeep trails and state truck trails, flora and fauna, recreation use and overuse; boundary structures and improvements and boundary markings. Actions by the State on lands covered by the APSLMP must be consistent with the provisions of the APSLMP.

Executive Law §816 requires this Department to develop, in consultation with the APA, individual UMPs for each unit of land under the Department's jurisdiction which is classified in one of the nine classifications set forth in the APSLMP. The UMPs must conform to the guidelines and criteria set forth in the APSLMP. Thus, UMPs implement and apply the APSLMP general guidelines for particular areas of land within the Adirondack Park.

Executive Law §816(1) provides in part that "(u)ntil amended, the master plan for management of state lands and the individual management plans shall guide the development and management of state lands in the Adirondack park." Thus, the

APSLMP and the UMPs have the force of legislative enactment in guiding Department actions.

This UMP also includes management guidelines for the Croghan Tract and Lassiter Conservation Easements. All actions undertaken pursuant to this UMP are also subject to the following laws, rules, regulations, and policies:

Environmental Conservation Law (ECL):

- Article 9: Lands and Forests
- Article 11: Fish and Wildlife
- Article 15: Water Resources
- Article 23: Mineral Resources
- Article 24: Wetlands
- Article 33: Pesticides
- Article 71: Enforcement

New York Code of Rules and Regulations (NYCRR) - Title 6:

- Chapter I: Fish and Wildlife
- Chapter II: Lands and Forests
- Chapter III: Air Resources
- Chapter IV: Quality Services
- Chapter V: Resource Management Services
- Chapter X: Division of Water Resources
- Chapter XI: Part 617; State Environmental Quality Review

Department Policies:

- Administrative Use of Motor Vehicles and Aircraft in the Forest Preserve (CP-17)
- Standards and Procedures for Boundary Line Maintenance (NR-95-1)
- Motor Vehicle Access to State Lands Under the Jurisdiction of DEC for People with Disabilities (CP-3)
- Tree Cutting on Forest Preserve Land (O&D #84-06).
- Cutting and Removal of Trees in the Forest Preserve (LF-91-2)
- Snowmobile Trails- Forest Preserve (ONR-2).
- The Administration of Conservation Easements (NR-90-1).
- Acquisition of Conservation Easements (NR-86-3)
- Division Regulatory Policy (LF-90-2).
- Adopt-A-Natural Resource (ONR-1).
- Policies and Procedure Manual Title 8400- Public Land Management.
- Forest Preserve Roads (CP-38)

Division of Lands & Forests Forest Preserve Policies of 1986

- Fireplaces and Fire rings
- Foot bridges
- Foot trails

Primitive camping sites
Road barriers
Sanitary facilities
Trailheads

Guidance and Clarification Documents

Interim Guidelines for Snowmobile Trail Construction and Maintenance -
11/1/2000
Clarification of Practice Regarding Motor Vehicle Use for Snowmobile Trail
Grooming, Maintenance and Construction - 11/1/2000
Guidelines for Motor Vehicle Use Proposals in Wild Forest UMPs Memorandum
- 7/25/2001

The recommendations presented in this unit management plan are subject to the requirements of the State Environmental Quality and Review Act of 1975. All proposed management activities will be reviewed and significant environmental impacts and alternatives will be assessed.

Historic and Archaeological Site Protection

The historic and archaeological sites located within the unit as well as additional unrecorded sites that may exist on the property are protected by the provisions of the New York State Historic Preservation Act (SHPA - Article 14 PRHPL), Article 9 of Environmental Conservation Law, 6 NYCRR § 190.8 (g) and Section 233 of the Education Law. Unauthorized excavation and removal of materials from any of these sites is prohibited by Article 9 of the ECL and Section 233 of the Education Law. In some cases additional protection may be afforded these resources by the federal Archaeological Resources Protection Act.

2. Application of Guidelines and Standards

All projects will be developed in accordance with the above mentioned laws, rules, regulations and policies and will incorporate the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs), including but not limited to such considerations as:

Construction Projects:

- Locating improvements to minimize necessary cut and fill;
- Locating improvements away from streams, wetlands, and unstable slopes;
- Use of proper drainage devices such as water bars and broad-based dips;
- Locating trails to minimize grade;
- Using stream crossings with low, stable banks, firm stream bottom and gentle approach slopes;
- Constructing stream crossings at right angles to the stream;
- Limiting stream crossing construction to periods of low or normal flow;
- Avoiding areas where habitats of threatened and endangered species are known to

- exist;
- Using natural materials to blend the structure into the natural surroundings.

Lean-tos:

- Locating lean-tos to minimize necessary cut and fill;
- Locating lean-tos to minimize tree cutting;
- Locating lean-tos away from streams, wetlands, and unstable slopes;
- Use of drainage structures on trails leading to lean-to sites, to prevent water flowing into site;
- Locating lean-tos on flat, stable, well-drained sites;
- Limiting construction to periods of low or normal rainfall.

Parking Lots:

- Locating parking lots to minimize necessary cut and fill;
- Locating parking lots away from streams, wetlands, and unstable slopes wherever possible;
- Locating parking lots on flat, stable, well-drained sites using gravel or other permeable material for surfacing;
- Locating parking lots in areas that require a minimum amount of tree cutting;
- Limiting construction to periods of low or normal rainfall;
- Wherever possible, using wooded buffers to screen parking lots from roads;
- Limiting the size of the parking lot to the minimum necessary to address the intended use.

Trails:

- Locating trails to minimize necessary cut and fill;
- Wherever possible, lay out trails on existing old roads or clear or partially cleared areas;
- Locating trails away from streams, wetlands, and unstable slopes wherever possible;
- Use of proper drainage devices such as water bars and broad-based dips;
- Locating trails to minimize grade;
- Using stream crossings with low, stable banks, firm stream bottom and gentle approach slopes;
- Constructing stream crossings at right angles to the stream;
- Limiting stream crossing construction to periods of low or normal flow;
- Using stream bank stabilizing structures made of natural materials such as rock or wooden timbers;
- Using natural materials to blend the structure into the natural surroundings.

Bridges:

- Minimizing channel changes and the amount of cut or fill needed;
- Limiting construction activities in the water to periods of low or normal flow;
- Minimizing the use of equipment in the stream;
- Installing bridges at right angles to the stream channel;

- Constructing bridges to blend into the natural surroundings;
- Using stream bank stabilizing structures made of natural materials such as rock or wooden timbers;
- Stabilizing bridge approaches with aggregate or other suitable material;
- Using soil stabilization practices on exposed soil around bridges immediately after construction;
- Designing, constructing and maintaining bridges to avoid disrupting the migration or movement of fish and other aquatic life;
- Consultation with the Adirondack Park Agency in cases where existing bridge abutments must be replaced.

Mountain Bike Trails:

- Look for and identify control points (i.e wetlands, rocks outcrops, scenic vistas).
- Avoid sensitive areas; wetlands and wherever water collects. Keep trails below 2,000 ft.
- Use existing roadways where possible that do not exceed grades of 10%.
- Clear new trails to a maximum width of 4 feet to establish a single track route.
- Keep tread width less than 18" along a rolling grade.
- Remove vegetation at the root level-not at ground level.
- Keep routes close to the contour and avoid fall lines where water is likely to flow downhill.
- On side slopes, following the contour, cut full benches to construct the tread.
- Cuts and fills will be minimized to the maximum extent possible. Cuts and fills will be undertaken so as not to cause root damage and will not exceed a total of 18 inches. Side slopes will be dressed and tapered within the width of the trail.
- Build flow into the trail with open and flowing designs with broad sweeping turns.
- Streams should be crossed at ninety-degree angles preferably across rock or gravel.
- Bridges may be used where steep banks prevent normal stream crossings. The latter may require an APA Wetlands Permit.
- Do not construct skid berms or extensive banked turns that may accelerate erosion.
- Avoid acute, sharp angle turns.
- Plan trails for beginners to intermediate levels of riders. Maintain an overall grade of 10% or less.
- Allow short changes in grade to avoid obstacles.
- Design grade dips to break up long, straight linear sections, and to help divert runoff from the tread.
- Monitor and inspect all trails semi-annually. Address water problems immediately.

Liming:

All liming projects will be in compliance with the Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement on the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Program of Liming Selected Acidified Waters, dated October 1990, as well as the Division of Fish, Wildlife and Marine Resources liming policy.

Fish Stocking:

All fish stocking projects will be in compliance with the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement on Fish Species Management Activities of the Department of Environmental Conservation, dated December 1979.

Guidelines for protection of deer-wintering areas:

The maintenance and protection of deer-wintering areas are important in maintaining deer in the northern portions of their range. Activities which substantially diminish the quality or characteristics of the site should be avoided, but this does not mean human use is always detrimental. Forest stewardship activities (including softwood harvest), pass through trails, and other uses can be compatible with a deer yard if carefully considered. The most important characteristic of an Adirondack deer yard is the habitat configuration making up a “core” and travel corridors to and from the core. The core is typically an area (or areas) of dense conifer cover used by deer in severe conditions. Travel corridors are dense but narrow components which allow access to food resources in milder conditions. Management conditions which afford protection of core sections and avoid fragmenting travel corridors are acceptable in many situations. Certain types of recreation trails, such as ski trails or snowmobile trails, particularly if the traffic is not prone to stopping or off-trail excursions, are not considered to have significant negative impacts on deer yards. These types of trails in or adjacent to deer wintering areas can provide firm, packed surfaces readily used by deer for travel during periods of deep snow. They can, however, also create access for free-roaming dogs if the location is close to human habitation; thus, trails should avoid deer yards in these situations. High levels of snowmobile or cross-country ski use can disturb deer and may cause them to run, placing higher energy demands on deer already stressed by winter. The following are some general guidelines to follow for protecting deer wintering areas.

Deer Yard Protection in the Adirondacks

- Maintain a minimum 100 foot forested buffer on either side of streams to protect winter habitat and travel corridors between core yard components.
- Avoid placement of ski trails through core segments of deer yards to reduce disturbance associated with skiers stopping to observe deer.
- Trails should not traverse core segments of deer yards in densely populated areas such as hamlets, villages, or along roadsides developed with human habitation because they provide access for free roaming dogs.

The Departments’ Northern Zone deer biologist do not presently feel snowmobile activity has a significant adverse impact on deer populations. Care, however, should be used in the planning of snowmobile trails in or adjacent to deer wintering areas. Increased human activity within the core of a yarding area can result in an increased energy demand to deer present in the immediate vicinity of the trail. During portions of the day when use is limited however, the same trail may also provide a firm, packed surface readily used by deer for travel between yard components during periods of deep snow.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Its Influence on Management

Actions for Recreation and Related Facilities:

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 applies to the Department and requires, in part, that reasonable modifications must be made to its services and programs, 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 to the Department. Since recreation is an acknowledged public accommodation program of the Department, and there are services and activities associated with that program, the Department has the mandated obligation to comply with the ADA, Title II and ADA Accessibility Guidelines, as well as Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

The ADA requires a public entity to thoroughly examine each of its programs and services to determine the level of accessibility provided. The examination involves the identification of all existing programs and services and an assessment to determine the degree of accessibility provided to each. The assessment includes the use of the standards established by Federal Department of Justice Rule as delineated by the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG, either adopted or proposed) and/or the New York State Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Codes, as appropriate. The development of an inventory of all the recreational facilities or assets supporting the programs and services available on the unit was conducted during the UMP planning process. The assessment established the need for new or upgraded facilities or assets necessary to meet ADA mandates, in compliance with the guidelines and criteria set forth in the Adirondack Park State Master Plan. The Department is not required to make each of its existing facilities and assets accessible. New facilities, assets and accessibility improvements to existing facilities or assets proposed in this UMP are identified in the "Proposed Management Actions" in Section IV.

The Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines

The ADA requires public agencies to employ specific guidelines which ensure that buildings, facilities, programs and vehicles as addressed by the ADA are accessible in terms of architecture and design, transportation and communication to individuals with disabilities. A federal agency known as the Access Board has issued the ADAAG for this purpose. The Department of Justice Rule provides authority to these guidelines.

Currently adopted ADAAG address the built environment: buildings, ramps, sidewalks, rooms within buildings, etc. The Access Board has proposed guidelines to expand ADAAG to cover outdoor developed facilities: trails, camp grounds, picnic areas and beaches. The proposed ADAAG is contained in the September, 1999 Final Report of the Regulatory Negotiation Committee for Outdoor Developed Areas.

ADAAG apply to newly constructed structures and facilities and alterations to existing structures and facilities. Further, it applies to fixed structures or facilities, i.e., those that are attached to the earth or another structure that is attached to the earth. Therefore, when the Department is planning the construction of new recreational facilities, assets that support recreational facilities, or is considering an alteration of existing recreational facilities or the assets supporting them, it must also consider providing access to the facilities or elements for people with disabilities. The standards which exist in ADAAG or are contained in the proposed ADAAG also provide guidance to achieve modifications to trails, picnic areas, campgrounds, campsites and beaches in order to obtain programmatic compliance with the ADA.

ADAAG Application

Current and proposed ADAAG will be used in assessing existing facilities or assets to determine compliance to accessibility standards. ADAAG is not intended or designed for this purpose, but using it to establish accessibility levels lends credibility to the assessment result. Management recommendations in each UMP will be proposed in accordance with the ADAAG for the built environment, the proposed ADAAG for outdoor developed areas, the New York State Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Codes, and other appropriate guiding documents. Until such time as the proposed ADAAG becomes an adopted rule of the Department of Justice, the Department is required to use the best information available to comply with the ADA; this direction includes, among other things, the proposed guidelines.

C. Administration and Management Principles

1. Administration

The WETU is administered by DEC's Region 6, Sub-Office located in Lowville. Day-to-day Lands and Forests activities are the responsibility of the Regional Forester. Forest Preserve lands within the Lowville working circle (Lewis and northern Herkimer Counties) are administered by a Supervising Forester and a Forest Preserve Forester/Planner. The latter is responsible for planning and implementation of Forest Preserve programs in several separate Forest Preserve units as well as several Conservation Easements. The Division of Lands and Forests, Fish and Wildlife, Operations and the Office of Public Protection all have management responsibilities on the unit.

In accordance with Article 9, ECL all wildfires are suppressed on Forest Preserve lands. With each fire start, DEC managers consider the most appropriate response and tactics which result in minimum cost and resource damage.

D. Management Issues, Needs and Desires

Several issues were of concern to the Department and the public in the development of this plan. Information and feedback on issues was obtained from the public by way of an Open House, held on May 24, 2001 at Beaver River School, by mail, and e-mail. The

following list of issues, needs and desires were received from the public and DEC staff. Some of the issues, needs and desires have not resulted in Proposed Management Actions being developed. Where this has occurred, a justification for the exclusion is provided. The issues identified by the public for this unit were expressed in general terms, for the unit as a whole, rather than a specific use at a specific location. Section IV will address specific proposed management actions, some of which are in response to input received through the participation of groups and individuals.

1. Access for All Terrain Vehicles and Motor Vehicles

Increasing the mileage of roads and trails available for ATV use was the most common issue raised by the public. There was a strong desire expressed to provide new routes that connect roads that were currently posted open to ATVs, as well as provide access to additional areas of state land. The appropriateness of providing routes for ATVs must be weighed against APSLMP guidelines, the New York State Vehicle and Traffic (V&T) Law §2403 and §2405, Public Highway Law, natural resources protection, impact of illegal ATV use and access provided for recreational opportunities. The detailed considerations of these factors is discussed in more detail under “Proposed Management Actions.” (See Section IV-B-1.)

Related to this issue is use of ATVs and other motor vehicles by landowners who have a ROW or easement over a DEC road to their lands. Use of a road for private purposes under a deeded ROW or easement by a landowner, guest, invitees, etc. may be a legitimate exercise of a deeded right, so not subject to DEC control. This may complicate enforcement of vehicle restrictions on some roads.

2. Access

Current access to the unit is relatively good, however improvement of access to the Lassiter easement would enhance public access to several points of interest. Rainbow Falls, reachable only by bushwhacking approximately 1-1/4 miles through the woods, is a very scenic location and improved access for public enjoyment would be desirable. Current public motor vehicle access to the Lassiter Easement is only from the south via the Bald Mountain Road from Long Pond. The only exception to this is access on the Bryants Bridge Road from Harrisville to the north for canoeists and kayakers only. A proposal was brought forth in 2004 by Lassiter to move the canoe access route to the Number One Road, which goes from Bryants Bridge to the Bald Mountain Road. In addition to canoe access, the route would also be open for general public access. This would thus provide access to the Lassiter easement lands and Forest Preserve lands along the Middle Branch from Belfort to the south and Harrisville to the north. In exchange for this access all access along the Bryants Bridge Road between Bryants Bridge and the Mico-Burst Road would be closed to public use.

The network of roads on the Lassiter easement provide excellent mountain biking opportunities, however the more desirable loops are not currently available due to the need to cross private lands. An agreement with adjoining private landowners will be

explored to provide for this connection. If acquired, this access would make roads in the vicinity of Blue Swamp and Palmer Creek more readily accessible. Connecting easement roads to those on an adjoining State Forest would be possible and logical if this access is acquired.

3. Illegal Motor Vehicle Use

This is the most serious issue relating to resource impacts identified by DEC staff on the Forest Preserve portions of this unit. Numerous old logging roads and trails provide tempting places for people to illegally drive ATVs. Some of these old roads lead into the interior of the Five Ponds and Pepperbox Wilderness Areas and have been used as traditional access to lakes and ponds. Hunting season brings additional illegal use, as hunters use ATVs to reach areas inaccessible by car or truck. Past management actions to curtail this activity have included gating, increasing patrols by Forest rangers and Environmental Conservation Officers and signing, with only limited success. In September of 2004 through an administrative action the Department closed all roads within the WETWF to ATV use. This administrative action did not address the issue of whether adjoining landowners on specific DEC roads have legal rights to use ATVs on those roads as part of their ROW or easement rights. This complex legal issue complicates enforcement against illegal ATV use.

4. Snowmobile Trails

The Number One Camp snowmobile trail currently impacts two significant wetlands. This trail, also an old road with private rights, was originally constructed on corduroy across these locations. As the underlying corduroy has disappeared and illegal ATV use has increased environmental impacts have arisen. Public comments received supported either the rehabilitation of this trail or relocating it to a more appropriate location.

5. Private Access Rights

There are four private properties within the Five Ponds and Pepperbox Wilderness Areas, and one in the WETWF, which have deeded rights across certain roads in this unit. The rights are limited to a ROW for ingress and egress and the right to take gravel (Bear Pond Club), at the discretion of the Department, for maintenance purposes. A portion of the Number One Camp snowmobile trail is subject to these rights. The acquisition of those rights from willing sellers on roads that are unsuitable for motor vehicle traffic is desirable. Under the current situation the ROW holder has no obligation to conduct any maintenance on these roads, while their use of the road cannot be controlled. Appendix 7 includes a listing of known rights-of-ways for this unit.

6. Gravel Pits

A closure plan for the Parquet Hill gravel pit has been prepared.(Appendix 6) The existing gravel pit is approximately 6/10ths of an acre in size. To reclaim this site the pit

will be expanded to cover approximately 1.4 acres. The closure plan will result in the complete disappearance of the pit, even though initially this will require disturbing a larger area and the removal of existing vegetation from a larger area. Similar projects have resulted in old pits, that although stabilized and revegetated, still had the appearance of a gravel pit. The 20-30 years for which disturbance will still be evident following the closure is minuscule when compared to the infinite time the area will be part of the Forest Preserve.

E. Goals and Objectives

1. Goals for the management of the WETU

- a. Protect the natural wild forest setting.
- b. Provide a variety of compatible outdoor recreational opportunities without degrading the resource or impairing the wild forest character. These opportunities must be consistent with the guidelines set forth in the APSLMP and with Department policies.
- c. Manage easement lands for public recreation, in cooperation with the landowner goals and objectives for the property.

IV. PROPOSED MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

This section describes specific proposed management actions for the administration of the WETU. Some proposed management actions are in response to issues identified by DEC staff, oral and written comments received at the public open house and comments received via mail, e-mail and phone during the development of this plan. Proposed actions are consistent with the goals and objectives stated in Section III. When writing

management proposals, DEC managers are restricted by Article XIV, Section 1 of the New York State Constitution and the APSLMP and their respective legislative histories, the Environmental Conservation Law (ECL), DEC rules and regulations and policies. (See 11" x 17" Existing and Proposed Facilities map in the Appendix)

A. Bio-Physical Resources

1. Water

Present Situation and Assumptions:

Water quality studies have been conducted throughout the Adirondacks by the ALSC, researching the effects of acid deposition, and the Bureau of Fisheries routinely conducts biological surveys of area waters. No studies have been conducted to determine the effects of recreation use on water quality. As focal points for visitation, streams, springs, lakes, ponds, and wetlands are on the receiving end of more human disturbance than upland forest areas. Visitors must be advised that the water is not considered potable and must be properly treated before consumption.

Objectives:

- Seek to achieve and maintain high water quality within the WETU.
- Reduce the potential for pathogenic contamination from all water sources.
- Reduce or eliminate aquatic invasive plant species found within the unit.
- Reduce the direct impact of human activities on water quality by improving user awareness of the effect of polluting activities.
- Reduce the impact on water quality caused by the use and construction of facilities by locating facilities adequate distances from water bodies and adhering to BMPs during construction.

Management Actions:

- Develop LAC indicators and standards for vegetation in riparian areas near lakes and streams.
- Aquatic and riparian habitats will be maintained and/or improved. Any new use which could prove damaging to the character of riparian vegetation will be monitored.
- Train DEC staff working within the unit to identify and document the location of key invasive plant species.
- Monitor for the location and extent of aquatic invasive plant species found within the unit.
- Management of identified populations of invasive plant species should be undertaken. These actions may be carried out by NYSDEC personnel or by members of APIPP or other volunteers under supervision of NYSDEC through an Adopt a Natural Resource Agreement.
- Biological survey work will be incorporated in all future water related planning activities.
- Advise adjoining landowners on the use of Best Management Practices to protect

- water quality.
- Advise the public through DEC information and education programs to treat all water prior to consumptive use.

2. Soil

Present Situation and Assumptions:

Broad soil types (accurate to an area about 40 acres in size) were delineated on aerial photographs by the Natural Resource Conservation Service. Little information has been documented on wide-spread soil loss and deposition.

Objective:

- Keep soil erosion and compaction caused by recreational use within acceptable limits that closely approximates the natural erosion process.

Management Actions:

- Inventory, map, and monitor soil conditions affected by recreational use.
- Develop LAC indicators and standards for soil erosion.
- Relocate any trail, designated campsite, or lean-to which is causing significant soil erosion.
- Continue to restrict motor vehicle use during the spring breakup and during periods of excessively wet weather.
- Target trail and road maintenance to heavily eroded trails and roads; develop a priority list based on resource need rather than on user convenience.
- Request voluntary compliance with seasonal closures of trails during periods of wet weather; usually from November 1 - December 15 and April 1 - May 15, or at appropriate times set by the area manager.

3. Vegetation

Present Situation and Assumptions:

Much of the WETU vegetated landscape has been altered by wind, fire, insects and disease, pre-Forest Preserve logging, and recreational use. Despite these influences, the unit has several unique ecosystems requiring special attention. These areas include, small portions of old growth forest, wetland communities, and potentially some areas not yet identified through the unit management planning process. Plant inventories and ecological mapping are on-going; however, not all areas have been inventoried.

Prior to implementing targeted containment and/or eradication controls, terrestrial invasive plant infestations occurring within the Watson East Triangle Wild Forest need to be assessed on a site-by-site basis. The geophysical setting and the presence, or absence, of sensitive native flora within or adjacent to the targeted infestation often predicts the Best Management Practices (BMPs) and limitations of the control methodology. Infestations occurring within specific jurisdictional settings may trigger a permitting

process, as do most terrestrial infestations occurring within an aquatic setting. The species itself often dictates whether manual management controls, e.g. hand-pulling or cutting, or the judicious, surgical application of herbicides is warranted in order to best control that specific species in that exacting infestation and setting. No single BMP guarantees invasive plant containment or eradication. Many infestations require multiple, seasonal control efforts to reduce the density and biomass at that setting. Adaptive Management protocols suggest that implementation of integrated control methodologies may provide the best over-all efficacy at specific infestations.

It is suggested that NYS DEC view all “easy to contain – low abundance” terrestrial infestations within the Watson East Triangle Wild Forest as immediate targets for containment and/or eradication controls. Minimizing the spread of newly documented and immature infestations before they have the chance to become well-established should be considered a priority management action.

Objectives:

- Allow natural processes to play out their roles to insure that the succession of plant communities is not altered by human impacts.
- Preserve and protect known locations of Threatened, and Endangered species.
- Continue and enhance programs to identify and map Threatened, and Endangered species.
- Assist natural forces in restoring natural plant associations and communities where they have been severely altered by human activity.
- Reduce or eliminate terrestrial invasive plant species found within the unit.
- Support scientific research projects on the WETU through the issuance of TRPs.

Management Actions:

- Develop LAC indicators and standards for condition of vegetation in camping areas.
- All vegetation protection and restoration programs will emphasize information and education as the primary means to reduce impacts and slow unnatural change.
- Continue botanical surveys to produce a more complete inventory of Threatened and Endangered species.
- Ecological inventorying and mapping will be correlated with recreation, and fish and wildlife project plans to prevent unintended and undesirable impacts to Threatened and Endangered species.
- Minimum impact techniques will be used to revegetate sites where concentrated use has destroyed natural vegetation. Native seedlings, trees, shrubs, and grasses will be planted to accelerate return to natural conditions when necessary.
- Vegetation at primitive tent sites will be monitored in conjunction with the campsite monitoring program described in the section on campsites.
- Contract with APIPP to conduct an inventory of non-native invasive species on the WETU.
- Train DEC staff working within the unit to identify and document the location of key invasive plant species.
- Control known infestations of invasive species using BMPs found in Appendix 11. These actions may be carried out by NYSDEC personnel or by members of

APIPP or other volunteers under supervision of NYSDEC through an Adopt a Natural Resource Agreement.

4. Fish

Present Situation and Assumptions:

Appendix 3 contains a brief description of the WETU's fisheries resources, grouped according to management classifications developed by Pfeifer (1979). Their current and proposed future management is discussed here and noted in Appendix 3.

Adirondack Brook Trout Ponds - Adirondack Zone ponds which support and are managed for populations of brook trout, sometimes in company with other salmonid fish species. These waters generally lack warmwater fishes, but frequently support bullheads.

Relative to the WETU, Mud, Buck, Wolf, Desert, Lost and Little Mudhole Ponds are considered Adirondack Brook Trout Ponds. The Mud, Buck and Wolf Pond brook trout populations are maintained by annual stocking, because natural spawning by brook trout in these waters has not been adequate to maintain populations at satisfactory densities for angling. One other water, Little Deer Pond, located on easement lands has been recommended as a brook trout stocking candidate water. Desert, Lost and Little Mudhole Ponds are also managed for Adirondack Brook Trout. These three currently support low density "wild" populations.

The stocked ponds noted above were recently surveyed in 2001 or 2002. Therefore their resource inventory data is considered up-to-date. It is unlikely these will be resurveyed within the next five years, except for water chemistry monitoring, which usually occurs more frequently than biological surveys. The exception to the above is Little Deer Pond. This pond has been recommended for brook trout stocking. If its stocking policy is approved, in accordance with the Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement on Fish Species Management Activities of the Department of Environmental Conservation Division of Fish and Wildlife (1980) the pond will be resurveyed three years following its initial stocking.

The area's "wild" brook trout ponds (Desert, Lost and Little Mudhole Ponds) are all located within the Desert Creek watershed. A recent inspection revealed that these ponds, and their respective abilities to support trout, are shrinking as their bog wetland fringes mature and enlarge. Management for these very small waters will include trout population (by periodic angling surveys) and water quality monitoring.

Whenever re-survey data documents the presence of non-native species in Adirondack brook trout waters at densities that present a negative impact on stocked brook trout fisheries or native fish communities, reclamation may be recommended. Post reclamation objectives will be to restore and enhance either the brook trout fisheries or restored native fish communities. If a reclamation is determined to be necessary, the WETU plan will be amended to include it in the schedule of implementation.

Depressed pH levels have been documented for all of the area's stocked brook trout ponds. These ponds are not considered liming candidates at this time however, as their flush rates are all higher than the minimum (2/year) established by the Division of Fish, Wildlife and Marine Resources pond liming policy and the Final Generic Environmental Statement on the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Program of Liming Selected Acidified Waters (Simonin 1990).

Coldwater Streams - Adirondack Zone rivers and streams which support and are managed for populations of brook trout.

Brook trout populations located in area rivers and streams will be monitored periodically by either electrofishing or angling surveys. Relative to Palmer Creek's heritage strain brook trout, future management may include special No-Kill angling regulations if drastically increased angling pressure and/or a population decline is detected. Trout populations in the area's other rivers and streams will continue to be managed extensively by periodic biological survey, and maintenance of statewide angling regulations.

Warmwater Lakes and Ponds - Waters which support and are managed for populations of warmwater game fishes and lack significant populations of salmonid fishes.

The WETWF unit contains eight warmwater lakes and ponds (see Appendix 3). In general these waters support natural spawning populations of brown bullhead, white sucker, pumpkinseed, and yellow perch. Recognized gamefish species, such as largemouth bass, are noticeably absent from these waters. As angling resources, none of these waters is particularly noteworthy. No additional management actions are proposed for these waters at this time.

Fishless / Acidified Ponds - Ponds with depressed pH levels (< 5.0) and documented as fishless.

There are five ponds in the WETU unit which are both fishless and/or acidified. Due to flush rate and other pond liming policy concerns, none of these is considered a liming candidate. As a result, their potential for fishery development is very low. No management action is proposed at this time.

Unknown (Unclassified) Waters - Waters which could not be assigned a management category due to a paucity or complete lack of survey information.

There are a few very small remotely located unnamed waters of this category located within the WETU. Mainly these are beaver ponds associated with streams. Therefore they are not permanent ponded water bodies and as such, are not included in the area's inventory at this time.

Objectives:

- Perpetuate and enhance a diverse, high quality fishing experience in accordance with sound biological management practices.

- Maintain the diversity of coldwater and warmwater fish populations in the unit.
- Encourage and promote angler use of the waters in the unit through routine fish management practices including hotlines, correspondence and contact with the public by Department staff.

Management Actions:

- Conduct biological surveys of all ponds within the unit as required.

5. Wildlife

Present Situation and Assumptions:

A number of changes have occurred over the past several decades that have impacted a variety of wildlife species within the Watson's East Triangle Wild Forest. Habitat changes have resulted from pre-Forest Preserve logging, wildfires, acid precipitation, recreational use, natural plant succession, protection of the forest and wildlife species through legislation, attempted reintroduction of extirpated species of wildlife and immigration of extirpated species back into the area.

One of the original factors attracting visitors to the Adirondacks, in general, was the vast array of hunting, fishing and trapping opportunities. The APSLMP indicates that these uses are legitimate and compatible with Forest Preserve concepts. DEC policy encourages these activities as part of a larger Forest Preserve experience, not just a quest for game (Doig, 1976).

Habitat areas heavily used by wildlife are often also choice locations for human trails and campsites (Hendee and others, 1990). Bears often scrounge for food and garbage where people habitually camp. While negative human/bear encounters in this unit are minimal, the concentration of camping in distinct locations poses the potential for this to be a problem in the future. Domestic pets, mainly dogs, may also harass and stress wildlife.

Objectives:

- Re-establish self-sustaining wildlife populations of species that are Endangered, Threatened or of Special Concern in habitats where their existence will be compatible with other elements of the ecosystem.
- Monitor and afford extra protection, where warranted, to species which are Endangered, Threatened or of Special Concern that are currently using the WETU.
- Maintain and perpetuate annual hunting and trapping seasons as legitimate uses of the wildlife resources compatible with Wild Forest recreation.
- Provide information, advice and assistance to individuals, groups, organizations and agencies interested in wildlife, whose activities and actions may affect, or are affected by, the wildlife resources or the users of wildlife.

Management Actions:

- Monitor the occurrence of Endangered or Threatened species on the unit.
- Promote educational efforts to protect spruce grouse from accidental shooting by small game hunters.
- Monitor moose that enter the area through visual observation, reports from the public and by radio collaring moose whenever the opportunity presents itself.
- Continue pelt sealing of species to determine level of harvest, guarding against over harvest for species especially vulnerable to trapping (marten and fisher).
- Promote education efforts stressing multiple use and hunting seasons that are concurrent with other anticipated uses of the area. Advise visitors of the fact that there is hunting in the area so that they may dress and act accordingly during the hunting season.
- Advise visitors to the area that the potential for conflict with wildlife exists and suggest means of avoiding conflicts through a combination of on-site signage, printed Department media, and direct contact with Department staff.

B. Facilities Development and/or Removal

1. Roads

Present Situation and Assumptions:

Currently there are 13 roads open to public passenger vehicle use within the Watson's East Triangle Wild Forest. Eight of these roads were previously posted open to both public passenger vehicle use and public ATV use, but were closed to public ATV use in September of 2004 through an administrative action by the Department. This was done when a determination was made that the use of these roads by ATVs was not compliant with §2405(1) of the Vehicle and Traffic Law.

There are 12 roads open to public motor vehicle use on the easement lands included in this unit.

There are a number of factors which must be considered before a management decision regarding public ATV use of a public road is made. These considerations are detailed below.

1. Legal Considerations

There are some key legal considerations regarding the appropriateness of opening roads to public motor vehicle use, including ATVs. The APSLMP and the Vehicle & Traffic Law, as well as the Highway Law, determine whether roads can be designated.

- Compliance with the APSLMP (not applicable to easement roads):

The APSLMP, on page 33 Basic guideline #4 states "Public use of motor vehicles will not be encouraged and there will not be any material increase in the mileage of roads and snowmobile trails open to public motorized use by the public in wild

forest areas that conformed to the APSLMP at the time of its original adoption in 1972.”

On page 35 of the APSLMP under “Motor Vehicles, Motorized Equipment and Aircraft,” guideline 2(d) authorizes the use of ATVs “only on existing public roads or Department of Environmental Conservation roads open to such vehicles, as specified in (b) above”(guideline 2-b). Guideline 2-b specifies that the use of motor vehicles will be permitted only on: “existing public roads; on Department of Environmental Conservation roads now or hereafter designated as open for public use by motor vehicles...; or on rivers, lakes and ponds now and hereafter designated as suitable...for such motorized uses.” Both of these guidelines are subject to Basic guideline #4. The definition of “road” in the APSLMP is “an improved way or partially improved way designed for travel by automobiles and which may also be used by other types of motor vehicles ...”. Taken together these three sections of the APSLMP limit ATV use to existing public roads.

Further, the APSLMP provides that “nothing in the guidelines for lands falling within each major classification shall be deemed to prevent the Department of Environmental Conservation, or any other state agency administering such lands, from providing for more restrictive management where necessary to comply with constitutional requirements or to protect the natural resources of such lands.”

- Compliance with the Vehicle and Traffic Law :

Vehicle and Traffic Law §2405(1) authorizes the DEC, by rule or regulation, to post public highways as open for ATV travel upon DEC determination that “it is otherwise impossible for ATVs to gain access to areas or trails adjacent to the highway” that are legally open to public ATV use. Vehicle and Traffic Law §118 defines a highway as “the entire width...of every way publicly maintained when any part thereof is open to the use of the public for purposes of vehicular travel,” and therefore includes any DEC road or easement road open to public motor vehicle use. Therefore, opening “public highways” to provide public ATV riding opportunities can only occur if the road provides access to areas or trails that are open to ATV use, and such areas or trails cannot be accessed by ATVs except via such road.

- 6 NYCRR §196.1

On Forest Preserve lands, ATVs are permitted only on roads.

- Easement Terms

The Croghan easement provides for ATV use on “Motorized Access Corridors,” which must be designated in the “Land Management Plan.” Some of these Motorized Access Corridors were identified as “primary access corridors” that could be opened and closed to public use at the state’s discretion, while other routes must be established with the agreement of the landowner.

The Lassiter easement provides public access to and over the property by motor vehicle, including ATVs, on roads that existed at the time the easement was signed, on new roads one-half mile or less in length with additional approval of the landowner, or on new routes with the permission of the landowner, such approval not to be unreasonably withheld.

In summary, the APSLMP, V&T law, and the easement agreements together yield the following direction and guidance:

- There is opportunity for continued public passenger vehicle use on Forest Preserve lands, primarily on existing roads;
- Since the APSLMP does not provide for use of ATVs on trails or areas, and V&TL §2405(1) does not allow ATV use on public highways except to provide access to areas or trails open to ATV use, they collectively prohibit the Department from allowing the public use of ATVs in Wild Forest Areas. However, situations may arise where roads could be legally opened to ATVs in Wild Forest Areas. For example, a Forest Preserve road open to public motor vehicle use that adjoins two areas (such as easement lands) that are open to ATV use could legally be opened to public ATV use, when it is otherwise impossible to access the areas;
- ATV use may be allowed on easement roads, if such roads are not concurrently open for other public motor vehicle use, or on portions of easement roads in order to provide connections between areas or trails open for ATV use.
- ATV trails may be established on easement lands per the terms of the easements.

Underlying Fee Title Interest: As regards roads on easement lands, the rights of underlying fee owner will be respected to ensure that any proposed public ATV use does not interfere with the reserved rights of the underlying fee owner to manage its lands.

Management Actions:

Watson's East Triangle Wild Forest

Based on the assessment of the public motor vehicle roads in the Watson's East Wild Forest with respect to the above considerations, specific roads or road segments will be permanently closed to all public motor vehicle use. In total, five roads (Burning Creek Road, Spring Creek Road, River Road, Buck Pond Road, and the Mullins Flow Road) totaling 2.2 miles will be closed entirely. Three roads (Creek Road, Wolf Creek Road West, and Wolf Creek Road East) totaling 0.5 miles will be partially closed.

In addition, this plan proposes to construct lean-tos at Buck Pond and on the Mullins Flow Road. In order to avoid issues with motorized access to lean-tos and to provide a more traditional experience, the Buck Pond Road and the Mullins Flow Road will be closed to motor vehicle use following construction of the lean-tos. The roads, once closed, will be converted into accessible access routes to the lean-to locations.

Recommendations regarding the status of the following roads are as follows:

- Research the issue of ATV use by adjoining landowners on those roads in the unit identified as part of their ROW or easement rights.
- Complete road work, as defined in the APA/DEC MOA and RCPA settlement, (Appendix 8) on the Bear Pond Road (WETWF). Work is mostly completed on the section of the Bear Pond Road from the Herkimer County line east about 8 miles as per the APA/DEC MOA and subsequent work plans. Gravel for the completion of this road work will be obtained from the Parquet Hill pit and from the Kelly Pond Road pit if it is closed and reclaimed.
- Monitor all roads for illegal motor vehicle use and develop a strategy to control such use if it is found to be occurring.
- Develop work plans, in consultation with the APA, for completion of the rehabilitation of the Bear Pond Road from the end of the portion currently being worked on (near the Kelley Pond Road) to the gate on the Bear Pond Primitive Corridor as well as for the spur roads open to public motor vehicle use off of the Bear Pond Road. 1.45 miles
- Close the Burning Creek Road to public motor vehicle use. This road is flooded by beaver activity, is only passable for 3/10ths of a mile, and does not provide significant access to recreation opportunities. 1.1 miles
- Close the Spring Creek Road to public motor vehicle use. This road is flooded by beaver activity at 0.3 miles, is in poor condition, and does not provide significant access to recreation opportunities. 0.4miles
- Close the River Road to public motor vehicle use. The road is in poor condition and is located immediately adjacent to a scenic river and is therefore within the scenic river corridor. 0.2 miles
- Close the Creek Road to public motor vehicle use beyond the campsite. The road is in poor condition beyond the campsite and does not provide significant access to recreation programs. 0.15 miles
- Close Wolf Creek Road West to public motor vehicle use beyond the campsite to prevent illegal motor vehicle use into the Five Ponds Wilderness Area. 0.2 miles
- Close Wolf Creek Road East to public motor vehicle use beyond the new campsite to prevent illegal motor vehicle use into the Five Ponds Wilderness Area. 0.15 miles
- Close the Buck Pond Road (0.25 miles) and the Mullins Flow Road (0.25 miles) to motor vehicle use, by installing rock barriers, following the construction of lean-tos at those locations. Convert the roads into accessible routes to the lean-tos.

Conservation Easement Lands:

Based on the assessment of the Conservation Easement terms and Vehicle and Traffic Law, roads currently posted as open for public passenger vehicle use on easement lands will be closed for public ATV use. Under a recent informal opinion from the Attorney General's Office, a section of a road that links to town roads that are open to ATV traffic may not itself be opened to ATVs under VTL 2405(1) unless it is demonstrated that a road section is necessary to provide access to open areas or trails adjacent to the road in

compliance with V&TL §2405(1). See:
http://www.oag.state.ny.us/lawyers/opinions/2005/informal/2005_21.pdf

In total, 12 specific roads or road segments (See list in Section II-B) on both the Lassiter and Croghan Tract totaling 18.5 miles will be closed to ATVs. The development of new ATV routes on easement lands will depend on the development of road standards, in cooperation with the fee holder, that will provide for safe and environmentally compatible routes, as well as completion or revision of recreation management plans to determine whether future routes will be available for public use.

- Complete resurfacing the Main Haul Road to provide safe public access. 3.1 miles
- Upgrade the road, including culvert replacement, to Eagle Canyon parking lot to provide for public access. 0.5 miles
- Close easement roads open for public passenger vehicle use to ATVs. 18.5 miles
- Finalize road standards for the Croghan tract easement
- Develop road standards for the Lassiter easement.
- Assess all roads on easement lands for condition, impacts and illegal use

2. Snowmobile Trails

Present Situation and Assumptions:

WETWF-The current snowmobile trail system on this area receives considerably less use than that on the adjoining easement lands. The Number One Camp Trail needs to be relocated due to impacts on two wetlands. Designated as a secondary trail, this trail provides an alternative route to the corridor trail which crosses the Lassiter Easement. However, during winter logging operations on the easement lands, when the corridor trail may be closed for safety concerns, this trail receives a significant increase in use. It then becomes the primary route between the Long Pond Road and the Mullins Flow Bridge. Based on an evaluation of aerial photographs and maps, several possible routes were identified to relocate the trail to. A route along the western boundary of the unit as well as a route on easement lands were eliminated due to the extent and number of wetland and/or stream crossings required. The Proposed route is the only reasonable alternative for the relocation of this trail. Utilizing old woods roads the trail connects the Bear Pond Road via Wolf Pond to the Number 1 Road which is the existing snowmobile trail. (See tree count in Appendix 15.)

The Bear Pond Road, Buck Pond, Wolf Pond and Deep Cuts Roads are also designated as snowmobile trails. These routes are not groomed and are mostly used by late season hunters or inholders to reach their camps during the winter months. Limited opportunity for connecting routes from this area will make future demands for snowmobiling opportunities unlikely.

The Steam Sleigh trail provides a corridor trail connection between the Croghan Tract Easement and the Lassiter Easement. This trail has been severely damaged by illegal ATV use. A restoration plan for the most heavily damaged section of trail is being developed, in consultation with APA. Restoration work will be completed under the DEC/APA MOU. Additional work on other sections of this trail will be completed in the

future. The Doc Woods trail provides a connection between the Prentice Road and the Long Pond Road. The Bald to Buckhorn Trail provides a route from the Long Pond Road to the Bald Mountain Road on the Lassiter Easement. Both the Doc Woods Trail and the Bald to Buckhorn Trail are designated as secondary trails.

Snowmobile Trail Grooming - Under an existing Adopt-A-Natural Resource Agreement the Long Pond Snowmobile Club grooms area snowmobile trails. DEC will continue to allow grooming by tracked groomers on trails where this activity has occurred in the past in the WETWF in the interim period while the Comprehensive Snowmobile Plan for the Adirondacks is being finalized and adopted. In addition, tracked groomers will be allowed on the proposed snowmobile trail relocation since they are already being used on both the Bear Pond Road and the Number 1 Road. In the event that the Comprehensive Snowmobile Plan for the Adirondacks is not finalized at the end of the two year period, APSLMP compliance with tracked grooming on WETWF trails will be resolved by the Department and APA.

Comprehensive Snowmobile Plan

Snowmobiling is a recreational activity that is allowed by the APSLMP on state lands, which DEC manages pursuant to UMPs. A related planning document (Draft Comprehensive Snowmobile Plan for the Adirondack Park/Draft EIS) that is currently being developed by OPRHP, DEC, and APA will supplement OPRHP's "Statewide Snowmobile Trails Plan." The development of the Draft Comprehensive Snowmobile Plan for the Adirondack Park/Draft EIS (Draft Plan) is an initial phase and the draft Vision Statement and Goals have been prepared and have been the subject of public hearings throughout the State.

The Vision for the Draft Plan is "To develop and maintain an integrated snowmobile trail system on public and, increasingly, on private land in the Adirondack Park that will provide snowmobilers with an experience that is consistent with Article XIV, Section 1 of the State Constitution while also striving to enhance the economic vitality of the Park's citizens by providing trail linkages between local communities within the Park." The Draft Plan was developed in cooperation with local government officials, recreationists, environmental groups and snowmobile representatives.

The Draft Plan outlines an Adirondack Park Snowmobile Trail System that will involve trails on public and increasingly, on private lands. Creation of this new system may involve the reconfiguration of the existing system on the Forest Preserve, including the designation of trails to establish community connections and the re-designation of existing snowmobile trails located within the interior of Wild Forest Units or adjacent to private inholdings for non-motorized use through the UMP process. It may also require the relocation or development of trails on private lands through the acquisition of fee title, conservation easement, or other access rights from willing sellers.

UMPs will continue to set forth management proposals for snowmobiling, which will be consistent with and conform to the APSLMP. When a final snowmobile plan is finalized, individual UMPs may then be amended as appropriate.

CE lands- Both conservation easement tracts accommodate much of the current snowmobile use in the unit. Corridor trails pass through both easements and provide connections between Lewis County and St. Lawrence County.

Management Actions:

Watson's East Triangle Wild Forest:

- Close the Number One Camp Trail to protect impacted wetlands. 2.5 miles
- Construct a new trail from Wolf Pond to Number One Road to continue to provide a snowmobiling opportunity without impacting wetlands. 1.5 miles
- Complete restoration work on the Steam Sleigh Trail.

3. Parking Areas

Present Situation and Assumptions:

WETWF - Existing designated parking for this area is adequate for current use levels. When the Buck Pond and Mullins Flow Roads are closed, additional parking will be needed at both locations. This will be accomplished by converting a short segment of the existing road surface into two car parking areas, with one space being accessible.

CE lands - Parking for access to existing recreational opportunities currently occurs on old log landings and along roads. The designation of formal parking will provide for better management of users as well as protect resources.

Bear Pond Road Primitive Corridor - Currently the "Old Upper South Pond Road" is not gated. This allows for motor vehicle access to the informal parking area approximately 1000 feet from the Bear Pond Road. To eliminate motor vehicle use within the river corridor and to deter illegal use of motor vehicles into the adjoining wilderness area parking will be redirected to a new parking area along the Bear Pond Road.

The construction of new parking facilities is intended to provide adequate, safe parking while protecting natural resources and is not intended nor anticipated to increase use of facilities. Current existing facilities do not show evidence of overuse, however, where new parking facilities are constructed in association with other new facilities, monitoring will be required to determine future use levels.

Management Actions:

Watson's East Triangle Wild Forest:

- Construct a four car parking area adjacent to the Bear Pond Road just north of the existing gate near Old Upper South Pond Road. This will provide parking for hiking, canoeing and fishing. (BPRPC)
- Convert portions of the Buck Pond and Mullins Flow Roads into two car parking areas, with one accessible space, following closure.

Conservation Easement Lands:

- Construct a six car parking lot at the terminus of the Eagle Canyon Road for rock climbers using the canyon. (CTCE)

- Construct a two car parking lot for hikers at the site of the burned camp at the base of Bald Mountain. Construction to include clean up of debris from camp. (LCE)

4. Bridges

Present Situation and Assumptions:

WETWF - At the end of the Creek Road there is the remnants of an old bridge across Desert Creek. This bridge needs to be removed not only for safety reasons, as it is in poor condition, but also to prevent future illegal ATV use.

The relocation of the Number One Camp snowmobile trail will require the construction of two new snowmobile bridges. These bridges will also allow summer use of this trail for mountain biking.

CTCE - The existing bridge over Fish Creek on the Main Haul Road needs to be replaced. The current bridge is constructed of log stringers and wood decking and is deteriorating beyond safe use.

Management Actions:

Watson's East Triangle Wild Forest:

- Construct (2)- 8'X30' snowmobile bridges on the proposed Wolf Pond Snowmobile Trail.
- Remove the old foot bridge across Desert Creek at the south end of the Creek Road. This bridge existed prior to State ownership and is currently in poor condition and serves no useful purpose.

Conservation Easement Lands:

- Construct a new 20'X36' motor vehicle bridge to replace the existing bridge over Fish Creek on the Main Haul Road of the Croghan Tract. The current bridge was "Red Flagged" by NYSDOT in the fall of 2004. The bridge is currently closed to all motor vehicle traffic. The replacement of this bridge will allow for continued public access to easement and Forest Preserve lands beyond that location. (CTCE)

5. Hiking Trails

Present Situation and Assumptions:

WETWF - There is a designated campsite located at Massewepie Pond but the access trail is not marked. In order to direct campers to this location the trail will be designated and signed.

LCE - The old fire tower site on the summit of Bald Mountain is easily reached by a short hike from the Bald Mountain Road. Designating and signing of the trail will make it easier for those hikers wishing to do this short climb.

Rainbow Falls located on the Middle Branch of the Oswegatchie River is a sixty foot cascade into a steep walled gorge. This location is popular with many local residents

even though they access the area illegally. A trail should be constructed entirely on easement lands to provide public access to this attractive location. The alternative which will be looked at is to reach an agreement with Lassiter properties that would allow foot access across several hundred feet of their property, which is not subject to an easement, to reach easement lands surrounding the falls.

Management Actions:

Watson's East Triangle Wild Forest:

- Designate the trail to the campsite on Massawepie Pond.

Conservation Easement Lands:

- Designate the trail to the summit of Bald Mountain on the Lassiter Easement. (LCE)
- Construct a foot trail to Rainbow Falls entirely on easement lands if an agreement cannot be reached for access from the Bryants Bridge Road. (LCE)

6. Mountain Bike Trails

Present Situation and Assumptions:

WETWF - Currently all roads and designated trails, including the replacement snowmobile trail for the Number One Camp Trail, are suitable for mountain bike use. Only the Number One Camp Trail will not be open for mountain bike use. At current levels of mountain bike use, no significant environmental impacts are likely to occur on these trails. Assessments of current mountain bike trails and potential trails not currently designated should be accomplished prior to the revision of the UMP. Assessments should focus on identifying both areas which may be designated in the future for bicycle use and on areas where bicycle use should be prohibited due to environmental impacts or user conflicts.

Management Actions:

Watson's East Triangle Wild Forest:

- Post the Number One Camp trail to prohibit the use of mountain bikes.

Conservation Easement Lands:

- Designate suitable existing roads and trails on easement lands for mountain biking.

7. Camping

Present Situation and Assumptions:

Existing camping regulations require camping to be either at designated sites or undesignated sites that are at least 150 feet or more from a road, trail or water (6 NYCRR §190.3(b)). The latter is referred to as the "150 foot rule" which permits "at-large" camping subject to those requirements. The APSLMP guidelines for primitive tent sites in Wilderness areas (page 21) define conforming primitive tent sites as meeting the following criteria;

“- primitive tent sites below 3,500 feet in elevation that are out of sight and sound and generally one-quarter mile from any other primitive tent site or lean-to:”

“- where severe terrain constraints prevent the attainment of the guideline for a separation distance of generally one-quarter mile between primitive tent sites, individual unit management plans may provide, on a site-specific basis, for lesser separation distances, provided such sites remain out of sight and sound from each other, be consistent with the carrying capacity of the affected area and are generally not less than 500 feet from any other primitive tent site;”

Under guidelines for management and use of Wild Forest areas (page 36), the APSLMP additionally allows:

“Small groupings of primitive tent sites designed to accommodate a maximum of 20 people per grouping under group camping conditions may be provided at carefully selected locations in wild forest areas, even though each individual site may be within sight or sound and less than approximately one-quarter mile from any other site within such grouping, subject to the following criteria:

- such groupings will only be established or maintained on a site specific basis in conformity with a duly adopted unit management plan for the wild forest area in question;
- such groupings will be widely dispersed (generally a mile apart) and located in a manner that will blend with the surrounding environment and have a minimum impact on the wild forest character and natural resource quality of the area;
- all new, reconstructed or relocated tent sites in such groupings will be set back a minimum of 100 feet from the mean high water mark of lakes, ponds, rivers and major streams and will be located so as to be reasonably screened from the water body to avoid intruding on the natural character of the shoreline and the public enjoyment and use thereof.”

Most camping that occurs on this area is in conjunction with the big game hunting season. Traditionally camping permits are issued for the entire hunting season. The site on the Wolf Creek Road East is poorly located and would should be relocated to a more desirable location. A natural opening approximately 0.15 miles west of the current site location will be designated as the new site. This relocation moves the site away from Wolf Creek and away from the Five Ponds Wilderness Area boundary. An assessment of all designated primitive tent sites should be completed during the first year of this plan. This data will be used to monitor sites for environmental impacts and site expansion from use.

Large groups of people (10 or more individuals) have not utilized the WETWF for camping in the past. Consistent with APSLMP guidelines, wilderness UMPs are proposing a maximum overnight group size of eight people. A limit on the size of overnight groups in wilderness areas may put increasing pressure on wild forest areas to accommodate group camping activities. Since the need and/or desire for specific group camping locations has not been determined, the planning team decided that there was no immediate need for the formal designation of group camping sites during the term of this plan. If use patterns change and large groups require places to camp within the WETWF, the plan will be amended to accommodate this use in appropriate areas.

Management Actions:

Watson's East Triangle Wild Forest:

- Designate new campsite on Wolf Creek Road east 0.2 miles from intersection with Number One Rd. The current site is poorly located and needs to be moved. (WETWF)
- Conduct an initial assessment (using procedures contained in Appendix 5) of all designated sites to provide a base line for future assessments followed by a reassessment in the fifth year of the plan. (WETWF)

8. Gates/Barriers

Present Situation and Assumptions:

The installation of gates and barriers is intended to curtail illegal or undesirable uses of specific roads or trails. Although gates and barriers provide a deterrent, they are often circumvented, especially by ATVs. Evidence of illegal use around gates and barriers is an indication that current management strategies need to be reevaluated and new management actions proposed.

Management Actions:

Watson's East Triangle Wild Forest:

- Install new gate at the south end of Wolf Pond snowmobile trail to prevent illegal motorized use during the summer.
- Install new gate at bridge on north end of Wolf Pond snowmobile trail to prevent illegal motorized use during the summer.
- Install rock barrier at the new parking area at the intersection of the River Road and the Mullins Flow Road south to prevent illegal motor vehicle use.
- Install rock barrier at beginning of Burning Creek Road to prevent illegal motor vehicle use.
- Install rock barrier just south of first campsite on Creek Road to prevent illegal motor vehicle use.
- Install rock barriers at two location beyond the campsite on Deep Cuts Road to prevent illegal motor vehicle use.
- Install rock barrier at north end of Number One Camp snowmobile trail to prevent illegal motor vehicle use.
- Install rock barrier just beyond campsite on Wolf Creek Road west to prevent illegal motor vehicle use.
- Install rock barrier just beyond new campsite on Wolf Creek Road east to prevent illegal motor vehicle use.
- Install new gate on Old Upper South Pond Road 30 feet east of Bear Pond Road to prevent illegal motor vehicle use. (BPRPC)
- Install a new gate on the both ends of the Doc Woods Snowmobile Trail to prevent illegal motor vehicle use.
- Install rock barriers on the Buck Pond Road and Mullins Flow Road to prevent motor vehicle access to the lean-to sites.

Conservation Easement Lands:

- Install new gate at north end of Blue Line snowmobile trail to prevent illegal ATV use. (CT)

9. Access

Present Situation and Assumptions:

There are opportunities on the Lassiter Easement that could be greatly enhanced by providing better public access. Wherever access can be improved through cooperative agreements with landowners those possibilities should be explored.

Management Actions:

Conservation Easement Lands:

- Approach private landowners adjacent to the Lassiter easement for easement agreements for mountain biking to provide better access and routes to easement lands.
- Approach Lassiter Properties for agreement for access to Rainbow Falls.
- Open the Number One Road to public motor vehicle and snowmobile use with the agreement of Lassiter, and close the Bryant's Bridge Road to all users.

10. Signs

Present Situation and Assumptions:

Current unit identification signage throughout this unit is adequate. With different guidelines for public use throughout the unit, users need to be informed where the boundaries between adjoining units are. Access in general to this unit is on County and Town roads. For this reason a sign was installed in 2004 along State Route 812 directing users to the area. Additional unit identification signs was installed in 2002 or 2003, and most recently in 2006 at the Soft Maple Reservoir.

Management Actions:

Watson's East Triangle Wild Forest:

- Appropriately sign newly designated trails.

Conservation Easement Lands:

- Install signage at the Bald Mountain Road at southern easement line. (1) (LCE)
- Install signage at the Prentice Road at Croghan Tract easement line. (1) (CTCE)
- Install signage at the Fish Creek Road at Croghan Tract easement line. (1) (CTCE)

11. Kiosks

Present Situation and Assumptions:

Providing information to users through the use of informational kiosks not only enhances their enjoyment of the area but also educates them to guidelines, areas of interest and other opportunities available within the unit.

Management Actions:

- Provide an information kiosk at Bergens Clearing at the entrance to the Bear Pond Road (WETWF, LCE).
- Provide an informational kiosk at the intersection of the Long Pond Road and Fish Creek Road, including a map showing access to the unit and to adjoining areas of Forest Preserve. This will be done through a written agreement with the landowner (CTE).

12. Trail Registers

Present Situation and Assumptions:

Currently there are no trail registers located on this unit. As the use of registers is one of the few ways to gather user numbers, registers will be installed at several locations.

Management Actions:**Watson's East Triangle Wild Forest:**

- Install a new register at Bergens Clearing at the beginning of the Bear Pond Road. (WETWF, LCE)
- Install a register at the new parking area near "Old Upper South Pond Road. (BPRPC)

Conservation Easement Lands:

- Install a register at the Bald Mountain trailhead. (LCE)
- Install a register at the Rainbow Falls trailhead if it is built. (LCE)
- Install a register at Bryants Bridge if access is acquired. (LCE)

13. Lean-tos

Present Situation and Assumptions:

Prior to the advent of light weight backpack tents lean-tos were erected for user convenience and to provide shelter from inclement weather. History and nostalgia make lean-tos attractive destinations, especially among novice users. The construction of accessible lean-tos on this unit will provide facilities that will allow people with disabilities the opportunity to enjoy a traditional Adirondack lean-to experience.

Management Actions:**Watson's East Triangle Wild Forest:**

- Construct a new accessible lean-to and accessible privy at Buck Pond.
- Construct a new accessible lean-to and accessible privy at the north end of the Mullins Flow Road south, near the site of the former hunting camp but at least five hundred feet from the river bank.
- New, reconstructed or relocated lean-tos will be set back a minimum distance of 100 feet or more from the water as required by the APSLMP (page 33). This same minimum setback will also apply to trails where feasible.

14. Waterway Access Sites

Present Situation and Assumptions:

Currently access to the areas waters is gained through the use of informal sites. Constructing formal access sites on some waters will provide for safer managed access to those waters. Constructing these facilities to accessibility guidelines will help meet the Departments goals of providing recreational opportunities for people with disabilities.

Fishing and waterway access sites are defined in the APSLMP, 2001, page 17 to include: “a site for fishing or other water access with attendant parking which does not contain a ramp for or otherwise permit the launching of trailered boats.” Access to Buck Pond will be limited to cartop launching only, with the site barricaded with a suitable barrier to prevent trailered launching by the public.

Management Actions:

Watson’s East Triangle Wild Forest:

- Construct an accessible access trail and waterway access site at Buck Pond.

15. Gravel Pits

Present Situation and Assumptions:

The existing gravel pit at the base of Parquet Hill existed when the State acquired the lands in 1986. Gravel from this pit has been used for repairs and resurfacing on the Bear Pond Road. The pit is nearly depleted of usable gravel and should be permanently closed. The inholders whom have a right-of-way on the Bear Pond Road have deeded rights to remove gravel, at the discretion of the Department, for road repairs. There are several small roadside pits located within the Bear Pond Road Primitive Corridor that will be left open for this use. A detailed use and closure plan for three pits along the Bear Pond Road was completed, in consultation with the APA, in 2004. The use of these pits by inholders exercising their deeded rights will be done under TRP from the Department.

Management Actions:

Watson’s East Triangle Wild Forest:

- Close and reclaim the Parquet Hill gravel pit per the pit closure plan detailed in Appendix 6. (See tree count in Appendix 15.)

16. Dams

Present Situation and Assumptions:

The existing 125 year old wooden dam at Mud Pond is in need of rehabilitation. When the State acquired the Champion lands in 1999, the Department made a commitment to maintain the dam which is now on Forest Preserve. To determine the extent of work needed to rehabilitate the dam an engineering study will be required.

Management Actions:

- Conduct a study of the Mud Pond dam to determine the extent of work needed for its rehabilitation.
- Rehabilitate the Mud Pond Dam if necessary. Rehabilitation, if necessary, will be done utilizing natural materials to the greatest extent possible.

17. Non-conforming structures

Present Situation and Assumptions:

When the State acquired the lands of Champion International in 1999, several leased camps were allowed to remain on the property until 2004. Two of these camps were situated on lands that are now part of the WETWF. One camp was removed in 2004 while the other still remains. This camp is located adjacent to the Long Pond Road and must be removed.

Management Actions:

- Remove existing nonconforming structures located on the unit such as the camp adjacent to the Long Pond Road.

B. Maintenance and Rehabilitation of Facilities

Various facilities require annual maintenance at the support levels indicated in Section V, Schedule of Implementation. It is of the utmost importance that the existing facilities receive adequate maintenance in order for the public to safely use them, to protect environmental values, and to preclude more costly rehabilitation efforts at a future date. Department staff who use motor vehicles to reach and maintain Forest Preserve facilities must adhere to Commissioner's Policy CP-17, Record keeping and Reporting of Administrative Use of Motor Vehicles in the Forest Preserve.

C. Public Use Management

Present Situation and Assumptions:

Current public use management of the Forest Preserve lands included in this management complex has focused on the continuation of traditional uses that occurred prior to State acquisition. Some of these uses may not be compatible with Forest Preserve values or may cause unwanted impacts on natural resources. Future public use management will include management actions to eliminate uses which are in conflict with the goals and objectives for this area. Future educational efforts will focus on providing adequate information to users to direct them on appropriate uses of Forest Preserve lands.

Public use management of easement lands is guided by the language of each respective easement.

Management Actions:

- Due to their relatively small size and isolated locations, restrict the use of motor boats, by regulation, on all water bodies within the WETWF.
- As permitted under 6NYCRR Part 190.4(a), continue to provide season long camping permits during the big game season.
- Direct public access across the Rifle Season Access Corridors on the Croghan Tract Easement during hunting season through adequate signing. These corridors are to allow public access to adjoining Forest Preserve lands and may only be used during this time for that purpose.
- Produce a map and brochure which adequately describes facility locations, restrictions and promotes the responsible use of the unit.

D. Fire Management

Present Situation and Assumptions:

DEC is required by law (Article 9 of the ECL) to suppress all human-caused and natural fires. Fire activity within this unit has been historically low. The predominantly hardwood forests combined with abundant annual precipitation lessens the likelihood of major fires. Short term droughts can increase the potential for fires.

Management Actions:

- Fire prevention activities will consist of public education by the integration of fire safety awareness information disseminated through brochures and signing at informational kiosks.
- Use restriction may be imposed on Forest Preserve lands during periods of high fire danger.

E. Administration

Present Situation and Assumptions:

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

The interaction between the Department and APA is governed by a Memorandum of Understanding. The various divisions of the Department have attended to the procedures laid out in the MOU in an uncoordinated manner. Better coordination could improve efficiency in meeting management goals within and between the two agencies.

Objectives:

- Make the WETU a focus of Department management.
- Improve the management of the WETU through better coordination among Department program divisions and between the Department and APA.

Management Actions:

- Designate a unit manager for the WETU who would coordinate all management activities to make the management of the unit as efficient and consistent as possible, and to facilitate communication with the public about the management of the unit. The unit manager would be appointed by the appropriate Regional Director. Staff from all DEC program divisions with Forest Preserve management responsibilities would keep the unit manager informed about planned activities, natural resource conditions, and anything else that would have a bearing on Forest Preserve management or public communication.

For each unit under his or her jurisdiction, the unit manager would be responsible

for:

- Overseeing the preparation, periodic update and revision, amendment, and implementation of Unit Management Plans;
- Coordinating the preparation of budget requests;
- Assuring that the management activities of all DEC divisions comply with applicable laws, regulations, policies, the APSLMP and unit management plans;
- Coordinating trailhead management and all Department signage within the unit;
- Fostering communication about management activities within DEC, between DEC and APA, and between DEC and the public;
- Continue the Assistant Forest Ranger program on the unit; and
- Appoint a management team as another measure to advance the cause of coordinating the management of the WETU. The management team would be appointed by the Regional Director. The activities of the team would be overseen by the unit manager.

For each unit, the unit management team typically would be composed of:

- The unit manager;
- One Forester;
- Staff from the Office of Public Protection to include at least one Forest Ranger, and if appropriate, an Environmental Conservation Officer;
- One fisheries Biologist;
- One wildlife Biologist;
- One Operations Supervisor; and
- One representative of the Bureau of Real Property.

The unit management team will be responsible for:

- Preparing, periodically updating and revising, amending, and implementing the unit management plan;
- Monitoring resource conditions and public use, and assessing the effectiveness of the unit management plan in addressing resource and public use needs;
- Preparing budget requests for the unit; and

- Communicating regularly with each other, their program divisions, the unit manager, and the public.

F. Land Acquisition

Present Situation and Assumptions:

Future land acquisition efforts will be directed by recommendations set forth in the New York State Open Space Conservation Plan (NYS DEC, 2002).

Management Actions:

- Pursue acquisition of parcels identified in the Open Space Plan from willing sellers.
- The acquisition of private rights-of-ways over the Number 1 Camp Trail (road) from willing sellers, which impassable and is impacting wetlands should be pursued. Alternatives may include the exchange of rights over the currently used route for those on routes that are not environmentally sensitive. This alternative would require an amendment to Article XIV, Section 1 of the New York State Constitution.

G. Updates to APSLMP

Management Actions:

- Propose addition to the next revision of the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan to include a description of the Watson's East Triangle Wild Forest.

H. SEQRA Requirements

An environmental assessment form and a negative declaration have been prepared for this plan.

V. SCHEDULE FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND ESTIMATED BUDGET

The following tables outline a schedule for implementation of the proposed management actions and their estimated costs. Accomplishments are contingent upon sufficient staffing levels and available funding. The estimated costs of implementing these projects is based on historical costs incurred by the Department for similar projects. Values for some projects are based on projected costs for service contracting. These cost estimates to not include capital expenditures for items such as equipment, nor do they include the value of program staff salaries. MD stands for man days.

Annual Maintenance and other Activities	Estimated Cost
Road Maintenance (grade, rake, mow)	\$51,000
Trail Maintenance (brushing, blowdown removal)	\$10,000
Maintenance of signs, registers and kiosks	\$6,000
Maintenance of gates	\$2,400
Bridge maintenance	\$4,000
Waterway Access site maintenance	\$3,000
Parking area maintenance	\$1,000
Boundary Line Maintenance	\$5,550
Stock fish in unit waters consistent with Bureau of Fisheries policies and the <i>Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement on Fish Species Management Activities of the Department of Environmental Conservation Division of Fish and Wildlife (1980)</i>	
Contract with APIPP to monitor unit for invasive plants.	\$1,000
Conduct biological and chemistry surveys of selected unit waters to assess management needs and to determine progress towards the objectives stated in this plan.	3 md
When a reclamation or pond liming is determined to be necessary, the UMP will be amended to include it in the schedule for implementation.	3md
Total annual maintenance	\$83,950/6md

Year 1	Estimated Cost
Complete road work, per APA/DEC MOA, on Bear Pond Road. (WETWF)	\$200,000
Develop Work plans for completion of Bear Pond Road. (WETWF) 1.45 miles	5 md
Close, by signing roads identified in Section IV-B-1.(WETWF)	1 md
Close easement roads to public ATV use by signing.	\$500
Remove remaining camp (Long Pond Road) from Forest Preserve lands.	\$40,000
Designate new campsite on Wolf Creek Rd east. (WETWF)	--
Close the Number One snowmobile trail by placement of boulders and post closed to all terrain bicycle use. (WETWF)	\$750
Assess all roads on easement lands for condition, impacts and illegal use. (CTCE, LCE)	2 md
Approach Lassiter Properties for agreement for access to Rainbow Falls. (LCE)	-0-
Finalize road standards for Croghan tract. (CTCE)	-0-
Develop road standards and maintenance schedule for Lassiter easement. (LCE)	2 md
Contract with APIPP to conduct an inventory of invasive species on the unit.	\$2,000
Complete restoration of the Steam Sleigh Trail.	\$10,000
Initiate an engineering study of the Mud Pond Dam to determine necessary rehabilitation work.	\$15,000
Designate a unit manager for the Watson's East Triangle Wild Forest Unit.	-0-
Conduct initial campsite assessment of all designated sites.	5 md
Total costs year 1	\$268,250/ 15 md

Year 2	Estimated Cost
Construct the Wolf Pond snowmobile trail including bridges. (WETWF)	\$15,000
Designate the trail to the campsite on Massewepie Pond. (WETWF)	-0-
Assess all trails and roads on unit for maintenance needs.	3 md
Complete resurfacing of Main Haul Road on the Croghan tract. (CTCE)	\$240,000
Approach private landowners for agreement for mountain biking easement.	-0-
Develop LAC indicators and standards for soil erosion.	3 md
Develop LAC indicators and standards for condition of vegetation in camping areas.	3 md
Designate suitable existing roads and trails on easement lands for mountain biking.	2 md
Develop an informational brochure for the unit.	\$2,500
Promulgate a new regulation restricting motor boats on unit waters.	2 md
Open the Number One Road to public motor vehicle and snowmobile use with the agreement of Lassiter, and close the Bryant's Bridge Road to all users.	-0-
Total costs year 2	\$257,500/ 18 md

Year 3	Estimated Cost
Install gates at both ends of Wolf Pond snowmobile trail, including signs (WETWF)	\$4,000
Install rock barriers and signs at locations identified in Section IV-B-8. (WETWF)	\$5,000
Install new gates on both ends of the Doc Woods Trail to prevent illegal motor vehicle use.	\$3,000
Install a new gate on the Old Upper South Pond Road.	\$250

Year 3	Estimated Cost
Upgrade the road to the Eagle Canyon parking area including culvert replacement and construction of a six car parking area. (CTCE)	\$18,500
Construct a new 20'X36' motor vehicle bridge over Fish Creek on the Main Haul Road. (CTCE)	\$45,000
Designate the foot trail up Bald Mountain. (LCE)	-0-
Construct a two car parking area at the base of Bald Mountain. (LCE)	\$6,800
Install new gate and signs at north end of Blue Line snowmobile trail. (CTCE)	\$2,000
Install new trail registers at locations identified in Section IV-B-11. (LCE)	\$450
Close and reclaim the Parquet Hill gravel pit.	\$2,500
Total costs year 3	\$87,500

Year 4	Estimated Cost
Remove the old bridge over Desert Creek at end of Creek Road. (WETWF)	\$6,800
Construct a four car parking area adjacent to the Bear Pond Road near the South Ponds Trail intersection.	\$1,500
Construct foot trail to Rainbow Falls if other access cannot be obtained. (LCE)	\$3,000
Total cost year 4	\$11,300

Year 5	Estimated Cost
Construct new accessible lean-tos, and privies at Buck Pond and at old camp location at north end of the Mullins Flow Road south (\$9,850 ea) (WETWF)	\$19,700
Construct an accessible trail and waterway access site at Buck Pond. (WETWF)	\$2,500

Year 5	Estimated Cost
Close the Buck Pond and Mullins Flow Roads to public motor vehicle use by installing rock barriers and convert each road into an accessible access route to the lean-to locations.	\$8,000
Construct two car parking areas at the beginning of the Buck Pond and Mullins Flow Roads.	\$1,500
Rehabilitate the Mud Lake Dam.	\$350,000
Reassess all designated campsites on the unit.	5 md
Construct informational kiosks at Bergens Clearing and the intersection of the Long Pond Road and Fish Creek Roads	\$2,000
Total costs year 5	\$383,700/ 5 md

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CROGHAN TRACT CONSERVATION EASEMENT
AFFIRMATIVE RIGHTS

Those rights agreed to by the parties herein as running with the Protected property are more fully described as follows:

1. The Grantor grants to the Grantee, its successors and assigns, the right to view the Protected Property in its current state.
2. The Grantor grants to the Grantee, its successors and assigns, rights of access to the Protected Property including the right of access for administrative purposes and the right of public access for recreational purposes only, subject to the TERMS AND CONDITIONS and RESERVED RIGHTS set forth herein.
3. The Grantor grants to the Grantee, its successors and assigns, the right and responsibility to manage the public on the Protected Property in accordance with the purposes of this Easement, the Land Management Plan, as defined in the TERMS AND CONDITIONS of this Easement, and operable laws and regulations administered by the State of New York.
4. The Grantor grants to the Grantee, its successors and assigns, a right of public access for recreational purposes, to include the following:
 - a. Public access to and over the Protected Property by foot, bicycle or other non-motorized means including hiking, snowshoes, cross-country skiing, mechanized aids for persons with disabilities, and/or horseback. The use of horses or other similar animals for riding or transportation of supplies is permitted.
 - b. Public access to and over the Protected Property by canoe and other waterborne travel by the public on any streams or bodies of water crossing or situated on the Protected Property.
 - c. Public access over specifically designated Motorized Access Corridors by motor vehicle or other mechanized means. As used herein, the term "motorized access" includes access by motor vehicle, snowmobile, all terrain vehicle, or other mechanized recreational vehicle. Only those Motorized Access Corridors which have been designated in the Land Management Plan and which have been specifically marked for the type of motorized vehicular travel permitted shall be available for public recreational access. The Grantee is responsible for all necessary signs indicating the specific corridors which may be opened for public motorized access and the type of motorized access (e.g. motor vehicle, snowmobile, all terrain vehicle) permitted upon said specific corridors. Notwithstanding the foregoing, prior to the adoption of the Land Management Plan, the public may use Rifle Season Primary Access Corridors, as defined under TERMS AND CONDITIONS, for access by motor vehicle to the adjoining Forest Preserve lands owned by Grantee. The Rifle Season Primary Access Corridors are delineated on the Maps of the Protected Property.

The motorized public access provided for above is subject to the RESERVED RIGHTS of the Grantor, including the right to close Motorized Access Corridors to public use in the manner and for the reasons specifically provided for in the RESERVED RIGHTS and TERMS AND CONDITIONS Sections of this Easement.
5. Grantee, its successors and assigns, shall have the right to construct and maintain new trails for foot, bicycle, or horseback travel by the public, to construct and maintain new parking lots, and to construct and maintain new Motorized Access Corridors in addition to those which may already exist on the Protected Property, so long as such trails, parking lots, or roads do not interfere with the Grantor's Reserved Right of Forest Management, and as are provided for in Grantee's Land Management Plan or have been otherwise approved by Grantor, approval not unreasonably withheld. Any timber removed by the construction of these roads, trails or parking lots shall belong to the Grantor. Grantor shall be given reasonable time to remove such timber.
6. The Grantee, its successors and assigns, shall have the right to utilize on-site gravel in

furtherance of Grantee's AFFIRMATIVE RIGHTS under this Easement, subject to the approval of the Grantor with regard to the location from which said gravel may be removed as described in the RESERVED RIGHTS Section of this Easement. The siting of said gravel removal area shall comply with all applicable laws and regulations. Grantor's approval of the siting of the gravel removal area shall not be unreasonably withheld.

7. The Grantee, its successors and assigns, shall have the right to permit camping by the public in the same manner as currently regulated (or to be regulated) on State lands, provided, however, that designated camping sites shall be delineated in the Land Management Plan.

8. The Grantee, its successors and assigns, shall have the right to permit the public to build fires for cooking, warmth or smudge only with firewood gathered from onsite dead and downed trees. Open fires will be regulated in the same manner as on Forest Preserve.

9. The Grantee, its successors and assigns, shall have the right to permit the public to hunt, fish and trap in accordance with established New York State seasons, applicable rules and regulations and the RESERVED RIGHTS section of this Easement.

10. The Grantee, its successors and assigns, shall have the right and responsibility to manage the fish and wildlife resources on the Protected Property in accordance with regulations or other generally accepted standards for the long term use and benefit of the public within this Easement's "Purposes of this Grant" Section.

11. Grantee, its successors and assigns, shall have the right and responsibility to take any emergency action necessary in response to natural disaster, environmental hazard or threats to human safety. The Grantor shall be immediately notified and consulted with regards to any such emergency action.

12. Grantee, its successors and assigns, shall have the right to enter the protected property at all reasonable times and with prior notice for the purpose of:

- (a) Inspecting the Protected Property to determine if the Grantor is complying with the covenants and purposes of this Conservation Easement.
- (b) Enforcing the terms of the Conservation Easement.
- (c) Taking any and all legal action with the respect to the Protected Property as may be necessary or appropriate to remedy or abate violations hereof.

13. Grantee, its successors and assigns, shall have the right with consent of Grantor, to construct, use, repair, maintain, improve, demolish, replace, expand or extend lean-tos, cabins or other structures designed to facilitate public recreation and management of the Protected Property subject to applicable laws and regulations and the provisions of the Land Management Plan. Should said structures no longer serve their intended purpose, Grantee shall remove such structures within two (2) years.

14. The public access granted herein shall be limited by Grantor's Reserved Rights to, among other things, conduct forest management activities (including the designation of closure zones); access and maintain principal buildings, structures and uses set forth in APA Permit No. 98-313 per subdivided parcel and the forestry use structures provided for in the RESERVED RIGHTS Section of this Easement; exclude the public from one acre tracts as provided for in paragraph nine (9) of the RESERVED RIGHTS Section of this Easement; and to exercise exclusive hunting rights on leased lands as provided for in paragraph seven (7) of the RESERVED RIGHTS Section of this Easement.

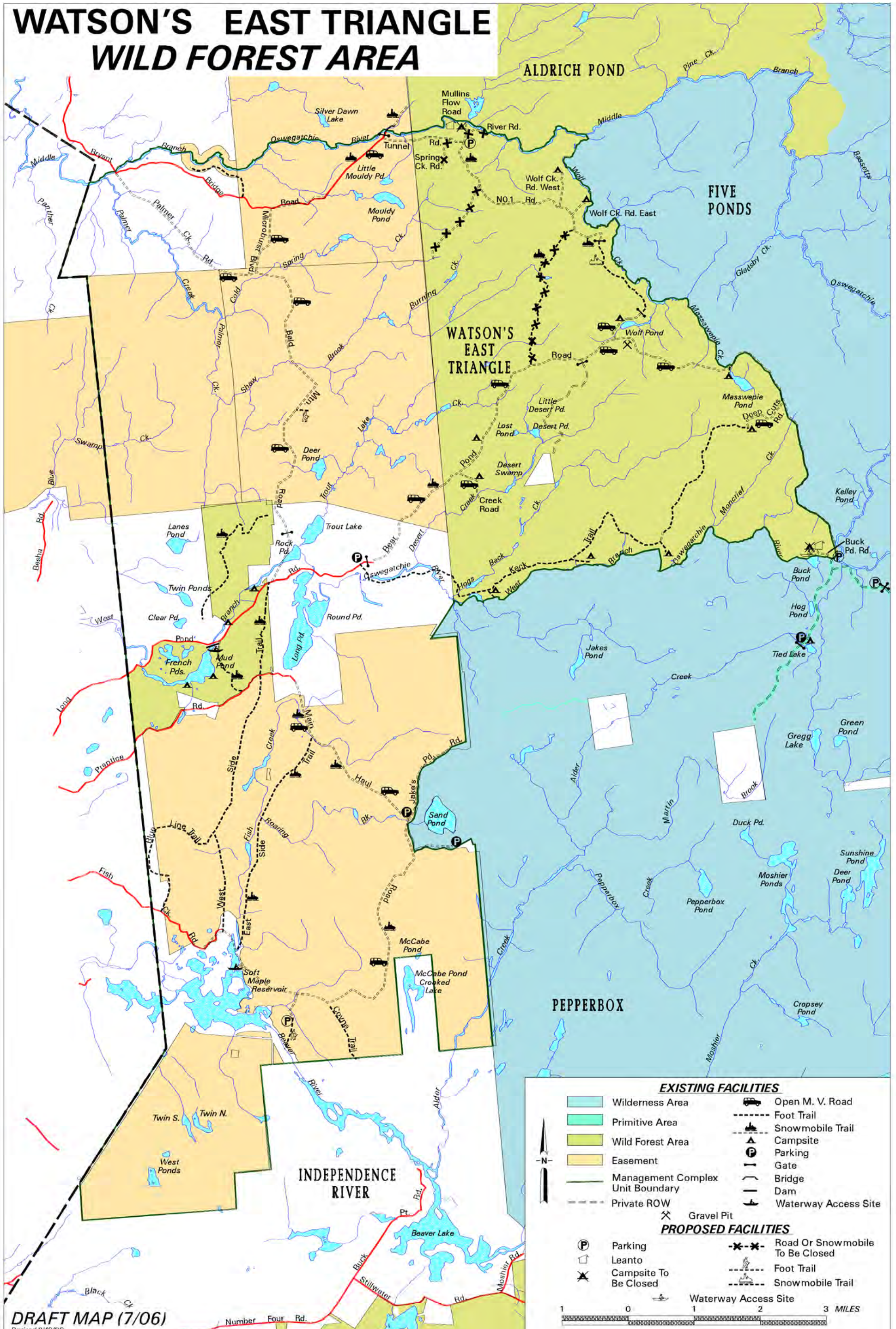
DECLARATION OF RESTRICTIONS

The parties, their assigns and successors-in-interest, agree that the following restrictions shall apply to the Protected Property in perpetuity:

1.) No Forest Mangement Activities shall be permitted except as provided for in the RESERVED RIGHTS and TERMS AND CONDITIONS Sections hereof.

- 2.) No buildings, residences, mobile homes or other structures, signs, billboards or other advertising material shall be constructed or placed in, on, over or upon the Protected Property except as allowed on the 5-acre development sites permitted in APA Permit No. 98-313, or as otherwise provided for in this Easement. Both Grantor and Grantee may erect signs, gates, fences or other barriers as may be necessary to carry out their rights and obligations hereunder, provided that all signs, gates, fences and barriers displayed by Grantor or grantee shall conform to the Land Management Plan and forest Management Plan.
- 3.) The property may not be subdivided except as provided for in the RESERVED RIGHTS Section. The correction of a boundary line location, the maintenance of existing recreational leases or the creation of new leases shall not constitute a subdivision for purposes of this provision.
- 4.) No application of pesticides, including but not limited to insecticides, fungicides, rodenticides and herbicides shall be allowed except as provided in the RESERVED RIGHTS Section.
- 5.) No dumping or storing of ashes, sawdust, noncomposted organic waste (excepting organic logging debris), "offsite" sewage or garbage, scrap material, sediment discharges, oil and its by-products, leached compounds, toxic fumes or any other unsightly or offensive material shall be allowed in, on, over, under or upon the Protected Property, except as provided in the RESERVED RIGHTS Section.
- 6.) No motorized vehicles shall be operated on the Protected Property by Grantor, its employees, agents, contractors and invitees, except as they may be used to carry out forest management activities, fire protection or other emergency needs, and for the furtherance of Grantor's RESERVED RIGHTS. No off-road or off-trail use of motorized vehicles shall be permitted on the Protected Property by grantor, its employees, agents, contractors and invitees, except as they may be used to carry out forest management activities, fire protection or other emergency needs, and for the furtherance of Grantors Reserved Rights. This restriction does not impair the public access rights provided for herein, or access rights enjoyed by Grantor as a member of the public, or any of Grantee's access rights described in this Easement.
- 7.) No permanent exterior artificial illumination shall be employed on the Protected Property, other than that employed on the date hereof, without prior written consent of the Grantee, except as is reasonably required for enjoyment of the RESERVED RIGHTS by the Grantor.
- 8.) No residential, commercial or industrial activities of any kind shall be permitted on the Protected Property other than those specifically provided for in this Easement.
- 9.) Except as may be specifically permitted in the RESERVED RIGHTS Section or pursuant to Environmental Conservation Law Section 49-0307, no new telephone, telegraph, cable television, electric, gas, water or sewer or other utility lines shall be routed over, under, in, on, upon or above the Protected Property without prior material written consent of the parties hereto, such consent not to be unreasonably withheld.
- 10.) No mining will be conducted and no minerals, gas or oil will be extracted from the Protected Property except the on-site use of gravel as provided for in the Affirmative and Reserved Rights Sections of this Easement.

WATSON'S EAST TRIANGLE WILD FOREST AREA



DRAFT MAP (7/06)
Revised 9/10/08

EXISTING FACILITIES

- | | | | |
|--|--------------------|--|----------------------|
| | Wilderness Area | | Open M. V. Road |
| | Primitive Area | | Foot Trail |
| | Wild Forest Area | | Snowmobile Trail |
| | Easement | | Campsite |
| | Management Complex | | Parking |
| | Unit Boundary | | Gate |
| | Private ROW | | Bridge |
| | | | Dam |
| | | | Waterway Access Site |
| | | | Gravel Pit |

PROPOSED FACILITIES

- | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| | Parking | | Road Or Snowmobile To Be Closed |
| | Leanto | | Foot Trail |
| | Campsite To Be Closed | | Snowmobile Trail |
| | | | Waterway Access Site |

1 0 1 2 3 MILES