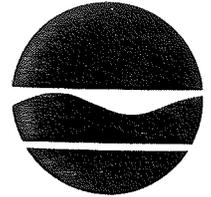


MEMORANDUM FROM  
**THOMAS C. JORLING**, *Commissioner*

*New York State*  
*Department of Environmental Conservation*



SEP 1 1988

TO: The Record  
FROM: Thomas C. Jorling *Tom Jorling*  
RE: Unit Management Plan Amendment  
Independence River Wild Forest

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The amended Unit Management Plan for the Independence River Wild Forest has been developed in consultation with the Adirondack Park Agency. It is consistent with the guidelines and criteria of the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan, involved citizen participation is consistent with the State Constitution, the Environmental Conservation Law, rules, regulations and policy, and the stated management objectives of such area for a five-year period, accordingly is hereby approved and adopted.

cc: L. Marsh

ADDENDUM  
Independence River Wild Forest  
Otter Creek Horse Trail

Background

The Independence River Unit has been utilized informally for horseback rides for several years. In fact, the D.E.C. pamphlet entitled, "Horse Trails in N.Y.S." has the following listing on page 21 under Lewis County: Forest preserve lands and roads Brantingham-Chases Lake 25 miles. The "trails" have never been formally marked, but consist of numerous sandy roads and snowmobile trails between Chases Lake and Brantingham Lake. While the Independence Plan was in progress, only limited interest was expressed in expanding this recreational opportunity. Since the completion of the plan, other factors have enhanced the opportunities available in this unit. The horse trails in the Cold River area are not standing up to public use due to soil conditions and environmental factors. At the same time, interest on the part of organized horse groups is expanding and several have indicated an interest in the western Adirondack area. The soils are ideal in this unit and the scenic and physical attributes lend themselves perfectly to what could be one of the most attractive and resilient trail systems in New York State (see Page 26, paragraph 2 of the existing plan and item 4 public use management on Page 33).

Objective

To modify the unit plan originally approved by D.E.C. Commissioner Henry Williams on 10/20/86 to include the development of an initial trail system of approximately 15 miles in length followed by an expansion in the second year, if interest warrants, to add 13 miles of forest preserve trails and 5 miles of State Forest Trails to the system, utilizing existing roads and snowmobile trails. The original plan would need to be modified by the following build-out:

- IV. Projected use and management proposed
  - A. Facilities Development

- 9. Horse Trail Development

- Approximately 13½ miles of existing routes on forest preserve lands including the Blue Jog Road, Hiawatha Trail, Confusion Flats Road, Erie Canal Trail, Catspaw Lake Road, Shortcut Road, Pitcher Pond Road, Blueberry Trail, Crooked Creek Trail, and Florence Pond Road will serve as the year one system and needs only to be signed and high pruned. The trailhead parking, tie stalls and water point and 1.3 miles of trail will be on the adjacent reforestation area outside the Adirondack Park. Year two will involve posting an additional 13 miles of existing roads and trails north and east of Chases Lake on forest preserve lands, including the Hinchings Pond Road and trail, old Number Four Trail, Evies Pond Trail, Cleveland Lake Trail and Little Otter Lake Road; and 5 miles of existing roads and trails on adjacent Lewis Reforestation Area # 34, outside the Adirondack Park. Only a few edge or danger trees may need to be removed along the trail route. They would be marked and handled in accordance with the tree cutting policy LF 84-2 and the Commissioner's Delegation Memorandum 84-06.

V. Schedule for Implementation

<u>Year</u>	<u>Activity</u>	
II (1988)	18. High prune & sign 13½ miles of existing trails and roads.	\$2,000
III (1989)	12. High prune & sign an additional 13 miles of existing trails & roads	\$2,000
VI Appendix	L-3 Summary Facilities Changes	
	<u>Watson</u>	
	5. Horse Trails, new	13.0 miles
	<u>Greig</u>	
	6. Horse Trails, new	<u>14.1</u> miles
	Grand Total	27.1 miles (new)

VI Appendix - Negative Declaration

The forest preserve portion of the proposed horse trail is considered to be covered by the original unit plan negative declaration. However, the attached Environmental Assessment Form (full) and negative declaration is intended to cover the entire project.



Scott K. Gray  
Regional Forestry Manager  
Region 6

SKG:jes  
4/11/88



**SEQR**  
**Negative Declaration**  
Notice of Determination of Non-Significance

Project # \_\_\_\_\_

Date 4/8/88

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

The Department of Environmental Conservation, as lead agency, has determined that the proposed action described below will not have a significant effect on the environment.

Title of Action: Independence River Wild Forest Unit Management Plan  
Otter Creek Horse Trails Addendum

SEQR Status: Type I   
Unlisted

**Description of Action:**

A total of 33 miles of existing woods roads and snowmobile trails would be designated and marked as part of the horse trail system (7.5 miles of which are outside the Adirondack Park on State Reforestation Areas 34 & 35). The trailhead was Lewis RA #35 will have 3,000 feet of access road upgraded 1.8 acres cleared and graveled for parking, two open barn tie stalls (12 stalls each) handicapped mounting platform trail map structure, porta johns and a well water system. Year two would add 24 tie stalls, a stud stall, picnic tables and a four unit flush toilet with septic tank system. All construction and land clearing (1.8 acres) will be done outside the Forest Preserve. Only signing, tree pruning and removal of occasional hazardous trees as necessary will occur within the Forest Preserve. The Commissioner's Delegation Memorandum 84-06 will be complied with.

Location: (Include the name of the county and town. A location map of appropriate scale is also recommended) Lewis County, Towns of Greig & Watson

**Reasons Supporting This Determination:**

The soils in this area are sandy gravelly Adams - Croghan types. They are extremely well drained and would be resilient to house use. The facilities are rustic in nature and require no foundations with the exception of the year two installation of the flush toilet system. The percolation rates are excellent and will facilitate good distribution of water. Much of the area required for parking and stalls is already in an open area, requiring limited clearing of trees; scattered, stunted, red and white pine. Impact on water quality (streams) will be minimal; crossings will be at right angles to the water flow. Also the banks are low.

**For Further Information:**

Contact Person: Scott K. Gray, III  
Address: 317 Washington St., Fifth Floor, State Office Building  
Watertown, NY 13601-3787  
Phone No.: (315) 785-2610

**Copies of this Notice Sent to:**

Commissioner-Department of Environmental Conservation, 50 Wolf Road, Albany, New York  
12233-0001  
Appropriate Regional Office of the Department of Environmental Conservation  
Office of the Chief Executive Officer of the political subdivision in which the action will be  
principally located  
Applicant (if any)  
Other involved agencies (if any)