NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY | Department of Environmental Conservation

Amendment 2

To the

Jessup River Wild Forest Unit Management Plan

Hamilton County

June 2015

Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor

Joseph J. Martens, Commissioner

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JUN 16 2015

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Record

FROM: Joseph J. Martens

SUBJECT: Jessup River Wild Forest

The amendment to the Jessup River Wild Forest Unit Management Plan has been completed and the Adirondack Park Agency found it to be in conformance with the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan.

The UMP amendment is consistent with Environmental Conservation Law and Department Rules, Regulations and Policies and is hereby approved and adopted.

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NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY. Adirondack Park Agency

LEILANI CRAFTS ULRICH
Chairwoman

TERRY MARTINO
Executive Director

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE ADIRONDACK PARK AGENCY WITH RESPECT TO AMENDMENT 2 OF THE 2006 JESSUP RIVER WILD FOREST UNIT MANAGEMENT PLAN

May 15, 2015

WHEREAS, Section 816 of the Adirondack Park Agency Act directs the Department of Environmental Conservation to develop, in consultation with the Adirondack Park Agency, individual management plans for units of land classified in the Master Plan for Management of State Lands and requires such management plans to conform to the general guidelines and criteria of the Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, in addition to such guidelines and criteria, the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan prescribes the contents of unit management plans and provides that the Adirondack Park Agency will determine whether a proposed individual unit management plan complies with such general guidelines and criteria; and

WHEREAS, in 2006 the Department of Environmental Conservation (the Department) adopted the first unit management plan for the Jessup River Wild Forest, located in Hamilton County, and has now prepared a second amendment to the plan dated April, 2015 that includes a proposed management action to reestablish use of 900 feet of a Department road on Forest Preserve; and

WHEREAS, the Department has filed a SEQR Negative Declaration and published a notice in the Environmental Notice Bulletin on May 6, 2015; and

WHEREAS, the Department is the lead agency, and the Adirondack Park Agency is an involved agency whose staff have been consulted in the preparation of the proposed plan amendment; and

WHEREAS, the Agency is requested to determine whether the final Jessup River Wild Forest Unit Management Plan Amendment 2 (Amendment), dated April, 2015, is consistent with the guidelines and criteria of the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Adirondack Park Agency has reviewed the proposed Amendment; and

WHEREAS, the Amendment recognizes the need to improve public use and enjoyment of the area, avoid user conflicts and prevent overuse according to the guidelines and criteria of the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Amendment proposes to provide public motor-vehicle access along 900 feet of existing road in the unit, beyond which safer public parking and improved public access to the area's snowmobile trail network will be developed on the Perkins Clearing Conservation Easement;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that pursuant to Section 816 of the Adirondack Park Agency Act, the Adirondack Park Agency finds the Jessup River Wild Forest Unit Management Plan Amendment 2, dated April, 2015, conforms with the general guidelines and criteria of the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Adirondack Park Agency authorizes its Executive Director to advise the Commissioner of Environmental Conservation of the Agency's determination in this matter.

Resolution adopted on this date, May 15, 2015.

AYES: Chairwoman Lani Ulrich, Richard Booth, Sherman Craig, Karen Feldman, Arthur Lussi, William Thomas, Dan Wilt, Brad Austin (DED), Deidre Scozzafava (DOS), Robert Stegemann (DEC)

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

ABSENT: None

INTRODUCTION

The Jessup River Wild Forest (JRWF) is located in the Towns of Arietta, Wells, Indian Lake, and Lake Pleasant in Hamilton County. It is approximately 47,350 acres in size. A Unit Management Plan (UMP) for this area was completed in 2006. A subsequent UMP amendment to address snowmobile use within this unit was approved in 2010.

This UMP Amendment proposes to provide better access to the area's snowmobile trail network by allowing public motor vehicle access along 900 feet of existing road across the JRWF. The existing road leads to a proposed parking area on the Perkins Clearing Conservation Easement, the approval for which is being sought separately in an Interim Recreation Management Plan (RMP). This amendment does not propose any changes to the snowmobile trail configuration within the unit.

IV. PROPOSED MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

C. FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT

24. Trailhead Parking

Background:

The JRWF has a fair amount of public highway road frontage. However, there are few places to park motor vehicles safely off the road shoulder. Parking areas that provide access to popular locations often reach capacity, resulting in an overflow of vehicles along the roadsides. This is especially problematic during typically high-use winter months. The many miles of snowmobile trails in and around the JRWF attract snowmobilers along with their vehicles and trailers in tow. Currently a small parking area located along N.Y.S. Route 30, on conservation easement land, is a main parking and winter access point for the Perkins Clearing Easement. The inadequate size of the parking area often results in an overflow that creates unsafe conditions for passing motorists.

The snowmobile trail system within the JRWF is closely linked to trails provided by the Perkins Clearing and Speculator Tree Farm Conservation Easements. The extensive logging road network within the easement provides important snowmobile trail connections between State lands and the surrounding communities. Winter harvest activities on these lands often result in the closure and/or re-routing of snowmobile trails to avoid conflicts with log trucks. Providing additional access to the trail system will help mitigate the impact of trail closures and also help to keep these important community connections open.

Objectives:

The objectives of this Amendment are to alleviate unsafe conditions by providing additional parking, ensuring adequate public access, and mitigating the impact of trail closures to the snowmobile trail system in and around the JRWF, Perkins Clearing, and Speculator Tree Farm Conservation Easements.

Management Actions:

Access Road

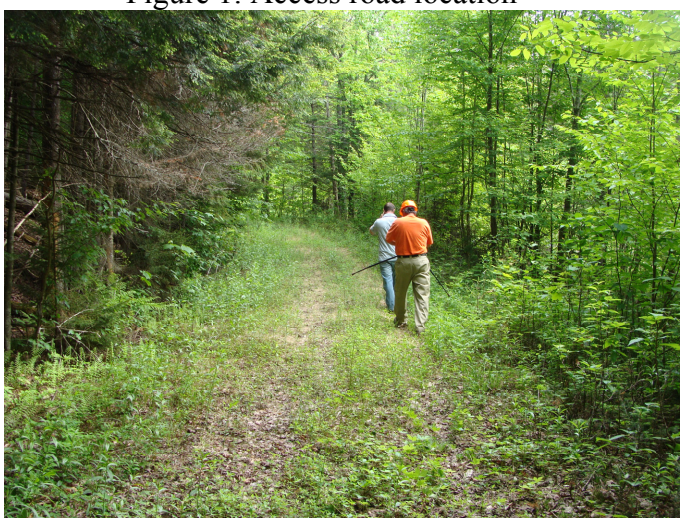
This amendment proposes utilization of an existing roadway that is currently not being used to provide access to a parking area to be located within the Speculator Tree Farm Conservation Easement. The utilization of this existing roadway to allow access to the parking area will alleviate the unsafe condition of motor vehicles parking along NYS Route 30. The use of this existing roadway is essential to the administration of the area, no feasible alternative exists, and there will be no deterioration of the wild forest character or natural resource quality of the area.

The road enters JRWF on the east side of N.Y.S. Route 30 approximately 1.3 miles north of the Village of Speculator (See Figure 3). It runs generally in a north east direction from N.Y.S. Route 30 for approximately 900 feet across JRWF lands to the adjacent conservation easement lands. This section of road was previously used for logging operations on the adjacent conservation easement land and is still in very good condition. Upon entering easement land, the access road will continue another 500 feet to an open clearing to be used as the parking area.

This road will be open year-round as a public motor vehicle road for recreation as described in the November 2005 Interim Recreation Management Plan for IP Conservation Easement, Hamilton 308, Speculator Tree Farm, and Perkins Clearing. The construction of the parking area will be addressed through an additional Interim Recreational Management Plan. Additional recreational opportunities will be made available through the completion of a full Recreation Management Plan at a later date.

The existing roadway is fairly flat and in good condition. No tree cutting will be required and only minor road work will be necessary. This will include scraping off the duff layer and applying gravel where needed. Two boulders at the entrance of the road near N.Y.S. Route 30 will be removed and a few blown down trees will be cleared from the corridor. Below, Figure 1 shows the current condition of the roadway on State land.

Figure 1: Access road location



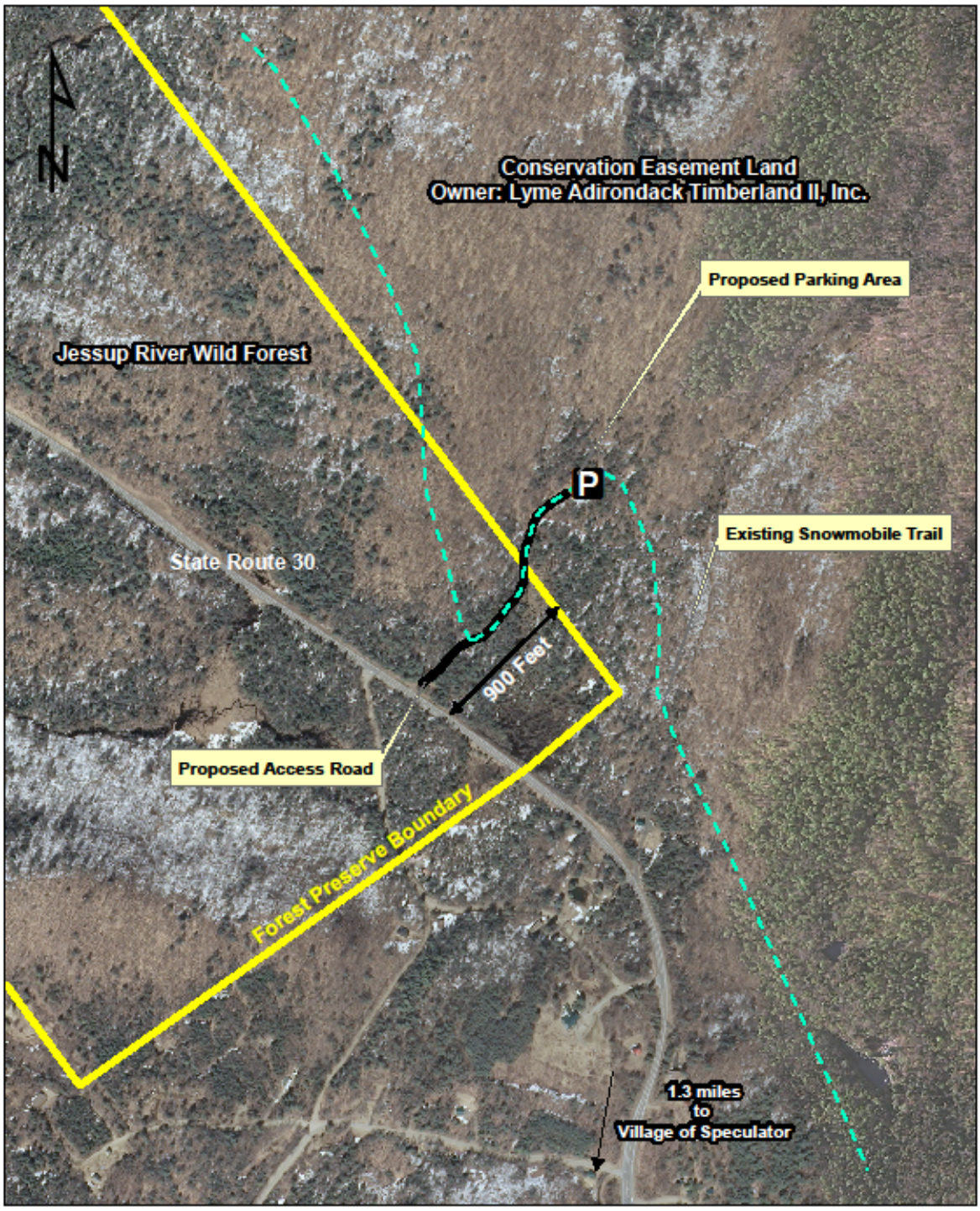
Parking Area
The parking area will be located entirely within the easement lands of Speculator Tree Farm. Utilization of an existing landing area will provide ample space for 8 or more vehicles with trailers. This will include one accessible parking space. The parking area will need some light grading to accommodate this use. Below Figure 2 shows the current state of the landing area.

Figure 2: Parking area location

Kiosk and Register
A kiosk with a trail register will be installed at the parking area. A detailed map depicting the surrounding trail system will be displayed, as well as appropriate trail use information. The kiosk will be built to accessible standards.

Figure 3:

Jessup River Wild Forest UMP Amendment 2 Location Map



Change to Jessup River Wild Forest Unit Management Plan – August 2006

Page 177 of the unit management plan in August of 2006 addresses "Roads Open to Public Motor Vehicle Use". The proposed management actions in this amendment will change the mileage. The table included in this ump is an update to the "Roads Open to Public Motor Vehicle Use".

Table XVI - Roads Open to Public Motor Vehicle Use (Existing and Future status)

ROAD NAME	PRE-1972 [1] MILEAGE	POST-UMP MILEAGE	DESCRIPTION	PRIVATE ACCESS [2]
Old Military Road	0 miles Was private road only	0.7 mile	From IP boundary to Pillsbury Mountain trailhead. Acquired in 1983 through land exchange with IP.	No
Round Pond Road [3]	0.1 miles	0.1 mile	From Big Brook Road to IP lands. Acquired in 1890's.	Yes
Peasley Access Road [2]	0.1 mile	0.0 mile	From end of maintained town road (Fawn Lake Road) to trailhead, road continues to buildings on Sacandaga Lake. Appropriated in 1974.	Yes
Hernanez Loop Road	0.6 mile	0.6 mile	From end of Hernandez Road to Silver Lake Wilderness boundary line. Acquired in 1964.	No
Gilman Lake Access Road	0.1 mile	0.1 mile	Section of road between Gilmantown Road and Gilman Lake. Acquired in 1963.	No
Jessup Access Road	?	0.2 mile	From NYS Route 30 to Lyme boundary.	Yes
Total Mileage	**0.9 miles**	**1.7 miles**		

[1] Pre-1972 road mileage is based upon DEC records and land acquisition files.

[2] This road will be gated at the proposed new trailhead at the end of the town road. A section of this road will be open between the gate and accessible parking area for persons with disabilities holding permits under Policy CP-3, subject to closure for seasonal conditions.

[3] This road provides access to State lands, private landowners, International Paper, Company, Inc. and its lessees.