

D. Watch Hill/Indian Lake Area

This area contains approximately three miles of lake frontage, an attractive waterfall (Beaver Brook), along with rocky outcrops with views of Indian Lake and Snowy Mountain. An old stone chimney-fireplace documents the location of a previous camp structure. Even though the 1983 trails sub-committee (See report in Appendix 12) recommended that the existing trails at Watch Hill not be formally designated as official Department trails, increasing public use, resource degradation, and suitability for other recreationists (ATB bicycling, hiking, cross-country skiing, etc.) can best be addressed by official designation, marking and maintenance. One isolated campsite administered as part of the Indian Lake Islands Administrative Camping Area is located near Beaver Brook Falls. The area also receives use by horseback riders on non-designated trails.

Current Situation:

This block of NYS land is sandwiched between Indian Lake and NYS Route 30. The proximity to NYS Route 30 and motorized uses on Indian Lake result in limited opportunities for exploring and experiencing isolation from the sights and sounds of man, with the probability of encountering other area users being moderate to high, particularly on the lake. While there are no developed DEC trails, day use is popular due to the combination of attractive natural features including an old public highway, rock overlooks, attractive lakeshore, and waterfall all within a small geographic area. The majority of use consists of day hiking, with some horseback riding occurring on the old road and herd paths in the area. A fair amount of this activity is from guests from the adjacent private land at Timberlock.

Illegal user-created painted trails have developed, some which have no public benefit serving only to provide access from adjoining private land. The majority of equestrian trail riding within the JRWF has been at Watch Hill. A short de facto horse trail has developed over the years using to a large degree parts of an old highway and paths towards Watch Hill.

The existing informal NYS Route 30 shoulder parking near the southern terminus of Old Route 30 is considered inadequate to meet current public use at this location. The capacity of the road shoulder parking has been exceeded on popular weekends and the lack of a plowed parking area has discouraged winter use.

Old Route 30

This old road is presently used by the public to access JRWF lands in the vicinity of Watch Hill. A 1.4 mile section of the old town highway between Speculator and Indian Lake was not incorporated into the construction of the NYS Route 30 Highway. While the jurisdiction of this road may be under the town of Indian Lake the is not maintained as a town highway, and has not received motor vehicle use or road maintenance for many years.

Terrain and Soils

The terrain of this area can be described as moderately rugged with some steep areas. The mesosoils on Watch Hill are mostly Becket-Lyman with some of the lower elevations

consisting of Becket-Skerry. Generally, the soils are deep or moderately deep except for shallow soils on some of the higher elevations.

Vegetation/Wetlands/Wildlife

Vegetative covertypes are predominately sugar maple mesic and evergreen northern hardwood with patches of spruce-fir and evergreen wetlands. Plant life is generally similar to other areas of the JRWF, with the exception of a small portion of a mature hardwood forest natural community in the northern portion of the tract. The majority of the Watch Hill area does not contain mapped wetlands with only a few small scattered pockets near Griffin Brook and the Snowy Mountain trailhead. No deer wintering areas have been identified in the area.

Specific Area Objectives:

- Maintain scenic qualities in the area.
- Insure adequate public access while minimizing impacts to the adjoining travel corridor.
- Identify and evaluate existing uses, paths, and natural features to accommodate a variety of public recreational opportunities throughout the year.
- Develop and designate facilities such as trails and parking areas to better manage the area and mitigate user impacts.
- Coordinate proposed recreational activities on the short section of Old Route 30 with the town of Indian Lake.

Proposed Management Policies/Actions:

- Close user created trails that have no public benefit. (See proposed regulations in Section IV-D-3.) (OPP)
- Enforce regulation prohibiting of camping within 150 feet of the trails at the summit of Watch Hill and attractive locations such as the waterfall, beach area, and lakeshore along Indian Lake. (OPP)
- Construct parking lot for 10 vehicles (including one accessible space), to be plowed. A suitable parking area is necessary for this NYS Route 30 location upon completion of the proposed trails. Vehicles currently park either along the road shoulder of the State highway or on the southern part of Old Route 30. Since this parking area will be the main access point for the myriad of trails in the area a capacity of 10 vehicles was determined to be the minimum size lot needed. This facility will supplement the existing Snowy Mountain parking area to the north.

The lot will be located as close to the proposed trailhead as possible, taking advantage of the existing road shoulder. Additional fill and surface dressing will be needed to provide an adequate parking lot. The facility is intended to primarily serve recreationists accessing this area by foot, ski, or bike. Since part of the parking area may be located within the NYS Route 30 right-of-way, the Department will consult with the DOT prior to construction. Arrangements will be made with the DOT to provide for snow removal in the winter, to accommodate anticipated use by skiers. (LF/OP)

- Install a new level-two type "Storey kiosk" at trailhead parking area. This small display will assist users to self-interpret the recreational, historical, geological and natural resource information of the surrounding area. Construct pit privy for trailhead users. (LF/OP)

- Designate the 1.4 mile old town road with red trail (accommodate ski, bike and foot travel) markers to the Snowy Mountain trailhead. Since the trail may also accommodate horse back riders, a horse trail bridge may be constructed across Griffin Brook in the future. Bridging and/or other types of drytread will be installed in the wet area adjacent to the Snowy Mountain trailhead to allow a connection with the existing parking area. All necessary wetlands permits will be obtained prior to commencing construction of any bridging or drytread. (LF/OP)
- Designate a 1.0 mile spur trail starting approximately one-half mile north of the parking area. This trail leads to the top of Watch Hill with scenic views of the lake and Snowy Mountain. This trail approaches the first rock outcropping in 0.5 miles, continues to the second outcropping then turns downhill to Watch Point on Indian Lake. While most users approaching Watch Hill from the west will stop at the top, the trail to the lake could be used by people with boats who wish to climb Watch Hill. Along the climb and ridge line are areas of thin soil and exposed rock. Although the potential exists for soil loss, serious problems will be avoided through proper trail layout and trail hardening, where necessary. The path will be maintained as a class III primitive trail and will be marked with yellow trail markers. It is expected to receive moderate use. (LF/OP)
- Construct and designate new foot/ski trails. In order to create a nested loop system, a 3.5 mile looping ski and foot trail will be constructed and designated with blue markers. This trail will start from the old road just past the Griffin Brook bridge and will be located along the east side of Griffin Brook to Indian Lake passing by sandy beaches then continuing northeasterly along the shoreline to the waterfall and picnic area at Beaver Brook, then turning westerly to intersect the old road near the Snowy Mountain trailhead. By walking back along the road to the parking area a five mile loop is possible. By using a mile of existing herd path along the lake tree cutting can be reduced. The development of this facility will help offset the loss of 3.5 miles of poorly located and maintained designated ski trails in the Lake Abanakee area that will be closed. (LF/OP)
- Accommodate equestrian use on Old Route 30. While existing regulations normally prohibit the use of horses on foot trails, unless the trail is also specifically designated for horse use, this old town road may still be considered a public highway, and the regulation may not apply. To better inform the general public and accommodate existing equestrian uses, the town road will be signed at the entrance identifying equestrian use. Horseback riding will also be allowed on an existing path partly up Watch Hill separate from the proposed foot trail. Since existing use levels are low, this short section of path will not be designated officially as a horse trail. Impacts from horse use will be monitored. In the event that unacceptable environmental impacts cannot be addressed, the trail will be rehabilitated and/or closed to horse travel. Maintenance for equestrian use will be conducted under a stewardship agreement. (LF/OP)

Alternatives Discussion for Watch Hill

No Action Alternative - The first option considered was to do nothing and allow use to continue as is. Problems would only get worse. User created trails would continue to expand and public use would be uncontrolled. Outstanding opportunities for public recreation along a travel corridor would not be realized. Therefore, this alternative will not be supported by this UMP.

Alternative 2 - Close All Trails. This alternative would propose the closure of all trails in the area for environmental or social reasons. This option would afford the opportunity for the greatest degree of solitude but would not eliminate public use completely, since the public will still use the area. While this action would lower public use thereby limiting impacts to the ecological, scenic, and historical characteristics of the area, it would also eliminate appropriate public enjoyment of these same resources. This alternative would also be difficult to enforce given the historic use patterns in the area and easy access from the State highway. Therefore, this alternative will not be supported by this UMP.

Alternative 3 - Partial Trail Designation. This alternative would propose limiting trail designation to the existing herd paths to Watch Hill and Indian Lake. This alternative while viable, would limit the number of recreational opportunities in the area and miss an opportunity to provide a worthwhile educational experience to the general public. The lack of a nested loop trail system would require the public to repeat a trip up and down Watch Hill to return to their vehicle at the trailhead. Therefore, this alternative will not be supported by this UMP.

Alternative 4 - This area is ideal for the development of “family-oriented” trails that are short in length and require only low to moderate exertion. This Watch Hill parcel offers the opportunity for the public to see a waterfall, enjoy sandy beaches and rocky shoreline, climb to the top of a small mountain with rock outcrops, or just take a stroll along an old road. The **preferred alternative** is to provide and manage for family trails and multiple recreational opportunities in this attractive natural setting. All combination foot/ski trails will be maintained to the maintenance standards for cross-country ski trail specifications to accommodate this use.

The town of Indian Lake suggested the utilization of all proposed area trails by ATB riders to provide additional mountain bike riding opportunities in the area. The planning team considered the proposal but decided that the potential number of ATB riders, level of environmental impacts, and conflicts with other users render the proposed foot/ski trails and Watch Hill foot trail unsuitable for ATB use. While Old Route 30 will be designated for bicycle use, riders will have to park their bikes if they wish to hike on the trails to Watch Hill or Indian Lake.

Projected Use and Potential Impacts of the Preferred Alternative

The parking lot development, trail construction, and formal designation will create a safe trail system that will be maintained to Department standards. While use may increase significantly, the trails will be located along appropriate terrain and soils to minimize the need for bridging and will be hardened when necessary to limit environmental impacts. Use levels and site impacts will be closely monitored. Increased law enforcement presence will help reduce illegal tree cutting, improper fires, and other potential problems.

Environmental - A minor amount of vegetation removal will be necessary for the construction of the parking areas and new trails. The utilization of appropriate sections of existing trails will limit the amount of tree cutting necessary, rather than constructing completely new trails. Prior to any construction work, a work plan will be completed, including a tree tally. Disturbance of wetlands is not anticipated. Any wetlands work will require consultation with and/or a wetlands permit from the APA. Water quality impacts will be mitigated through proper trail

layout and trail hardening techniques. Effects on fish and wildlife populations are expected to be minor.

Social and Economic - Localized increases in traffic and highway use are anticipated to be minor. The improvement to parking will alleviate existing parking problems in the summer/fall and provide plowed winter parking that does not exist currently. The development of a viable ski trail system offers the potential to increase cross country skiing activity and be of economic benefit to the nearby communities. Formal designation of area trails should help keep users on one route, minimizing the impacts associated with people who may trespass on adjacent private lands.

Future Trails:

- Investigate the feasibility of links to future trails, such as the West Canada Wilderness to the west. Some members of the public currently visit the wilderness to view the new slide on Snowy Mountain, or the glacial erratics in the area. (LF)

E.Indian Lake Islands Administrative Camping Area

To deal specifically with recreation impact management, the Jessup River Wild Forest UMP has been divided beyond its APSLMP classification into a smaller subdivision called a special area compartment - the Indian Lake Islands Administrative Camping Area. This is an area of major concern which requires special attention. Factors considered in defining the compartment boundaries included: existing and historic recreational use patterns and the desired resource, social, and managerial setting to prevent unacceptable change as prescribed by the APSLMP.

Special Features:

The islands of Indian Lake have been a popular camping destination for over fifty years. Public access to the lake and state land is available from various points along route 30 as well as from the public boat launch in the Lewey Lake Campground. Various problems associated with unregulated use of the area became evident in the 1950's. The Indian Lake Islands Campground was established in 1960 to improve protection of the area. The presence of campground staff along with tables, fireplaces, pit privies and campsite regulations enabled the department to successfully manage recreational use. Today, the campsites are consistently among the most popular in the Adirondack Park and are referenced in numerous regional travel guides, maps, and on the Internet.

The 1972 APSLMP included the Indian Lake Islands Campground Intensive Use Area. Concern about possible future expansion of the campground may have prompted a reclassification which eliminated the Intensive Use Area in 1979. The reclassification left 20 campsites in the Siamese Ponds Wilderness Area and 35 campsites in the Jessup River Wild Forest. A perhaps unintended consequence of the action was that campsite regulations which limit party size, establish quiet hours, control pets, etc. no longer applied. Site separation distance also became important, because under the previous Intensive Use classification no separation guidelines are specified in the master plan.

Current Situation:

There are 35 designated campsites on the islands and shoreline of Indian Lake which are part of the Jessup River Wild Forest. These campsites are administered through the department's campground recreation program. There is a \$17.00 per night camping fee, and individual campsites may be reserved on the Internet. Current use of the 35 campsites is approximately 8,600 camper days annually. Campsite permits show that two thirds of campers are New Yorkers, but other states as well as several foreign countries are also represented. These recreational visitors help to support local businesses when they purchase goods and services locally. Camping fees are used to help offset the cost of maintenance and seasonal staffing. Seasonal hiring of staff also helps the local economy. The camping season runs from Memorial Day through Labor Day, although many campsites are still used after the campground officially closes.

Campsite separation distances have been carefully measured using GPS technology to determine the map coordinates of each site. The APSLMP provides that campsites should generally be at least one-quarter mile apart and out of sight and sound from each other. However, where severe terrain constraints prevent the attainment of the one-quarter mile separation, individual UMP's may provide for lesser separation distances, provided such sites remain out of sight and sound from each other and are generally not less than 500' from any other campsite.

A campsite survey was conducted in 2003 to document current management needs and site conditions. The results of this survey were used to help develop the following proposed management actions.

Off-season Use

The off-season for Indian Lake Islands Administrative Camping Area will be the fall, winter, and spring period when there is no full time staffing at the facility, approximately between Labor Day and Memorial Day. During this period, the Intensive Use Area regulations will remain in effect. The department may allow camping at the developed campsites on a first-come first-served basis. Groups of over six people per site or camping activity in excess of three nights will be regulated by permit. Day use activities such as boating, fishing, picnicking, snowmobiling, cross country skiing, snowshoeing and other legal uses will be allowed.

Specific Area Objectives:

- To protect the Forest Preserve in accordance with Article 14 and the APSLMP
- To provide recreational opportunities to the public
- To offset management costs with revenues from fees
- To provide economic benefits to local communities

Management Actions:

● Stabilization of Shoreline Entrances and Access Points (Year 1-5)

The fluctuating level of Indian Lake, sandy soil and foot traffic between the shore and campsite necessitates the stabilization of many shoreline entrances. The Stabilization of Shoreline Entrances and Access Points referenced in Management Actions, will be tailored specifically for each site listed and will follow a general planning scheme of utilizing vegetative controls where conditions warrant, with utilization of local stone rip rap and/or log cribbing in areas prone to more severe degradation. In all cases, the designs will be developed by a DEC Landscape Architect or Park Engineer, under the direction of a Licensed Professional Engineer. Final design details will be submitted to the APA for review prior to construction. Estimated cost - \$7,000

● Evaluate Site Conditions and Implement Corrective Measures (Years 1-5)

High use of the 35 campsites on Indian Lake during the camping season has the potential to adversely impact soil, vegetation and shoreline stability. A procedure will be established to monitor campsite conditions and conduct annual camper surveys. Based on this information, work plans will be developed, and, after consultation with the APA, will be implemented to address any noted deficiencies and will include site stabilization and erosion control, re-vegetation, re-location and closure, if necessary. A report on the status of planning for campsite

evaluation, relocation, stabilization and erosion control will be provided to APA in the first year and on implementation progress in the third year. Estimated cost - \$5,000/year.

- **Evaluate Pit Privies and Implement Corrective Measures (Years 1-3)**

Locations and conditions of pit privies will be evaluated to insure compliance with APSLMP guidelines and SPDES requirements. Corrective measures will be tailored specifically for each site and could include moving privies to new locations which are at least 150 feet from the mean high water mark, or where 150 foot setback cannot be met, replacement of privies with composting or vault privies. The exterior appearance of the composting or vault units would be of a rustic design, similar to the standard pit privy design and they would be located a minimum of 50 feet from the mean high water mark and screened from view as much as possible.

Estimated cost - \$35,000

- **Construct (4) Campsites (Years 1-5)**

Four (4) campsites will be constructed to accommodate the proposed relocation of (4) Campsites from the adjacent Siamese Ponds Wilderness Area special area compartment also known as the Indian Lake Islands Administrative Camping Area. The proposed changes in both UMPs will not impact the overall number of campsites located on Indian Lake but will result in improved separation between sites in the Siamese Ponds Wilderness Area. The four proposed relocated campsites are #13, 27, 44 & 46. Locations are indicated on the campsite map in the appendix. Each campsite will be located on a well drained, level area at least 100' from the shoreline. Final locations will be selected after consultation with the APA. Estimated cost - \$10,000

- **Amend Campground Regulations (Year 1)**

To provide DEC the legal authority to enforce campground rules which include requiring all campers to register, limit the number of people per site and the length of stay, establish quiet hours, and prohibit the discharge of firearms, amend 6NYCRR Section **190.0(10)** by adding "Indian Lake Islands administrative camping area" and by adding a new Section 190.7(a)(21)(g) Indian Lake Islands Administrative Camping Area. The state-owned islands and shoreline, to a point 500 feet landward from the water's edge of the eastern shore of Indian Lake beginning north of campsite #1 at the state Wild Forest boundary south to UTM gridline 4833, west on that gridline across John Mack Bay then continuing north at Gates Hill Point, then south to 500 feet south of campsite #51, then across the Jessup Bay continuing at the state Wild Forest boundary with privately owned Backlog Camp, running north around the Point, then south to the Intensive Use classified Lewey Lake Campground boundary, and including a 500 foot radius around campsite #11 on the western shore of Indian Lake at Griffin Falls, shall be designated the Indian Lake Islands Administrative Camping Area.

While a legal boundary of the administrative camping area is needed to enforce campground rules, these regulations do not limit the use of this area to paid campers and day users. The public is permitted the use of lake and shoreline for picnicking, swimming, hiking, boating, and other legal activities within the forest preserve. The public would not be allowed the use of the developed campsites unless having registered and paid appropriate fees. Estimated cost - none

- **Draft New Regulation**

Section 190.7(21)

(g) **Indian Lake Islands Administrative Camping Area**

The state-owned islands and shoreline, to a point 500 feet landward from the water's edge of the eastern shore of Indian Lake beginning north of campsite #1 at the state Wild Forest boundary south to UTM gridline 4833, west on that gridline across John Mack Bay then continuing north at Gates Hill Point, then south to 500 feet south of campsite #51, then across the Jessup Bay continuing at the state Wild Forest boundary with privately owned Backlog Camp, running north around the Point, then south to the Intensive Use classified Lewey Lake Campground boundary, and including a 500 foot radius around campsite #11 on the western shore of Indian Lake at Griffin Falls, shall be designated the Indian Lake Islands Administrative Camping Area.

(1) Notwithstanding subdivision (a)(1) of this section, day users are not required to register with the facility supervisor when entering the Indian Lake Islands Administrative Camping Area.

(2) Notwithstanding subdivision (a)(20) of this section, boats may be landed or beached at any point within the Indian Lake Islands Administrative Camping Area except at developed campsites unless having registered and paid appropriate fees.

Alternatives Discussion for Indian Lake Islands Camping Area

No Action Alternative - This option would minimize disruption because campers would be able to return to favorite sites as they have for the past 45 years. The current level of attendance would be maintained and campers would continue to patronize local businesses. Revenues from camping fees would be used to hire seasonal staff, who would provide maintenance services as well as a full time presence for the enforcement of rules and for emergency assistance. Maintenance would be provided for erosion control and rehabilitation of fireplaces, picnic tables and pit privies as necessary. However, stricter camping regulations would not apply making it impossible to enforce quiet hours, a party size limit of six, possession of firearms, etc.

Alternative 2 - The Indian Lake campsites would be treated as designated interior sites under this option. The Division of Lands and Forests would assume responsibility for their management. No camping fees would be charged, however there would be no ability to make reservations for a particular campsite. Prospective campers would have no way to determine site availability without boating to each site. Camping rules in Wild Forest and Wilderness are also less restrictive than those in developed campgrounds. The overuse problems experienced prior to the creation of the campground in 1960 would likely reemerge. Except for occasional Forest Ranger patrols, there would be no staff available on a 24 hour basis for campsite maintenance, enforcement of rules, or in emergencies. This option might be welcomed by those who want free camping, but would generate complaints from current campers who use the reservation system and would limit the department's ability to manage the area. Attendance would probably drop since the Indian Lake Islands Administrative Camping Area would not be advertised and promoted as other campgrounds are. Local businesses, who benefit from the patronage of campers, might see some decline in patronage. Local government officials would

probably express concern about the loss of the seasonal campground positions and the impact on local business.

Alternative 3 - Alternative 3 would increase site separation to a minimum 1/4 mile between campsites. However, it would be impossible to uniformly distribute campsites over the area because of the limitations imposed by topography and the lake. This would essentially mean the elimination of approximately half of the existing campsites on Indian Lake. Some of the most popular sites which offer natural sand beaches, views, and shelter would be closed to camping. Camping attendance would drop proportionally. A special regulation would be proposed to allow the application of the stricter campground rules. This option would likely generate complaints from campers and be unpopular with local businesses as well as from local government officials. Revenues from camping fees would decrease and fewer seasonal staff would be employed. Camping fees might not be enough to offset operating costs. However, capital and R&I expenditures would decrease with sites to maintain.

Alternative 4 - Some have suggested that the Indian Lake Islands Administrative Camping Area be reclassified as an Intensive Use Area as it was in 1972. This would be consistent with the master plan (page 15) which states “the presence of an existing campground requires the classification of intensive use.” A reclassification would not disrupt recreational users, attendance levels would be maintained and local businesses would benefit. Revenues from camping fees would be used to offset the cost of seasonal staff who provide maintenance services as well as a full time presence for the enforcement of rules and to provide emergency assistance. In addition, stricter camping regulations would apply making it possible to enforce quiet hours, the party size limit of six, and the possession of firearms. However, individuals and organizations concerned with wilderness protection in the Adirondack Park might oppose any change in classification which reduces the size of either the Jessup River Wild Forest or the Siamese Ponds Wilderness.

Alternative 5 - The **preferred alternative** is to continue to manage the 35 campsites on Indian Lake through the campground program as an administrative camping area. This will maintain the current Wild Forest classification and yet provide recreational opportunities for the public at a level that are consistent with protection of the forest preserve and the carrying capacity of the area. Seasonal campground staff would be available to enforce rules, maintenance and to provide assistance in the event of an emergency. A special regulation has been proposed to allow the application of the stricter campground rules.

Summary of Alternatives

Criteria	Alt 1	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5
Protect Forest Preserve	Yes	Limited	Yes	Yes	Yes
Comply With APSLMP	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Provide Recreational Opportunities	Yes	Yes	Limited	Yes	Yes
Offset Management Costs	Yes	No	Limited	Yes	Yes

Section VI - Special Area Management Plans

Support Local Economy	Yes	Limited	Limited	Yes	Yes
Strict Camping Regulations Apply	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

Projected Use and Potential Impacts of the Preferred Alternative

The administration of the campsites on Indian Lake through the campground recreation program offers the most practical means of providing for a significant level of recreational use while protecting the area from overuse. Future use of the campsites over the term of this plan is unlikely to change from the current level. The potential impact of the Indian Lake Islands Administrative Camping Area on the Forest Preserve is negligible for many reasons including the limited number of campsites, the seasonal nature of camping, the large size of the area, restrictions placed on party size, and routine maintenance activities by seasonal staff.

Site Separation Distances for Jessup River Wild Forest Campsites							
Present Condition				Proposed Condition			
Site #	Nearest Site	Unit*	Distance Between	Site #	Nearest Site	Unit*	Distance Between
1	2	JRWF	2,140'	1	2	JRWF	2,140'
2	3	JRWF	1,385'	2	3	JRWF	1,385'
3	4	JRWF	748'	3	4	JRWF	748'
4	5	JRWF	403'	4	5	JRWF	403'
5	6	JRWF	377'	5	6	JRWF	377'
6	5	JRWF	377'	6	5	JRWF	377'
7	8	JRWF	1,109'	7	8	JRWF	1,109'
8	9	JRWF	830'	8	9	JRWF	830'
9	8	JRWF	830'	9	8	JRWF	830'
10	9	JRWF	964'	10	9	JRWF	964'
11	12	JRWF	2,859'	11	13	JRWF	2,165'
12	13	SPWA	1,039'	12	13	SPWA	497'
-	-	-	-	13**	27	JRWF	276'
15	18	JRWF	332'	15	18	JRWF	332'
16	15	JRWF	349'	16	15	JRWF	349'
17	18	JRWF	155'	17	18	JRWF	155'

Section VI - Special Area Management Plans

Site Separation Distances for Jessup River Wild Forest Campsites							
Present Condition				Proposed Condition			
Site #	Nearest Site	Unit*	Distance Between	Site #	Nearest Site	Unit*	Distance Between
18	17	JRWF	155'	18	17	JRWF	155'
20	21	JRWF	804'	20	21	JRWF	804'
21	22	JRWF	145'	21	22	JRWF	145'
22	21	JRWF	145'	22	21	JRWF	145'
23	22	JRWF	479'	23	22	JRWF	479'
24	25	JRWF	145'	24	25	JRWF	145'
25	24	JRWF	145'	25	24	JRWF	145'
-	-	-	-	27**	13	JRWF	276'
28	26	SPWA	473'	28	26	SPWA	473'
32	33	SPWA	1,469'	32	33	SPWA	1,469'
34	35	JRWF	237'	34	35	JRWF	237'
35	34	JRWF	237'	35	34	JRWF	237'
36	35	JRWF	442'	36	35	JRWF	442'
37	38	JRWF	702'	37	38	JRWF	702'
38	37	JRWF	702'	38	37	JRWF	702'
39	40	JRWF	932'	39	40	JRWF	932'
40	33	SPWA	641'	40	33	SPWA	641'
-	-	-	-	44**	41	SPWA	2,209'
-	-	-	-	46**	52	JRWF	2,303'
52	54	JRWF	3,678'	52	46	JRWF	2,303'
53	54	JRWF	254'	53	54	JRWF	254'
54	53	JRWF	254'	54	53	JRWF	254'
55	54	JRWF	286'	55	54	JRWF	286'

* SPW is Siamese Ponds Wilderness; JRWF is Jessup River Wild Forest

** Proposed Relocation from Siamese Ponds Wilderness Area

F. Indian Lake/Lewey Lake/Lake Abanakee Area

This general area allows for unique year round recreational experiences due to the connection of different waterbodies and streams, large percentage of State ownership, and aesthetic qualities of the shoreline.

Present Conditions:

Indian Lake, although a reservoir, is a popular recreational destination with the characteristics of a natural body of water containing numerous islands and bays to explore, offering views of beautiful mountains, rock outcroppings and stony shoreline, along with occasional sandy beaches at the lake's edge. Indian Lake, Lewey Lake, and Lake Abanakee support shanties used for ice fishing from December through March, with the majority of use concentrated in Townline Bay, on Indian Lake. In addition, the frozen water surfaces of these lakes are used by snowmobilers and other winter enthusiasts and provide important snowmobile links to communities. Portions of these lakes are also occasionally used by ATVs in the winter. The proximity to NYS Route 30 and motorized uses on area lakes result in reduced opportunities for exploring while experiencing isolation from the sights and sounds of man, with the probability of encountering other area users being moderate to high on these waterbodies.

Snowy Mountain Trail (Some of the information for this section was derived from a 1989 memo from Willie Janeway, past ADK trails coordinator). Visual evidence of resource problems on this hiking trail is significant as the upper portions of the trail have worn through the thin soils to bedrock. The natural process of erosion is aggravated by soil compaction and the churning agitation of hiking traffic. The rough, slippery nature of the trail further encourages hikers to walk parallel to and alongside of the trail corridor, further compounding soil and plant disturbance.

In the late 1980's professional crews and volunteers from the Adirondack Mountain Club worked with DEC to correct erosion problems on parts of the Snowy Mountain trail. Intensive maintenance activity on lower portions of the Snowy Mountain Trail have hardened some of the trail surface and diverted water problems on some hillsides. The final section of trail near the summit was not worked on and is currently in very poor shape. It is reported that this upper section of trail may actually be along a portion of the original telephone line trail that went straight up the mountain.

This steep section has eroded from five to twenty feet in width and down to bedrock in several places. There are islands of soil and vegetation within this section of 30 to 40 degree slope. The edges are one to three feet in height and are losing lateral support due to rapid water runoff and the parallel herd paths. Unless appropriate action is taken, the trail area will continue to erode and widen due to the use of its edges by hikers afraid of slipping.

Snowy Mountain Tower - In 1983, the Hamilton County Board of Supervisors passed a resolution recommending preservation of the tower. The Citizens Advisory Committee unanimously endorsed retention of the tower. The tower provides views from the top of the mountain which are mostly obscured by existing vegetation at ground level. Work conducted

by DEC Operations, Office of Public Protection and Americorps staff in the Summer of 2001 included the replacement of the wood treads, some of the fencing, restoration of the cement footers and rebending of the bottom two flights of stair-tread brackets. Due to the remoteness of Snowy Mountain, all the materials and equipment were flown to the summit.

An examination of recent trail data (See use statistics for the entire unit in Section II-D.) indicates that registered public use ranges from 3,500 to 5,100 users annually. It has been estimated by the area forest ranger and the volunteer steward that only one-third to one-half of the people using the area sign the register. This would indicate that the summit and fire tower receives actual use numbers in the range of 8,000 to 11,000 visitors each year.

Snowy Mountain Trail - Register Data 1999-2003

<u>Month</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>
Jan	24	60	59	86	56
Feb	41	35	40	59	28
Mar	45	79	27	45	44
Apr	102	124	58	69	45
May	331	278	237	245	189
Jun	319	320	270	289	281
Jul	981	785	896	908	933
Aug	877	808	1012	948	911
Sep	667	480	602	483	464
Oct	351	390	367	334	372
Nov	76	64	107	7	120
Dec	51	43	73	0	55
Total	3865	5071	3748	3473	3498

An examination of the register pages for 2003 indicates several trends. The core season where use is the highest occurs between May and October. Within this five month popular period, the months of July, August, September, and October receive the greatest use, mostly on the weekends and holidays. This use is lower than what is observed on Blue Mountain where upwards of 300 individuals have signed in on peak days. Large groups do not commonly visit this area. In 2003, there were 26 days when larger groups visited Snowy Mountain with the most common group size between 10 and 12. The only large group in 2003 consisted of a total of 40 people. Most activity consists of very small groups of between two to four people in size.

Indian Lake - 4,365 acres, with a maximum depth of 83 feet and shoreline length of 49 miles. This lake has a maximum length of 12 miles and maximum width of 1 ½ miles. At the head of the lake, a dam blocks the channel. Winds can make the main portion of the lake too rough for some non-motorized recreationists. The five mile long Jessup River arm of the lake is a

narrow, one-fourth-mile-wide fjord-like channel lined by densely wooded steep terrain. This part of the lake is somewhat protected from the wind by the adjoining topography.

The public owned shoreline provides visitors with large areas of undeveloped woodland scenery and the opportunity to interact with a natural environment, with low to moderate challenge and risk. Boating, day use and camping activity has increased in recent years, part of which may be a consequence of special laws, rules, and regulations for Lake George. The high use and crowding on parts on Lake George (estimate of 2.3 acres per boat provided by Lake George Association) and area commercialization has encouraged some users to look elsewhere. Although power boating is a major activity on Indian Lake, canoeists, kayakers, and other non-motorized craft make up a significant proportion of the total numbers of watercraft users. With the exception of riparian owners, the majority of the boaters on the lake launch from the Indian Lake Boat Launch or from private marinas. Occasional hand launching occurs at the Indian Lake Dam.

There are approximately 23.0 miles of JRWF shoreline with 23 islands, greater than 1/4 acre in size. Thirteen of the islands and portions of the mainland have developed facilities (picnic tables, fireplace, privy) administered as part of the Indian Lake Islands Administrative Campground. These established tent sites and picnic areas (on Indian Lake only) contribute to the popularity of swimming and camping opportunities in the area. Trails which provide access from Indian Lake enable hiking opportunities to various waters in the Siamese Ponds Wilderness and attractive scenic overlooks in the JRWF such as Baldface Mountain and Watch Hill.

Indian River - classified as a recreational river (ECL §15-2714(3)(m)) approximately one mile from the Indian Lake dam to the southern boundary of Lot 16, Township 15, Totten and Crossfield's Purchase. The rapids below the Indian Lake dam require a short carry to proceed to Lake Abanakee.

Jessup River - This stream is easily accessible from informal parking areas at the NYS Route 30 bridge. During high water conditions, the Jessup River is navigable for 1.5 miles upstream from Indian Lake. Low water levels during the peak recreational season expose a long section of shallow rocky river before entering a narrow bay of Indian Lake. This has tended to discourage canoeing into the lake during the summer unless a portage is made over these river obstructions. The river is also navigable for approximately two miles upstream from the NYS Route 30 bridge.

Lewey Lake/Miami River - 365 acres, with a maximum depth of 58 feet and shoreline length of 4.4 miles. There are approximately 1.6 miles of JRWF shoreline mostly along the western and southern shores. The lake is somewhat protected from winds by the adjacent high mountains and is often calmer than the nearby Indian Lake. Lewey Lake and Indian Lake are connected by Lewey River, commonly known as Lewey Channel, which is approximately three feet deep. A small piled stone dam beneath the NYS Route 30 bridge prevents power boats from motoring between the lakes. When Indian Lake is full the two lakes are at the same level, later in the summer there may be a foot or two difference requiring a portage over the highway. The Lewey Lake Campground provides public access to the Miami River

approximately 1.3 miles across the lake. This river is passable for approximately one mile upstream from the lake and is utilized by a variety of recreationists including boaters, anglers, and trappers. Numerous beaver dams and log jams restrict easy passage when traveling upstream. The river is also the boundary line between the JRWF and the West Canada Lake Wilderness to the west.

Lake Abanakee - 480 acres, with a maximum depth of 21 feet and shoreline length of 9.6 miles. This lake is long and narrow with 1.2 miles of JRWF shoreline concentrated mainly in the south part of the lake near the Indian River. The dam is situated at the north end of the long axis of the lake and the Indian River enters at the opposite southern end. Public access to this lake is available from the causeway on the Big Brook Road.

The lake is popular with anglers and sustains a moderate amount of fishing pressure throughout the year. Heaviest angling use occurs during the summer months when anglers focus on catching largemouth bass, northern pike, yellow perch and brown bullhead. Lake Abanakee is also open to ice fishing in winter, when there is some angling effort for northern pike and yellow perch. Concerns over water releases and impacts to riparian owners during the summer have been expressed in the past by some members of the Lake Abanakee Civic Association. Detailed fisheries data for Lake Abanakee is provided in the Blue Mountain Wild Forest UMP, May, 1995.

Background and History of the Indian Lake Dam - Indian Lake is a reservoir impoundment that helps regulate the streamflow of the Hudson River Basin. The reservoir is formed by a stone/masonry dam with a usable capacity of 4.668 billion cubic feet at elevation, 1,651.29 ft (crest of spillway). The existing stone dam constructed in 1898, transformed the three small original lakes into the 4,365-acre two-story reservoir that is Indian Lake today. This structure was preceded by two earlier dams erected to assure a supply of water for driving logs down the Indian River.

The majority of lands under Indian Lake in TWP 32, T&C Purchase, were included in a purchase by the State of New York in 1891 and 1897. The flowage rights were reserved by the Indian River Holding Company in the 1897 deed. The rights to operate the dam were turned over to the Hudson River-Black River Regulating District (HRBRRD) from the Indian River Holding Company after a rehabilitation of the dam was completed in 1987. The HRBRRD has the right to:

"Perpetually to maintain, use, control, and operate the dam now, as well as such as may hereafter be raised, constructed, repaired, or improved at the outlet of Indian Lake...(and also)...such dam or dams as may be constructed across the Indian River lower down said river."

Background and History of the Indian Lake Caretaker Facility - In the past, a house was built adjacent to the Indian Lake Dam to provide housing for an on-site caretaker. A problem concerning the caretaker's use of the buildings and surrounding land has existed since 1916. The then Conservation Commissioner, George Pratt, gave permission for the caretaker to remain on the property and use the buildings. The Commissioner did state, however, that this

permission could be revoked. In 1946, the Attorney General determined that the occupancy is illegal under the provisions of Article XIV, Section 1 of the Constitution, Section 61 of the Conservation Law, and Section 1425 of the Penal Law.

"A right reserved by the State's grantor of forest preserve lands to maintain, use, control and operate a dam at the outlet of a lake on the lands conveyed and to enter upon such lands for the purpose of constructing, repairing, maintaining, and operating the dam does not entitle the gate tender of the dam to live upon the lands conveyed or to cut firewood thereon or cultivate a portion thereof."

The HRBRRD position after acquiring the dam rights in 1987 was to affirm their belief in a legal right to maintain an on-site dam keeper at the existing residence. The associated caretaker house, dug well, septic system, and related facilities will be maintained by the HRBRRD. Use by the HRBRRD staff of these lands and shoreline shall not be deemed exclusive. (See Appendix 19.)

Hudson River-Black River Regulating District

The HRBRRD, created by the NYS Legislature in the early 1920's, is charged under ECL Title 21, Article 15, section 15-2101 with regulating the flow of the Hudson and Black Rivers *"as required by the public welfare including health and safety."* Specifically, the District's responsibilities involve reducing floods caused by excess run-off, and augmenting river flow at times of drought or other periods when normal river flows are low. Snow melt run-off fills the reservoir in the spring capturing water that otherwise would flood downstream cities, villages, farmlands and industries. During the rest of the year, the stored water is systematically released to protect water quality standards and downstream industrial and hydroelectric sites. This action also assists navigation in the lower Hudson River and compensates for flow diverted from Hudson River at Glens Falls into Champlain (Barge) Canal.

Weather and hydrologic patterns are a prime concern to water management, so the HRBRRD operates observation stations to monitor streamflow, temperatures, precipitation, reservoir and ground water levels. To assist with this effort, HRBRRD field staff also include part-time meteorological observers. The District uses a system of automatic chart and digital recorders, remote sensing equipment and a computing system to collect and analyze meteorological and hydrological information. The data is shared with the National Weather Service and the U.S. Geological Survey, and is used in formulating District water management policy.

One USGS Surface-water Gaging Station is located on JRWF lands near the Indian River approximately one-half mile downstream from the Indian Lake Dam. It is a non-recording gage that is monitored daily. Elevation records at this location provided by HRBRRD can be viewed at: <http://waterdata.usgs.gov/ny/nwis/uv?01314500>.

Indian Lake Water Release Data (Information condensed from phone conversation - Robert Folton, HRBRRD Chief Engineer) - The management of the dam including water levels have a direct effect on JRWF lands and waters both upstream and downstream into Lake Abanakee. Indian Lake experiences significant water level fluctuation as a result of lake drawdowns for flood control. Large areas of the lake bottom are exposed for a portion of the year, especially

during the mid-and late summer months. There have been complaints both downstream and upstream due to the fluctuating water levels. Erosion of portions of the shoreline of the islands and mainland is a result of wave action, boat wakes and/or water level changes.

For many years, the operation of the Indian Lake dam had significant adverse effects on downstream aquatic life. Between the 1920s and 1980s discharge rates from the Indian Lake dam were nearly zero at times. More recently, as a result of the efforts of HRBRRD, the adverse effects of the operation of the dam on invertebrate abundance have abated. The HRBRRD have established target elevations for Indian Lake that have been in effect for the last 10 years with the goal of maintaining water quality while accommodating public recreation.

The drawdown is started when the lake is full since existing law prevents water above the spillway crest at 1650.9 feet. Target elevations: July 1(1,649.9 feet), August 1 (1,647.9 feet), Sept. 1 (1,645.9 feet), bottoming out in mid to late March (1,636.9 feet). Since 1988, when HRBRRD modified its dam release protocol after negotiations with DEC, minimum discharge rates usually have been maintained within the range of 50 to 60 cfs. This range is considered by DEC fisheries staff to be adequate for the maintenance of aquatic life between the dam and Lake Abanakee.

Relationship to the Town of Indian Lake Dam on Lake Abanakee

Most of the shoreline of Lake Abanakee is privately owned. A portion of the land along the shore of the lake is Forest Preserve land with approximately 1.2 miles of JRWF shoreline located south of NYS Route 28.

Excessive fluctuations in lake water levels caused by uncontrolled water releases could alternately expose the lake bottom and flood shoreline areas, resulting in damage to property, interference with property owners access to the lake, and reductions in the quality of shoreline aesthetics. The potential impacts of water releases on fisheries were first assessed in the 1995 Blue Mountain Wild Forest UMP. Town of Indian Lake staff have gained experience in judging lake recharge rates and have been effective in their efforts, seldom lowering Lake Abanakee gauge readings by more than two inches. The lake level gauge installed at the dam and the electronic water level monitoring system installed farther up the lake have enabled interested parties to obtain instantaneous water level readings at any time before, during or after release periods. The ability of the town of Indian Lake to maintain the water level of Lake Abanakee and minimum flows below the dam has been supported by improvements in the regulation of the Indian Lake dam.

Relationship to Adjacent Private Lands

Access to the following private lands is currently across JRWF lands without deeded easement:

International Paper (Portion of the southeast quarter of Township 32, T&C Purchase - 2,632 acres) IP owns a large block of forested land in Township 32. This property is managed for a

variety of forest related products and is also leased to individuals who have established camps in the area.

Crotched Pond Hunting & Fishing Club (Portion of the southeast quarter of Township 32, T&C Purchase - 346 acres) - In 1985, this club purchased IP land and land under the waters of Crotched Pond from IP. The acquired property also included a camp on Crotched Pond.

Round Pond Road (Lot 108, Twp. 15, T&C Purchase) - Motor vehicle use of the Round Pond Road is primarily by International Paper staff and lessees along with the Crotched Pond club members. This road crosses more than 700 feet of State land from the Big Brook Road to the JRWF boundary.

In 1975 a steel beam-rock crib bridge with a span of 48 feet was constructed under TRP across Round Lake Outlet by International Paper Company. The bridge allows IP ingress and egress to their lands in Township 32 while providing public access to the Siamese Ponds Wilderness across an existing trail easement. In 1977, this road was realigned and improved. Maintenance of the road and bridge have been conducted recently without a TRP. While use of this road over JRWF land is a benefit to both International Paper for access to its lands, and the public for access to the trail easement, problems concerning maintenance and improper use need to be examined. A portion of this road washed out in 1993. In 1994, the bridge over Round Pond Outlet was closed to motor vehicle traffic by DOT. A new bridge was constructed in 1995 by IP under a TRP.

Kunjamuk Trail Easement - The public may use the Round Pond Road to access a trail easement across IP lands to the Siamese Ponds Wilderness. This trail easement* was granted in 1954 to cross International Paper Company lands. The Kunjamuk Trail follows woods roads on International Paper Company lands in Township 32, Totten & Crossfield's Purchase. Public use is guaranteed from the JRWF boundary (Lot 108, Township 15, T&C Purchase) to the Siamese Ponds Wilderness boundary in the vicinity of Round Pond. Access to the beginning of this trail is from the Big Brook Road over the Round Pond Road and bridge over Round Lake Outlet. This DEC road is currently used by both the general public and private landowners and lessees for access. If the deeds transferring these lands to NYS do not reserve a right of access across such land, the DEC does not have the legal authority to grant unreserved rights-of-way to private property owners. Allowing unrestricted ingress and egress almost exclusively to private parties constitutes a permanent use of State lands that is neither legal nor in the best interests of the people of the State.

Public Parking Area - In 1975, International Paper granted the State a 75-foot by 25-foot area to be used as a public parking area just inside the private land boundary. To date, no official DEC parking area has been established although the Kunjamuk trail was officially marked with blue trail markers in 2005.

Recreational Activity/User Conflicts

* This easement was for the purpose of passing through or across IP's lands on foot, skis, snowshoes, or horseback. The easement allows the DEC motorized access to construct, improve, and maintain the trail.

As mentioned in previous sections of this UMP, DEC has the power to regulate use of waters totally surrounded by State lands and to regulate uses of scenic and recreational rivers. In addition, local municipalities can enact horsepower or watercraft limitations within 1,500 feet from shore. While the Indian Lake Association has discussed banning personal watercraft in the past, the number of nuisance jet skis has been greatly reduced since the private marina stopped renting them. Recent local opinion favors enforcing existing regulations.

In 2002, the Adirondack Explorer launched a Campaign for Quiet Waters to call for limits on motorized use on some Adirondack lakes, ponds, and streams that are bordered or surrounded by Forest Preserve lands. Within the JRWF, it was suggested that motorized use of the five mile long Jessup River Arm of Indian Lake would continue, but that a five mph speed limit be posted and enforced. During the planning process, letters were received from the public both in favor and opposition to banning motors in this part of the lake. The Seaplane Pilots Association strongly objects to closure to motorized craft of the southern portion of the lake since some campsites are accessible by seaplane. (See discussion of public comments in Section IV-C-27)

Some of the requests for limits on motorized use on Adirondack lakes, ponds, and streams is due to conflicts with non motorized crafts or shoreline erosion concerns caused by boat wakes. In some locations, existing laws already restrict boat speed or wake. Along the Miami and Jessup rivers, channels are generally less than 150 feet wide. Navigation Law, Article 4, §45-2 requires all motorized vessels to operate slower than 5mph within 100 feet of the shore or an anchored vessel. This law restricts all motorized craft to this slow speed helping to limit environmental impacts in shallow areas and rendering the channels safer from reckless operation. Article 4, §§46-aaa-1 and 2 provide additional regulations regarding vessel speed and wake on Indian Lake. On this waterbody, motorized watercraft are restricted for a distance of 200 feet from shore to a maximum speed limit of five mph.

An analysis using ArcView software was performed for the Jessup River Arm of Indian Lake to determine the portion of area already under protection by existing Navigation law. The results of this analysis indicate that the total size of the Jessup River Arm is approximately 580 acres, with 80 acres or 13% within the town of Indian Lake and the remaining 500 acres in the town of Lake Pleasant (including small part in the village of Speculator). The regulated area 200 feet from each shore amounts to approximately 240 acres currently protected by existing regulations. This amounts to approximately 40% of the total surface area of the Jessup River Arm where motorized vessels cannot exceed 5mph. As the water levels in the lake are lowered in the fall, the navigable portion of the Jessup River Arm is reduced. Based on reports from Indian Lake Association members, the lake does not have a heavy boating traffic during the week, and the weekend traffic is not much greater. People who paddle a canoe or kayak in the Jessup arm in June or September, would rarely be disturbed by powerboats. During July and August in the early morning there is seldom any boat traffic on the lake. The planning team discussed existing uses on the lake and did not feel that user conflicts rose to the level that a five mph posting for the entire Jessup River Arm was justified.

A rock ledge area near the spillway portion of the Indian Lake dam is a popular spot for public day use with access to this spot primarily by boat. Illegal climbing on the dam structure also

occurs. In 1994, the Hudson River Regulating District posted the dam and some adjoining NYS lands as a hazardous area. Additional safety concerns involve the public use on unsafe ice or water in front of the dam when the gates are operating, illegal rope swings, and the lack of buoys and other navigation aids. To address security and dam safety issues, the HRBRRD recently installed a log safety boom anchored to Forest Preserve lands to keep boaters away from the dam, spillway, and outlet structure. Additional fencing and signage was placed to prevent people from climbing on the dam.

Terrain and Soils

The terrain of this general area can be described as moderately rugged with some steep areas. The mesosoils within the JRWF are mostly Lyman-Rock Outcrop/Rock Outcrop-Lyman in the higher elevations and Becket-Lyman in the lower elevations. Generally, the soils are deep or moderately deep except for shallow soils on some of the higher elevations.

Vegetation/Wetlands/Wildlife

Vegetative covertypes are predominately sugar maple mesic, evergreen hardwood, with patches of spruce-fir. A small portion of a mature northern hardwood forest natural community is found in the vicinity of Lewey Lake. A report of an endangered plant species (Cloud Sedge - *Carex hayenii*, - G5, S1, Endangered, EO rank-H, Last observed in 1927) was found with a possible location radius within the JRWF in the vicinity of the northern part of Indian Lake. The majority of the wild forest area at this general location lacks wetlands with the exception of areas adjacent to the Miami River, Jessup River, and small scattered pockets near streams and drainages. Deer wintering areas have been identified on the southeast shore of the Jessup River, Bear Trap Brook, and in the vicinity of Doherty Brook.

Specific Area Objectives:

- Monitor impacts of water releases on upstream and downstream biological resources
- Identify and monitor user conflicts.
- Encourage enforcement of Navigation Law, where appropriate.
- Identify public safety concerns.
- Insure adequate public access while minimizing impacts to the adjoining travel corridor.
- Identify and evaluate existing uses, paths, and natural features to accommodate a variety of public recreational opportunities throughout the year.
- Provide primitive opportunities for free low impact camping in parts of Indian Lake.
- Investigate the feasibility of a land based snowmobile community connection between Speculator and Indian Lake.

Proposed Management Policies/Actions:

A discussion of the impacts of the town of Indian Lake rafting program on Lake Abanakee including growth-inducing impacts, mitigation measures, alternatives, lake drawdown levels, etc., will be analyzed in depth in the Hudson Gorge Primitive Area Unit Management Plan.

- Rehabilitate Snowy Mountain trail. (LF/OP)

Impacts and Management Alternatives for the Snowy Mountain trail:

No Action Alternative - The first option considered was to do nothing and allow use to continue as is. Undertaking no management action will result in further degradation of the resource, and only postpones the ultimate need to furnish a safe enjoyable hiking route to the summit with minimal environmental impact. Therefore, this option is not viable.

Alternative 2 - Strip and Scrape: This undesirable sounding remedy would serve to remove unstable elements (loose soil, rocks, etc.), from the eroded area making footing more secure, encouraging hikers to friction climb the rock. Considering the high usage of this trail by inexperienced hikers who could be expected to be afraid of the height, angle of incline and potential chance of injury, most people could be expected to continue to use the edges for security, especially when walking downhill. Also, for long periods, this eroded area can be expected to be wet if not icy. As a result erosion and widening would most likely continue. Therefore, this alternative will not be supported by this UMP.

Alternative 3 - Relocation: Relocation may be impossible due to the steep topography to the south, north and west. There may be room for several tight switchbacks on the first part of the summit cone. There is the possibility that the original trail was somehow replaced with the telephone line trail. Therefore, this option is viable and will be further investigated.

Alternative 4 - Rock Steps: When there is suitable material and soil, rock steps offer a solid natural, permanent solution. These conditions may exist on the first half of summit cone, but the final stretch appears to be void of materials. Therefore, this alternative will not be supported by this UMP.

Alternative 5 - Wood Steps: Wood steps, anchored into stable soils on the sides of the trail provide a tread and work as check dams, collecting debris while allowing revegetation to occur just above them. Where there are relatively stable banks this could work, but in many places the existing "slide" is too wide. There is not enough material near the summit to provide for the number of steps that would be needed. Due to the width of the trail, and corresponding amount of wood that would be needed, this activity would have a very high negative aesthetic impact. Therefore, this alternative will not be supported by this UMP.

Alternative 6 - Low Angle Ladders: Use of low angle wooden ladders would be a possible solution to the problem, providing a firm, solid and safe surface for hikers with some drawbacks. Their construction is very labor intensive, requiring chain saws to build, and they need to be bolted to the bedrock (four holes per 15 foot ladder). While they would work and combined with proper revegetation, would allow the eroded slides to recover, the extent to which they might detract from naturalness of the trail must be considered. Therefore, this alternative will not be supported by this UMP.

Alternative 7 - Pin Steps: This is an engineering technique developed by the US Forest Service and involves drilling holes in the bedrock for rebar which holds small custom shaped 8" by 8" treated wooden blocks for steps. This requires extensive drilling and re bar, but involves less wood than ladders or steps. Aesthetically this technique probably has less impact than ladders, but provides a less secure tread and tends to be avoided by some users. Therefore, this alternative will not be supported by this UMP.

Alternative 8 - Coated Cable(s): Cables alone have arguably the highest aesthetic impact. They could be used in conjunction with pin steps. Compared to low angle ladders and pin steps, cables are relatively inexpensive and simple to install. Use by hikers depends on circumstances at the site. On Gothics in the High Peaks Wilderness, for example, cables are used by some users and avoided by others who prefer the security of edging on the flora adjacent to the trail. On the summit of Snowy a significant number of users could be expected to take advantage of the open woods around the trail and ignore the cable. Therefore, this alternative will not be supported by this UMP.

Alternative 9 - Closure: While closure may be considered an option, it will not solve the erosion problem since some use will continue and water will continue to erode the trail. Therefore, this alternative will not be supported by this UMP.

Alternative 10 - The preferred alternative is to leave the trail in as natural, erosion resistant safe and enjoyable condition as possible for aesthetic considerations. To complete the stabilization and reconstruction of the Snowy Mountain trail, the upper portion of the trail will be relocated, if possible. If relocation of the trail is not feasible, the Department will establish switchbacks, rock steps and drainage control devices (wood or rock waterbars, etc.) on the lower part of the top section. The use of low angle wooden ladders will be used on the summit cone only if no other practical solution is possible. The restoration of the Snowy Mountain fire tower and the recent publication of a number of books popularizing fire towers is likely to cause the use of the trail to increase. However, these trail improvements are expected to harden the trail sufficiently to withstand use without significant new soil erosion.

- Encourage botanical survey to determine presence and status of Cloud Sedge . The plant was last observed in 1927. (FWMR)
- Work with HRBRRD and the town of Indian Lake to monitor water levels in the area. (FWMR)
- Enforce existing navigation law by posting and enforcing the five mph speed limit in appropriate locations. The planning team discussed existing uses on area waters and streams and did not identify areas where user conflicts rose to the level at which additional regulations would be necessary at this time. (OPP)
- Close Abanakee Loop Cross-Country Ski trails. A series of poorly designed and maintained loop trails in a small parcel of JRWF land will be closed as official trails. The small amount of public use, lack of adequate access over private lands, wet trail conditions, and lack of a formal parking area limit the suitability of this site for public skiing. Trail markers and signage will be removed and all maintenance will end. (OP/OPP)
- Develop Snowy Mountain Kiosk and Summit Display. Construct level-two “Storey kiosk” at the NYS Route 30 trailhead to provide helpful information to the general public. A large percentage of visitors to the area are not aware of trail conditions between the parking lot and the summit and may be ill equipped to make the climb. Trailhead informational signing will stress the relative difficulty of the ascent, especially when the trail is wet, and the need for proper apparel and footwear. Relevant historical, geological, and natural resource data will be provided along with a topographic map of the area. A small display exhibit is proposed for the summit area in

the vicinity of the firetower. The facility will allow users to self-interpret the historical, geological and natural resource information of the surrounding area. The display will be a valuable educational tool to supplement any DEC staff presence or a volunteer program. The design will be flexible to allow information materials to be changed and updated as necessary. (LF/OP)

- Enhance public educational efforts about the Snowy Mountain fire tower. Various restoration and interpretation activities, possibly including the installation of original equipment in the fire tower cab, the development of an informational brochure and website, and staffing the tower during the summer with an interpretive guide has been discussed. DEC is currently working with an individual to maintain the area under an AANR Agreement. (See Appendix 16.)
- Designate Canoe Carry trails (± 1.5 miles) - The intent of these carries is to provide links between area waterbodies and to help avoid river obstacles. Without formal carries, users will continue to use existing paths. Multiple paths often develop in wet areas contributing to erosion. To enhance canoeing opportunities on both Indian Lake and Lake Abanakee a short canoe carry trail will be designated beginning on the south side of the Indian Lake Dam and continuing southeast for 0.2 miles along the Dam Road. The trail will continue easterly for approximately 0.5 mile along an existing herd path to the Indian River. A short carry also needs to be marked along the east side of the Jessup River (currently a herd path) to assist portaging around a impassible river section. (OP/OPP)
- Designate/Construct Waterway Access Sites at the northern end of Indian Lake and the Jessup River. Many residents of the Indian Lake area submitted comments opposed to the idea of new facilities at the Indian Lake dam. It was felt by some people that the various proposal will increased road traffic on a narrow unpaved road, create potential security problems at the dam, encourage illegal snowmobile access, PWC launching, and add congestion to boat traffic on the northern part of the lake (Tamarack Cove). (See additional details on the waterway access site in Section IV-C-27.)
- Construct level-two type "Storey kiosk" near the Indian Lake dam to direct the public to the canoe carry trail and present information on specific rules and regulations for use of the area. It will also inform the public about this Forest Preserve land and the history of the HRBRRD caretaker house and dam. (LF/OP)
- Designate Dug Mountain Brook trail (± 0.4 miles) - There is an attractive waterfalls at the mouth of Dug Mountain Brook, where it enters the Jessup River. From the northeast shore (used as a picnic area in the past), an existing unmarked path proceeds upstream along the north bank of Dug Mountain Brook. The path generally parallels the brook leading to a pool at the base of a 40 foot high waterfall. The trail then ascends to the top of the cataract, where it terminates. To enhance short recreational family trails, this 0.4 miles path will be formally marked and designated.

The path will be maintained as a class III primitive trail and will be marked with red foot trail markers. Since the trail is accessible primarily by watercraft it is expected to only receive light to moderate use. The need for bridging or other trail hardening techniques is unknown at this time. Should bridging or other construction be necessary to cross wet areas, the appropriate permits will be obtained from the APA. (OP/OPP)

- Encourage and enforce low impact camping by closing illegal non-designated sites and not designating any camping sites within 150 feet from shore, trail, streams, or wetlands for the portion of JRWF at Watch Hill, Indian Lake Dam, Poplar Point, and Dug Mountain Brook.

Impacts and Management Alternatives of Overnight Camping on portion of Indian Lake not considered part of Indian Lake Islands Administrative Campground:

Groups and individuals presently camp on the Jessup River and parts of Indian Lake, with some groups paddling down the lake to the dam area. Several options were considered in determining a preferred management strategy for camping in the non-campground administered portion of the lake that minimizes potential conflicts with campground site users:

No Action Alternative - Not a solution, problems with illegal or inappropriate camping could develop as the area becomes more popular and facilities such as trails are designated. Illegal user created sites close to shore would continue to expand and public use would be unregulated. Camping activity that is not out of sight & sound from the numbered campground sites would invite conflicts between the two types of users possibly leading to complaints and/or confrontations. Therefore, this alternative will not be supported by this UMP.

Alternative 2 - Close Watch Hill, Indian Lake Dam, Poplar Point, and Dug Mt. Brook areas to all camping within 500 feet from shore: The developed campground sites offer the recreational public the opportunity to insure in advance by reservation an attractive shoreline camping location with amenities such as fireplace, picnic tables and pit privy. For some recreational users, the freedom to camp for free on a primitive camping spot of ones own choosing in an area as natural as possible without the need for site amenities, is an important component of their Forest Preserve experience. If all camping was restricted to the developed Indian Lake Islands Administrative Campground sites, the ability to camp along a large portion of the lake that was never part of the campground would be severely restricted. Recreational users and youth groups passing through Indian Lake from camping areas along the Jessup River and connecting to Lake Abanakee would find it inconvenient or impossible to find an available campground site on popular weekends. Therefore, this alternative will not be supported by this UMP.

Alternative 3 - Designated Site Camping: Designate sites near the shoreline of Indian Lake (non administrative campground portion) for primitive camping. Public camping in the non-campground administered portion of Indian Lake could be enhanced by the designation and construction of several primitive tentsites consisting of a fire ring and flat spot for a tent. They would be administered on a first come-first served basis. The small number of these sites would be inadequate for the anticipated demand in this popular area. The public would be confused why they are required to pay for some sites and not others. The free sites would probably be utilize more heavily by people from nearby communities, making them unavailable to recreational users who have to spend time traveling to the area, especially on weekends. Care, custody & control of any sites outside of the campground would be the responsibility of Lands and Forest staff and would involve controlling excessive noise in the middle of the night, removal of garbage left on site, and other administrative concerns. While the physical locations of designated sites would be under Department control and site impacts

could be minimized by proper site placement and spacing the anticipated social problems and lack of onsite staff to properly maintain these sites outweigh the beneficial aspects. Therefore, this alternative will not be supported by this UMP.

Alternative 4 - Regulated Camping: This alternative would propose limiting use near the shoreline of Indian Lake (non campground portion) to designated sites only or restricting camping by permit only. This alternative would be similar to alternative 4 by providing developed sites for primitive camping. Additional regulations would restrict all camping in these areas to designated sites only. While this alternative would enable enforcement of established carrying capacities for the area, the strategy is difficult to manage in the field and would cause administrative problems when users show up last minute looking for a site or permit. Therefore, this alternative will not be supported by this UMP.

Alternative 5 - With the exception of the area identified as the Indian Lake Islands Administrative Campground (See 500 foot shoreline buffer identified on map), the **preferred alternative** proposes so-called “at-large” camping to be allowed within the JRWF at the Watch Hill, Indian Lake Dam parcel, Poplar Point, and Jessup River areas in accordance with 6NYCRR, §190.3(b). This regulation prohibits camping within 150 feet any road, trail, spring, stream, pond, or other body of water except at camping areas designated by the department. This alternative would propose the closure of all existing illegal user created primitive tent sites within 150 feet of water or road for environmental or social reasons. No designated sites will be provided but dispersed camping using low-impact techniques will be allowed. In order not to conflict with day use activities, additional locations such as Paradise Beach, Dug Mountain Brook Falls, Griffin Falls, and the Indian Lake Dam will be closed to camping by signage or regulation.

A review of all the alternatives shows that each has advantages and disadvantages. In comparing alternatives, their benefits and drawbacks were weighed in terms of their relevance to the objectives for the entire Indian Lake area. Long-term benefits were given more weight than one-time costs such as site development. The preferred alternative is the most desirable option since it allows for a type of camping that would not interfere with the administration of the campground portion of the lake.

Projected Use and Potential Impacts of the Preferred Alternative

The lack of site designation and identification on area maps or brochure would discourage the majority of the public from camping at these locations. The small amount of camping that will occur by users practicing low-impact camping techniques will be minimal and widely dispersed, with few if any anticipated environmental or social impacts. Use levels and site impacts will be monitored. If LAC standards are exceeded, or specific sites start receiving constant use the possibility of limited designation may be considered.

Proposed Snowmobile Trail Improvements

- Construct Big Brook Road Parking Area, 10 vehicles (including one accessible space) , to be plowed. A suitable parking area is necessary for this location upon completion of the proposed Round Pond Brook Snowmobile trail. Currently, vehicles park at the small plowed area along the road shoulder next to the bridge. This area is mostly used

by lessees or the owners of the Crotched Pond property. The proposed rectangular parking area will be located in an existing open field and will be designed to accommodate a total of 10 vehicles with trailers. Arrangements will be made with the town of Indian Lake to provide for snow removal in the winter. (LF/OP)

- Relocate Crow Hill Trail (± 0.1 miles). In an effort to enhance snowmobiling, the town of Indian Lake is attempting to relocate a portion of the Indian Lake-Sabael Trail in the vicinity of Crow Hill. The purpose of this change is to realign some private land crossings and to move the existing trail section over JRWF lands from an unsuitable wet section along a creek bed. If the town of Indian Lake can negotiate a grant-of-permission agreement with the new private landowners, DEC would be willing to consider the relocation proposal. This change would remove approximately .5 miles of trail from JRWF lands, with the new trail section only crossing 0.1 mile of JRWF lands in the northwest corner of Lot 27.
- Designate Round Pond Brook Snowmobile trail (Preferred Alternative Option B ± 2.7 miles). A new trail is proposed to allow snowmobilers to travel from Pratt Road to Jerry Savarie Road in the town of Indian Lake. This trail will enable residents of the Big Brook area to connect with the town and county trail systems. In 1995, the Indian Lake town board voted to authorize this trail in addition to approving designation of Pratt Road and Jerry Savarie Road as snowmobile trails.

Option A - A suitable route was investigated by volunteers from the town of Indian Lake, the area forest ranger, and town staff. This proposed trail would cross two parcels of private land. Grant of permission agreements from these landowners have been secured. Permission from the private landowners is primarily for winter use, thereby limiting a year-round trail that could connect the two roads. Total trail length will be approximately three miles, of which 2.5 miles would cross JRWF lands. A bridge would need to be constructed to cross Round Pond Brook.

Option B - An alternative start to the proposed Round Pond Brook snowmobile trail is possible through International Paper lands. With IP's permission (in accordance with the conservation easement for the property) the trail would begin along Round Pond Road continuing over approximately one mile of IP woods roads to the State boundary. From the boundary, a new trail would have to be constructed for a distance of approximately 0.7 mile along the east side of Baldface Mountain before continuing northerly across Jerry Pond Outlet for an additional two miles to the Jerry Savarie Road at a point east of Jerry Pond.

Option B is the **preferred alternative** for a number of reasons. State land on Big Brook Road would enable the development of a suitable winter parking area, that is not possible in Option A. This trail location would also avoid the need to build a large bridge to cross Round Pond Brook. Another advantage would be the ability to consider in the future designation of the trail for multiple uses, instead of just winter snowmobiling.

The trail will be considered a Class B snowmobile trail and will be marked with blue trail markers. It is expected to receive heavy use and will also be designed to accommodate use by other types of recreation, including hikers, bicyclists, etc.

Lake Pleasant - Indian Lake Snowmobile Trail Community Connection System

In the past snowmobile riders traveling between Indian Lake and Speculator or Arietta had to cross the dangerous "narrows" portion of the frozen surface of Indian Lake. This area can be hazardous, as evidenced by the death of a snowmobiler through the ice in 1993. After the accident, the town of Lake Pleasant proposed a change to the existing snowmobile trail system and DEC and APA staff authorized a temporary relocation in 1994. Approval was granted to clear, maintain, and groom on a temporary basis approximately three and one-half miles of snowmobile trail. The majority (2.2 miles) of this route follows portions of the old snowmobile trail within the NYS Route 30 ROW.

Bridges were rebuilt but no other tree cutting or trail improvements were made. The use of this temporary trail enabled snowmobiles to travel from Speculator to Indian Lake until a more permanent and suitable trail was located and developed. In order to promote use of the reopened trail and discourage use of the unsafe trail, the town of Lake Pleasant suspended grooming of the existing trail to Indian Lake.

More recent efforts by town and DEC staff concentrated on finding a suitable route that would safely link the communities of Arietta, Speculator, and Indian Lake and avoid water crossings as much as possible. For safety reasons, trails should be kept off highways (especially major highways) and waterbodies. However, trails must also be sited with environmental considerations in mind: rare and endangered plant and animal species and their habitats should be avoided; deer wintering yards should be avoided; vegetative disturbance should be minimized; wetlands and areas with poor drainage or steep slopes should be avoided; tree cutting should be minimized and the trail canopy preserved.

Following the release of the proposed final JRWF UMP, it was determined that additional field work was needed to adequately identify the most appropriate snowmobile route and possible alternatives for a new snowmobile trail in the vicinity of Pine Hill. A detailed alternative analysis and identification of a preferred alternative will be conducted during year one. The preferred alternative will then be submitted to the APA for approval through the UMP amendment process.

- Amend UMP to Address Speculator-Indian Lake trail

In the draft UMP, an interior snowmobile trail was proposed from the south end of Indian Lake to Lewey Lake campground, passing next to Pine Hill. During the public comment period, several letters and numerous signature cards from one adjoining landowner opposed the proposed trail location identified in the draft UMP. Some comments suggested the relocation and creation of new snowmobile routes must conform to the definition of a snowmobile trail under the APSLMP. It was suggested that Community Connector snowmobile routes should be located on the periphery of wild forest units and the mileage of new routes must be offset by the phase out of snowmobile trails in the interior of Wild Forest Areas.

An alternative route was proposed by members of Backlog Camp, in cooperation with adjoining private landowners near Lewey Lake who are directly affected by the proposed trail. The alternative proposal would relocate the existing roadside NYS Route 30 trail further into the woods in some locations, then looping around private land beside Pine Hill, eventually turning northerly to the Lewey Lake campsites on the "Quaker Loop".

Both alternatives eliminate the Lewey Lake snowmobile crossing and are desirable since this reduces overall trail mileage over ice. Department efforts will concentrate on finding a viable snowmobile route that minimizes new mileage over JRWF lands while limiting conflicts with adjoining landowners. Since the preferred route is not decided at this time, the UMP will be amended to accommodate this important snowmobile trail after further field investigation in year 1. After the selection of the preferred alternative and amendment of the UMP, the trail will be constructed. The trail will be considered a Class A snowmobile trail and will be marked with blue trail markers.

The feasibility of a future snowmobile connection to the hamlet of Indian Lake has not been adequately identified at this time. The presence of a wilderness area on the west side of NYS Route 30, large amount of private lands, steep terrain over a flank of Squaw Mountain make a completely land based route over State lands difficult. Because of the ownership patterns in this area, it may be necessary for the new trail to cross sections of private land. The Department will not place snowmobile trails on private land without the owner's permission. This phase could only continue if the town of Indian Lake was able to secure permission from private landowners and a suitable route could be found.

Potential Future Proposals

A few proposals while considered desirable need further consideration and study. It is suggested that these proposals be investigated during the five year term of this UMP and considered in future revisions of the UMP or through a UMP amendment, if determined to be feasible and necessary.

- Investigate the need for buoys on Indian and Lewey lakes. The increase in recreational water-based activities on Indian Lake has led to an increased potential for drowning and other water related accidents. The lack of buoys and other navigation aids renders parts of the lake hazardous to the inexperienced user. ECL, Article 41, §41-0103 states that "*the department shall, within the sixth park region, administer Articles 3 and 11 of the Navigation law.*" Section 35 of the Navigation Law allows for the placement, by the department, of navigation aids on lakes and rivers in the Adirondack Park.

There has been public disagreement over how to provide for safer motorboat use on Indian Lake. The CAC campground subcommittee recommended the charting and buoying of boating hazards in Indian Lake and Lewey Lake as funds become available. Other individuals, landowners and the lake association are opposed to the addition of orange and white bouys, feeling that the wild character of the area would suffer.
(LF/OP)

- Investigate the need for Kunjamuk Trail Parking Area, (IP lands-authorized by easement) A parking area is needed to accommodate users when the Old Kunjamuk Road is opened as a foot and cross-country ski trail as identified in the Siamese Ponds Wilderness UMP. While there is a current agreement between International Paper Company and the Department allowing for the construction of such a parking area, the conservation easement for these International Paper Company lands (Phase 2) will require the identification of parking needs and access to the entire Crotched Pond Tract. This will be addressed in the future recreation plan. (LF/OP)
- Evaluate potential for North Country National Scenic Trail (NCNST) - (See Appendix 21 for map of original route, the final route is not decided at this time.)

The NCNST is a proposed interstate trail system extending 3,200 miles from the vicinity of Crown Point, New York, through the states of New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota, eventually joining the Lewis and Clark Trail at Lake Sakakawea, North Dakota. The United States Department of Interior is the main administering agency for this facility. The section through the Adirondacks does not currently exist, however, the final route will likely use existing trails and some new trail construction. A separate comprehensive trail plan is being developed for this long trail.

In New York, the DEC as the lead agency has proposed a broad corridor concept for the trail originating at Crown Point and traveling in a southwesterly direction to enter Pennsylvania in the vicinity of Allegheny State Park. The original 1982 proposed corridor traverses the JRWF from the Haskell Road along the existing Northville-Lake Placid trail. The original route has been re-evaluated in light of the findings of the High Peaks Wilderness citizens advisory committee. A southern New York route terminating at the Appalachian Trail and alternative routes avoiding the High Peaks Wilderness are under consideration. These options would avoid the Northville-Lake Placid trail section through the JRWF. At the time of development of this UMP, there were several proposed routes through the Park, one of which passes through JRWF. The Department plans to finalize the entire route through the Adirondack Park. Other routes were identified in a 1997 issue paper prepared by the National Park Service. The suggested route that crossed the JRWF was described in one of the alternatives:

“would enter from the West Canada Lake Wilderness in the vicinity of the Pillsbury Mountain trailhead. The proposed trail would skirt the south and southeast flanks of Page Mountain, cross the Miami River, pass to the south of Mason Lake, cross the Jessup River and continue along the arm of Indian Lake into the Siamese Ponds Wilderness.”

Since the actual trail designation is contingent upon a final route and completion of the unit management plans for all Forest Preserve lands involved, only a general outline of the proposal is possible within this document. If the preferred route passes through the JRWF, a comparison and field evaluation of suitable routes will be conducted. A detailed work plan will be prepared and the UMP amended before any construction or designation occurs.

