

VI. SPECIAL AREA MANAGEMENT PLANS

In order to better manage and control recreational uses and impacts in a few popular locations within the JRWF, these special area plans with maps were developed. While all proposed new facilities were briefly described in Section IV, a higher level of detail with maps was considered necessary for the areas around Fawn and Sacandaga lakes, Fall Lake and Fall Stream, Mason Lake, Watch Hill, Indian Lake Islands Administrative Camping Area, and Indian Lake/Lake Abanakee. At each of these locations the following assessments were made to help ensure that the proposed developments would have the least impact on the natural environment, other users, or adjoining private lands.

Analysis of Physical Conditions - An analysis of the physical conditions along the proposed trail corridors, day use areas and parking locations was performed to identify conditions which could present construction and operational problems (hazards) as well as to identify natural attractions which may add to the enjoyment of these areas.

Physiographic Conditions - Generalized slope conditions were reviewed. Areas of excessive slopes were identified. Route modifications in some cases were necessitated by this condition.

Soils - Areas of poorly drained soils are generally unsuitable for recreational trail development without extensive improvements to harden the trail tread surface or control water drainage. Meso-intensity soil survey maps were viewed. Areas of wet soil, muck, and other sensitive or unstable soil conditions will be avoided whenever possible.

Surface Drainage and Surface Water Areas - Streams, wetlands, lakes and ponds all restrict the placement of recreational facilities. In general, trail crossings of these features were avoided whenever possible.

Natural Environmental and Biological Resources - Records of sensitive and unique biological resources in these areas were reviewed through the Department's Master Habitat Data Bank (MHDB). Efforts were made to avoid locating facilities in deer wintering areas or other significant habitats. Detailed Fish, Wildlife and Marine Resources information for these areas is found throughout the UMP and in the Appendices.

Social Factors - New facility construction and/or designation of trails took into account the location of existing recreational trails in the general area and unit in particular. Of particular concern was the placement of trailheads since they determine the traffic flow and pattern of activity of the area. Another factor included sensitivity to the presence of neighbors living adjacent to the JRWF. Development of new or expanded facilities will be done in such a manner as to minimize whenever possible, the degree of negative impacts to adjoining private landowners.

In outline, the Department's LAC approach in managing the JRWF and these special management areas in particular will include:

- The identification of acceptable resource and social conditions by measurable indicators;

- An analysis of the relationship between existing conditions and those desired;
- Determinations of the necessary management actions needed to achieve desired conditions; and,
- A monitoring program to see if objectives are being met.

In all cases, proposed management actions will emphasize protecting the area's natural resources while accommodating appropriate public use and Department administrative needs.

IP Conservation Easement Lands (Speculator Tree Farm and Perkins Clearing) Areas

During Phase I of the Hamilton 308 acquisition project, approximately 138 acres of International Paper land located in the south-central portion of the Adirondack Park were acquired in fee* and a total of 39,578 acres were acquired under conservation easement A or B. The majority of the Speculator Tree Farm and Perkins Clearing lands will be subject to Conservation Easement A that will allow public access, resource conservation, and sustainable timber management. These IP lands are located adjacent to the JRWF and will be subject to an Interim Recreation Management Plan.

There is a long history of people using International Paper Company lands on both the Speculator Tree Farm and Perkins Clearing areas for a variety of recreational activities. Public uses have included snowmobiling, hunting, fishing (from banks, wading, and from watercraft), trapping, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing on groomed trails, walking and hiking, mountain biking, wildlife observation, canoeing/kayaking, and pleasure driving. While the general public was allowed to utilize the property for recreational purposes certain activities such riding ATVs, camping, or building fires were prohibited. In general, the parts of the Speculator Tree Farm and Perkins Clearing that were open to the public previously will remain open subject to the easement conditions. Areas that were generally off-limits to the public and leased to hunting and fishing clubs will be closed to the public with the possible exception of limited recreation rights on identified corridors and trails.

Portions of IP lands with recreational connections to the JRWF include: Sacandaga River (Main Branch - from Speculator downstream to Auger Flats), Jessup River (NYS Route 30 bridge upstream to Perkins Clearing Road), Austin Falls, and area snowmobile trails.

While camping was prohibited on IP lands previously, the easement will allow this activity in the future. Additional recreation facilities such a cross country ski, all terrain bicycle, and equestrian use will take advantage of the extensive existing road system. The development of campsites, trails, and parking facilities on IP lands will reduce the need to develop similar facilities on the adjoining State lands.

While the Interim Recreation Plan is beyond the scope of this UMP, public recreation on these International Paper lands and the access to State lands they provide are briefly mentioned in this plan since they have a direct bearing on existing and future recreational activities in the JRWF.

*The 105 acres of lands to be purchased fee title from IP consists of the area between Old Route 8 and the Sacandaga River and the five acre Auger Falls Picnic Area. This land will be managed as unclassified Forest Preserve and will be included in the appropriate Unit Management Plan after the formal classification process.

A.Fawn Lake/Sacandaga Lake Area

This area consists of the JRWF lands at the end of Fawn Lake Road and north of Sacandaga Lake in the town of Lake Pleasant. These State lands serve as both a trailhead providing important access to snowmobile trails along with waterway access to Sacandaga Lake and Fawn Lake.

Present Conditions:

A fair amount of use occurs at this area consisting of day hikers, campers, anglers, and swimmers in the spring, summer and fall along with significant numbers of snowmobilers in the winter. The natural sandy beach/swimming areas on the north end of Fawn Lake and the western shore of Sacandaga Lake are popular attractions in the summer. Current public vehicle access in this area occurs on the open DEC road to the Peasley residence. Existing informal shoulder parking areas on either side of the end of the Fawn Lake Road, and near the Fawn Lake trail register are filled to capacity on some weekends and holidays. The parking is considered inadequate and poorly located since vehicles park wherever they can, often partially within the road ROW at the town road turnaround (posted against parking), or next to the Peasley residence. The frozen water surface of both lakes are used by snowmobilers, Sacandaga Lake being an important link connecting two separate DEC snowmobile trails.

Fawn Lake

This interior water is a popular camping, fishing, and day hiking location and is only a short ½ mile walk along an old road. The proximity to NYS Route 8 and short hike to Fawn Lake increase the likelihood of encountering other area users especially at the beach on the north shore. With the exception of snowmobiling in the winter months, the majority of public use occurs during July and August. Occasional large day use groups (predominantly from nearby Camp Fowler, Camp of the Woods or Deerfoot Lodge) visit the lake.

In addition to the popular day use activities such as swimming at the beach, hiking, and fishing, camping occurs on the scattered un-designated campsites around Fawn Lake. The campsites at the northern end of the lake are too close to the water and trail, and show evidence of physical impact from users. While the sites on the west side of the lake are somewhat accessible by foot, the existing paths are overgrown in places, with most access probably occurring by boat. The heavy day use at the sandy beach at the north end of the lake has led to problems with human sanitation, complicated by nearby area wetlands. Illegal boat storage occurs predominately on the eastern shoreline, with 12 unattended canoes and/or rowboats documented in 2003.

One public comment on the draft plan suggested the prohibition of motorboats and floatplanes from Fawn Lake. Motor boat and floatplane use is legal in wild forest waters. The long history of occasional motorboat use and general lack of public complaints or natural resource damage, led the plan to allow these uses to continue. In addition, floatplane use would enable people with mobility impairments easy access to the proposed accessible camping site on the eastern shore of Fawn Lake. One public comment asked for the removal of the Fawn Lake lean-to proposal, suggesting that there is no need to further enhance public use of the lake with such a facility. It was reported that the advantages of having a lean-to on the lake in the winter months

does not outweigh the impact of having one there for the summer months. The criteria used to determine suitable lean-to locations is discussed in Section IV-C-16. Fawn Lake was determined to be a suitable location and could accommodate a lean-to on the southwest shore.

Sacandaga Lake

Due to the large amount of JRWF land along the western shoreline, the public has the opportunity for a high degree of interaction with the natural environment, often with low or moderate challenge and risk. The proximity of the trailhead to NYS Route 8 and motorized uses on Sacandaga Lake result in reduced 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.

Snowmobile Trail Changes

Public concerns, recent purchase of recreational rights on adjacent International Paper Company lands, and the desire to insure the best possible future snowmobile trail system for the area, led the Department to consider various snowmobile trail configurations that would involve changes to portions of NYS Snowmobile Corridors 4 and 8 located between Piseco and IP lands in the vicinity of Perkins Clearing. Discussions with local government officials, snowmobile clubs, other groups, and interested individuals resulted in the identification of Alternative E, Option 3 as the preferred Department alternative. (See Appendix 25.) Using a combination of existing and proposed new snowmobile trails, the proposed Fish Mountain snowmobile trail would enable a land based connection between Piseco, Speculator, and IP lands to the north.

The full implementation of Alternative E, Option 3 would include construction of the Fish Mountain trail (section between CR24 and the IP boundary near Mud Lake), re-opening of the Mud Lake trail (to connect to public parking at the campground), and construction of a new 1.7 mile spur trail near Brister Brook to connect with snowmobile trails east of NYS Route 30. This proposal will require approximately 12.1 miles of new snowmobile trail, while eliminating the need for snowmobile use on 5.4 miles of the Piseco-Perkins Clearing trail, 1.2 miles of the Mossy Vly Spur, and 2.5 miles of the western part of the Fawn Lake trail.

The result would be an increase in three miles of snowmobile trails in the local area with the beneficial aspect of providing a land based route between communities. While snowmobile use levels are expected to increase slightly, a large portion of snowmobile activity will continue to use the existing Oxbow - Sacandaga Lake trail.

Adjoining Private Uses:

Information on the structures occupied by Mr. and Mrs. John Peasley can be found in Section IV-C-4 and Section III-A-4. The maintenance and use of these buildings are authorized by the terms and conditions of a 1981 agreement. When the existing housing accommodations are no longer used or occupied by the individuals authorized under the agreement, the State buildings will be demolished and the site will be converted into an accessible camping and waterway access site.

Terrain/Soils

The terrain of this area can best be described as rolling hills with occasional steep areas like Vly Lake Mountain and Fish Mountain. The mesosols of the area are mostly Pillsbury-Lyme and Becket-Skerry in the higher elevations and along the lakeshores with Greenwood-Cathro in the lowlands and vlies. Generally, the soils are deep except for shallow soils and rock outcrops on some of the higher elevations.

Vegetation/Wetlands/Wildlife

Vegetative covertypes are predominately evergreen northern hardwood and evergreen wetlands with patches of spruce-fir and sugar maple mesic. The eastern edge of an old-growth beech-sugar maple dominated forest community has been identified in this general area. Otherwise, plant life is generally similar to other areas of the JRWF with the exception of wetland plant species in the inlets and vlies. Wetlands have been identified on small parts of the shore of both Sacandaga and Fawn lakes, but are more common along the inlets at Burnt Place Brook, Hatchery Brook and Fawn Lake Vly.

Two deer wintering areas have been identified on the northern and eastern shore of Fawn Lake. The occurrence of a large great blue heron rookery was first observed in the Fawn/Sacandaga Lake area in 1978. The current status of this nesting site is unknown.

Specific Area Objectives:

- Insure adequate public access while minimizing impacts to nearby private residences.
- Improve facilities to better manage the area and mitigate user impacts.
- Provide camping opportunities within the capacity of the area to withstand use.
- Enhance snowmobile community connections between Speculator and Arietta
- Link appropriate recreational opportunities to the adjoining Moffitt Beach campground.
- Bring primitive tent sites into compliance with APSLMP separation requirements.

Proposed Management Policies/Actions:

- Monitor area trails within the old-growth beech-sugar maple vegetative community for exotic plants and follow trends in the beech scale necrotic complex disease. (FW/LF)
- Inspect heron rookery site to determine current status and condition. If the site is still active, the location will be protected from excessive human disturbance while birds are nesting during the breeding season. (FW/LF)
- Enforce existing navigation law by posting and enforcing the 5mph speed limit in navigable channels of Burnt Place Brook and Hatchery Brook. (OPP)
- Barricade Peasley Access Road with pipe gate to restrict public motor vehicle use on a 0.1 mile section of privately maintained road. This road is being closed to the general public for motor vehicle use to help prevent conflicts between the public and Mr. and Mrs. John Peasley at their residence. (LF/OP)
- Expand Fawn Lake Road existing parking to accommodate 15 vehicles, (End of Fawn Lake Road, including one accessible space) and construct additional two car accessible only parking area near Sacandaga Lake. Close parking near the Fawn Lake trailhead.

Public parking consists of undeveloped road shoulder pulloffs and is considered inadequate for the network of existing and future proposed trails from this location. A formal developed parking area is necessary to limit conflicts with town road

maintenance or nearby private landowners. Two rectangular gravel parking lots will be constructed adjacent to the road, designed to accommodate a total of 15 vehicles, taking advantage of the large existing road shoulder. The proposed parking lot will consolidate general public parking at one location and help prevent conflicts between the public and the Peasley residence on Sacandaga Lake. Since this parking lot will serve a combination of uses (people walking the old road to Sacandaga Lake, existing Fawn Lake trail and the proposed Fish Mountain Snowmobile trail relocation) an adequate sized facility was needed in order to accommodate a wide variety of public recreational uses. The proposed parking area size was designed taking into consideration the use capacity of the interior, adjoining waterbodies, and need to accommodate vehicles with snowmobile trailers in the winter.

Since a large portion of the facility will be located within the existing cleared right-of-way, only a minor amount of tree cutting will be needed. The Department will consult with the town of Lake Pleasant prior to construction. Arrangements will be made with the town to provide for snow removal for access to winter recreational opportunities. Install a new level-two type "Storey kiosk" at the trailhead parking area. (LF/OPP)

- Designate the Peasley Access Road as open for CP-3 motor vehicle use between the end of the town road (Fawn Lake Road parking area) and the proposed accessible parking area. Minor gravel application and road drainage work will allow this road to be usable for three seasons of the year. (LF/OP)
- Develop an accessible picnic area with two tables, privy, and associated accessible two-car parking area and access path to ADA/ADAAG standards near the end of the Peasley Access Road. Construct accessible path from parking area to picnic area just north of the Peasley residence. Since general public parking will be available at the Fawn Lake Road, public use of the access road and accessible two-car parking lot will be limited to individuals with mobility impairments who possess a CP-3 permit. Persons with disabilities will need to plan on assistance from family members or friends if they wish to access Sacandaga Lake itself. Restrict general public parking and camping by signage. (LF/OP)
- Inventory and rate the proposed 0.5 mile Fawn Lake foot/ski trail for accessibility using UTAP. See Section IV-D-5. (LF/OP)
- Identify and evaluate Fawn Lake camping opportunities on the 3.7 miles of JRWF shoreline. Fourteen undesignated tentsites currently exist at Fawn Lake. Designate and/or construct seven sites taking into consideration day use of the area, appropriate existing sites, APSLMP spacing guidelines, and terrain constraints. Construct and designate one of these sites (accessible firering, privy, tentsite, and picnic table) near the end of the proposed foot/cross country ski trail to Fawn Lake for exclusive use by persons with disabilities, using the proposed and/or adopted ADAAG. Close sites three, four, and five at the north end of the lake next to the beach area due to conflicts with day users and environmental constraints. Close sites eight, 11, and 12 that are unsuitable, too close to the water, or do not comply with APSLMP spacing guidelines. (LF/OP)
- Issue group camping (10 persons or more) permits only at the one designated group camping area at the northwest part of Fawn Lake. Total capacity of the site will not exceed 20 people. Post signage restricting camping at the site to camping by permit only. Site numbers comprising group site include sites six and seven.

- Identify and evaluate camping opportunities on the 3.2 miles of Sacandaga Lake shoreline within the JRWF. Three undesignated tentsites currently exist at Sacandaga Lake. Designate and/or construct three sites (specific locations need to be determined) taking into consideration day use of the area, appropriate existing sites, APSLMP guidelines, and terrain constraints. Construct and designate one of these sites (including accessible firering, privy, tentsite, and picnic table) or suitable substitute location for use by persons with disabilities, using the proposed and/or adopted ADAAG. Close unsuitable sites. (LF/OP)
- Construct a lean-to on the southwest shore of Fawn Lake. This remote location will help spread out use on the lake, while helping to avoid problems associated with lean-tos close to roads. Access will be primarily by watercraft or by a combination of existing snowmobile trail and 1.5 miles of proposed foot/ski trail (Piseco-Speculator trail) on the west shore of the lake. To allow for greater diversity of use, permits to camp for more than three nights will not be issued for the proposed lean-to or for other sites in heavy demand during the core camping season. (LF/OP)
- Construct Fish Mountain trail (\pm 12.1 miles, including spurs to Mud Lake, Moffitt Beach Campground and Brister Brook) - The existing Oxbow - Sacandaga Lake trail (Corridor trail - C4) is a very heavily used snowmobile trail connecting these two waterbodies and associated amenities. While a portion of this trail is on State lands, the majority of the snowmobile trail crosses private land that is not secured by an easement. The need to cross frozen waterbodies, especially early and late in the season, has been reported to discourage some snowmobilers from riding in this area because they do not have confidence in the safety of the lakes. Concerns over water crossings, rough existing trail conditions on the Piseco - Perkins Clearing trail, redundant trails, and ways to improve community connections led to the identification of Alternative E, Option 3 as the preferred long term solution for snowmobiling in the southern portion of the JRWF. (See detailed alternative analysis and proposed trail route in Appendix 25.)

Since the Fish Mountain trail will be multiply marked for different recreational uses in addition to snowmobiling, it is broken down for description purposes into three separate trail segments.

Mud Lake segment (\pm 2.4 miles, plus short 0.4 mile spur trail to the IP boundary line) - The proposed Mud Lake foot/snowmobile/bike trail would begin at the public parking area in Moffitt Beach Campground and utilize campground utility line clearing, roads, and new trail construction for approximately 0.5 miles to the wild forest boundary. The trail will continue northeasterly for approximately 0.4 miles to intersect an old snowmobile trail in the vicinity of Hatchery Brook crossing. The trail will continue generally northwesterly along the old snowmobile trail when appropriate, for a distance of approximately 2.0 miles to Mud Lake. In cooperation with town of Lake Pleasant efforts for local ATB trail systems, this trail will provide a link to ATB riding opportunities on IP lands in the Perkins Clearing area. This trail may be suitable for “family” use since it has varied and interesting scenery; is located on relatively gentle terrain; offers a good return in terms of overall mileage compared to new trail construction; and requires no new parking facilities. Due to its campground beginning, it is expected to be a popular trail for campground users and the general public. Utilizing

parts of the old existing snowmobile trail will help limit the number of trees needed to be cut. Construction of the trail will not begin until the trail proposal is approved in an amendment to the Moffitt Beach Campground UMP. The terrain, potential wet ground conditions, and terminus at the campground would preclude this trail for equestrian use. Conflict between hikers and ATB riders will be closely monitored. The trail will be marked with blue markers.

Brister Brook segment (\pm 1.7 miles) - The proposed snowmobile/bike trail would begin near the Hatchery Brook bridge crossing and proceed for 1.6 mile trail easterly, parallel to Brister Brook ending on Old Indian Lake Road (Page Street Spur). The trail would follow the town road shoulder for a short distance before crossing NYS Route 30 to enter JRWF lands. Some steep terrain and area wetlands will be limiting factors for the final trail location. From NYS Route 30, the trail would follow 0.1 miles of an existing old road easterly to intersect the Lawrence Farm trail and network of snowmobile trails on IP lands. The trail will be marked with yellow markers.

Fish Mountain segment (\pm 7.6 miles, plus 1.0 mile existing snowmobile trail) - This proposed trail would begin at County Route 24 (Old Piseco Road) and end near Mud Lake. New sections of snowmobile trail would be constructed north of Oxbow Lake with the trail roughly parallel to the Oxbow - Sacandaga Lake trail to the existing Fawn Lake trail. The proposed trail would continue northerly along the Fawn Lake trail for 1.0 miles before turning northeasterly to cross Burnt Place Brook on a new bridge ending at the Mud Lake trail. The trail will be marked with red markers.

The Fish Mountain trail will be designed and constructed to provide for a more primitive experience with curves and hilly sections to accommodate more leisurely riding and slower speeds. It is expected to receive moderate use and will also accommodate occasional use by other types of recreation, including hikers. (LF/OP)

- Designate Echo Lake trail (\pm 0.2 miles) An existing path allows the public to walk from Page Street to the outlet of Echo Lake. Use of this path has been limited due to the unmarked nature of the trail and lack of developed parking or signage. Recreational activity has consisted primarily of day use by fisherman or day hikers from the adjacent Moffitt Beach Campground. Winter use has consisted of occasional illegal snowmobile riding, with some people ice fishing the lake for yellow perch and the occasional walleye. In summer, the lake is fished for bass and bullheads.

Several comments on the draft plan suggested the removal of the Echo Lake foot trail proposal based on the opinion that increased use will lead to litter, illegal boat storage, illegal snowmobile use and negative impacts to area wildlife and wetlands. In a couple of cases, some people thought the trail was going to be upgraded to accommodate wheelchairs. This 50-acre lake has mixed ownership with approximately 0.7 miles (32%) of JRWF shoreline on the southwest portion of the lake. Some landowners on the lake incorrectly regard Echo Lake as being entirely private which has led to occasional confrontation with local anglers. There is considerable local interest to improve access to the lake. To enhance access to State land the existing path will be formally designated as a foot trail. There is adequate parking capacity on a large existing road shoulder, so a formal parking lot is not needed. In the winter ice fisherman and other

recreationists can park at the plowed parking in the campground and walk/snowshoe a 0.25 mile section of existing snowmobile trail to Page Street to access the foot trail to Echo Lake

The path will be maintained as a class II path and will be marked with red trail markers. The trail is very short and will not be designated for other recreational activities such as ATB use. It is expected to only receive light to moderate use. While there is no need for bridging, other trail hardening techniques will be used if needed to protect natural resources. A minor relocation is necessary at the beginning of the trail to avoid steep slopes on the existing path. Use of the trail will be monitored and illegal activities such as boat storage will be addressed. (OP/OPP)

- Relocate Page Street Snowmobile Trail (\pm 0.5 miles) - The existing trail between Lake Pleasant and Sacandaga Lake is a heavily used local trail that relies on a combination of private lands, town road ROW, and intensive use classified lands in the Moffitt Beach Campground to connect these two waters. It enables riders from the Speculator area to quickly travel westerly to Oxbow Lake and further west into Arietta without the need to travel over a long 13 mile detour through IP lands in Perkins Clearing and JRWF trails to the Piseco Airport or Fawn Lake. Complaints have been reported by snowmobilers and some local residents about the section of existing trail along Page Street. The trail is heavily used by snowmobiles traveling between Lake Pleasant and Sacandaga area homes or businesses and is dangerously close to traffic (no buffer to the road). The trail is groomed by the town of Lake Pleasant but is very difficult to maintain because of the high salt and sand content presented by plowing of Page Street itself. One safety concern involves a traffic hazard caused by a blind spot on a sharp turn where snowmobilers currently cross. Another concern involves illegal road riding. When the trail gets rough, its close proximity to the road leads some snowmobilers ride the highway instead of the trail, mostly late at night.

To solve these problems a short 0.5 mile section of new snowmobile trail will be constructed on JRWF lands outside the road ROW. The trail will be relocated from its existing location to the northeast into the woods, a short distance away from Page Street. This relocation will minimize current conflicts with vehicle traffic and enable a more suitable location for the highway crossing closer to NYS Route 8, thereby avoiding the blind curve. By locating the trail away from the highway it will be screened from view. It is anticipated that a couple of short sections of wetlands may need to be crossed. To insure a more permanent solution, written permission or an easement to move the section of trail from the road shoulder onto private property will be secured by the local snowmobile club or the town of Lake Pleasant.

Proposal discussion

The proposed Page Street trail relocation will eliminate the existing unsuitable roadside trail that is neither safe nor enjoyable for most snowmobilers. There are no known endangered or threatened plants or animals in the vicinity and the proposed segment does not pass through any known critical environmental areas or deer wintering yards. Any new sections of snowmobile

trail through the Moffitt Beach Campground will be identified in the separate UMP for the area.

Although this trail relocation will address current safety concerns along the road, the proposal does not eliminate lake travel on either end of this snowmobile trail. One proposal suggested by the local snowmobile club would be to develop a trail through state land in Moffitt Beach Campground and along Hatchery Brook, crossing NYS Route 30 near the other end of Page Street connecting to the existing Corridor 4 trail to provide an alternative to the Lake Pleasant water crossing. This proposal would also eliminate a 20 mile or so detour through Perkins Clearing to reach the same point, and would allow Echo Lake/Page Street residents to connect to the village by snowmobile. The proposed Fish Mountain trail identified as Alternative E, Option 3 in Appendix 25, will enable an alternative land based snowmobile trail connection for people who wish to avoid lake crossings.

As part of the planning process, other snowmobile activity in the Echo Lake area was examined. During the last couple of years, a few people have illegally snowmobiled on an unmarked path between private lands at Echo Lake and Page Street. Existing regulations prohibit the operation of snowmobiles on Forest Preserve lands unless the trail is designated for this use. This activity enabled a small group of private landowners to access the snowmobile trail that enters the Moffitt Beach Campground without having to ride the shoulders of Page Street. The ability to designate this path for snowmobile use was considered by the planning team. The public benefit to provide snowmobile access to Echo Lake was weighed against potential conflicts with private landowners. Existing policy restricts development of new snowmobile dead end trails, especially where there may be adverse affects to adjoining landowners. Since the proposed Echo Lake foot trail will provide adequate access to the lake for ice fishing purposes, there would be minimal public benefit for a short snowmobile trail that dead ends on a lake with a large degree of private ownership. Therefore, the trail will only be designated for pedestrian use. A boulder barrier will be installed to prevent illegal snowmobile use. See Section IV-C-22.

No Action Alternative - If no action is taken, the existing trail would remain along the road and a hazardous road crossing would continue. While the dangerous crossing could be moved it would be preferable to address the entire section of unsuitable trail.

- Designate Fawn Lake Cross Country Ski Trails - Upon closure of the western end of the Fawn Lake trail to snowmobile use, the trail will be designated for cross country ski use. A new trail will continue southwesterly parallel to the shore for approximately 1.5 miles to the Fawn Lake lean-to. To allow for a loop trail around Fawn Lake the old road to Fawn Lake will also be marked with foot/ski trail markers. A barrier will be installed to prevent illegal snowmobile use. By using a combination of this spur to the lake, one mile of the frozen surface of Fawn Lake to the proposed lean-to, 1.5 miles of proposed ski trail, and 1.5 miles of existing snowmobile trail; a 4.5 mile ski trail loop is possible.

Each trail segment will be marked with trail markers. The overall trail is expected to receive light use in the winter . (OP/OPP)

Impacts and Alternatives for All Management Proposals:

Environmental - A minor amount of tree and vegetation removal will be necessary for the designated tentsites and proposed lean-to, parking area improvements, picnic area, and trails. Increased law enforcement presence will help reduce illegal tree cutting associated with camping. Disturbance of wetlands and water quality will be mitigated through proper trail layout and new privy construction and location. Effects on fish and wildlife populations are expected to be minor, with new trails routed to avoid the heron rookery, deer wintering yards, and possible osprey or loon nesting sites.

Social and Economic - Localized increases in traffic and highway use are anticipated to be minor. Safety hazards on area snowmobile trails will be reduced by relocating one trail from a wide road over private land to a more narrow, curvy trail over JRWF land. The posting of speed limits on snowmobile trails should also provide for a safer experience, and reduce noise levels from snowmobiles. Noise and visual impacts associated with camping are expected to be reduced with the spacing out of campsites and vegetative screening. The development and designation of ski trails near Fawn Lake, ultimately linking the towns of Lake Pleasant and Arietta will allow for a long distance cross country skiing opportunity that may have economic benefits to the communities.

The minor proposed development of primitive sites, small picnic area, and undeveloped beach on Wild Forest lands is not expected to compete with the DEC campground on the north end of Sacandaga Lake. The two recreational experiences are different and largely mutually exclusive with the campground providing amenities such as modern rest rooms with showers, public telephone, changing rooms, covered pavilion, etc. The section of the proposed Mud Lake trail will enhance the camping experience at Moffitt Beach Campground by providing a day hike and/or bicycle trip into JRWF using this proposed trail.

No Action Alternative - The first option considered was to do nothing and allow use to continue as is. This alternative would not enhance protection of the environment, would interfere with people seeking a wild forest experience and would negatively impact the adjacent property owners. This alternative would allow the continued public use on unsuitable sections of trail and shoreline in the area. It would also not address the non-conforming use of undesignated sites and sites that do not meet APSLMP spacing guidelines. Therefore, this option is not viable.

Alternative 2 - Minimal facility development and designation. This alternative would be a conservative approach with limited parking area improvements, no new trails, no accessible picnic site, and closure of some existing facilities. Designate a small number of primitive tentsites. Close the open DEC road at the end of the Fawn Lake Road and do not reopen the Sacandaga Peasley Access Road to motor vehicles under CP-3. This action would eliminate the private access road maintenance issue and limit conflicts with adjoining private landowners. While this alternative would restrict public motor vehicle use, it would not eliminate public use completely, since the public could walk or bicycle in the area. The Fish Mountain snowmobile trail crossing over private land would eventually be closed and not relocated, eliminating a popular snowmobile route. Trail linkages proposed by neighboring towns, such as the Piseco - Speculator ski trail connectors would not be constructed. Bike trail designation would await

further study. While this alternative would result in the least disturbance to plant and animal habitats, public use would be discouraged. The lack of bike trail designation and ski trail construction would deny the public legitimate recreational opportunities identified as important to the local communities. This alternative would also restrict opportunities for mobility impaired individuals to picnic, easily access the lake or camp on JRWF lands. Therefore, this alternative will not be supported by this UMP.

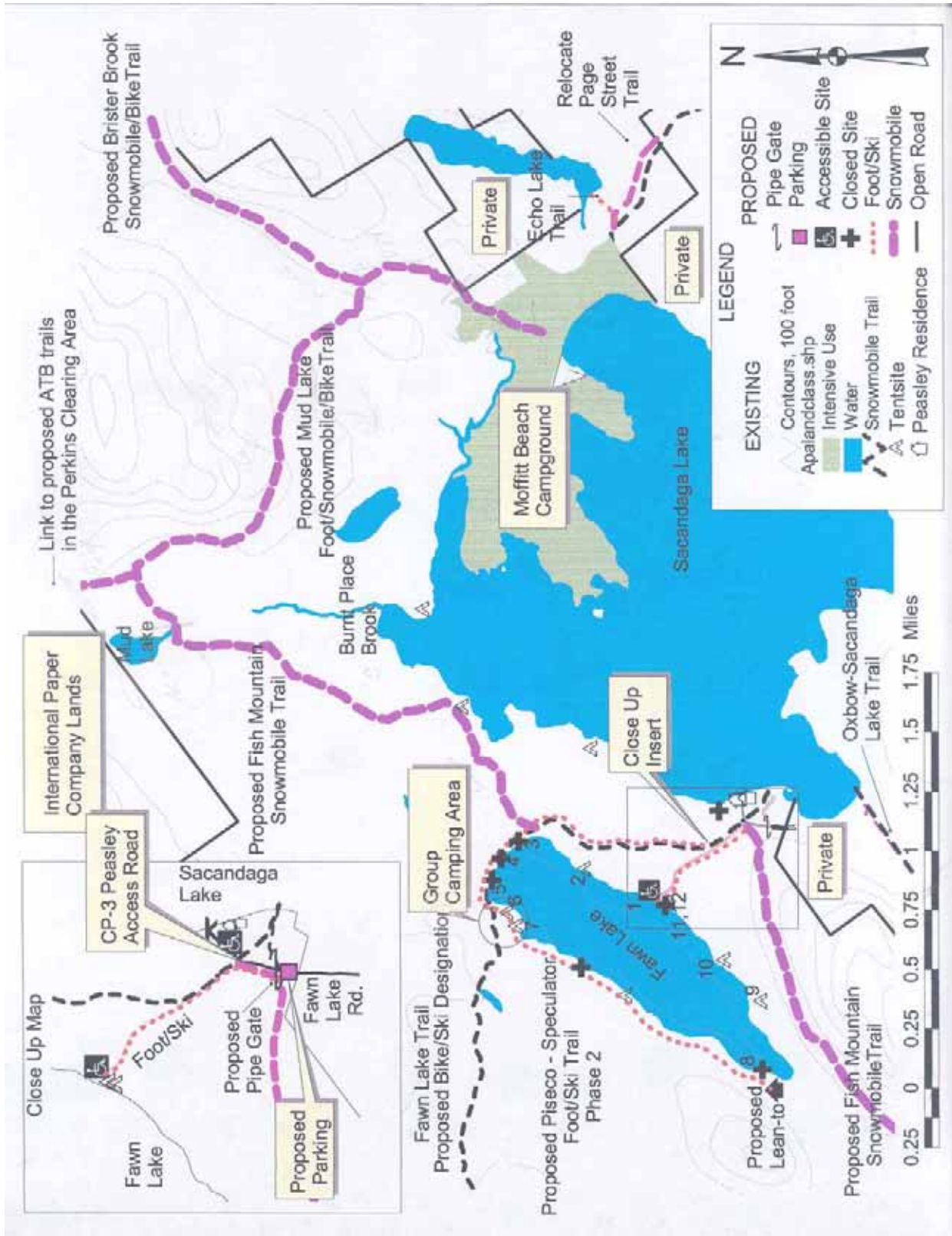
Alternative 3 - Significant facility development. This alternative would provide for maximum access and variety of recreational opportunities. In order to accomplish this, there would need to be a large increase in the size of parking capacity to accommodate expected increased public use. In addition to the trail proposals in alternative four, additional trails would be constructed to the summit of Fish Mountain and around the south end of Fawn Lake. More opportunities for equestrian and ATB riders would be available by additional trail hardening and designation for these uses. Maximize camping opportunities, including roadside campsites. This level of development would not enhance protection of the environment and could lead to user conflicts due to the mix of hikers, bikers, and equestrian use on the same trails. This alternative would result in the most disturbance to plant and animal habitats due to the large degree of trail construction and maintenance. Therefore, the level of development described in this alternative will not be supported by this UMP.

Alternative 4 - The **preferred alternative** is to close undesirable trails and a short section of road, with a limited amount of new trails to be officially designated and maintained. This alternative proposes a rehabilitation of the area with a consolidation of public parking to one location at the end of the town road. Existing camping locations will be either closed or officially designated. One group camping site will be designated on Fawn Lake. An accessible picnic site will be developed near Sacandaga Lake with access by CP-3 permit. See details in previous pages. The addition of a level-two type "Storey kiosk" at the trailhead and development of an official parking area will alleviate parking problems in the summer/fall and accommodate plowed winter parking that currently does not exist. In order to minimize potential conflicts, proposed area ski trails were separated from snowmobile trails as much as possible. Proposed improvements at the site will allow for more controlled day use in the area while minimizing impacts to a nearby private residence. For these reasons, this alternative will be supported by this UMP.

Projected Use and Potential Impacts of the Preferred Alternative

The Department is charged with protecting the resource and providing appropriate recreational opportunities for the people of the State of New York. The proposed area improvements will provide a safer and more enjoyable experience which may eventually increase public use due to greater user satisfaction. An additional benefit of this proposal includes a greater variety of new opportunities for the recreational user. By spreading use across a larger number of trails and trail length encounters with other users may be reduced.

Section VI - Special Area Management Plans



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B. Fall Lake/Fall Stream Area

This location consists of the JRWF lands east of the Piseco Airport in the town of Arietta. The town property and other private lands serve as important trailhead or waterway access sites providing important access to area ski and snowmobile trails, along with waterway access to Fall Stream.

Present Conditions:

The general area receives a moderate amount of use from day hikers, campers, boaters and anglers in the spring, summer and fall along with significant numbers of snowmobilers in the winter. Camping occurs on a few scattered un-designated campsites on Fall Stream and around Fall Lake. The character of the area can be intermittently noisy due to air traffic at the Piseco Airport and numerous snowmobile trails. These activities result in reduced opportunities for exploring and experiencing isolation from the sights and sounds of man, with the probability of encountering other area users likely to be light to moderate. The only official parking areas are associated with the town owned Piseco Airport and a small waterway access site on private lands. It is common on weekends and holidays to see the parking areas filled to capacity, with a majority of the town parking associated with local use of the airport.

Piseco Airport

The Piseco Airport is a publicly owned aviation facility under the jurisdiction of the town of Arietta. The airport is situated north of County Route 24 (Old Piseco Road) near the hamlet of Piseco. Access is from the Airport Road, with the facility operating daylight hours from May through November. A public telephone is located near the runway entrance. The parking area next to the airport is currently utilized by the public to access NYS lands and for open space recreational purposes on the 50 acres of town lands at the end of the runway.

Fall Stream/Fall and Vly Lakes

Water access to Fall Stream is currently allowed from a small parking area on the Old Piseco Road owned by the Piseco Company. Additional use occurs from members of the "Bog Trotters Camp" that have an inholding within the JRWF, and other landowners with private access to Fall Stream. This watercourse is passable by small watercraft from the Old Piseco Road to Vly Lake and is used for canoeing, fishing, hunting, and trapping; in addition to providing access to Fall Lake and Vly Lake. The meandering narrow streambed winds across a broad, marshy area with the terrain consisting of low rolling hills, traversing through a picturesque marsh for most of the trip with occasional beaver dams to carry over. Above Vly Lake, Fall Stream becomes narrower and the number of obstacles increase. A few primitive tentsites are located next to these waters.

Northville-Lake Placid Trail (NP trail)

The Northville-Lake Placid trail was constructed by the Adirondack Mountain Club and opened in 1923 as a foot trail. Approximately 5.7 miles (four percent) of this well-known trail is within the JRWF. Use numbers range from 600 to 1,000 annually. An examination of the trail register information indicated that the majority of day use and short overnight trips are to Spruce Lake. Individuals completing this long trail primarily travel from south to north.

Piseco Airport Cross Country Ski Trail

This trail, also referred to locally as the Foxey Brown trail, receives light to moderate use with a range of 200 to 800 individuals registering annually. Use is almost entirely related to winter activities, predominantly skiing with occasional snow shoe use. In the past, the Chambers of Commerce of Speculator, Lake Pleasant, and Piseco annually sponsor a 10 kilometer cross country ski race (under a TRP) on this trail. Until 2000, the trail was groomed before the race with a snowmobile. A range of 30 to 50 people have competed annually in this event. Off season use through the Spring, Summer, and Fall is very light. Some bird watching occurs at this location.

"Bog Trotters Camp" Inholding - Only one "inholding" exists within the JRWF that is completely surrounded by wild forest classified lands. This 180 foot by 180 foot parcel (approximately 3/4 acre) was included within the area purportedly granted to the State by the town of Arietta by warranty deed under the 1965 constitutional amendment and subsequent land exchange. However, while doing a subsequent survey of the parcel acquired by the State it was found that one Clifford Walter claimed title to these lands.

The status of this land (Claim of Clifford Walter; Miscellaneous Title Investigation # 483) was researched by DEC legal and real property staff. In 1981, legal counsel recommended that no action be brought to eject or evict the occupants as it was believed that the premises could likely be sustained by the claimants through many years of adverse possession against the previous owner. The camp is currently named the Fall Stream Sportsman Club.

Access Road (0.2 of a mile from the airport to the State boundary on the westerly line of Lot 144)

This road crosses JRWF land in Lot 140, Township 9, town of Arietta, Hamilton County, to the small inholding (3/4 acre) near Fall Stream. The original owners of the private camp claimed this road as a right-of-way easement. An easement through Lot 144 (acquired by NYS in 1891) has not been documented.

Snowmobile Trail Changes (See previous discussion in the Fawn Lake/Sacandaga Lake section and Appendix 25.)

The development of the proposed Fish Mountain snowmobile trail (Alternative E, Option 3) will eliminate the need for the rehabilitation of the Piseco-Perkins Clearing trail. While this relocation doesn't solve the problem of crossing Fall Lake, the alternatives are less desirable. A large extensive wetland system lies to the north of Fall Lake and would need a significant amount of wetland bridging along with a large inlet bridge to cross. A trail crossing to the south of Fall Lake would also involve wetlands and a major bridge over Fall Stream. This existing crossing over the ice of Fall Lake has been in existence for many years and in the opinion of local riders, freezes adequately during most winters.

Terrain/Soils

The terrain of this area can be described as rolling hills. The mesosoils of the area are mostly Pillsbury-Lyme, Becket-Lyman and Becket-Skerry in the higher elevations with Greenwood-Cathro and Fluvaquent-Borasprist in the wetlands and along Fall Stream. Generally, the soils are deep except for shallow soils on some of the higher elevations.

Vegetation/Wetlands/Wildlife

Vegetative covertypes are predominately evergreen northern hardwood and evergreen wetlands with patches of spruce-fir and sugar maple mesic. The eastern edge of an old-growth beech-sugar maple dominated forest community and unusual mixed conifer-hardwood floodplain association have been identified in this general area. Otherwise, plant life is generally similar to other areas of the JRWF with the exception of wetland plant species scattered throughout the general area and along the shore of Fall Lake and Fall Stream. No deer wintering areas have been identified in this area.

Specific Area Objectives:

- Insure adequate public access while minimizing impacts to adjacent private lands.
- Provide camping opportunities within the capacity of the area to withstand use.
- Consolidate public parking on JRWF lands or through easements.
- Enhance recreational trail connections between Speculator and Arietta

Specific Northville-Lake Placid Trail Objectives:

Though there is as yet no formal policy governing the management of the Northville-Lake Placid trail, the following objectives have been developed to guide the process of selecting a new route for the trail in the vicinity of the Piseco Airport. The objectives reflect the goal of maximizing recreational values and the stability of the location of the route while minimizing environmental impacts and keeping costs within reason.

- Minimize the length of the trail on roads open to motor vehicle use.
- Minimize the length of the trail open to conflicting recreational uses.
- Maximize the length of the trail on State land rather than private land subject to uncertain landowner permission or activities that would affect the scenic qualities of the trail corridor.
- Minimize the total length of new trail construction, when feasible.
- Identify a trail location that minimizes the potential for impacts on soils, wetlands, significant habitats and rare species.
- Use old roads or existing trails for the route to minimize the cost of trail construction, but build new trail if desirable to reduce overall trail length, reduce use conflicts, avoid wet areas and bypass sections that do not have the natural character appropriate for a foot trail.
- Maximize the length of trail with a corridor of high scenic quality.
- Minimize steep trail sections and minimize variation in elevation, for ease of walking and to help prevent erosion.
- Identify a route where good camping spots are available at strategic locations.
- Designate long trail for pedestrian use only, as much as possible, with the exception of short sections of shared multiple use trail.

Proposed Management Policies/Actions:

- Monitor area trails within the old-growth beech-sugar maple vegetative community for exotic plants and follow trends in the beech scale necrotic complex disease. (FW/LF)

- Enforce existing navigation law by posting and enforcing the 5mph speed limit in the navigable channels of Fall Stream. This action will allow for a safer experience for non-motorized recreationists and help reduce noise levels in the area. (OPP)
- Barricade with a pipe gate the private access road (“Bog Trotters Camp” Access) across from the Piseco Airport facility to restrict illegal public motor vehicle use. (LF/OP)
- Identify and evaluate camping opportunities in the area. Undesignated tentsites currently exist along the NP trail and at Fall Lake and Fall Stream. Designate and/or construct sites (specific locations need to be determined) taking into consideration day use of the area, appropriate existing sites, APSLMP guidelines, and terrain constraints. Due to the presence of wetlands and unsuitable terrain, the northwestern part of Fall Lake is the only suitable location for camping, requiring the primitive tentsites and proposed lean-to to be in close proximity to each other and spaced less than 1/4 mile apart. Close and/or relocate unsuitable sites. (LF/OP)
- Issue group camping (10 persons or more) permits only at the one designated group camping area in an old pit near the Piseco Airport. Total capacity of the site will not exceed 20 people.
- Construct an accessible lean-to on the west shore of Fall Lake. This facility will be accessible by a variety of means including foot, bike, snowmobile, horse, or watercraft. Given the history of past uses in the area, the location is not expected to attract all-night parties or other inappropriate uses sometimes associated with easily accessible lean-tos. The lean-to will be built and located, taking into consideration universal design. Upgrade and harden trail from waters edge to the accessible tentsite and lean-to site to ADA/ADAAG, either proposed or adopted. A wooden boardwalk/dock will be needed at the landing site to facilitate access from water craft by people with mobility impairments. DEC will consult with APA to assure that any structure has minimal impact to wetlands and visual impacts from the surrounding area. A wetlands permit will be secured from the APA, if necessary. Also, because of their anticipated popularity, camping permits to stay for more than three nights will not be issued for the proposed lean-to or nearby sites. (LF/OP)
- Construct and designate one site (firering, privy [to be located if possible, to be shared with users of the nearby Fall Lake lean-to], accessible tentsite, and picnic table) at Fall Lake for exclusive use by persons with disabilities, using the proposed and/or adopted ADAAG. DEC will consult with APA to determine if terrain constraints justify less than 1/4 mile separation. (LF/OP)
- Inventory and rate the Fall Lake trail for accessibility to people with disabilities. Determine if physical parameters (slope, obstacles, etc.) can be easily modified or the trail hardened to accommodate persons with disabilities. (LF)
- Construct and designate Piseco Airport-Northville-Lake Placid Connector trails (\pm 0.8 miles consisting of three new trails) - To enhance cross country skiing opportunities a few new trail links are proposed for the existing Piseco Airport Loop Trail. One modification will be to develop a 0.25 mile crossover trail in the middle of the existing loop. This enables a shorter loop for those not willing to ski the entire 6.2 miles (10 kilometers). An additional short connection will provide skiers access to the Northville-Lake Placid trail. By skiing south on the NP trail to the boundary and using a 0.5 mile existing path to the east, skiers would be able to intersect the existing Airport Loop ski trail next to its southwest terminus on town property.

This potential series of alternative loops will allow for a varied trail experience within a small geographic area. The intent of this trail system would be for primitive winter non-motorized uses such as cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing. A small portion of new trail will cross wetlands on the town property that is part of the FAA cleared zone and will require consultation with APA staff to determine if a wetlands permit is necessary. No bridges are expected to be necessary and the trail should freeze adequately for skier use in the winter. FAA regulations would preclude any pedestrian use of the runway when the airport was operational. Parking would be at the proposed NP trail parking area at the Piseco Airport. The connector trails will be marked with yellow trail markers. (OP/OPP)

- Close portion of Piseco-Perkins Clearing trail to snowmobiles - (NYS Corridor 4.8) ± 5.4 miles - One public comment on the draft plan questioned the amount of money proposed to rehabilitate this trail and the lack of any supporting accident information to justify the work. It was stated that straightening and smoothing the trail would permit riders to travel at higher speeds, potentially making the trail more dangerous. Other public comments from snowmobilers mentioned that this corridor trail is very narrow from Fawn Lake outhouse to Piseco Lake with long stretches of trail preventing snowmobilers from passing safely. It has been reported that the poor quality of this corridor trail causes many snowmobilers to use the Oxbow to Sacandaga trail and connecting lakes. While the northern portion of this trail has had some maintenance work performed by the town of Lake Pleasant a few years ago, the five-mile section between the airport and Fall Stream is considered inadequate as a corridor snowmobile trail with numerous unsafe trail obstacles such as large trees, stumps or rocks that protrude into the trail surface. The southern 1.0 mile part of the trail between the Piseco Airport and Fall Lake will continue to be maintained for snowmobile use. The proposed Fish Mountain trail will offer a substitute recreational snowmobiling opportunity for those people who enjoy riding on a Forest Preserve snowmobile trail. (LF/OP)
- Designate Piseco - Speculator Ski Trail - The towns of Arietta and Lake Pleasant have proposed the development of a long distance trail that would connect the two towns and link the existing Piseco Airport loop trail to Speculator. Due to possible conflicts with motorized snowmobile uses on nearby snowmobile trails, the development of a separate non-motorized ski/snowshoe trail that minimizes trail sharing was identified as an important requirement by town staff.

The State's purchase of a conservation easement with recreational rights over adjacent IP lands, enable alternatives routes over these private lands for a cross country ski trail connection between Arietta and Speculator. Pending the closure of the northern portion of the Piseco - Perkins snowmobile trail to snowmobile use, the trail will be designated as a cross country ski trail. (OP/OPP)

The trail will be marked with red trail markers. The overall trail is expected to receive light use in the winter due to the long distance nature of the trail and the lack of mechanical grooming.

- Construct lean-to on the Northville-Lake Placid trail. On this long trail, there is currently no lean-to between Hamilton Stream in the Silver Lake Wilderness Area and Spruce Lake in the West Canada Lake Wilderness Area. The area receives not only

hikers on the NP trail, but family groups and individuals starting out from Piseco and going to Fall Stream. A new lean-to is proposed for the vicinity of Fall Stream. The structure will be set back a minimum of 100 feet from the mean high water mark in addition to being reasonably screened from the Northville-Lake Placid trail. A short yellow marked spur trail will provide access to the lean-to. (LF/OP)

- Designate parking lot for Northville-Lake Placid trail (on existing paved area of Piseco Airport south of the playground) 10 vehicles (including one accessible space), to be plowed. There is no established parking area for the public to access the section of the NP trail in the Piseco area. The lack of suitable public prompted the idea of the development of a formal NP trail parking area on town property at the Piseco Airport. With the permission of the town of Arietta, a parking area is proposed to be located on an existing paved area south of the playground. The parking lot will be defined with painted lines and will be developed to accommodate approximately 10 vehicles. The facility was sized taking into consideration public use capacity and the variety of recreational uses that could originate from this location. Parking of vehicles with horse trailers is contingent upon approval from the town of Arietta. Arrangements will be made with the town of Arietta to provide for snow removal in the winter. Install a new level-two type “Storey kiosk” at the trailhead parking area. (LF/OP)
- Construct and designate Northville-Lake Placid Trail (NP trail) Relocation. (LF/OP)

Impacts and Management Alternatives:

The development of a satisfactory relocation for the NP trail within the JRWF was considered a high priority project for this important Adirondack recreational asset. A section of the NP trail between the Piseco School and the end of the Haskell Road was determined to have several problems mostly related to inadequate parking, unsecured private land crossings, and undesirable road walking. The process of selecting a new route for the NP Trail involved a comparison of a number of alternatives. To assist in the elaboration and analysis of alternatives, DEC convened a meeting in December, 2001 involving the coordinators of the UMPs potentially affected by relocation proposals and a number of individuals and organizations with interest in the trail. Meeting participants presented and discussed a number of alternative routes. It was the consensus of this group that where feasible the trail be relocated off roads to better enhance the aesthetic experience. Other suggestions included developing spur trails to attractive side destinations, spacing camping locations at reasonable distances and the development of a maintenance policy for this long trail. An additional meeting was held in September, 2004 to consider alternatives involving Piseco Company lands for the NP trail and public access/parking at Fall Stream. The following discussion builds upon the results of the meetings and staff discussions, and concludes with the selection of a preferred alternative.

In describing and comparing the alternative routes included for discussion, the planning team benefitted from the extensive knowledge of field conditions provided by DEC staff and interested volunteers. Portions of these alternatives have been scouted in the field. The alternative analysis includes consideration of hypothetical locations of some route segments and involves a comparison of recreational characteristics, practical considerations such as land ownership, and available ecological information, such as information about rare species and significant habitats from the records of the Natural Heritage Program, regional mapping of deer wintering areas, and wetlands.

All alternatives were judged (x total miles; x miles road, x miles existing trail, x miles of new trail) for comparison purposes for the section of trail between NYS Route 8 crossing to a point on the existing NP trail west of Vly Lake.

No Action Alternative (4.7 total miles; 3 miles roads, 1.7 miles existing trail, 0 miles of new trail) The first option considered was to do nothing and allow use to continue as is. Maintaining the current route would require no trail construction and by its location along public and private roads would minimize the physical and biological impacts on Forest Preserve lands. Existing maps and guidebooks would not need to be revised. The current route is the alternative with the least overall length. Of all the alternatives, this one would require the longest road walk, and therefore the greatest length of undesirable trail shared with potentially conflicting uses due to the presence of automobiles. Problems with parking at the airport or public access north of the Haskell Road would continue since at these locations area trails are not secured by easements. The trail could possibly be closed by the private landowners. Therefore, this alternative will not be supported by this UMP.

Alternative 2 (5.5 total miles; 0 miles roads, 3.5 miles existing trail, 2.0 miles of new trail) - A second option considered was developing a trail over JRWF lands to the greatest possible degree. Starting at the NYS Route 8 crossing a 0.2 mile trail would be developed parallel to the Old Piseco Road crossing the outlet of Oxbow Lake on the highway bridge. The majority of this part of JRWF on both sides of the highway is designated wetlands that would require extensive trail hardening and/or boardwalk construction to support foot traffic. From the highway bridge suitable upland areas would allow for a new 0.5 mile section trail to be developed to the east along the shoreline of Oxbow Lake to the existing Rudeston Hill Snowmobile trail, then continuing west along this snowmobile trail for a distance of 0.5 miles. The NP trail would continue on new trail in a northerly direction for a distance of 1.0 mile crossing wetlands and Fall Stream to intersect the existing snowmobile trail near the proposed airport parking facility. The trail would follow the snowmobile trail for a 0.5 mile then turn north to intersect the ski trail following the same route as in alternative 4.

The entire route would be on Forest Preserve land. This route would eliminate all the road walking but would require 1.0 miles along snowmobile trails. Because it would have the largest amount of new trail construction, it would have more trail character than the other alternatives which utilize sections of public roads. Existing camping opportunities on Oxbow Lake could be made available to NP trail travelers. A side trip to the cliffs on Oxbow Mountain would be an attractive diversion for through travelers.

The configuration of private land, wetlands, lakes, and Fall Stream make a completely JRWF land base route from NYS Route 8 to the existing NP Trail the most costly to construct. Significant amounts of new trail construction and environmental remediation would be necessary over the numerous sections of wetland in this general area. It would also require a sizeable new bridge over a 100 foot section of Fall Stream. The potential environmental impacts and difficulty of developing foot trails through wetlands along with a major new footbridge would make this alternative a poor choice. Therefore, this alternative will not be supported by this UMP.

Alternative 3 (6.3 total miles; 0.2 miles roads, 5.3 miles existing trail, 0.8 miles of new trail) - A third option considered was developing a trail starting at the NYS Route 8 crossing following the Old Piseco Road for 0.2 miles to the outlet of Oxbow Lake. From the highway bridge suitable upland areas would allow for a new 0.5 mile section trail to be developed to the east along the shoreline of Oxbow Lake to the existing Rudeston Hill Snowmobile trail. The NP Trail would continue west along this snowmobile trail for a distance of 1.2 miles to a private land (Irondequoit Club) boundary. With the permission of the private landowners* the trail would continue on the existing snowmobile trail crossing Fall Stream on the existing bridge near the county road, re-entering JRWF lands after 1.0 mile. The trail would follow the snowmobile trail for 0.6 of a mile then turning north to intersect the ski trail following the same route as in alternative 4.

Due to the winding nature of the existing snowmobile trail, this alternative would have the longest overall length. Though most of the road walking would be eliminated, a short 0.2 mile section would remain between NYS Route 8 and the Inlet to Oxbow Lake. As in alternative 2, existing camping opportunities on Oxbow Lake or a side trip to the cliffs on Oxbow Mountain would be available to NP trail travelers.

This alternative would utilize the largest amount of existing snowmobile trail and private land crossing, and would require permission from private landowners. A portion of the snowmobile trail section on JRWF lands is over wetlands that freeze adequately for snowmobile use but would have to be bridged to accommodate NP trail use. Activities on the private land such as logging could close the trail for periods of time. Without a secured easement, this permission if granted, could be revoked, requiring closure of the trail and resumption of the original road walk. Until an easement is likely, this alternative will not be supported by this UMP.

The Preferred Alternative: Alternative 4 (5.6 total miles; 2.2 miles roads, 3.0 miles existing trail, 0.4 miles new trail) - This alternative would use the existing part of the NP trail along 2.0 miles of County Highway 24 turning on Airport Road for an additional 0.2 mile to the proposed parking area. The trail would continue northeasterly approximately 0.1 mile partly on an old road to a gravel pit and partly on newly constructed trail to connect with an existing snowmobile trail to the east. The NP trail would turn north on the snowmobile trail for a distance of 0.5 miles before turning westerly on a short, newly constructed link trail to intersect the existing ski trail. The NP trail would continue along the ski trail for a distance of approximately 2.5 miles, then turn westerly on a new 0.15 mile link trail to intersect the existing NP trail.

*The Piseco Company would like to continue managing the forest resources of their property. An important concern of the landowner is to avoid an easement that would negatively impact the possible development of the property in the future. It was suggested initially that the Department consider a 20-30 year lease for the NP trail and Fall Stream parking area. This alternative is not viable or would rank the project very low when compared to other permanent easements. Since the landowner in this case a board of individuals, is unclear as to their final ideas for the property, it was suggested that Piseco Company develop a simple master plan for the property. Through proper planning the valuable roadside frontage could remain in its current state for future development while a portion of interior property (mostly Fall Stream riparian buffer) may be considered under a conservation easement.

Potential conflicts could develop over multiple trail uses for the 0.5 mile section of shared snowmobile trail. Occasional use by all terrain bicyclists and horse back riders has occurred on the snowmobile trail and is expected to continue. By using the existing ski trails to the greatest degree possible, only three new short connector links totaling approximately 0.4 miles would need to be constructed for the relocation. In order to provide a unique recreational experience, the NP trail relocation (with the exception of the short 0.5 mile shared trail) will be only marked with foot and ski trail markers even though the wild forest designation could permit other uses such as ATBs and horseback riding. Many people using foot trails, in particular “long trails,” prefer trails to be restricted to pedestrian use only because of conflicts with other recreationists, especially motorized uses. This will be one of the few trails in the JRWF marked solely for pedestrian travel.

Though the road walking between the Airport Road and the Haskell Road trailhead would be eliminated, some road walking would remain. Overall, the NP trail mileage will increase by about a mile with almost one mile of public highway walking eliminated. The trail character and maintenance needs of the existing Piseco Airport cross country ski trail is comparable to the character of NP trail section north of the Haskell Road. Fairly heavy snowmobile use could conflict with winter pedestrian uses. Most of the route would follow existing trails and new trail construction would be minimal.

Comparison of Alternatives and Selection of a Preferred Alternative

A review of the alternative routes for the NP trail relocation shows that each has advantages and disadvantages. In comparing alternatives, their benefits and drawbacks were weighed in terms of their relevance to the objectives listed previously. Long-term benefits were given more weight than one-time costs such as trail construction. The possibility of a more direct route using town of Arietta lands north of the airport by sharing the proposed ski trail link was examined in the field. This route crossed wetlands on the town property that is part of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) cleared zone and would require significant bridging to allow for hiking use. Any other routes that would cross the active part of the airport property are not possible due to existing FAA regulations.

Segments of the trail that will follow existing trails generally will require little more work than cutting brush and posting trail markers. Minor bridging or other trail hardening techniques will be needed in a few locations. In general the new sections of trail will be located with the goal of minimizing the need for foot bridges and drainage structures, tree cutting, long-term maintenance needs and impacts to soils, wetlands, significant habitats and rare species. The trail will be designated with blue NP trail markers. Before trail construction begins, DEC will consult with APA in the development of a detailed work plan along with securing all necessary permits.

Projected Use and Potential Impacts of the Preferred Alternative

It is not possible to accurately project use levels of trails yet to be constructed or designated. However, general predictions can be made from a review of characteristics such as location, access, land character and the use patterns in nearby areas. Though it will afford a more attractive route than the current road walk, the relocation of the NP trail is not expected to result in a significant change in the use of the trail by through-hikers or other day users. Winter use of

all parts of the relocated trail segment is expected to be low. Given the multitude of trails and uses of JRWF lands in the area, it is practical to have one centralized trailhead. By using an existing paved area on town property (with permission) no trees will need to be cut on JRWF lands. The parking area would address the needs of NP trail users in addition to other users going to the proposed lean-to on Fall Lake or State land in general. This location would allow the public would be able to take advantage of the amenities (phone, rest rooms, vending machine) at the nearby airport or use the parking lot as a staging area.

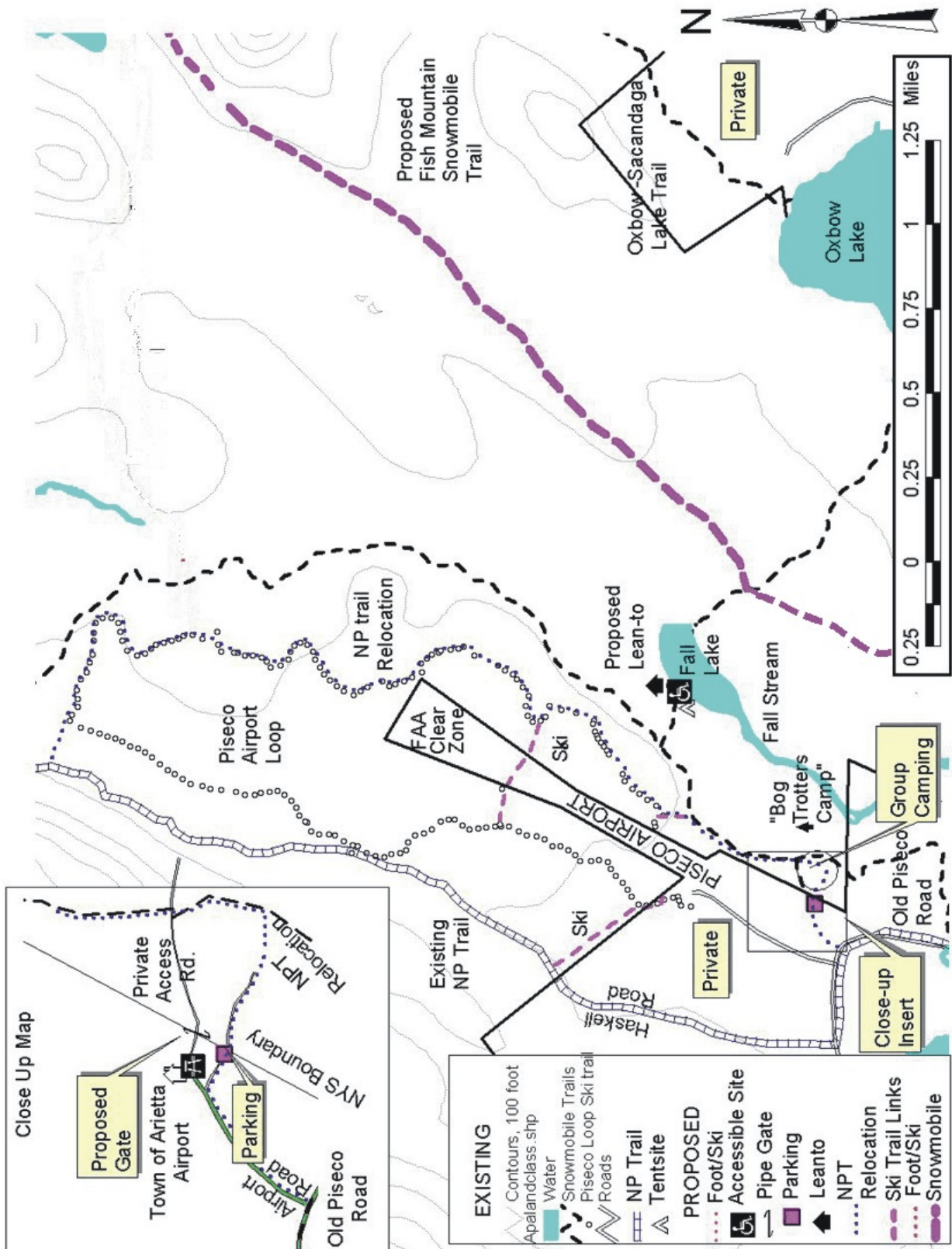
Impacts and Alternatives for all proposals in this area:

Environmental - Air quality will continue to be monitored at the DEC research trailer. A minor amount of vegetation removal will be necessary for the construction of the parking areas, lean-to, and new trails. The utilization of existing trails will limit the amount of tree cutting necessary. Prior to any construction work, a work plan will be completed, including a tree tally. Disturbance of wetlands and water quality will be mitigated through the use of BMPs, proper trail layout and new privy construction and location. Wetlands work will require consultation with and/or a wetlands permit from the APA. Effects on fish and wildlife populations are expected to be minor, with new trails routed to avoid known deer wintering yards, whenever possible.

Social and Economic - Localized increases in traffic and highway use are anticipated to be minor. Use of the adjacent town lands is expected to occur both in the summer when the airport is open and the winter, when skiing and snowmobiling occur. Safety hazards on area snowmobile trails will be reduced by rehabilitating the snowmobile trail north of the airport, thereby enhancing the recreational experience with the potential to bring more snowmobiles into to the local community. The posting of speed limits on snowmobile trails should also provide for a safer experience and reduce associated noise levels.

Future Proposals:

- Investigate Proposed Interpretive Trail - The town of Arietta supports the development of an interpretive trail close to the day use area at the airport similar to the one in the Village of Speculator. The feasibility of this proposal will be investigated during the term of this UMP. The plan will be amended to accommodate this proposal, if determined to be appropriate. (LF/OP)
- Investigate the feasibility of relocating the NP trail entirely over JRWF lands from the outlet of Oxbow Lake to the Piseco Airport Loop ski trail. Public comment on the NP trail relocation proposal supported a route entirely on Forest Preserve land, with concerns over potential user conflicts on shared sections of trail that are also designated for snowmobile use. A relocation placing the entire route on Forest Preserve land would require the largest amount of new trail construction and wetland crossings, along with a sizeable new bridge over Fall Stream. The potential environmental impacts and difficulty of wetland crossings along with a major new footbridge would make this alternative the most costly to construct although it would preserve the trail character. The feasibility of this alternative will be investigated in the field, before the preferred alternative is implemented. If a viable route can be established, this proposal will be adopted through a UMP amendment.



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C.Mason Lake/Perkins Clearing Road Area

This area consists of the JRWF lands in the vicinity of Mason Lake and the Perkins Clearing Road* (formerly referred to as the Jessup River Road), which offer an attractive wild forest setting easily accessible from two public roads. Its location only nine miles north of Speculator, proximity to the nearby Lewey Lake Campground, good bass fishery, and unique roadside camping have contributed to the popularity of the area. A NYS Route 30 DOT roadside pull-off/picnic area provides a scenic view of Mason Lake.

Current Situation:

The Mason Lake Area probably receives the greatest camping use of any undeveloped location within the JRWF. The close proximity to public roads, attractive setting, and large number of roadside sites have encouraged use of this area for fishing, primitive camping and other recreational activities. The location near NYS Route 30 and the Perkins Clearing Road results in reduced opportunities for exploring and experiencing isolation from the sights and sounds of man, with a high probability of encountering other area users or hearing traffic sounds. While this area is frequently used during the summer season there has been increasing heavy use in the fall during the big game hunting season, when many of the roadside sites are occupied by camping equipment. Most of this use is regulated by long term camping permits and occurs predominately on the roadside sites. Soil compaction and loss of vegetation, as a result of overuse, are visible at several sites. Over the years, there has been a continuing problem of campsite expansion, littering, occasional rowdy behavior, and damage to trees. Rock barriers and signs have also been vandalized at this location.

Mason Lake - This water body is entirely surrounded by State land with approximately 2.6 miles of JRWF shoreline. The lake bottom contains a fair number of boulders and some sand in a couple of locations. The shoreline of Mason Lake is quite irregular with several small bays and no discernable inlet, the outlet forming a picturesque wetland. The lake contains one small wooded island. A five horsepower or less electric motor regulation limits the size of boats and type of motor allowed on this small waterbody.

When NYS Route 30 was realigned a DOT parking/rest area was created along the north shore of the lake. The edge of this pull-off is approximately 60 feet from the water's edge. While the steep bank showed signs of erosion in the past, this problem was corrected by DOT in 2002 when the site was rehabilitated and picnic tables were added. The lack of screening provides a scenic overlook from the public highway but may impact negatively on the public utilizing the lake. The boundary between JRWF lands and edge of the DOT ROW is not identified in the field.

In 2003, as part of a partial campsite inventory and monitoring program, baseline site information for Mason Lake and a portion of the Perkins Clearing Road was gathered for 17 of

**In 2003, the road name was changed from the Jessup River Road to the Perkins Clearing Road by a resolution from the town of Lake Pleasant town board. This action was based upon local preferences and the history of the area. The road is seasonal and open from May 1 to October 1.*

the more popular undesignated primitive tentsites (site #1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 21, 22, and 24). The results of the inventory are listed in Appendix 2. The density of tent sites in this area does not conform with the APSLMP separation requirements. Occasionally long term camping permits are issued to the same people, resulting in a particular group of individuals occupying the same campsite on an annual basis. This may deny others recreational access and occurs more frequently on the larger sites or those capable of accommodating vehicle campers. In some instances violations of the site occupancy rules have occurred where the camping trailer or other structure is unoccupied for most of the week, and the site is only used on the weekends.

The most popular sites are those close to the water with views of the lake or sites easily accessible from the Perkins Clearing Road. The inventory has identified damage to vegetation and size of the disturbed area as the two campsite impacts which are of primary concern. Increase in the size of the disturbed areas associated with a campsite and user created sites have been a problem at this location. While most camping sites can only accommodate the maximum three tents allowed by the APSLMP, several sites have cleared areas that can exceed these maximum capacity numbers. The disturbed area in a campsite tends to expand with time as more people use a site and visitors are likely to set up their tents where it is convenient, even if it is not necessarily in the original area of the campsite. There is no regulation which requires that a camper must pitch their tent within some certain specified distance from a "camp here" disk. The lack of formal designation has contributed to the problem, since the public has generally camped anywhere they wanted often in violation of the 150 foot rule.

Another problem associated with the use of campsites is the number and location of fire rings. There is no regulation which requires users to build campfires in an existing fire ring. As campsites expand additional fire rings often appear. Many of these fire rings are poorly constructed or located, and may not properly contain fire. This may result in damage to natural resources or a potential fire hazard.

Terrain/Soils

The terrain of this area can best be described as rolling hills. The Lyman-Rock Outcrop mesosols of the area are mostly located in the higher elevations, Becket-Lyman in the lower elevations and Adams-Croghan or Borosprists - Fluvaquents in the lower wet areas. Generally, the soils are deep or moderately deep except for shallow soils on some of the higher elevations. A duff and sandy-silt overburden is common with a few areas showing the presence of boulders.

Vegetation/Wetlands/Wildlife

Vegetative covertypes are predominately sugar maple mesic and evergreen northern hardwood with patches of spruce-fir and evergreen wetlands. No exemplary natural communities or deer wintering areas have been identified in this general area. Wetlands are scattered throughout the area and along parts of the shore and outlet of Mason Lake.

Specific Area Objectives:

- Bring primitive tent sites into compliance with APSLMP separation requirements.
- Provide camping opportunities within the capacity of the area to withstand use.
- Improve facilities to better manage the area and mitigate user impacts.

Proposed Management Policies/Actions:

APSLMP guidelines for wild forest areas include the encouragement of the kinds and levels of recreational use that are compatible with an area's wild character. Recreational activities to be encouraged include hiking, camping, hunting, fishing, trapping, snowshoeing, ski touring, birding, nature study and other activities that rely on the natural environment rather than a developed setting for their enjoyment. In addition, snowmobiling and motor boating are permitted on a limited and regulated basis, as long as the use will not adversely affect the wild character.

In general, wild forest areas are intended to accommodate higher levels of recreational use than wilderness areas, where motorized vehicles are not permitted and managers work to provide outstanding opportunities for primitive unconfined recreation. On the other hand, wild forest areas are not managed to accommodate the concentrated use typical of the Department's intensive used campgrounds and day use areas where hundreds of campers and day users visit daily. Therefore, in wild forest areas camping is permitted, but only in widely-separated primitive tent sites, not dense concentrations of developed sites, as in campgrounds. Activities such as picnicking and swimming are permitted, but are not supported by extensive structures and improvements such as picnic pavilion buildings, flush toilets, running water, and changing rooms. Because of these differences in management approach, generally the people who visit wild forest areas are seeking a different less developed and regulated recreational experience than those who visit the more intensively managed areas, like campgrounds and boat launch areas.

The goal of management is to maintain and protect this property while providing high quality scenic and educational opportunities for visitors of all ages. The challenge is to meet increasing demand in a way that reduces its impact on the property while providing for public safety without diminishing the areas' natural beauty. This location is unique in having an attractive wild forest setting readily accessible from a public road. Another consideration in the discussion of management strategies for Mason Lake is the opportunity to provide access to Department programs for people with mobility or other impairments.

Because of the areas accessibility and visibility adjacent to both a State and town highway, it is likely that visitors would expect and tolerate a relatively high level of interpersonal encounters. In light of these characteristics, solitude is not a management objective at this location. The pattern of public use that developed on this property prior to the development of the UMP has been detrimental to the natural resources of the area and has contributed to use related problems in the area. Some of these negative impacts and uses persist. The site is currently undeveloped and minimally patrolled leading some of the public to feel that they are free to use the area any way they want. To better manage this location, there needs to be an improved identification of DEC's stewardship of the property with a clear identification of recreational opportunities and allowable uses for this Forest Preserve land. Carefully planned improvements that are minimal in nature and designed to blend into the natural environment will help direct appropriate public use to suitable locations, while reducing impacts to the natural environment.

This strategy follows the guidelines within the APSLMP which states on page 33: "*when public access to and enjoyment of the wild forest areas are inadequate, appropriate measures may be*

undertaken to provide improved access to encourage public use consistent with the wild forest character.” The following proposed management actions are designed to address the challenging task of balancing appropriate public access and use of these Forest Preserve lands with the need to protect natural resources and respect the interests of adjacent property owners. Actions will emphasize protecting the resource first, while accommodating types of uses that will not negatively affect the wild forest atmosphere.

Vandalism, littering, poor human sanitation, and building open fires at inappropriate locations have been reported. These activities must be curbed in order to limit degradation of the area. A combination of user education and modest facility development with additional law enforcement presence is planned for this area.

- Designate Miami River trail. The existing \pm 1.1 mile path to the Miami River is not officially marked, but will be designated as a new foot trail. This path begins at the Perkins Clearing Road across from Mason Lake and proceeds generally westerly then turning northerly to a makeshift bridge across the Miami River. The trail designation will stop at the Miami River, although an unmarked herd path continues into the West Canada Lake Wilderness eventually ending in the upper drainage of Callahan Brook. The purpose of the trail is to enhance access to the upper Miami River and provide additional fishing and hiking opportunities for people camping in the vicinity of Mason Lake. Formal designation of the trail should help keep users on one route, minimizing the impacts associated with people choosing their own, often inappropriate, route.

The path will be maintained as a class II trail and will be marked with red trail markers. It is expected to only receive light use, and there is currently no need for bridging or other trail hardening techniques. (LF/OP)

- Designate Old Telephone Line trail and Old Military Road for equestrian and bicycle use. See Section IV. In addition to these two old roads, IP roads in the Perkins Clearing tract allow for additional riding opportunities in the area. The town of Lake Pleasant designated the Perkins Clearing Road as an official bicycle trail. By combining highway shoulders of town and state roads (where such use is legal), private land, and JRWF lands in the area loops are possible. The ability to camp on State lands in the Mason Lake area would enhance day riding activity. (See details in Section IV.) (LF/OP)
- Enforce existing motorboat horsepower restriction regulations at Mason Lake. (OPP)
- Barricade Mason Lake illegal access driveways with rocks to restrict illegal public motor vehicle use. (LF/OP)
- Identify and evaluate camping opportunities in the area. Management for solitude is not a goal for this area since this small piece of JRWF land is sandwiched between two public highways. The presence of wetlands in the inlet part of Mason Lake renders this part of the shoreline unsuitable for camping. Based upon a 2003 inventory, 24 undesignated tentsites currently exist in the vicinity of the shoreline of Mason Lake and along the Perkins Clearing Road. Formally designate eight sites (plus another two sites limited to group camping under permit) taking into consideration day use of the area, appropriate existing sites, APSLMP guidelines, and terrain constraints. By utilizing existing impacted locations, many undeveloped parts of the lake will be preserved in

their natural, tent-site free condition, while concentrating camping activity in the vicinity of the town road.

Close fourteen established sites: 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 20, and 23. The closure of these sites and formal designation of ten sites will result in a significant reduction of camping opportunities in the area. This action is necessary to prevent further natural resource degradation and help meet APSLMP spacing guidelines. Except for sites within the group camping cluster, individual campsites will generally be out of sight and sound from each other and generally 1/4 mile apart. (LF/OP)

- Adapt one existing site (privy, accessible tent-site, fire ring, and picnic table) for exclusive use by persons with disabilities, using the proposed and/or adopted ADAAG. (LF/OP)
- Issue group camping (10 persons or more) permits only at the one designated group camping area near the IP boundary line. Total capacity of the site will not exceed 20 people. Post signage restricting camping at the site to camping by permit only. Site numbers comprising group site include sites 22 and 24. (LF/OP)
- To limit site impacts, campers will be encouraged by signage to set up their tents within 15 feet of the “camp here” disk. (OPP)
- Enforce camping permit site occupancy rules, to limit inappropriate storage of camping structures. (OPP)
- To control fire ring locations and to prevent multiple fire rings from appearing at primitive tent sites, construct in fire sensitive areas, a fire ring with a hardened slab. At these sites visitors will be requested to build fires only in the existing fire ring. (LF/OP)
- Develop necessary signage to inform people about recreational opportunities in the area. At the proposed waterway access site, install an ADA/ADAAG compliant level-two type “Storey kiosk” to provide visitor information on general regulations, the special horsepower regulations of the area and campsite locations. This structure and attached map will clarify management strategies for the area. (LF/OP)
- Designate Mason Lake Waterway Access Site - (See Section IV-C-27.) (LF/OP)
- Develop accessible picnic area next to the waterway access site. Construct and install two accessible picnic tables and privy to ADA standards. The site will be designated as day-use only; all camping will be prohibited. (LF/OP)
- DEC will conduct an inventory to determine the extent which roadside camping exists in Wild Forest areas park-wide. The Department will consult with APA to establish and implement design criteria for campsites accessible along roads.
- Work with DOT to identify property boundary between JRWF lands and edge of the DOT ROW by the Mason Lake rest area. Plant low vegetation on steep bank to help prevent erosion and screen rock rip-rap from the lake. (LF)

Alternatives Discussion for Mason Lake/Perkins Clearing Road Camping:

No Action Alternative - The first option considered was to do nothing and allow use to continue as is. Problems would only get worse and user created sites would continue to expand with public use generally uncontrolled. Minimal maintenance and limited enforcement of existing regulations is not enough to address concerns regarding overuse of the area. Therefore, this alternative will not be supported by this UMP.

Alternative 2 - Close Undesignated Campsites and /or Restrict Type of Camping. This alternative would propose the removal of user created primitive tent sites within 150 of water or road for environmental or social reasons. Camping structures would be restricted by regulation to "tents, tarps and lean-to's as required by the APSLMP, thereby eliminating use of travel trailers, "pop-up" style campers, tent trailers, or structures of similar fashion. This option would eliminate opportunities for individuals seeking an easily accessible camping site close to a lake or road. Current regulations allow for camping anywhere in the JRWF as long as the 150 foot set back requirement is met. People would probably still park by the road and camp further in without any controls. This alternative would also restrict opportunities for mobility impaired individuals to access the lake and/or camp on JRWF lands. Therefore, this alternative will not be supported by this UMP.

Alternative 3 - Increased Regulations. This alternative would propose limiting use to designated sites only or restricting camping by permit only. This strategy is difficult to manage in the field and can cause administrative problems when users show up last minute looking for a permit. Therefore, this alternative will not be supported by this UMP.

Alternative 4 - Significant facility development. Provide for maximum degree of camping and variety of recreational opportunities. Designate the majority of existing sites and develop new sites. Provide a fire ring, pit privy, and picnic table at each site. This alternative would result in the most disturbance to plant and animal habitats due to the large degree of facility improvements. This level of development would not take into consideration required APSLMP tent site spacing guidelines with the level of development approaching that of a primitive campground. Therefore, this alternative will not be supported by this UMP.

Alternative 5 - The **preferred alternative** is to designate sites taking into consideration day use of the area, appropriate existing sites, APSLMP spacing guidelines, and terrain constraints. Because of their anticipated popularity, permits to stay for more than three nights will not be issued for sites in heavy demand during the core camping season. The camping areas at the northwest end of the lake will be closed due to conflicts with day users and environmental constraints. Other sites that are unsuitable or too close to the water will be closed and revegetated.

Projected Use and Potential Impacts of the Preferred Alternative

The closure of fourteen sites along with official designation of 10 suitable sites will reduce the amount of camping the area is currently experiencing. When all sites have been occupied, users will be directed to camp elsewhere. The opening of the adjacent IP lands to camping under the conservation easement will accommodate overflow camping. Use levels and site impacts will be closely monitored on the designated sites. If LAC standards are exceeded, the individual site will be closed and/or rehabilitated.

Impacts for all proposals:

Environmental - A minor amount of vegetation removal will be necessary for the construction of the parking areas, campsites, and new trails. The utilization of existing trails will limit the amount of tree cutting necessary. Prior to any construction work, a work plan will be

completed, including a tree tally. Disturbance of wetlands and water quality will be mitigated through proper trail layout and new privy construction and location. Effects on fish and wildlife populations are expected to be minor, with new trails routed to avoid known deer wintering yards, whenever possible.

Social and Economic - Localized increases in traffic and highway use are anticipated to be minor. Use of the adjacent private lands is expected to increase slightly due to improved camping opportunities on the public lands. Safety hazards on area snowmobile trails will be reduced by relocating one trail from along the NYS highway ROW a more interior trail over State land. The posting of speed limits on snowmobile trails should also provide for a safer experience and reduce associated noise levels.

Future Proposals:

- The possibility of an accessible fishing pier will be investigated during the term of this UMP. No specific location has been identified to date. If a suitable location can be found it will be included in the five year update to this UMP. (LF/OP)
- Investigate the suitability of designating sites for parking and use by equestrians. Camping with horses has the potential to cause impacts which can degrade a normal tent site. An accumulation of horse manure on the ground can render a campsite undesirable for use by others. Horses also may damage campsite vegetation through trampling or by eating the bark and branches of trees, and damage tree roots through soil compaction. To help mitigate potential impacts and limit conflicts with other users, opportunities for equestrian camping will be considered for this area. Accessible mounting platforms will be provided, if determined to be necessary. No facilities for manure disposal will be provided. The level of development necessary for adequate horse trailer parking areas with pull-through access and space for large vehicles would be more appropriate for the adjacent IP lands under conservation easement. (LF/OP)

