New York State
Department of Environmental Conservation

Division of Lands and Forests

SILVER LAKE WILDERNESS AREA

Silver Lake Wilderness
Sacandaga Primitive Area
Cathead Mountain Primitive Area

UNIT MANAGEMENT PLAN

April 2006

GEORGE E. PATAKI, Governor

DENISE M. SHEEHAN, Commissioner

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Silver Lake Wilderness Area

Silver Lake Wilderness
Sacandaga Primitive Area
Cathead Mountain Primitive Area

Unit Management Plan
April 2006

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
Division of Lands & Forests
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-4254
(518) 473-9518
www.dec.state.ny.us

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

GEORGE E. PATAKI
GOVERNOR

STATE OF NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12233-1010

DENISE M. SHEEHAN
COMMISSIONER

M E M O R A N D U M

APR 20 2006

TO: The Record

FROM: Denise M. Sheehan

SUBJECT: Silver Lake Wilderness Area Final Unit Management Plan (Final UMP)

The Final UMP for the Silver Lake Wilderness Area Final Unit Management Plan (Final UMP) has been completed. The Final UMP is consistent with the guidelines and criteria of the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan, the State Constitution, Environmental Conservation Law, and Department rules, regulations and policies. The Final UMP/FEIS includes management objectives and a five year budget and is hereby approved and adopted.

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY
THE ADIRONDACK PARK AGENCY
WITH RESPECT TO SILVER LAKE WILDERNESS,
SACANDAGA PRIMITIVE AND CATHEAD MOUNTAIN PRIMITIVE AREAS
UNIT MANAGEMENT PLAN
March 9, 2006

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

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

WHEREAS, the Department of Environmental Conservation has prepared a unit management plan for the Silver Lake Wilderness, Sacandaga Primitive and Cathead Mountain Primitive Areas dated February, 2006; and

WHEREAS, this action is an unlisted action pursuant to implementing regulations of the State Environmental Quality Review Act, 6 NYCRR Part 617, and the Department has made a negative determination of significance on July 27, 2005; and

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

WHEREAS, the Agency is requested to determine whether the final Silver Lake Wilderness, Sacandaga Primitive and Cathead Mountain Primitive Areas Unit Management Plan, dated February, 2006, is consistent with the Standards and Guidelines of the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Adirondack Park Agency has reviewed the proposed Silver Lake Wilderness, Sacandaga Primitive and Cathead Mountain Primitive Areas Unit Management Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Plan explicitly recognizes the primary value of the Silver Lake Wilderness is the rare opportunity it provides the recreating public to experience a high degree of solitude; and

WHEREAS, the Plan proposes an important relocation of one segment of the Northville-Placid Trail to eliminate the need for a long stretch of road walking and to thereby significantly enhance the recreational experience of all those who use the trail in this area; and

WHEREAS, the Plan commits to the implementation of strategies for prevention, targeted containment and/or eradication of invasive plant infestations; and

WHEREAS, the Plan proposes management intended to restore and perpetuate indigenous fish species, provide recreational angling as part of a larger wilderness experience, and maintain and perpetuate annual hunting and trapping activities as legitimate uses of the wildlife resources compatible with wilderness recreation; and

WHEREAS, the Plan proposes management to monitor and afford protection to species which are endangered, threatened, or of special concern; and

WHEREAS, the entire length of the West River Road, also known as Whitehouse Road, is a public road currently maintained by the Town of Wells which passes through State land and three separate private in-holdings within the Silver Lake Wilderness; and

WHEREAS, the Sacandaga Primitive Area designation is recognized by the State Land Master Plan as having highway use and associated legal interests “whose removal, though a long-term objective, cannot be provided for by a fixed deadline”; and

WHEREAS, the Town has gone on record stating that the West River Road provides motor vehicle access to several private parcels, provides important access to the Sacandaga River corridor and serves as an important entrance to the Silver Lake Wilderness Area; and

WHEREAS, the Department does not have sole legal authority to close the full extent of the road because Highway Law §212 does not authorize closure of a road which does not pass over or through lands wholly controlled by the State; and

WHEREAS, the Plan commits to efforts to work cooperatively with the Town of Wells to bring that portion of the West River Road that extends beyond the last private in-holding into compliance with the State Land Master Plan by the end of the five-year period covered by this Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Department has committed to completion of a campsite impact assessment for primitive tent sites in the areas, as well as to continued consultation with the Agency regarding design criteria for primitive tent sites to ensure they will conform to the guidelines and criteria of the Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Plan commits to initiation of a Limits of Acceptable Change approach to assessing carrying capacities and protecting the resources of the areas; and

WHEREAS, the Plan commits to removal of one non-conforming chimney and all non-conforming fireplaces where they exist in the units; and

WHEREAS, the Plan commits to discontinued maintenance of another non-conforming chimney and to conduct minor maintenance, only, of the two non-conforming, steel suspension bridges over Hamilton Lake Stream and the West Branch of the Sacandaga River; and

WHEREAS, the Department has determined the so-called “Godfrey Road Extension” does not provide legal motor vehicle access for the public beyond the Wilderness boundary and will close this portion of the road to all such motorized use now and in the future; and

WHEREAS, the Department has committed to a future unit management plan amendment for any proposed new parking area for motor vehicle access at the Wilderness boundary;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that pursuant to Section 816 of the Adirondack Park Agency Act, the Adirondack Park Agency finds the Silver Lake Wilderness, Sacandaga Primitive and Cathead Mountain Primitive Areas Unit Management Plan, dated February, 2006, conforms with the general guidelines and criteria of the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan; and

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

AYES: R. Whaley, Chairman; R. Beach (DED), S. Buchanan (DEC), R. Hoffman (DOS), F. Mezzano, D. Rehm, J. Townsend, L. Ulrich

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

ABSENT: K. Roberts, C. Wray

SILVER LAKE WILDERNESS AREA
Proposed Final Unit Management Plan

Executive Summary

The Silver Lake Wilderness Area (SLWA) is comprised of the Forest Preserve lands in three distinct, but interrelated units: (1) the Silver Lake Wilderness (SLW), (2) the Sacandaga Primitive Area (SPA), and (3) the Cathead Mountain Primitive Area (CMPA). The Sacandaga Intensive Use Area, also known as the Sacandaga Campground, is not included in the SLWA.

The Silver Lake Wilderness is a 106,770 acre management unit located in the Towns of Lake Pleasant, Benson, Hope, Wells and Arietta in Hamilton County. It is the fourth largest and southern most wilderness area in the Adirondacks. The unit is roughly bounded on the north by Route 8 and private lands near Piseco Lake, Oxbow Lake, Hamilton Lake, Sand Lake and Lake Pleasant; on the east by Route 30; on the south generally by the Hamilton County line; and on the west by Route 10, the West Branch of the Sacandaga and the Piseco Outlet. Surrounding nearby state lands include the Jessup River Wild Forest to the north; Wilcox Lake Wild Forest to the east; Shaker Mountain Wild Forest to the south; and the Ferris Lake Wild Forest to the west.

Both the Sacandaga and Cathead Mountain Primitive Areas are relatively small sections of State land which provide access to private lands that are totally enclosed by the wilderness area. The Sacandaga Primitive Area is 4.2 acres in the Town of Wells and consists only of the Whitehouse Road and its right-of-way in lots 362 and 382 of the Benson Tract. The Cathead Mountain Primitive Area consists of Great Lot 121 (206 acres) in the Town of Benson which contains two rights-of-way to an inholding of private land as well as the remnants of a telephone line for the state owned fire tower on Cathead Mountain. A unit management plan (UMP) for the SLWA has never previously been written.

There are several key issues related to the management of the Silver Lake Wilderness Area they include:

West River Road (also known as Whitehouse Road) - The West River Road is a dirt and gravel road that follows the West Branch of the Sacandaga River as it penetrates deep into the heart of the Silver Lake Wilderness. The road begins just south of the village of Wells, where it forks left or south from Algonquin Drive, 0.7 miles from NY 30, and continues southwest 8.0 miles to Whitehouse. The entire length of road is a public right-of-way and is currently being maintained by the Town of Wells. It provides motor vehicle access to several private parcels, the last one being a small triangular portion of Lot 11, Oxbow Tract, on the south side of the road, at 7.1. This private parcel has approximately 0.2 miles of road frontage along the West River Road. The last 0.7 miles of road to Whitehouse are on Forest Preserve lands classified as Wilderness and do not provide access to any private land.

The Town has also designated the entire length of road open to snowmobiles and ATVs. This designation has contributed to ATV and other motor vehicle use impacts in the Whitehouse area.

The Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan ("Master Plan" or "APSLMP") contains several specific provisions on the use of motor vehicles in areas classified as wilderness. The Master Plan, June 2001, states in guideline 2 under the heading "Structures and improvements" on pages 21 and 22, that in wilderness areas "roads and state truck trails" are considered non-conforming structures. Guideline 1 under the heading "Motor vehicles, motorized equipment and aircraft" on page 23 of the Master Plan, provides "public use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment and aircraft will be prohibited." Guideline 2, paragraph b under the heading "Basic guidelines" for management and use of wilderness areas, on page 20 of the Master Plan, provides that all non-conforming uses "will be removed by March 31, 1987." Thus, the Master Plan does not allow for any use of public motor vehicles on wilderness units within the Adirondack Park.

The last 0.7 miles of the West River Road need to be brought into compliance with Master Plan requirements. Such action should also help eliminate illegal off-road ATV traffic in the Whitehouse area.

A portion of this road from Whitehouse to the confluence with Dugway Creek is included within the West Branch of the Sacandaga River wild river corridor (ECL §15-2713(1)(g)). 6 NYCRR §666.2(g) provides that "all new land use or development in a river area must be undertaken in compliance with the standards listed in this Part" (emphasis added), thereby implying that land use or development existing before the day when the river corridor was designated is not required to comply with 6 NYCRR Part 666. Since the West River Road and the use thereof were established before the river corridor was designated as a wild river, public use of the road is therefore allowed.

There is also a third issue relating to this road. The Master Plan classifies that portion of the Whitehouse Road and its right-of-way which crosses Lots 362 and 382 of the Benson Tract as the Sacandaga Primitive Area, thereby authorizing a public highway that would be non-conforming if the corridor were classified as part of the Silver Lake Wilderness area. However, the Master Plan does not include within this Primitive Area classification the entire portion of the road which extends southwesterly from it's beginning at Algonquin Road to the most westerly private parcel that is located on the road; that portion of the public highway which crosses lots 366, 376, 377 and 378 of the Benson Tract is not included within the Primitive Area. Thus, this portion of the road is classified by the Master Plan as part of the Wilderness Area in spite of the fact that it provides access to private land. Although the Master Plan Wilderness Area requirements discussed above mandate that this section of the road be closed, DEC has no legal authority to close this portion of the road because Highway Law §212 does not authorize the closure of a road which does not pass over or through lands wholly controlled by the State.

Proposed management actions include working cooperatively with the Town of Wells to bring the last 0.7 miles of the West River Road into compliance with Master Plan requirements before the end of the 5-year period covered by this UMP. Possible options for effectuating such compliance might include, among other things, an order of abandonment by the Town pursuant to Highway Law §205(1) or a Commissioner closure order pursuant to Highway Law §212. When the road has been established as a foot trail, the proposal is to create a new parking area and trailhead within 500 feet of the wilderness boundary. The foot trail conditions will be established by breaking up the road surface, removing appropriate culverts, and planting native vegetation.

Northville-Placid Trail relocation - The Northville-Placid Trail (NPT) is a 133-mile footpath that begins at Northville and traverses the heart of the Adirondacks to end at Lake Placid. The trail was established by the Adirondack Mountain Club (ADK) in 1922 and was later turned over to DEC for marking and maintenance. The official starting point of the trail is at a large DEC signpost along NY 30, where a bridge spans the Sacandaga River as it enters the Sacandaga Reservoir. The trail heads north from this point following NY 30 and the Benson Road for 10.3 miles to Upper Benson where it then enters the Silver Lake Wilderness (SLW). Today, most hiking along the NPT is initiated at Upper Benson. Hikers skip the section of trail from Northville to Upper Benson to avoid carrying a heavy pack along what is now a busy paved highway. This makes the trip not only more enjoyable but safer as well.

The NPT is the only marked hiking trail in the SLW. Public use of the trail in this area is estimated to be approximately 2500 people/year comprising both day use and overnight camping activity. Trail data is collected from three registers at the Upper Benson, Whitehouse and Piseco trailheads. A relocation of the section of trail from Northville to Upper Benson would involve both the Shaker Mountain Wild Forest (SMWF) and SLW. It would locate the "Northville", now Upper Benson beginning of the trail, in the SMWF at a new trailhead off Gifford Valley Road. The trail would pass through a portion of the SMWF and enter the SLW from a small pull-off along the Benson Road in the vicinity of Woods Lake. Both portions of reroute are independent of each other because of the Benson Road.

There are two alternatives for the new section of trail in the SLW. The preferred route would cross the Benson Road east of Woods Lake, swing north of Lapland Lake X-C Ski Center to join the existing trail at the foot bridge over the North Branch of West Stony Creek. This alternative would eliminate approximately half of the current road walking and would improve the public's safety, the user's experience, and the overall character of the trail. However, there has been some concern expressed by private landowners around Woods Lake regarding this alternative and the close proximity of the reroute to their property. The potential impacts to private property were taken into consideration and can be mitigated by locating the new trail in a manner so as to be reasonably screened

from view from the private property and lake to avoid intruding on the private property and natural character of the area. Primitive campsite designation will be confined to the east shore on the south half of the lake.

Proposed management actions include rerouting a section of the Northville-Placid Trail through the southern portion of the unit as described above, closing 0.4 miles of the old Godfrey Road in Lots 74 & 105 of the Benson Tract, and relocating the current parking area in Lot 105 (near the North Branch of West Stony Creek) to within 500 feet of the wilderness boundary. This will add approximately 4.5 miles of new foot trail in the wilderness and eliminate 0.4 miles of non-conforming road milage. No other new facilities related to this trail are anticipated.

Godfrey Road Extension (part of old Godfrey Road) - The Godfrey Road Extension runs from the town road turnaround at the end of Godfrey Road approximately 0.8 miles to the wilderness boundary. It is a public right-of-way (ROW) over private land in Lots 48 and 73, Benson Tract. See the Easement and Right-of-Way Section of this plan for the types of public use allowed along this route. The ROW is technically within the Shaker Mountain Wild Forest (SMWF) but is being discussed here since it provides public access to the Silver Lake Wilderness (SLW).

In 1968, the Department acquired this easement by appropriation for the purpose of providing public access to the Northville-Placid Trail (NPT) and other local hiking destinations. A section of this foot trail was at that time, and is still today, laid out from the end of the town road along this ROW to a small clearing on the North Branch of West Stony Creek. The total distance of this route is approximately 1.2 miles (0.8 miles of ROW on private land and 0.4 miles on state land in wilderness). Limited public motor vehicle use has also been occurring along this route for some time, probably since its acquisition. The Godfrey Road trailhead is the only developed access point in the southern portion of the unit.

There is no question that public motor vehicle use along the last 0.4 miles of road in wilderness is not permitted under APSLMP guidelines . The beginning of the road (first 0.8 miles) is on lands that are not classified as forest preserve. Public motor vehicle use is technically allowed on this section within the terms of the easement. There are three alternatives for the first section of this road: 1. Close the road to all types of public use. 2. Close the road to public motor vehicle use only with the option to provide future public motor vehicle or CP-3 access if necessary. 3. Allow continued use of public motor vehicles. See the Management Issues Section for a more in-depth discussion of these alternatives.

This UMP proposes to close the entire 1.2 miles (0.8 miles of ROW on private land and 0.4 miles on state land in wilderness) of road to public motor vehicle use with the option to provide future public motor vehicle or CP-3 access to within 500 feet of the wilderness boundary if necessary. When resources allow, we will evaluate the need to restore the roadway and, if warranted, rehabilitate the roadway to a driveable condition and build a new parking area within 500 feet of the wilderness boundary. Until such time, the closed section of road will be leveled and rehabilitated to mitigate any environmental impacts. The one designated campsite along the North Branch of West Stony Creek will remain regardless of the road status.

Whitehouse chimneys - Whitehouse is an area along the West Branch of the Sacandaga that was once the site of a lumber camp, private hunting lodge, and boys' camp. Today, all that remains is some old building foundations, a few cellar holes, and two stone chimneys. The large clearing along the river, where people currently camp, was the site of a private hunting camp with a main "white house" lodge. Scattered in the woods surrounding this area are a few stone foundations and a stone chimney from Larry Fountain's residence which was also later known as the "Blair House."

Further along the West Branch of the Sacandaga, where the Northville-Placid Trail crosses, is a steel suspension bridge which was built in 1962. Directly in front of this bridge on the north shore sits a second stone chimney which is the remains of a boys' camp recreation hall.

These two chimneys are non-conforming structures under the APSLMP. However, the people in the local community wish to keep the chimneys because they consider them part of the cultural history of the area. In an effort to determine their historical value, DEC's Historic Preservation Officer assessed both chimneys pursuant to the State Historic Preservation Act (PRHPL Article 14). Based on this assessment, DEC and OPRHP concluded

that the removal of both structures would have 'No Impact' upon cultural resources in or eligible for inclusion in the State and National Registers of Historic Places. These structures were determined as non-significant for a number of reasons including their age and construction materials.

Proposed management actions include immediately removing the chimney along the West River Road (known as the Blair House chimney) because of structural damage and related public safety concerns. The UMP recommends that the chimney along the north shore of West Branch (from the boys' camp recreation hall) be allowed to remain in place until it deteriorates to a point that it becomes a public safety issue. At that point, it will also be removed.

Steel suspension bridges - The two suspension bridges along the Northville-Placid Trail, one across the West Branch of the Sacandaga River and one across Hamilton Lake Stream Outlet, do not meet the APSLMP guidelines since they are not constructed of "natural materials"(Master Plan, page 21), utilizing instead steel cables, concrete and steel support beams. These materials were used partially because of the long distances in which these bridges span, but also because it was the only technology available at that time. The bridges do have a positive impact on the physical resource by reducing vegetation trampling and associated river bank erosion caused by users searching for a suitable crossing location. They also provide users with a safe means of crossing at times when water levels are high. The UMP recommends that these bridges continue to remain in place and be maintained until their condition requires replacement. The Department will continue to perform routine maintenance on the bridges, but no major rehabilitation. Prior to their replacement, the Department will seek alternate river crossing sites then consult with the APA to decide what kind of bridges will be built.

Spy Lake access - Spy Lake is a 376-acre lake which is mostly divided between private ownership and the Silver Lake Wilderness. However, a small parcel of wild forest land on the north shore dictates that the lake be included as part of the inventory of the Ferris Lake Wild Forest. Public access to the lake is being discussed in this plan because one of the alternatives is a new foot trail through the wilderness. Interest in gaining access to the lake is mainly for the purpose of fishing. The access alternatives in their preferred order include: 1. Reestablish historic access via the Spy Lake Road. 2. Boat access via the Piseco Outlet. 3. Foot access via a new trail through the Silver Lake Wilderness.

Public car-top boat access was once available from private land along the Spy Lake Road, but has been closed due to use-related problems. It is unclear whether permission needs to be acquired to reopen this road to public access.

Whether the public can access the lake via the Piseco Outlet depends on whether the outlet satisfies the common law test on whether the waterway is navigable-in-fact. The test employed by the courts in making this determination is whether the waterway, in its natural, unimpounded state, has a practical utility for trade or travel. See Adirondack League Club, Inc. v. Sierra Club, 92 N.Y.2d 591 (1998). The waterway need not be navigable in both directions, nor during twelve months of the year, although it must have practical utility for trade or travel at a time other than flood stage. Also, the presence of occasional rapids or obstructions in the waterway do not necessarily destroy its navigability. Historically, waterways have been found to be navigable-in-fact where the waterway is capable of floating logs in its unimpounded state. Although it is highly likely that the outlet was once used for this purpose, no official documentation has yet been found. Further research will be done during the five years of this UMP to determine whether the Outlet has practical utility for trade or travel, including whether there is a history of logging on the outlet.

A new foot trail through the wilderness area is an option, but it is not a suitable alternative for boat access because of steep terrain and the difficulty in transporting boats overland to the lake.

The UMP recommends exploring the possibility of obtaining public access to the lake through one of the mentioned alternatives.

Additional recreational facilities - The primary value of this wilderness area is its ability to provide a high degree of solitude throughout much of the area. Relatively low use of the interior along with seasonal use patterns minimizes encounters between users and helps maintain that high degree of solitude. Areas which receive moderate

use, such as Whitehouse, are located on the periphery and are accessible by motor vehicle. The primary users of this wilderness area are fishermen, hikers, campers, hunters and skiers.

There are four physical features or characteristics of the Silver Lake Wilderness which have contributed to or resulted in the current availability of a high degree of solitude. Those characteristic are: its remoteness, the limited access to the area, the limited access within the area, and major attractions which are located on the periphery. The only marked hiking trail within the unit is a 23 mile section of the Northville-Placid Trail. There are also many miles of additional foot paths that are unmarked and primarily used by hunters and fisherman. Most of these paths are only seasonally used and dead end at either a lake, pond or camping area.

The APSLMP defines wilderness, in part, as having "outstanding opportunities for solitude." The Silver Lake Wilderness provides such an area for hunters, fishermen, hikers, and others who desire that high degree of solitude as part of their recreational experience. Excessive facilities and intrusive management can threaten the naturalness and wilderness values that users of this area ultimately seek. Increased visitor use can adversely impact wilderness experiences through resulting crowding, visitor conflicts, loss of solitude, and direct impacts on resources such as loss of vegetation at campsites, and soil erosion on trails.

In comparison to the highly overused wilderness areas, such as the High Peaks and Pharaoh Lake Wilderness Areas, the Silver Lake Wilderness Area provides a unique opportunity for the public to recreate in an area providing significantly more solitude. The UMP proposes to preserve this unique opportunity.

In an effort to protect the wilderness character and values that this unit currently supports, the decision has been made to keep management proposals for new facilities to an absolute minimum. New facilities will only be proposed when necessary for resource protection or user safety, and will not be made solely for user convenience.

Cathead Mountain access - The CMPA has one issue that is beyond the scope of a UMP but deserves a brief explanation. The APSLMP defines the CMPA as 206 acres and consists of Great Lot 121 in the Town of Benson. It also states that the CMPA contains two rights-of-way to an inholding of private land within the Silver Lake Wilderness as well as the remnants of a telephone line for the state owned fire tower on Cathead Mountain, situated within the inholding.

The issue related to the CMPA involves public access to the Cathead Mountain Trail and focuses on the nature and extent of private access over Great Lot 120 of the Benson Tract. The Cathead Mountain Trail is a very popular hiking trail that leads to a state-owned fire tower lying within a private inholding. The trail begins on private property, crosses state land, then re-enters private property where the fire tower is located. Other associated structures that are state-owned and located on the parcel of private property at the fire tower site include: a radio building, wind generating tower, observer's cabin, storage shed, helipad, and privy. The previously recognized motor vehicle road and telephone line to the fire tower are no longer used.

Historically, the private land owners used motor vehicles over Lot 120 to access their property, as authorized by Temporary Revocable Permits (TRPs) issued by the Department. Normally, private use of motor vehicles would not be allowed over Lot 120 because of its Forest Preserve and Wilderness classification, but an exception exists for the use of a private right-of-way which pre-dated State acquisition. A few years ago DEC determined that the owners of this property had no such legal right-of-way across Lot 120, and consequently denied the owner's request for a new TRP. The owners responded in September of 2000 by withdrawing their permission for the public to use the Cathead Mountain Trail and filing a lawsuit against the State, alleging that they had a right-of-way and that DEC had therefore improperly denied the TRP. On June 16, 2005 the Appellate Division, Third Department, unanimously affirmed a lower court ruling that the Thomas Gang has no legal right of access to its property across Forest Preserve lands. Consequently, public access to the Cathead Mountain Trail continues to be denied.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

SILVER LAKE WILDERNESS AREA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS i
UNIT LOCATION MAP ii
PLANNING PROCESS DESCRIPTION iii

I. INTRODUCTION TO THE SILVER LAKE WILDERNESS AREA 1
- AREA OVERVIEW 1
- UNIT LOCATIONS AND DESCRIPTIONS 1
  - Silver Lake Wilderness 1
  - Sacandaga Primitive Area 1
  - Cathead Mountain Primitive Area 1
- ACQUISITION HISTORY 1
- GENERAL ACCESS 1
- HISTORY OF THE AREA 2

II. BIOPHYSICAL RESOURCES 4
- GEOLOGY 4
- SOILS 4
- TERRAIN 4
- WATER 5
- WETLANDS 6
- CLIMATE 7
- AIR QUALITY 7
- OPEN SPACE 9
- VEGETATION 9
- WILDLIFE 15
- FISHERIES 18
- SIGNIFICANT HABITATS 22
- VISUAL/SCENIC RESOURCES 24
- TRAVEL CORRIDORS 25
- WILD, SCENIC AND RECREATIONAL RIVERS 25

III. MAN-MADE FACILITIES AND PUBLIC USE 26
- EXISTING FACILITIES 26
  - SILVER LAKE WILDERNESS 26
  - SACANDAGA PRIMITIVE AREA 29
  - CATHEAD MOUNTAIN PRIMITIVE AREA 29
- CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES 30
- RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE LAND 32
- PUBLIC USE OF LAND UNIT 33
- CAPACITY TO WITHSTAND USE 36
- EDUCATION, INTERPRETATION AND RESEARCH 40
- EASEMENTS AND RIGHT-OF-WAYS 41

IV. MANAGEMENT AND POLICY OVERVIEW 43
- ADMINISTRATION 43
- PAST MANAGEMENT 43
- MANAGEMENT ISSUES 44
- MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES 50
- MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES 53

MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 55
PRESCRIPTIVE MANAGEMENT ZONES 55
APPLICATION OF LAC PROCESS 57
AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) 58
HISTORIC AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE PROTECTION 59

V. PROPOSED MANAGEMENT ACTIONS 60
LAND PROTECTION 60
CEMETERIES 60
BOUNDARY LINE MANAGEMENT 60
PUBLIC USE AND ACCESS 63
RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES 64
BIOPHYSICAL RESOURCES 65
SOILS 65
WATER 65
WETLANDS 66
AIR QUALITY 67
VEGETATION 67
WILDLIFE 69
FISHERIES 70
MAN-MADE FACILITIES 71
TRAILHEADS 71
TRAILS 72
CAMPSITES 74
SIGNS 76
BRIDGES 76
PROPOSED RULES AND REGULATIONS 77
SPECIAL AREA PLANS 78
CATHEAD MOUNTAIN PRIMITIVE AREA 78
SACANDAGA PRIMITIVE AREA 79
WHITEHOUSE 80
NORTH COUNTRY NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL (NCNST) 81

VI. IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE/BUDGET 82

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES 84

ACRONYMS 87

UNIT BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION 88

APPENDICES 89
SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS/ISSUES WITH RESPONSES 90
CAMPSITE LOCATION MAPS 100
WILDLIFE INVENTORY 109
FISHERIES INVENTORY 124
TRAIL CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM AND MARKING STANDARDS 144
INVASIVE PLANT SPECIES BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES 148
CAMPSITE IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND MONITORING MANUAL 151
SEQR DOCUMENTS 161
UNIT MAPS 166

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
The development of this plan is part of the Governor's initiative to complete all remaining Unit Management Plans (UMP's) for forest preserve lands in the Adirondack and Catskill Parks. Opportunities for public involvement were provided through a mailing requesting written comments on planning issues followed by an information meeting and finally the review of a draft unit management plan. Some of the individuals and organizations that actively participated in the planning process are listed below. It should be noted that the listing of a named contributor does not imply that the individual or organization supports the management recommendations in the plan.

The Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks - David Gibson
National Park Service - Thomas L. Gilbert
Adirondack Mountain Club (ADK) - Neil F. Woodworth
North Country Trail Association - Howard S. Beye
Town of Long Lake - Robert C. Gibson
SUNY ESF - Chad Dawson, Jennifer Gagnon and Stacy McNulty
Adirondack Nature Conservancy - Hilary Oles and Stephen Flick

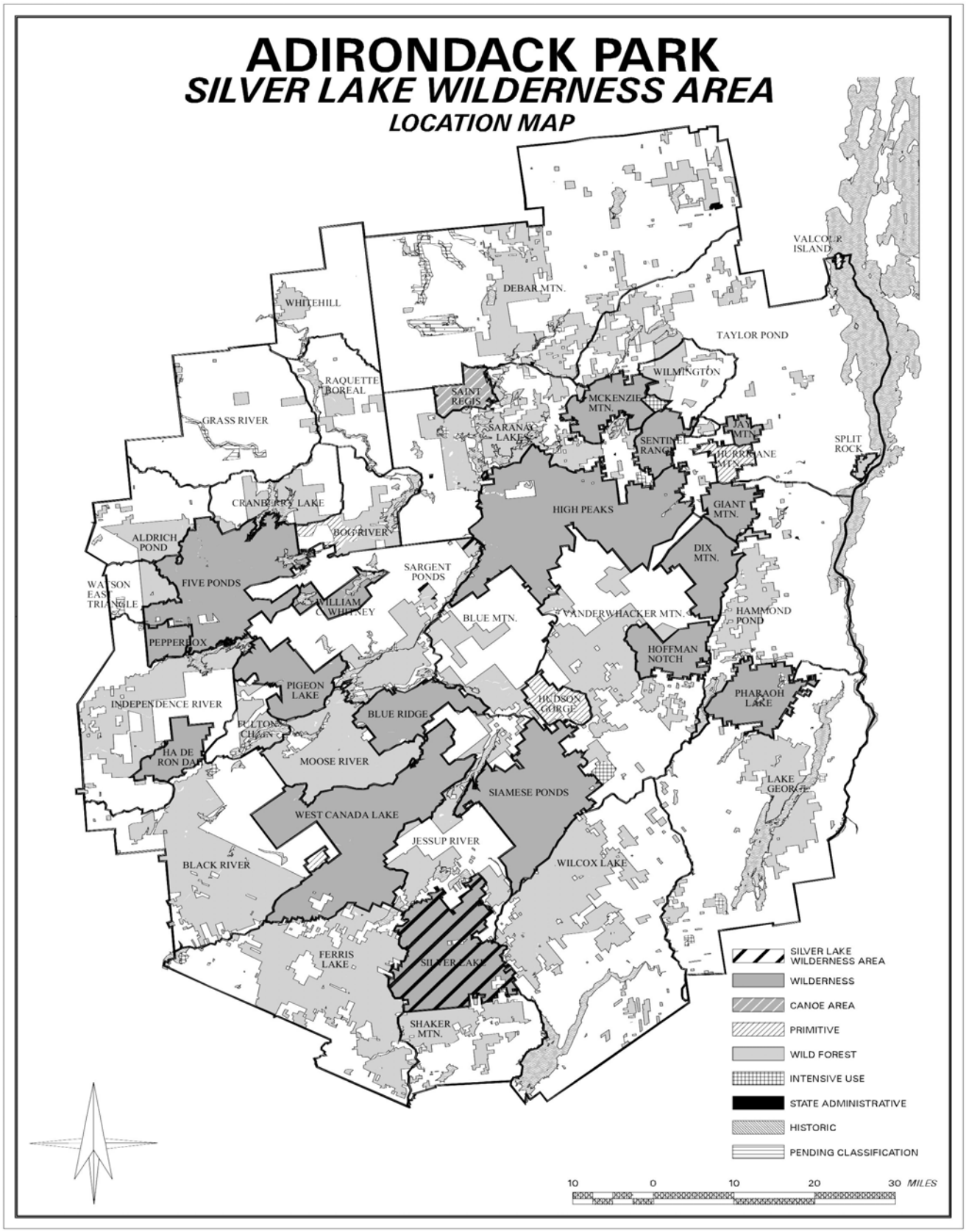
John W. Washburn
Barbara McMartin
Jacqueline Bave
Donald F. Leadley
Robert J. MacFarlane
Ken Orleanski
Bill Ingersoll
John Shepard III
Edward Miller
Robert Godlewski
Brian Murphy
Janine Ardohain
Roy Earley
Bob Shwajlyk
David M. Brenan
Lee & Judi Borland
Claire Aldrich

DEC Unit Management Planning Team Members:
Team Leader: Eric J. Kasza, Lands and Forests, Herkimer

Region 5
Rick Fenton, Lands and Forests, Northville
Lance Durfey, Fisheries, Ray Brook
Bob Inslerman, Wildlife, Ray Brook (Retired)
Dave Winchell, Public Affairs, Ray Brook
Bruce Richards, Operations, Northville
Mark Kralovic, Forest Ranger, Northville
Lt. Scott Florence, Conservation Officer, Ray Brook

Adirondack Park Agency (APA) Unit Management Planning Team Members:
Walter Linck, Rick Weber, Jim Connolly, Sunita Halasz

Other DEC Staff Contributors:
Dave Smith, Tom Martin, Karyn Richards, Tom Wolfe, Rob Messenger, Ken Hamm, Peter Frank, Fred Munk, Sandra Garlick, Jim Sessions, Charles Vandrei, Linda Kashdan-Schrom, Carole Fraser, Tom Kapelewski, Richard Van Laer (Retired), Brian Finlayson, Scott Orr, Nick Conrad, Stephanie Diamond, Rosa Howard.


ADIRONDACK PARK
SILVER LAKE WILDERNESS AREA
LOCATION MAP
VALCOUR ISLAND
DEBAR MTN.
WHITEHILL
TAYLOR POND
WILMINGTON
RAQUETTE BOREAL
SAINT REGIS
MCKENZIE MTN.
GRASS RIVER
SARANAC LAKES
SENTINEL RANGE
JAY MTN.
HURRICANE MTN.
SPLIT ROCK
CRANBERRY LAKE
HIGH PEAKS
GIANT MTN.
ALDRICH POND
BOG RIVER
DIX MTN.
SARGENT PONDS
WATSON EAST TRIANGLE
FIVE PONDS
WILLIAM C. WHITNEY
BLUE MTN.
VANDERWHACKER MTN.
HAMMOND POND
PEPPERBOX
HOFFMAN NOTCH
PIGEON LAKE
PHARAOH LAKE
INDEPENDENCE RIVER
HUDSON GORGE
BLUE RIDGE
FULTON CHAIN
HA DE RON DAH
MOOSE RIVER
LAKE GEORGE
SIAMESE PONDS
WEST CANADA LAKE
JESSUP RIVER
BLACK RIVER
WILCOX LAKE
FERRIS LAKE
SILVER LAKE
SHAKER MTN.
SILVER LAKE WILDERNESS AREA
WILDERNESS
CANOE AREA
PRIMITIVE
WILD FOREST
INTENSIVE USE
STATE ADMINISTRATIVE
HISTORIC
PENDING CLASSIFICATION
10 0 10 20 30 MILES

PLANNING PROCESS DESCRIPTION

The Division of Lands and Forests has the lead role in and is responsible for developing Unit Management Plans (UMP's) for all lands designated as Forest Preserve. The appointment of a UMP team by the appropriate Regional Director initiates the UMP process. The team includes DEC staff from Fisheries, Wildlife, Forest Rangers, Forestry, Operations, and in the case of UMP's written for units in the Adirondacks, staff from the Adirondack Park Agency (APA). The Department announces the plan's inception via a press release and a letter to the Forest Preserve Advisory Committee, known interest groups, local governments, planning boards, and individuals known to have a specific interest in the property. The press release and the letter request public comment regarding the management of the unit. A public information meeting is held to provide members of the public the opportunity to express their concerns and ideas to the UMP team in person. Written comments are also accepted throughout the UMP process.

Concurrent with the public participation process, an inventory of the property's existing facilities is conducted. Data is compiled regarding current use of the property, its physical and biological resources, past management activities, and the relationship of the unit to surrounding lands and communities. The inventory data and the input received from the public are then used by the UMP team to develop goals and objectives for the management of the land. Specific management actions are formulated to achieve the stated goals and objectives, and a schedule for their implementation is developed. Depending on the size of the unit and the issues involved, the writing of goals, objectives, and management actions may require additional public input.

Once the initial draft UMP has been completed, the State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) process is started. At this point, a Long Environmental Assessment Form (EAF) may be completed. Depending on the degree of environmental impacts identified, a positive or negative declaration is determined. If a positive declaration is determined, the initial draft UMP is revised to include a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). The draft UMP is then reviewed internally by DEC and (for Adirondack UMP's) APA staff, and any necessary changes are made prior to distribution for public review. At this time, a press release is issued and a public meeting scheduled to receive public comments on the draft plan. If a DEIS has been prepared, a notice is published in the Environmental News Bulletin (ENB) and local newspapers, and a public meeting is held to comply with SEQR requirements.

A minimum 30-day public comment period follows the public meeting, during which time written comments may also be submitted regarding the plan. At the end of the public comment period, all comment received on the draft plan is assessed, and appropriate changes are made to the plan. If a DEIS has been prepared, a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) is prepared, along with a SEQR Findings Statement. In the Adirondacks, the final UMP is then reviewed by the APA staff and Commissioners to determine its consistency with the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan. Catskill UMP's are reviewed by DEC staff to determine their consistency with the Catskill Park State Land Master Plan. Subsequently, the final UMP is approved by the Commissioner of Environmental Conservation, printed and distributed. If a DEIS has been prepared, the Notice of Completion of FEIS is issued and SEQR findings are filed.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

I. INTRODUCTION TO THE SILVER LAKE WILDERNESS AREA

AREA OVERVIEW

The Silver Lake Wilderness Area (SLWA) is comprised of the Forest Preserve lands in three distinct, but interrelated units: (1) the Silver Lake Wilderness, (2) the Sacandaga Primitive Area, and (3) the Cathead Mountain Primitive Area. The Sacandaga Intensive Use Area, also known as the Sacandaga Campground, is not included in the SLWA.

The Silver Lake Wilderness is the fourth largest and southern most wilderness area in the Adirondack Park. Both the Sacandaga and Cathead Mountain Primitive Areas are relatively small sections of State land which provide access to private lands that are totally enclosed by the wilderness area. All three units are classified by the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan (APSLMP or Master Plan). Consequently, the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is required by executive Law §816 to develop, in consultation with the Adirondack Park Agency (APA), a Unit Management Plan (UMP) for them. The decision to include these three areas in one plan was made because of the common issues they share and their geographic relationship to one another.

The United States Geological Survey (USGS) topographic maps that cover the area include the Canada Lake, Caroga Lake and Jackson Summit 7.5 minute series quadrangles; and the Morehouse Mountain, Piseco Lake, Wells, Three Ponds Mountain and Hope Falls 7.5x15 minute series quadrangles. A UMP for this area has not previously been written.

UNIT LOCATIONS AND DESCRIPTIONS

Silver Lake Wilderness

The Silver Lake Wilderness (SLW) is 106,770 acres and is located in the Towns of Lake Pleasant, Benson, Wells, Hope and Arietta in Hamilton County. The unit is roughly bounded on the north by Route 8 and private lands near Piseco Lake, Oxbow Lake, Hamilton Lake, Sand Lake and Lake Pleasant; on the east by Route 30; on the south generally by the Hamilton County line; and on the west by Route 10, the West Branch of the Sacandaga River and Piseco Outlet. Surrounding nearby state lands include the Jessup River Wild Forest to the north; Wilcox Lake Wild Forest to the east; Shaker Mountain Wild Forest to the south; and Ferris Lake Wild Forest to the west.

Sacandaga Primitive Area

The Sacandaga Primitive Area (SPA) is 4.2 acres and is located in the Town of Wells in Hamilton County. It adjoins the Silver Lake Wilderness and consists only of the Whitehouse Road, or West River Road, and its right-of-way (ROW) in Lots 362 and 382 of the Benson Tract.

Cathead Mountain Primitive Area

The Cathead Mountain Primitive Area (CMPA) is 206 acres and consists of Great Lot 121, Benson Tract, in the Town of Benson in Hamilton County. The Master Plan provides that it contains two rights-of-way to an inholding of private land within the Silver Lake Wilderness as well as the remnants of a telephone line for the state owned fire tower on Cathead Mountain, situated within the inholding.

ACQUISITION HISTORY

The lands of the SLWA are part of the Lawrence Patent; Oxbow Tract; Benson Tract; Jones Gore; Bergens Purchase; Totten & Crossfield Purchase; Overacker Tract and Van Wagonen Tract. The majority of the lands in this unit were acquired by the State in the late 1800's. The most recent purchase occurred in 1989 in the Town of Wells. This parcel helped to provide additional access to the wilderness area from the Gilmantown Road. An interesting acquisition was a land exchange between the Town of Arietta and the State of New York that was approved by the voters in November 1991. This unique acquisition (via Constitutional Amendment) added 83 acres of land to the wilderness area in exchange for 50 acres of wild forest land north of the Piseco Airport.

GENERAL ACCESS

The area is readily accessible by car, lying approximately 35 miles north of the Mohawk Valley. Public access to the periphery is primarily via the Benson Road, Gilmantown Road and NYS Routes 8, 10 and 30. Access to the

interior can be gained by the Whitehouse Road, also known as West River Road, which penetrates deep into the heart of the unit. The only marked hiking trail is a section of the Northville-Placid Trail (NPT), extending from Godfrey Road in Upper Benson to NYS Route 8 in Piseco. Seasonal water access can be gained via the West Branch of the Sacandaga River.

HISTORY OF THE AREA

The Adirondack Mountain Club's "Guide to Adirondack Trails" series and Barbara McMartin's "Discover the Southern Adirondacks" are among the literature giving a good historical background of the area. A short compilation of the area's more significant historical people and places is included below. Consult the Bibliography for a listing of some of the many other excellent sources of historical information.

As early as 1835, this area was settled by hearty, hard-working farmers, mill owners, lumbermen, and tannery workers. The lumbermen stripped the land of its forests, depleting the resource responsible for their employment, while the farmers were slowly defeated by a harsh climate and stony soil. Chemical tanning processes soon negated the need for hemlock bark, and the lands and tiny towns were gradually abandoned. Around the turn of the twentieth century, huge blocks of this abandoned land were acquired by the state and designated as Forest Preserve.

Nick Stoner. Nick Stoner was a Revolutionary War veteran who turned to the Adirondacks after the war. He was a frontiersman and later guide who spent a great deal of time trapping along the West Branch of the Sacandaga River. Many say that he was just as skillful in the woods as any Native American. He built one of his bark cabins on the bank of the West Branch near the outlet of Trout Lake and stayed there when setting traps for beaver along the river. Stoner would occasionally be troubled by Native Americans and legend has it that this site was the spot where two St. Regis Indians were killed when they attempted to steal some pelts and traps.

Whitehouse. Whitehouse is an interesting area along the West Branch of the Sacandaga, or the West River as it has always been known to local residents, that dates back to the late 1800's. It was once the site of a lumber camp, private hunting lodge, and boys' camp. Today, there are only the remains of some old building foundations, a few cellar holes, a small family cemetery, and two stone chimneys. The large clearing along the river, where people currently camp, was the site of a private hunting camp with a main "white house" lodge. Scattered in the woods surrounding this area are a few stone foundations and a stone chimney from Larry Fountain's residence which was also later known as the "Blair House."

Further along the West Branch of the Sacandaga, where the Northville-Placid Trail crosses, is a swinging suspension bridge that was built in 1962. In earlier years, hikers coming from the south had to go down to the shoreline and yell across to the "white house" on the opposite bank. If they were lucky, someone appeared and rowed across to get them. Otherwise, they took off their boots and waded across. Directly in front of this bridge on the north shore sits a second stone chimney which is the remains of a boys' camp recreation hall.

The Whitehouse itself was a large two story structure with a metal roof. It contained a dining room, living room and lean-to kitchen on the first floor and a bathroom and six two-occupant bedrooms on the second floor where the guides, cook and other workers slept. Sportsmen usually occupied the three cabins that were located just north of the main lodge. A boys camp run by Lee Fountain's son, Larry, was an alternate source of income during the summer months. The camp could accommodate fifty boys and was appropriately named Mountain Trail Camp since it was within the Adirondack State Park.

The Whitehouse was a popular place for sportsman from throughout the State, but in particular for sportsman from the Mohawk and Hudson Valleys. Detailed records were kept about everyone who hunted there and the number of deer taken. During a 10-year period 292 bucks and two does were shot; the biggest buck was 237 pounds. The owners of the lodge ran a tight ship with strict rules of conduct. There was no drinking, no swearing, and everyone followed the directions of the guides. For these reasons, the Whitehouse never had any hunting accidents or any lost hunters.

Many remember the Whitehouse as a hunting lodge, but only a few remember it as a furniture business. Lee Fountain, the proprietor of the lodge and cabin business at the Whitehouse during the early 1900's, gained a reputation as a fine maker of Adirondack furniture. He spent many winter hours fashioning his style of Adirondack furniture. He designed and made giant birch stump tables along with birch table chairs, rocking chairs, end tables and coat racks. The birch that he used was carefully selected from an Adirondack hillside near the Whitehouse; it grew in a spot on a hillside where it developed a natural curve by turning upward to reach the light. He also carefully selected black ash logs to make natural splints for the seats and backs of his chairs. Some of the Whitehouse furniture is still in use today; a reflection of his careful craftsmanship.

In 1962 the Whitehouse and its 350 acres was offered for sale. No one but the State was interested, and the reported purchase price was $17,500. The buildings were removed and burned and the property became part of the Adirondack Forest Preserve.

Old Dan Wadsworth Hermitage. Silver Lake was the hermitage of Old Dan Wadsworth around 1915. A lumberman for most of his life, Old Dan took to the woods for good after his wife died. His place on Devorse Creek had to be abandoned when the state bought the land in that area. He moved on to Silver Lake where he lived to the ripe old age of 90, dying in 1924.

Colonel Loring Peck. Descendant of a family that had come to New England in 1638, Col. Loring Peck was a zealous patriot. The son of Jonathan and Hannah Wood Peck of Bristol, Rhode Island, he had entered military service at an early age. By January, 1775, he had become a captain. During the War of the Revolution, Peck was promoted to major. In 1794, as commander of the Senior Class Regiment of Rhode Island troops of Newport and Bristol Counties, he became lieutenant colonel, a rank he held throughout his continuous service through 1797. He was also a member of the Rhode Island Legislature for many years.

In May, 1798, Col. Loring Peck with Jane Burke, his second wife, and their family, left Bristol, Rhode Island to settle in Amenia, Dutchess County, New York. In 1811, they relocated to the Town of Lake Pleasant. Here Loring and his newly-married oldest son, William Burke Peck, bought adjoining farmlands of Amos and Ebenezer Green to the southeast of Lake Pleasant toward the base of Speculator Mountain in Township One. Here they cleared the land, built roads and houses, planted orchards, and tilled the rocky soil.

Time has since changed the land where the Peck family once lived. The forest has reclaimed the well-kept fields and roads while the farm buildings have disintegrated with decay. The only visible remains are a few old stone walls and a cemetery where the Colonel, his wife, and one of their sons are buried.

1950 Blowdown. On November 25, 1950, the biggest “wind” of all hit the Adirondacks, leveling trees in scattered locations of the Park from Franklin County to Fulton County. David H. Beetle, writing for the Utica Observer Dispatch of January 22, 1951 illustrated salvage estimates (1,740,000 cords) as "a four foot deep, four foot high pile of pulp logs that would stretch without a break from New York to Los Angeles plus a few miles out into the Pacific." In addition to this, the Department estimated that some 124 million board feet of maple, birch and beech were down. Sixty percent of this volume was located on state land and a portion of this occurred on the Silver Lake Wilderness. Larger areas damaged include the lands north of Whitehouse and lands east of Sherman Mountain.

Gold Rush Days. Goldmine Creek is a reminder of the old “gold rush” days of the 1800's. During this time, numerous low-grade gold and silver claims were developed throughout the southern portion of the Adirondacks. Other valuable and sought after metals, such as lead and graphite, were also known to the Indians, but their location was seldom revealed. There are still small quantities of ore to be found in this region today, but no one expects to find a large amount.

II. BIOPHYSICAL RESOURCES

GEOLOGY

Geologically, the Adirondacks are part of the Canadian Shield, a vast terrain of ancient Precambrian igneous and metamorphic rock that underlies about half of Canada and constitutes the nucleus of the North American continent. In the U.S. the Shield bedrock is mostly concealed under younger Paleozoic sedimentary rock strata, but is well exposed in a few regions of the Adirondacks. The upward doming of the Adirondack mass during the past few million years (a process that is still going on) is responsible for the erosional stripping of the younger rock cover and exposure of the ancient bedrock (Cressey 1966). The rocks are mainly gneisses of a wide range of composition. One of the more interesting rocks is the enormous anorthosite mass that makes up nearly all of the High Peaks region. The nearly monomineralic rock composed of plagioclase feldspar is almost identical to some of the rock brought back from the moon.

The present landscape is geologically young, a product of erosion initiated by the ongoing doming. The stream-carved topography has been extensively modified by the sculpturing of glaciers during the last Ice Age. As the ice retreated northward, it left behind an irregular cover of rock rubble. Sand and stone settled out and formed natural dams which, when filled with melt water, created lakes and ponds. Since this early structuring of the Adirondacks, vegetation has gradually reclaimed the land and has helped evolve the present forest ecosystems, including the contribution of humus to today's soil structures.

SOILS

The soils in the unit are mostly derived from glacial deposits that were deposited as glaciers advanced and retreated. Soil characteristics are variable and can fluctuate widely from location to location. The soil types can be classified into three broad categories: glacial till, glacial outwash, and organically derived.

Glacial till soils are a mixture of clay, silt, sand, and stone. These soils are nutrient rich and dominate the upland areas. Glacial outwash soils are stratified soils deposited as eskers and moraines in areas subject to periods of flash-flooding during the glacial retreat. These soils are low in nutrient-bearing silts and clays. Organically derived soils are rich in vegetative matter in various states of decay. These soils occur in low lying wetland areas where impeded drainage created saturated soils on top of glacial outwash or bedrock and where upland plants could not survive.

Soil characteristics need to be considered in the management and use of this unit. Some of the characteristics of soils found in the unit are listed below. These characteristics when combined with topographic features (i.e. slope, landscape position, etc.) can place moderate to severe limitations on recreational use.

- The soils are usually moist, retain water well, yet drain freely.
- The soils contain a layer enriched in iron and humus that is strongly acidic.
- A majority of the acreage is very stony and bouldery.
- The dominant soils have slowly permeable fragipan layers that form a barrier to roots and water.
- Some soils exhibit a seasonal high water table during wet times of the year.

TERRAIN

The unit’s topography can best be described as relatively low with rolling hills with only four mountain tops that exceed 3,000 feet elevation. The topography is gently rolling from west to east and rises from south to north. There is a considerable acreage of conifer swamp as well as some beaver meadows along streams, lakes and ponds. The most outstanding topographic features are Hamilton Mountain, Swart Mountain, Dugway Mountain and Three Ponds Mountain.

The maximum relief (change in elevation) across the unit is approximately 2600 feet. Elevations rise from around 820 feet in the southeast portion near Snell Road, to elevations which exceed 3400 feet in the northern portion near Hamilton Mountain. This increase in total elevation occurs as gradual, rolling, gentle topography. Overall, the combination of natural features and the variety of ecosystems provides for a very interesting and diverse unit.

WATER

Water resources are an abundant and important component of the natural ecosystem within the SLWA. They provide a wide range of aquatic environments along with opportunities for public recreation. Ponded waters in the SLWA range in size from small beaver flows to 75 acres. The NYS Biological Survey lists 48 ponded waters within the unit. Some of these ponds are likely temporary, owing their existence to beaver activity. The unit's 48 ponded waters have an estimated combined area of about 663 acres. All ponded waters except Little Stoner Lake drain into the Sacandaga River system. Little Stoner is a tributary of the Mohawk River system.

Streams of the area total approximately 180 miles in length. The longest of these is the West Branch of the Sacandaga River. All but 45.1 miles of stream are tributaries of the West Branch. Most of the streams are relatively steep and fast flowing except in the vicinity of Silver Lake where a number of beaver flows exist on both the North Branch and the West Branch of the Sacandaga River and tributaries.

The section of the West Branch between Dugway Creek and Piseco Lake is characterized by two relatively different habitat types separated by a falls and gorge which lie approximately 0.5 miles upstream from Cold Brook. The portion of river above the falls is a long stillwater extending all the way to Arietta hamlet. Below the falls the river is essentially a rapid flowing stream interrupted only occasionally by pools or short stillwaters.

Acid Precipitation

Recently acidic deposition has impacted the aquatic resources of the Adirondacks. The ALSC surveyed 1,469 Adirondack waters, 24 percent of which had pH levels less than 5.0 (Kretser el al. 1989). Historic data and water chemistry analysis demonstrate that many of those waters were historically circumneutral and able to support fishes. Although less well studied, streams have also been impacted by acidification (Colquhoun 1984).

While acid deposition has affected all areas of the Adirondack Park, the available data indicates that it has had a substantial impact on the fisheries resources in the Silver Lake Wilderness. The pH ranges from 4.6 to 7.1 on area ponds for which chemistry data is available. Six ponds formerly known to support fish communities have since become fishless due to the effects of acid deposition.

Bti Program

The Townships of Lake Pleasant, Benson, Wells, and Arietta currently use the biological pesticide *Bacillus thuringiensis var. israelensis* (Bti) to control black fly larvae populations in water; the Town of Hope does not. Bt is a naturally occurring bacteria that has been used for years in the control of various garden pests. The variety *israelensis* is very specific and found to be extremely selective, killing only the larvae of black flies, mosquitoes, and a few non-biting flies. Several field and laboratory studies have indicated that the bacteria is non-toxic to most other organisms and does not persist in the environment.

Since the application is made directly to water, it falls within the scope of Article 15 of the Environmental Conservation Law and an aquatic pesticide application permit is required under 6 NYCRR Part 329. In cases where the program involves the treatment of streams at points within state owned land, a Temporary Revocable Permit (TRP) under 6 NYCRR § 190.9(a) is required in addition to the Part 329 permit. No treatments are made directly into wetlands. However, Article 24 (Freshwater Wetlands Act) has also been determined jurisdictional under the following circumstances: introduction of Bti upstream of the adjacent area of a wetland, if the Department is able to demonstrate that the pesticide will be transported into the wetland and will adversely affect the wetland. All treatments are made by applicators who have successfully completed a DEC approved training course specifically in the use of Bti.

The 2000 data shows the following Bti treatment information:

Bti Use - SLW Townships			
Township (data is representative of entire Township)	Treatment Area (sq miles) Approximate	Stream Length (miles) Approximate	Amount of Product Used (gal) Approximate
Lake Pleasant	60	82	23.0
Benson	35	110	36.7
Wells	20	64	45.7
Arietta (Piseco Lake)	40	130	37.9

WETLANDS

Approximately 5.7% (6,115 acres) of the unit is wetland. These wetlands are of various shapes and sizes and occur mostly in low-lying areas. They range from less than one acre to more than 500 acres in size. Wetland areas possess great ecological, aesthetic, recreational and educational values. Their capacity to receive, store, and slowly release rainwater and snowmelt, helps them protect water resources by stabilizing water flow and minimizing soil erosion and sedimentation. Wetlands also act as "natural sinks" by removing pollutants from water entering these areas. Wetlands are one of the most productive habitats for fish and wildlife, and provide numerous opportunities for hunting, fishing, trapping, wildlife observation and photography.

All Adirondack Park wetlands that are one acre in size and larger, or any size wetlands adjacent to open water are protected under the 1975 New York State Freshwater Wetlands Act by the Adirondack Park Agency. The largest and most significant wetlands in the unit are found along the West Branch of the Sacandaga River, Piseco Outlet, Silver Lake Outlet, North Branch Stream, and Abner Brook.

WETLAND COVER TYPES	ACRES	% TOTAL AREA
Forested Needle-Leaved Evergreen	1,881.61	30.7
Scrub/Shrub Broad-Leaved Deciduous	1,624.56	26.5
Emergent Persistent	617.87	10.1
Scrub/Shrub Broad-Leaved Evergreen	590.29	9.6
Scrub/Shrub Needle-Leaved Evergreen	524.69	8.5
Open Water	471.28	7.7
Forested Broad-Leaved Deciduous	228.55	3.7
Forested Dead	143.64	2.3
Forested Needle-Leaved Deciduous	20.50	0.3
Scrub/Shrub Needle-Leaved Deciduous	11.02	0.1
Unconsolidated Shore Cobble/Gravel	0.91	0
Scrub/Shrub Dead	0.13	0
TOTAL	**6,115.05**	

CLIMATE

The area's climate can be best described as cool and moist. Seasonal conditions may very slightly throughout the unit due to such factors as latitude, altitude or elevation, distance and direction from large bodies of water, and normal storm patterns.

Summers tend to be warm with cool nights. Maximum day-time temperatures seldom exceed 90° F. Date of first killing frost in the fall is usually around mid to late September. The growing season ranges from 135 days to 120 days. Winter temperatures can get as low as -20° to -30° F, with temperatures near zero common. Mean annual precipitation in water equivalent is between 50 and 60 inches per year; snowfall ranges from 80 to 120 inches per year.

Prevailing winds are westerly, generally shifting toward the north in winter and toward the south in summer. The prevailing direction may be modified in some areas by topographic features. Extensive damaging winds are rare, but can occur when coastal storms move inland and when strong storm fronts move in from the west.

AIR QUALITY

The effects of various activities on the unit's air quality have not been sufficiently measured or determined. Air quality and visibility in the unit appears to be good to excellent, rated Class II (moderately well controlled) by federal and state standards. However, acid deposition has been a topic of controversy and concern. Air quality may be more affected by particulate matter blown from outside sources rather than from activities within the unit. Currently, efforts are being made nationwide to reduce emissions of sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxide.

Air Resources and Atmospheric Deposition

The adverse effects of atmospheric deposition on the Adirondack environment has been documented by many researchers over the last two decades. While permanent monitoring sites have not been established in the SLWA general observations of the effects of acidic deposition on the regional ecosystem are numerous and well documented.

Effects of Acidic Deposition on Forest Systems

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

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

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

Nitrogen deposition is now recognized with sulfur as an important contributor to effects on forest in some ecosystems, which occurs through direct impacts via increased foliar susceptibility to winter damage, foliar leaching, leaching of soil nutrients, elevation of soil aluminum levels, and/or creation of nutrient imbalances. Excessive amounts of nitrogen cause negative impacts on soil chemistry similar to those caused by sulfur deposition in certain sensitive high-elevation ecosystems. It is also a potential contributor to adverse impacts in some low-elevation forests.

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

Sugar maple decline has been studied in the eastern United States since the 1950s. Recently, studies suggest that the loss of crown vigor and incidence of tree death is related to the low supply of calcium and magnesium to soil and foliage.

Exposure to acidic clouds and acid deposition has reduced the cold tolerance of red spruce in the Northeast, resulting in frequent winter injury of current-year foliage during the period 1960-1985. Repeated loss of foliage due to winter injury and other related stresses has caused crown deterioration and contributed to high levels of red spruce mortality in the Adirondack Mountains of New York, the Green Mountains of Vermont, and the White Mountains of New Hampshire.

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

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

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

Recent results of lake chemistry monitoring by DEC from 1992 through 1999, indicates that sulfates declined in a majority of lakes selected by the Adirondack Lakes Survey Corporation, but nitrate patterns were less clear with a few lakes improving and most lakes not changing. The decrease in sulfates is consistent with decreases in sulfur emissions and deposition, but the nitrate pattern is not explained by the unchanged levels of nitrogen emissions and deposition of recent decades.

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

Permanent Long-Term Monitoring (LTM) Sites
In 1987, as part of an Adirondack Park extensive survey, the Adirondack Lakes Survey Corporation (ALSC) surveyed five waters in this unit. Summaries of those data can be found in Appendix D and at http://www.adirondacklakessurvey.org. Since 1992 the Adirondack Long-Term Monitoring (LTM) Program managed by the ALSC has been sampling water chemistry in 52 lakes across the Park on a monthly basis. While none of these waters are located directly within the boundaries of the SLWA, two LTM waters are located within 5 miles to the west of the unit. These include Jockybush Lake and G Lake. Annual summaries of the 22 chemical parameters collected are downloadable from the ALSC website.

OPEN SPACE
The natural landscape of the SLWA is an important element in the quality and character of the lives of many people in New York State. More than 100 years ago the People of the State of New York led the country in understanding the significance of open land and the wisdom of setting aside certain areas to meet the public's needs. Early generations had the foresight to protect large tracts of the Adirondacks and Catskills through the creation of the Forest Preserve and what is now Article XIV, Section 1 of the New York State Constitution. Today, these same public lands provide a wide variety of economic, social, and environmental benefits to a multitude of people.

The SLWA provides us a place away from our normal routine where we can regain our perspective and creativity. It provides a place for recreation and relaxation, a place for enjoyment and study, and most importantly, a place for interacting with the natural world around us.

VEGETATION
The SLWA contains a wide array of plant communities which are determined in part by local variations in soil type, moisture and topography. These communities intergrade spatially and temporally to form a mosaic in the landscape that changes through time. Past events such as fire, wind, and logging may have also contributed to shaping the present day community structure.

Vegetative Cover Types
The plant community types listed below are known to exist within the unit. The communities are distinguished by physiognomy, composition of resident organisms, and ecological processes. All plants on State land are protected by General State Land Use Regulations (6 NYCRR §190.8). The accompanying species lists and associations are presented as a representative sample.

Beech-Maple Mesic Forest - A hardwood forest with sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*) and American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*) codominant. These forests occur on moist, well-drained, usually acid soils. Common associates are basswood (*Tilia americana*), American elm (*Ulmus americana*), white ash (*Fraxinus americana*), yellow birch (*Betula alleghaniensis*), Eastern hop hornbeam (*Ostrya virginiana*), and red maple (*Acer rubrum*). There are relatively few shrubs and herbs. Eastern hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*) and red spruce (*Picea rubens*) may also be present at low densities. Example(s) - widespread throughout unit.

Hemlock-Northern Hardwood Forest - A mixed forest that typically occurs on middle to lower slopes of ravines, on cool, mid-elevation slopes, and on moist, well-drained sites at the margins of swamps. Eastern hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*) is codominant with any one to three of the following: American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*), sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*), red maple (*Acer rubrum*), black cherry (*Prunus serotina*), Eastern white pine (*Pinus strobus*), and yellow birch (*Betula alleghaniensis*). The dominant ground cover is witch-hobble (*Viburnum alnifolium*), with other various ferns, grasses and wild flowers present. On recently disturbed sites, aspen, birch and fire (pin) cherry tend to dominate. Example(s) - widespread throughout unit.

Spruce-Northern Hardwood Forest - A mixed forest that occurs on lower mountain slopes and upper margins of flats on glacial till. Codominant trees are red spruce (*Picea rubens*), sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*), American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*), yellow birch (*Betula alleghaniensis*), and red maple (*Acer rubrum*) , with scattered balsam fir (*Abies balsamea*). Striped maple (*Acer pensylvanicum*) and mountain maple (*A. spicatum*) are common subcanopy

trees. Characteristic shrubs are witch-hobble (*Viburnum alnifolium*) and American fly honeysuckle (*Lonicera canadensis*). Example(s) - widespread throughout unit.

Spruce Flats - A mixed forest that occurs on moist sites along the borders of swamps and in low flats along lakes and streams. The dominant trees are red spruce (*Picea rubens*) or black spruce (*Picea mariana*), mixed with smaller numbers of yellow birch (*Betula alleghaniensis*), black cherry (*Prunus serotina*), hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*), red maple (*Acer rubrum*) and beech (*Fagus grandifolia*). The shrub layer is sparse or patchy. Characteristic shrubs are Labrador tea (*Ledum groenlandicum*), sheep laurel (*Kalmia angustifolia*), and blueberries (*Vaccinium* spp.). Example(s) - widespread throughout unit.

Balsam Flats - A conifer forest that occurs on moist, well-drained soils of low flats adjoining swamps, gentle ridges, and knolls within swamps. The dominant tree is balsam fir (*Abies balsamea*), which occurs either in pure stands or in mixed stands with red spruce (*Picea rubens*) or black spruce (*Picea mariana*) and possibly a few yellow birch (*Betula alleghaniensis*), red maple (*Acer rubrum*), and black cherry (*Prunus serotina*). The shrub layer is patchy and sparse; characteristic tall shrubs include witch-hobble (*Viburnum alnifolium*) and wild raisin (*V. cassinoides*). Example(s) - widespread throughout unit.

Sedge Meadow - This is a wet meadow community that has organic soils (muck or fibrous peat). Soils are permanently saturated and seasonally flooded. The dominant species is tussock-sedge (*Carex stricta*), usually with at least 50% cover. Other characteristic herbs include sedges (*Carex* spp.), bluejoint grass (*Calamagrostis canadensis*), sweetflag (*Acorus americanus*), spotted joe-pyeweed (*Eupatorium maculatum*), tall meadow-rue (*Thalictrum pubescens*), purple-stem angelica (*Angelica purpurea*), and bulrushes (*Scirpus* spp.). Example(s) - within the unit along the West Branch of the Sacandaga River between Chub Lake and Shaker Place.

Shrub Swamp - This is an inland wetland dominated by shrubs that occurs along the shore of a lake or river, in a wet depression or valley not associated with lakes, or as a transition zone between marsh, fen, or bog and a swamp or upland community. Shrub swamps are very common and quite variable. They are dominated by alder(*Alnus incana* ssp. *rugosa*); and sometimes called an alder thicket. Common associates may include meadow-sweet (*Spiraea latifolia*), gray dogwood (*Cornus foemina* ssp. *racemosa*), swamp azalea (*Rhododendron viscosum*), willow (*Salix* spp.), buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*), and arrowwood *(Viburnum recognitum*). Example(s) - within the unit along the West Branch of the Sacandaga River between Good Luck Lake and Shaker Place.

Riverside Ice Meadow - This is a meadow community that occurs on gently sloping cobble shores and rock outcrops along large rivers in areas where winter ice floes are pushed up onto the shore, forming an ice pack that remains until late spring. Within this community there is a gradient of two to three vegetation zones that vary with elevation above the river and soil moisture. Along the river there is often a narrow zone of seepy, wet meadow; characteristic species of this riverside seep include sweet-gale (*Myrica gale*), twig-rush (*Cladium mariscoides*), stiff willow (*Salix rigida*), silky dogwood (*Cornus amomum*), three-way sedge (*Dulichium arundinaceum*), and cranberry (*Vaccinium macrocarpon*). Where the cobble shores are broad and the soil is coarse and dry, there is a zone of grassy meadow. The dominant grasses include big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*), little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), and Indian grass (*Sorghastrum nutans*). Characteristic species of the dry meadow include sweet-fern (*Comptonia peregrina*), woodland sunflower (*Helianthus divaricatus*), meadow-sweet (*Spiraea latifolia*), wild rose (*Rosa virginiana*), and bush-clover (*Lespedeza capitata*). Farthest from the river there may be a shrubby zone that includes some tree saplings and seedlings. Characteristic species of the shrubby zone include hazelnut (*Corylus americana*), bush honeysuckle (*Diervilla lonicera*), ostrich fern (*Matteuccia struthiopteris*), interrupted fern (*Osmunda claytoniana*), red raspberry (*Rubus idaeus*), and deer-tongue grass (*Panicum clandestinum*). Example(s) - along Main Branch of the Sacandaga River between the Sacandaga campground and confluence of West Stony Creek.

Unique/Rare Plants

A review of the Natural Heritage Program database for rare plant species indicated that rocky mountain sedge (*Carex backii)* may occur within the unit or adjacent areas in the appropriate habitat. Other species that are not listed as rare, but are identified as “exploitably vulnerable” because of their beauty or economic value and tendency to be picked

include: ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*), bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*), the orchid family, nearly all the ferns, and many species in the lily family.

Rocky Mountain Sedge - Rocky mountain sedge (*Carex backii*) is classified as threatened in New York State. It is a native perennial herb which grows roughly two to three feet in height in dense clusters. Stems are triangular in cross-section and it is usually found in marshes, wet meadows and swamps. The decomposition of above ground biomass helps build organic matter in soils. The thick growth serves as cover for small wildlife. The above ground growth serves as food for many mammals and many birds eat the seeds produced. Amphibians hide among this plant and spring peepers will use it as a breeding area. Management efforts will concentrate on protecting this species by maintaining at least a 100 foot buffer zone between structures and improvements and known rare plant sites.

All plant species that are classified as rare, endangered, threatened, or exploitably vulnerable are protected by the New York Protected Native Plants Regulations (6 NYCRR §193.3) and the Environmental Conservation Law (Section 9-1503). Any facilities or improvements that have the potential to directly impact a protected plant species will be closed or relocated immediately.

Forest Health

A combination of many factors can influence the health of a plant community. Physical factors tend to be weather related with notable examples being lightning fires, ice damage, severe winds, and flooding. A few areas in the SLWA were impacted by the "Blowdown of 1950." More recently the effects of drought during 2001 and 2002 impacted some tree species, ranging from slowed growth to weakened resistance to secondary pests. The harsh winter of 2003 resulted in the use of more road deicing agents than usual on area roads. Roadside conifers, especially Eastern white pines, may exhibit evidence of salt damage from this activity.

Biological factors are variable and include the effects of disease, insects, and wildlife (beaver impoundments and deer wintering areas) on the forest environment. Three major forest insects and one major disease described below have had an effect on this area (DEC-Forest Health Reports, NYS Forest Health: Summary Report of Conditions for 2003). The effects of acidic deposition were discussed previously.

Beech Bark Disease - Beech bark disease is an important insect-fungus complex that has caused extensive mortality of American beech throughout portions of the Adirondacks. The primary vector, a scale insect, *Cryptococcus fagi*, attacks the tree creating entry sites for the fungus, *Nectria coccinea var. faginata*. Changes in the percent of beech in the cover type can stimulate shifts in animal populations that utilize beech mast extensively as a food source. On the other hand, dead and/or dying beech trees may benefit other wildlife species by providing abundant nesting, feeding, and potential den locations.

Eastern Spruce Budworm - The Eastern spruce budworm (*Choristoneura fumiferana*) is considered to be one of the most destructive conifer defoliators in North America. Host species include balsam fir in addition to red, white, and black spruce. The last significant incidence of this pest within the Adirondack Park occurred in the mid 1970's. Populations of this insect, while currently not a problem, are being monitored throughout the northeast.

Forest Tent Caterpillar - The forest tent caterpillar (*Malacosoma disstria*) a native insect, may be found wherever hardwoods grow. Outbreaks have occurred at 10 to 15 year intervals with the last widespread outbreak in the late 1970's. While portions of St. Lawrence County were moderately to severely defoliated in 2003, no widespread outbreaks were reported for Fulton or Hamilton Counties. Favored hosts are sugar maple and aspen with birch, cherry, and ash also being utilized.

Balsam Woolly Adelgid - The balsam woolly adelgid (*Adelgaes piceae*), a pest of true firs, was introduced into the United States from Europe or Asia around the turn of the century. Since that time it has spread throughout the United States and Canada.

In addition to the major insect and disease problems listed above, Eastern spruce bark beetle (*Dendroctonus piceaperda*), Eastern larch beetle (*Dendroctonus simplex*), along with various forest declines, have impacted the

vegetation within the unit and the surrounding areas. More recently in 2003, Pine shoot beetles (*Tomicus piniperda*) have been trapped in Hamilton County. This insect is a pest of many pine species but Scots pine is preferred. Serious damage and mortality from this insect has been reported from Halifax, but in New York and neighboring New England states, damage has been less. Federal quarantines restrict the movement of pine products from infested to non-infested counties.

To provide a factual basis for public policy and private ownership decisions, permanent forest inventory and analysis plots have been established by the U.S. Forest Service statewide, including forest preserve and private lands within the Adirondacks. These plots and the evaluation of the data collected at them, document and provide information on forest changes that might be caused by atmospheric deposition, soil nutrient loss, global warming, and/or various insect and disease factors. From 1985 to the present, significant research efforts have been underway to study the effects of atmospheric deposition on forest species, with support from federal and state agencies, forest industry, and other institutions. Data are still being evaluated to determine the link between air pollution and forest health.

Invasive/Exotic Plants

Nonnative, invasive species directly threaten biological diversity and the high quality natural areas in the Adirondack Park. Invasive plant species can alter native plant assemblages, often forming monospecific stands of very low quality forage for native wildlife, and drastically impacting the ecological functions and services of natural systems. Not yet predominant across the Park, invasive plants have the potential to spread - undermining the ecological, recreational, and economic value of the Park's natural resources.

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

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

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

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

plants likely to become invasive within New York State. A continuum of ED/RR surveys now exists under the guidance of the Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program (APIPP).

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

The Adirondack Park is susceptible to further infestation by invasive plant species intentionally or accidentally introduced to this ecoregion. While many of these species are not currently designated a priority species by APIPP, they may become established within or in proximity to a unit and require resources to manage, monitor, and restore the site. Infestations located within and in proximity to a unit may expand and spread to uninfected areas and threaten natural resources within a unit; therefore it is critical to identify infestations located both within and in proximity to a unit and then assess high risk areas and prioritize Early Detection Rapid Response (ED/RR) and management efforts.

Terrestrial Invasive Plant Locations - Terrestrial invasive plant species documented in, or within proximity to, the Silver Lake Wilderness include the following: Purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), Common reed (*Phragmites australis*) and Japanese knotweed (*Polygonum cuspidatum*).

Terrestrial invasive plant infestations within DOT State Route ROW are referenced by the green Reference Markers (RM) positioned every 0.2 mile along State Routes within the Park. Example: State Route RM 86-1202-1172. Terrestrial infestations beyond NYS DOT ROW, along County, Town or back roads, or within backcountry settings are geo-referenced via a hand-held GPS unit utilizing NAD 83 Program for Zone 18. Example: 4911698North (N) 590545East (E). Infestations noted as High Priority should be strongly considered for containment and/or eradication controls. These infestations have multiple vectors or threaten sensitive communities within or adjacent to the infestation.

There are two (2) Purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) infestations affecting this unit.

- At 4814153 N 552387 E a Purple loosestrife infestation occurs along South Shore Road, Town of Lake Pleasant.
- At 4795436 N 560727 E a Purple loosestrife infestation occurs along River Road, Town of Hope. The infestation appears to occur within the unit boundary and with eastward expansion, the Sacandaga River is likely to distribute seed and/or plant propagules. A more thorough inventory of this specific infestation is warranted in order to better assess threat status, abundance and distribution.

There are six (6) Japanese knotweed (*Polygonum cuspidatum*) infestations affecting this unit. All occur within the road right-of-way with the exception of a Black Bridge Road infestation.

- At State Route RM 8-2209-1196 Japanese knotweed occurs within DOT Right-of-Way.
- At State Route RM 10-2205-1010 Japanese knotweed occurs within DOT Right-of-Way.
- At State Route RM 10-2205-1008 Japanese knotweed occurs within DOT Right-of-Way.
- At State Route RM 30-2206-1077 Japanese knotweed occurs within DOT Right-of-Way and is expanding down slope towards the Sacandaga River.
- At State Route RM 30-2206-1081 Japanese knotweed occurs within DOT Right-of-Way.
- At 4800970 N 554467 E a Japanese knotweed infestation occurs along Black Bridge Road Right-of-Way, Town of Wells, possibly within the fringe of the unit boundary. A more thorough inventory of this specific infestation is warranted in order to better assess threat status, abundance and distribution.

Additionally, in proximity to Silver Lake Wilderness Area, at 4860880 N 557869 E, two Japanese knotweed infestations occur within the NYS DEC Sacandaga River Campground. A single, mature stand is currently being cultivated as an ornamental near the restroom facility. Secondary infestations occur along the fringe of forest/upland behind the restroom facility, near the toe of slope from State Route 30.

There is one (1) Common reed (*Phragmites australis*) affecting this unit.

- At State Route RM 10-2205-14 multiple, significant Common Reed infestations occur within, and around the periphery of, the NYS DOT Arietta stockpile facility. The geophysical location of the infestations, coupled with the shared, jurisdictional usage of the facility, make it an imminent threat to the Silver Lake, Shaker Mountain and Ferris Lake units. Materials stockpiled, borrowed or extracted from this facility and utilized for road infrastructure, right-of-way or drainage improvement projects on State, County or Town roads within or in proximity to the three units will likely contain Common reed rhizome, plant parts and/or seed.

A map showing the terrestrial invasive plant species distribution is included in Appendix I.

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

Aquatic invasive plant species documented in the Adirondack Park are Eurasian watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*), Water chestnut (*Trapa natans*), Curlyleaf pondweed (*Potamogeton crispus*), Fanwort (*Cabomba caroliniana*), European frog-bit (*Hydrocharus morsus-ranae*), and Yellow floating-heart (*Nymphoides peltata*). Species located in the Park that are monitored for potential invasibility include Variable-leaf milfoil (*Myriophyllum heterophyllum*), Southern Naiad (*Najas guadalupensis*), and Brittle Naiad (*Najas minor*). Additional species of concern in New York State but not yet detected in the Park are Hydrilla (*Hydrilla verticillata*), Water hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*), and Brazilian elodea (*Egeria densa*). For species specific information regarding natural history, ecology, and reproduction, refer to the Invasive Plant Atlas of New England program website at http://webapps.lib.uconn.edu/ipane/search.cfm.

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

The Silver Lake Wilderness has few easily accessible lakes and ponds. Aquatic invasive plants are primarily spread via human activities, therefore lakes with public access, and those connected to lakes with public access, are at higher risk of invasion. APIPP volunteers have not monitored any waters within the unit, and no aquatic invasive plant infestations are documented in the unit to-date. APIPP volunteers monitored numerous lakes on the periphery of the unit. The APIPP Park-wide volunteer monitoring program aims to maintain a long-term monitoring program on these and other lakes. All aquatic invasive species pose a risk of spreading via transport mechanisms which may include seaplanes, motorized and non-motorized watercraft (canoes, kayaks, jet skies, motor boats etc.) and associated gear and accessories.

Aquatic Invasive Plant Locations - Longitude and latitude coordinates are used to indicate a lake with a documented infestation. Infestations may range from an isolated population to a lake-wide invasion. Knowledge of locations and coordinates of specific infestations within the lake is limited and variable and will be provided as available.

No aquatic invasive plants are detected within the Silver Lake Wilderness; however, several adjacent units have confirmed infestations.

- Eurasian watermilfoil is confirmed in the following lake in the Shaker Mountain Wild Forest:

East Caroga Lake	430741N	742852W

- Eurasian watermilfoil and Curlyleaf pondweed are confirmed in the following lake in the Shaker Mountain Wild Forest:

Mayfield Lake	

- Eurasian watermilfoil is confirmed in the following lake in the Ferris Lake Wild Forest:

West Caroga Lake	430813N 742945W

- Eurasian watermilfoil is confirmed in the following lakes in the Wilcox Wild Forest:

Daggett Pond	433217N 0735047W
Great Sacandaga Lake	431904N 0735528W

- Fanwort is confirmed in the following lakes in the Wilcox Wild Forest:

Hunt Lake	431535N 0735420W
Jenny Lake	431559N 0735444W
Efner Lake	431556N 0735543W
Mill Pond	

A map showing the aquatic invasive plant species distribution is included in Appendix I.

WILDLIFE

Field inventories of wildlife species have been conducted by DEC and other individuals on a broad ecosystem type basis and have included the SLWA in their scope. The species included in Appendix C were compiled from various surveys and publications. These species are common to the Adirondacks and their populations within the unit are presumably at levels consistent with other areas of the Park.

Birds

The New York State Breeding Bird Atlas compiled by DEC and the Federation of NYS Bird clubs lists 101 bird species as occurring in Breeding Bird Atlas blocks that lie wholly or partially within SLWA; 52 possible breeders, 23 probable breeders, and 26 confirmed breeders. The Atlas deals with those species actually breeding and nesting. Species thought to occur occasionally, i.e. during periods of migration, are not shown in the Bird Atlas data. Breeding Bird Atlas data is found in Appendix C.

Birds associated with marshes, ponds, lakes and streams are numerous and include the common loon, American woodcock, great blue heron, Canada goose, and a variety of ducks. The most common ducks include the mallard, wood duck, common merganser, and ring-necked duck. Birds of prey common to the unit include the barred owl, great horned owl, broad-winged hawk, northern goshawk, and red-tailed hawk. Songbirds present include various species of woodpeckers, flycatchers, wrens, thrushes, vireos, warblers, blackbirds, finches, grosbeaks, and sparrows. Common upland game species include the wild turkey and ruffed grouse.

Mammals

The SLWA is home to a variety of large and small sized mammals. Some of the larger sized mammals include the white-tailed deer, moose, black bear, coyote, bobcat, raccoon, river otter, beaver, mink, varying hare, striped skunk, gray squirrel, porcupine, red fox, gray fox, muskrat, fisher, and marten. The smaller sized mammals include a variety of bats, shrews, moles, and mice, along with the ermine, long-tailed weasel, eastern chipmunk, and red squirrel.

Most species are distributed relatively evenly throughout the unit, although the populations of weasel, mink, muskrat, river otter, and beaver are concentrated near water, and the varying hare and red squirrel are mostly confined to spruce and fir stands. White-tailed deer populations tend to be highest in areas near recent disturbances with wintering areas occurring in lowland coniferous areas. A complete list of mammals believed to inhabit the SLWA can be found in Appendix C.

Reptiles and Amphibians
The relatively short summers and long cold winters limit the number of species of reptiles and amphibians within the SLWA. Three species of turtles, seven species of snakes, seven species of salamanders, one species of toad, and nine species of frogs have been documented in the unit. Species found in marshes or ponds and along wooded streams include the following: turtles-snapping, painted; snakes-northern water, northern redbelly, garter, northern brown; toads-American; salamanders-spotted, red-spotted newt, spring, two-lined, Allegheny dusky, northern dusky; frogs-bullfrog, pickerel, green, wood, mink, northern leopard, gray treefrog, and spring peepers.

A few species can be found under logs and leaf litter on the forest floor or in forest openings. The species listed below do not require moist surroundings to survive: snakes-milk, smooth green, garter; salamanders-redback. A list of reptiles and amphibians believed to inhabit the SLWA is found in Appendix C.

Endangered, Threatened, and Species of Special Concern
The Indiana bat is the only species listed on the New York State endangered species list that may be found in the SLWA. Several other species that are listed as special concern which may be present in the unit include: common loon, northern goshawk, osprey, and small-footed bat. Although not listed in the Breeding Bird Atlas data, recent bald eagle sightings in certain portions of the unit may indicate a possible nesting site.

Indiana Bat (myotis) - The Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*) is classified endangered in New York State. Its presence has not been documented in the unit, but species distribution maps indicate that it may exist in the Adirondack's wherever there are suitable conditions. Preferred habitats include caves in winter, man-made structures and possibly hollow trees in summer. Because bats hibernate in caves and mines, they are subject to flooding or ceiling collapses. The most serious problem for hibernating bats is believed to be disturbance by people exploring caves. Bats are sensitive to noise and light and can be aroused from their motionless state by passing cavers. If too many disturbances occur, the animals will not survive until spring. Outside of the hibernating season, factors which may be contributing to declines in the population probably vary. For instance, pesticide poisoning is believed to be contributing to the decline of some bat species.

Since the most vulnerable period in the life-cycle of the Indiana bat is during winter hibernation, management efforts will be concentrated on protecting bat wintering sites. If a bat hibernacula is discovered within the unit, all facilities in that immediate area will be closed.

Common Loon - The common loon (*Gavia immer*) is a species of special concern in New York State. The characteristics of being a long-lived species and a predator at the top of the food chain make loons more susceptible to the accumulation of environmental toxins. Thus, this species is often used by scientists as an ecological indicator of the health of the environment and water quality. In addition, the loon has great public appeal, signifying remote, wild areas to people.

Numerous natural and anthropogenic (human) factors can impact the breeding population of loons. Natural predation of eggs and chicks is common and has been observed and documented on several different occasions within the Park. Airborne contaminants, including "acid rain", can cause the bioaccumulation of mercury, a neurotoxin, and a decreased food supply, which can potentially lead to decreased reproductive success. In addition, human disturbance (including paddling activity) can result in nest abandonment or direct injury to adult or juvenile birds. Shoreline use by campers, particularly on islands, has the potential to lead to the loss of nest site availability. The death of adult loons due to lead toxicity from the ingestion of lead fishing tackle accidentally lost by angers is a concern and has recently been documented in New York State. This concern has prompted the development of a voluntary sinker exchange program and new regulations banning the sale of certain size lead sinkers in New York State. The effects of direct human impacts, such as disturbance or shoreline use, on breeding loons within this unit has not been determined, but is presumed to be low due to the minimal number of improvements and facilities. Management efforts will concentrate on protecting loon nesting areas and habitat.

Bald Eagle - The bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) is classified as threatened in New York State. They generally prefer undeveloped waterways with a good fishery and abundant large trees for nesting. Fish makes up

a significant portion of an eagle's diet. White pines are commonly chosen as nesting trees in the northeast, with eagles typically choosing the tallest in the area and locating the nest several feet down into the tree's branches, but with an excellent vantage from the nest. Bald eagle activity has been observed in the area in recent years, but a nesting site has not been confirmed. Management efforts will concentrate on protecting potential eagle nesting sites. When nests are discovered, a 100–300 meter buffer may be established around the nest if necessary. This buffer zone may or may not be posted. A determination will be based on attracting the least amount of attention to the nest while providing protection to the eagles.

Northern Goshawk - The northern goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*) is a species of special concern in New York State. Goshawks generally prefer coniferous forests, but can also be found around farmland, woodland edges, and open country in the winter. The goshawk remains mostly in the northern coniferous forests unless forced to move south by a periodic decline in the populations of the grouse that are a staple of its diet. They are fearless in defense of their nest and will boldly attack anyone who ventures too close. Goshawk populations seem to be directly influenced by prey abundance, i.e grouse populations. Since there are no specific provisions for wildlife management on Forest Preserve lands, vegetation manipulation for grouse propagation is not permissible. Therefore, management efforts will concentrate on protecting identified nesting sites whenever possible.

Osprey - The osprey (*Panion haliaetus*) is a species of special concern in New York State. Ospreys have been observed in the unit, but no known nests have been found to date. Management efforts will concentrate on protecting potential osprey nesting sites. If a nesting site is discovered within the unit, all facilities in that immediate area will be closed.

Small-footed Bat - The small-footed bat (*Myotis subulatus*) is a species of special concern in New York State. Preferred habitats include caves, mine tunnels, crevices in rocks, and buildings in or near forested areas. Like most bats, the small-footed bat's most serious problem is believed to be human disturbance during hibernation. Too many disturbances and the animals will not survive until spring. The same management efforts will apply to this species as with the Indian bat.

Extirpated Species

The elk, timber wolf (or red wolf), cougar, lynx, and wolverine are all animals that once inhabited the SLWA but have since disappeared from the Adirondacks and New York State. The mammals' disappearances were mostly attributed to unregulated harvest and habitat destruction in the nineteenth century; while the more recent bird disappearances (i.e. eagles and loons) can be attributed to pesticide use. The once extirpated moose population has started to reestablish itself through natural migration and projects have been conducted to reestablish the bald eagle and peregrine falcon.

Public Health Concerns

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

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

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

West Nile Virus - This is a relatively new viral disease that is carried by birds and can be transmitted to humans through mosquito bites. It is often fatal to some species of birds, such as crows, but in most species it is not fatal. It can be fatal in humans, especially in those with compromised immune systems. The use of insect repellant can help reduce exposure to the virus by warding off potentially infected mosquitoes.

Rabies - Rabies is a viral infection that affects the nervous system of all mammals, including humans. It is usually transmitted by the bite of an infected animal to another. Like other viral infections, it does not respond to antibiotics and is almost always fatal once the symptoms appear. Major carriers of rabies include raccoons, skunks, bats and fox species, but all mammals can be potential carriers. Fortunately, no cases of rabies were confirmed in Hamilton County in either 2000 or 2001.

FISHERIES

The SLWA lies mostly within the Upper Hudson watershed, with a small portion also occurring in the Mohawk drainage. The unit is drained by small, high gradient, headwater streams. The majority of those streams flow into to the West Branch of the Sacandaga or the Sacandaga River which is tributary to the Hudson River. A very small southwestern portion of the unit drains via the Stoner Lakes outlet to the Mohawk River.

Ponded waters in the SLWA range in size from small beaver flows to 75 acre Silver Lake. The NYS Biological Survey lists 48 ponded waters within the unit which have an estimated combined area of about 663 acres. Some of these ponds are likely temporary, owing their existence to beaver activity. There are three lakes (Duck Lake, County Line Lake and Lake 16) that lie on the southern boundary of the unit, partially in the wilderness and partially in Shaker Mountain Wild Forest. It was decided to include these lakes in the Shaker Mountain UMP and manage them as wild forest waters.

Appendix D lists the major ponded waters in the unit with a brief narrative pertaining to their important features, including past and current management, accessibility, size, water chemistry, and fish species composition. Tables 1 and 2 in Appendix D give additional information about the ponded waters including physical, chemical and biological data.

Fish communities in the Adirondacks are a result of geological and human influences. Prior to human influences relatively simple fish communities were common. Human-caused changes in habitat and introduction of fishes have altered those natural communities.

Geological History

The Fishes of the Adirondack Park, a DEC publication (August 1980) by Dr. Carl George of Union College, provides a summary of geological events which influenced the colonization of the Adirondack ecological zone by fishes. A limited number of cold tolerant, vagile, lacustrine species closely followed the retreat of the glacier. Such species presumably had access to most Adirondack waters. Additional species gained access about 13,000 B.P. (before present) when glacial Lake Albany, with a surface elevation of 350' average sea level, provided a colonizing route for Atlantean and eastern boreal species to southern and eastern portions of the Adirondacks. Barriers above that elevation would have excluded those species from interior portions of the Adirondacks.

By about 12,300 BP, the Ontario lobe of the glacier had retreated sufficiently to allow species associated with the Mississippi drainage access to fringes of the Adirondacks via the Mohawk Valley and the St. Lawrence drainage including Lake Champlain. Lake Albany had apparently drained prior to that, as barriers had formed on the Lake George outlet.

The sequence of colonization routes to surrounding areas, combined with Adirondack topography, resulted in highly variable fish communities within the Adirondacks. In general, waters low in the watersheds would have the most diverse communities. The number of species present would have decreased progressing towards headwater, higher elevation sections. Chance and variability in habitat would have complicated the trends. Consequently, a diversity of fish communities, from no fish to monocultures to numerous species, occurred in various Adirondack waters.

Brook trout were particularly successful at colonizing the Adirondack region and thrived in the relative absence of competing and predacious fishes. George (1980) states: "Under primeval conditions, the brook trout was nearly ubiquitous in the Adirondacks. Its agility, great range in size and facility in rapidly flowing water allowed it to spread widely, perhaps even concurrently with the demise of the glaciers, thus explaining its presence in unstocked waters above currently impassable waterfalls." Brook trout were reported to be native to nearly all Adirondack waters according to Calvins's Report to the Commissioners of Fisheries, Game and Forests, 1902-1903. The 1932 Biological Survey of the Upper Hudson Watershed Report reiterated that "Above the 1000 foot contour line most Adirondack waters are naturally suited and were originally inhabited by brook trout."

Many Adirondack waters were originally inhabited by brook trout or brook trout in combination with only one or two other species as indicated by the following passage, also from the 1932 Biological Survey: "In the survey of the Upper Hudson drainage, 51 trout ponds were studied where the trout is found in company with only a few other species" (page 36). Natural fish barriers prevented the establishment of native-but-widely-introduced (NBWI) fishes found downstream. Today, natural fish barriers are considered to be an indicator that a pond historically contained a very simple fish community. In these circumstances brook trout would have been capable of maintaining themselves by natural spawning.

Watershed morphometry probably severely limited the diversity of fishes in higher elevations within the Silver Lake Wilderness. The unit includes headwater portions of the Upper Hudson and Mohawk Watersheds and fish diversity is normally low in such headwater portions of watersheds (Hynes 1972). Topography would have made that lack of diversity particularly prominent. The ponds in the unit are at elevations of 1300 ft or higher, and natural barriers to upstream fish migration (e.g. waterfalls) exist between the unit's ponds and waters peripheral to the park. Concerning portions in the Hudson Watershed, the Hadley-Luzerne Falls and possibly Spier Falls were barriers at elevations above historic Lake Albany. As Lake Albany drained, two additional barriers, Glens Falls and Bakers Falls, formed. Several hundred additional feet of elevation from the Hadley-Luzerne Falls to ponds in the unit, and the resulting high gradient, lotic habitat, would have acted as a strong filter, if not a barrier, to many species.

Its headwater nature and the extreme gradients of streams draining the area would have caused low fish diversities in the Silver Lake Wilderness relative to much of the Adirondacks. Furthermore, the Adirondacks in general had low fish diversities relative to surrounding lowland regions. Consequently, the unit historically supported particularly low diversities on a region-wide basis. Brook trout are very adept at colonizing such head water areas and would probably have been abundant in the unit historically. Also historic brook trout monocultures were most likely to have occurred in such headwater areas.

Approximately 300 years ago the influence of human cultures from the Old World initiated a period of rapid manipulation of the natural environment. Slightly more than 150 years ago, canal construction opened new migration routes for fishes into peripheral Adirondack areas. Commercial lumbering precipitated substantial impacts to natural ecosystems. Railroads and eventually roads were developed to support the tanning, lumbering and mining industries (George 1980). Exploitation of pristine fisheries combined with environmental degradation resulted in the decline of fish populations and stimulated early management efforts consisting primarily of stocking.

Early Stocking

In the pioneering days of fishery management, volunteers who applied for fish from the state and federal hatcheries would drive to the hatchery or to train depots with horse and buggy to pick up their allocated cans of fish for stocking. Later on, hatchery employees would employ wagons and teams to haul fish to individual waters or to train depots for more distant delivery (Pieffer 1979). In the year 1891, the state purchased its own specially designed wooden railroad car appropriately named "The Adirondack." Initially, the railroad companies furnished free transportation as a public service (Lindsey 1958).

Despite the difficulty of moving live fish, "enthusiastic citizens secured and distributed all sorts of fish for New York's inland waters." Brook trout, brown trout, landlocked salmon, rainbow trout, lake trout, lake whitefish, round whitefish, cisco, smelt, walleye, yellow perch, crappie, largemouth bass, smallmouth bass and rock bass were among

the species distributed by the state hatcheries. (Fifteenth Annual Report of the Forest, Fish and Game Commission 1909).

Although millions of fish were stocked in waters selected by volunteers, stocking was not done scientifically prior to the 1930's when the first biological surveys established stocking policies (planned annual stocking). Few waters were stocked every year and many waters were stocked only occasionally, because volunteers were not available in all areas of the Adirondacks.

Stocking of fish from the New York Fish and Game Commission was frequently not carried out as planned. The Fifteenth Annual Report of the Forest, Fish and Game Commission, in the year 1909 cited that, "The messenger (railroad) is obliged to take the fish to the next applicant on his route if applicants for fish failed to meet messengers. Often the applicants were not on hand to meet the messenger because certain persons who occupy summer homes in the Adirondacks or some other resorts apply for fish which have to be sent after those persons have returned to their winter homes." Consequently, fish were sent to the next applicant on the route, who stocked the fish in nearby waters. Fishes may have become established in waters where stocking was not intended by the Forest, Fish and Game Commission because of difficulties in distribution and because unclaimed fish were disposed of along the route.

The New York Forest, Fish and Game Commission feared that many of our Adirondack lakes had received bass and other fish from the United States Commission of Fisheries (obtained by volunteers via application) "which never should have been placed in trout waters." In its report to the legislature in the year 1909, the Forest, Fish and Game Commission expressed concern about stocking nonnative fishes via the federal stocking program and cited New York law "prohibiting the placing of anything but trout in Adirondack waters. We most certainly desire to continue to produce from the Federal hatcheries every year such allotments as are necessary to keep up the stock in our inland waters, but we respectively submit that this allotment should only be made with the advice of this Commission based on the scientific knowledge of the State Fish Culturist." (Fifteenth Annual Report of the Forest, Fish and Game Commission 1909). Similarly, "... the one outstanding reason why so many of the lakes, ponds and streams of this and other Adirondack areas are now unfit for the native species is that small-mouthed bass, perch, northern pike and other species of non-native warmwater fishes have been introduced" (1932 Biological Survey of the Upper Hudson Watershed).

The decline in brook trout associated with the introduction of other fishes is a result of both predation and competition for food. Brook trout feed primarily on invertebrates. Many other fishes, including white sucker, longnose sucker, redbreast sunfish, pumpkinseed, brown bullhead, yellow perch, and the cyprinids (minnows, shiners, and dace) also feed primarily on invertebrates (Scott and Crossman 1973). In low fertility waters such as Adirondack ponds, competition for such forage can be intense.

In addition to competing with brook trout for food, many fishes prey directly on brook trout. Northern pike, largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, and rock bass are highly piscivorous. Species which may feed on eggs and/or fry include yellow perch, brown bullhead, pumpkinseed, creek chub, common shiner, white sucker and longnose sucker (Scott and Crossman 1973). The relative importance of competition versus predation in the decline of brook trout is not known for individual waters, but the result is the same regardless of the mechanism.

Competition and predation by introduced species has greatly reduced the abundance of brook trout sustained by natural reproduction. Only about 40 (10%) of the traditional brook trout ponds in public ownership in the Adirondack Park now support viable, self-sustaining brook trout populations, and they are subject to reproductive failure as other fishes become established. No ponds in the Silver Lake Wilderness are presently known to sustain brook trout by natural reproduction.

Human introductions of nonnative and native-but-widely-introduced (NBWI) fishes have nearly eliminated natural brook trout monocultures in the Adirondacks. The presence of brook trout monocultures is well known, and the survival of even a few such unique communities through the massive environmental disturbances and species introductions of the 19th and 20th centuries is quite remarkable.

Fish Community Changes

A variety of nonnative species were distributed into the Adirondack uplands via stocking efforts described by George (1980) as "nearly maniacal." He notes that many species were "...almost endlessly dumped upon the Adirondack upland." Nonnative species were introduced and the ranges of native species, which previously had limited distributions, were extended. The result has been a homogenization of fish communities. Certain native species, notably brook trout and round whitefish, have declined due to the introduction of other fishes. Other natives, brown bullhead and creek chubs, for example, are presently much more abundant than historically, having been spread to many waters where previously absent. Native species often were introduced concurrently with the nonnatives. NBWI fishes were stocked right along with the native fishes. NBWI introductions are just as unnatural as nonnative introductions, and due to the lack of early surveys, it is often unknown which NBWI fishes were actually native to a pond or if they have been introduced.

Consequently, fish populations in the majority of waters in today's Adirondack wilderness areas have been substantially altered by the activities of mankind. Indeed, of the 1,123 Adirondack ecological zone waters surveyed by the Adirondack Lakes Survey Corporation (ALSC), 65% contained known nonnative species.

Detailed documentation of the historic fish communities is not available. Extensive fishery survey data was first collected in the 1930's, decades after the massive stockings and introductions of the late 1800's. Reviewing work by Mathers from the 1880's and others, George (1980) has summarized what is known. Table 3 in Appendix D presents information on species known to be native, NBWI and nonnative. It should be noted that the native classification does not mean those species were found in every water or even in a majority of waters. For example, of 1,123 waters surveyed by the Adirondack Lakes Survey Corporation in the 1980's which contained fish, white suckers and northern redbelly dace were found respectively in 51 and 19 percent of the lakes. Such distributions, after a century of introductions, demonstrates that "native" does not necessarily imply a historically ubiquitous distribution. Barriers, high stream gradients, low stream fertilities, and rigorous climatic conditions following retreat of the glacier resulted in low species diversity for fishes in most Adirondack waters. Low diversity allowed the brook trout to occur in large areas of the Adirondack upland.

Habitat Changes

Natural reproduction by brook trout is also very sensitive to impacts from sedimentation caused, for example, by extensive logging, fires and other human activities. Due to their reproductive behavior, brook trout are among the most susceptible of all Adirondack fish fauna to the impacts of sedimentation. Brook trout spawn in the fall, burying their eggs in gravel. Flow must be maintained through the gravel, around the eggs, until hatching the following spring. Sand or fine sediments restrict flow around the eggs resulting in an inadequate supply of oxygen.

The long incubation period, the lack of care subsequent to egg deposition and burying of the eggs contribute to the brook trout's susceptibility to sedimentation. Most other Adirondack fishes are spring spawners, yielding short incubation periods, and do not bury their eggs. Various strategies further minimize vulnerability to sediments, such as eggs suspended from vegetation (e.g.. yellow perch, northern pike, and certain minnow species) and fanning the nest during incubation (e.g.. bullhead, pumpkinseed, smallmouth bass and largemouth bass). In general, the species less susceptible to sedimentation have thrived during the recent history of the Adirondacks.

Conclusion

Habitat changes, widespread introductions of nonnative fishes and broad dispersal of native fishes which historically had limited distributions have drastically altered the fish fauna of Adirondack waters.

Throughout the Adirondack Park, native species sensitive to competition and habitat changes have declined. Distribution of other natives and nonnatives has increased due to stocking. Within the Silver Lake Wilderness Area, ponded brook trout populations maintained by natural reproduction have been virtually eliminated.

Simple fish communities containing only brook trout, or brook trout in association with one or a few other fishes, are depressed within the unit. In ponds currently managed for brook trout, abundance is low compared to other DEC managed waters.

Streams
Small, high gradient, headwater streams dominate the flowing waters of the Silver Lake Wilderness, however two major rivers are present within the unit. The majority of streams flow to The West Branch Sacandaga and the Sacandaga River which is tributary to the Hudson River. The extreme southwestern portion of the unit drains via the Stoner Lakes outlet to Canada Lake, and then via Sprite Creek to East Canada Creek and then the Mohawk River, also tributary to the Hudson. The small, high gradient streams support coldwater communities of fishes which are likely to include: brown trout, brook trout, cutlips minnows, common shiners, blacknose dace, longnose dace, northern redbelly dace, creek chub, white sucker and slimy sculpin along with a mixture of various nonnatives. Few streams within the Unit have actually been surveyed. The few that have (Abner and Hatch Brooks and North Branch West Stony Creek) yielded brook trout, brown trout, logperch, blacknose dace, longnose dace, common shiner, creek chub, white sucker, slimy sculpin, brown bullhead, smallmouth bass, and tesselated darter. The streams in the unit are generally not stocked, however brown trout are stocked in portions of the West Branch Sacandaga and the Sacandaga River.

SIGNIFICANT HABITATS
Several areas within the unit which have been identified as important wildlife habitats include:

- **Loon Nesting Sites** - Spy Lake, Trout Lake and Buckhorn Lake.
- **Deer Wintering Areas** - historic areas include several small areas around Charley Lake and Piseco Outlet and an extensive area along the West Branch of the of the Sacandaga River.

Bird Conservation Areas
Important Bird Areas (IBAs) represent the most important habitats for the survival of birds and the conservation of bird species. They can be important only in their home state or province, or can be of national and even global significance. IBAs have to have a high level of bird use, such as a large number or individuals or a high diversity of species, or they must be home to species of high conservation priority.

Audubon inaugurated the IBA Program in New York State in 1996. The IBA Program was formally adopted as one of a triad of habitat conservation strategies that make up the Partners in Flight (a loose coalition of conservation organizations, wildlife agencies, and other groups cooperating to further the aims of bird conservation in the United States and Canada) Bird Conservation Strategy, or "Flight Plan." In New York State, Audubon has collaborated with Partners in Flight state and regional coordinators to fit the IBA Program into the larger context of the Flight Plan, which includes developing physiographic area conservation plans, habitat goals for species and habitat types, and management recommendations for large landscape-level units.

In 1997, New York Sate created a model Bird Conservation Area (BCA) program based on Audubon's IBA program under §11-2001 of the Environmental Conservation Law of New York. The program is designed to safeguard and enhance bird populations and their habitats on selected state lands and waters. In November of 2001, New York designated the Adirondack mountain summits above 2,800 feet in Essex, Franklin, and Hamilton counties as the Adirondack Subalpine Forest Bird Conservation Area (BCA). The site was nominated because of its diverse species concentration, individual species concentration and its importance to species at risk, in particular the Bicknell's Thrush (special concern). That portion of the SLWA within Hamilton County over 2,800 feet include: Hamilton Mountain, Dugway Mountain, Swart Mountain, Speculator Mountain, and Three Ponds Mountain.

Management Guidance for Bird Conservation Areas
The vision for the Adirondack Subalpine Forest BCA is to "continue to maintain the wilderness quality of the area, while facilitating recreational opportunities in a manner consistent with conservation of the unique bird species present" (NYSDEC, 2001). The Department has developed management guidance to identify education and research needs, and to outline operational management considerations. Considerations specific to the unit include:

- The BCA is comprised of lands that are within the SLWA and other lands within the broader Adirondack Forest Preserve. The SLWA portion is subject to relatively stringent regulations and use limitations. Portions of the BCA that are not within the SLWA may have less stringent use limitations.

• To ensure disturbances are kept to a minimum, trail maintenance and construction activities should be accomplished outside of the breeding season, when possible. If, in accordance with Department policy, motorized equipment use is necessary, such use shall be minimized during the breeding or nesting periods.

• There is a need to identify to the public the distinctive bird community present in subalpine forests over 2,800 feet. The potential impacts of human intrusion need to be portrayed to the public, and a "please stay on the trails" approach may be beneficial. Continue partnerships with the National Audubon Society, Adirondack Mountain Club and other groups involved in education and conservation of birds in New York State.

• Acid rain deposition may be having an impact on nesting success of songbirds at high elevations by causing die-offs of high altitude conifer forests, and killing snails and other sources of calcium needed for egg production. More research is needed on this. The curtailment of sulphur dioxide emissions and the reduction of acid rain is currently a significant New York State initiative.

• A detailed inventory and standardized monitoring of special concern species is needed for the area. In particular, all peaks above 2,800 feet should be surveyed for Bicknell's Thrush.

• The impact of the current levels of human use on nesting success needs to be assessed.

Deer Wintering Areas

A deer wintering area or deer yard is any piece of landscape where deer tend to concentrate during winter. Deer wintering areas typically have features which provide thermal benefits and/or mobility advantages during periods of cold and deep snow. In the Adirondacks, deer wintering areas are often associated with dense conifer cover which helps reduce rapid snow accumulation, provides shelter from winds, and limits radiational cooling during the evening. South-facing slopes are also used by wintering deer, where lower snow accumulation and favorable sun exposure provide similar benefits. Better quality deer wintering areas also have adjacent regenerating hardwood components which provide available woody browse during milder conditions.

Information provided by regional wildlife staff identified several historic deer wintering areas that are wholly or partially contained within the unit (see above significant habitats). Deer use the same areas annually, although the precise boundaries of these areas can change over time depending on winter weather and vegetative succession, so some of these areas may not hold deer every winter, and other areas may not have been identified.

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

Guidelines for Protection of Deer Wintering Areas

The maintenance and protection of deer wintering areas are important in maintaining deer in the northern portions of their range. Activities which substantially diminish the quality or characteristics of the site should be avoided, but this does not mean human use is always detrimental. Forest stewardship activities (including softwood harvest), pass through trails, and other uses can be compatible with deer yards if they are carefully considered.

The most important characteristic of an Adirondack deer wintering area is the habitat configuration making up a "core" and travel corridors to and from the core. The core is typically an area, or areas, of dense conifer cover used by deer in severe conditions. Travel corridors are dense but narrow components which allow access to food resources in milder conditions. Forest management conditions which afford protection of core sections and avoid fragmenting travel corridors are acceptable in many situations. Certain types of recreation trails (i.e. snowmobile trails) are not presently considered to significantly impact deer yards in a negative way. These types of trails in or adjacent to deer wintering areas can provide a firm, packed surface readily used by deer for travel during periods of deep snow. They can also create access for free-roaming dogs if the location is close to human habitation, thus trails should avoid deer yards in these situations. The following are some general guidelines to follow for protecting deer wintering areas.

- Maintain a minimum 100 foot forested buffer on either side of streams to protect winter habitat and travel corridors between core yard components.

- Avoid placement of ski trails through core segments of deer yards to reduce disturbance associated with skiers stopping to observe deer.

- Trails traversing deer yards should be designed for through traffic, functioning much as a highway.

- Trails should not traverse core segments of deer yards in densely populated areas such as hamlets, villages, or along roadsides developed with human habitation because they provide access to free roaming dogs.

- In areas with nearby human habitation, avoid land uses which result in remnant trail, roadways or other access lane which facilitate accessibility to free-roaming dogs.

VISUAL/SCENIC RESOURCES

Most of the aesthetic appeal of the SLWA can be attributed to the West Branch of the Sacandaga River. Arising in the southern part of the unit, it gathers volume as it travels first westward, then northward paralleling Route 10, then finally eastward to its junction with the Sacandaga River. Several sections of the West Branch have been designated in ECL§15-2711 and under the APSLMP as wild or recreational (see below).

There are only four mountain tops within the unit exceeding 3,000 feet in elevation with many smaller mountain tops lying adjacent to streams and beaver meadows. Most of the vantage points from these mountain tops are isolated and many require a bushwhack to reach. The once popular trail to Cathead Mountain has been closed by the private land owners and the scenic vista atop Hamilton Mountain no longer exists since the removal of the fire tower. Other significant or unique natural areas within the unit include the following:

West Branch Gorge	A deep gorge with a series of four waterfalls through which the West Branch of the Sacandaga River flows.
Big Eddy	A quiet pool along the West Branch of the Sacandaga River where the waters rest after cascading through the West Branch Gorge.
Groff Creek Waterfalls	A series of two waterfalls along Groff Creek.
Jimmy Creek Waterfalls	A delightful waterfall along Jimmy Creek. The strange rock formation beside the pool below the falls is an old rock diversion wall built to keep logs in the stream as they were being floated to the river.
Finch Mountain Cliffs	Scenic views of the northern unit and the West Branch Valley.
Southerland Mountian	Scenic views around the periphery of the unit.

Little Cathead Mountain	Scenic views of Woods Lake and the mountains south beyond the Benson Road.

TRAVEL CORRIDORS

The natural corridors are generally oriented in a southwesterly or northeasterly direction as evidenced by the natural water courses. Oxbow and Piseco Lake outlets and Lake Pleasant outlet all finally merge into the Sacandaga River prior to its mouth at Great Sacandaga Lake. The main automobile highways are also located along these natural corridors and scenic views of much of the area can be had along the West River Road and NYS Routes 8, 10 and 30.

WILD, SCENIC AND RECREATIONAL RIVERS

Several sections of river that flow through the unit are classified under the Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers System Act (ECL Article 15, Title 27). The following sections are classified and will be managed consistent with their classification:

Wild Rivers

West Branch of the Sacandaga River - approximately 9 miles of river from the source near Silver Lake Mountain to the wilderness boundary near the most downstream Route 10 bridge crossing (ECL §15-2714(1)(f)) and approximately 7 miles of river from the confluence of Piseco Lake Outlet to the confluence with Dugway Creek (ECL §15-2713(1)(g)).

Recreational Rivers

West Branch of the Sacandaga River - approximately 9.1 miles of river from the most upstream Route 10 bridge crossing near Good Luck Lake to the confluence with Cow Creek and approximately 7.2 miles of river from the confluence of Dugway Creek to the confluence with the Main Branch of the Sacandaga River (ECL §15-2714(3)(w)).

Pursuant to 6 NYCRR §666.6(f), upon the designation of a river in this system and until final boundaries are established, the provisions of 6 NYCRR Part 666 (the regulations implementing the Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers program) are applicable within one-half mile of each bank of the river. None of these rivers are known to have a current use which is in conflict with either the Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers Act (ECL Article 15, Title 27) or the implementing regulations. Although a portion of the road from Whitehouse to the confluence with Dugway Creek is included within West Branch of the Sacandaga Wild River corridor and would normally be considered a nonconforming use under Part 666, this use predated the River's designation and is therefore permitted.

III. MAN-MADE FACILITIES AND PUBLIC USE

The Silver Lake Wilderness Area is the fourth largest and southern most wilderness in the Adirondacks. It is traversed from north to south by the Northville-Placid Trail. The rest of the area is almost without marked trails expect for a few scattered sportsmen's paths. Most of the region remains one of the least-known and used parts of the Forest Preserve.

EXISTING FACILITIES
SILVER LAKE WILDERNESS

There are a number of man-made facilities in the Silver Lake Wilderness. The APSLMP provides guidance for those facilities that are allowed (conforming) in wilderness areas and those which are not.

Non-conforming Facilities Inventory

The following is a list of known non-conforming facilities in the SLW:

- Steel suspension bridges (2 total)
  - 1 each 320'x4' - NPT over West Branch of the Sacandaga River, built in 1962.
  - 1 each 110'x4' - NPT over Hamilton Lake Stream, built in 1966.
- Two stone chimneys at Whitehouse.
- Cemeteries[1] (2 total)
  - 1 along the West River Road, near Whitehouse
  - 1 off the South Shore Road, Lake Pleasant - Colonel Peck's Grave Site.
- Designated primitive campsites (5 total; do not meet APSLMP separation guidelines)
  - 2 @ Whitehouse [site #4 and #5]
  - 2 @ Woods Lake [site #2 and #3]
  - 1 along West River Road [site #4]
- Privies (1 total)
  - 1 @ Hamilton Lake Stream - currently does not meet the minimum set back distance of 150 feet or more from water as required by the APSLMP.
- Stone fireplaces (7 total)
  - 1 @ the designated campsite along the North Branch of West Stony Creek.
  - 1 @ Hamilton Lake Stream lean-to
  - 1 @ Mud Lake lean-to
  - 1 @ the designated campsite near the chimney along the West Branch of the Sacandaga River.
  - 3 @ Woods Lake
- Parking Areas which are in excess of 500 feet from the wilderness boundary (2 total)
  - West River Road, Whitehouse / NPT - unpaved, can accommodate 10 vehicles, not maintained during winter.
  - Godfrey Road, West Stony Creek / NPT - unpaved, can accommodate 5 vehicles, not maintained during winter.
- Stop Barriers[2] (4 total)
  - Bar/Pipe Gates (1)
    - 20' North Branch West Stony Creek / NPT
  - Swinging Gates (3)
    - 16' Whitehouse / NPT
    - 16' River Road / Town of Hope - gate is missing, only posts remain.
    - 16' Rt. 8 / Town of Lake Pleasant

---

[1]These are permanent non-conforming uses or non-conforming uses whose removal cannot be scheduled by a fixed deadline.

[2]These structures are non-conforming at their present locations.

- Approximately 0.5 miles of private access road in Lot 120, Benson Tract. This is the road being used by the Thomas Gang Camp.
- Three motor vehicle bridges along the private access road in Lot 120, Benson Tract.
- Approximately 0.7 miles by 3 rods wide (49.5 feet), of the most westerly portion of West River Road from the last private parcel to the parking area at Whitehouse and that portion of the West River Road which crosses Lots 366, 376, 377 and 378 of the Benson Tract. This non-conforming use includes that portion of the unpaved public right-of-way that is maintained by the Town of Wells which is not included within the Sacandaga Primitive Area.
- Approximately 300 feet of private access road in Lot 8, Benson Tract.
- Approximately 0.4 miles of the old Godfrey Road from the wilderness boundary to the parking area along the North Branch of West Stony Creek.

Conforming Facilities Inventory

The following is a list of known conforming facilities in the SLW:

Boundary Lines

Approximately 119 miles.

Foot Trails

Class I Unmarked Trails (no mileages are given due to the trails' undefined nature)

North Branch Reservoir Trail
West Branch Gorge Trail
Silver Lake Outlet Trail
Confluence of Piseco Outlet and the West Branch
Big Eddy Trail
Groff Creek Trail
King Vly Trail
Abner Creek Trail
Three Ponds Mountain and Helldevil Dam Trail
The Notch/Devorse Creek Trail

Class III Primitive Trails

Woods Lake Trail - approx. 0.2 miles

Class IV Secondary Trails

Northville-Placid Trail (NPT) from Upper Benson to Piseco - approx. 23 miles. Trail marker color blue.

Trailhead Parking Areas (4 total)

Rt.10, Arietta / North Branch - paved (DOT ROW), can accommodate 5 vehicles, maintained during winter.
Rt.10, Arietta / Chub Lake - paved (DOT ROW), can accommodate 5 vehicles, maintained during winter.
River Road, Town of Hope - unpaved, can accommodate 4 vehicles, not maintained during winter.
Blackbridge Road, Lot 360 - unpaved, can accommodate 4 vehicles, not maintained during winter.

Lean-tos (3 total)

Silver Lake	The original Silver Lake lean-to was built along the shore, facing away from the lake. In the Spring of 1993 it was rebuilt with the assistance of volunteers farther up the ridge, facing the lake. The pit privy was built in 1991 and is in good condition.
Mud Lake	The original Mud Lake lean-to burned in October of 1978. A new lean-to was rebuilt in 1984 which replaced the one that burned. The pit privy is in good condition.
Hamilton Lake Stream	The Hamilton Lake Stream lean-to was relocated from the Whitehouse area in 1968 because of repeated social conflicts between users. The pit privy was built

through contract in 2000 and is in good condition; however, it does not meet the minimum set back distance from water required by the APSLMP.

Pit Privies (3 total) [includes one non-conforming structure]
Silver Lake
Mud Lake
Hamilton Lake Stream - does not meet the minimum set back distance from water.

Foot Trail Bridges (22 total)
Northville-Placid Trail (NPT)

(2) 9'x1.5' East Stony Creek - 2x6 planks laid on sills.
(1) 50'x4' East Stony Creek - treated deck and stringers with 5' high cribbed abutments.
(2) 13'x1.5' East Stony Creek - squared logs laid on log sills.
(1) 12'x1' Silver Lake - squared logs laid on log sills.
(1) 45'x1.5' Silver Lake - 2x8 planks laid on sills.
(1) 254'x2' Silver Lake to Mud Lake - log corduroy.
(1) 120'x1' Silver Lake to Mud Lake - 2x4 planks laid on sills.
(1) 205'x1' Silver Lake to Mud Lake - 2x4 planks laid on sills.
(1) 5'x1' Silver Lake to Mud Lake - squared log laid across wet area.
(1) 120'x1' Mud Lake - 2x8 planks laid on sills.
(1) 50'x1.5' Mud Lake to Whitehouse - 2x6 planks laid on sills.
(1) 12'x1.5' Mud Lake to Whitehouse - 2x6 planks laid on sills.
(1) 35'x1.5' Mud Lake to Whitehouse - 2x6 planks laid on sills.
(1) 20'x1.5' Mud Lake to Whitehouse - log corduroy.
(1) 15'x1.5' Mud Lake to Whitehouse - log corduroy.
(1) 50'x1.5' Mud Lake to Whitehouse - 2x6 planks laid on sills.
(1) 25'x2.5' Whitehouse - 2x8 planks on stringers.
(1) 20'x1.5' Hamilton Lake Stream - 2x6 planks laid on sills.
(1) 85'x1.5' Hamilton Lake Stream - 2x6 planks laid on sills.
(1) 27'x4' Buckhorn Lake Outlet - 2x6 planks on stringers.

Registration Booths (2 total) * small kiosk w/map
Piseco*/ NPT
Whitehouse / NPT (metal box)

Signs (24 total)
Woods Lake (1 total)

"Carry in & carry out"

Godfrey Road (1 total)

"Barrier" wooden 2'x6"

North Branch of West Stony Creek (3 total)

"Trail to Rock Lake, Silver Lake, Whitehouse"
"No motorized vehicles" poster w/chapel board
yellow directional arrow

Rock Lake (1 total)

"Trail to Silver Lake lean-to 2.55, Canary Pond 5.2 , Whitehouse 10.7 miles"

Silver Lake (3 total)

"Lean-to" w/directional arrow
"Trail to Rock Lake 2.5, Northville 17.7 miles"
"Trail to Canary Pond 2.6, Mud Lake 5.9, Whitehouse 8.1 miles"

Mud Lake (2 total)

"Trail to Canary Pond 3.9, Silver Lake lean-to 5.9, Northville 23.6 miles"
yellow directional arrow

Whitehouse (10 total)

"Foot trail - this foot trail is not a public road. Its use for public vehicular traffic is prohibited"
"Camping prohibited"
"No bicycles"
"Trail to Mud Lake lean-to 2.2, Canary Pond 5.5, Northville 25.5 miles"
"Trail to Hamilton Lake lean-to 2.6, Buckhorn Lake 4.6, Piseco 8.6 miles"
5 yellow directional arrows

Piseco @ Rt. 8 (2 total)

"Trail to Piseco 2.0 miles"
"Trail to Fiddler Lake 1.8, Hamilton Lake Stream lean-to 3.5, Whitehouse 6.5, Mud Lake 8.6 miles"

NPT @ Rt. 8 intersection, Piseco (1 total) 8"pole w/cross arm

"NPT, Piseco-Whitehouse, Trail to Hamilton Lake Stream lean-to 3.8, Whitehouse 6.4 miles"

Designated Primitive Campsites (34 total) - does not include lean-tos.
West River Road (7) [includes one non-conforming site]
Whitehouse (6) [includes two non-conforming sites]
Spy Lake (6)
Woods Lake (4) [includes two non-conforming sites]
North Branch West Stony Creek / NPT (1)
Rock Lake / NPT (1)
Sacandaga River / NPT (1)
Meco Lake / NPT (1)
Silver Lake / NPT (1)
Canary Pond / NPT (1)
Hamilton Lake Stream / NPT (2)
West Branch Sacandaga River / NPT (2)
Buckhorn Lake Outlet / NPT (1)

SACANDAGA PRIMITIVE AREA

Non-conforming Facilities Inventory

That portion of the West River Road which is located within the SPA.[1]

Conforming Facilities Inventory

The following is a list of known conforming facilities in the SPA:

Boundary Lines

Approximately 1.4 miles.

CATHEAD MOUNTAIN PRIMITIVE AREA

Non-conforming Facilities Inventory

The following is a list of known non-conforming facilities in the CMPA:

- Approximately 1.0 miles of motor vehicle road.
- Approximately 0.5 miles of old telephone line which is no longer used.

Conforming Facilities Inventory

The following is a list of known conforming facilities in the CMPA:

Boundary Lines

Approximately 2.2 miles. (Note: only about 1.25 miles are adjacent to private property and are maintained)

[1]These are permanent non-conforming uses or non-conforming uses whose removal cannot be scheduled by a fixed deadline.

Foot Trails

Class V Trunk Trail

Cathead Mountain Trail - approx. 0.6 miles. This trail starts and ends on private property and is not currently being maintained because there is no public access.

CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES

Many places within the SLWA have interesting historical backgrounds. The unique cultural qualities of early settlers along with past land use patterns have helped shape the character of the land we know today. However, documentation of these cultural and historic resources has not been extensive.

The term "cultural resources" encompasses a number of categories of human-created resources including structures, archaeological sites and related resources. The Department is required by the New York State Historic Preservation Act (SHPA - PRHPL Article 14) and the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA - ECL Article 8) to include such resources in the range of environmental values that are managed on public lands. The Adirondack Forest Preserve was listed as a National Historic Landmark by the National Park Service in 1963. This designation also results in automatic listing of the Park in the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

Within the Forest Preserve, the number of standing structures is, in general, limited due to the requirements of Article XIV, Section 1 of the State Constitution, ECL §9-0109 and the APSLMP. Often those that remain are structures that facilitate the Department's land management activities such as fire towers, ranger cabins and related resources. Fire towers as a class of resources, have been the subject of considerable public interest over the last decade. The majority of surviving fire towers have been found eligible for inclusion in the State and National Registers of Historic Places and a number of towers were formally listed in the Registers in 2001. For State agencies, Register listing or eligibility are effectively the same; obligating the Department to treat these resources appropriately and requiring that special procedures be followed should it be necessary to remove or otherwise affect these resources. This formal listing is in addition to the SHPA Memorandum of Agreement relating to fire towers that the Department signed with OPRHP in 1994. This agreement was designed to accommodate the requirements of the APSLMP and the SHPA. No fire towers are present within the SLWA although there is a site of a former fire tower on Hamilton Mountain. A fire tower does exist on adjacent private land on the summit of Cathead Mountain. None of the other known structures within the unit, i.e. the Whitehouse chimneys, meet the criteria for listing in the State or National Registers of Historic Places.

Archaeological sites are, simply put, any location where materials (artifacts, ecofacts) or modifications to the landscape reveal evidence of past human activity. This includes a wide range of resources ranging from pre-contact Native American camps and villages to Euro-American homesteads and industrial sites. Such sites can be entirely subsurface or can contain above ground remains such as foundation walls or earthwork features.

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

The quality of the site inventory information varies a great deal in all respects. Very little systematic archaeological survey work has been undertaken in New York State and especially in the Adirondack region. Therefore all current inventories must be considered incomplete. Even fewer sites have been investigated to any degree that would permit their significance to be evaluated. Many reported site locations result from 19th century antiquarian information, artifact collector reports that have not been field verified. Often very little is known about the age, function or size of these sites. This means that reported site locations can be unreliable or be polygons that encompass a large area. Should systematic archaeological inventory be undertaken at some point in the future it is very likely that additional resources will be identified. The results of these site file checks are presented in the following table:

Known Archaeological Resources within or in close proximity to the Silver Lake Wilderness Area

Quadrangle	OPRHP# or NYSM#	Site Name	Description: age, cultural affiliation, etc.
Jackson Summit	A03501.000011	Pinnacle Tannery	Tannery c.1855. Only the stone foundation remains. Reported by Steven Englehart.
Piseco Lake	A04101.000002	Eli Quesnell's Clockmill	Between 1860 and 1880 Canadian named Eli Quesnell bought 2,200 acres with frontage along NY Route 10. He changed his name to Kennell and erected a sawmill and shingle mill; each operated by waterpower by separate ponds. He lumbered for years on large-scale. He moved to Gloversville and died in 1900. Reported by Hartgen Archeological Associates.
Piseco Lake	A04101.000003	Shaker Place Settlement	Early Shaker settlement. Reported by Hartgen Archeological Associates.
Piseco Lake	A04101.000004	Averys Place Inn	"An old Inn." Reported by Hartgen Archeological Associates.
Lake Pleasant	A04140.000001 and NYSM 6068	Nesbit's Beach	Middle Woodland. Finds include, corded pottery and stemmed projectile points. Reported by Fred Stevens.
Lake Pleasant	A04140.000002	Cherry Brook Site	Wide temporal range. Reported by Hartgen Archeological Associates.
Lake Pleasant	A04140.000003	Guideboard Hill Cemetery and Settlement	Early settlement and monumented cemetery located on old roadbed to Gilmantown Road, marked by local historians. Reported by Hartgen Archeological Associates.
Lake Pleasant	A04106.000006 and NYSM 6067	Indian Bay	Late Woodland. Noted as "Oak Hill, Mohawk." Reported by Fred Stevens.
Piseco Lake	NYSM 3407	No name provided	Prehistoric camp site. One of two camps yielding relics. NYSM location from Parker description. Also see 7513. Identified by Arthur C. Parker.
Piseco Lake	NYSM 3409	No name provided	Prehistoric Camps.
Lake Pleasant	NYSM 3412	ACP HTMN 6A	Camp. See 7509 for other two camps listed as HMTN 6. Reported by Arthur C. Parker.
Lake Pleasant	NYSM 3413 and 7509	ACP HMTN 7A 7B 7C	Camps. See 7510 for other camps listed HMTN 7. Reported by Arthur C. Parker.
Piseco Lake	NYSM 6110	Little Sand Point Campgrounds	Prehistoric site. Identified by Beth Wellman 1985.
Lake Pleasant	NYSM 7508	ACP HMTN 5B	Camp. Reported by Arthur C. Parker.
Lake Pleasant	NYSM 7510	ACP HMTN 7D	Camp. Reported by Arthur C. Parker.
Lake Pleasant	NYSM 7511	ACP HMTN (no number)	Camps. Reported by Arthur C. Parker.
Piseco Lake	NYSM 7513	No name provided	Prehistoric camp site. Identified by Arthur C. Parker.
Piseco Lake	NYSM 7514	No name provided	Prehistoric camps. Three camps on Parker's map. Identified by Arthur C. Parker.
Piseco Lake	NYSM 7515	No name provided	Prehistoric camps. "Three camps on Parker's map numbered 1, but Parker description of 1 differs, see 3407 and 7513." Identified by Arthur C. Parker.
Piseco Lake	NYSM 7516	Sites	No further information.
Piseco Lake	NYSM 7518	No name provided	In Parker's introduction to Hamilton County, on a large rock are 3 parallel groves about 6" long by 5" apart, apparently artifacts. Identified by Arthur C. Parker.

OPRHP = Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation NYSM = New York State Museum 21 sites

The archaeological inventory of the Silver Lake Wilderness Area reflects the known general characteristics of the area's history. A number of pre-contact Native American sites have been identified in the vicinity of Canada and Piseco Lakes. Euro-American sites within the unit reflect land use prior to state acquisition. These include a number of farmstead sites and the remains of mining and logging operations.

A search of the Natural Heritage Program database has indicated several sites of interest, but detailed information is not available. Other sources have indicated the following sites, which may or may not be duplicative of or related to the above-listed sites:

• **Whitehouse:** site of a former hunting lodge and boys camp with a cemetery, two chimneys and remnants of building foundations.
• **Helldevil Dam:** site of a flood dam for the earliest logging operations in the Benson Tract, dating to 1870.
• **North Branch Reservoir:** site of former reservoir that was used to float logs to an old mill on NY 10.
• **Hamilton Mountain:** site of former fire tower which was removed in 1977.
• **Arietta Game Preserve:** site of former state game preserve along the North Branch. It was built in 1927 in an attempt to increase the deer herd. A single strand of wire surrounded nearly 4000 acres.
• **Peck's Grave:** grave site of Colonel Loring Peck 1743-1833. Peck fought in the Revolutionary War and moved to the Lake Pleasant area in 1811. He lies buried with his wife and son on land they once cleared for a farm. The gravestones read:

- Col. Loring Peck, a patriot of the Revolution, died July 29, 1833 in his 90th year.
- Jane, his wife, died June 20, 1825 in her 71st year.
- Loring Peck, Jr., died May 5, 1861 in his 80th year.

• **Whitehouse Cemetery:** according to historic notes there are possibly 30 or more graves in this cemetery, but only five gravestones. The gravestones read:

- Mary, wife of Sylvester Flansburgh; died Oct. 13, 1894; aged 44 yrs.
- Agnes, daughter of John & Alwilda Davison; died Feb. 18, 1895; aged 2 yrs. & 8 days.
- Albert, son of B.B. & R. Fountain; died Oct. 18, 1865; aged 7 yrs. & 9 months.
- Elizabeth, wife of John Mattice; died Aug. 31, 1871 in the 45 yr. of her age.
- Lottie Carpenter; died 1892; infant daughter.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE LAND

Section 532A of the Real Property Tax Law provides that "all wild or forest lands owned by the state within the Forest Preserve" are subject to taxation for all purposes. If the land were privately held and "improved," property taxes on this land would increase, adding to the tax base. However, unimproved State land does not generate the public service demands (e.g. public schools, water and sewer, and road maintenance) that improved private land does.

The New York Office of Real Property (formerly Equalization and Assessment) has provided the following projected tax liability on taxable State land within the townships of this unit for 1999. Please note that the data shows the total amount of taxes paid by the State in each of these townships. Since some of the land of these towns is located outside of the Silver Lake Wilderness Area in adjacent Forest Preserve units, the taxes in the table include some taxes paid on Forest Preserve lands which are not within the Silver Lake Wilderness Area.

SLWA Projected Tax Liability for 1999		
	Hamilton County	
Town of:	Lake Pleasant	$730,017.13
	Benson	$466,735.87
	Wells	$574,634.79
	Hope	$148,390.13
	Arietta	$1,183,878.85
		Grand Total: $3,103,656.77

Adjacent public lands include the Jessup River Wild Forest to the north, Wilcox Lake Wild Forest to the east, Shaker Mountain Wild Forest to the south, and the Ferris Lake Wild Forest to the west. The Village of Speculator and Hamlets of Lake Pleasant and Wells lie on the perimeter of the SLWA and their economy depends, to some extent, on these undeveloped lands. The economic importance of hiking, cross country skiing , wildlife viewing, canoeing,

fishing, and big and small game hunting should not be overlooked in this area. Many individuals from outside the region use these State lands for these activities and contribute to the economy through local purchases as well as sales and property taxes paid. If not for the presence of Forest Preserve lands, the area's attractiveness to vacationers and camp owners would likely be significantly diminished.

Angling-related expenditures do contribute to the economy of the area, but are not high given the limited fisheries resource. The negative impacts on the fishery resource due to acidification may have led to this lost economic opportunity. Hunting-related expenditures also contribute to the economy of the area, but are not overwhelming given the limited big game resource. The impacts on the wildlife resource due to the change in forest structure may have led to this lost economic opportunity.

Private holdings and public right-of-ways generally produce a slight economic impact on adjacent State lands. Boundary line painting and/or signing and law enforcement costs to combat trespasses which originate on private lands and access trails are necessary. Also, in some instances, public easements are desirable to secure access across private lands to certain waters. Access to Spy Lake, a water which is largely within the Silver Lake Wilderness, is very limited.

PUBLIC USE OF LAND UNIT

The attractiveness of this unit lies in the West Branch of the Sacandaga River. The West Branch dominates the landscape as it meanders its way through the area . There is only one marked hiking trail within the unit which consists of a section of the Northville-Placid Trail from Upper Benson to where the trail crosses NYS Route 8 in Piseco. With its large size and minimal facilities the SLWA fulfills the ideals of wilderness solitude in a way that few other Adirondack areas so designated are able to do.

Land Resource

The amount of public use within the unit can best be estimated by trail register reports and permit statistics. Trailhead register figures must be considered to be on the low side due to failure of users to take the time to register; this is especially true for day users. It is important to note that these figures do not account for all of the public use within the area, but can be used as a general indicator and also serve as a guide to the locations of areas of high impact. Interior trail register reports from three trail registers indicate the following visitor use information:

Northville-Placid Trail @ Benson - Register Data 2000 - 2004

Month	2000 Entries	2000 People	2001 Entries	2001 People	2002 Entries	2002 People	2003 People	2004 People
Jan	13	40	39	76	23	46	23	48
Feb	21	36	8	18	18	42	38	44
Mar	19	45	5	8	9	26	14	29
Apr	30	100	6	11	21	54	17	40
May	35	66	37	70	47	96	103	147
Jun	23	65	57	100	50	112	114	88
Jul	75	141	85	145	-	-	172	181
Aug	68	133	100	240	-	-	200	225
Sep	45	111	67	158	-	-	82	115
Oct	58	124	42	92	12	17	141	92
Nov	27	43	43	68	40	83	55	75
Dec	11	21	14	25	9	17	36	-
Totals	425	**925**	503	**1011**	229	**493**	**995**	**1084**

Northville-Placid Trail @ Whitehouse - Register Data 2000 - 2004

Month	2000 Entries	2000 People	2001 Entries	2001 People	2002 Entries	2002 People	2003 People	2004 People
Jan	2	3	6	10	5	10	14	12
Feb	4	9	2	2	1	2	3	3
Mar	8	11	4	10	3	7	6	12
Apr	28	60	7	12	13	34	22	52
May	84	210	79	247	93	207	238	250
Jun	69	178	107	263	47	141	296	256
Jul	174	430	170	484	-	-	521	347
Aug	163	385	10*	30*	-	-	479	357
Sep	100	245	40*	109*	-	-	238	234
Oct	66	198	56	126	54	130	145	179
Nov	16	34	31	62	17	29	49	67
Dec	10	16	10	12	4	5	-	3
Totals	724	**1779**	522	**1367**	237	**565**	**2011**	**1772**

*missing some register sheets

Northville-Placid Trail @ Piseco Rt. 8 - Register Data 2001 - 2004

Month	2001 Entries	2001 People	2002 Entries	2002 People	2003 Entries	2003 People	2004 People
Jan	7	11	12	18	1	1	9
Feb	6	12	2	4	2	5	10
Mar	4	18	-	-	3	5	19
Apr	19	45	-	-	2*	3*	25
May	49	108	-	-	-	-	94
Jun	48	120	-	-	-	-	49
Jul	58	124	-	-	35	85	158
Aug	68	167	-	-	59	134	132
Sep	9*	10*	26	42	34	64	53
Oct	-	-	17	24	19	31	35
Nov	13	16	2	3	7	11	6*
Dec	7	15	4	7	2	5	-
Totals	288	**646**	63	**98**	164	**344**	**590**

*missing some register sheets

An assessment of the available figures indicates that the highest use in the unit occurs from the Whitehouse trailhead, which has an average of approximately 1,850 people/yr. The Benson trailhead comes in second with an average of

approximately 1000 people/yr, while the Piseco trailhead finishes last with approximately 600 people/yr. A majority of the use is concentrated along the Northville-Placid Trail; the only marked foot trail within the unit.

The Whitehouse trailhead is very popular among day users because of easy access and the relatively short walk to a unique suspension bridge over the West Branch of the Sacandaga River. Other popular destinations from Whitehouse include Big Eddy, Mud Lake, and Hamilton Lake Stream. Popular destinations from the Benson Trailhead include Rock Lake and the North Branch of West Stony Creek. People registering at the Piseco Trailhead are mainly thru hikers on the NPT or individuals headed to Buckhorn (Fiddler) Lake.

Camping permits are required for groups of ten or more and for groups of any size staying three or more nights in the same location. Most people who camp in the unit only stay for one or two nights, thus the camping permits issued do not reflect the total camper usage. Most of the permits issued are for either small groups or hunting camps during the big game season. Available camping permits indicate the following group size and length of stay information:

Group Size and Length of Stay from Camping Permits in the Silver Lake Wilderness Area

Time Period	Group Size	Length of Stay (days)	Maximum Group Size
1/1/01 to 12/31/01	< 10: 2 Total: **2**	> 21: 2	5
1/1/02 to 12/31/02	< 10: 6 Total: **6**	8 to 14: 3 15 to 21: 1 >21: 2	8
1/1/03 to 12/31/03	< 10: 18 10 to 14: 11 15 to 19: 1 Total: **30**	< 3: 1 3 to 7: 15 8 to 14: 5 15 to 21: 1 > 21: 8	15
1/1/04 to 12/31/04	< 10: 15 10 to 14: 7 15 to 19: 2 > 19: 1 Total: **25**	< 3: 3 3 to 7: 7 8 to 14: 3 15 to 21: 1 > 21: 11	20

On average about ten permits are issued annually for the big game hunting season. The permit data indicates that the highest use is concentrated around the North Branch of West Stony Creek and Whitehouse. Earlier camping permit data from the mid 1970's indicates that youth groups of up to 200 campers would occasionally use the Whitehouse area on weekends during July and August. Fortunately, this type of concentrated use no longer occurs.

Wildlife Resource

Big and small game hunting and trapping use estimates are currently not available for the unit. However, it is known that big game hunting is among the more popular sports in the unit during the fall season. To protect wildlife populations and prevent over-harvesting, hunting and trapping regulations are set by DEC. The Bureau of Wildlife monitors the populations of game species by collecting, compiling, and analyzing annual harvest data. Harvest data is available for big game (deer and bear) and selected small game and furbearer species. This information is currently compiled by township, county, and Wildlife Management Unit (WMU).

A majority of the big game hunting use occurs along the West River Road, also known as the Whitehouse Road. This area is popular because it: (1) provides good roadside access to relatively large unbroken tracts of land; (2) has several roadside campsites; and (3) contains a number of seasonal hunting camps on private lands.

The SLWA occurs within WMU 5H. See Appendix C for wildlife harvest data by township for selected species. Consult the appropriate NYS Hunting & Trapping Regulations Guide for big game, small game and trapping season dates and bag limits.

Fisheries Resource

Quantitative angler use estimates and their economic impact for the Silver Lake Wilderness are not available. Fishing pressure on the unit's streams is probably light. Trout fishing on lakes and ponds typically peaks in April, May, and June when trout can still be found in the cool water near the surface. Surface fishing activity declines in the summer due to formation of a thermocline which causes fish to move to deeper water. These periods of peak angler use do not overlap the periods of peak usage by campers and hikers during summertime.

DEC angling regulations are designed to conserve fish populations in individual waters by preventing over-exploitation. When necessary, populations of coldwater gamefishes are maintained or augmented by DEC's annual stocking program. Most warmwater species (smallmouth bass, largemouth bass, northern pike and panfishes) are maintained by natural reproduction; however, stocking is sometimes used to introduce those fishes to waters where they do not exist.

Under existing angling regulations, the coldwater and warmwater fish populations are capable of withstanding current and anticipated levels of angler use.

DEC monitors the effectiveness of angling regulations, stocking policies, and other management activities by conducting periodic biological and chemical surveys. Based on analysis of biological survey results, angling regulations may be changed as necessary to protect the fish populations. Statewide angling and special angling regulations provide the protection necessary to sustain or enhance natural reproduction where it occurs.

CAPACITY TO WITHSTAND USE

The New York State Constitution, the APSLMP and other laws, regulations and policies provide general direction for the management of the SLWA by specifically prohibiting certain structures, improvements and uses and establishing general goals and guidelines for protecting natural resources and managing the types of facilities and uses that are permitted. The managers of the SLWA must apply these general guidelines and determine through the UMP process which structures and improvements will be constructed, retained or removed within the unit, and how much impact to the unit's natural resources and recreational environment will be tolerated.

The capacity of the SLWA to withstand public recreational use and other types of human influence is not a quality inherent in the unit that may be determined simply through an objective assessment of its physical and biological features and recreational conditions. While the levels of various types of impacts can be measured, the levels that are acceptable within the unit generally or at particular locations within it can only be determined through the development of goals and objectives reflecting desired conditions. This process should include the consideration of the management guidelines for wilderness and primitive areas and the natural resource and recreational characteristics of the unit in the landscape contexts of New York State and the Adirondack Park, and should be shaped by public participation in the planning process. The LAC process should be applied to specific issues for which the establishment of measurable standards is considered necessary to refine the application of management objectives.

Physical inspections of trails and campsites in the unit coupled with Ranger and user feedback provide the following baseline information about public use and related resource impacts:

- The SLWA exhibits few of the overuse indicators evidenced in other more highly used areas, such as the High Peaks and Pharaoh Lake Wilderness. This is likely due to the geographic location of the unit and the lesser number of primary attraction points (summits, lakes, ponds, interior structures).

• Moderate levels of soil erosion and compaction are evident mainly on the peripheral campsites. This impact appears to be the result of several factors including large groups that use those areas and illegal motor vehicle use.

• Much of the visitor use appears to be either day trips or short-term overnights. Summer weekends and holidays see the greatest number of users. The summer holiday weekends see use levels in some portions of the unit that may reduce the level of solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation that might be acceptable in a wilderness setting. However, on the majority of non-holiday periods the level of use in the SLWA remains such that wilderness solitude can easily be experienced.

• The majority of primitive tent sites in the unit appear to be long established. Most appear to be fairly well self contained, however several camping sites tend to be clustered where there is easy motor vehicle access. Sites in these areas will need to be brought into compliance with the APSLMP separation guidelines.

• Recreational angling in the SLWA appears to be light and fishery inventories indicate that existing State fishing regulations are adequately protecting the fishery resource. Fishery managers are proposing management action which will maintain native populations, and possibly reintroduce native endangered species where appropriate and consistent with Department policy and the APSLMP guidelines.

• Likewise, hunting pressure in the unit appears stable. Hunting is not expected to impact overall numbers of any species population. Management action has been taken to protect critical habitats and species that are of special concern, with the result that populations remain stable. Should protected species exhibit a significant decline in numbers appropriate action will be taken consistent with Department policies and APSLMP guidelines.

Carrying Capacity Concepts

The SLWA cannot withstand ever-increasing, unlimited visitor use levels without suffering the eventual loss of wilderness character. The challenge for managers is to determine how much use and what type of use the area, or particular sites within it, can withstand before the impacts of use cause serious degradation of the wilderness resource. A manager's most important responsibility is to work to ensure that a natural area's "carrying capacity" is not exceeded while providing for visitor use and benefit.

The term carrying capacity has its roots in range and wildlife sciences. As defined in the range sciences, carrying capacity means "the maximum number of animals that can be grazed on a land unit for a specific period of time without inducing damage to the vegetation or related resources" (Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center, 1994). This concept, in decades past, was modified to address recreational uses as well, although in its application to recreational use it has been shown to be significantly flawed when the outcome sought has been the maximum number of people who should be allowed to visit an area such as the SLWA. Much research had shown that the derivation of such a number is not useful, because the relationship between the amount of use and the resultant amount of impact is not linear (Krumpe and Stokes, 1993). For many types of activities, low levels of use can cause observable impacts. For example, in sensitive areas the elimination of ground vegetation at a campsite can become significant after only a few camping parties have occupied it. Once moderate use levels have removed nearly all the vegetation, large increases in use cause relatively little additional impact. It has been discovered that such factors as visitor behavior, site resistance and resiliency and type of use may actually be more important in determining the degree of impact than the amount of use, although the total amount of use contributes to a significant extent (Hammit and Cole, 1987).

The shortcomings of a simple carrying capacity approach have become so apparent that the basic question has changed from the old one, "How many is too many?" to the new, more realistic one: "How much change is acceptable?" Because of the complex relationship between use and use impacts, the manager's job is much more involved than simply counting, redirecting, or restricting the number of visitors in an area. Professionally-informed judgements must be made so that carrying capacity is defined in terms of acceptable resource and social conditions. These conditions must be compared to real conditions, projections must be made, and management policies and

actions must be drafted and enacted to maintain or restore the desired conditions. Influencing visitor behavior can require a well-planned, multi-faceted educational program. Determining site resistance and resiliency always requires research, often involving much time, legwork and experimentation. Shaping the types of use impacting an area can call not only for education, research and development of facilities, but also the formulation and enforcement of a set of regulations which some users are likely to regard as objectionable. The Department embraces this new approach, recognizing the ambitious scope of the work required to adopt it and subsequently implement needed management.

The shift in the focus of managers, from trying to determine how many visitors an area can accommodate to trying to determine what changes are occurring in the area and whether or not they are acceptable, will be more effective in assuring that all areas of the Forest Preserve will, as required by the New York State Constitution, be "forever kept as wild forest lands," and that in the SLWA, the primeval character inherent in the APSLMP definition of wilderness will be retained. A central goal of this plan is to lay out a strategy for achieving an appropriate balance between resource protection and public use in the SLWA. This strategy reflects legal requirements, policy guidelines and established management principles and has directed the development of goals, objectives, and ultimately the management proposals which are detailed in Section V.

The Goal-Achievement Framework

In wilderness areas, the Department is mandated by law to implement actions designed to realize the intent of the wilderness guidelines of the APSLMP. The goal-achievement framework will be used to organize this management plan to direct the process of determining appropriate management actions through the careful development of goals and objectives. Goals are general descriptions of management direction reflecting legal mandates and general conditions to be achieved or maintained in the wilderness area. Once articulated, the goals for the management of the SLWA will shape management objectives, which are statements of more specific conditions whose achievement will be necessary to assure progress toward the attainment of the established goals. Objectives in turn will serve as criteria for deciding what management actions are needed.

General goals proposing a long-term direction for the management of the SLWA are given in Section IV. In each category of management activity included in Section V, the current management situation is assessed and assumptions about future trends and conditions are discussed. Proposed objectives describing conditions to be achieved on the way toward meeting long-term management goals are presented and individual actions to meet the objectives are proposed.

The goal-achievement framework provides an organized approach to planning that is effective in addressing the full range of issues affecting a wilderness area. However, the objectives developed in this approach usually do not identify specific thresholds of unacceptable impact on particular resources or give managers or the public clear guidance as to whether a restrictive management action is warranted in a particular situation. For significant management issues that require the resolution of conflicting goals, that involve activities that have the potential to lead to unacceptable change, and lend themselves to the development of measurable and attainable standards, the Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) process will be used.

Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) Process

The Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) process employs carrying capacity concepts to prescribe the desired resource and social conditions that should be maintained regardless of use. It does not prescribe the total number of people who can visit an area. Establishing and maintaining acceptable conditions depends on explicit management objectives which draw on managerial experience, research, inventory data, assessments, projections and public input. When devised in this manner, objectives founded in the LAC process dictate how much change will be allowed, as well as how management will respond to change. Indicators - measurable variables that reflect conditions - are chosen and standards, representing the bounds of acceptable conditions, are set, so management efforts can address unacceptable change. A particular standard may be chosen to act as a boundary which allows for management action before conditions deteriorate to the point of unacceptability. The monitoring of resource and social conditions is critical. The LAC process relies on monitoring to provide systematic and periodic feedback to

managers concerning specific conditions related to a range of impact sources, from visitor use to the atmospheric deposition of pollutants.

Though the LAC process is ideally suited to solving many management problems, it does not work in every situation. LAC is designed to help managers decide how best to address competing goals where there are concerns about the potential for unacceptable change. For instance, two goals of wilderness management are protecting natural conditions and providing public recreational access. Yet the promotion of recreational use could have unacceptable impacts to natural resources, such as the soils and vegetation in a popular camping area. The LAC process could be used to determine the thresholds of acceptable soil and vegetation impacts and what management actions would be taken to protect resources from camping use. Issues that do not involve potential trade-offs do not lend themselves to LAC treatment. For example, managers do not need a process to help them determine how much motor vehicle use is acceptable in wilderness. Because existing wilderness guidelines and regulations explicitly prohibit all public motor vehicle use, it is clear that no amount of public motor vehicle use is acceptable.

The Department will identify all significant management issues affecting the SLWA and prioritize them. Issues suitable for the application of the LAC process will be selected. For these issues, the Department will implement the four major components of the LAC process:

1. The identification of acceptable resource and social conditions represented by measurable indicators;
2. An analysis of the relationship between existing conditions and those desired;
3. Determinations of the management actions needed to achieve and preserve desired conditions; and,
4. A monitoring program to determine whether objectives continue to be met over time.

The process involves 10 steps:

Step 1: Define Goals and Desired Conditions
Step 2: Identify Issues, Concerns and Threats
Step 3: Define and Describe Acceptable Conditions
Step 4: Select Indicators for Resource and Social Conditions
Step 5: Inventory Existing Resource and Social Conditions
Step 6: Specify Standards for Resource and Social Indicators for Each Opportunity Class
Step 7: Identify Alternative Opportunity Class Allocations
Step 8: Identify Management Actions for Each Alternative
Step 9: Evaluate and Select a Preferred Alternative
Step 10: Implement Actions and Monitor Conditions

Though generally the levels of human impact within the SLWA are relatively low, a number of management issues could develop within the area that could be addressed by the LAC process. Such issues may be categorized as conflicts between public use and resource protection, conflicts between users, and conflicts between outside influences and the objectives for natural resource or social conditions within the unit. The capacity of the area to withstand use can be divided into three categories for which impact indicators can be chosen:

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

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

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

The following list gives examples of indicators that could be used in assessing and monitoring conditions in the SLWA.

Physical capacity
- Extent of soil erosion on trails and at campsites
- Extent of air and water quality degradation caused by fossil fuel combustion[1]

Biological capacity
- Extent of unvegetated soil in camping areas and riparian areas near lakes and streams
- Diversity and distribution of plant and animal species

Social capacity
- Noise volume and frequency of aircraft overflights[1]
- Incidence and volume of late night noise at campsites
- Extent of illegal tree cutting for firewood near campsites
- Number of encounters with large groups on trails

The application of the LAC process will require a substantial commitment of staff time and public involvement. Because each Department office is responsible for several Forest Preserve management units, the full implementation of LAC for each unit will occur over a period of years. It will be important to prioritize the issues within each unit and focus management attention on the most significant issues first. Of the 10 steps of the LAC process, this plan implements steps 1, 2 and 3, which apply to all the resources and conditions of the unit. The application of steps 4, 5 and 6 to selected land resource issues is proposed for the next five years.

Though LAC will not be fully implemented during the five-year scope of this plan, the plan is complete, organized according to the goal-achievement framework. It provides substantial resource inventory information, sets goals founded on law, policy and the characteristics of the area, identifies management issues, and lays out an extensive system of proposed objectives and actions designed to meet management goals. Once it is fully implemented, LAC will provide more detailed guidance to managers and the public in the management of important issues. Ultimately a monitoring system will be put in place, and management actions will be revised and refined over time in response to the results of periodic evaluation to assure that desired conditions will be attained or maintained. LAC will be incorporated into the management of the SLWA as a fully-developed, science-based approach to protecting and managing the area's physical, biological and social resources.

EDUCATION, INTERPRETATION AND RESEARCH

Education, interpretation or research projects on state owned lands require a temporary revocable permit (TRP) pursuant to ECL §9-0105(15), unless the project is carried out by the DEC. Each request or application for such a permit is considered separately giving consideration to the limitations of the area and consistency with the management goals and objectives for the lands involved. Permits will not be issued for any project or purpose that is inconsistent with Article XIV, Section 1, any statute or rules and regulations, or the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan guidelines which are applicable for wilderness or primitive areas. Such permits may be denied, revoked, or suspended by the Department at any time.

Research activities that are occurring in or adjacent to the SLWA include:

Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program (APIPP) - The mission of this program is to document invasive plant distributions and to advance measures to protect and restore native ecosystems in the Park through partnerships with Adirondack residents and institutions. Partner organizations operating under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) are the Adirondack Nature Conservancy, Department of Environmental Conservation, Adirondack Park Agency, Department of Transportation, and Invasive Plant Council of NYS. The APIPP summarizes known

[1]Though LAC could be useful in addressing this issue, it is beyond the scope of a UMP.

distributions of invasive plants in the Adirondack Park and provides this information to residents and professionals alike.

USDA Forest Service, Forest Inventory and Analysis Program - This program is the nation's forest census. It reports on status and trends in forest area and location; in the species, size, and health of trees; in total tree growth, mortality, and removals by harvest (on private land); in wood production and utilization rates by various products; and in forest land ownership. The program includes information relating to tree crown condition, lichen community composition, soils, ozone indicator plants, complete vegetative diversity, and coarse woody debris. Additional information on the program can be found at http://www.fia.fs.fed.us.

Hamilton County Soil & Water Conservation District Water Quality Monitoring Program - The purpose of this program is to collect water quality data over a long period of time and keep a watchful eye out for any changes. This is often referred to as baseline data collection. The program takes into account chemical, physical and biological parameters of select lakes in Hamilton County. The core parameters sampled include: water transparency, pH, alkalinity, total phosphorous, nitrates, temperature, dissolved oxygen, aluminum, calcium, conductivity, and chlorophyll *a*. Additional information on the program can be found at http://www.hamiltoncountyswcd.com.

EASEMENTS AND RIGHT-OF-WAYS

Easements and right-of-ways (ROWs) provide a means of access to property. An easement is a right or ownership interest in the land owned by another person, granting the use of the land for a particular purpose only and does not grant the right to possess or control the land. Within or adjacent to the unit the following types of easements exist:

Public Easements

Godfrey Road to Lot 74, Benson Tract (approx. 0.6 miles)

A permanent easement was acquired by the State in 1968 for travel by the public on foot, snowshoes, skis, and horseback or motor vehicles over the lands in Lots 48 & 73, Benson Tract, Town of Benson, Hamilton County. The easement is defined as "all that certain piece or parcel of land being a strip 49.5 feet in width, lying 24.75 feet both sides of the centerline of an old highway, leading from State land in Lot 49 to State land in Lot 74 as shown on DEC Map No. 7472."

River Road to north line of Lot 1, sub 2, Pat 7, Bergen's Purchase (approx. 0.5 miles)

A permanent easement exists over the portion of town road abandoned under Highway Law Section 205-b. The Town Board meeting minutes of 1941 describe the abandoned section as follows: "That part of the road on the west side of the Sacandaga River in the Town of Hope beginning at the north line of the Monk farm and running in a northerly direction to the end of said road a distance of about a half (½) mile." A copy of the resolution of abandonment is on file in the Town of Hope Clerk's Office, Book of Minutes dated September 6, 1930 to December 29, 1944 on pages 154-156.

Lots 6, 8, 9 and 22 Bergen's Purchase & Lots 66, 113, 166 and 167 Benson Tract

An easement was acquired by the State over private lands in the lots listed above for the purpose of providing telephone and telegraph communications to the fire tower on Cathead Mountain. The easement states: "the right, privilege, and authority to construct, reconstruct, operate and maintain its line of telephone and telegraph, including such poles, cross arms, wires, cables, guys, stubs, anchors, brace poles, and appurtenances thereto as the said Conservation Department may deem necessary...so long as they may operate and maintain said telephone and telegraph system." Copies of some of the easements are recorded in the Hamilton County Clerk's Office, Book 2, pages 29-33

Private Easements

Lot 70, Benson Tract to Woods Lake (approx. 0.6 miles)

The state acquired the land in Lot 70, Benson Tract, Town of Benson, Hamilton County in 1923 subject to this private easement, described as "All that certain piece or parcel of land being a strip 50 feet wide, lying 25 feet on each side of a line located in the center of an old road as shown on DEC Map No. 676."

The road across state land is not barricaded but public access to the road is denied by a barrier on private land.

Lot 1, Township 2, Totten & Crossfield Purchase

The state acquired the land in Lot 1, Township 2, T&C Purchase, Town of Lake Pleasant, Hamilton County in 1985 subject to a utility easement. A 1931 easement allows the New York Power and Light Corporation, its successors and assigns, the right to enter said premises, and place, maintain, repair and replace poles, guys, guy stubs, crossarms, wires and appurtenances at any time necessary for the transmission and distribution of electricity, together with the right at all times to cut, trim and remove such trees as may in the opinion of said Corporation, its successors or assigns, be necessary for the proper and efficient operation thereof.

IV. MANAGEMENT AND POLICY OVERVIEW

ADMINISTRATION

The administration of the SLWA is shared by several programs in DEC. The following DEC programs perform the indicated functions:

The Division of Lands and Forests acquires and maintains land for public use, manages the Forest Preserve lands, promotes responsible use of public lands and provides educational information regarding the use of the Forest Preserve.

The Division of Fish, Wildlife and Marine Resources protects and manages fish and wildlife species, provides for public use and enjoyment of natural resources, stocks freshwater fish, licences fishing, hunting and trapping, protects and restores habitat, and provides public fishing, hunting and trapping access.

The Natural Heritage Program enables and enhances conservation of New York's rare animals, rare plants, and significant ecosystems. Field inventories, scientific analyses, expert interpretation, result in the most comprehensive database on New York's distinctive biodiversity which provides quality information for natural resources planning, protection, and management.

The Division of Water protects water quality in lakes and rivers by monitoring water bodies and controlling surface runoff.

The Division of Air Resources regulates, permits and monitors sources of air pollution, forecasts ozone and stagnation events, educates the public about reducing air pollution and researches atmospheric dynamics, pollution and emission sources.

The Division of Operations designs, builds and maintains Department facilities and infrastructure, operates Department Campgrounds and day-use facilities and maintains trails and lean-tos.

The Division of Public Affairs and Education is the public communication wing of the Department. The Division communicates with the public, promotes citizen participation in the UMP process, produces, edits and designs Department publications.

The Division of Law Enforcement is responsible for enforcing all of New York's Environmental Conservation Laws relating to hunting, fishing, trapping, licence requirements, endangered species, possession, transportation and sale of fish and wildlife, trespass, and damage to property by hunters and fishermen.

The Division of Forest Protection and Fire Management is responsible for the preservation, protection, and enhancement of the State's forest resources, and the safety and well-being of the public using those resources. Forest Rangers are the stewards of the Forest Preserve and are the primary public contact for the SLW and responsible for fire control and search and rescue functions. In 1980, state law designated Forest Rangers as Peace Officers with all powers to enforce all state laws and regulations with emphasis on the Article 9 of the Environmental Conservation Law and Part 190 of the Department's Regulations.

PAST MANAGEMENT

Land Resource

ECL §§3-0301(1)(d) and 9-0105(1) provide that the Department has the duty and authority to exercise care, custody and control of the State Forest Preserve lands constituting the Adirondack and Catskill Parks. Since the turn of the twentieth century, management of these lands has consisted primarily of fire protection, forest insect and disease control, law enforcement, and administrative decision-making in response to current recreation needs instead of long term planning. Early administration of the Forest Preserve related mainly to the solving of on-the-ground problems, to the issuance of various permits, to the upholding of the integrity of constitutional provisions, laws or policies, or to reactions to projects necessitated by facilities' needs.

In the 1950's, money to fund outdoor recreation became available and recreational management was booming in the form of widespread trail and facilities construction and maintenance. Throughout the 1960's, funding for interior construction and maintenance was sufficient to maintain any existing structures, . Maintaining increasing amounts of land is challenging given fiscal realities.

Wildlife Resource

Past wildlife management on the unit has not been specific to the area, but it has been within the general framework of Statewide regulations for setting season lengths, opening dates and bag limits. Surveys have been periodically conducted throughout the Adirondacks to document the population status of various wildlife species and their habitats. Examples are: nest sites for loons, eagles and osprey as well as other significant habitats (i.e. spruce grouse). Furbearer population data are obtained through pelt tagging. The Breeding Bird Atlas documented the status of all nesting birds throughout New York State.

Throughout history a number of natural disturbances have opened up the forest and allowed sunlight to reach the forest floor, resulting in a proliferation of vegetative growth within the reach of various wildlife species. In 1954 a special hunt allowed the taking of deer of either sex in certain areas of the Adirondacks. The Party Permit system was in effect from 1957-1970 and attempted to balance the deer population with the carrying capacity of the winter range. Record buck takes were established until three severe winters (1968-1969, 1969-1970 and 1970-1971) caused massive mortality resulting in a significant decrease in deer numbers. Sportsmen perceived that “doe permits” had caused the crash and legislation was passed in 1970 to prohibit the issuance of antlerless or Deer Management Permits (DMP’s) in the northern zone. ECL §11-0913 was amended in 1997 to allow the issuance of antlerless permits in certain parts of the northern zone experiencing high deer populations. No part of the SLWA lies within those portions of the northern zone where antlerless permits may be issued.

Fisheries Resource

Fish management in the SLWA has emphasized brook trout restoration through an annual stocking program. Area waters generally are subject to statewide angling regulations with the exception that the use of fish as bait is prohibited in the unit to minimize the potential for introducing additional nonnative fishes. Future management will continue to concentrate on brook trout, but may focus on pond liming to offset the effects of acidification on those ponds that meet the Division of Fish, Wildlife and Marine Resources' criteria for liming candidates.

Biological data are available for slightly over half the ponded waters in the unit. Appendix D and Tables 1 and 2 present pond specific survey and management data for ponds in the unit. Little active fishery management has been conducted on streams within the unit because of their remoteness and small size. However, portions of the West Branch of the Sacandaga and Sacandaga River receive annual brown trout stockings.

MANAGEMENT ISSUES

The basic management issues within this unit mainly focus on non-conforming uses, assessing the impacts of existing public use, addressing current use issues, and the degree to which DEC should construct additional facilities to allow additional public recreational opportunities. A list of the public comments and issues identified during the planning process can be found in Appendix A. The following key issues must be considered and addressed to provide adequate management of the area. Specific management proposals related to these issues can be found in the Proposed Management Actions section under the appropriate subject heading.

West River Road (also known as Whitehouse Road) - The West River Road is a dirt and gravel road that follows the West Branch of the Sacandaga River as it penetrates deep into the heart of the Silver Lake Wilderness. The road begins just south of the village of Wells, where it forks left or south from Algonquin Drive, 0.7 miles from NY 30, and continues southwest 8.0 miles to Whitehouse. The entire length of road is a public right-of-way and is currently being maintained by the Town of Wells. It provides motor vehicle access to several private parcels, the last one being a small triangular portion of Lot 11, Oxbow Tract, on the south side of the road, at 7.1 miles. This private parcel has approximately 0.2 miles of road frontage along the West River Road. The last 0.7 miles of road to Whitehouse are on Forest Preserve lands classified as wilderness and do not provide access to any private land.

The Town has also designated the entire length of road open to snowmobiles and ATVs. This designation has contributed to ATV and other motor vehicle use impacts in the Whitehouse area.

The Master Plan contains several specific provisions on the use of motor vehicles in areas classified as wilderness. The Master Plan, June 2001, states in guideline 2 under the heading "Structures and improvements" on pages 21 and 22, that in wilderness areas "roads and state truck trails" are considered non-conforming structures. Guideline 1 under the heading "Motor vehicles, motorized equipment and aircraft" on page 23 of the Master Plan, provides "public use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment and aircraft will be prohibited." Thus, the Master Plan does not allow for any use of public motor vehicles on wilderness units within the Adirondack Park.

The last 0.7 miles of the West River Road must be brought into compliance with Master Plan requirements. Such action should also help to eliminate illegal off-road ATV traffic in the Whitehouse area. Proposed management actions include working cooperatively with the Town of Wells to bring the last 0.7 miles of the West River Road into compliance with Master Plan requirements before the end of the 5-year period covered by this UMP. Possible options for effectuating such compliance might include, among other things, an order of abandonment by the Town pursuant to Highway Law § 205(1) or a Commissioner closure order pursuant to Highway Law § 212.

A portion of this road from Whitehouse to the confluence with Dugway Creek is included within the West Branch of the Sacandaga River wild river corridor (ECL §15-2713(1)(g)). 6 NYCRR §666.2(g) provides that "all new land use or development in a river area must be undertaken in compliance with the standards listed in this Part" (emphasis added), thereby implying that land use or development existing before the day when the river corridor was designated is not required to comply with 6 NYCRR Part 666. Since the West River Road and the use thereof were established before the river corridor was designated as a wild river, public use of the road is permitted .

There is also a third issue relating to this road. The Master Plan classifies that portion of the Whitehouse Road and its right-of-way which crosses Lots 362 and 382 of the Benson Tract as the Sacandaga Primitive Area, thereby recognizing the existence of a non-conforming public highway. However, the Master Plan does not include within this Primitive Area classification the entire portion of the road which extends southwesterly from its beginning at Algonquin Road to the most westerly private parcel that is located on the road; that portion of the public highway which crosses lots 366, 376, 377 and 378 of the Benson Tract is not included within the Primitive Area. Thus, this portion of the road is classified by the Master Plan as part of the Wilderness Area in spite of the fact that it provides access to private land. Although the Master Plan Wilderness Area requirements discussed above mandate that this section of the road be closed, DEC has no legal authority to close this portion of the road because Highway Law §212 does not authorize the closure of a road which does not pass over or through lands "wholly controlled" by the State.

Northville-Placid Trail relocation - The Northville-Placid Trail (NPT) is a 133-mile footpath that begins at Northville and traverses the heart of the Adirondacks to end at Lake Placid. The trail was established by the Adirondack Mountain Club (ADK) in 1922 and was later turned over to DEC for marking and maintenance. The official starting point of the trail is at a large DEC signpost along NY 30, where a bridge spans the Sacandaga River as it enters the Sacandaga Reservoir. The trail heads north from this point following NY 30 and the Benson Road for 10.3 miles to Upper Benson where it then enters the Silver Lake Wilderness (SLW). Today, hiking along the NPT is usually initiated at Upper Benson. Hikers skip the section of trail from Northville to Upper Benson to avoid carrying a heavy pack along what is now a somewhat busy paved highway. This makes the trip not only more enjoyable but safer as well.

The NPT is the only marked hiking trail in the Silver Lake Wilderness. Public use of the trail in this area is estimated to be approximately 2500 people/year comprising both day use and overnight camping activity. Trail data is collected from three registers at the Upper Benson, Whitehouse and Piseco trailheads. A relocation of the section of trail from Northville to Upper Benson would involve both the Shaker Mountain Wild Forest (SMWF) and Silver Lake Wilderness. It would relocate the "Northville," now Upper Benson, beginning of the trail in the Shaker Mountain Wild Forest at a new trailhead off Gifford Valley Road. The trail would pass through the SMWF to a

small pull-off along the Benson Road in the vicinity of Woods Lake. The possible reroute alternatives for the SLW from this point include:

Alternative #1 - The trail would cross the Benson Road east of Woods Lake, follow the Woods Lake Trail around the lake swinging north of Lapland Lake XC Ski Center to join the existing trail at the foot bridge over the North Branch of West Stony Creek. This option would eliminate approximately half of the current road walking, but would add approximately 4.5 miles of additional new trail in the wilderness area.

Alternative #2 - The trail would cross the Benson Road east of Woods Lake (same as alternative #1), then swing along the south shore of Woods Lake to Storer Road, Lapland Road, Washburn Road, and Godfrey Road. This option would still require walking approximately 1.5 miles of road.

Upon analysis, alternative #1 is the preferred route since it would eliminate public safety concerns of walking along the road and would significantly improve the user experience and overall character of the trail. There has been some concern expressed by private landowners around Woods Lake regarding this alternative and the close proximity of the reroute to their property. It is unlikely that use of the new trail near the private property will be heavy, since most trail use will be local to the lake at the south end. Nonetheless, the Department understands these concerns and will mitigate potential impacts by locating the new trail in a manner so as to be reasonably screened from view from the private property and lake to avoid intruding on the private property and natural character of the area. Primitive campsite designation will be confined to the east shore on the south half of the lake.

Godfrey Road Extension (part of old Godfrey Road) - The Godfrey Road Extension runs from the town road turnaround at the end of Godfrey Road approximately 0.8 miles to the wilderness boundary. It is a public right-of-way (ROW) over private land in Lots 48 and 73, Benson Tract. See the Easement and Right-of-Way section of this plan for the types of public use allowed along this route. The ROW is technically within the Shaker Mountain Wild Forest (SMWF) but is being discussed here since it provides public access to the Silver Lake Wilderness (SLW).

In 1968, the Department acquired this easement by appropriation for the purpose of providing public access to the Northville-Placid Trail (NPT) and other local hiking destinations. A section of this foot trail was at that time, and is still today, laid out from the end of the town road along this ROW to a small clearing on the North Branch of West Stony Creek. The total distance of this route is approximately 1.2 miles (0.8 miles of ROW on private land and 0.4 miles on state land in wilderness). Limited public motor vehicle use has also been occurring along this route for some time, probably since its acquisition. The Godfrey Road trailhead is the only developed access point in the southern portion of the unit.

There is no question that public motor vehicle use along the last 0.4 miles of road in wilderness needs to end. The APSLMP is clear in that public motor vehicle use is not permitted in wilderness areas. The beginning of the road (first 0.8 miles) is on lands that are not classified as forest preserve. Public motor vehicle use is technically allowed on this section within the terms of the easement. There are three possible alternatives for the first section of this road.

Alternative #1 - Close the road to all types of public use. The Godfrey Road access is now the beginning of the NPT for many; however, that will change with the proposed relocation of the trail in the vicinity of Woods Lake. It is anticipated that use of this trailhead will decrease somewhat once the NPT is relocated. While the proposal to relocate the NPT will remove the trail from this ROW road, there is still the need for public access to the wilderness in this area. Available trail register data indicates that public use is pretty evenly distributed between thru hikers on the NPT and day hikers headed to local destinations such as West Stony Creek, Rock Lake and Silver Lake. The use of this road enhances public access to these local areas and other popular bushwhacks in the southern portion of the unit.

Alternative #2 - Close the road to public motor vehicle use only with the option to provide future public motor vehicle or CP-3 access if necessary. As previously mentioned, limited public motor vehicle use along this section of road has been occurring for some time. Conversation with a former Ranger for the area (Dan Singer) indicated

that the Department did maintain this road in the 1970s; however, very little maintenance has been done recently. The road may have been considered a town highway back when the rod and gun club owning the land crossed by the road blocked it to public use. The Department at that time appropriated a three-rod ROW across the club property to another private parcel that was being negotiated and ultimately purchased. This is the piece along West Stony Creek where the parking area is currently located.

It is clear that there is a long history of people driving in to this area, but the road has been deteriorating through lack of maintenance. It is believed that most people who drive in don't sign the trail register, so register numbers don't provide an accurate picture of use. There is consensus, however, that current use of this road by motor vehicles is low and may actually be declining. This may partly be due to the road's rough condition, but also to the club's posted signs at the end of the town road which may give the public the idea that they aren't permitted to drive in.

The SLW, in context of the rest of the Forest Preserve, is a place characterized by an abundance of outstanding opportunities for solitude and a large plant and animal community enjoying minimal impacts from direct human use. If the road were closed to public motor vehicles, we would essentially be taking a rare opportunity to increase the protections we are affording those essential wilderness characteristics in a relatively wild unit. The current road surface could be stabilized and rehabilitated to foot trail conditions and gated at the end of the town highway. Reduced motor vehicle access would reduce noise and use impacts. The wild character of the area and its condition as a natural plant and animal community would be enhanced.

The North Branch of West Stony Creek has also been identified as an area that could provide some good wilderness recreational opportunities for people with disabilities. The section of road in wilderness that will be closed to motor vehicles lends itself nicely to the future development of an accessible trail and other related facilities. Some of the factors that are considered and used in determining trail suitability include trail length, width, grade, cross slope, rest areas, passing space and condition of trail surface. By leaving the door open for future public motor vehicle or CP-3 access, this type of recreational opportunity would not be precluded should it be determined necessary at a later date.

Alternative #3 - Allow continued use of public motor vehicles. As mentioned earlier, public motor vehicle use along this section of road is believed to be low. Hunters during the fall big game season are one of the primary known users. Last year a total of six long-term camping permits were issued for trailers in the clearing along West Stony Creek. This type of use will eventually end when the section of road in wilderness is closed and the proposed regulation on camping structures is adopted (see section V. Proposed Management Actions; Proposed Rules and Regulations).

Allowing continued use of the first section of road would help compensate for the section being closed in wilderness and would enable the public, especially older and less physically-able people to better access the West Stony Creek area for traditional fishing, hunting, hiking and camping opportunities. While the public could still walk this ROW, even if the road deteriorated further, the use of this road enhances access to popular destinations within the wilderness. These locations would be more difficult to reach if the public was required to use the proposed NPT relocation or walk the road ROW.

It is likely that improving this section of road will increase the amount of use by motor vehicles. However, the use increases would probably be from local users and it isn't likely there would be a significant effect on the SLW back country. Comparatively, unregulated motor vehicle use along the 0.4 miles of road currently open in wilderness has been allowed to occurred for quite some time with minimal resulting impacts outside the defined road area. Future impacts from motor vehicle use are anticipated to be significantly less since motor vehicle access would end within 500 feet of the wilderness boundary. Allowing continued motor vehicle use on this road would also enable the Department to provide some good wilderness type recreational opportunities for people with disabilities.

Upon analysis, alternative #2 is the preferred alternative. This alternative was chosen based partly on consideration of the current road condition and use patterns, but more importantly on the protection of the wilderness characteristics (i.e. an abundance outstanding opportunities for solitude and a large plant and animal community

enjoying minimal impacts from direct human use) found in this relatively wild unit. This alternative is also the most consistent with the management objectives and direction of management for the area.

Whitehouse chimneys - Whitehouse is an interesting area along the West Branch of the Sacandaga, or the West River as it has always been known to natives, that was once the site of a lumber camp, private hunting lodge, and boys' camp. Today, there remain only some old foundations, a few cellar holes, and two stone chimneys. The large clearing along the river, where people currently camp, was the site of a private hunting camp with a main "Whitehouse" lodge that was named for the Washington Whitehouse during the 1950's. Scattered in the woods surrounding this area are stone foundations and a stone chimney of a former building called "Blair House."

Further along the West Branch of the Sacandaga, where the Northville-Placid Trail crosses, is a steel suspension bridge. In earlier years, hikers coming from the south had to go down to the shoreline and yell across to the "white house" on the opposite bank. If they were lucky, someone appeared and rowed across to get them. Otherwise, they took off their boots and waded across. Directly in front of this bridge on the north shore sits a second stone chimney which is the remains of a boys' camp recreation hall.

Although people in the local community have an interest in keeping these chimneys because they consider them part of the cultural history of the area, the chimneys are non-conforming under APSLMP Wilderness guidelines.

Steel suspension bridges - The two suspension bridges along the Northville-Placid Trail, one across the West Branch of the Sacandaga River and one across Hamilton Lake Stream Outlet, do not meet the APSLMP guidelines since they are not constructed of "natural materials"(Master Plan, page 21), utilizing instead steel cables, concrete and steel support beams. These materials were used partially because of the long distances in which these bridges span, but also because it was the only technology available at that time. The bridges do have a positive impact on the physical resource by reducing vegetation trampling and associated river bank erosion caused by users searching for a suitable crossing location. They also provide users with a safe means of crossing at times when water levels are high. Alternate river crossing sites may be an option where smaller bridges made of natural materials could be used.

Spy Lake access - Spy Lake is a 376-acre lake which is mostly divided between private ownership and the Silver Lake Wilderness. However, a small parcel of wild forest land on the north shore dictates that the lake be included as part of the inventory of the Ferris Lake Wild Forest. Public access to the lake is being discussed in this plan because one of the alternatives is a new foot trail through the wilderness. Public interest in gaining access to the lake is mainly for the purpose of fishing. The possible access alternatives in their preferred order include: 1. Reestablish historic access via the Spy Lake Road. 2. Boat access via the Piseco Outlet. 3. Foot access via a new trail through the Silver Lake Wilderness.

Alternative #1 - Reestablish historic access via Spy Lake Road. Public car-top boat access was once available from private land along the Spy Lake Road, but has been closed due to use-related problems such as late night parties, garbage, etc. The road is currently gated to prevent public motor vehicle access. A Hamilton County highway map dated 1992 shows the road as being a town road. It is unclear whether permission needs to be acquired to reopen this road to public access.

Alternative #2 - Boat access via the Piseco Outlet. There is currently a public waterway access site along NYS Route 10 in the Ferris Lake Wild Forest that provides the public with water access to Big Bay. Public use of this site to access Spy Lake via the Piseco Outlet has been denied by the private land owner in the area. Whether the public can use this site to access the lake depends on whether the Outlet satisfies the common law test on whether the waterway is navigable-in-fact. The test employed by the courts in making this determination is whether the waterway, in its natural, unimpounded state, has a practical utility for trade or travel. See Adirondack League Club, Inc. v. Sierra Club, 92 N.Y.2d 591 (1998). The waterway need not be navigable in both directions, nor during twelve months of the year, although it must have practical utility for trade or travel at a time other than flood stage. Also, the presence of occasional rapids or obstructions in the waterway do not necessarily destroy its navigability. Historically, waterways have been found to be navigable-in-fact where the waterway is capable of floating logs in

its unimpounded state. Although it is highly likely that the outlet was once used for this purpose, no official documentation has yet been found. Further research will be done during the five years of this UMP to determine whether the Outlet has practical utility for trade or travel, including whether there is a history of logging on the Outlet.

Alternative #3 - Foot access via a new trail through the Silver Lake Wilderness. A new foot trail through the wilderness to the north shore of the lake is an option, but it is not a very suitable alternative for boat access because of steep terrain and the difficulty in transporting boats overland. Furthermore, a management decision has been made to limit the number of facilities within the unit in an effort to help preserve the high degree of solitude that is part of the wilderness experience, though this lake has a road to the shore and there are a few private camps on it.

Additional recreational facilities - The primary value of this wilderness area is its ability to provide a high degree of solitude throughout much of the area. Relatively low use of the interior along with seasonal use patterns minimize encounters between users and help maintain that high degree of solitude. Areas which receive moderate use, such as Whitehouse and Woods Lake, are either located on the periphery or are accessible by motor vehicle. The primary users of this wilderness area are fishermen, hikers, campers, hunters and skiers.

There are four physical features or characteristics of the Silver Lake Wilderness which have contributed to or resulted in the current availability of a high degree of solitude. Those characteristics are: its remoteness, the limited access *to* the area, the limited access *within* the area, and major attractions which are located on the periphery. The only marked hiking trail within the unit is a 23 mile section of the Northville-Placid Trail. Many miles of additional foot paths are unmarked and primarily used by hunters and fisherman. Most of these paths are only seasonally used and dead end at either a lake, pond or camping area.

The APSLMP defines wilderness, in part, as having "outstanding opportunities for solitude." The Silver Lake Wilderness provides such an area for hunters, fishermen, hikers, and others who desire a high degree of solitude as part of their recreational experience. Excessive facilities and intrusive management can threaten the naturalness and wilderness values that users of this area ultimately seek. Increased visitor use can impact wilderness experiences through resulting crowding, visitor conflicts, loss of solitude, and direct impacts on resources such as loss of vegetation at campsites, and soil erosion on trails.

In comparison to the highly overused wilderness areas, such as the High Peaks and Pharaoh Lake Wilderness Areas, the Silver Lake Wilderness Area provides a unique opportunity for the public to recreate in an area providing significantly more solitude.

Cathead Mountain access - This is an access issue that is beyond the scope of a UMP but deserves a brief explanation. The issue involves the Cathead Mountain Trail and focuses on the nature and extent of private access over Great Lot 120 of the Benson Tract. The Cathead Mountain Trail is a very popular hiking trail that leads to a state owned fire tower located within a private inholding. The trail begins on private property, crosses state land, then re-enters private property where the fire tower is located. For years the public has been granted permission by the private land owners to cross a portion of their property to access the tower.

Historically, the private land owners used motor vehicles over Lot 120 to access their property, as authorized by TRPs issued by the Department. Normally, private use of motor vehicles would not be allowed over Lot 120 because of its Forest Preserve and Wilderness classification, but an exception exists for the use of a private right-of-way which pre-dated State acquisition. A few years ago DEC determined that the owners of this property had no such legal right-of-way across Lot 120, and consequently denied the owner's request for a new TRP. The owners responded in September of 2000 by withdrawing their permission for the public to use the Cathead Mountain Trail and filing a lawsuit against the State, alleging that they had a right-of-way and that DEC had therefore improperly denied the TRP. On June 16, 2005 the Appellate Division, Third Department, unanimously affirmed a lower court ruling that the Thomas Gang has no legal right of access to its property across Forest Preserve lands. Consequently, public access to the Cathead Mountain Trail continues to be denied.

MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

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

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

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

The APSLMP provides guidance for the use and management of lands which it classifies as "Wilderness" and "Primitive" by establishing basic guidelines. Guidelines are set forth for such matters as: structures and improvements; ranger stations; the use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment and aircraft; roads, jeep trails and state truck trails; flora and fauna; recreation use and overuse; boundary structures and improvements and boundary markings. Actions by the State on lands covered by the APSLMP must be consistent with the provisions of the APSLMP.

DEC policy has been developed for the public use and administration of Forest Preserve lands. Select policies relevant to the management of this unit include:

- Administrative Use of Motor Vehicles and Aircraft in the Forest Preserve (CP-17)
- Standards and Procedures for Boundary Line Maintenance (NR-91-2; NR-95-1)
- Tree Cutting on Forest Preserve Land (O&D #84-06)
- Cutting and Removal of Trees in the Forest Preserve (LF-91-2)
- The Administration of Conservation Easements (NR-90-1)
- Acquisition of Conservation Easements (NR-86-3)
- Division Regulatory Policy (LF-90-2)
- Adopt-A-Natural Resource (ONR-1)
- Policies and Procedures Manual Title 8400 - Public Land Management
- Fishery Management in Wilderness, Primitive and Canoe Areas, as amended – November 2, 1993 (O&D #93-35)
- Adirondack Subalpine Forest Bird Conservation Area – Management Guidance

The Department also maintains policy to provide guidelines for the design, location, siting, size, classification, construction, maintenance, reconstruction and/or rehabilitation of dams, fireplaces, fire rings, foot bridges, foot trails, primitive camping sites, road barriers, sanitary facilities and trailheads. Other guidelines used in the administration of Forest Preserve lands are provided through Attorney General Opinions, Department policy memos, and Regional operating procedures.

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

Application of Guidelines and Standards

All trail construction and relocation projects will be developed in accordance with the APSLMP, and will incorporate the use of Best Management Practices, including but not limited to such considerations as:

- Locating trails to minimize necessary cut and fill;
- Wherever possible, lay out trails on existing old roads or clear or partially cleared areas;
- Locating trails away from streams, wetlands, and unstable slopes wherever possible;
- Use of proper drainage devices such as water bars and broad-based dips;
- Locating trails to minimize grade;

- Using stream crossings with low, stable banks, firm stream bottom and gentle approach slopes;
- Constructing stream crossings at right angles to the stream;
- Limiting stream crossing construction to periods of low or normal flow;
- Using stream bank stabilizing structures made of natural materials such as rock or wooden timbers;
- Avoiding areas where habitats of threatened and endangered species are known to exist;
- Using natural materials to blend the structure into the natural surroundings.

All bridge construction and relocation projects will incorporate the use of Best Management Practices, including but not limited to such considerations as:

- Minimizing channel changes and the amount of cut or fill needed;
- Limiting construction activities in the water to periods of low or normal flow;
- Minimizing the use of equipment in the stream;
- Installing bridges at right angles to the stream channel;
- Constructing bridges to blend into the natural surroundings;
- Using stream bank stabilizing structures made of natural materials such as rock or wooden timbers;
- Stabilizing bridge approaches with aggregate or other suitable material;
- Using soil stabilization practices on exposed soil around bridges immediately after construction;
- Designing, constructing and maintaining bridges to avoid disrupting the migration or movement of fish and other aquatic life;
- Consultation with the Adirondack Park Agency in cases where existing bridge abutments must be replaced.

All lean-to construction and relocation projects will incorporate the use of Best Management Practices, including but not limited to such considerations as:

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

All parking lot construction and relocation projects will incorporate the use of Best Management Practices, including but not limited to such considerations as:

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

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

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

All pond reclamation projects will be in compliance with the "Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement on Fish Species Management Activities of the Department of Environmental Conservation" and "*Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement on Undesirable Fish Removal by the Use of Pesticides Under Permit Issued by the Department of Environmental Conservation, Division of Lands and Forests, Bureau of Pesticide Management.*"

MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

The call for a management approach which balances the need for recreational use with the need to preserve the wilderness character of the area and the capacity of the resources to withstand use presents a challenging and complex task - one which requires both long-term and a day-to-day approach to problem solving. Managers must recognize that there may be no one right answer to a problem - that in making decisions, the key is to apply a systematic rationale based on monitoring and evaluation. In order to accomplish this, the following principles will be used to manage the SLWA.

- **Manage wilderness as a composite resource, not as separate parts.**
  Wilderness is a distinct resource producing many societal values and benefits. One of wilderness's distinctive features is the natural relationship between all its component parts: geology, soil, vegetation, air, water, fish and wildlife - everything that makes up a wilderness. In most cases, separate management plans will not be developed for vegetation, fish, wildlife, recreation, etc. Rather, one plan must deal simultaneously with the interrelationships between these and all other components.

- **Manage the use of other resources and activities within wilderness in a manner compatible with the wilderness resource itself.**
  All proposed management actions must consider their effect on the wilderness resource so no harm comes to it. For example, recreation should be managed and kept within acceptable levels that maintain the SLWA's wilderness character, including opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation emphasizing a quality visitor experience.

- **Allow natural processes to operate freely in wilderness.**
  This principle is derived in part from the APSLMP (2001) definition of wilderness in dealing with the term "natural conditions." According to the APSLMP, the primary wilderness management guideline will be to achieve and perpetuate a natural plant and animal community where man's influence is not apparent. It means, for example, not introducing exotic plants and animals not historically associated with the Adirondacks nor manipulating vegetation to enhance one resource over another.

- **Attain a high level of wilderness character within legal constraints.**
  An important APSLMP wilderness goal is to retain and make, where necessary, Adirondack wilderness areas as wild and natural as possible. Examples of this principle include efforts to rehabilitate alpine summits, closing roads to motor vehicle use, or restoring severely eroded trails.

- **Preserve and enhance wilderness air and water quality.**
  Wilderness air and water quality bear testimony to the general health of our environment. Federal and state laws are designed specifically to protect air and water quality. In wilderness, internal pollution sources such as human and animal wastes must be controlled.

- **Safeguard human values and benefits while preserving wilderness character.**
  Wilderness areas are not just designated to protect natural communities and ecosystems; they are also for people. The APSLMP (2001) states: “Human use and enjoyment of those lands (meaning state lands within the Adirondack Park) should be permitted and encouraged, so long as the resources in their physical and biological context and their social and psychological aspects are not degraded.” This is especially true for wilderness.

- **Preserve outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.**
  This principle comes directly from the APSLMP (2001) definition of wilderness. Levels of solitude within any given wilderness will vary; sometimes substantially. However, each wilderness should have places and times where visitors can find little or no contact with others. Management

strategies to protect the wilderness resource should strive to minimize the amount of contact or control over visitors once they are in the unit.

- **Control and reduce the adverse physical and social impacts of human use in wilderness through education and minimum regulation.**
  When human use must be controlled to prevent misuse and overuse, it is best to do so by education followed by the minimum degree of regulation necessary to meet management objectives. The latter option is sometimes called the minimum tool rule - application of the minimum tools, equipment, regulations, or practices that will bring the desired result.

- **Favor wilderness dependent activities when managing wilderness use.**
  Wilderness is a distinct resource, and many recreational or other activities taking place there can be enjoyed elsewhere. Not all outdoor activities require a wilderness setting. Examples are large group use, orienteering schools, competitive events, and other organized events (DEC policy, 1972-present). A DEC management goal is to refer these activities to wild forest areas.

- **Remove existing structures and terminate uses and activities not essential to wilderness management except for those provided by the APSLMP.**
  "A wilderness area is further defined to mean an area of state land or water having a primeval character without significant improvements or permanent human habitation..." (APSLMP, 2001). Except for those conforming structures, uses, and administrative actions specifically identified by the APSLMP, DEC is mandated to remove all non-conforming structures and uses not compatible with a wilderness environment as soon as possible.

- **Accomplish necessary wilderness management work with the "minimum tool."**
  This principle requires every management action to be scrutinized to see first if it is necessary, then plan to do it with the "minimum tool" to accomplish the task. Its goal is to have the least possible impact on the environment and the visitor experience.

- **Establish specific management objectives, with public involvement, in a management plan for each wilderness.**
  Working together within the constraints of the APSLMP, managers and the public need to define acceptable levels of use and specific management practices for each Adirondack wilderness. These need to be clearly stated in management plans available for public review and comment. It is essential visitors and other users understand wilderness values, and managers clearly know their management responsibilities..

- **Harmonize wilderness with adjacent land uses.**
  Wilderness management should be coordinated with the management of adjacent state and private lands in a manner that recognizes differing land management goals.

- **Manage wilderness with interdisciplinary scientific skills.**
  Because wilderness consists of complex relationships, it needs the skills of natural resource professionals and social scientists that work as an interdisciplinary team focusing on preserving wilderness as a distinct resource. Environmental and social sciences are used to replace nostalgia and politics in decision-making.

- **Manage special exceptions provided by the APSLMP with the minimum impact on the wilderness resource.**
  The APSLMP (2001) provides for certain conforming uses and structures that differ from the wilderness definition. These exceptions, in part, include interior outposts, existing dams on established impoundments, existing or new fish barrier dams, trails, bridges, signs, trail shelters (lean-tos), etc. Construction of additional conforming structures and improvements will be

restrained to comply with wilderness standards, and all management and administrative actions will be designed to emphasize the self-sufficiency of users in an environmentally sound and safe way.

MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The development of a unit management plan and long-term strategy for managing the SLWA uses a combination of two generally accepted wilderness planning methods: (1) the goal-achievement framework; and (2) the Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) model employed by the U.S. Forest Service and other agencies. Given the distinctly different, yet important purposes of these methods, there are clear benefits offered by employing a blend of these two approaches.

PRESCRIPTIVE MANAGEMENT ZONES

The management goals developed for the SLWA apply to the entire unit. However, within the unit some variation in the level of human influence on natural resources and the recreational environment can be seen. In addition, the ecological communities within the unit vary in terms of their sensitivity to disturbance. An attempt to achieve uniformity in the conditions of the unit likely would involve the use of strict regulations and intrusive management techniques in the more attractive, accessible areas that would require a significant management staff presence and reduce the freedom and spontaneity that visitors expect in a wilderness area. A more practicable approach might be to recognize and accommodate, within the bounds of the management guidelines for wilderness and primitive areas, a limited range of resource and social conditions. In the LAC process, this range of acceptable conditions is embodied in a series of opportunity classes, or prescriptive management zones. For each zone, acceptable conditions are defined, indicating the comparative levels of resource and social impact to be tolerated, as well as the intensity and intrusiveness of management control - the managerial conditions - to be applied. Together, the prescriptions for the resource, social and managerial conditions constitute the general management objectives for each zone.

In general, the social conditions in the SLWA are less variable than they are in other areas of the Forest Preserve. The character of the recreational environment appears fairly consistent among the area's designated access points, trails and camping destinations. These areas stand in contrast to the areas where access is not provided by designated trails. It appears appropriate, therefore, to divide the unit into two prescriptive management zones. Zone 1 consists of all areas within 500 feet of trailheads, parking areas, marked trails, and lakes and ponds accessed by marked trails. Zone 2 comprises all areas outside zone 1. Areas that are relatively sensitive to disturbance, such as wetlands and other areas of critical habitat, would be given appropriate management consideration within each zone, and may be thought of as mapping overlays.

Management Zone 1

The lands of the SLWA are readily accessible from public highways. However, largely because there are few primary attraction points, the development of structures and improvements such as trails, lean-tos and primitive tent sites has been limited. Even at ponds that are the unit's most popular camping destinations, relatively few tent sites have been developed. The area of the unit designated as Zone 1, therefore, takes up a small percentage of the area of the unit. Public use impacts within the SLWA were described in the Public Use section of this plan. In summary, public use levels in all seasons are relatively low. Therefore, the direct impacts of use on land and water resources, including soil erosion and the disturbance of soils and vegetation on trails, soil erosion and damage to vegetation at lean-tos and tent sites, and the sedimentation and pollution of water bodies also are relatively low. With the absence of summit destinations, the only marked trail in the unit generally traverse terrain with gentle to moderate slopes and is less susceptible to soil erosion caused by use than trails in other units having more trails to mountain summits. It is likely that increases in use and use impacts over the next five years will not be substantial.

Except at a few locations, the unit's trails, lean-to sites and tent sites generally could withstand higher use levels without sustaining increases in impacts on soils and vegetation to the extent that they would be judged by experienced managers to exceed wilderness standards. However, the goals and general objectives for the management of the SLWA reflect an interest in preventing the unit's relatively high degree of naturalness from degrading. They are statements of the intent to maintain the unit's position near the pristine side of the recreational opportunity spectrum. Managers should strive to keep the existing relatively low levels of impact on soils,

vegetative communities and wetlands from increasing significantly. Goals and objectives will be translated into measurable form when specific standards for acceptable levels of impact are developed.

The construction of trails, lean-tos and primitive tent sites tends to attract use and attendant use impacts. It is possible that the construction of new facilities within the SLWA would serve to disperse use to some degree and, by offering new hiking and camping opportunities, divert use and use impacts from existing facilities. But because it also is possible that the construction of new facilities could attract new use, overall use levels and use impacts could increase. The goal of maintaining the lands of the unit in a condition near the pristine side of the recreational opportunity spectrum will be achieved by limiting the construction of new facilities to those needed for appropriate access and resource protection. The unit's largely trailless interior will be kept free of marked and maintained trails. Maintaining facility development at a relatively low level is likely to limit the rate of growth in use numbers, and so will set the capacity of the SLWA to withstand use at a level lower than other wilderness areas having more extensive infrastructures.

No areas within the unit have sustained extreme use impacts to physical and biological resources, or are likely to do so in the near future. However, impacts are evident wherever use has occurred, and in some places, continued use may cause impacts to exceed wilderness standards. Places where observed impacts are significant in the context of the objective of maintaining a high degree of naturalness should receive immediate management attention, even though specific standards have not yet been established. For instance, the roadside campsites at Whitehouse have sustained some significant impacts from motor vehicle use and large group camping. Without immediate action, these sites could not withstand the physical impacts of continued use, even at presently moderate levels. Ongoing illegal motor use can be addressed through the installation of rock barriers at the point where foot trails have been established. Even though the one designated trail in the unit crosses fairly gentle terrain with few steep grades, significant impacts to soils and vegetation occasionally are evident, especially in wetland areas. The need for bridging or trail relocation to protect resources should be determined and appropriate actions should be taken as soon as possible to minimize these impacts. Noncompliant behavior, such as camping too close to the shores of ponds, has resulted in soil erosion, vegetation loss and visual impacts. Illegal tent sites should be closed and new sites in suitable locations designated. Law enforcement should focus on sensitive areas.

Management Zone 2

As in most wilderness areas, public use outside the system of marked trails and their destinations within the SLWA generally is very low. Therefore, use impacts within the area designated as Zone 2 are minimal. However, unmarked trails have developed through use, mostly by hunters and anglers following former roads. The unmarked trails most frequently used are those that follow old haul roads constructed for logging operations prior to state acquisition. These roads enter the unit from various points along the periphery. Unmarked trails provide access for day hunting and lead to interior tent sites used mostly during the big game hunting season.

To meet the objective of maintaining very low levels of resource impacts in Zone 2, management staff should focus monitoring, education and enforcement efforts on identifying and mapping trails and tent sites and preventing trail marking, vegetation cutting , the construction of structures such as bridges and camping shelters, and the storage of personal property. The application of the LAC process to trails and tent sites should include zone 2.

Prescriptive Management Zones in the Silver Lake Wilderness Area

Zone 1	Zone 2
Description: Area within 500 feet of trailheads, parking areas, marked trails, mountain summits accessed by marked trails, and ponds and lakes accessed by marked trails.	**Description:** All areas outside zone 1.

Zone 1	Zone 2
Acceptable Resource Conditions: Resource impacts low to moderate, restricted to limited areas of persistent vegetation loss and localized instances of minimal soil erosion, largely limited to parking areas, trails, summits, campsites and access points on shorelines. Impacts apparent to most visitors.	**Acceptable Resource Conditions:** Resource impacts very low to nonexistent, restricted to minor temporary loss of vegetation on occasional unmarked trails and undesignated interior tent sites. Impacts not apparent to most visitors.
Acceptable Social Conditions: Generally few, occasionally moderately frequent contacts with other parties on trails and at trail destinations. Camping out of sight and sound of others almost always possible.	**Acceptable Social Conditions:** Almost always no contact with other parties. Camping out of sight and sound of others always possible.
Acceptable Managerial Conditions: No on-site management of visitors unless necessary for resource protection, visitor safety, law enforcement or facility construction or maintenance. Little evidence of management staff. Education and indirect management methods preferred to manage visitor behavior. Regulation used for APSLMP compliance and to maintain acceptable conditions only when less intrusive methods fail. Educational information and regulations communicated in advance of visitor arrival or through signs at the unit boundary. Structures and improvements constructed and maintained with minimal modification of natural site conditions. Existing structures and improvements modified or relocated where necessary to minimize impacts on wetlands and critical habitat. New structures and improvements located and constructed to minimize impacts on wetlands and critical habitat.	**Acceptable Managerial Conditions:** No on-site management of visitors unless necessary for resource protection, visitor safety or law enforcement. Education and indirect management methods preferred to manage visitor behavior. Regulation used for APSLMP compliance and to maintain acceptable conditions only when less intrusive methods fail. Regulations and educational information communicated in advance of visitor arrival or through signs at the unit boundary. Public marking of trails and cutting of live vegetation on trails and tent sites prohibited.

APPLICATION OF LAC PROCESS

The impacts of public use on the land resources of the SLWA are relatively low, so other units sustaining more severe impacts will take priority in the application of the LAC process. In the SLWA, work during the next five years will concentrate on the development of a list of indicators and an inventory of trail and campsite conditions, mostly in zone 1, to establish a baseline for monitoring, and the selection of standards to quantify management goals and objectives. The inventory will involve an initial measurement of indicators such as:

Trail Condition Indicators

- Depth of trail tread compared to surrounding grade at fixed locations every 500 feet along trail.
- Width of trail tread at fixed locations every 500 feet along trail.
- Number and development of user-created trails.
- Number of locations, and at each location, distance of trail where drainage is not controlled and erosion is active.
- Number of locations, and at each location, distance along trail and width of disturbance where standing water/wetlands requires hikers to walk around.

Campsite Condition Indicators

- General inventory indicating the number of campsites too close to water, trails, roads and each other.

- Frissell campsite condition class (one of five classes related to the degree of disturbance to vegetation and soils).
- Area of barren core.
- Distance of down firewood from fire ring.

Social Condition Indicators

- Average number of trail register entries per day by season.
- Average size of party signing in to trail registers.
- Number of parties per week larger than 10 signing in to trail registers by season.
- Number of other groups camping within sight and sound.
- Number of pieces of litter at campsites.

LAC standards for the indicators, once selected, will be the targets against which the results of periodic monitoring will be compared. Future effort will focus on the development of management prescriptions to prevent standards from being exceeded.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), along with the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 (ABA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; Title V, Section 504, have had a profound effect on the manner by which people with disabilities are afforded equality in their recreational pursuits. The ADA is a comprehensive law prohibiting discrimination against people with disabilities in employment practices, use of public transportation, use of telecommunication facilities and use of public accommodations. Title II of the ADA applies to the Department and requires, in part, that reasonable modifications must be made to its services and programs, so that when those services and programs are viewed in their entirety, they are readily accessible to and usable by people with disabilities. This must be done unless such modification would result in a fundamental alteration in the nature of the service, program or activity or an undue financial or administrative burden to the Department. Since recreation is an acknowledged public accommodation program of the Department, and there are services and activities associated with that program, the Department has the mandated obligation to comply with the ADA, Title II and ADA Accessibility Guidelines, as well as Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

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

The Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines

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

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

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

ADAAG Application

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

HISTORIC AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE PROTECTION

The historic and archaeological sites located within the SLWA as well as additional unrecorded sites that may exist on the property are protected by the provisions of the New York State Historic Preservation Act (SHPA - Article 14 PRHPL), 6 NYCRR § 190.8 (g) and Section 233 of the Education Law. No actions that would impact these resources are proposed in this Unit Management Plan. Should any such actions be proposed in the future they will be reviewed in accordance with the requirements of SHPA. Unauthorized excavation and removal of materials from any of these sites is prohibited by Article 9 of the ECL and Section 233 of the Education Law. In some cases additional protection may be afforded these resources by the federal Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA).

The archaeological sites located on this land unit as well as additional unrecorded sites that may exist on the property may be made available for appropriate research. Any future archaeological research to be conducted on the property will be accomplished under the auspices of all appropriate permits. Research permits will be issued only after approval by the New York State Museum and consultation with OPRHP and APA. Extensive excavations are not contemplated as part of any research program in order to assure that the sites are available to future researchers who are likely to have more advanced tools and techniques as well as more fully developed research questions.

V. PROPOSED MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

This section provides an overview of the current situation and describes the specific management objectives and proposed management actions for administering the area as related to a specific resource. The management objectives apply the plan's goals to a particular issue as identified by the public or DEC staff. The management actions are the means that will be employed to reach the management objectives. All management proposals are pursuant and subject to all laws, rules, regulations and policies set forth by the Department, the New York State Constitution, the APSLMP, and the Environmental Conservation Law.

LAND PROTECTION

Current Situation

The overall framework for land protection in New York State is identified in the State Open Space Conservation Plan (Open Space Plan). The plan is built from the bottom up from the work of nine regional committees, representing the spectrum of open space advocates, natural resource and recreation professionals, local government, and concerned citizens. This plan ensures that the State of New York conserves its cherished open space resources as a critical part of efforts to improve the economy and the quality of life in New York communities.

CEMETERIES

Current Situation

There are two small cemeteries within the unit. These cemeteries do not conform with APSLMP wilderness guidelines, although they can be considered lawfully existing due to their unique legal status. DEC will not maintain these sites, but will respond to public requests for maintenance under steward agreements.

BOUNDARY LINE MANAGEMENT

Current Situation

Aside from public roads and riparian boundaries, the SLWA has approximately 119 miles of boundary lines that must be maintained on a regular basis. The proper maintenance of these lines is important to help reduce trespass, eliminate the need for resurvey work, familiarize field staff with an area, reduce the cost of regular inspections, and facilitate public use of the area. Boundary line maintenance needs to be given a high priority when annual work plans are developed and funding requests are made.

The wilderness boundary behind the Piseco School has been a topic of discussion between the Town of Arietta, APA and DEC. In 2004, approximately 145 acres of wilderness behind the Piseco School were reclassified to the Jessup River Wild Forest (APA reclassification R2003-3A). This reclassification of state lands was undertaken in order to remove a statutorily defined Critical Environmental Area (in this instance, lands within one-eighth mile of a wilderness) in a community which has an approved land use program in place and to accommodate an approximately 1.2 mile snowmobile trail relocation around private land. The snowmobile trail relocation was necessitated by the imminent closure of a section of the existing route on private lands in the vicinity.

As part of the reclassification package, approximately 750 acres of the Ferris Lake Wild Forest were reclassified to wilderness. The area reclassified is a 1/4 mile wide corridor along the Piseco Outlet and West Branch of the Sacandaga River.

There is also an unresolved private access issue in the Silver Lake Wilderness. The route in question leads from County Route 6, sometimes referred to as the Benson Road, across Lot 8 to private lands in Lot 53. DEC informed the landowner that it had found no evidence that the landowner had a legal right to use this route to access his property. The landowner responded by sueing the Department, and the matter is currently in litigation.

Objective(s):

- To locate, post, and maintain all unit boundary lines.
- To identify and address all access, land title, and trespass issues.
- To physically identify APSLMP unit designations on the ground for administrative and public use.

- To identify Forest Preserve parcels where reclassification would better define the unit and where those parcels would be expected to conform to the Guidelines and Criteria for Wilderness Areas specified in the APSLMP.

Proposed Management Actions:

- Physically inspect all boundary lines to determine maintenance needs and assign a priority to each identified need. Undertake maintenance activity to ensure all boundaries are identified and marked within the five-year implementation of this plan. Brush, paint, and sign all boundary lines at least once every seven years as per DEC Boundary Line Maintenance Policy NR-95-1. Mark boundaries where they cross any trail, road, or stream. Monitor boundaries and pursue strict enforcement for unauthorized activities, such as illegal motor vehicle and mountain bike entry and timber trespass.

- Resolve the known private access issue in Lot 8 of the Benson Tract.

- Sign unit boundaries with boundary signs identifying the land classification of the Unit. Sign trailheads, trails and other entrances to the SLWA with specific signage identifying the unit's designation, so that both DEC personnel and the public know individual unit designations.

- The Department recommends that the APA consider reclassification of the following state land parcels:

  Recommendation "A" - Ferris Lake Wild Forest to Silver Lake Wilderness. Approximately 1,500 acres of the Ferris Lake Wild Forest to the SLW. The area recommended for r consideration lies east of NYS Route 10 and west of the West Branch of the Sacandaga River and Piseco Lake Outlet extending south towards Shaker Place. No facilities exist on these lands that would be inconsistent with wilderness classification. Research on the potential impacts of this reclassification to adjoining private lands and a deed search for easements, reservations or other restrictions on this land did not indicate a reason to preclude inclusion as part of the SLW.

  Recommendation "B" - Ferris Lake Wild Forest to Silver Lake Wilderness. Approximately 369 acres of the Ferris Lake Wild Forest to the SLW. The area recommended for consideration lies east of NYS Route 10 and west of the West Branch of the Sacandaga River extending north from the old Avery Game Farm. No facilities exist on these lands that would be inconsistent with wilderness classification.

  Recommendation "C" - Jessup River Wild Forest to Silver Lake Wilderness. A portion of the boundary between the SLW and the Jessup River Wild Forest south of the South Shore Road in the Town of Lake Pleasant conforms to an indeterminate drainage rather than an easy to follow geographic feature. A review of the SLW boundary description by APA staff (Savarie memo, 03-31-03) revealed that the existing mapped boundary was correct for the section of state lands south of the South Shore Road, in the Town of Lake Pleasant.

  Two areas of state land (87 acres and 65 acres) are inappropriately classified as wild forest. No facilities exist on these lands that would be inconsistent with wilderness classification. Adjustments to the state land boundaries have been discussed with APA staff. Department staff concur with the APA recommendation to use a geographic feature such as the South Shore Road as the Silver Lake boundary instead of an indeterminate drainage. It is recommended that these two areas of the Jessup River Wild Forest totaling approximately 152 acres on the south side of the South Shore Road be considered for reclassification from wild forest to wilderness and be made part of the SLW.

  Note: A correction to DEC lands and the APA land classification coverage is also needed in this area. The NYS/private land boundary south of Lake Pleasant needs to be adjusted to conform with a recent court decision. This will involve the change of approximately 183 acres of state land to private land.

Recommendation "D" - Jessup River Wild Forest to Silver Lake Wilderness (and vise-a-versa). A review of the boundary line description for the SLW by APA staff (Savarie memo, 03-31-03) revealed that the existing mapped boundary was incorrect for the section of state lands in the Town of Lake Pleasant at Gilman Lake. In addition, a parcel of state land acquired in 1963 has not been correctly identified as state land. A nine acre triangular piece of unclassified state land in the Town of Lake Pleasant adjoins the Jessup River Wild Forest at the town boundary. No facilities are known to exist on this property. A 16 acre parcel along the northwest side of Gilman Lake includes approximately 0.3 miles of shoreline. An existing open motor vehicle road is used by the public to access Gilman Lake from the Gilmantown Road. Camping occurs on the property at undesignated primitive tent sites.

In a few locations the written boundary description for the SLW conflicts with the existing APA State Land Map. Adjustments to the state land boundaries to correct these errors have been discussed with APA staff. Department staff concur with the APA recommendation to correct the wilderness boundary on the map to comply with the SLW written boundary description. It is recommended that the APA consider reclassifying the eight acre part of the SLW between Gilmantown Road and the inlet to Gilman Lake from wilderness to wild forest and be included in the Jessup River Wild Forest.

To correct map errors, it is recommended that the 1 acre unclassified land on the north (inlet) part of Gilman Lake be considered by the APA for a split classification. It is recommended that the part of the unclassified parcel east of the inlet (approximately ½ acre) be considered by the APA for classification as wild forest and be included in the Jessup River Wild Forest. It is recommended that he part of unclassified parcel west of the inlet (approximately ½ acre) be considered by the APA for classification as wilderness and be included in the SLW.

To accommodate existing public uses and conform the SLW boundary to the western shore of Gilman Lake, it is recommended that the 16 acres of unclassified lands adjacent to the eastern shore of Gilman Lake be considered by the APA for classification as wild forest and included in the Jessup River Wild Forest. This would allow for roadside camping and other possible recreational opportunities for people with disabilities.

Since the nine acre unclassified parcel at the town boundary adjoins wild forest, it is recommended that this parcel be considered by the APA for classification as wild forest and included in the Jessup River Wild Forest.

Recommendation "E" - Silver Lake Wilderness to Shaker Mountain Wild Forest. A small triangular 22 acre piece of the SLW is cut-off from the rest of the wilderness area by the Cramer Road (also called Storer Road). The road has been a public highway for many years. Further east in the vicinity of Woods Lake, the SLW is separated from the Shaker Mountain Wild Forest by the Benson Road.

The 22 acre parcel does not meet the APSLMP criteria for wilderness classification, thus it is inappropriately classified as wilderness. No facilities exist on this parcel. Since the Cramer Road is a town road, it is recommended that the part of the SLW west of the road be considered by the APA for re-classification from wilderness to wild forest and be made part of the Shaker Mountain Wild Forest.

Recommendation "F" - Cathead Mountain Primitive Area to Silver Lake Wilderness. The area recommended for consideration is the entire 206 acre Cathead Mountain Primitive Area (Great Lot 121, Benson Tract). There are no longer any facilities on these lands that would be inconsistent with wilderness classification.

PUBLIC USE AND ACCESS

Current Situation

Public access to the SLWA is free and relatively unregulated. Public use is permitted to the extent that it does not degrade the physical, biological, and social characteristics of the area. The "minimum tool" concept is used to manage public use and achieve management objectives, using indirect methods when possible (i.e. limiting parking), and direct methods when necessary (promulgating regulations).

It is difficult to obtain accurate use figures due to the unit's large physical size, multiple access points, and failure of visitors to register at trailheads. Based on the available trail register reports and current field observations, most of the unit appears to receive light total use, with moderate use concentrated around the Whitehouse area and Woods Lake. Long term use data for Whitehouse is lacking, and no use data is available for Woods Lake. However, Department staff have observed a notable increase in day use in these two areas in recent years. The potential for overuse and subsequent degradation does exist for these areas if appropriate management actions aren't taken.

Public use of motor vehicles along a portion of the West River Road and old Godfrey Road is in question. The last 0.7 miles of West River Road and last 0.4 miles of old Godfrey Road are both on lands classified as wilderness. The use of motor vehicles along these sections of road has been allowed to occur and in several instances has spread into adjacent lands causing some natural resource damage. The Master Plan contains several specific provisions on the use of motor vehicles in areas classified as wilderness and does not allow for any public use of motor vehicles in these areas. The sections of road on lands classified as wilderness must be brought into compliance with Master Plan requirements. See the Management Issues section for a more detailed discussion of the West River Road and Godfrey Road issues.

Another concern raised during the planning process was access to Spy Lake. The public has expressed an interest in gaining access to the lake mainly for the purpose of fishing. Public car-top boat access was once available from private land along the Spy Lake Road, but has been closed due to use-related problems such as late night parties, garbage, etc. The three possible access alternatives for this issue in their preferred order include: 1. Reestablish historic access via the Spy Lake Road. 2. Boat access via the Piseco Outlet. 3. Foot access via a new trail through the Silver Lake Wilderness. See the Management Issues section for a more complete discussion of the issue and alternatives.

Many of the resource impacts that result from recreational use can be mitigated through an active visitor education and information program. Most visitors lack a basic understanding of DEC rules and regulations and are unaware of the effects their activities have on the resource. Visitors need to be informed of the proper use of state land and all special rules and regulations that apply before they enter the unit. A well developed education and information program can help reduce any user related impacts while improving the visitor experience. The Department will pursue the development of a comprehensive education strategy outside the UMP initiative.

Objective(s):

- To reduce visitor impacts on natural resources through proper education and information.
- To promote new interest in and increase the public's knowledge of the SLWA and all applicable rules and regulations.
- To improve the managers' ability to accurately assess visitor impacts upon the resources.
- To improve the managers' ability to accurately assess the type and extent of visitor use in the area.
- To effectively enforce existing laws, regulations, and polices.

Proposed Management Actions:

- Promote "Leave-No-Trace" ethics and techniques with all users.

- Establish a foot trail on the Godfrey Road Extension (part of old Godfrey Road). A suitable barrier will be placed at the end of the town road and at the wilderness boundary. The closed section of road will be rehabilitated and restored to a more natural condition by breaking up the unused road surface, removing appropriate culverts, and planting native vegetation.

- Work cooperatively with the Town of Wells to bring the last 0.7 miles of the West River Road into compliance with Master Plan requirements before the end of the 5-year period covered by this UMP. Possible options for effectuating such compliance might include, among other things, an order of abandonment by the Town pursuant to Highway Law § 205(1) or a Commissioner closure order pursuant to Highway Law § 212. When the road has been re-established as a foot trail, create a new parking area and trailhead within 500 feet of the Wilderness boundary. Foot trail conditions will be established by breaking up the unused road surface, removing appropriate culverts, and planting native vegetation.

- Continue to assess conditions of key resources and regularly monitor changes, with a focus on the most heavily used or impacted resources, such as designated campsites and foot trails. At a minimum, continue collecting the following type of baseline information:

  • Measurements of soil erosion from foot trails and ground cover loss at all designated campsites.
  • Public use data from trail registers and surveys to determine average number of yearly users and groups sizes.

- Sign all trailheads and major access points with the appropriate signage so the public knows where they are.

- Explore the possibility of obtaining public access to Spy Lake.

- Develop a brochure and map on the Silver Lake Wilderness that focuses on the unit's history, natural resource values, recreational opportunities, use guidelines, and linkages with local communities.

RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Current Situation

People with disabilities comprise one of the nation's largest minority groups. As the population ages, approximately 40 percent of people over the age of 65 will likely have disabilities. According to recent Census Bureau data, there are at least 54 million Americans with disabilities and it is estimated that more than 20.3 million families in the U.S. have at least one member with a disability.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that people with disabilities receive full and equal enjoyment of goods, services, facilities, privileges and advantages of any place of public accommodation. However, in providing such access states are not required to alter the fundamental nature of the programs which they offer to the public. The degree of access required depends on whether the structure is new, existing and undergoing an alteration, or existing but not being altered. Providing access to people with disabilities does not always have to be expensive or require sophisticated equipment, but it does require a thorough understanding of the individual's specific needs.

Identifying specific areas for access and how to provide a quality experience are major issues facing planning staff. There are varying degrees of disability which must be accommodated, and there is disagreement within the disabled community about how best to make an outdoor experience accessible. There is consensus, however, about the need to improve access and about some of the access methods and locations. Training provided by the National Center on Accessibility has helped the staff better understand the characteristics and needs of the disabled community and how to address these needs in the unit management planning process.

The SLW is an area that can provide some good recreational opportunities for people with disabilities. The Godfrey Road Extension (part of the old Godfrey Road) lends itself nicely to the future development of an accessible trail and other related facilities should it be necessary. Some of the factors that are considered and used in determining trail suitability include trail length, width, grade, cross slope, rest areas, passing space and condition of trail surface. Other areas that were identified as possible candidates for providing improved access but will require further assessment are the roadside campsites along the West River Road.

Objective(s):

- To comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) by improving access and creating recreational opportunities for people with disabilities.

Proposed Management Actions:

- Incorporate the principles of universal design into new construction projects.

- Involve a knowledgeable representative from the community of people with disabilities, such as the NYS Independent Living Center Council, Inc. or other similar organizations, in all subsequent projects and proposals, including the design and construction of any accessible facilities proposed in this plan.

- Conduct an accessibility assessment on the primitive campsites along the West River Road. This area has the potential to provide some primitive camping opportunities for people with disabilities.

BIOPHYSICAL RESOURCES

SOILS

Current Situation

Detailed soil survey maps for the SLWA are not available. Broad soil types, accurate to an area about 40 acres in size, are delineated on aerial photographs. Soil type interpretations are general and have not been completed. Little information has been documented within the unit on widespread soil loss and degradation, except that there are a few sites where soil disturbances on trails and campsites require rehabilitative actions. Trail widening, trail use during wet weather, camping too close to riparian areas, and poor trail design are all contributing factors. Resources for trail rehabilitation, relocation, and erosion control are needed.

Objective(s):

- To keep soil erosion caused by recreational use within acceptable limits that closely resemble the natural erosion process.
- To minimize the amount of soil compaction from human activity on undeveloped areas where the natural plant community exists.

Proposed Management Actions:

- Develop LAC indicators and standards for soil erosion.

- Monitor all soil conditions within the unit affected by recreation use. Take action when LAC standards are exceeded, correct undesirable conditions by rehabilitating the area using the most current soil conservation practices or relocating use to more durable sites.

- Target trail maintenance to heavily eroded areas and develop a priority list based on resource need rather than user convenience.

- Design, locate, and construct all new structures and improvements in ways that will minimize the potential for soil erosion. All new construction projects will be developed in accordance with the APSLMP, and will incorporate the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) identified in the Management Guidelines section of this plan.

WATER

Current Situation

The Adirondack Lakes Survey Corporation (ALSC) has conducted water quality studies researching the effects of acid deposition on aquatic ecosystems. The Department's Bureau of Fisheries routinely conducts biological surveys to assess and monitor the fish populations in area waters. No studies have specifically focused on the effects of recreational use on water quality. Being major attractions, streams, lake, ponds, and wetlands are on the receiving end of high levels of human disturbance. With continued use, the potential for further deterioration of water quality

must be anticipated. At a minimum, visitors must be educated about the impacts of recreational use on water quality and their role in protecting it.

Objective(s):

- To maintain or improve all aquatic and riparian habitats.
- To stabilize current water conditions and improve long-term water quality.
- To reduce the risk of pathogenic contamination and any other potential impacts on water quality.

Proposed Management Actions:

- Develop LAC indicators and standards for vegetation in riparian areas near lakes and streams.

- Monitor vegetation in riparian areas near lakes and streams. Take action when LAC standards are exceeded, correct undesirable conditions by rehabilitating the area or relocating use to more durable sites.

- Relocate all non-designated campsites and pit privies away from water. The APSLMP requires in Wilderness Basic Guideline 8 on page 21 (June 2001) that any new, reconstructed or relocated lean-tos or primitive tent sites planned for shorelines of lakes, ponds, rivers or major streams be located so as to be reasonably screened from view from the water body to avoid intruding on the natural character of the shoreline and public enjoyment and use thereof, and that any such lean-tos will be set back a minimum of 100 feet from the mean high water mark of any lake, pond, stream, or river; the minimum setback for pit privies is 150 feet.

- Rehabilitate lake shore and streamside areas that have been impacted by bank erosion caused by recreational use.

- Incorporate all biological survey work done by DEC, ALSC or other institutions into any future water-related planning activities.

- Support and encourage research to determine the effects of recreational use on water quality. This documentation will help strengthen assessments of the limits of acceptable change.

- Educate the public about the effects and impacts of recreation use on water quality and their role in preserving water quality.

WETLANDS

Current Situation

APA regulates all wetlands within the Park under the NYS Freshwater Wetlands Act (1975) and the Adirondack Park Agency Act (1971). All wetlands that are one acre in size and larger, or any size wetlands adjacent to open water are regulated and an APA permit is required for any material alteration. Wetland inventories and maps for the entire Park are incomplete, but official maps are available for the SLWA.

Objective(s):

- To minimize the amount of wetland disturbances and impacts caused by the construction and maintenance of structures and improvements and human recreation use.
- To preserve and protect wetland community vegetation and associated plant species.

Proposed Management Actions:

- Correct any undesirable wet conditions on trails by relocating use to a more appropriate area or by installing bridges, culverts, stepping stones, or bog bridging. Try to relocate use first, and improve crossings as a second alternative.

- Assist in developing a system that makes wetland information more readily available to resource managers and the general public.

- Relocate any trails or facilities when necessary to reduce the impacts on wetlands or associated vegetation.

- Minimize the impacts of construction and maintenance activities on wetlands. Coordinate all future construction and maintenance activities that may affect wetlands with the APA to determine wetland boundaries and the need for wetlands permits. DEC will acquire APA wetlands permits as necessary for all proposed management activities and such permits will condition proposed actions to avoid or mitigate any potential impacts to wetlands.

AIR QUALITY

Current Situation

One of the most important features of the Adirondacks is clean air. Federal Clean Air Act Standards rate Adirondack air as Class II (Class I being the cleanest). Research indicates that air quality problems tend to originate outside the Park boundaries and are transported long distances. There are no known air pollution activities within the Adirondacks that have negatively affected sight visibility, water quality, or open space in general. More research needs to be conducted to determine whether the air quality of the area is static, improving, or deteriorating.

Objective(s):

- To achieve Federal Class I air standards.

Proposed Management Actions:

- Cooperate with other agencies and scientific researchers in developing baseline data to identify the effects of potential air pollutants on natural resources within the unit.

- Support and encourage research to determine the effects and impacts of recreational use on air quality.

- Monitor air quality at various locations within the Adirondack Park.

VEGETATION

Current Situation

Most of the SLWA vegetative cover has been altered at one time or another by either early logging, wind, fire, insects and disease, or recreational use. Despite all these influences, the unit has managed to retain a natural character and some unique ecosystems. The most notable ecosystems are the numerous wetland communities along the West Branch and Main Branch of the Sacandaga River. These communities provide many different benefits including a wide variety of habitats and food sources for wildlife species.

The vegetative impacts caused by recreation use is a problem in some of the periphery areas, but is not a widespread problem. A campsite inventory and impact assessment, which includes an analysis of vegetative cover, has been completed for all campsites and lean-tos along the Northville-Placid Trail. Ground cover loss and the illegal cutting of standing live and dead trees can be found at all lean-to sites and a majority of the designated campsites. Tree damage in some instances appears to be more an act of vandalism than a resource related issue since sufficient dead and down material is still readily available for campfire purposes in the vicinity of most traditionally used campsites. The current practice of mowing an expansive clearing along the West Branch at Whitehouse needs to be stopped. Such mowing does not conform with the APSLMP. Another place where mowing occurs but is unclear as to whether it is on Forest Preserve is the DOT parking area along Route 10 just south of the northern most bridge over the West Branch. The ROW boundary needs to be defined in this area.

No instances of terrestrial invasive species have been identified within the unit however presently, there is little existing inventory work available with respect to the presence of invasive plant species. The importance of this issue to the Adirondack ecosystems has been underscored in the establishment of the Adirondack Park Non-Native Invasive Plant Species Project, a project jointly undertaken by the APA, DOT, Nature Conservancy and DEC.

Objective(s):

- To allow natural processes to continue their role in the succession of plant communities.
- To preserve and protect any threatened and endangered plant species or communities.
- To comply with the constitutional directive of forever keeping the lands as "wild forest lands."
- To monitor for the location and extent of terrestrial invasive plant species found within the unit.
- To reduce or eliminate terrestrial invasive plant species found within the unit and protect the area from the introduction, establishment and spread of invasive species.
- To continue and expand programs that identify and map ecological communities and sensitive, rare, threatened, and endangered plant species or communities.

Proposed Management Actions:

- Maintain existing plant databases and support efforts to inventory plant communities, with an emphasis on sensitive, rare, threatened, or endangered plant species or communities.

- Use native trees, shrubs, and grasses to restore areas to natural conditions. Non-native species may be used if necessary to provide temporary cover until native species can become established.

- Work with DOT to identify the ROW boundary along Route 10 in the vicinity of the parking area just south of the northern most bridge over the West Branch of the Sacandaga River. Stop any mowing that is determined to be in wilderness.

- Monitor vegetation in high-use areas, such as campsites and lean-tos, on a continual basis to detect any changes before unacceptable conditions arise. Take action when LAC standards are exceeded, correct undesirable conditions by rehabilitating the area or relocating use to more durable sites.

- Enforce the Lands and Forests general rules and regulations regarding tree cutting on State land. 6 NYCRR §190.8(g) provides that "No person shall deface, remove, destroy, or otherwise injure in any manner whatsoever any tree, flower, shrub, fern, moss or other plant, rock, fossil or mineral found or growing on State land. " 6 NYCRR §190.1(c) further provides that "No wood, except from dead and down trees or from supplies furnished by the department, shall be used for fuel."

- Educate the public on their role in protecting and sustaining natural plant communities and the vegetative impacts associated with various recreational activities.

- Encourage and support any research to determine the long-term effects of acid deposition on native plant species and communities. The apparent decline of old growth red spruce has been in question and may not be completely explained by historical causes. A recent hypotheses includes the effect of long-term climate change and exposure to chronic or acute episodes of air pollution as possible causes of decline.

- Train DEC staff working within the unit to identify and document the location of key invasive plant species.

- Work towards a complete comprehensive inventory of the presence and extent of invasive plants in the unit.

- Eliminate any identified populations of invasive plant species that are discovered in the unit. These actions may be carried out by DEC personnel or by members of APIPP or other volunteers under supervision of DEC through an Adopt-a-Natural Resource Agreement.

- Continue periodic monitoring and further management of identified invasive plant populations.

WILDLIFE

Current Situation

A number of changes have occurred through time that have impacted a variety of wildlife species. Habitat changes that have resulted from early logging, acid precipitation, recreational use, natural plant community succession, and protection of the forest and wildlife through new legislation are just a few things that have helped shape today's wildlife populations.

Most wildlife management activities in the SLWA are passive in nature (i.e. monitoring various species and populations) due to the fact that there are no special strategies for wildlife management on Forest Preserve lands. Indirect management of game species populations can be effected by review and revision of existing hunting and fishing regulations. Participation has slowly declined during the last decade for hunting and trapping. Birding and wildlife photography are two activities that have become increasingly popular among outdoor enthusiasts.

In 2005, DEC received confirmation of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) from two captive white-tailed deer herds in Oneida County and subsequently detected the disease in two wild deer from this area. Twenty-five deer from the Town of Arietta, Hamilton County were also tested but were negative. Until recently, New York was the only state in the northeast with a confirmed CWD case in wild deer. However, CWD was recently detected in wild deer in West Virginia.

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

Objective(s):

- To encourage the current level of species diversity and promote the presence of species that are endangered, threatened, or of special concern where these species range include the SLWA.
- To maintain and perpetuate hunting and trapping as legitimate uses of, and tools for the management of, the wildlife resource that are compatible with other recreation uses.
- To provide information and assistance to individuals, groups, organizations, and other agencies interested in wildlife whose activities or actions may affect, or are affected by, the wildlife resources or users of wildlife.

Proposed Management Actions:

- Continue to inventory wildlife species, including endangered, threatened, and special concern wildlife species.

- Continue to inventory significant wildlife habitats, such as deer winter yards and wetland nesting areas.

- Determine the presence and numbers of moose in the unit through visual observations, reports from the public, and by radio collaring moose whenever the opportunity arises.

- Continue pelt sealing furbearers to determine levels of harvest and to prevent the over harvest of vulnerable species (marten and fisher).

- Advise visitors that the potential for user/wildlife conflicts exists and suggest means of avoiding these conflicts. Black bears are common throughout the unit and conflicts could become an issue if visitor use increases dramatically.

FISHERIES

Current Situation

Ponds in the Silver Lake Wilderness did not escape the massive fish introductions by humans described earlier for the Adirondacks in general. Known non-native fishes are present in 13 out of the 23 ponds for which fish data are available (Appendix D, Table 4). In addition to known non-natives, native-but-widely-introduced fishes are present in all of the ponds for which fish data are available. In addition, six ponds formerly known to support fish communities have since become fishless due to the effects of acid deposition.

Early fisheries surveys are generally not available to document the progression of fish introductions in the unit. None of the ponds in the unit were surveyed or netted prior to 1930. Surveys subsequent to that date document recent changes in those waters.

Of particular interest are the status of brook trout and round whitefish populations within the unit. Gilman Lake, a water adjacent to the SLWA, formerly contained a population of round whitefish. No round whitefish were captured in the most recent surveys. Round whitefish are endangered in New York. George (1980) states that the round whitefish: "...is at the extreme southeastern extent of its range in the Adirondacks and must be considered highly vulnerable to competition and predation by invading southern (fishes)." Brook trout populations have declined in the unit as well, with numerous ponds formerly containing brook trout now devoid of this native species. In particular, Upper Loomis Pond was documented as having a brook trout monoculture, but has since become fishless because of acid precipitation. Silver Lake, White Lake, Middle Loomis, Ross Lake, and Meco Lake were all known at one time to have supported native fish species, but which are now fishless because of acid precipitation. Both the round whitefish and self-sustaining populations of brook trout were historically much more abundant in the Adirondacks than presently (George 1980).

Most ponds in the unit that contain nonnatives cannot be returned to natural conditions (natives only). In some instances large, extensive wetlands preclude effective treatment with rotenone, and in others, no natural fish barrier or site to construct a fish barrier exists. These ponds cannot be restored with current technology. In those few ponds where brook trout populations continue to persist in the face of competition from non-natives, as additional fishes become established, it is likely that brook trout will be eliminated from these waters.

The 1993 Organizational and Delegation memorandum regarding "Fishery Management Policy in Wilderness, Primitive, and Canoe Areas - amended 11/02/93" form the basis for fishery management objectives in the unit. That memorandum includes policy guidelines that resulted from negotiations between the DEC, APA, and several citizen organizations.

Objective(s):

- To restore native fish communities with emphasis on native species that have declined due to man's influences. This objective is consistent with the primary wilderness management guideline in the APSLMP. Implementation may include reclamations, liming, stocking and other activities as per the "Fishery Management Policy in Wilderness, Primitive, and Canoe Areas."
- To protect native fish communities from the addition of undesirable non-native fishes. This objective is also consistent with the primary wilderness management guideline in the APSLMP.
- To provide recreational angling as part of a larger wilderness experience emphasizing quality over quantity.
- To protect the fishless state of naturally barren waters that have not been stocked.
- To maintain a comprehensive biological and chemical resource inventory for the ponds, lakes, and streams within the unit.
- To reduce the distribution of nonnative and native-but-widely-introduced fish species, and increase the abundance of the depressed native brook trout.

Proposed Management Actions:

- Explore the possible reintroduction of round whitefish within the unit. If a suitable candidate water is found and reintroduction is recommended, the UMP will be amended to include the proposed work.

- Explore the possible use of liming to restore native fish communities in acidified ponds historically containing fish. Explore the use of liming to prevent the impairment of native fish communities at risk from the effects of acidic deposition. If suitable candidate waters are found and liming is recommended, the UMP will be amended to include the proposed work.

- Manage 24 ponds as Adirondack brook trout ponds including: Grant Lake (UH-P157), Unnamed water (UH-P158a), Three Ponds (UH-P159, 160 & 217), Unnamed water (UH-P160a), Mud Lake (UH-P216), Unnamed waters (UH-P216a, 216b & 216c), Lake Chartreuse (UH-P219), Unnamed waters (UH-P221a & 221b), Owl Pond (UH-P222), Lost or Cooney Lake (UH-P233), Upper Loomis Pond (UH-P255), Middle Loomis (UH-P257), North Branch Flow (UH-P266a), Canary Pond (UH-P267), Brown Lake (UH-P268), Silver Lake (UH-P270), White Lake (UH-P271), Rock Lake (UH-P275), and Meco Lake (UH-P276).

- Manage one water as a Two-story pond: Woods Lake (UH-P156).

- Manage one water as a Cold Water pond: Unnamed water (UH-P218a).

- Manage two waters as Warm Water ponds including: Chub Lake (UH-P264) and East Stoner Lake (MH-P723).

- Maintain and enforce regulations that prohibit the use of fish as bait in the unit. The use of fish as bait is a potentially significant vector for introductions of disruptive non-natives.

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

- Conduct biological surveys of waters within the unit as required.

- Enhance partially effective natural fish barriers, and construct fish barrier dams as needed to prevent the spread of non-native and NBWI fishes. The APSLMP specifies that fish barrier dams are conforming structures in wilderness areas. When non-natives have been established upstream of an existing barrier, enhanced/constructed fish barriers may be the only option to prevent the spread of fishes further upstream in that portion of the watershed. Specific sites for newly enhanced or constructed barriers are not proposed in this plan. If or when the need for a new barrier site is identified, the UMP will be amended to include the proposed work.

MAN-MADE FACILITIES

TRAILHEADS

Current Situation

A trailhead can be defined as the starting or ending point of a designated trail at a point of entrance to state land. Trailheads may contain one or all of the following: trail signs, informational kiosks, pit privies, vehicle parking, and registration structures.

The SLWA has three primary entry points, two of which are on state land and one on private. The Department does have a permanent deeded easement for the access point on private land. The easement was acquired by appropriation for the purpose of providing public access to the Northville-Placid Trail (NPT) and other local hiking destinations. A section of the NPT was at that time, and is still today, laid out from the end of the town road along this ROW to a small clearing on the North Branch of West Stony Creek. Limited use of public motor vehicles has been occurring along this route for some time and the small clearing on West Stony Creek is often used as a parking area. See the Easement and Right-of-Way section for more details on the easement.

All three access points to the area contain a parking area with a trail register and trail sign stating a destination and distance. Vandalism is generally not a problem, but litter can be in some of the more popular areas. All trailheads are maintained by volunteers and DEC personnel.

Objective(s):

- To provide and manage adequate trailhead facilities that accommodate visitor needs and protect resource values.
- To provide adequate parking and mitigate any parking related problems.
- To reduce the amount of litter and vandalism occurring at trailheads.

Proposed Management Actions:

- Develop a routine maintenance schedule for trailhead facilities and litter removal.

- Incorporate the unit's man-made facility inventory into the Maintenance Management System (MMS).

- Encourage partnerships with local governments and volunteers to maintain and snowplow roadside trailhead parking facilities (i.e. Adopt-a-Natural Resource Program).

- Develop individual maintenance plans for all existing parking areas. These plans should include detailed information on their maintenance and management.

- Construct a new trailhead parking area within 500 feet of the point where the West River Road is eventually brought into compliance with Master Plan requirements. The new parking area will replace the existing parking area that is currently in wilderness in excess of 500 feet of the boundary. It would enhance public access to the NPT and to popular bushwhacks in the area. The parking area will be large enough to accommodate 10 vehicles with one van accessible space. Detailed information on the construction of the parking area will be specified in the individual project plan. All parking lot construction and relocation projects will incorporate the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) identified in the Management Guidelines section of this plan.

- Provide information about recreational opportunities and rules and regulations at trailheads, with the goal of minimizing the number of interior signs.

- Place new level-two kiosks which incorporate a trail register box, sign-in book, area map, and informational signs at the following three trailhead locations: Godfrey Road, Rt. 8 Piseco, and Whitehouse.

TRAILS

Current Situation

There is only one marked foot trail within the unit which consists of a section of the Northville-Lake Placid Trail (NPT) from Godfrey Road, Upper Benson to where the trail crosses NYS Route 8 in Piseco. A complete inventory of this section of trail was completed by the Student Conservation Association (SCA) during the 2002 summer field season in anticipation of this UMP. During this inventory, several sections of trail were reported having some minor problems and are in need of maintenance. Trails are not self-sustaining and must receive a degree of maintenance or they will deteriorate quickly and cause other resource problems. These sections will need to be fixed or moved to avoid the risk of any further damage to the resource. Blowdown, heavy brush and "wet areas" were the most common problems encountered. There is also a considerable amount of interest in rerouting the southern portion of the NPT through the SLWA. The official starting point of the NPT is along NYS Route 30 at Northville, where a large bridge spans the Sacandaga Reservoir. The trail then heads north following motor vehicle roads for about the first eleven miles to Upper Benson. A reroute through the southern portion of the unit would eliminate safety concerns of walking along the road and would also improve the user experience and overall character of the trail.

As previously mentioned, the public use of motor vehicles along a portion of the West River Road and old Godfrey Road has become an issue. The last 0.7 miles of West River Road and last 0.4 miles of old Godfrey Road are both on lands classified as wilderness. The use of motor vehicles along these sections of road has been allowed to occur and in several instances has spread into adjacent lands causing some natural resource damage. The Master Plan contains several specific provisions on the use of motor vehicles in areas classified as wilderness and does not allow

for any public use of motor vehicles in these areas. The sections of road on lands classified as wilderness must be brought into compliance with Master Plan requirements. See the Management Issues section for a more detailed discussion of the West River Road and Godfrey Road issues.

The APSLMP defines wilderness, in part, as having "outstanding opportunities for solitude." The Silver Lake Wilderness Area provides such a place for hunters, fishermen, hikers, and others who desire a high degree of solitude as part of their recreational experience. An expanded trail network and associated facilities can threaten the naturalness and wilderness values that users of this area ultimately seek. Increased visitor use can impact wilderness experiences through resulting crowding, visitor conflicts, loss of solitude, and direct impacts on resources such as loss of vegetation at campsites, and soil erosion on trails. In an effort to protect the wilderness character and values that this unit currently supports, trails and new facilities will be kept to an absolute minimum. New facilities will only be proposed when necessary for resource protection or user safety, and will not be made solely for user convenience.

Any new trail construction, reconstruction, or relocation activities must have an approved work plan, and must comply with proposed ADAAG and other information relevant to compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the APSLMP, and DEC policies and regulations. No activities will be undertaken in the absence of an approved plan. Temporary Revocable Permits (TRP's) are valid for no more than one year, Adopt-A-Natural Resource stewardship agreements are valid for up to five years. All trail construction and relocation projects must also incorporate the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) identified in the Management Guidelines section of this plan.

Objective(s):

- To provide a trail system that offers wilderness recreational opportunities in a manner that keeps the physical, biological, and social impacts to a minimum.
- To provide people the opportunity to experience and enjoy the natural beauty of the Adirondacks and the Forest Preserve.
- To maintain and reconstruct trails to appropriate wilderness standards and APSLMP provisions.
- To maintain "trail less" areas to preserve the wilderness character and sense of remoteness and solitude.

Proposed Management Actions:

- Formally adopt, as a matter of Department policy, the trail classification system and marking standards contained in Appendix E for all trail management activities. Under this system, all developed trails will be maintained, relocated or reconstructed to specified standards. Wilderness trail maintenance will emphasize resource protection and visitor safety rather than user convenience or comfort.

- Develop LAC indicators and standards for extent of soil erosion on trails.

- Monitor all marked and unmarked trails on an annual basis to ensure that there are no significant signs of deterioration. Take action when LAC standards are exceeded, correct undesirable conditions by rehabilitating the area or relocating use to more durable sites.

- Review volunteer trail maintenance agreements approved by DEC on an annual basis and seek additional volunteer agreements.

- Consider routing the North Country National Scenic Trail (NCNST) through the SLWA. Should the upcoming assessment of proposed routes for the NCNST determine that the most environmentally sound route for the trail pass through the SLWA, then construct the trail using the route prescribed in the assessment. Consult with APA and amend the UMP to reflect the trail construction project. The NCNST assessment will not be done as part of this plan; it will be a separate project (see Special Area Plan section).

- Remove all non-conforming stop barriers (i.e. swinging gates and pipe gates) and replace them with boulder barriers as needed.

- Close the Godfrey Road Extension (part of old Godfrey Road) to public motor vehicle use. Suitable barriers will be placed at the end of the town road and at the wilderness boundary. Re-establish foot trail conditions along the closed route. The closed section will be rehabilitated and restored to a more natural condition by breaking up the unused road surface, removing appropriate culverts, and planting native vegetation.

- Work cooperatively with the Town of Wells to bring the last 0.7 miles of the West River Road into compliance with Master Plan requirements before the end of the 5-year period covered by this UMP. Possible options for effectuating such compliance might include, among other things, an order of abandonment by the Town pursuant to Highway Law § 205(1) or a Commissioner closure order pursuant to Highway Law § 212. Re-establish foot trail conditions along this route. Create a new parking area large enough to accommodate 10 cars with one van accessible space and a trailhead within 500 feet of the location where motorized access will end. A new level-two kiosk which incorporates a trail register box, sign-in book, area map, and informational signs will be placed at this location. Two (2) additional roadside campsites along the West River Road will also be provided to compensate for the sites that are no longer accessible by car. Foot trail conditions will be established on this route by breaking up the road surface, removing appropriate culverts, and planting native vegetation. This proposed action should also help to eliminate illegal off-road ATV traffic in the Whitehouse area.

- Reroute a section of the Northville-Lake Placid Trail (NPT) through the southern portion of the unit. The new section of trail will cross the Benson Road east of Woods Lake, follow the Woods Lake Trail around the lake swinging north of Lapland Lake XC Ski Center to join the existing trail at the foot bridge over the North Branch of West Stony Creek. The trail will be located in a manner so as to be reasonably screened from view from private property and the lake to avoid intruding on private property and the natural character of the area. The reroute will eliminate approximately half of the current road walking, but would add approximately 4.5 miles of additional new trail in the wilderness area. The reroute has been mapped by volunteers and is desirable for improving public safety and the user experience. See the Management Issues section for a more detailed discussion of this issue.

CAMPSITES

Current Situation

The SLWA provides a variety of different camping opportunities. The interior portion of the unit contains numerous primitive tent sites that are located along the Northville-Placid Trail and along shores of the more popular lakes. These sites are designated with a yellow camping disk and often contain a fire ring. There are also a number of roadside sites located on the periphery along secondary access roads, such as the West River Road. These sites are all within 500 feet of the road, easily accessible and occasionally occupied by small camper trailers. The West River Road sites and the campsite along the North Branch of West Stony Creek have been identified as potential candidates for providing improved access for people with disabilities.

There are three lean-tos within the unit which are all located along the Northville-Placid Trail. Only two meet the minimum set back distance of 100 feet or more from water as required by the APSLMP. The one that fails to meet the set back requirement will be brought into compliance when it's ready for replacement provided there is a more suitable location.

Most of the designated campsites are sites that have been historically used. Some of the sites at Whitehouse, Woods Lake, and along the West River Road fail to meet the APSLMP separation guidelines. These sites will be closed and relocated. All the designated campsites have been inventoried, but an impact assessment has only been completed for the lean-tos and campsites along the Northville-Placid Trail. Ground cover loss and the illegal cutting of trees is a problem in some of the more heavily used areas, but is not a widespread problem. The current practice

of mowing a large area for two campsites along the West Branch at Whitehouse needs to be stopped. Such mowing does not conform with the APSLMP. When the last 0.7 miles of the West River Road are brought into compliance with Master Plan requirements, seven (7) roadside campsites will no longer accessible by motor vehicle. Crowding is not currently an issue and there is no apparent sign that campsite demand exceeds site availability. See the Appendices for maps showing the general locations of the designated campsites.

Objective(s):

- To reduce, eliminate, or mitigate the adverse effects on the natural environment that result from improperly located campsites.
- To provide a variety of camping opportunities and experiences with adequate facilities.
- To assure that campsite and privy locations comply with the APSLMP guidelines.

Proposed Management Actions:

- Complete a campsite impact assessment for all campsites within the unit according to the campsite impact assessment and monitoring manual in Appendix G. Campsites that are not located along the Northville-Placid Trail need to be assessed and are a high priority. This assessment will be used to identify and designate campsites that comply with APSLMP guidelines by YEAR THREE of this plan. Campsites will be selected on physical criteria and the sight and sound criteria of the APSLMP. Actions to address inappropriate motor vehicle access to roadside campsites will be implemented at the completion of the campsite assessment. Such actions may include road closure with barricades, the designation of an off-highway parking area and the closure of related campsites, or the redesign of campsites to separate camping from parking.

- Develop LAC indicators and standards for extent of soil erosion at campsites.

- Develop LAC indicators and standards for condition of vegetation in camping areas.

- Monitor all marked and unmarked campsites, especially those along the West River Road and at Woods Lake, on a regular basis to ensure that there are no significant signs of deterioration. Monitoring will be according to the campsite impact assessment and monitoring manual in the Appendix G. Action will be taken when LAC standards are exceeded to correct undesirable conditions by rehabilitating the area or relocating use to more durable sites. It is extremely important to keep an eye on the campsites around Woods Lake where camping use is anticipated to increase due to the reroute of the Northville-Placid Trail.

- Remove all non-conforming structures (i.e. fireplaces) from designated campsites within three (3) years of the adoption of an approved unit management plan for the area. All removed fireplaces will be replaced with a fire ring.

- Designate two (2) more roadside campsites along the West River Road to compensate for the sites that will no longer be accessible by motor vehicle when the road is brought into compliance with Master Plan requirements. These sites will be separated from parking places and adequately set back to meet APSLMP guidelines and DEC policy. The total number of designated campsites along the West River Road from Algonquin Drive to Whitehouse will not exceed twelve (12) at any given time. One of the two new sites will be made accessible for people with disabilities.

- Close all designated and non-designated campsites that fail to meet the Master Plan separation guidelines and all non-designated campsites that fail to meet the required minimum set back distance of 150 feet from any road, trail, spring, stream, pond or other body of water. Where feasible, relocate closed designated campsites to appropriate sites to continue to meet the need demonstrated by the original creation of the sites.

- Amend 6 NYCRR §190.13(d) to apply to the SLW. This section sets camping restrictions which prohibit tent platforms or camp structures other than tents, tarps, lean-tos, or structures composed of snow.

- Incorporate and emphasize campsite maintenance and rehabilitation in annual work plans.

- Restore all closed campsites to their natural state by removing all evident camping sign and rehabilitating the area as necessary, using the following techniques where appropriate: cultivation of devegetated areas to promote root growth, seeding or planting appropriate vegetation, posting the area as closed to camping.

SIGNS

Current Situation

Signs are used to welcome users, mark trails, and provide regulatory, interpretive, and safety information. Proper signing can educate users and help minimize user impacts on the resource. In wilderness areas, signs may be erected at trail junctures that show directions with arrows and use the minimal necessary wording. The Division of Lands and Forests, Operations, and Fish,Wildlife and Marine Resources all use signs within the unit. However, signing is kept to a minimum within the unit to avoid interfering with wilderness values and guidelines.

The primary access points of the SLWA are properly identified but could use better signs and registers with area maps at these locations. A new level-two trailhead information kiosk has been developed and will be installed at trailheads where conveying messages about recreational opportunities and visitor guidelines and regulations is considered especially important. The new kiosk incorporates a trail register box with a sign-in book on one side with room for an area map and informational signs on the other. The standard or traditional trail register box provides a sign-in book, but is smaller and less informative than the new level-two style. Efforts are currently underway to coordinate trailhead signing to be consistent and relevant to resource and user needs.

Objective(s):

- To develop a Maintenance Management System (MMS) sign inventory.
- To provide the minimal amount of signing necessary to manage and protect the resource.
- To adequately identify the unit, major access points, and resources.

Proposed Management Actions:

- Develop a comprehensive sign inventory that is maintained and updated annually.

- Coordinate all signs from different program areas through a single area manager and post signing that is consistent and relevant to both the resource and user needs.

- Replace the three existing trail registers (Whitehouse, Godfrey Road and Rt. 8 Piseco) with new level-two style registers. These new registers will incorporate area maps along with user guidelines and regulations.

BRIDGES

Current Situation

The SLWA has roughly 24 foot bridges along the Northville-Placid Trail that are maintained by DEC and local volunteer organizations. With the exception of two steel suspension bridges, bridge construction is primarily the standard wood stringer type with planking. Maintenance is a continual process and many bridges are often repaired when needed by trail adopters without prior Department knowledge. A comprehensive bridge inventory has been completed and efforts are currently under way to incorporate this information into the maintenance management information system.

The foot bridges across the West Branch of the Sacandaga River at Whitehouse and Hamilton Lake Stream Outlet do not meet the APSLMP guidelines since the materials used in their construction include steel cables, concrete and steel support beams. These materials were used partially because of the long distances in which these bridges span,

but also because it was the only technology available at that time. The bridges do have a positive impact on the physical resource by reducing vegetation trampling and associated river bank erosion caused by users searching for a suitable crossing location. They also provide users with a safe means of crossing at times when water levels are high.

Objective(s):

- To adopt a bridge design system that meets the user's needs, provides resource protection and requires minimal future maintenance.
- To ensure all bridges are properly maintained and safe for travel.

Proposed Management Actions:

- Develop a comprehensive MMS type bridge inventory with location maps, design sketches, and material construction details.
- Conduct regular safety inspections of all bridges to identify maintenance needs and develop a priority list.
- Assess replacement needs in coordination with all DEC program units and volunteer organizations.
- Incorporate the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) identified in the Management Guidelines section of this plan in all new bridge construction and relocation projects .
- Incorporate the principles of universal design where required into all new bridge construction projects and maintenance work.
- Construct all bridges of natural materials as indicated in the APSLMP.
- Retain the two suspension bridges (West Branch and Hamilton Lake Stream) until their condition requires replacement. The Department will continue to perform routine maintenance on the bridges, but no major rehabilitation. It is estimated that the bridges will need replacement in approximately 10-15 years. Prior to their replacement, the Department will seek alternate river crossing sites then consult with the APA to decide what kind of bridges will be built.
- Remove any building scrap from new bridge construction and/or old bridge maintenance or removal and dispose of properly.

PROPOSED RULES AND REGULATIONS

Current Situation

Several of the management proposals outlined in this section require the promulgation of new rules and regulations in accordance with DEC policies and procedures, the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), and the APSLMP. Statutory authority for regulatory change is found in ECL §9-0105(3) and Executive Law §816(3), which directs and authorizes DEC to develop rules and regulations necessary to implement the APSLMP. Existing regulations relating to public use of State lands under the jurisdiction of the Department are found in 6 NYCRR Part 190. The regulations proposed herein constitute the minimum level of direct regulation necessary to assure APSLMP compliance and directly influence visitor behavior to protect resources and the experiences of visitors.

Proposed Management Actions:

- Amend 6 NYCRR §196.4 to include Woods Lake in the SLW. This section prohibits the operation of mechanically propelled vessels and aircraft on identified bodies of water in the forest preserve.
- Amend 6 NYCRR §190.13(c) to apply to the SLW. This section sets group size restrictions which prohibit: day use groups of sixteen or more people; camping groups of nine or more people; affiliated day use or camping groups which exceed the numerical limitations established unless such

group has separated into smaller groups which do not exceed such limitations and such smaller groups maintain a separation distance from each other of at least one mile.

- Amend 6 NYCRR §190.13(d) to apply to the SLW. This section sets camping restrictions which prohibit tent platforms or camp structures other than tents, tarps, lean-tos, or structures composed of snow.

- Amend 6 NYCRR §190.13(f) to apply to the SLW. This section contains miscellaneous restrictions which: require registration at trailheads; prohibit the use of any audio device which is audible outside the immediate area of a campsite; prohibit the use of soap or detergent in any pond, stream or other water body; prohibit the disposal of any food scrap, food matter or food container in any pond, stream or other water body; prohibit the use of any motorized equipment; prohibit the marking of trails with plastic ribbons, paint, blazes or other devices, or the cutting or clearing of trails except by written permission of the Department; prohibit unattended pets or pets not under the complete control of their owners; require proof of a valid and current rabies inoculation for any dog which is accompanying them; prohibit erecting or maintaining any commemorative features, such as signs, plaques or markers depicting cultural sites except by written permission from the Department; prohibit undertaking any research project except under permit of the Department; prohibit possessing a glass container, except glass containers which are necessary for the storage of prescribed medicines.

SPECIAL AREA PLANS
CATHEAD MOUNTAIN PRIMITIVE AREA
Current Situation

The CMPA has one issue that is beyond the scope of a UMP but deserves a brief explanation. The APSLMP defines the CMPA as 206 acres and consists of Great Lot 121 in the Town of Benson. It also states that it contains two rights-of-way to an inholding of private land within the Silver Lake Wilderness as well as the remnants of a telephone line for the state owned fire tower on Cathead Mountain, situated within the inholding.

The issue related to the CMPA involves public access to the Cathead Mountain Trail and focuses on the nature and extent of private access over Great Lot 120 of the Benson Tract. The Cathead Mountain Trail is a very popular hiking trail that leads to a state owned fire tower lying within a private inholding. The trail begins on private property, crosses State land, then re-enters private property where the fire tower is located. Other associated structures that are State owned and located on the parcel of private property at the fire tower site include: a radio building, wind generating tower, observer's cabin, storage shed, helipad, and privy. The previously recognized motor vehicle road and telephone line to the fire tower are no longer used.

Historically, the private land owners used motor vehicles over Lot 120 to access their property, as authorized by TRPs issued by the Department. Normally, private use of motor vehicles would not be allowed over Lot 120 because of its Forest Preserve and Wilderness classification, but an exception exists for the use of a private right-of-way which pre-dated State acquisition. A few years ago DEC determined that the owners of this property had no such legal right-of-way across Lot 120, and consequently denied the owner's request for a new TRP. The owners responded in September of 2000 by withdrawing their permission for the public to use the Cathead Mountain Trail and filing a lawsuit against the State, alleging that they had a right-of-way and that DEC had therefore improperly denied the TRP. On June 16, 2005 the Appellate Division, Third Department, unanimously affirmed a lower court ruling that the Thomas Gang has no legal right of access to its property across Forest Preserve lands. Consequently, public access to the Cathead Mountain Trail continues to be denied.

Proposed Management Actions:

- Allow the bridges to remain until such time as a resolution has been reached to bring these crossings into compliance with the Master Plan.

- Remove all remnants of the old telephone line, including poles, along the foot trail leading to the fire tower. These are no longer used and are not necessary for the operation of the tower.

- The Department recommends that the APA consider reclassification of this area to the Silver Lake Wilderness since there are no longer any facilities that would prevent a wilderness classification.

SACANDAGA PRIMITIVE AREA

Current Situation

The West River Road is a dirt and gravel road that follows the West Branch of the Sacandaga River as it penetrates deep into the heart of the Silver Lake Wilderness. The road begins just south of the village of Wells, where it forks left or south from Algonquin Drive, 0.7 miles from NY 30, and continues southwest 8.0 miles to Whitehouse. The entire length of road is a public right-of-way and is currently being maintained by the Town of Wells. It provides motor vehicle access to several private parcels, the last one being a small triangular portion of Lot 11, Oxbow Tract, on the south side of the road, at 7.1 miles. This private parcel has approximately 0.2 miles of road frontage along the West River Road. The last 0.7 miles of road to Whitehouse are on Forest Preserve lands classified as wilderness and do not provide access to any private land.

The Master Plan describes the SPA as follows: "This area is in the Town of Wells in Hamilton County. It consists only of the Whitehouse Road and its right-of-way in Lots 362 and 382 of the Benson Tract." The Master Plan also provides that there are 7 miles of non-conforming public road located in this Primitive Area. Unfortunately, the Master Plan's geographic description of the SPA does not match its description of the number of miles of non-conforming road that is included in this area. A measurement of the road in Lots 362 and 382 reveals that there is only about 0.7 miles in these two lots. To further complicate matters, the Agency's GIS coverage shows the primitive area extending all the way down the road to the last small private parcel in Lot 11 of the Oxbow Tract – a total of 7 miles of road. Therefore, according to the GIS coverage, the sections of road in Lots 366, 376, 377 and 378 of the Benson Tract, as well as those in Lots 362 and 382, are part of the SPA.

The Master Plan contains several specific provisions on the use of motor vehicles in areas classified as wilderness. The Master Plan, June 2001, states in guideline 2 under the heading "Structures and improvements" on pages 21 and 22, that in wilderness areas "roads and state truck trails" are considered non-conforming structures. Guideline 1 under the heading "Motor vehicles, motorized equipment and aircraft" on page 23 of the Master Plan, provides "public use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment and aircraft will be prohibited." Thus, the Master Plan does not allow for any use of public motor vehicles on wilderness units within the Adirondack Park. Under the Master Plan, that portion of the road which is not included in the SPA must therefore be closed to the public use of motor vehicles. If, however, the Primitive Corridor does include only 0.7 mile of this road, DEC is without legal authority to effectuate a closure of that portion of the road which reaches to the last parcel of private property situated on the road, because Highway Law §212 does not authorize the Department to close a road which does not pass over or through lands "wholly controlled" by the State.

Further discussions will be held with the Town of Wells to address the future status of the last 0.7 miles of the West River Road. Within the 5-year period covered by this UMP, said discussions will result in action which bring the status of this section of road into compliance with Master Plan requirements. Possible options for effectuating such compliance might include, among other things, an order of abandonment by the Town pursuant to Highway Law § 205(1) or a Commissioner closure order pursuant to Highway Law § 212.

Another issue is that the portion of the road from Whitehouse to the confluence with Dugway Creek is included within the West Branch of the Sacandaga River wild river corridor (ECL §15-2713(1)(g)). 6 NYCRR §666.2(g) provides that "all <u>new</u> land use or development in a river area must be undertaken in compliance with the standards listed in this Part" (emphasis added), thereby implying that land use or development existing before the day when the river corridor was designated <u>not</u> required to comply with 6 NYCRR Part 666. Since the West River Road and the use thereof were established before the river corridor was designated as a wild river, public use of the road is therefore permitted.

Proposed Management Actions:

- Consult with APA and clarify the discrepancy between the Master Plan geographical description on the one hand and the Master Plan and DEC GIS mileage description on the other.

WHITEHOUSE

Current Situation

Whitehouse is an interesting area along the West Branch of the Sacandaga that was once the site of a lumber camp, private hunting lodge, and boys' camp. Today, there are only the remains of some old building foundations, a few cellar holes, and two stone chimneys. The large maintained clearing along the river, where people currently camp, was the site of a private hunting camp with a main "white house" lodge. Scattered in the woods surrounding this area are a few stone foundations and a stone chimney from Larry Fountain's residence which was also later known as the "Blair House." Further along the West Branch of the Sacandaga, where the Northville-Placid Trail crosses, is one of two steel suspension bridges. Directly in front of this bridge on the north shore sets a second stone chimney which is the remains of a boys' camp recreation hall.

The Whitehouse area is by far the most popular place in the unit. The West River Road provides both day users and overnight campers with easy access to the wilderness. The Town has designated the entire length of West River Road open to snowmobiles and ATVs. The last 0.7 miles of road are on lands classified as wilderness and the public use of motor vehicles along this section has recently become an issue. Over the years, this use has been allowed to occur but has since spread into adjacent lands causing some natural resource damage. The Master Plan does not allow any public motor vehicle use in Wilderness areas within the Park. Also, both the stone chimneys and the two steel suspension bridges are non-conforming structures under the Master Plan's Guidelines. Some of the people in the local community have an interest in keeping the chimneys and bridges because they consider them part of the cultural history of the area. Both chimneys were assessed by DEC's Historic Preservation Officer pursuant to the State Historic Preservation Act (PRHPL Article 14) to determine their historical significance. Based on these assessments OPRHP concluded that both structures were not historically significant for multiple reasons including the materials from which they were constructed.

The two suspension bridges, one across the West Branch of the Sacandaga River and one across Hamilton Lake Stream Outlet, do not meet the APSLMP guidelines since they are not constructed of "natural materials"(APSLMP, June 2001, page 21), utilizing instead steel cables, concrete and steel support beams. These materials were used partially because of the long distances in which these bridges span, but also because it was the only technology available at that time. The bridges do have a positive impact on the physical resource by reducing erosion along the river banks and by providing users with a safe means of crossing at times when water levels are high.

The current practice of mowing an expansive area to maintain a clearing along the riverbank for two designated campsites needs to stop. Such mowing has been allowed to occur, but does not conform with the APSLMP.

Proposed Management Actions:

- Remove the "Blair House" chimney because of its poor structural condition and easy accessibility. This chimney is a public safety issue and often attracts large groups of visitors. The boys' camp recreation hall chimney by the suspension bridge will not be maintained and will be removed once it deteriorates.

- Work cooperatively with the Town of Wells to bring the last 0.7 miles of the West River Road into compliance with Master Plan requirements before the end of the 5-year period covered by this UMP. Possible options for effectuating such compliance might include, among other things, an order of abandonment by the Town pursuant to Highway Law § 205(1) or a Commissioner closure order pursuant to Highway Law § 212. Re-establish foot trail conditions along this route. Create a new parking area large enough to accommodate 10 cars with one van accessible space and a trailhead within 500 feet of the location where motorized access will end. A new level-two kiosk which incorporates a trail register box, sign-in book, area map, and informational signs will be placed at this location. Two (2) additional roadside campsites along the West River Road will also be provided to compensate for the sites that are no longer accessible by car. Foot trail conditions will be established on this route by breaking up the road surface, removing appropriate culverts, and planting native vegetation. This proposed action should also help to eliminate illegal off-road ATV traffic in the Whitehouse area.

- Close all designated and non-designated campsites that fail to meet the Master Plan separation guidelines and all non-designated campsites that fail to meet the required minimum set back distance of 150 feet from any road, trail, spring, stream, pond or other body of water. Where feasible, relocate closed campsites to appropriate sites to continue to meet the need demonstrated by the original creation of the sites.

- Periodically inspect the two cable suspension bridges. It is recommended that these bridges continue to remain in place and be maintained until their condition requires replacement. Prior to their replacement, the Department will seek alternate river crossing sites then consult with the APA to decide what kind of bridges will be built.

NORTH COUNTRY NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL (NCNST)

Current Situation

The North Country National Scenic Trail (NCNST) was originally conceived in the mid 1960's as a trail to connect through eight northern states, from the Lewis & Clark Trail on the Missouri River in South Dakota to the Appalachian Trail in the Green Mountains of Vermont. In 1980, Federal legislation authorized the establishment of the entire length of the NCNST from South Dakota through New York as a component of the National Trails System. It is one of only eight trails authorized by Congress to be National Scenic Trails.

The portion of the NCNST through western New York has been designated and generally follows the Finger Lakes Trail (FLT). The completion of the trail through eastern New York (the Adirondacks) has been an issue from the start. Several problems were perceived with the original concept for the trail route through the already heavily impacted High Peaks Region. For a variety of reasons, local trail groups opposed this route and have been reluctant to actively adopt the NCNST as a cause, and without the critical elements of local support and advocacy, the trail has literally gone nowhere.

One issue that has been resolved is that the trail should pass through the southern Adirondacks, outside the High Peaks Region. With this in mind, two new alternative routes were developed. Alternative #1 recommends that the trail pass through the SLW with a couple different options within the unit. However, it is impractical at this point to consider a specific location until the APA and DEC decide on a general route and how to handle a trail of this nature within the framework of the UMP process. It is believed that the SLW would be able to support this type of trail system, and is thus a good candidate for selection. The DEC is currently soliciting bids for a professional assessment of the proposed route alternatives. The criteria for this assessment are based on the National Scenic Trail standards, the APSLMP, DEC policy, and comment from the New York State Trails Council and the Forest Preserve Advisory Committee. The resulting recommendations for the most appropriate route will be the major consideration in deciding the final approved route.

Proposed Management Actions:

- Should the upcoming assessment of proposed routes for the NCNST determine that the most environmentally sound route for the trail pass through the SLW, and the DEC and APA approve the resulting recommendations from the assessment, construct the trail using the route prescribed in the assessment. If deemed necessary by the APA, amend the UMP to reflect the trail construction project.

VI. IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE/BUDGET

The following table outlines a schedule for implementation of the proposed management actions and their estimated costs. The estimated costs of implementing these projects is based on historical costs incurred by the Department for similar projects. It should be noted that the cost of contracting any job not earmarked for contracting could be two or three times the listed cost.

Cited costs for YEAR I are estimates based on 2005 figures. Successive years have been prorated to reflect price increases, but still may need to be adjusted accordingly. The Department will cooperatively work with volunteers, towns and counties to accomplish any of the proposed actions. It is possible that not all actions planned for a particular year may be implemented. Any action delayed will be undertaken in one of the following years.

	PROJECT	COST
ANNUALLY		
1.	Routine maintenance of trails and associated facilities.	$5,000
2.	Maintenance and cleanup of campsites and associated facilities.	$2,000
3.	Boundary line maintenance (17 miles/year @ $200/mile).	$3,400
4.	Monitor public use and visitor impacts on natural resources and related facilities.	10 person days
5.	Promote an active educational program stressing the proper use of public lands, including the development of a unit brochure and map.	$5,000
6.	Monitor wildlife populations through the analysis of harvest data and field observations. Inventory non-game, endangered, threatened and special concern species as well as significant habitats.	5 person days
7.	Conduct biological and chemical surveys of select unit waters to assess management needs and to determine progress towards meeting the fisheries objectives.	10 person days
8.	Maintain an active acquisition program from willing sellers pursuant to the Open Space Plan to acquire desirable parcels as availability and funding permit.	1 person days
9.	Stock fish in unit waters consistent with Bureau of Fisheries policies and the Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement on Fish Species Management Activities of the Department of Environmental Conservation Division of Fish and Wildlife (1980).	5 person days
	TOTAL	**$15,400**
YEAR I		
1.	Work with Town of Wells to bring the last 0.7 miles of the West River Road into compliance with Master Plan requirements and create a new parking area within 500 feet of the wilderness boundary.	$15,000
2.	Remove the stone chimney from the “Blair House”.	$1,000
3.	Remove the non-conforming stop barrier at Whitehouse.	$250
4.	Designate two (2) additional campsites along the West River Road.	$500
5.	Remove the stone fireplace at the designated campsite near the chimney along the West Branch of the Sacandaga River.	$250

6.	Conduct baseline inventory of all established campsites.	$1,500
7.	Assess status of invasive plants in Unit and develop any necessary management objectives for control of invasives should they exist.	$5,000
	TOTAL	**$23,500**

YEAR II

1.	Close the Godfrey Road Extension (part of old Godfrey Road) to public motor vehicle use.	$15,000
2.	Remove the non-conforming fireplace at the West Stony Creek campsite.	$250
3.	Remove the non-conforming stop barrier at West Stony Creek.	$250
4.	Develop LAC guidelines and standards to monitor environmental and sociological conditions	30 person days
	TOTAL	**$15,500**

YEAR III

1.	Reroute the Northville- Lake Placid Trail through the southern portion of the unit.	$10,000
2.	Remove the three non-conforming fireplaces at Woods Lake.	$750
3.	Relocate or close all non-conforming campsites.	$5,000
	TOTAL	**$15,750**

YEAR IV

1.	Promulgate rules and regulations as identified.	5 person days
2.	Replace the non-conforming stop barrier along Rt 8 with boulders.	$1,000
	TOTAL	**$1,000**

YEAR V

1.	Remove the non-conforming fireplaces at the two lean-tos.	$1,000
2.	Remove the remnants of the old telephone line in the Cathead Mountain Primitive Area.	$2,000
	TOTAL	**$3,000**

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center. 2000. Wilderness Planning Training Module. Wilderness Planning Workshop, Charleston, SC.

Blake, Leigh M. 1981. Liming Acid Ponds in New York. New York Fish and Game Journal, Vol. 28, No. 2, July.

Brenning, Lee M., W.P. Ehling and B. McMartin. 1987. Discover the Southwestern Adirondacks. Backcountry Publications, Woodstock, Vermont.

Calvin. Date Unknown. Annual Report of the Forest, Fish and Game Commissioners for 1902-1903. J.B. Lyon Company, Albany NY. pp 292.

Cline, M.G. and R.L. Marshall. 1977. Soils of New York Landscapes. An extension publication of the NYS College of Agricultural and Life Sciences at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York.

Colquhoun, J., J. Symula and G. Aylesworth. 1982. Spatial and Temporal Variation in Water Chemistry in Two Acidified Lakes. N.Y.S . Department of Environmental Conservation, Rome Field Station.

Cressey, G.B. 1966. Landforms. In: Thompson, J.H., ed. The geography of New York State. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press: 19-53.

Donaldson, Alfred L. 1977 (Reprint of 1921 Edition). A History of the Adirondacks. Two Volumes, Harbor Hill Books, Harrison, New York.

Driscoll, C.T. et.al. 2001. Acidic Deposition in the Northeastern United States: Sources and Inputs, Ecosystem Effects, and Management Strategies. BioScience 51:3, pp. 180-198.

Driscoll, C.T., K.M. Driscoll, MJ Mitchell and DJ Raynal. 2002. Effects of acidic deposition on forest and aquatic ecosystems in New York State. Environmental Pollution. (In Press).

Food and Agricultural Organization. 1970. Reclamation of Ponds, Lakes and Streams with Fish Toxicants: A Review. FAO Technical Paper 100, Reprinted by U.S. Dept. of Interior, USFWS, Washington, D.C.

George, C.J. 1980. The Fishes of the Adirondack Park. NYSDEC Publications Bulletin FW-P171. 93 pp.

Graham, Frank, Jr. 1978. The Adirondack Park. Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., New York.

Greeley, J. R. and S. C. Bishop. Date Unknown. Fishes of the Upper Hudson watershed. In: A Biological Survey of the Upper Hudson Watershed. State of New York Conservation Department. J. B. Lyon Company. Albany, NY. 1932.

Hammitt, William E. and David N. Cole. 1987. Wildland Recreation: Ecology and Management. John Wiley and Sons, New York, NY.

Hynes, H.B.N. 1972. The Ecology of Running Waters. University of Toronto Press. 555 pp.

Isachsen, Y.W. 1962. Geological History of the Adirondack Mountains. Educational Leaflet, NYS Conservationist Reprint - NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, Albany, New York.

Krumpe, E. E. and G. L. Stokes. 1993. Application of the Limits of Acceptable Change in United States Forest Service Wilderness Management. Proceedings of the 4th World Wilderness Conference, Norway.

Kretser, W., J. Gallagher, and J. Nicolette. 1989. Adirondack lakes study 1984-1987, an evaluation of fish communities and water chemistry. Adirondack Lake Survey Corporation, Ray Brook, New York.

Laing, Linda. 1994. Guide to Adirondack Trails: Southern Region. Adirondack Mountain Club, Inc., Lake George, New York.

Lindsey, J. 1958. The Fish Car - Adirondack - An Era Passes. The New York State Conservationist. December - January, 1958-59. Volume 13(3): 31.

Mather, F. 1884. Memoranda relating to Adirondack fishes with descriptions of new species, from researches made in 1882. Appendix E, New York State Land Survey. p. 113- 182.

McMartin, B. 1994. The Great Forest of the Adirondacks. North Country Books, Inc., Utica, New York.

McMartin, B. 1999. Discover the Southern Adirondacks. Lake View Press, Canada Lake, NY. Distributed by North Country Books, Utica, New York.

Mordoff, R.A. 1949 (Reprinted May 1953). The Climate of New York State. Extension Bulletin 764. NYS College of Agriculture at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York. 71p.

National Science and Technology Council Committee on Environment and Natural Resources. 1998. National Acid Precipitation Assessment Program Biennial Report to Congress: An Integrated Assessment. U.S. National Acid Precipitation Assessment Program, Silver Spring, MD.

New York Natural Heritage Program. 1985. New York State Breeding Bird Atlas. Wildlife Resource Center, Latham, New York.

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. 1996. Black River Wild Forest Unit Management Plan. Division of Lands and Forests, Herkimer, New York.

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and The Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. 1998. Conserving Open Space in New York State 1998, Final Plan and Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement. Open Space Conservation Plan, Albany, New York.

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. 1999. High Peaks Wilderness Complex Unit Management Plan. Division of Lands and Forests, Ray Brook, New York.

Pfeiffer, M. 1979. A Comprehensive Plan for Fish Resource Management within the Adirondack Zone. NYSDEC, Ray Brook, NY.

Plosila, D. 1977. A Lake Trout Management Plan for New York State. NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, Bureau of Fisheries, Mimeo.

Scott, W.B., and E.J. Crossman. 1973. Freshwater Fishes of Canada. Fisheries Research Board of Canada, Ottawa. 966 pp.

Shepherd, W., E. Dietsch, C. Parker, T. Pelchar, J.D. Sheppard, J. Dell, P. Neth. 1980. Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement on Fish Species Management Activities of the Department of Environmental Conservation. NYSDEC Administrative Report.

Simonin, H. 1990. Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement on the NYSDEC Program of Liming Selected Acidified Waters. NYSDEC Administrative Report.

State of New York, Adirondack Park Agency, and Department of Environmental Conservation. 1987. Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan. Adirondack Park Agency, Ray Brook, New York.

VanValkenburgh, Norman J. 1985. Land Acquisition for New York State. The Catskill Center, Arkville, New York.

Zilliox, R. and M. Pfeiffer. 1956. Restoration of Brook Trout Fishing in a Chain of Connected Waters. New York Fish and Game Journal, 3: 167-190.

Zurbuch, P. 1984. Neutralization of Acidified Streams in West Virginia. Fisheries, Vol. 9:1: 42-47.

ACRONYMS

ADA	American with Disabilities Act
ADAAG	Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines
ADK	Adirondack Mountain Club
ALSC	Adirondack Lakes Survey Corporation
ANC	Acid neutralizing capacity
APA	Adirondack Park Agency
APLUDP	Adirondack Park Land Use Development Plan
APSLMP	Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan
ARTC	Adirondack Regional Tourism Council
ATV	All Terrain Vehicle
BBA	Breeding Bird Atlas
CAC	Citizens' Advisory Committee
CMPA	Cathead Mountain Primitive Area
DEC	Department of Environmental Conservation
DEIS	Draft Environmental Impact Statement
DMU	Deer Management Unit
DOT	Department of Transportation
ECL	Environmental Conservation Law
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
ENB	Environmental Notice Bulletin
EPA	Environmental Protection Act of 1993
EQBA	Environmental Quality Bond Act
FEIS	Final Environmental Impact Statement
FPAC	Forest Preserve Advisory Committee
IP	International Paper
LAC	Limits of Acceptable Change
NBWI	Native-But-Widely-Introduced
NPS	National Park Service
NYCRR	New York Code of Rules and Regulations
NYS	New York State
NYSM	New York State Museum
OPRHP	Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation
OSP	Open Space Plan
PPM	Bureau of Forest Preserve, Protection, and Management
ROW	Right-of-Way
SEQR	State Environmental Quality Review Act
SCORP	Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan
SLW	Silver Lake Wilderness
SLWA	Silver Lake Wilderness Area
SPA	Sacandaga Primitive Area
SUNY	State University of New York
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
UMP	Unit Management Plan
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USFS	United States Forest Service
USGS	United States Geological Survey
VERP	Visitor Experience and Resource Protection
WMU	Wildlife Management Unit

UNIT BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Revised 06/20/77
and 12/08/05

Silver Lake Wilderness Area:

Beginning at a point at the intersection of County Road 111 and the common boundary of Lots 28 and 29, N ½, Township 1, Totten and Crossfield's Purchase, thence easterly along southerly edge of ROW of county road and following the northern boundary of State Lands to the intersection with said road and the north line of Lot 33, thence easterly along the north boundary of Lots 33, 34, and 35 to the northeast corner of Lot 35, thence southerly along the western boundary of Township 9, Totten and Crossfield's Purchase to the northwest corner of Township 10, thence easterly along the northern boundary of Township 10 to the ROW boundary of the Gilmantown Road, thence southerly along the western boundary of Gilmantown Road ROW to a point where Gilman Lake Inlet crosses said road, thence westerly along the north shore of said inlet and Gilman Lake to the state land boundary between Lots 9 and 10, Twp 1, N ½, T&CP, thence westerly along State line to the northwest corner of Lot 9, thence southerly along State land boundary between Lots 8 and 9, to the southwest corner of Lot 9, thence easterly along the south line of Lot 9 to the Gilmantown Road, thence southerly along said road to the State land boundary being the south line of Lot 9, Van Wagonen Tract, Twp 1, T&CP, thence along State land boundary to the Gilmantown Road at its intersection with the north line of the Overacker Tract, thence southerly along the west side of the Gilmantown Road to the State land boundary, thence westerly and following the State land boundary as it winds and turns to the easterly line of Lot 382, Benson Tract, to the north line of the right-of-way of the Whitehouse Road, thence westerly along said right-of-way to the north line of Lot 363, Benson Tract, thence proceeding westerly along the State land boundary around private land, to the point where the east line of Lot 363 intersects the road right-of-way, thence along the southern boundary of the road right-of-way, to the east line of Lot 382, Benson Tract, thence following the State land boundary to a point where it crosses the West Branch of the Sacandaga River, thence along the river to the east line of Benson Tract, thence southerly along the boundary of State and private land to the right-of-way of the Town Road, paralleling West Branch of Sacandaga (near southern boundary of Lot 2, Bergen's Purchase), southeasterly along the Town Road right-of-way to the boundary of Sacandaga Public Campsite Acquisition, Hamilton 100 as shown on Map #6686 on file, DEC Albany Office, thence westerly along said boundary of Public Campsite Acquisition shown on Map #6686 to the river and proceeding along the west bank of the Sacandaga River to Lot 1, Sub 2, Pat 7, Bergen's Purchase, around private lands in said Lot 1 to Town Road right-of-way known as River Road, thence along the west side of said road right-of-way to the north line of Lot 3, sub 2, Patent 7, Bergen's Purchase, thence around private lands in Lot 3 to said road right-of-way, thence along said right-of-way to State land boundary being the south line of Lot 22 of Patents 8 and 9, Bergen's Purchase, thence southwesterly, westerly and northerly along the boundary of State lands to the northwest corner of Lot 115, Benson Tract, thence along the west line of Lots 119 and 168 to the northwest corner of Lot 168, thence westerly along the boundary of State and private lands to the southeast corner of Lot 122, thence easterly along the north line of Lot 113 to the State land boundary, thence southerly along the boundary of State land to its intersection with the Benson Road in Lot 8, Benson Tract, thence following the north line of the right-of-way of the Benson Road and the right-of-way of Lang Road to the west line in Lot 51, thence northerly and easterly around Lot 51 to Woods Lake, thence counterclockwise around Woods Lake to the State line in Lot 70, thence along the boundary of State lands to the southwest corner of Lot 72, thence proceeding northerly and following the State land boundary to the county line at the southeast corner of Lot 14, Benson Tract, thence along said county line in a westerly direction to the right-of-way of Route 10, thence following Route 10 to Lot 249, Oxbow Tract, excepting private lands along the road in Lot 89, Benson Tract, and Lot 27, Jerseyfield Patent, thence easterly to the southeast corner of Lot 251, Oxbow Tract, thence northerly following the State land boundary to the West Branch of the Sacandaga River, at the north line of Lot 270, thence along the west boundary of a quarter mile buffer on the West Branch of the Sacandaga River to the confluence with Piseco Outlet, thence continuing along the same quarter mile buffer on the Piseco Outlet to the south line of Lot 132, Oxbow Tract, thence along the State land boundary on the easterly and northerly sides to the northwesterly corner of Lot 132, to the Piseco Outlet, thence continuing along the same quarter mile buffer on the Piseco Outlet to the State land boundary being the west line of Lot 144, Oxbow Tract, thence along the State land boundary to the south shore of Spy Lake, thence easterly along the south shore and counterclockwise around the lake to the State land boundary on the north side of the lake, thence northerly along State land boundary to the snowmobile trail (Corridor 8), thence along the snowmobile trail as it winds and turns northerly and easterly to the to the north line of Lot 122 and Route 8, thence following State boundary as it winds and turns to the point of beginning; also excepting private lots being interior lots described as Lot 367, Benson Tract, and the triangular portion of Lot 11, Oxbow Tract, south of Whitehouse Road in the southwest corner of the lot, also excepting ROW of Whitehouse Road.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS/ISSUES WITH RESPONSES

Silver Lake Wilderness Area - Summary of Initial Public Comments/Issues

Public Access

• New trail recommendations: Hell Devil Loop, Three Ponds Spur, Notch-Devorse Trail, Abner Brook Spur, Abner Brook Trail, King Vly Trail, Groff Mountain Loop, Little Cathead Mountain, Grant Lake, Jimmy Creek, Finch Mountain from Blackbridge area, Hamilton Mountain, Southerland Mountain and the outlet of King Vly.

Response- This is a wilderness area where the natural landscape should dominate and human presence remain relatively unnoticed. A conscious effort was made to keep proposals for new facilities to a minimum in order to preserve the sense of solitude and remoteness that currently exists.

• Cathead Mountain - would like public access to summit.

Response- The summit of Cathead Mountain is private and it is the private land owner's decision on whether or not to allow public access.

• North Country Scenic Trail (NCST) - a possible route through unit?

Response- A possible route through the unit will be considered in the upcoming assessment of the proposed trail routes.

• Reroute the Northville-Placid Trail (NPT) from Northville to Benson (several options were presented).

Response- The UMP includes a proposal for a reroute of a section of this trail through the southern portion of the unit from Woods Lake to West Stony Creek.

• Keep the reroute of the Northville-Placid Trail (NPT) away from private property on Woods Lake.

Response- The new trail will be located in a manner so as to be reasonably screened from view from the private property and lake to avoid intruding on the private property and natural character of the area.

• Keep both suspension bridges (Hamilton Lake Stream Outlet & West Branch of the Sacandaga River).

Response- Both steel suspension bridges will remain in place and be maintained until their condition requires replacement.

• Repair the suspension bridge over West Branch of the Sacandaga River.

Response- This bridge appears to be in good shape and the DEC is unaware of any maintenance problems.

• Need trailhead parking near the end of River Road to access Groff Creek.

Response- There is currently a small parking area at the end of River Road.

• No snowmobile, ATV, or ORV use in the wilderness.

Response- Public use of motor vehicles is prohibited in wilderness areas by the APSLMP.

• Properly maintain existing trails and limit the number of new trails.

Response- The DEC makes every effort possible to properly maintain existing trails and the number of new trails proposed was kept to a minimum.

• A snowmobile trail should be allowed through the area to connect Wells with northern areas.

Response- Snowmobile use is prohibited in wilderness areas by the APSLMP.

• Need more hiking and XC ski trails.

Response- An effort was made to keep proposals for new facilities to a minimum in order to preserve the sense of solitude and remoteness that currently exists.

• Provide trash receptacles and trail registers at trailheads.

Response- The Department has a carry in & carry out policy for trash and does provide trail registers at the more popular trailheads.

• Need adequate parking in Piseco for NPT.

Response- The UMP proposes additional parking in Piseco where the NPT crosses Rt. 8.

• Need additional parking for whitewater put-in 0.4 miles east of Whitehouse, near Buck Pond Outlet.

Response- The UMP proposes to work cooperatively with the Town of Wells to bring the last 0.7 miles of the West River Road into compliance with Master Plan requirements. Once this has occurred, the area where additional parking has been requested will no longer be accessible to motor vehicles. It is proposed that, upon such compliance, a new trailhead parking area will be constructed within 500 feet of the point where West River Road will be closed.

• Enlarge and improve existing parking area on Godfrey Road, add signs and refuse containers.

Response- This area is in the Shaker Mountain Wild Forest and will be addressed in that UMP.

• Improve NPT signing from parking area on Godfrey Road to sign in register and along trail on Godfrey Road to private lands.

Response- This portion of the NPT is in the Shaker Mountain Wild Forest. There is a proposal in this UMP for a reroute of the southern portion of the NPT that will bypass this section of trail.

• Denote where NPT crosses private lands.

Response- The Department makes every effort to acknowledge where trails cross private land.

• NPT needs clearing and signing throughout entire area.

Response- This comment was taken into consideration during the development of this plan.

• Add an additional fireplace at West Stony Trail intersection and upgrade existing fireplace.

Response- Fireplaces in Wilderness areas are non-conforming under the APSLMP and will be removed.

• Construct a foot bridge crossing West Stony Creek for access to the Notch, Three Ponds, and Wallace Bush Whacks.

Response- There is currently a foot bridge across West Stony Creek a little ways up on the NPT.

• All parking needs to be accessible year round.

Response- DEC encourages volunteer maintenance agreements with local organizations for maintenance during the winter months.

• Canoe take-out on the West Branch of the Sacandaga along Rt 10 south of Shaker Place.

Response- A canoe take-out in this area is discussed in the Ferris Lake Wild Forest UMP.

• Whitehouse Road must remain open to provide access for the disabled.

Response- Motor vehicle use in wilderness areas in not allowed by the APSLMP. The Department will work cooperatively with the Town of Wells to effectuate the closure of the road A campsite along the section of the road that will remain open will be made accessible.

• Snowmobile trail near Piseco - snowmobile trail in wilderness?

Response- There is a section of snowmobile trail on lands classified as wilderness behind the Piseco School has been addressed by the DEC and APA.

• More access could lead to more people, more sign requirements and group size restrictions.

Response- This was taken into consideration when developing the plan.

• There should be no camping within 100 feet of the West Branch of the Sacandaga River.

Response- DEC regulations currently prohibit camping within 150 feet from any body of water unless at a designated site.

• Restrict camping party size so the area doesn't become like the High Peaks.

Response- There is a proposal for a regulation to limit camping group size within the unit.

• Keep the Whitehouse Road closed in the early spring during mud season.

Response- The end of this road is currently closed during this time of year.

• Piseco Outlet (Spy Lake access) - is it covered by the general terms of the navigation settlement?

Response- The navigability of this section of water has not been resolved through the settlement of any litigation and thus still needs to be determined.

• DEC ought to claim a carry along the short rapids that leads to the outlet and into Spy Lake.

Response- Although the public right of navigation includes a right to portage around obstacles or rapids, this right exists only if the Outlet is navigable-in-fact. Fact gathering on the issue of whether the Outlet is navigable-in-fact will continue during the life of the UMP.

<u>Fish & Wildlife</u>

• Protect endangered and threatened species in the area.

Response- Protecting endangered and threatened wildlife species is one of the goals of this plan.

• Must conduct through natural resource inventories to identify and protect critical and sensitive areas.

Response- A through resource inventory has been completed for the unit and the protection of critical and sensitive areas is one of the goals of this plan.

<u>Public Protection</u>

• Create an informal "neighborhood watch" type program.

Response- This can be done by the local community without DEC involvement.

• Historical districts should protect local history as well.

Response- DEC acknowledges local history and makes every attempt to preserve historically significant sites.

• Need greater law enforcement presence along the West River Road.

Response- DEC recognizes the need for increased law enforcement in this area.

Education

• Promote wilderness areas by writing editorials and articles in local and regional newspapers and periodicals.

Response- Editorials and articles about Adirondack wilderness areas are often written on a regular basis by free-lance writers.

• Educating the public is very important!

Response- The DEC recognizes that educating the public is an important aspect to the proper management of the area.

• Provide NP trail pamphlets at sign in register along Godfrey Road.

Response- The DEC does not provide trail pamphlets at trailheads because of the likelihood that it would result in a trash issue along the trails.

• Provide interpretative information about the area's history where appropriate.

Response- This type of information will be provided in a unit brochure.

• Clearly post wilderness land use restrictions at access points.

Response- The posting of informational signs and use regulations at primary access points is addressed in this plan.

• Set up a small cultural center at Whitehouse and detail the history of the area.

Response- This type of facility is not conforming with Wilderness management guidelines.

• Move the barrier at Whitehouse so that people with wheelchairs and the disabled can drive to the suspension bridge and experience the fantastic view of the river.

Response- Motor vehicle use in wilderness areas in not allowed by the APSLMP. The Department will ensure that sufficient space is provided for people with wheelchairs to get through the barrier.

General

• UMP should require that noise mitigation equipment be installed at the rock crushing and sand extraction business in Wells.

Response- This is a Town issue that is beyond the scope of a UMP.

• Recreation facilities must be compatible with wilderness classification. The UMP must be consistent with Article XIV, the Forever Wild Clause of the New York State Constitution, the State Land Master Plan and all other pertinent laws, and DEC's Rules and Regulations.

Response- Agreed. Every effort was made by DEC to develop a plan that complies with the Forever Wild Clause and all pertinent laws, rules and regulations, and policies.

• Primary focus must be to protect the area's natural resources.

Response- Protecting the area's natural resources is one of the primary goals of this plan.

• Replace the geological survey marker (old one stolen) at the end of road parking area.

Response- Geological survey markers are property of the US Geological Survey and can only be replaced or set by that agency.

• Keep the fireplaces at Whitehouse.

Response- The plan calls for the removal of one of the stone fireplaces at Whitehouse because it is a public safety issue and calls for the removal of the other fireplace when it deteriorates.

• Wilderness areas must remain as trackless as possible.

Response- This was taken into consideration while writing the plan.

• Maintain the site of Colonel Peck's grave.

Response- The DEC does not maintain sites like this, however, it may be possible for a volunteer organization to maintain this site with an Adopt-A-Natural Resource agreement.

• Maintain the state land boundary lines.

Response- The current Department policy is to maintain boundary lines on a seven year maintenance cycle.

West River Road

• Numerous public comments opposed the proposal to bring the last 0.7 miles of the West River Road into compliance with Master Plan requirements because it would limit access to the wilderness and would also limit canoe access along the West Branch of the Sacandaga River. Five towns (Wells, Arietta, Long Lake, Fine and Day) have passed resolutions opposing this proposal. Numerous other public comments supported this proposal and felt that bringing the road into compliance is necessary in order to bring the area up to wilderness standards and help preserve the wilderness character of the area.

Response- The last 0.7 miles of road are on Forest Preserve lands classified as Wilderness. The Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan ("APSLMP" or "Master Plan") is clear in that it does not allow for any use of public motor vehicles on wilderness units within the Adirondack Park. Therefore, the last 0.7 miles of road need to be brought into compliance with Master Plan requirements. See the discussion on the West River Road in the Management Issues Section of this plan for more information related to this issue.

• Change the land classification along the West River Road to allow continued motor vehicle use (i.e. make the whole road part of the primitive area).

Response- The Department feels that the end of the road is correctly classified and reclassification is not an option. Furthermore, the APSLMP states that the objective of a primitive classification is to eventually upgrade the area to wilderness.

• DEC should clearly state in the UMP that ATV use along the West River Road is illegal pursuant to Vehicle and Traffic Law Section 2405(1).

Response- Whether or not ATV use is illegal along the West River Road is beyond the scope of this UMP.

Chimneys

• Numerous public comments opposed the proposal to phase out the stone chimneys at Whitehouse because they felt the chimneys were of significant cultural value and DEC needs to recognize the heritage and history of the local area and people. Numerous other comments supported this proposal and felt the chimneys were a public safety concern as well as a non-conforming structure in wilderness.

Response- The chimneys are considered non-conforming under the APSLMP guidelines. Both chimneys were assessed pursuant to the State Historic Preservation Act (PRHPL Article 14) to determine their historical significance. Based on these assessments it was concluded that both structures were not historically significant.

Suspension Bridges

• Numerous public comments supported the proposal to retain and maintain the two suspension bridges until they require replacement. A few comments supported the immediate removal of the bridges stating that they were non-conforming in wilderness.

Response- The Department acknowledges that the bridges are non-conforming, but also realizes their importance for user safety and resource protection. Both bridges are serviceable and will be allowed to remain until they require replacement. Prior to their replacement, the Department will seek alternative river crossing sites then consult the APA to decide what kind of bridges will be built.

Godfrey Road Extension

• Numerous public comments supported Alternative #2 (close the road to public motor vehicle use only with the option to reopen in the future) while only a few comments supported Alternative #3 (allow continued use of public motor vehicles).

Response- The Department has chosen Alternative #2 as the preferred alternative. This alternative increases the protection of the wilderness characteristics (i.e. an abundance outstanding opportunities for solitude and a large plant and animal community enjoying minimal impacts from direct human use) found in a relatively wild unit. It is also the most consistent with the management objectives and direction of management for the area.

North Country National Scenic Trail (NCNST)

• Numerous public comments supported the potential development of the NCNST in the Silver Lake Wilderness. One comment opposed the development and felt than an area that provides less solitude would be more appropriate.

Response- The ongoing effort to find a suitable location for the NCNST is currently focusing on other areas with less solitude than the SLWA.

Cemeteries

• A couple people commented that DEC should maintain the two small cemeteries within the unit.

Response- As the UMP states, DEC will not maintain these sites, but will respond to public requests for maintenance under stewardship agreements.

Trails

• Numerous comments supported Alternative #1 for the relocation of the Northville-Lake Placid Trail (NPT). There were also some comments that expressed concern regarding the close proximity of this alternative to private property and the potential increase in use around Woods Lake.

Response- DEC understands these concerns and will mitigate potential impacts by locating the new trail in a manner so as to be reasonably screened from view from the private property and lake to avoid intruding on the private property and natural character of the area. In addition, primitive campsite designation will be confined to the east shore on the south half of the lake. The plan also states that it is extremely important to monitor the campsites around Woods Lake where camping use is anticipated to increase due to the reroute of the trail. It also states that action will be taken when LAC standards are exceeded to correct undesirable conditions by rehabilitating the area or relocating use to more durable sites.

• The list of "Class I Unmarked Trails" in the inventory section is incomplete.

Response- The inventory has been revised to include omitted trails.

• The more prominent of the Class I trails are better described as Class II trails. These trails are very old, very established routes, and although certain sections of them may be vague due to a lack of recent maintenance, all of them have compacted treads and "intermittent" markings in the form of blazes and flagging.

Response- The Department feels that the trails in the inventory are classified appropriately and their future maintenance will be consistent with the management objectives for the area.

• Several new trails were proposed by the public in an effort to provide more recreational opportunities, as well as lessen pressure on the High Peaks and Pharaoh Lake Wilderness Areas.

Response- The decision to keep trail development to minium can be best understood by putting the SLW in context with the rest of the Forest Preserve. The SLW is a place characterized by an abundance of outstanding opportunities for solitude and a large plant and animal community enjoying minimal impacts from direct human use. By keeping proposals for new facilities to a minimum, DEC is taking the rare opportunity to increase the protection of those essential wilderness characteristics in a relatively wild unit. In most other areas, the best we can hope for is to maintain the status quo or try to minimize the potential impacts of continuing increases in use.

Maps

• The maps in the plan are inadequate. The facilities map should show facilities on surrounding units. Show large landowners and easement lands on the map.

Response- This UMP contains more than the minimum number of maps recommended in the UMP template. Changes have been made to the facilities map to show some of the facilities on adjacent units that may have a direct influence on the SLWA. The Department typically does not show large private land owner names on UMP maps. All the public easements in this unit are short right-of ways that would be hard to depict on the facilities map due to the map scale. A description of the easements is given in the inventory section of the plan.

• A forest cover type map is needed and a map of the condition of boundary lines as to how well they are marked.

Response- A forest cover type map has been added. A map showing the condition of boundary lines is not available. The UMP calls for inspecting all boundary lines to determine maintenance needs and that actions be taken to ensure that all boundaries are identified and marked within the five-year implementation of the plan.

Public Access

• A few people commented on reopening canoeing and fishing opportunities below the dam on the Piseco Outlet.

Response- The immediate area below the dam is private land. Whether the public can access this portion of the Piseco Outlet depends on whether the outlet satisfies the common law test on whether the waterway

is navigable-in-fact. See the discussion on Spy Lake in the Management Issues Section of this plan for more information related to the navigability of a waterway.

• Improve public access to Spy Lake.

Response- The UMP recommends exploring the possibility of obtaining public access to the lake through one of the three mentioned alternatives.

• Numerous comments indicated that public access to Cathead Mountain should be restored and the possibility of a land exchange be pursued. While the UMP does not speak of a land exchange, numerous other public comments opposed the concept of a land exchange.

Response- The Cathead Mountain issue is beyond the scope of a UMP. The summit of mountain is private and it is the private land owner's decision on whether or not to allow public access.

Group Size

• Numerous comments supported the proposal to limit group size in wilderness while a number of youth camps opposed the proposal.

Response- Group size restrictions are excessively restrictive with respect to youth camps and other organized camps. A maximum group size of 8 persons is economically prohibitive to organized camps. The APSLMP establishes a capacity limit for a primitive tent site as no more than 8 persons and three tents. The Department is mandated to manage Forest Preserve lands in compliance with the APSLMP. Since the capacity of a tent site in wilderness has been established under the APSLMP, the Department must manage overnight use within those established limits.

Fisheries

• No non-native species should be stocked in reclaimed waters. Treat at least some lakes and ponds as ecosystems in their own right rather than fish reservoirs. Possibly some "reclaimed" ponds stocked with native fish could have no fishing allowed and only natural production allowed. The repeated use of Rotenone should be avoided, because of possible unknown toxic effects. Fishing could be prohibited in at least some reclaimed lakes and ponds in the interest of fish communities.

Response- The Department does not consider lakes or ponds as strictly fish reservoirs. As this comment implies, lake and ponds are important ecological systems. However, fishing per se does not endanger the integrity of pond or lake ecosystems. The Department uses closed seasons, minimum length limits, and bag limits to prevent over-fishing. Angler use of fishery resources is a legitimate and ecologically compatible activity, and when properly regulated will not negatively impact fish communities. The effects of reclamation with Rotenone have been extensively studied. Identifiable effects are short term and not cumulative.

• Urge that the DEC develop comprehensive public education efforts to control use of baitfish by banning use of all "live" bait to ensure that reclaimed waters are not contaminated again.

Response- We agree. The use of baitfish is discussed in this UMP. Moreover, the use and possession of fish for use as bait is prohibited in select waters within the unit in an effort to prevent the introduction of unwanted fish species. Signs to this effect are posted and Bureau of Fisheries staff do periodic checks to make sure the signs are maintained. We also post at some locations educational signs about baitfish and their potential consequences for Adirondack lakes and ponds. The Freshwater Fishing Regulations Guide discusses the use and possession of baitfish and the potential negative consequences of baitfish introductions. In addition, an article in the Department's magazine "The Conservationist" discussed the issue. However, additional education about this issue is a desirable goal and will be explored.

Wildlife

• The background information on the natural resources is very comprehensive, though once again the birds and mammals are not listed phylogenetically (beginning with Common Loon), the only way the list can be useful.

Response- The bird and mammal inventories are listed alphabetically by common name. The Department feels this is an adequate presentation of information for this type of document.

• The connection between biology and management is superficial, in comparison with the kinds of analysis that could be done. In contrast, the sections covering game management are detailed, suggesting that the position of DEC is that "non-game" management will take care of itself. Reference is made to the recently completed New York gap analysis, which mapped habitat statewide, but not much is made of it.

Response- The Department has completed, and is currently conducting, several efforts focused entirely, or mostly on non-game species. For example, the Department has led efforts to survey breeding birds, amphibians, and reptiles through several statewide atlas efforts (the Breeding Bird Atlas, 1980-1985 and 2000-2005 and the Amphibian and Reptile Atlas Project, 1990-1999). The Department is currently working with SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry on techniques to analyze the two Breeding Bird atlases for making inferences about potential changes in bird populations. Additionally, the New York Natural Heritage Program conducts surveys for endangered, threatened, and special concern species, as well as rare and exemplary ecological communities. Lastly, the Department conducts annual monitoring and survey programs for several non-game species, including Bald Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, and Spruce Grouse (in conjunction with SUNY Potsdam). The New York Gap Analysis Project has provided useful information on the potential distribution of vertebrate species and their habitats. However, use of this data may not be appropriate on the scale of an individual Forest Preserve unit. As an alternative to using NY Gap data, the Department uses actual wildlife survey data from the atlases and surveys mentioned above to make management decisions.

• Better wildlife surveys are needed and planning for the return of extirpated species should be improved and emboldened. It should be noted that in the general area around the SLWA , a cougar kitten and wolf were both killed in the recent past. DEC has not does nearly enough in recent years to focus on documenting the current populations of wolves, cougars, bald eagles, moose, peregrine falcon, golden eagle and Canada lynx. Challenge the statement that the lynx restoration project is "considered a failure" as public reports of lynx sightings continue to be reported to the DEC.

Response- Currently, the Department conducts annual monitoring of bald eagles and peregrine falcons. Additionally, the Breeding Bird Atlas has provided useful data on the occurrence and distribution of many other species as well, including those that are classified as endangered, threatened, or special concern. The Department receives sighting reports of Canad lynx, wolves and cougars each year. In most cases, these reports are investigated by a DEC staff person to ascertain details of the observation and the potential that another similar looking animal was actually observed (for example, bobcats, coyotes, and fisher). The lynx restoration project was considered a failure in the terms of restoring a viable lynx population to the Adirondacks, however, the Department learned much about the complexities of restoring large animal populations. While it is likely that transient lynx occasionally pass through the Adirondacks (lynx have very large home ranges and disperse long distances, especially in low food years), the Department has no data to suggest the existence of a resident lynx population or that breeding is occurring.

• The most up-to-date information on Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in white-tailed deer should be included in the UMP.

Response- Information on Chronic Wasting Disease was added to the plan.

<u>General Comments</u>

• Remove boats stored and chained on the West Branch of the Sacandaga River.

Response- The storage of boats on state land is illegal and law enforcement will pursue the violations.

• Phase out lakeside lean-tos.

Response- The SLWA has three lean-tos all of which conform to Master Plan guidelines. None of these structures warrant removal at this time, however, other use restrictions may be appropriate sometime in the future.

• The draft states that the State of New York owns the fire tower and other associated structures on Cathead Mountain. This is inaccurate. Kindly correct the draft to reflect the correct ownership of the fire tower and other structures on Cathead Mountain.

Response- The Department built the fire tower and associated structures; therefore, it is the Department's position that they are owned by the State.

• The APSLMP should be amended to redefine the Sacandaga Primitive Corridor to only include that section of the road west of Dugway Brook. The small portions of state land between the road and river in lots 362, 366 and 382 should be reclassified as wild forest.

Response- The Department feels that a primitive corridor should extended along the entire length of the road up to the last private parcel, being a small triangular portion of Lot 11, Oxbow Tract. The land outside this corridor should remain wilderness.

• Prohibit the use of all motorized equipment, specifically chainsaws.

Response- The UMP proposes to amend 6 NYCRR §190.13(f) to apply to the SLW. This section contains miscellaneous restrictions which would prohibit the use of any motorized equipment.

• Which campsites are considered designated and non-designated?

Response- Campsites included in the inventory section are designated and are marked in the field with a yellow disk.

• The illegal mowing of the Whitehouse campsites needs to be stopped.

Response- The UMP addresses this issue.

• Concerned with the future of the road from Blackbridge in the primitive corridor.

Response- Should the private lands west of lots 362 and 382 of the Benson Tract be acquired by the state, the APSLMP calls for the road to be terminated in lot 382 and the right-of-way, as well as the acquisition, become part of the SLW.

• Several people commented on Department signs and the posting of regulations.

Response- The UMP calls for a comprehensive sign inventory and to post signing that is consistent and relevant to both the resource and user needs.

• The mission of DEC is to "conserve, improve, and protect its natural resources and environment, and control water, land and air pollution" and to not somehow balance natural resource degradation with recreational use.

Response- The Departments primary focus is natural resource protection (as evidenced by a high level of restraint for new actions and facilities, increased boundary line maintenance efforts, new chemical and biological surveys, promulgation of new regulations, implementation of LAC, invasive species monitoring, and the closure of inappropriate camping sites, trails, and restrictions on public use). The Schedule for Implementation for the first two years prioritizes public use and natural resource inventories and rehabilitation of existing facilities before most new facility construction.

• Management units are subunits of the whole Adirondack Park and Forest Preserve, but they aren't managed that way. Many other things should examined such as: size and shape, relative locations, and nature of the matrix (what's outside the unit) can all be important.

Response- The SLWA as a whole was examined as it relates to opportunities on adjoining State lands. The planning team discussed how to maintain a spectrum of opportunities, separate incompatible user activities, and to provide facilities and settings in keeping with user expectations.

• Insure the integrity of the area by focusing land acquisition efforts on acquiring land along roadsides.

Response- The Department agrees that these parcels are key to insuring the integrity of the area. As the UMP states, the overall framework for land protection in New York State is identified in the Open Space Plan. Furthermore, DEC will only acquire lands through negotiated sales with willing sellers.

• DEC needs to allocate resources for a comprehensive plan for hiking, non-motorized boating and cross country skiing in the Adirondack Park.

Response- This is a good idea, but beyond the scope of this UMP.

• One comment questioned the inclusion of the "Wilderness Management Principals" in this UMP or any other UMP for that matter.

Response- DEC developed, in consultation with APA, the wilderness management principals included in this UMP. The UMP can be amended if these principals change in the future.

• The analyses, assessments and inventories detailed in the APSLMP UMP development section were not readily accessible.

Response- While a large amount of information could make it difficult to relate background and inventory information to proposals due to the volume of material, a detailed Table of Contents was included to assist finding individual topics or areas of interest.

• The closing of traditional public roads within the Forest Preserve does not comply with the original intention and understanding of the electorate in approving the Constitution (now Section 1 of Article XIV) in 1894. This is based on a 1919 NYS Attorney General opinion.

Response- Attorney General Opinion 266 of 1919 primarily addressed the issue of whether the Conservation Commission, in 1919, had the legal authority to allow the improvement, at private expense, of a wagon track or trail across certain Forest Preserve land situated within the hamlet of Raquette Lake, Hamilton County. The Opinion also discussed the generic issue of the Department's authority or lack of authority to then close roads in the Forest Preserve. The supposed statutory authority on which such Opinion was based has long since been repealed by the State legislature. Furthermore, subsequent court decisions on Article XIV, Section 1 of the New York State Constitution and subsequent constitutional amendments

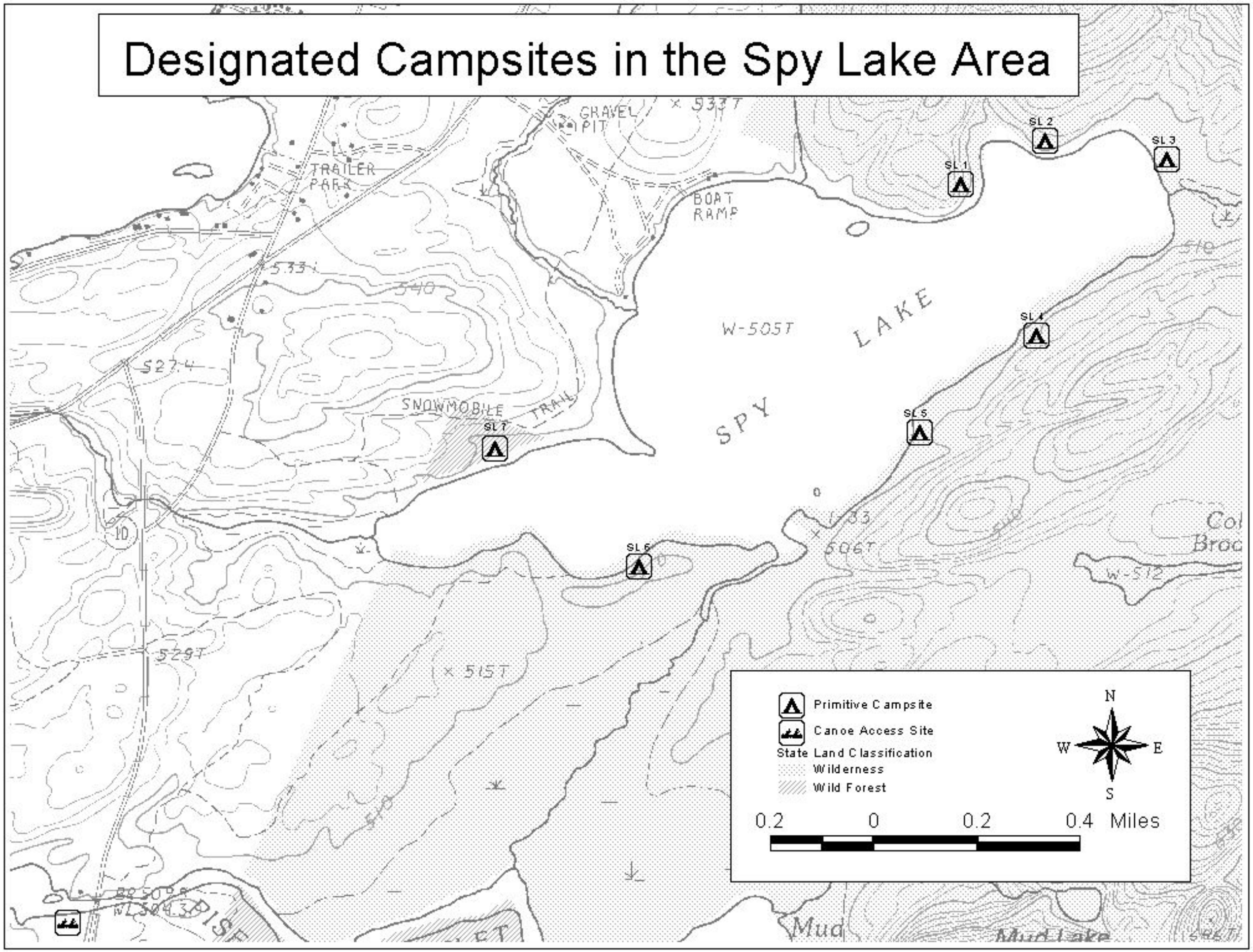
authorizing the improvements of existing roads and the construction of the Northway call into question the reasoning and conclusions of the 1919 Attorney General Opinion.

The Department of Environmental Conservation is currently vested with exclusive care, custody and control of the Forest Preserve under Environmental Conservation Law sections 3-0301(1)(d) and 9-0105(1), and is mandated to manage all such lands situated within the Adirondack Park in a manner which is consistent with the guidelines set forth in the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan. See Executive Law section 816(1). The Master Plan has been held to have the force and effect of legislative enactment. See Helms v. Reid, 90 Misc.2d 583, 604 (Supreme Court, Hamilton Co., 1977). It should also be noted that Highway Law section 212 currently authorizes the Department to close roads which traverse Forest Preserve lands, and this authority was upheld in the case of Kelly v. Jorling, 196 A.D.2d 181, 183 (3d Dep't 1990), leave denied, _ N.Y.2d _ (1991).

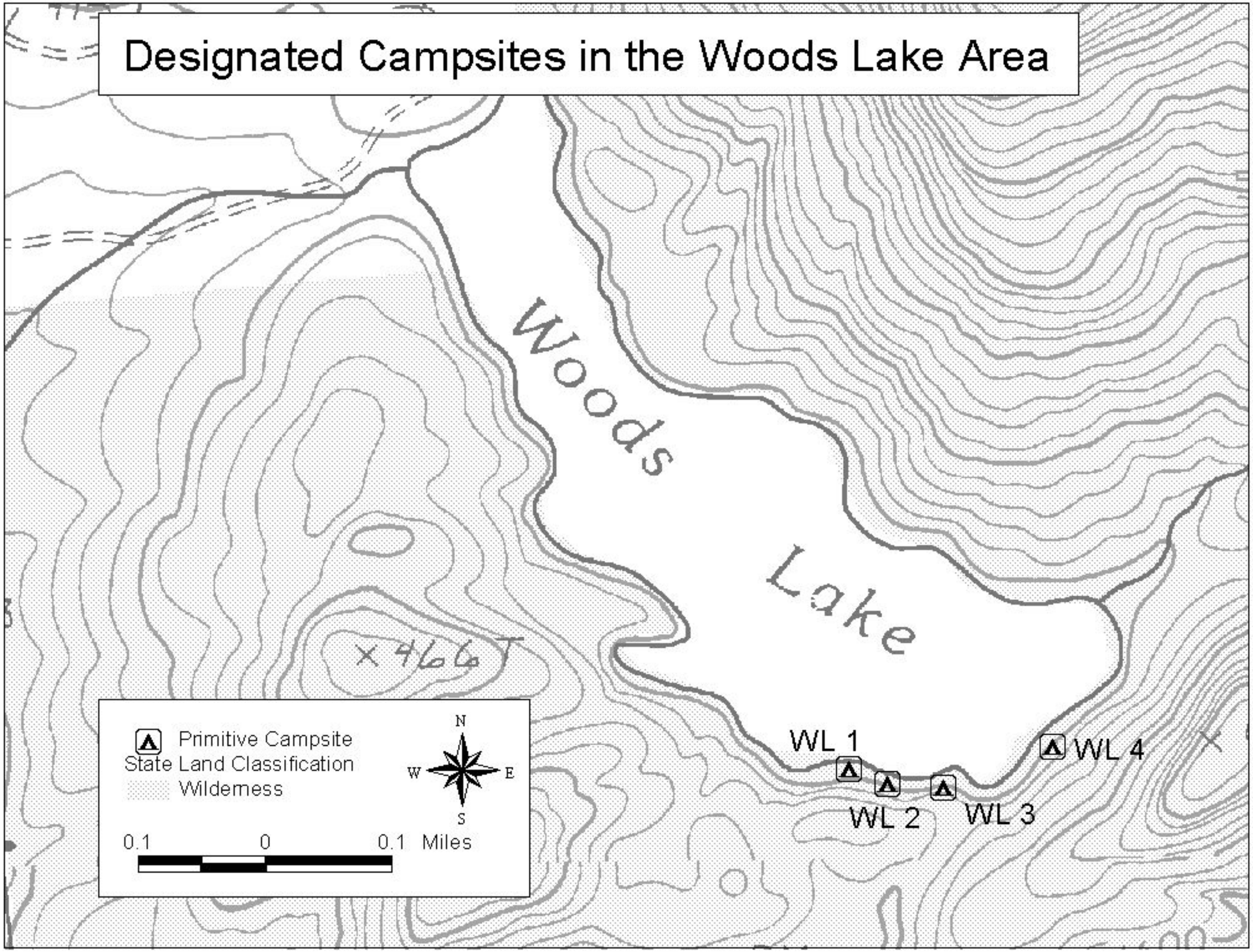
APPENDIX B
CAMPSITE LOCATION MAPS

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

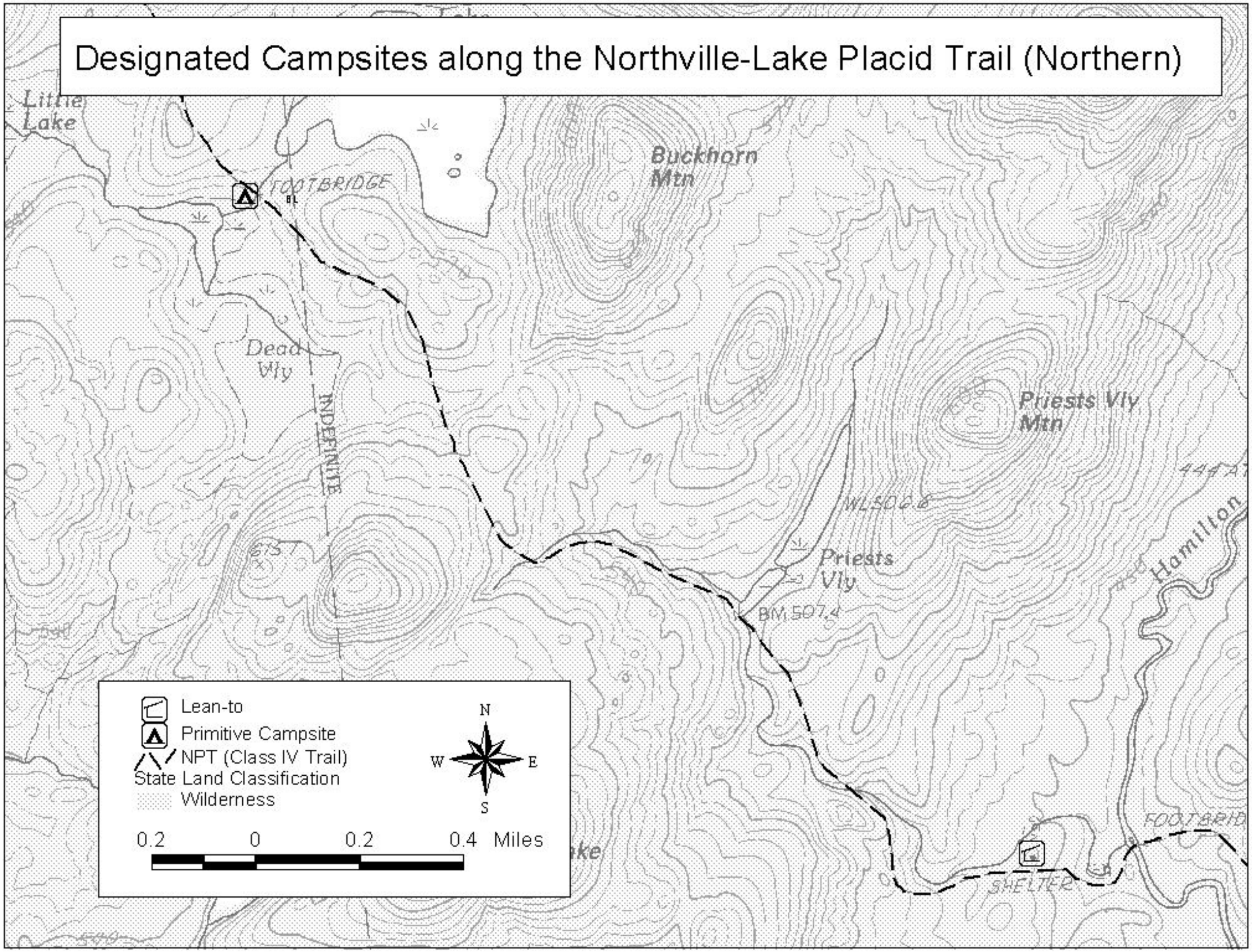
Designated Campsites in the Spy Lake Area



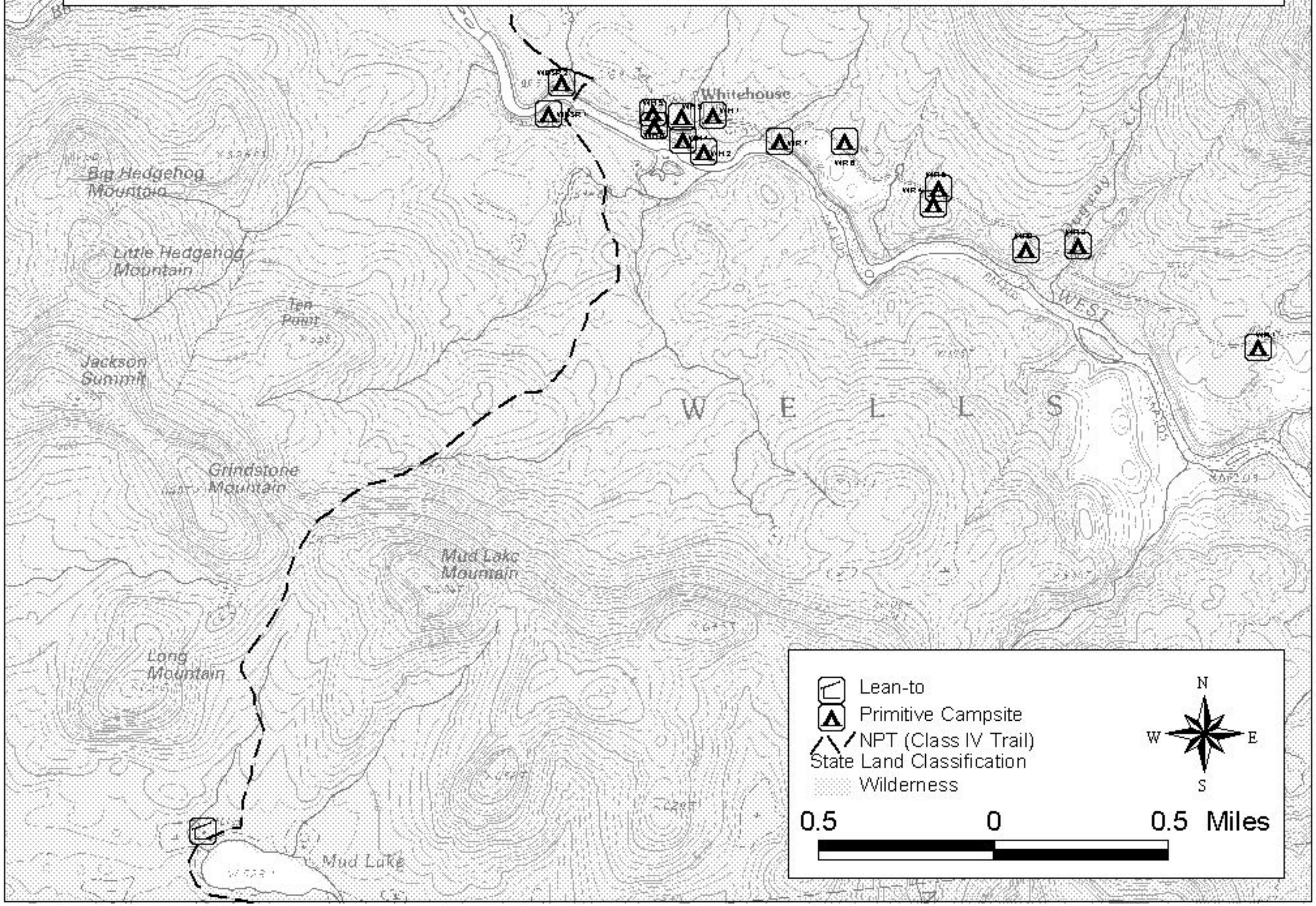
Designated Campsites in the Woods Lake Area



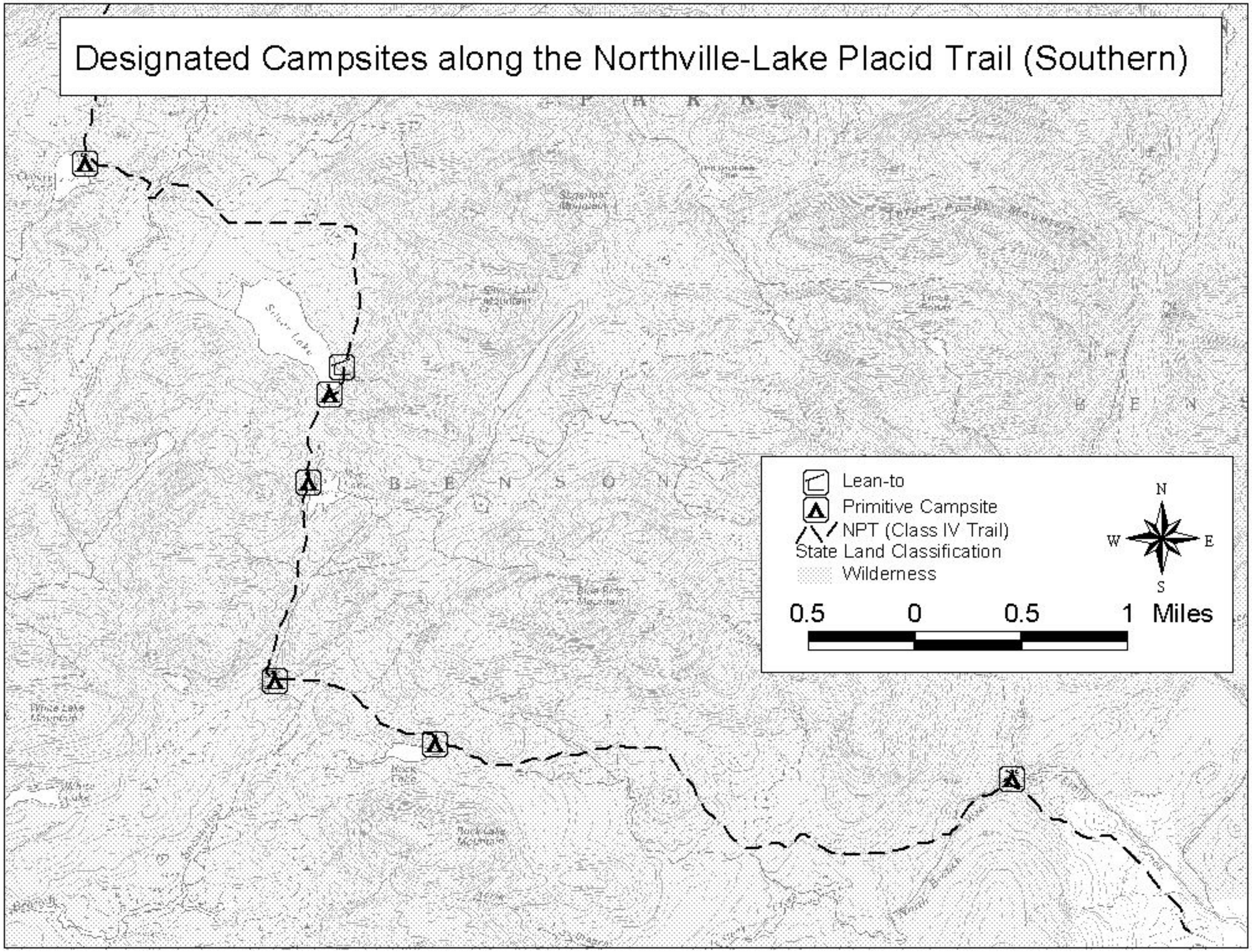
Designated Campsites along the Northville-Lake Placid Trail (Northern)



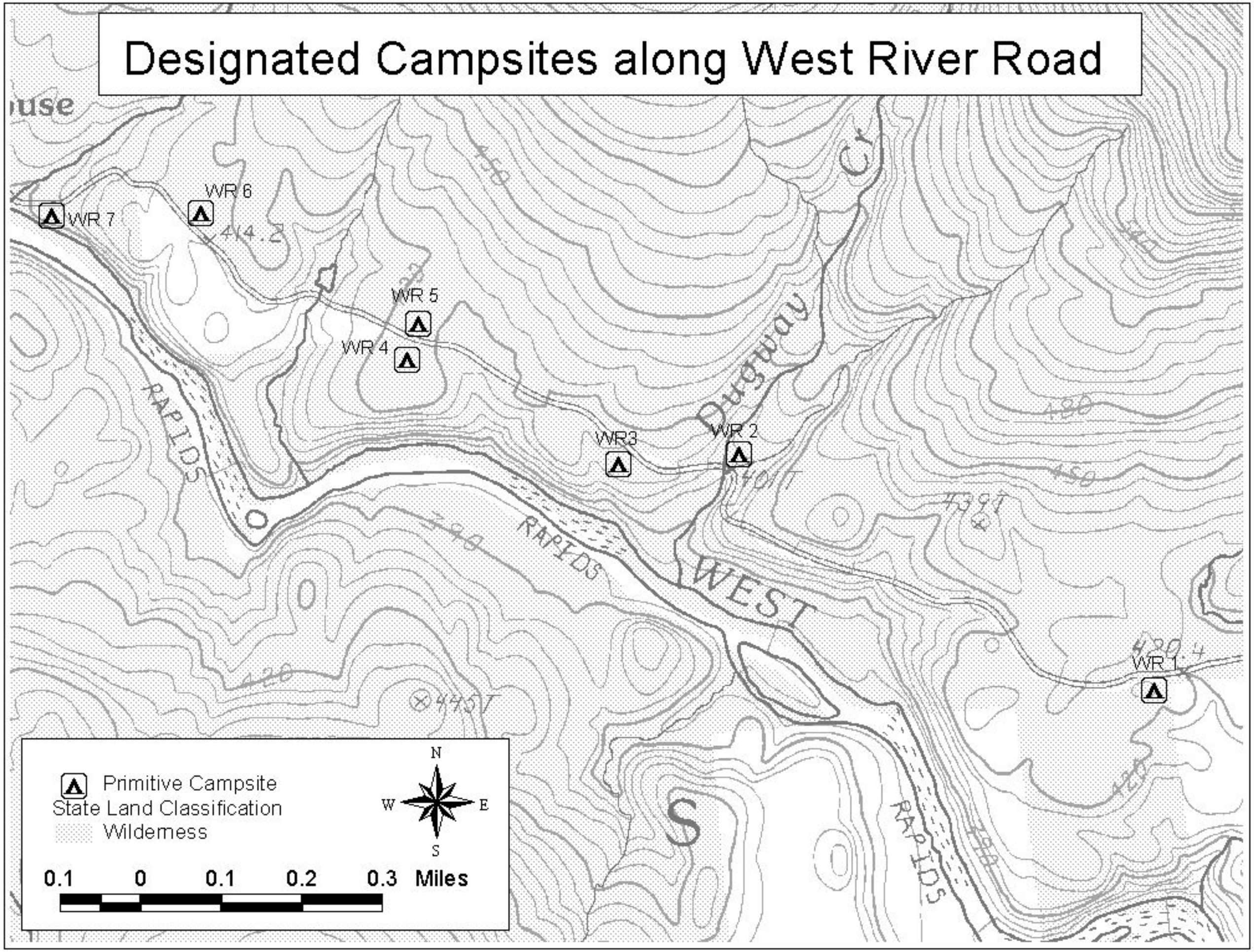
Designated Campsites along the Northville-Lake Placid Trail (Central)



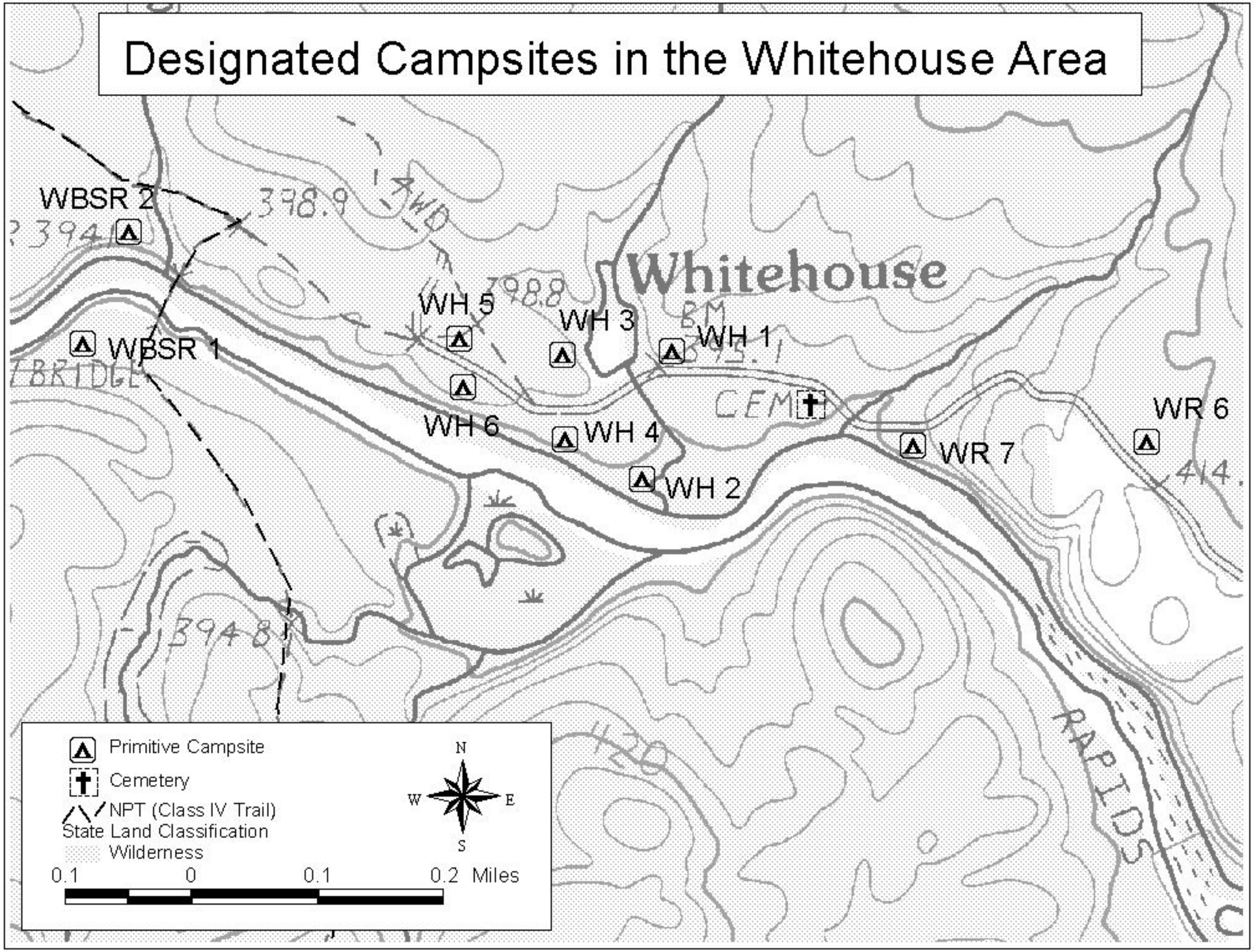
Designated Campsites along the Northville-Lake Placid Trail (Southern)



Designated Campsites along West River Road



Designated Campsites in the Whitehouse Area



APPENDIX C
WILDLIFE INVENTORY

BREEDING BIRD SPECIES OF THE SILVER LAKE WILDERNESS AREA*

NEW YORK STATE BREEDING BIRD ATLAS DATA

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	BREEDING STATUS	NEW YORK LEGAL STATUS
Alder Flycatcher	*Empidonax alnorum*	Possible	Protected
American Crow	*Corvus brachyrhynchos*	Confirmed	Game Species
American Goldfinch	*Carduelis tristis*	Probable	Protected
American Redstart	*Setophaga ruticilla*	Confirmed	Protected
American Robin	*Turdus migratorius*	Confirmed	Protected
American Woodcock	*Scolopax minor*	Confirmed	Game Species
Baltimore Oriole	*Icterus galbula*	Probable	Protected
Barn Swallow	*Hirundo rustica*	Probable	Protected
Barred Owl	*Strix varia*	Possible	Protected
Belted Kingfisher	*Ceryle alcyon*	Possible	Protected
Black-and-white Warbler	*Mniotilta varia*	Probable	Protected
Black-capped Chickadee	*Poecile atricapillus*	Probable	Protected
Black-throated Blue Warbler	*Dendroica caerulescens*	Probable	Protected
Black-throated Green Warbler	*Dendroica virens*	Confirmed	Protected
Blackburnian Warbler	*Dendroica fusca*	Confirmed	Protected
Blue Jay	*Cyanocitta cristata*	Possible	Protected
Blue-headed Vireo	*Vireo solitarius*	Probable	Protected
Broad-winged Hawk	*Buteo platypterus*	Possible	Protected
Brown Creeper	*Certhia americana*	Probable	Protected
Brown-headed Cowbird	*Molothrus ater*	Possible	Protected
Canada Goose	*Branta canadensis*	Confirmed	Game Species
Canada Warbler	*Wilsonia canadensis*	Possible	Protected
Cedar Waxwing	*Bombycilla cedrorum*	Probable	Protected
Chestnut-sided Warbler	*Dendroica pensylvanica*	Possible	Protected
Chimney Swift	*Chaetura pelagica*	Possible	Protected

BREEDING BIRD SPECIES OF THE SILVER LAKE WILDERNESS AREA*

NEW YORK STATE BREEDING BIRD ATLAS DATA

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	BREEDING STATUS	NEW YORK LEGAL STATUS
Chipping Sparrow	*Spizella passerina*	Confirmed	Protected
Common Grackle	*Quiscalus quiscula*	Possible	Protected
Common Loon	*Gavia immer*	Confirmed	Special Concern
Common Merganser	*Mergus merganser*	Confirmed	Game Species
Common Raven	*Corvus corax*	Possible	Protected
Common Yellowthroat	*Geothlypis trichas*	Confirmed	Protected
Dark-eyed Junco	*Junco hyemalis*	Confirmed	Protected
Downy Woodpecker	*Picoides pubescens*	Probable	Protected
Eastern Kingbird	*Tyrannus tyrannus*	Probable	Protected
Eastern Phoebe	*Sayornis phoebe*	Possible	Protected
Eastern Towhee	*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*	Possible	Protected
EasternWood-Pewee	*Contopus virens*	Probable	Protected
European Starling	*Sturnus vulgaris*	Possible	Unprotected
Evening Grosbeak	*Coccothraustes vespertinus*	Confirmed	Protected
Field Sparrow	*Spizella pusilla*	Possible	Protected
Golden-crowned kinglet	*Regulus satrapa*	Possible	Protected
Gray Catbird	*Dumetella carolinensis*	Possible	Protected
Great Blue Heron	*Ardea herodias*	Possible	Protected
Great Crested Flycatcher	*Myiarchus crinitus*	Possible	Protected
Great Horned Owl	*Bubo virginianus*	Possible	Protected
Hairy Woodpecker	*Picoides villosus*	Probable	Protected
Hermit Thrush	*Catharus guttatus*	Confirmed	Protected
Herring Gull	*Larus argentatus*	Possible	Protected
House Wren	*Troglodytes aedon*	Possible	Protected
Indigo Bunting	*Passerina cyanea*	Possible	Protected

BREEDING BIRD SPECIES OF THE SILVER LAKE WILDERNESS AREA*

NEW YORK STATE BREEDING BIRD ATLAS DATA

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	BREEDING STATUS	NEW YORK LEGAL STATUS
Killdeer	*Charadrius vociferus*	Confirmed	Protected
Least Flycatcher	*Empidonax minimus*	Possible	Protected
Lincoln's Sparrow	*Melospiza lincolnii*	Possible	Protected
Magnolia Warbler	*Dendroica magnolia*	Possible	Protected
Mallard	*Anas platyrhynchos*	Confirmed	Game Species
Mourning Dove	*Zenaida macroura*	Confirmed	Protected
Mourning Warbler	*Oporornis philadelphia*	Possible	Protected
Northern Cardinal	*Cardinalis cardinalis*	Possible	Protected
Northern Flicker	*Colaptes auratus*	Probable	Protected
Northern Goshawk	*Accipiter gentilis*	Possible	Special Concern
Northern Parula	*Parula americana*	Possible	Protected
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*	Probable	Protected
Northern Waterthrush	*Seiurus noveboracensis*	Possible	Protected
Olive-sided Flycatcher	*Contopus cooperi*	Possible	Protected
Osprey	*Pandion haliaetus*	Confirmed	Special Concern
Ovenbird	*Seiurus aurocapillus*	Confirmed	Protected
Pileated Woodpecker	*Dryocopus pileatus*	Probable	Protected
Pine Siskin	*Carduelis pinus*	Possible	Protected
Pine Warbler	*Dendroica pinus*	Possible	Protected
Purple Finch	*Carpodacus purpureus*	Possible	Protected
Red-breasted Nuthatch	*Sitta canadensis*	Possible	Protected
Red-eyed Vireo	*Vireo olivaceus*	Confirmed	Protected
Red-tailed Hawk	*Buteo jamaicensis*	Possible	Protected
Red-winged Blackbird	*Agelaius phoeniceus*	Probable	Protected
Ring-necked Duck	*Aythya collaris*	Possible	Game Species

BREEDING BIRD SPECIES OF THE SILVER LAKE WILDERNESS AREA*

NEW YORK STATE BREEDING BIRD ATLAS DATA

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	BREEDING STATUS	NEW YORK LEGAL STATUS
Rock Dove	*Columba livia*	Possible	Unprotected
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	*Pheucticus ludovicianus*	Possible	Protected
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	*Archilochus colubris*	Possible	Protected
Ruffed Grouse	*Bonasa umbellus*	Confirmed	Game Species
Rusty Blackbird	*Euphagus carolinus*	Possible	Protected
Scarlet Tanager	*Piranga olivacea*	Possible	Protected
Song Sparrow	*Melospiza melodia*	Confirmed	Protected
Spotted Sandpiper	*Actitis macularia*	Possible	Protected
Swainson's Thrush	*Catharus ustulatus*	Possible	Protected
Swamp Sparrow	*Melospiza georgiana*	Probable	Protected
Tree Swallow	*Tachycineta bicolor*	Probable	Protected
Tufted Titmouse	*Baeolophus bicolor*	Possible	Protected
Turkey Vulture	*Cathartes aura*	Possible	Protected
Veery	*Catharus fuscescens*	Possible	Protected
Warbling Vireo	*Vireo gilvus*	Possible	Protected
White-breasted Nuthatch	*Sitta carolinensis*	Probable	Protected
White-throated Sparrow	*Zonotrichia albicollis*	Probable	Protected
White-winged Crossbill	*Loxia leucoptera*	Probable	Protected
Wild Turkey	*Meleagris gallopavo*	Confirmed	Game Species
Winter Wren	*Troglodytes troglodytes*	Confirmed	Protected
Wood Duck	*Aix sponsa*	Confirmed	Game Species
Wood Thrush	*Hylocichla mustelina*	Possible	Protected
Yellow Warbler	*Dendroica petechia*	Possible	Protected
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	*Sphyrapicus varius*	Confirmed	Protected
Yellow-rumped Warbler	*Dendroica coronata*	Probable	Protected

BREEDING BIRD SPECIES OF THE SILVER LAKE WILDERNESS AREA*

NEW YORK STATE BREEDING BIRD ATLAS DATA

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	BREEDING STATUS	NEW YORK LEGAL STATUS
Yellow-throated Vireo	*Vireo flavifrons*	Possible	Protected

Total Species: 101

*Data includes all BBA blocks wholly or partially within the unit.

MAMMALS OF THE SILVER LAKE WILDERNESS AREA*

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	HABITAT TYPES	NEW YORK LEGAL STATUS	NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANK
Beaver	*Castor canadensis*	MF, adjacent to water	Game Species	S5
Big Brown Bat	*Eptesicus fuscus*	Wooded, semi-wooded areas	Unprotected	S5
Black Bear	*Ursus americanus*	DF, CF, MF	Game Species	S5
Bobcat	*Lynx rufus*	DF, MF, CF	Game Species	S4
Coyote	*Canis latrans*	All habitats	Game Species	S5
Deer Mouse	*Peromyscus maniculatus*	DF, CF, MF, open areas	Unprotected	S5
Eastern Chipmunk	*Tamias striatus*	DF, MF, hedgerows	Unprotected	S5
Eastern Cottontail	*Sylvilagus floridanus*	Fields, bogs, brushy areas	Game Species	S5
Eastern Pipistrelle	*Pipistrellus subflavusl*	Open areas, woodland edges	Unprotected	S5
Ermine	*Mustela erminea*	DF, MF, CF, old fields	Game Species	S5
Fisher	*Martes pennanti*	DF, MF, CF	Game Species	S3
Gray Fox	*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*	Lightly wooded, brushy areas	Game Species	S5
Gray Squirrel	*Sciurus carolinensis*	Mature DF, villages, towns	Game Species	S5
Hairy Bat	*Lasiurus cinereus*	DF, MF	Unprotected	S4
Hairy-tailed Mole	*Parascalops breweri*	DF	Unprotected	S5
House Mouse	*Mus musculus*	Buildings	Unprotected	SE
Indiana Bat (Myotis)	*Myotis sodalis*	Caves-winter, unk-summer	Endangered	S1
Keenes Myotis	*Myotis kees*	Woodlands, buildings	Protected	S5
Little Brown Bat (Myotis)	*Myotis lucifugus*	Buildings, caves	Unprotected	S5
Long-tailed Weasel	*Mustela frenata*	Old fields, DF	Game Species	S5
Longtailed or Rock Shrew	*Sorex dispar*	Talus slopes	Unprotected	S4
Marten	*Martes americana*	DF, MF, CF	Game Species	S3
Masked Shrew	*Sorex cinereus*	All w/ground cover	Unprotected	S5
Meadow Jumping Mouse	*Zapus hudsonius*	Open & brush areas in swamps	Unprotected	S5

MAMMALS OF THE SILVER LAKE WILDERNESS AREA*

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	HABITAT TYPES	NEW YORK LEGAL STATUS	NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANK
Meadow Vole	*Microtus pennsylvanicus*	Old fields, bogs, marshes	Unprotected	S5
Mink	*Mustela vison*	Forested wetlands	Game Species	S5
Moose	*Alces alces*	DF, MF, CF, wetlands	Game Species	S1
Muskrat	*Ondatra zibethicus*	Marshes, rivers w/cattail	Game Species	S5
New England Cottontail	*Sylvilagus transitionalis*	Forests edges, brushy areas	Game Species	S3
Northern Flying Squirrel	*Glaucomys sabrinus*	CF, MF	Unprotected	S5
Northern Short Tailed Shrew	*Blarina brevicauda*	All habitats	Unprotected	S5
Norway Rat	*Rattus norvegicus*	Buildings	Unprotected	SE
Porcupine	*Erethizon dorsatum*	DF, MF, CF	Unprotected	S5
Pygmy Shrew	*Sorex hoyi*	Woodland edges	Unprotected	S4
Raccoon	*Procyon lotor*	DF, MF, CF, adjacent to water	Game Species	S5
Red Bat	*Lasiurus borealis*	All, forested areas	Unprotected	S5
Red Fox	*Vulpes vulpes*	Woodland edges, DF, open areas	Game Species	S5
Red Squirrel	*Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*	CF, MF	Unprotected	S5
River Otter	*Lutra canadensis*	Lake, ponds, streams	Game Species	S5
Rock Vole	*Microtus chrotorrhinus*	Moist talus slopes	Unprotected	S4
Silver-haired Bat	*Lasioncteris noctivagans*	Forests adj. lakes, ponds	Unprotected	S4
Small-footed Bat (Myotis)	*Myotis leibii*	Unknown/caves	Special Concern	S1
Smokey Shrew	*Sorex fumeus*	DF, MF	Unprotected	S5
Southern Bog Lemming	*Synaptomys cooperi*	DF, bogs	Unprotected	S4
Southern Flying Squirrel	*Glaucomys volans*	DF, MF	Unprotected	S5
Southern Red-backed Vole	*Clethrionomys gapperi*	DF, CF, Boreal Forest	Unprotected	S5
Star-nosed Mole	*Condylura cristata*	DF, Wetlands	Unprotected	S5
Striped Skunk	*Mephitis mephitis*	Open forests, fields, villages	Game Species	S5

MAMMALS OF THE SILVER LAKE WILDERNESS AREA*

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	HABITAT TYPES	NEW YORK LEGAL STATUS	NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANK
Varying Hare	*Lepus americanus*	CF, MF, alder swamps	Game Species	S5
Virginia Opossum	*Didelphis virginian*	Villages, roadsides	Game Species	S5
Water Shrew	*Sorex palustris*	High elevations, woodland	Unprotected	S4
White-footed Mouse	*Peromyscus leucopus*	Woodland edges, DF, CF, MF	Unprotected	S5
White-tailed Deer	*Odocoileus virginianus*	DF, MF, CF	Game Species	S5
Woodchuck	*Marmota monax*	Open areas, DF, roadsides	Unprotected	S5
Woodland Vole	*Microtus pinetorum*	DF, Meadows	Unprotected	S5

*Based on NYSDEC Vertebrate Abstract Data Sources; Significant Habitat Unit, Delmar, NY.

Habitat Types:

DF=Deciduous Forests
CF=Coniferous Forests
MF=Mixed Forests

Natural Heritage Program State Ranks:

S1=Typically 5 or fewer occurrences, very few remaining individuals, acres, or miles of stream, or especially vulnerable to extirpation for other reasons.
S2=Typically 6 to 20 occurrences, few remaining individuals, acres, or miles of stream, or very vulnerable to extirpation for other reasons.
S3=Typically 21 to 100 occurrences, limited acreage, or miles of stream.
S4=Apparently secure.
S5=Demonstrably secure.
SH=No extant sites known, but it may still exist.
SU=Status unknown.
SE=Exotic, not native.

AMPHIBIANS OF THE SILVER LAKE WILDERNESS AREA*

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	HABITAT TYPES	NEW YORK LEGAL STATUS	NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANK
Spotted Salamander	*Ambystoma maculatum*	DF, MF, pools	Unprotected	S5
Northern Dusky Salamander	*Desmognathus f. fuscus*	Streams	Unprotected	S5
Allegheny Dusky Salamander	*Desmognathus*	Streams	Unprotected	S5
Two-lined Salamander	*Eurycea bislineata*	Streams	Unprotected	S5
Spring Salamander	*Gyrinophilus porhyriticus*	Streams, wetlands	Unprotected	S5
Redback Salamander	*Plethodon cinereus*	All woods	Unprotected	S5
Red-Spotted Newt	*Notophthalmus viridescens*	DF, MF, lakes, ponds	Unprotected	S5
Eastern American Toad	*Bufo a. americanus*	All areas	Unprotected	S5
Gray Treefrog	*Hyla versicolor*	Forests near streams, pools	Unprotected	S5
Bullfrog	*Rana catesbeiana*	Swamps, lakes, ponds, pools	Game Species	S5
Green Frog	*Rana clamitans melanota*	Swamps, lakes, ponds, pools	Game Species	S5
Pickerel Frog	*Rana palustris*	Lakes, ponds, streams, bogs	Game Species	S5
Mink Frog	*Rana septentrionalis*	Lakes, ponds, pools, bogs	Game Species	S5
Wood Frog	*Rana sylvatica*	DF, CF, swamps, bogs	Game Species	S5
Northern Leopard Frog	*Rana pipiens*	Meadows, lakes, ponds, streams	Game Species	S5
Spring Peeper	*Pseudacris c. crucifer*	Forests near ponds, swamps	Unprotected	S5

*Based on NYSDEC Vertebrate Abstract Data Sources; Significant Habitat Unit, Delmar, NY.

Habitat Types:

DF=Deciduous Forests
CF=Coniferous Forests
MF=Mixed Forests
Pools=Vernal pools or quiet water needed for breeding
Streams =Lives in, or adjacent to streams, springs, or wetlands.

Natural Heritage Program State Rank:

S4=Apparently secure.
S5=Demonstrably secure.

REPTILES OF THE SILVER LAKE WILDERNESS AREA*

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	HABITAT TYPES	NEW YORK LEGAL STATUS	NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANK
Common Snapping Turtle	*Chelydra s. serpentins*	Marshes, rivers, bogs, lakes	Unprotected	S5
Midland Painted Turtle	*Chrysemys picta*	Marshes, rivers, bogs, lakes	Unprotected	S5
Eastern Painted Turtle	*Chrysemys p. picta*	Marshes, rivers, bogs, lakes	Unprotected	S5
Eastern Milk Snake	*Lampropeltis t. triagulum*	DF, CF, MF, brush	Unprotected	S5
Northern Water Snake	*Nerodia s. sipedon*	Lakes, ponds, rivers, bogs	Unprotected	S5
Smooth Green Snake	*Liochlorophis vernalis*	Meadows, grassy marshes	Unprotected	S5
Northern Brown Snake	*Storeria d. dekayi*	All, esp old growth forests	Unprotected	S5
Northern Redbelly Snake	*Storeria occipitomaculata*	Moist woodlands, bogs	Unprotected	S5
Common Garter	*Thamnophis sirtalis*	All	Unprotected	S5
Eastern Garter Snake	*Thamnophis s. sirtalis*	All	Unprotected	S5

*Based on NYSDEC Vertebrate Abstract Data Sources; Significant Habitat Unit, Delmar, NY.

Habitat Types:

DF=Deciduous Forests
CF=Coniferous Forests
MF=Mixed Forests
Brush=Brushy areas, usually abandon farmlands

Natural Heritage Program State Rank:

S5=Demonstrably secure.

BLACK BEAR HARVEST - SILVER LAKE WILDERNESS REGION
(calculated take by township and season)

2003	Early	Archery	Muzzleloader	Regular	TOTAL
Lake Pleasant	6	0	5	10	21
Benson	5	0	2	1	8
Wells	3	0	5	14	22
Hope	6	0	1	5	12
Arietta	1	1	1	13	16

2002	Early	Archery	Muzzleloader	Regular	TOTAL
Lake Pleasant	2	0	0	3	5
Benson	0	0	0	0	0
Wells	2	0	2	9	13
Hope	0	0	0	2	2
Arietta	0	0	0	11	11

2001	Early	Archery	Muzzleloader	Regular	TOTAL
Lake Pleasant	12	0	0	5	17
Benson	0	0	0	3	3
Wells	3	0	0	3	6
Hope	1	0	0	3	4
Arietta	0	0	0	0	0

2000	Early	Archery	Muzzleloader	Regular	TOTAL
Lake Pleasant	7	0	4	13	24
Benson	0	0	0	4	4
Wells	5	0	3	23	31
Hope	0	0	2	6	8
Arietta	0	1	0	11	12

BLACK BEAR HARVEST - SILVER LAKE WILDERNESS REGION (calculated take by township and season)					
1999	Early	Archery	Muzzleloader	Regular	TOTAL
Lake Pleasant	1	0	0	3	4
Benson	2	2	0	0	4
Wells	10	1	0	13	24
Hope	2	0	0	0	2
Arietta	0	0	0	4	4

DEER HARVEST - SILVER LAKE WILDERNESS REGION
(calculated take by township - bucks/total)

TOWN	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	5 YEAR AVE.
Lake Pleasant	90/106	126/131	92/101	84/104	82/85	95/105
Benson	34/40	65/70	40/50	73/97	68/71	56/66
Wells	90/101	97/100	89/99	153/169	120/121	110/118
Hope	73/86	79/84	53/67	51/57	59/61	63/71
Arietta	57/68	105/116	64/72	126/132	72/77	85/93

TURKEY HARVEST - SILVER LAKE WILDERNESS REGION
(calculated take by county and season)

SPRING SEASON						
COUNTY	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	5 YEAR AVE.
Hamilton	15	16	18	18	7	15
FALL SEASON						
COUNTY	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	5 YEAR AVE.
Hamilton	30	4	15	1	5	11

FURBEARER HARVEST - SILVER LAKE WILDERNESS REGION
(calculated by township)

BEAVER	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	AVE. 1996-2003
Lake Pleasant	45	40	70	41	23	85	37	19	26	45
Benson	6	16	5	12	6	9	16	5	0	9
Wells	22	47	53	61	68	46	44	33	59	47
Hope	25	25	19	26	22	12	9	2	4	18
Arietta	63	80	102	53	58	44	61	23	53	61

FISHER	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	AVE. 1996-2003
Lake Pleasant	23	6	20	9	12	3	16	7	15	12
Benson	5	1	5	0	3	0	7	5	2	3
Wells	33	6	32	13	26	4	37	14	10	21
Hope	15	1	23	3	8	1	2	3	3	7
Arietta	14	7	29	5	7	7	27	5	14	13

OTTER	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	AVE. 1996-2003
Lake Pleasant	5	1	2	2	4	4	6	7	14	4
Benson	0	2	1	0	2	3	3	1	0	2
Wells	1	3	5	2	4	3	9	6	13	4
Hope	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1
Arietta	5	4	3	6	4	5	12	9	8	6

BOBCAT	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	AVE. 1996-2003
Lake Pleasant	2	1	0	1	0	0	2	0	1	1
Benson	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Wells	2	1	1	4	1	0	3	2	4	2
Hope	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Arietta	2	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1

FURBEARER HARVEST - SILVER LAKE WILDERNESS REGION (calculated by township)										
COYOTE	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	AVE. 1996-2003
Lake Pleasant	7	0	9	1	0	1	9	1	3	4
Benson	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	6	0
Wells	3	0	16	0	3	9	10	7	13	6
Hope	2	0	6	1	0	1	2	0	0	2
Arietta	1	2	2	1	0	1	9	1	2	2
MARTEN	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	AVE. 1996-2003
Lake Pleasant	1	0	5	1	3	0	8	2	2	3
Benson	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Wells	0	0	2	0	0	0	5	0	0	1
Hope	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Arietta	0	2	4	2	0	1	12	0	1	3

APPENDIX D
FISHERIES INVENTORY

INDIVIDUAL POND NARRATIVES FOR THE SILVER LAKE WILDERNESS

The following is a brief description of each pond in the Silver Lake Wilderness. The list of waters in this section was obtained from the NYS Biological Survey. Definitions of fisheries management classifications referred to in each description are noted below.

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

Coldwater Ponds and Lakes - Lakes and ponds which support and are managed for populations of several salmonids. These waters generally lack warmwater fishes but frequently support bullheads. Management may include stocking.

Other Ponds and Lakes - Fishless waters and waters containing fish communities consisting of native and nonnative fishes which will be managed for their intrinsic ecological value.

Two-Story Ponds and Lakes - Waters which simultaneously support and are managed for populations of coldwater and warmwater game fishes. The bulk of the lake trout and rainbow trout resource fall within this class of waters. Management may include stocking.

Unknown Ponds and Lakes - Waters which could not be assigned to the subprogram categories specifically addressed in this document due to a lack of or paucity of survey information.

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

UPPER HUDSON WATERSHED

Woods Lake (UH-P156) - Woods Lake is a relatively large (65 acre) water in the southeast portion of the Unit. Woods Lake has a mixture of state and private ownership; as such the lake will not be managed according to wilderness guidelines. The earliest file information on Woods Lake reveals the presence of nonnative smallmouth bass and yellow perch, plus native-but-widely-introduced (NBWI) brown bullhead in 1932. Subsequent surveys caught grass pickerel (nonnative), pumpkinseed (NBWI) as well as the previous three species. Because of the abundance of deep, cold water the lake received rainbow trout stockings beginning in 1967 and continuing into 1973. A subsequent netting survey resulted in a good rainbow trout catch, and angler reports during this period indicated a good fishery. The rainbow trout stocking was discontinued in 1974 because the warm-water fishery was deemed to be sufficient to support its perceived level of fishing. However, the rainbow policy may be revisited because of their relatively good performance. Woods Lake will be managed as a two-story water.

Management Class: Two-Story

Grant Lake (UH-P157) - Grant Lake is a historical brook trout water and has been annually stocked since 1956. A 1978 survey revealed the nonnative golden shiner had become established, as had the NBWI creek chub, brown bullhead, pumpkinseed and white sucker. The topographic map indicates a steep barrier on the outlet which would likely serve as a natural fish barrier. The pond will continue to be managed as an Adirondack brook trout pond. If subsequent surveys reveal the brook trout population to be in decline, and if field observations confirm the presence of a natural fish barrier on its outlet, it will be reclaimed to enhance and restore a native fish community. When a reclamation is determined to be necessary, the UMP will be amended to include it in the Schedule for Implementation and the pond narrative will be revised to reflect the new survey data.

Management Class: Adirondack Brook Trout

Unnamed Water (UH-P158a) - This 6 acre pond, located in the headwaters of Abner Brook, has never received a survey. While little specific information about the pond is known because of the lack of survey data, the pond has some management potential because of its size and location, and should be surveyed. Abner Brook itself was sampled near its mouth and contained brook trout in the late 1950's, and so the pond likely has potential as a brook trout water. Because of Abner Brook's brook trout population, the pond will be classed as Adirondack brook trout.

Management Class: Adirondack Brook Trout

Three Ponds (Lower) (UH-P159)
Three Ponds (Middle) (UH-P160)
Three Ponds (Upper) (UH-P217) - The Three Ponds are a set of closely situated ponds on the southern base of Three Ponds Mountain, and all three lack survey information. Middle and Lower Three Ponds are in the same drainage system, in the headwaters of an unnamed tributary that flows south into the North Branch West Stony Creek, while Upper Three Pond is in the headwaters of Ninemile Creek which flows north into West Branch Sacandaga River. Middle and Lower Three Ponds are relatively small (2 and 1 acres, respectively), however the map indicates there may be an effective fish barrier on the outlet of the ponds and so they warrant a survey for their potential as brook trout waters. Similarly, Upper Three Ponds appears to have a potential fish barrier on its outlet, and at a slightly larger 4 acres, it too should be surveyed for its brook trout management potential.

Management Class: Adirondack Brook Trout

Unnamed Water (UH-P160a) - This 4 acre pond is located in the southern portion of Benson, in Hamilton County near the Fulton County border. The pond forms the headwater of an unnamed stream eventually flowing into North Branch West Stony Creek. A map check of the pond indicates that there is likely a fish barrier on its outlet and thus should be investigated for its brook trout potential.

Management Class: Adirondack Brook Trout

Unnamed Water (UH-P215a) - This 2 acre water located on the eastern portion of the unit is in the headwaters of Vly Creek, reported in a 1932 survey as a brook trout stream. The pond does not show on some topographic maps, and may owe its existence to beaver activity.

Management Class: Unknown

Mud Lake (UH-P216) - This 23 acre lake is a historic brook trout water and part of the Ninemile Creek drainage system. A 1932 survey caught brook trout and brown bullhead (NBWI). In 1982 brook trout and bullhead were recaptured, but the nonnative golden shiner had become established. The pond will continue to be managed as an Adirondack brook trout pond. If subsequent surveys reveal the brook trout population to be in decline, and if field observations confirm the pond is a viable reclamation candidate, it will be reclaimed to enhance and restore a native fish community. When a reclamation is determined to be necessary, the UMP will be amended to include it in the Schedule for Implementation and the pond narrative will be revised to reflect the new survey data.

Management Class: Adirondack Brook Trout

Unnamed Water (Motts Flow)- (UH-P216a) - This 3 acre water, part of the Ninemile Creek drainage system, has never been surveyed. A 1932 survey of Ninemile Creek reported brook trout to be sustained by natural reproduction. It seems likely this pond contains brook trout as well, and will be managed as an Adirondack Brook Trout Water to preserve a native fish community in the presence of historically associated and nonnative species.

Management Class: Adirondack Brook Trout

Unnamed Water (UH-P216b) - This unnamed pond, approximately 3 acres in size, is also part of the Ninemile Creek system. It has never received a survey; however its presence in the Ninemile Creek system likely means it contains or historically contained native brook trout. It will be managed as an Adirondack Brook Trout Water to preserve a native fish community in the presence of any historically associated or nonnative species.

Management Class: Adirondack Brook Trout

Unnamed Water (UH-P216c) - This unnamed pond, approximately 2.5 acres in size, is also part of the Ninemile Creek system. Like the previous two ponds, it has never received a survey; however its presence in the Ninemile Creek system likely means it contains or historically contained native brook trout. It will be managed as an Adirondack Brook Trout Water to preserve a native fish community in the presence of any historically associated or nonnative species.

Management Class: Adirondack Brook Trout

Buck Pond (UH-P218) - An undated file note indicates brown bullhead (NBWI) were reported present, however the pond was not actually surveyed. Buck Pond had its first survey in 1961; no fish were captured in the single variable-mesh gill net set. Notes at the time of the survey indicate much of the pond to be shallow but there was a ½ acre section where the depth was up to 18'; the topographic map of the pond shows a high probability of a natural barrier on the outlet. In 1987 the ALSC surveyed the pond and failed to capture any fish in either gill nets or minnow traps. The maximum water depth was recorded as 22'. Water chemistry at the time indicated the pond was chemically unsuitable for brook trout with a pH of 4.7 and an ANC of -21.6, with a calculated flushing rate of 8.9. This relatively high flushing rate seems questionable as on both occasions when the pond was surveyed there was no flow in the outlet. Nonetheless, the pond appears to have been fishless since at least 1961 and, technically, does not meet criteria as a potential liming candidate because of its calculated flushing rate. Buck Pond will be managed to preserve its remaining aquatic resources for their intrinsic value.

Management Class: Other

Unnamed Pond (UH-P218a) - This relatively small 1 acre pond is man-made, created by a dam on an unnamed tributary (UH-360-20-14) of West Branch Sacandaga River. A file note dated 1932 states that brook trout were reported by the (then) owner, and a 1956 survey of the stream above and below the pond caught brook trout, a young-of-the-year brown trout, and numerous creek chubs, blacknose dace and common shiners. The earlier file note mentions the dam creating the pond is 10' high; thus it seems likely the dam would serve as a barrier to upstream fish movement into the pond from West Branch Sacandaga if still extant. This unnamed pond will be managed as a coldwater pond to preserve its native fishes in the presence of historically associated and nonnative species.

Management Class: Cold Water

Lake Chartreuse (UH-P219) - Lake Chartreuse, a 12 acre pond located at the bases of Hamilton, Swart, Haystack and Bear Mountains is an historical brook trout pond. The pond is drained by an unnamed stream eventually flowing into Hamilton Lake Stream. The pond was stocked with brook trout annually from 1944 through 1972 and was reported to have provided good brook trout fishing. In 1973 the stocking was discontinued because an angler reported the beaver dam on the pond had washed out and that it was likely too shallow and warm for brook trout. The pond, however, was never surveyed. Lake Chartreuse will be managed as an Adirondack Brook trout water, and brook trout stocking will resume pending verification of conditions suitable to sustain a native brook trout population.

Management Class: Adirondack Brook Trout

Unnamed Water (UH-221a) - This unnamed water has never been surveyed, despite its relatively large size of 11 acres. The pond, which is partially private, drains via its outlet directly into Hamilton Lake, which is a private water with a long history of lake, brook and rainbow trout stockings. Because of the apparent lack of any barriers to fish movement from Hamilton Lake, it seems likely the pond contains brook trout at least seasonally and perhaps year-round, assuming its depth is sufficient to provide a summer time refuge from warm surface waters. In fact, brook trout were reported, in a 1932 file note, to be running up all of Hamilton Lake's tributaries. Unfortunately, white sucker, creek chub (NBWI) and nonnative golden shiner were also reported in Hamilton Lake at that time. The presence of these species as well as bullhead was verified in a privately conducted survey in 1982, so the brook and pond may contain these species as well. The pond will be managed as an Adirondack brook trout water to preserve its native fishes in the presence of historically associated and nonnative species.

Management Class: Adirondack Brook Trout

Unnamed Water (UH-221b) - This 3 acre, unnamed pond is the source of Sucker Brook, which drains directly into Hamilton Lake. Sucker Brook likely contains brook trout because of Hamilton Lake's history of brook trout stockings and the file note mentioned above, although the brook and pond have never been surveyed. The NYCRR has Sucker Brook listed as a class C(T) water, also indicating the brook to be suitable for trout. Thus it seems likely the pond itself would contain brook trout. This water will be managed as an Adirondack brook trout pond to preserve its native fishes in the presence of historically associated and nonnative species.

Management Class: Adirondack Brook Trout

Owl Pond (UH-P222) - This 8 acre water is located on a relatively short, unnamed tributary draining directly into West Branch Sacandaga River. The topographic map indicates a good likelihood of a natural barrier to fish on the pond's outlet. Owl Pond is currently stocked with brook trout, and has been annually since 1942. A 1972 survey caught brook trout, white sucker and northern redbelly dace. The pond will continue to be managed as an Adirondack brook trout pond. If subsequent surveys reveal the brook trout population to be in decline due to interspecific competition from white suckers or new species introductions, and if field observations confirm the pond is a viable reclamation candidate, it will be reclaimed to enhance and restore a native fish community. When a reclamation is determined to be necessary, the UMP will be amended to include it in the Schedule for Implementation and the pond narrative will be revised to reflect the new survey data.

Management Class: Adirondack Brook Trout

Mud Lake (UH-P231) - Mud Lake (18 acres) drains directly into Piseco Lake Outlet via a very short outlet. Because there is very little elevation differential between Piseco Lake Outlet and Mud Lake, the species assemblage in the pond is likely the same as in Piseco Lake Outlet. The pond was last surveyed in 1932, when a single pickerel was captured via angling. Mud Lake will be managed to preserve its aquatic resources for their intrinsic value.

Management Class: Other

Lost or Cooney Lake (UH-P233) - Cooney Lake or Lost Lake, a 4 acre pond, is located on the western base of Lost Lake Mountain. The pond has been stocked annually with brook trout since 1947. Brook trout and brown bullhead (NBWI) were captured in the most recent survey conducted in 1978. The pH's at that time were in the 5.5 to 5.6 range. Lost Lake drains via an unnamed tributary into Cold Brook and then into West Branch Sacandaga River. The pond will continue to be managed as an Adirondack brook trout pond. If subsequent surveys reveal the brook trout population to be in decline due to interspecific competition from new species introductions, and if field observations confirm the pond is a viable reclamation candidate, it will be reclaimed to enhance and restore a native fish community. When a reclamation is determined to be necessary, the UMP will be amended to include it in the Schedule for Implementation and the pond narrative will be revised to reflect the new survey data.

Management Class: Adirondack Brook Trout

Little Lake or **Mud Pond** (UH-P250) - Little Lake (5 acres) drains directly via its unnamed outlet into Piseco Lake. The pond was noted in a 1958 site visit to be extremely shallow with less than an acre of open water, and thus no net was set in it. With very little elevation differential between the pond and Piseco Lake, the fish species assemblage in the pond is likely directly influenced by Piseco's fish fauna. Little Lake will be managed for the intrinsic value of its aquatic resources.

Management Class: Other

Buckhorn Lake or Fiddlers Pond (UH-251) - Buckhorn Pond is located upstream of Little Lake at the western base of Buckhorn Mountain. This 40 acre pond was last sampled in 1958, when pumpkinseed and brown bullhead (both NBWI) were captured and nonnative golden shiners were observed but not netted. Its management potential cannot adequately be addressed until the pond receives a complete survey. Because of the paucity of survey data the pond will be classed as unknown. The pond is fairly easily accessed from a trail originating off Route 8 near Rudeston.

Management Class: Unknown

Upper Loomis Pond (UH-P255) - Upper Loomis Pond is part of the three-pond Loomis Ponds, located on the northwestern base of North Branch Mountain. Upper Loomis drains via an outlet into West Branch Sacandaga River separately from Middle and Lower Loomis Ponds. Upper Loomis is an historic brook trout water having been stocked as recently as 1975, and notes from a 1956 survey indicate several 3' - 6' falls on the outlet form an effective fish barrier. In 1961, the pond contained a brook trout monoculture, with good survival noted. The pH's at the time were in the 5.6 - 5.4 range. Unfortunately, when the pond was re-surveyed in 1976 during an acid water survey, the netting yielded no brook trout and stocking was discontinued because the pond had become acidified, with a pH of 4.8 at a depth of 25'. Upper Loomis Pond needs to be investigated as a potential liming candidate. A map check indicates the pond has a limited watershed area and its flushing rate was calculated to be about 1, so preliminarily, the pond seems to be a warrant further investigation. Assuming it is found to meet the Division of Fish, Wildlife and Marine Resources' criteria as a liming candidate, the liming could restore this pond as a significant native fishery resource. If field observations confirm the pond is a viable liming candidate, it will be limed to enhance and restore a native fish community. When a liming is determined to be necessary, the UMP will be amended to include it in the Schedule for Implementation and the pond narrative will be revised to reflect the new survey data.

Management Class: Adirondack Brook Trout

Middle Loomis Pond (UH-P257) - Middle Loomis Pond drains into Lower Loomis Pond which in turn, drains via its outlet to West Branch Sacandaga River. There is very little elevation differential between Middle and Lower Loomis, however there appears to be a natural barrier to fish movement on the outlet of Lower Loomis based on a map check. Middle Loomis has a maximum depth of over 20' and is 8 acres. Middle Loomis was first surveyed in 1932 when the pH was determined to be 5.0. Middle Loomis received annual brook trout stockings from 1956 to 1961 based upon the results of a 1956 survey which found the pond suitable for trout. When the pond was re-surveyed in 1961, however, no fish were captured and the pH was less than 5.2. Stocking was then discontinued because the pond was deemed to be chemically unsuited. A more recent ALSC survey conducted in 1987 determined the pH had dropped to 4.69, with a -14.5 ANC. Unfortunately Middle Loomis was determined by the ALSC to have a flushing rate of 6.1, thus exceeding the Division of Fish, Wildlife and Marine Resources' criteria as a potential liming candidate. Middle Loomis will be managed as an Adirondack Brook Trout water. The pond should be re-surveyed. If water chemistry conditions have improved to the point where the pond may once again sustain fish, the pond will be restocked with brook trout.

Management Class: Adirondack Brook Trout

Lower Loomis Pond (UH-P256) - Lower Loomis is a relatively shallow (maximum depth of 8') 8 acre pond located just downstream of Middle Loomis. Lower Loomis was first surveyed in 1932, where water temperatures indicated the pond was too warm to support trout. No water chemistries were conducted. In 1961 the pond was surveyed again. An overnight gill net set failed to capture any fish, and the pH was determined to be 5.2. The pond was

deemed too shallow to support trout and no stocking at that time was recommended. A late June water chemistry conducted by the ALSC found the pH had dropped to 4.79, with a -9.5 ANC. The ALSC netting also failed to capture any fish. Lower Loomis' high flushing rate precludes it from inclusion in the Division of Fish, Wildlife and Marine Resources' liming program. Lower Loomis will be managed to protect its remaining aquatic resources for their intrinsic value.

Management Class: Other

Trout Lake (UH-P260) *and*
Little Trout Lake (UH-P261) - Trout Lake and its upstream neighbor, Little Trout Lake, are directly connected to the West Branch Sacandaga River by a relatively short, good-sized stream. Thus the river serves to control the fish species assemblage in Trout Lake and Little Trout. Trout Lake was last surveyed in 1987 by the ALSC. Fish species captured in that survey included a mixture of native and nonnative fish including chain pickerel, golden shiner, white sucker, brown bullhead, yellow perch and creek chubsucker. The creek chubsucker is discussed in the nearby Ferris Lake Wild Forest Draft Unit Management Plan by Demong (2000). Trout and Little Trout Lakes will be managed as warm water ponds to preserve their native aquatic community in the presence of nonnative fishes.

Management Class: Warm Water

Lost Pond (UH-P262) - Lost Pond has never been surveyed. Lost Pond is located upstream of Trout/Little Trout Lakes and is 4 acres in size. While this pond shares an outlet with Trout and Little Trout Lakes, there appears to be a natural barrier to fish movement close to the outlet of Lost Pond. A 1932 survey of the outlet of Lost Pond found it suitable for trout, and brook trout stocking was recommended; this likely indicates the pond itself is suitable for trout. Because of the lack of survey data the pond will be classified as unknown.

Management Class: Unknown

Unnamed Pond (UH-P262a) - This unnamed water lies within the same drainage as Lost Pond. Like its neighbor Lost Pond, there has never been a survey of this 9 acre pond. A map check indicates that likely there would be no barrier to fish movement between the two ponds so that the fish species assemblage of the two is likely similar. Because of the lack of survey data the pond will be classified as unknown.

Management Class: Unknown

Chub Lake (UH-P264) - Chub Lake, a 17 acre pond, is located in between the West Branch Sacandaga River and the western base of Chub Lake Mountain. The pond's relatively short outlet drains directly into West Branch Sacandaga River with very little elevation change, and likely the river influences the fish species assemblage in the pond. When last surveyed in 1932 the pond contained only nonnative chain pickerel, yellow perch and fallfish. Chub Lake will be managed as a warm water pond to preserve its fish species present for their intrinsic value.

Management Class: Warm Water

Ross Lake (UH-P266) - Ross Lake is a relatively small 4 acre water located in the North Branch drainage between Sherman and White Lake Mountain. The pond is an historic brook trout water and was annually stocked between 1950 and 1966; when surveyed in 1962 the pond's pH was 5.2. Stocking was discontinued in 1967 because of unsuitable water chemistries, and an ALSC survey in 1987 confirmed that the pH had dropped to 4.87, with a -6.7 ANC. Ross Lake was experimentally stocked again from 1995 to 1999, and when the pond was last surveyed in 1999 the pH had improved to 5.78 with an ANC of 14.4. Unfortunately, no fish were captured in the netting conducted in the 1999 survey, and brook trout stocking was once again discontinued. The reason for poor survival is unclear as the chemistries appear suitable, but the pond may be subject to acidic flushes during spring snow-melt. Relatively warm summer water temperatures may also have been a factor. Ross Lake's ALSC-calculated flushing rate exceeds the Division of Fish, Wildlife and Marine Resources' criteria as a liming candidate. Ross Lake will be managed for the intrinsic value of its remaining aquatic life.

Management Class: Other

North Branch Flow (UH-P266a) - North Branch Flow, an 8 acre pond, is located directly east of North Branch Mountain. As its name implies, the pond is formed by a widening of the North Branch, a tributary of West Branch Sacandaga River. North Branch Flow's fish fauna is influenced by that in the North Branch. The pond was stocked with brook trout annually from 1950 to 1966. When last surveyed in 1967, the pond contained brown bullhead (NBWI) and brook trout. Stocking was discontinued because the survey revealed natural reproduction was adequate. North Branch Flow will continue to be managed as an Adirondack Brook Trout water to preserve its native fish fauna in the presence of native but widely introduced brown bullhead.

Management Class: Adirondack Brook Trout

Unnamed Water (UH-P266B) - This 3 acre unnamed pond is located directly east of North Branch Flow and at the headwater of a small tributary that drains into the North Branch. This small pond has never been surveyed. Because of the lack of survey data the pond will be classified as unknown.

Management Class: Unknown

Canary Pond (UH-P267) - This 13.3 acre pond was last surveyed by the DEC in 1981. The pond at that time contained native brook trout and NBWI brown bullhead. The pond has been stocked annually with brook trout since 1942. The species assemblage has essentially remained unchanged from when the pond was first surveyed in 1932. The pond's pH in 1981 was measured at a 5.8 at a depth of 20'. ANC data are not available for the pond. The pond is relatively easily accessed via the Northville-Placid trail, and forms part of the headwaters of the North Branch. Canary will continue to be managed as an Adirondack Brook Trout water.

Management Class: Adirondack Brook Trout

Unnamed Water (UH-P267A) - This small (0.5 A), unnamed pond has never received a survey. A map check shows no inlet or outlet. Because of the lack of survey data the pond will be classified as unknown.

Management Class: Unknown

Brown Lake (UH-P268) - Brown Lake is a 10.6 acre pond. A 1962 survey with a single net reported non-native golden shiner and brown bullhead, while the following year native brook trout and native white sucker were reported in addition golden shiner and brown bullhead. In 1978 the pond was surveyed again by DEC as part of the Acid Rain Surveys. Only brown bullhead and golden shiners were captured in this survey, and the pH was recorded with a hand meter at a relatively low 5.1. Based on the lack of brook trout catch and the relatively low pH, brook trout stocking was discontinued. The ALSC surveyed the pond again in1987, and the pH had improved slightly to 5.25; only brown bullhead and golden shiners were captured. Based on the improved situation, brook trout stocking was resumed in 1994. A subsequent survey conducted in 1999 showed the pH had improved to 5.6, and brook trout and brown bullhead were the only species captured. The pond will continue to be managed as an Adirondack Brook Trout pond.

Management Class: Adirondack Brook Trout

Unnamed Water (UH-P269) - This 3 acre pond located between Meco Lake and the Silver Lake Outlet has never received a survey. Because there is currently no information on the pond, it will be classed as Unknown.

Management Class: Unknown

Silver Lake (UH-P270) - Silver Lake, the namesake of the Wilderness Unit, once supported a vibrant native fishery, but has, unfortunately, become a victim of acid precipitation. When first surveyed in 1932, the 75 acre pond was reported to have excellent conditions, and brook trout were reported in both Silver Lake and its outlet. Non-native

golden shiner, NWBI brown bullhead, and NWBI creek chub were also captured. The lake was stocked annually with brook trout from 1942 to 1968. The lake once sustained a healthy brook trout fishery and as stated in the 2001 State Land Master Plan, "Silver Lake is the principal attraction near the center of this area, chiefly for brook trout fishermen." However, in 1969 the pond was surveyed following angler reports of poor brook trout fishing. The survey failed to capture fish of any kind, and the pond was determined to be chemically unsuitable for fish. Consequently, stocking was discontinued. When surveyed in 1976 as part of the Acid Waters Survey the pH was 4.92 and, again, no fish were captured. Because some waters have had their pH's moderate in recent years, beginning in fall 2002, an experimental brook trout stocking policy was started on Silver Lake. The lake is tentatively scheduled to be surveyed in the future and, hopefully, water chemistry results and netting will show some degree of recovery. Silver Lake will also be investigated as a potential liming candidate. Silver Lake has a calculated flushing rate of less than 1, indicating it may meet the Division of Fish, Wildlife and Marine Resources' criteria for liming. Assuming it is found to meet the other criteria as a liming candidate, the liming could restore this lake as a significant native fishery resource. Silver Lake is accessed via the Northville-Placid trail, and there is a lean-to site near the lake. If field observations confirm the pond is a viable liming candidate, it will be limed to enhance and restore a native fish community. When a liming is determined to be necessary, the UMP will be amended to include it in the Schedule for Implementation and the pond narrative will be revised to reflect the new survey data. Silver Lake will also be investigated for its potential as suitable round whitefish habitat. If suitable, round whitefish may be experimentally stocked in an effort to establish a viable round whitefish population within the Unit.

Management Class: Adirondack Brook Trout

White Lake (UH-P271) - White Lake shares a similar history with Silver Lake. When first surveyed in 1932, the pond was reported to have a naturally sustaining brook trout population. Later, the pond was stocked annually with brook trout from 1942 through 1968. In 1969 following reports of poor fishing, the pond was re-surveyed. No fish of any kind were captured in the survey, the pond was declared chemically unsuitable, and stocking was discontinued. White Lake has never had its pH determined, however low pH, a result of acidic deposition, is assumed to have resulted in the demise of the pond's fish community. Like Silver Lake, in fall 2002 an experimental brook trout stocking policy was started on White Lake. The pond is tentatively scheduled to be re-surveyed to assess the performance of the brook trout. Preliminary data indicate White Lake may meet the Division of Fish, Wildlife and Marine Resources criteria for liming as its flushing rate was calculated to be near 2. Liming would enable restoration of a native fish community in White Lake should the scheduled survey information indicate low pH is still a limiting factor for this pond. This remote pond is located at the southern base of White Lake Mountain. If field observations confirm the pond is a viable liming candidate, it will be limed to enhance and restore a native fish community. When a liming is determined to be necessary, the UMP will be amended to include it in the Schedule for Implementation and the pond narrative will be revised to reflect the new survey data.

Management Class: Adirondack Brook Trout

Rock Lake (UH-P275) - Rock Lake is accessible via the Northville-Placid trail. This 8 acre pond was first surveyed in 1932. Only a single, non-native golden shiner was captured during the survey. From 1954 to the present the pond has received annual brook trout stockings, and prior to 1954 it received a mixture of rainbow trout or brook trout stockings. The pond was subsequently surveyed in 1965 as part of a routine net check on the stocking policy and NBWI brown bullhead and native brook trout were captured. The pond was surveyed again in 1978 as part of the Acid Waters Survey. Brown bullhead, brook trout and golden shiners were captured in that survey, and the pH was measured at a relatively low 4.85, although the meter used by the DEC crew may not have been accurate. If subsequent surveys reveal the brook trout population to be in decline due to interspecific competition from nonnative or NBWI species, and if field observations confirm the pond is a viable reclamation candidate, it will be reclaimed to enhance and restore a native fish community. When a reclamation is determined to be necessary, the UMP will be amended to include it in the Schedule for Implementation and the pond narrative will be revised to reflect the new survey data.

Management Class: Adirondack Brook Trout

Meco Lake (UH-P276) - Meco Lake, a 12 acre pond directly south of Silver Lake along the Northville-Placid Trail, was originally surveyed in 1932. No fish were captured in an overnight gill net set. The pond was experimentally stocked with brook trout from 1966 to 1968 following the recommendations of a survey in 1965. When a follow-up survey in 1969 failed to capture any brook trout, the pond was declared chemically unsuitable and stocking was discontinued. In 1975 Meco Lake was surveyed as part of the Acid Waters Survey. The pH recorded at the time was a low 4.70 with a negative alkalinity. A 1987 survey by the ALSC also failed to capture any fish, and the pH at the time was 4.93 with a negative ANC. Unfortunately, Meco Lake has a flushing rate of over 4, indicating it does not meet the Division of Fish, Wildlife and Marine Resources' liming criteria. Meco Lake should receive a chemical survey to determine if its pH has improved to the point where it can sustain fish. If results show the pond can now sustain a fish community, it will be stocked with brook trout.

Management Class: Adirondack Brook Trout

Unnamed Water (UH-P278A) - This small, 1 acre pond is an in-stream pond on Elbow Creek located near Co. Rt. 16. The pond has never been surveyed. Because it has never received a survey and because of its small size, it will be classed as unknown.

Management Class: Unknown

Unnamed Water (UH-P5280) - This in-stream pond on an unnamed tributary of Hatch Brook varies in size depending upon which map is referenced, and probably owes its existence to beaver activity. Its species assemblage is likely determined by that of the stream, and because it has never received a survey and because of its small size, it will be classed as unknown.

Management Class: Unknown

Unnamed Water (UH-P5284) - This widening of the West Branch Sacandaga is 10.1 acres in size. The species assemblage is controlled by that of the West Branch Sacandaga, and thus the pond offers little management potential.

Management Class: Other

Unnamed Water (UH-5285) - This small (4 acre) water is also an in-stream pond of the West Branch Sacandaga. The species assemblage in this pond is also controlled by that of the West Branch Sacandaga.

Management Class: Other

Unnamed Water (UH-5304) - This pond is apparently a temporal one, appearing on some maps and not others, perhaps owing its existence to beaver activity. The pond is located on an unnamed tributary that drains the southern portions of Middle Hill and Round Top. Because the pond is temporal and its species assemblage is determined by that in the tributary forming it, it has limited management potential and is classed as Other.

Management Class: Other

MOHAWK DRAINAGE

Little Stoner Lake, also referred to as North Stoner, East Stoner or East Stink Lake (MH-P723) - Little Stoner Lake was first surveyed in 1934. A shore seine captured chain pickerel, golden shiner and creek chubsucker. Fallfish nests and sunfish were also observed at that time. In 1975 the lake was surveyed again and yellow perch, fallfish, golden shiner, brown bullhead, chain pickerel, black crappie, and pumpkinseed were captured. No creek chubsucker were captured. In 1925 lake whitefish were stocked, followed by smallmouth bass and walleye in 1928 and 1931, respectively. In the 1950's and early '60's, unspecified numbers of salvage bass were stocked. Largemouth bass were experimentally stocked in the lake in 1969 and 1970, however since no largemouth were captured in the 1975 survey, the plantings were apparently a failure. Because of its dominant non-native, warm-water fishery community and its extensive, un-treatable watershed making a reclamation impossible, management to re-establish a native fish

community in this lake is impractical at this time. The lake will continue to be managed as a warm-water fishery and to preserve its native aquatic community in the presence of nonnative fishes.

Management Class: Warm Water

RIVER RESOURCES

West Branch Sacandaga River (UH-369-20) - The Sacandaga River forms much of the western boundary of the Silver Lake Wilderness Unit south of its confluence with Piseco Lake outlet, and thereafter bisects the Silver Lake Wilderness Unit in two, flowing across the unit in an easterly direction. The river has an assortment of native and non-native fish species including smallmouth bass, rock bass, fallfish, blacknose dace, longnose dace, cutlips minnow, margined madtom, brown trout and brook trout. The West Branch Sacandaga River is currently stocked with brown trout and brook trout.

Sacandaga River (UH-369) - The Sacandaga River roughly forms the eastern border of the unit downstream of its confluence with the West Branch Sacandaga. This river section contains an assortment of native and non-native fish species and no doubt contains many of the same species present in Great Sacandaga Lake, a large flood control reservoir located approximately one mile downstream of the southern boundary of the unit. The river serves as an important walleye spawning area for Great Sacandaga Lake's walleye population. Sampling conducted in 1969 in the vicinity of the Route 920H bridge over the Sacandaga River in Northville captured the following species: northern pike, smallmouth bass, rock bass, walleye, lake whitefish, white sucker, carp, largemouth bass, golden shiner, common shiner, spottail shiner, and fallfish. Stream electrofishing done in August 2002 several hundred yards upstream of the confluence of the Sacandaga River and the West Branch Sacandaga River captured most of the species listed above except walleye, carp and lake whitefish. In addition, stonecats, longnose dace and stocked brown trout were captured.

Table 1. Silver Lake Wilderness Area - Ponded Water Survey Data

Name	P#	Wshed	Most Recent Chemical survey					Most Recent Biological Survey		
			Date	Source	ANC (ueq/1)	pH	Conduc-tivity	Year	Source	Fish Species Present and Number Caught
Brown Lake	P268	UH	07/26/99	DEC	3.96	5.62	17.2	1999	DEC	BB(43), ST(7); & in 1987, GS(3) by ALSC.
Buck Pond	P218	UH	09/10/87	ALSC	-13.3	4.77	18.3	1987	ALSC	No fish caught.
Buckhorn Lake (Fiddlers Pond)	P251	UH	06/24/58	DEC	-	5.8	-	1958	DEC	BB(88), Lepomis Spp.(31), GS(observed), PKL(reported)
Canary Pond	P267	UH	07/21/81	DEC	-	4.6	17	1981	DEC	BB(53), ST(18)
Chub Lake	P264	UH	07/18/32	DEC	-	6.2	-	1932	DEC	YP(1), PKL(4), FF(many), & blk. bass nests observed
Grant Lake	P157	UH	08/03/78	DEC	-	5.2	20.2	1978	DEC	ST(4), WS(4), PKS(6), BB(1), CC(21), GS(1)
Lake Chartreuse	P219	UH	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Never surveyed. ST stocked historically until beaver dam went out
Little Lake	P250	UH	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Never surveyed. BB & PKL reported ‘58.
Little Stoner Lake	P723	M	07/16/75	DEC	-	6	-	1975	DEC	PKL(5), PKS(10), YP(140), BB(11), GS(14), FF(10), COB(1)
Little Trout Lake	P261	UH	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Never surveyed
Loomis Ponds (Upper)	P255	UH	08/25/76	DEC	-	4.85	-	1976	DEC	No fish caught. ST reported historically
Loomis Ponds (Lower)	P256	UH	06/26/87	ALSC	-9.5	4.87	22.6	1987	ALSC	No fish caught. Earlier survey, same.
Loomis Ponds (Middle)	P257	UH	06/26/87	ALSC	-12.7	4.78	21.7	1987	ALSC	No fish caught. Earlier survey, same.
Lost Lake (Cooney)	P233	UH	08/03/78	DEC	-	5.6	19	1978	DEC	BB(24), ST(1)
Lost Pond	P262	UH	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	No information
Meco Lake	P276	UH	08/04/87	ALSC	-7.9	4.93	19.3	1987	ALSC	No fish caught. Earlier surveys, same.
Mud Lake	P216	UH	07/11/32	DEC	-	6.4	-	1982	DEC	BB(100), ST(14), GS(9)
Mud Lake	P231	UH	07/20/32	DEC	-	5.8	-	1932	DEC	PKL(1), minnows observed.
North Branch Flow	P266A	UH	08/08/67	DEC	-	5.5	-	1967	DEC	BB(8), ST(3)

Table 1. Silver Lake Wilderness Area - Ponded Water Survey Data										
			Most Recent Chemical survey					Most Recent Biological Survey		
Name	P#	Wshed	Date	Source	ANC (ueq/1)	pH	Conduc-tivity	Year	Source	Fish Species Present and Number Caught
Owl Pond	P222	UH	08/02/78	DEC	-	5.55	18	1978	DEC	ST(4), WS(91), NRD(1)
Rock Lake	P275	UH	08/02/78	DEC	-	4.65	17	1978	DEC	BB(77), ST(8), GS(16)
Ross Lake	P266	UH	07/26/99	DEC	14.42	5.78	15.5	1999	DEC	No fish caught.
Silver Lake	P270	UH	08/23/76	DEC	-	5.11	-	1976	DEC	No fish caught. Earlier surveys caught ST, BB, GS.
Three Ponds (Lower)	P159	UH	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	No information
Three Ponds (Middle)	P160	UH	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	No information.
Three Ponds (Upper)	P217	UH	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	No information.
Trout Lake	P260	UH	08/04/87	ALSC	36.5	6.16	24.3	1987	ALSC	YP(41), PKL(3), BB(8), GS(5), WS(1), creek chubsucker(1)
Unnamed Water	P158A	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	No information.
Unnamed Water	P160A	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	No information.
Unnamed Water	P215A	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	No information.
Unnamed Water	P216A	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	No information.
Unnamed Water	P216B	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	No information.
Unnamed Water	P216C	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	No information.
Unnamed Water	P218A	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	ST reported historically.
Unnamed Water	P221A	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	No information.
Unnamed Water	P221B	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	No information.
Unnamed Water	P262A	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	No information.
Unnamed Water	P266B	UH	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	No information.
Unnamed Water	P267A	UH	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	No information.
Unnamed Water	P269	UH	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	No information.

Table 1. Silver Lake Wilderness Area - Ponded Water Survey Data										
			Most Recent Chemical survey					Most Recent Biological Survey		
Name	P#	Wshed	Date	Source	ANC (ueq/1)	pH	Conduc-tivity	Year	Source	Fish Species Present and Number Caught
Unnamed Water	P278A	UH	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	No information.
Unnamed Water	P5280	UH	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	No information.
Unnamed Water	P5284	UH	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	No information.
Unnamed Water	P5285	UH	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	No information
Unnamed Water	P5304	UH	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	No information.
White Lake	P271	UH	-	-	-	-	-	1969	DEC	No fish caught.
Woods Lake	P156	UH	?	DEC	-	6.5	-	1973	DEC	SMB(16), PKL(2), RT(9), BB(30), PKS(30), YP(7)

BB = Brown Bullhead
COB = Black Crappie
GS = Golden Shiner
LT = Lake Trout
PKL = Pickerel
RB = Rock Bass
ST = Brook Trout
WS = White Sucker
CC = Creek Chub
FF = Fallfish
LMB = Largemouth Bass
NRD = Northern Redbelly Dace
PKS = Pumpkinseed
SMB = Smallmouth Bass
YP = Yellow Perch

Table 2. Silver Lake Wilderness Area - Ponded Water Inventory Data

Name	P#	Wshed	File	County	USGS Quad Name	Area (acres) NYSBSU	Max Depth (feet)	Mean Depth (feet)
Brown Lake	P268	UH	487	Hamilton	Caroga Lake	10.6	25	7.9
Buck Pond	P218	UH	418	Hamilton	Lake Pleasant	5.2	22	4.3
Buckhorn Lake (Fiddlers)	P251	UH	465	Hamilton	Lake Pleasant	40	10	-
Canary Pond	P267	UH	486	Hamilton	Whitehouse	13.3	36	-
Chub Lake	P264	UH	482	Hamilton	Sherman Mountain	16.6	19	7.9
Grant Lake	P157	UH	327	Hamilton	Cathead Mountain	8.4	15	-
Lake Chartreuse	P219	UH	423	Hamilton	Lake Pleasant	11.6	-	-
Little Lake	P250	UH	464	Hamilton	Lake Pleasant	4.7	-	-
Little Stoner Lake	P723	M	1143	Hamilton	Canada Lake	24.5	33	-
Little Trout Lake	P261	UH	479	Hamilton	Sherman Mountain	11.6	-	-
Loomis Ponds (Upper)	P255	UH	472	Hamilton	Whitehouse	30.4	50	-
Loomis Ponds (Lower)	P256	UH	473	Hamilton	Sherman Mountain	8.2	4	2.3
Loomis Ponds (Middle)	P257	UH	474	Hamilton	Sherman Mountain	8.2	20	6.9
Lost Lake (Cooney)	P233	UH	441	Hamilton	Lake Pleasant	4	29	-
Lost Pond	P262	UH	-	Hamilton	Sherman Mountain	3.7	-	-
Meco lake	P276	UH	497	Hamilton	Whitehouse	12.1	20	8.2
Mud Lake	P216	UH	414	Hamilton	Whitehouse	23	10	4.6
Mud Lake	P231	UH	439	Hamilton	Piseco Lake	18.3	11	-
North Branch Flow	P266A	UH	485A	Hamilton	Whitehouse	7.9	10	-
Owl Pond	P222	UH	428	Hamilton	Whitehouse	7.7	22	-
Rock Lake	P275	UH	496	Hamilton	Whitehouse	8.2	38	-
Ross Lake	P266	UH	485	Hamilton	Whitehouse	4	10	4.3

Table 2. Silver Lake Wilderness Area - Ponded Water Inventory Data

Name	P#	Wshed	File	County	USGS Quad Name	Area (acres) NYSBSU	Max Depth (feet)	Mean Depth (feet)
Silver Lake	P270	UH	490	Hamilton	Whitehouse	75.1	55	-
Three Ponds (Lower)	P159	UH	331	Hamilton	Cathead Mountain	2.2	-	-
Three Ponds (Middle)	P160	UH	332	Hamilton	Cathead Mountain	1	-	-
Three Ponds (Upper)	P217	UH	416	Hamilton	Cathead Mountain	4.4	-	-
Trout Lake	P260	UH	478	Hamilton	Sherman Mountain	20.3	14	7.9
Unnamed Water	P158A	UH	329	Hamilton	Cathead Mountain	5.9	-	-
Unnamed Water	P160A	UH	-	Hamilton	Caroga Lake	3.7	-	-
Unnamed Water	P215A	UH	-	Hamilton	Cathead Mountain	2	-	-
Unnamed Water	P216A	UH	-	Hamilton	Whitehouse	3	-	-
Unnamed Water	P216B	UH	-	Hamilton	Whitehouse	3.2	-	-
Unnamed Water	P216C	UH	-	Hamilton	Whitehouse	2.5	-	-
Unnamed Water	P218A	UH	419	Hamilton	Whitehouse	1	-	-
Unnamed Water	P221A	UH	-	Hamilton	Wells	11.1	-	-
Unnamed Water	P221B	UH	-	Hamilton	Wells	3.2	-	-
Unnamed Water	P262A	UH	-	Hamilton	Sherman Mountain	9.4	-	-
Unnamed Water	P266B	UH	-	Hamilton	Whitehouse	3	-	-
Unnamed Water	P267A	UH	-	Hamilton	Sherman Mountain	0.5	-	-
Unnamed Water	P269	UH	489	Hamilton	Whitehouse	3	-	-
Unnamed Water	P278A	UH	-	Hamilton	Wells	1	-	-
Unnamed Water	P5280	UH	-	Hamilton	Cathead Mountain	1.7	-	-
Unnamed Water	P5284	UH	-	Hamilton	Whitehouse	10.1	-	-
Unnamed Water	P5285	UH	-	Hamilton	Whitehouse	3.7	-	-

Table 2. Silver Lake Wilderness Area - Ponded Water Inventory Data								
Name	**P#**	**Wshed**	**File**	**County**	**USGS Quad Name**	**Area (acres) NYSBSU**	**Max Depth (feet)**	**Mean Depth (feet)**
Unnamed Water	P5304	UH	-	Hamilton	Lake Pleasant	0.7	-	-
White Lake	P271	UH	491	Hamilton	Whitehouse	11.6	19	-
Woods Lake	P156	UH	325	Hamilton	Cathead Mountain	65	40	20.3

Table 3.

CLASSIFICATION OF COMMON ADIRONDACK UPLAND FISH FAUNA INTO NATIVE, NONNATIVE, AND NATIVE BUT WIDELY INTRODUCED

Adapted from George, 1980

NATIVE TO ADIRONDACK UPLAND

Blacknose dace	Redbreast sunfish	Common Shiner
White sucker	Finescale dace	Lake chub
Longnose sucker	Creek chubsucker	Slimy sculpin
Northern redbelly dace	Longnose dace	Round whitefish

NATIVE SPECIES WIDELY INTRODUCED WITHIN THE ADIRONDACK UPLAND[1]

Brook trout	Cisco	Brown bullhead
Lake trout	Pumpkinseed	Creekchub

NONNATIVE TO ADIRONDACK UPLAND

Golden shiner	Northern pike	Chain pickerel
Rock bass	Bluntnose minnow[2]	Smallmouth bass
Largemouth bass	Yellow perch	Johnny darter
Fathead minnow[3]	Brown trout	Rainbow trout
Splake	Atlantic salmon	Lake whitefish
Banded killifish[4]	Rainbow smelt	Fallfish[5]
Bluegill	Walleye	Pearl dace
Central mudminnow	Redhorse suckers (spp.)	Black crappie

[1]These native fishes are known to have been widely distributed throughout Adirondack uplands by DEC, bait bucket introduction, and unauthorized stocking. This means that their presence does not necessarily indicate endemicity. Other native species listed above also may have been moved from water to water in the Adirondack Upland, but the historical record is less distinct.

[2]Not mentioned by Mather (1884) from Adirondack collections, widely used as bait.

[3]Not mentioned by Mather (1884) from Adirondack collections, minor element southern Adirondack Uplands (Greeley 1930-1935).

[4]Early collections strongly suggest dispersal as a bait form.

[5]Adventive through stocking.

Table 4.

Silver Lake Wilderness - Fish Community Ecological Analysis
Known Fish Distributions from Early Surveys vs. Present

Lake/Pond Category	Prior to 1980	%	Post-1980	%	Net Change in # Lakes	% Net Change by Species
Total # Lakes	48	-	48	-	-	-
# Ponds Surveyed	23	-	10	-	-	-
# Un-surveyed	26	-	25	-	-	-
# Historically Fishless Ponds	1	-	1	-	-	-
# Historically Supporting Fish Life	24	-	24	-	-	-
# Ponds Formerly Supporting Fish but now Fishless	6	-	6	-	-	-
SPECIES CATEGORIES						
Native but Widely Introduced	Prior to 1980	%	Post-1980	%	Net Change in # Lakes	% Net Change by Species
Brook Trout	14	58%	9	38%	-5	-36%
Lake Trout	1	4%	1	4%	0	0%
Brown Bullhead	12	50%	11	46%	-1	-8%
Pumpkinseed	2	8%	2	8%	0	0%
Creek Chub	3	13%	2	8%	-1	-33%
Native Species	Prior to 1980	%	Post-1980	%	Net Change in # Lakes	% Net Change by Species
White Sucker	4	17%	4	17%	0	0%
Northern Redbelly Dace	1	4%	1	4%	0	0%
Creek Chubsucker	1	4%	1	4%	0	0%
Round Whitefish	1	4%	0	0%	-1	-100%

Non-Native Species	Prior to 1980	%	Post-1980	%	Net Change in # Lakes	% Net Change by Species
Golden Shiner	7	29%	8	33%	1	14%
Chain Pickerel	5	21%	5	21%	0	0%
Splake	1	4%	0	0%	-1	-100%
Rock Bass	1	4%	1	4%	0	0%
Smallmouth Bass	2	8%	2	8%	0	0%
Yellow Perch	5	21%	5	21%	0	0%
Rainbow Trout	2	8%	1	4%	-1	-50%
Black Crappie	1	4%	1	4%	0	0%
Fallfish	2	8%	2	8%	0	0%

APPENDIX E

TRAIL CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM AND MARKING STANDARDS

TRAIL CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM – SILVER LAKE WILDERNESS AREA

CLASS		EXAMPLE	MARKING	TREAD	BARRIERS	USE LEVEL	ACCEPTABLE MAINTENANCE
I	Unmarked Route	Fisherman's Path/ Old Haul Road	None	Intermittently apparent, relatively undisturbed organic soil horizon	Natural obstructions present, logs and water courses	Occasional	None
II	Path	None in SLWA	Intermittent	Intermittently apparent, compaction of duff, mineral soils occasionally exposed	Same as unmarked route	Low, varies by location	Intermittent marking with consideration given to appropriate layout based on drainage, occasional barrier removal only to define appropriate route.
III	Primitive	Woods Lake Trail	Trail markers, sign at junction with secondary or other upper level trail	Apparent, soil compaction evident	Limited natural obstructions (logs and river fords)	Low	Drainage (native materials) where necessary to minimize erosion, blowdown removed 2-3 years, brushing as necessary to define trail (every 5-10 years). Bridges only to protect resource (max - 2 log width). Ladders only to protect exceptionally steep sections. Tread 14"-18" wide, clear: 3' wide, 3' high.
IV	Secondary	Northville-Lake Placid Trail (NPT)	Markers, signs with basic information	Likely worn and possibly quite eroded. Rocks exposed, little or no duff remaining	Up to one year's accumulated blowdown, small streams.	Moderate	Drainage where needed to halt erosion and limit potential erosion (using native materials), tread hardening with native materials where drainage proves to be insufficient to control erosion. Remove blowdown annually. Brush to maintain trail corridor. Higher use may warrant greater use of bridges (2–3 logs wide) for resource protection. Ladders on exceptionally steep rock faces. Tread 18"-24" wide, clear: 4' wide, 3' high.
V	Trunk or Primary Trail	None in SLW Cathead Mountain Trail in CMPA	Markers, signed with more information and warnings.	Wider tread, worn and very evident. Rock exposed, possibly very eroded.	Obstructions only rarely, small streams	High	Same as above; Plus: regular blowdown removal on designated ski trails, non-native materials as last resort. Extensive tread hardening when needed, bridge streams (2–4 logs wide) difficult to cross during high water, priority given to stream crossings below concentrations of designated camping. Tread 18"-26" wide, clear: 6' wide, 8' high, actual turn piking limited to 2% of trail length.
VI	Front Country	None in SLWA	Heavily marked, detailed interpretive signing	Groomed	None	Very High	Extensive grooming, some paving, bark chips, handicapped accessible. This is to be implemented within 500' of wilderness boundary.

TRAIL CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM – SILVER LAKE WILDERNESS AREA

CLASS	EXAMPLE	MARKING	TREAD	BARRIERS	USE LEVEL	ACCEPTABLE MAINTENANCE
VII Horse Trail	None in SLWA	Marked as Trunk or Secondary	Wide tread, must be rather smooth.	Same as Trunk Trail.	Moderate to High	Same as trunk trail, except use techniques appropriate for horses. Bridges: 6' minimum width with kick rails, nonnative dimensional materials preferred. Tread: 2'-4' wide, clear: 8' wide, 10' high.
VIII Ski Trail	None in SLWA	Marked High. Special markers, sign at all junctions with hiking trails.	Duff remains. Discourage summer use	Practically none due to hazards.	High	Focus on removal of obstructions, maintenance should be low profile, tread determined by clearing 6' (Should be slightly wider at turns and steep sections. Provide drainage using native materials to protect resource.

TRAIL MARKING STANDARDS

On Forest Preserve and State Forest lands, all trails are marked with small, colored plastic disks nailed to trees or posts at regular intervals. In the past on hiking trails, blue markers were used for north-south trails, red markers for east-west trails and trails to fire towers, and yellow markers for connector trails.

The following markers are used today. All are available in blue, yellow, and red.

Foot Trail - Used on all trails where only foot traffic is permitted.
Trail - Used along multiple-use trails. Other markers appropriate on a given trail, such as foot, snowmobile, horse, and bicycle trail markers, are posted together at trailheads and intersections on guideboards. "Trail" markers are used along the trail to mark the trail route.
Canoe Carry - Used on designated canoe carry trails.
Cross-country Ski Trail - Used on trails considered suitable for cross-country skiing. Cross-country skiing is permitted anywhere on the Forest Preserve.
Snowmobile Trail - Used on trails where snowmobiles are permitted. Snowmobiles are only permitted on trails marked as snowmobile trails.
Horse Trail - Used on trails where horses are permitted. Horses may not be ridden on foot trails that are not also marked as horse trails, nor on snowmobile or cross-country ski trails when they are covered with ice and snow.
Bicycle Trail - Used on trails where bicycles are permitted. Bicycles are permitted in wild forest areas except where posted. In wild forest, it is not necessary for a trail to be marked as a bicycle trail for bicycles to be permitted. They may be used in primitive, and canoe areas only on designated roads. They are not permitted in wilderness.

Markers should be applied so that they appear on the right side of the trail to the traveler. They should be close enough that a person standing at one marker can see the next marker ahead clearly, but cannot see more than two markers ahead. Long straight trails or naturally well-defined trails should be marked less frequently (one every 100-200 feet). This guideline is especially applicable in wilderness areas where markers should be kept to a minimum.

Markers should be applied in **one direction at a time** to assure that they are located where appropriate for those traveling in that direction.

Appearance is extremely important. Old and damaged markers should be removed wherever it is possible to do so without further damage to the tree before posting the new marker. If the old marker can't be removed, cover it with a new marker, rather than setting the new marker in a different spot. Use **two** l ½-inch roofing nails, preferably aluminum (untreated steel nails rust and can stain markers), one near the top and one near the bottom of the marker. Unless vandalism is a problem, do not drive the nails home. Sinking the nails no more than one-half to two-thirds of the way into the wood allows the tree to grow for a few years without damaging the marker. Markers should be posted at or slightly above eye level except in areas of heavy snowfall where snow might obscure them. The markers then should be placed even higher on the tree.

A supply of markers and nails is available from Lands and Forests personnel.

APPENDIX F
INVASIVE PLANT SPECIES BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR STATE LANDS UNDER MANAGEMENT OF THE DEC IN THE ADIRONDACK PARK

Applicability

These Best Management Practices (BMP's) are intended for use by those applying for and implementing terrestrial invasive plant species management activities on State Lands under an Adopt-A-Natural-Resource Agreement (AANR). The following document contains acceptable practices for control of the following four terrestrial invasive species: Purple loosestrife *(Lythrum salicaria)*, Japanese knotweed *(Polygonum cuspidatum)*, Common reed *(Phragmites australis)*, Garlic mustard *(Alliaria petiolata)*.

The following management options, should be selected with consideration for the location and size of the stands, the age of the plants, past methods used at the site, time of year, sensitive native flora within or adjacent to the target infestation, and adjoining and nearby land uses.

Other management approaches not identified here may be appropriate but must be approved by the Regional Land Manager of the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation in the region where the proposed invasive plant control activity will take place in consultation with the Adirondack Park Agency's Director of Planning.

Within the Park there are several geographic settings (at the location of the target plant(s)) that need to be considered when determining appropriate BMP's and the regulatory instruments needed prior to their implementation. These settings and relevant action are:

1. In or within 100' of a wetland on private or public lands -- requires a general permit from the Adirondack Park Agency.

2. Forest Preserve lands -- requires an AANR from the Department of Environmental Conservation and, if wetlands are involved, an Adirondack Park Agency permit.

3. If the standing water is greater then one acre in size and/or has an outlet to surface waters, an aquatic pesticides permit is required pursuant to ECL 15-0313(4) and 6 NYCRR 327.1 in which case application can only be made by a Certified Applicator or Technician or supervised Apprentice licensed in "Category 5 – Aquatic Vegetation Control".

GENERAL PRACTICES

1. **Minimum Tools Approach** - State land stewardship involving invasive plant species management practices should always incorporate the principles of the Minimum Tools Approach. Any group or individual implementing such practices on State land should only use the minimum tools, equipment, devices, force, actions or practices that will effectively reach the desired management goals. Implicit in this document is the stricture to implement a hierarchy of management practices based upon the target species and site conditions starting with the least intrusive and disruptive methods.

2. **Notification** - The following best management practices are intended to be used only when invasive terrestrial plant species are identified on Forest Preserve lands. These management techniques are temporary activities and are implemented with the ultimate goal being protection and restoration of native plant communities. Appropriate signage should be employed to explain the project. It may also be appropriate to issue press releases to explain the goals and techniques of the management activities.

3. **Motorized Equipment** - All use of motorized equipment on State lands under the jurisdiction of the DEC within the Adirondack Park shall be in compliance with Commissioner's Policy Number 17 (CP17), and other pertinent DEC policy regarding the use of motorized equipment on Forest Preserve Lands.

4. **Erosion Control** - Some of the methods described below require actual digging or pulling of plants from the soil. In all cases they require removal of vegetation whether or not there is actual soil disturbance. Each situation must

be studied to determine if the proposed control method and extent of the action will destabilize soils to the point where erosion is threatened. Generally if more than 25 square feet of soil surface is cleared or plant removal occurs on steep slopes silt fence should be installed and maintained.

5. **Revegetation -** All of the control methods below are aimed at reducing or eliminating invasive species so that natives are encouraged to grow and re-establish stable conditions that are not conducive to invasive colonization. In most cases removal or reduction of invasive populations will be enough to release native species and re-establish their dominance on a site. However, replanting or reseeding with native species may be required.

6. **Herbicide Treatments -** The only herbicide application allowed is spot treatment to individual plants using a back pack or hand sprayer, wick applicator, cloth glove applicator, stem injection or herbicide clippers. **No broadcast herbicide applications using, for example a truck mounted sprayer, are allowed.** The only herbicides contemplated and approved for use are glyphosate and triclopyr. Glyphosate, in the correct formulation, may be used in situations where there is standing water including wetlands. Trichlopyr is to be used only in upland situations. **In all cases all label restrictions must and shall be followed by a certified applicator in an appropriate category.** The certified applicator or technician must have copies of the appropriate labels at the treatment site. Glyphosate and triclopyr are non-selective herbicides that are applied to plant foliage or cut stems and are then translocated to the roots. The application methods described and allowed are designed to reduce or eliminate the possibility that non-target species will be impacted by the herbicide use. All herbicide spot treatments require follow-up inspection later in the growing season or the following year to re-treat any individuals that were missed. Stem injections may be implemented using a large gauge needle or a specialized injection tool such as the JK Injection System (www.jkinjectiontools.com).

All herbicide mixing will be done in accordance with the label precautions and take place at a staging area (typically at a marshalling yard or a vehicle). No mixing shall take place on State lands unless at an approved location constructed for such use. Unused chemical and mixes shall be disposed of in a legal manner. No chemical or mix shall be disposed of on State lands unless at an approved location constructed for such use.

7. **Sanitation -** Management personnel must attempt to prevent invasive plant propagules from entering a treatment site or from being exported from it. Therefore, personnel must insure that their clothing including boots do not carry seeds or other propagules or weed seed infected soil clods. At the beginning of the field day personnel should inspect their clothing and boots at the staging area. Prior to leaving the treatment site personnel should conduct another inspection and remove any propagules or soil clods from their clothing or boots. Personnel must insure that all equipment used for invasive species control whether it be hand or power driven is cleaned prior to entering onto a control site and prior to leaving the treatment site. Vehicles and equipment can be cleaned at a staging area that is distant from the control site after management activities if precautions are taken during transport to contain any propagules. This is an effort to reduce transport of plant propagules and reduce the potential for new invasive introductions. Use steam or hot water to clean equipment.

8. **Material Collection and Transportation -** While on the treatment site bag all cut material in heavy duty, 3 mil or thicker, black contractor quality plastic clean-up bags. Securely tie the bags and transport from the site in a truck with a topper or cap to securely fasten the load, in order to prevent spread of the plant material from the project work site. Transport the material to a legal disposal location.

9. **Composting -** Because of the extremely robust nature of invasive species, composting in a typical backyard compost pile or composting bin is not appropriate. However, methods can be used whereby sun-generated heat can be used to destroy the harvested plant materials. For instance, storage in a sealed 3 mil thickness (minimum) black plastic garbage bags on blacktop in the sun until the plant materials liquefy is effective. If a larger section of blacktop is available, make a black plastic (4 mil thickness minimum) envelope sealed on the edges with sand bags. The plant material left exposed to the sun will liquefy in the sealed envelope without danger of dispersal by wind. The bags or envelopes must be monitored to make sure the plants do not escape through rips, tears or seams in the plastic. **When composting is suggested later in the text it is understood that liquefying the plant material in or under plastic is the desired action; not disposal in backyard composters or open landfill composting piles.**

APPENDIX G

CAMPSITE IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND MONITORING MANUAL

DESIGNATED CAMPSITE
IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND MONITORING MANUAL

DESCRIPTION OF PROCEDURES

For the purpose of this manual, designated campsites are defined as those areas either designated by the Department with a yellow DEC designated campsite marker, or shown on an area brochure. In areas with multiple sites there may not always be undisturbed areas separating sites, and an arbitrary decision may be necessary to define separate sites. For each site, monitoring begins with an assessment of Condition Class:

CONDITION CLASS DEFINITIONS

Class 1: Recreation site barely distinguishable; slight loss of vegetation cover and/ or minimal disturbance of organic litter.

Class 2: Recreation site obvious; vegetation cover lost and/ or organic litter pulverized in primary use area.

Class 3: Vegetation cover lost and/ or organic litter pulverized on much of the site, some bare soil exposed in primary use areas.

Class 4: Nearly complete or total loss of vegetation cover and organic litter, bare soil widespread.

Class 5: Soil erosion obvious, as indicated by exposed tree roots and rocks and/or gullying.

For sites rated Condition Class 1 or 2, complete Form B; for sites rated Class 3, 4 or 5, complete Form A. Form B is an abbreviated version of Form A and greatly reduces the amount of field time. The rationale for this approach is that detailed information on lightly impacted sites is not as critical to management.

During subsequent surveys an attempt should be made to relocate and reassess all sites from the proceeding survey. Former designated sites that have been closed, and are still being used, should be noted as illegal sites. Always note information regarding the history of site use under the comment parameter.

Materials:
- Compass, peephole or mirror type (not corrected for declination)
- GPS data recorder (GPS point will be taken at each sites center point)
- Tape measure, 100-foot (marked in tenths)
- Flagged wire pins (25 min), one large steel center point stake.
- Digital camera
- Clipboard, pencil, field forms, field procedures
- Steel nails (5 inch)

FORM A PROCEDURES

Inventory Parameters

1. Site Number: All sites will be assigned an old site number as well as a new site number. Old site numbers will use the existing site numbering system, while new site numbers will be assigned following completion of the mapping of all sites.
2. Inventoried By: List the names of field personnel involved in data collection.
3. Date: Month, day and year the site was evaluated (e.g., June 12, 1999 = 06/12/99)
4. Substrate of site area: Record the predominant substrate for the area of human disturbance for each site using the coded categories below.
   - B = bedrock - shelf bedrock
   - C = cobble - includes gravel size stone and up
   - S = sand - includes sandy soils that do not form a surface crust in trampled areas
   - O =s oil - includes clays to loamy sands
5. Number of other sites visible: Record the number of other campsites, which if occupied, would be visible from this site.
6. Fire ring: if present or not (y or n)
   a. Construction: stone/masonry or metal.

b. Condition: good = intact, functional for cooking.
Poor = missing stones, broken , not functional for cooking but will contain open fire.

7. Privy: if present or not (y or n)
   a. Condition: good = functional, has door, wood not deteriorated (would you use it?).
   Poor = nonfunctional, door missing, wood rotten.
8. Picnic table: if present or not (y or n)
   a. Condition: good = usable, no broken boards, table is solid.
   Poor = not usable, broken/rotten boards, not sturdy.
9. Tree canopy cover: Estimate the percentage of tree canopy cover directly over the campsite.
   1 = 0-25%, 2 = 26-50%, 3 = 51-75%, 4 = 76-100%

Impact Parameters

The first step is to establish the sites boundaries and measure its size. The following procedures describe use of the variable radial transect method for determining the sizes of recreational sites. This is accomplished by measuring the lengths of linear transects from a permanently defined center point to the recreation site boundary.

Step 1. Identify Recreation Site Boundaries and Flag Transect Endpoints. Walk the recreation site boundary and place flagged wire pins at locations which, when connected with straight lines, will define a polygon whose area approximates the recreation site area. Use as few pins as necessary, typical sites can be adequately flagged with 10-15 pins. Look both directions along site boundaries as you place the flags and try to balance areas of the site that fall outside the lines with offsite(undisturbed) areas that fall inside the lines. Pins do not have to be placed on the site boundaries, as demonstrated in the diagram following these procedures. Project site boundaries straight across areas where trails enter the site. Identify site boundaries by pronounced changes in vegetation cover, vegetation height/disturbance, vegetation composition, surface organic litter, and topography. Many sites with dense forest over stories will have very little vegetation and it will be necessary to identify boundaries by examining changes in organic litter, i.e. leaves that are untrampled and intact versus leaves that are pulverized or absent. In defining the site boundaries, be careful to include only those areas that appear to have been disturbed from human trampling. Natural factors such as dense shade and flooding can create areas lacking vegetative cover. Do not include these areas if they appear “natural” to you. When in doubt, it may also be helpful to speculate on which areas typical visitors might use based on factors such as slope or rockiness.

Step 2. Select and Reference Site Center point. Select a site center point that is preferably a) visible from all site boundary pins, b) easily referenced by distinctive permanent features such as larger trees or boulders, and c) approximately 5 feet from a steel fire ring if present. Embed a 5 inch nail in the soil at the center point location so that the head is 3-4 inches below the surface. During future sight assessments a magnetic pin locator can be used to locate the center point. Next, insert a large steel stake at the center point and reference it to at least three features. Try to select reference features in three opposing directions, as this will enable future workers to triangulate the center point location. For each feature, take a compass azimuth reading and measure the distance (nearest 1/10 foot) from the center point to the center of trees or the highest point of boulders. Also measure the approximate diameter of reference trees at 4.5 feet above ground (dbh). Be extremely careful in taking these azimuths and measurements, as they are critical to relocating the center point in the future. Record this information on the back of the form.

Take a digital photograph that clearly shows the center point location in relation to nearby trees or other reference features, such as the fire ring, trees or boulders. Record a photo description, such as “center point location site 23", in the photo log.

Options: Some sites may lack the necessary permanent reference features enabling the center point to be accurately relocated. If only one or two permanent reference features are available, use these and take additional photographs from several angles. If permanent features are unavailable, simply proceed with the remaining steps without permanently referencing the center point. This option will introduce more error in comparisons with future measurements, particularly if the site boundaries are not pronounced. Note your actions regarding use of these options in the comment section.

Step 3. Record Transect Azimuths and Lengths. Standing directly over the center point, identify and record the compass bearing (azimuth) of each site boundary pin working in a clockwise direction, starting with the first pin clockwise of north. Be careful not to miss any pins hidden behind vegetation or trees. Be extremely careful in identifying the correct compass bearings to these pins as error in these bearings will bias current and future measurements of site size. Next, anchor the end of your tape to the center point stake, measure and record the length of each transect (nearest 1/10 foot), starting with the same boundary pin and in the same clockwise direction as before. Be absolutely certain that the appropriate pin distances are recorded adjacent to their respective compass bearing.

Step 4. Measure island and satellite areas. Identify any undisturbed islands of vegetation inside the site boundaries (often due to the clumping of trees and shrubs) and disturbed satellite use areas outside the site boundaries (often due to tent sites or cooking sites). Use site boundary definitions for determining the boundaries of these areas. Use the geographic figure method to determine the areas of these islands and satellites (refer to the diagrams following these procedures). This method involves superimposing one or more imaginary geometric figures (rectangles, circles or right triangles) on island or satellite boundaries and measuring appropriate dimensions to calculate their areas. Record the types of figures used and their dimensions on the back of the form; the size of these areas should be computed in the office using a calculator.

Site Remeasurement: During site remeasurement use the data from the last monitoring period to reestablish the center point and all site boundary pins. If steel nails were embedded in the ground, a magnetic pin locator can assist in this process. Place flagged wire pins at each transect boundary point. Boundary locations based on the following procedures:

- Keep the same transect length if that length still seems appropriate, i.e., there is no compelling reason to alter the initial boundary determination.
- Record a new transect length if the prior length is inappropriate, i.e., there is compelling evidence that the present boundary does not coincide with the pin and the pin should be relocated either closer to or further away from the center point along the prescribed compass bearing. Use different colored flags to distinguish these current boundary points from the former boundaries.
- Repeat steps 1 and 3 from above to establish additional transects where necessary to accommodate any changes in the shape of recreation site boundaries (diagram below). Also repeat step 4.
- Leave all pins in place until all procedures are completed. Pins identifying the former site boundaries are necessary for tree damage and root exposure assessments.

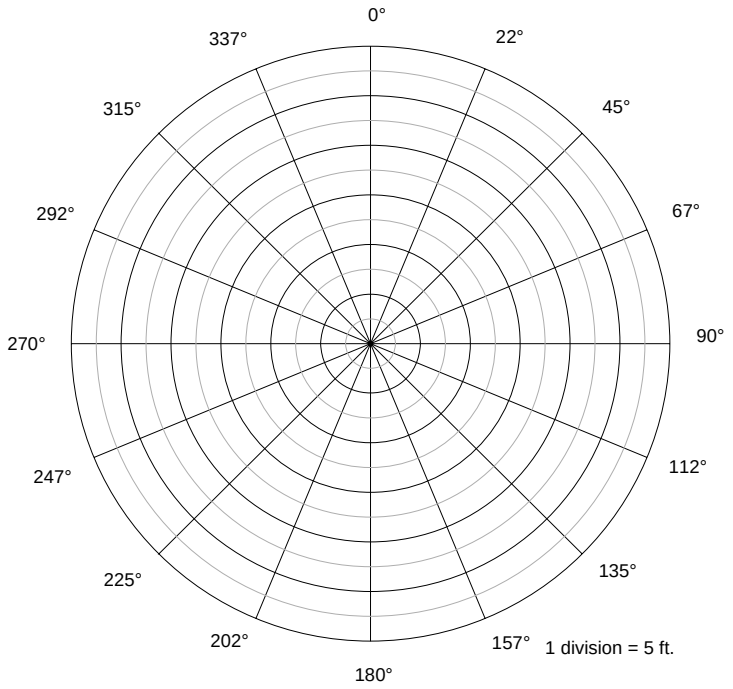
These additional procedures are designed to eliminate much of the measurement error associated with different individuals making subjective judgements on those sites or portions of sites where boundaries are not pronounced. These procedures may only be used for sites whose center points can be relocated.

Site Number / Site Name	_____/_____

Compass Bearing:

	0	22	45	67	90	112	135	157	180	202	225	247	270	292	315	337
X																
O																

Campsite Map:



10. Condition class: Record the condition class you assessed for the site using the categories described earlier.

11. Vegetative ground cover on site: An estimate of the percentage of live non-woody vegetative ground cover (including herbs, grasses, and mosses and excluding tree seedlings, saplings, and shrubs) within the flagged campsite boundary using the coded categories listed next. Include any disturbed satellite use areas and exclude any undisturbed Island areas of vegetation. For this and the following two parameters, it is often helpful to narrow your decision to two categories and concentrate on the boundary that separates them. For example, if the vegetation cover is either category 2 (6-25%) or category 3 (26-50%), you can simplify your decision by focusing on whether vegetative cover is greater than 25%.

1 = 0-5%, 2 = 6-25%, 3 = 26-50%, 4 = 51-75%, 5 = 76-95%,6 = 96-100%

12. Vegetative ground cover offsite: An estimate of the percentage of vegetative ground cover in an adjacent but largely undisturbed "control" area. Use the codes and categories listed earlier. The control site should be similar to the campsite in slope, tree canopy cover (amount of sunlight penetrating to the forest floor), and other environmental conditions. The intent is to locate an area that would closely resemble the campsite area had the site never been used. In instances where you cannot decide between two categories, select the category with less vegetative cover. The rationale for this is simply that, all other factors being equal, the first campers would have selected a site with the least amount of vegetation cover.

13. Soil exposure: An estimate of the percentage of soil exposure, defined as ground with very little or no organic litter (partially decomposed leaf, needle, or twig litter) or vegetation cover, within the campsite boundaries and satellite areas. Dark organic soil, which typically covers lighter colored mineral soil, should be assessed as bare soil. Assessments of soil exposure may be difficult when organic litter becomes highly decomposed and forms a patchwork with areas of bare soil. If patches of organic material are relatively thin and few in number, the entire area should be assessed as bare soil. Otherwise, the patches of organic litter should be mentally combined and excluded from assessments. Code as for vegetative cover.

14. Tree damage: Tally the number of live trees (>1 in, diameter at 4.5 ft.) within the campsite boundaries, including trees in undisturbed islands and excluding trees in satellite areas, into one of the rating classes described below. Assessments are restricted to trees within the flagged campsite boundaries in order to ensure consistency with future measurements. Multiple tree stems from the same species that are joined at or above ground level should be counted as one tree when assessing damage to any of its stems. Assess a cut stem on a multiple-stemmed tree as tree damage, not as a stump. Do not count tree stumps as tree damage. Take into account tree size. For example, damage for a small tree would be considerably less in size than damage for a large tree. Omit scars that are clearly not human-caused (e.g., lightning strikes).

During site remeasurement, begin by assessing tree damage on all trees within the site boundaries identified in the last measurement period. Tally the number of trees in areas where the boundary has moved closer to the center point, i.e., former site areas that are not currently judged to be part of the site separately. Place a box around this number. Next, assess tree damage in areas where boundaries have moved further from the center point, i.e. expanded site areas that are newly impacted since the last measurement period. Circle these tallies. These additional procedures are necessary in order to accurately analyze changes.

> None/Slight - No or slight damage such as broken or cut smaller branches, one nail, or a few superficial trunk scars.
> Moderate - Numerous small trunk scars and/or nails or one moderate-sized scar.
> Severe - Trunk scars numerous with many that are large and have penetrated to the inner wood; any complete girdling of trees (cut through tree bark all the way around tree).

15. Root exposure: Tally the number of live trees (>1 in, diameter at 4.5 ft.) within the campsite boundaries, including trees in undisturbed islands and excluding trees in satellite areas, into one of the rating classes described below. Assessments are restricted to trees within the flagged campsite boundaries in order to ensure consistency with future measurements. Where obvious, omit exposed roots that are clearly not human-caused (e.g., stream/river flooding).

During site remeasurement, begin by assessing root exposure on all trees within the site boundaries identified in the last measurement period. Tally the number of trees in areas where the boundary has moved closer to the center point, i.e., former site areas that are not currently judged to be part of the site separately. Place a box around this number. Next, assess root exposure in areas where boundaries have moved further from the center point, i.e. expanded site areas that are newly impacted since the last measurement period. Circle these tallies. These additional procedures are necessary in order to accurately analyze changes in root exposure over time.

> None/Slight - No or slight root exposure such as is typical in adjacent offsite areas.
> Moderate - Top half of many major roots exposed more than one foot from base of tree.
> Severe - Three-quarters or more of major roots exposed more than one foot from base of tree; soil erosion obvious.

16. Number of tree stumps: A count of the number of tree stumps (>1 in. Diameter) within the campsite boundaries. Include trees within undisturbed islands and exclude trees in disturbed satellite areas. Do not include cut stems from a multiple-stemmed tree.

During site remeasurement, begin by assessing stumps on all trees within the site boundaries identified in the last measurement period. Tally the number of trees in areas where the boundary has moved closer to the center point, i.e., former site areas that are not currently judged to be part of the site separately. Place a box around this number. Next, assess stumps in areas where boundaries have moved further from the center point, i.e. expanded site areas that are newly impacted since the last measurement period. Circle these tallies. These additional procedures are necessary in order to accurately analyze changes in stumps over time.

17. Number of trails: A count of all trails leading away from the outer campsite boundaries. Do not count extremely faint trails that have untrampled tall herbs present in their tread or trails leading out to any satellite sites.

18. Number of fire sites: A count of each fire site within campsite boundaries, including satellite areas. Include old inactive fire sites as exhibited by blackened rocks, charcoal, or ashes. Do not include areas where ashes or charcoal have been dumped. However, if it is not clear whether or not a fire was built on the site, always count questionable sites that are within site boundaries and exclude those that are outside site boundaries.

19. Litter/trash: Evaluate the amount of litter/trash on the site: n = None or less than a handful, S = some-a handful up to enough to fill a 2-1/2-gallon bucket, M = Much- more than a 2-1/2-gallon bucket.

20. Human waste: Follow all trails connected to the site to conduct a quick search of likely "toilet" areas, typically areas just out of sight of the campsite. Count the number of individual human waste sites, defined as separate locations exhibiting toilet paper and/or human feces. The intent is to identify the extent to which improperly disposed human feces is a problem. Use the following code categories: N=None, S=Some-1-3 sites, M=Much-4 or more sites evident.

21. Comments/Recommendations: An informal list of comments concerning the site: note any assessments you felt were particularly difficult or subjective, problems with monitoring procedures or their application to this particular campsite, or any other comment.

22. Campsite photograph: Select a good vantage point for viewing the entire campsite, preferably one of the site boundary pins, and take a digital picture of the campsite. Note the azimuth and distance from the center point to the photo point and record on the form. The intent is to obtain a photograph that includes as much of the site as possible to provide a photographic record of site condition. The photo will also allow future workers to make a positive identification of the site. Label disks with date, and site number.

23. Total campsite area: Calculate the campsite area based on the recorded transect measurements. Add the area of any satellite sites and subtract the area of any undisturbed islands to obtain the Total Campsite Area. Record campsite area to nearest square foot (ft^2).

FORM B PROCEDURES

Refer to the procedures described earlier, all procedures are the same with the exception of campsite size. Measure campsite size using the geometric figure method. Typically, class 1 and 2 campsites are quite small in size and this method should be both efficient and accurate. Be sure to record on form B the types of figures used (rectangle, square, triangles...etc.) and all necessary dimensions. Record campsite area to nearest square foot (ft^2).

CAMPSITE MONITORING FORM A

1) Old Site Number:_____ 1a) New Site Number_____

2) Inventoried By:_____ 3) Date:____/____/____

INVENTORY PARAMETERS

4) Substrate of site area: (B = bedrock, C = cobble, S = sand, O = soil) _____
5) Number of Other Recreational Sites Visible: _____
6) Fire Ring Present: (y or n) _____
Construction: (stone or metal) _____
Condition: (1 = good, 2 = poor, 3 = replace) _____
7) Privy Present: (y or n) _____
Condition: (1 = good, 2 = poor, 3 = replace) _____
8) Picnic Table Present: (y or n) _____
Condition: (1 = good, 2 = poor, 3 = replace) _____
9) Tree Canopy Cover: (1 = 0-25%, 2 = 26-50%, 3 = 51-75%, 4 = 76-100%) _____

IMPACT PARAMETERS (Begin with Site Boundary Determination)

10) Condition Class: (3, 4 or 5) _____
11) Vegetative Ground Cover Onsite: (Use categories below) _____
(1 = 0-5%, 2 = 6-25%, 4 = 51-75%, 5 = 76-95%, 6 = 96-100%)
12) Vegetative Ground Cover Offsite: (Use categories above) _____
13) Soil exposure: (Use categories above) _____
14) Tree Damage: None/Slight____, Moderate____, Severe_____
15) Root Exposure: None/Slight____, Moderate_____, Severe_____
16) Number of Tree Stumps: _____
17) Number of Trails: _____
18) Number of Fire Sites: _____
19) Litter/Trash: (N = None, S = Some, M = Much) _____
20) Human Waste: (N = none, S = Some, M = Much) _____
21) Comments/Recommendations: _____
_____
22) Take Center point and Site Photographs:

<u>Site Center point References</u>

1)
2)
3)
4)

<u>Satellite Site Dimensions</u>

<u>Island Site Dimensions</u>

Site area from Program: _____
+Satellite Area _____
-Island Area _____ =
Total Site Area _____ (sq ft)

Transect Data
AzimuthDistance (ft)

1)
2)
3)
4)
5)
6)
7)
8)
9)
10)
11)
12)
13)
14)
15)
16)
17)
18)
19)
20)
21)
22)
23)
24)
25)

CAMPSITE MONITORING FORM B

1) Old Site Number: _____ 1a) New Site Number: _____

2) Fire Ring Present: _____ Condition: _____

3) Privy Present: _____ Condition: _____

4) Picnic Table Present: _____ Condition: _____

5) Condition Class (1 or 2)_____ Site Size: _____(ft^2)

APPENDIX H
SEQR DOCUMENTS

State Environmental Quality Review
NEGATIVE DECLARATION

Notice of Determination of Non-Significance

Identifying # 2006-FPM-5-57

Project Number _____ **Date April 20, 2006**

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

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

Name of Action: Adoption and Implementation of the Silver Lake Wilderness Area Unit Management Plan, including the Sacandaga and Cathead Mountain Primitive Areas.

SEOR Status: Type I [x] Unlisted [ ]

Conditioned Negative Declaration: [ ] Yes [x] No

Description of Action: The action involves the NYSDEC developing a Unit Management Plan (UMP) for the Silver Lake Wilderness Area, and as the lead agency, determining that the proposed UMP will not have a significant adverse environmental impact.

Section 816 of the Adirondack Park Agency Act (Executive Law) requires the Department of Environmental Conservation to develop, in consultation with the Adirondack Park Agency, individual unit management plans for each unit under its jurisdiction classified in the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan. Proposed management actions include removing several non-conforming structures and uses; a reroute of the southern portion of the Northville-Lake Placid Trail (NPT); designation of two primitive roadside campsites, one of which will be made accessible for people with disabilities; monitoring public use, fish and wildlife populations, and environmental impacts; pond reclamation, stocking, and liming; public education; maintenance of existing facilities; the relocation of one parking area within 500 feet of the point where West River Road is closed, the closure of the Godfrey Road and associated parking area and possible construction of foot bridges.

The Northville-Lake Placid Trail (NPT) reroute will be in the southern portion of the unit. It will eliminate almost half of the distance that currently requires walking along the road, but would add approximately 4.5 miles of additional new trail in the wilderness area. Trail construction will consist primarily of marking, brushing, and some foot bridge construction where necessary. The reroute has been mapped by volunteers. It is necessary for public safety reasons. No significant impacts are anticipated as a result of this action.

The relocated parking area will involve new construction. The capacity of the parking area will remain at 10 spaces with one new van accessible spot. This parking area will provide access to the NPT and adjacent public lands. Parking area construction will consist of tree cutting, grading, and surfacing. No significant impacts are anticipated as a result of this action.

Two additional primitive roadside campsites will be designated along the West River Road to compensate for the sites no longer accessible by car after the road closure. Campsite designation will entail brushing and marking appropriate locations. No significant impacts are anticipated as a result of this action.

Location: The Silver Lake Wilderness Area is located in the Towns of Lake Pleasant, Benson, Wells, Hope and Arietta in Hamilton County.

Reasons Supporting This Determination: A majority of the proposed management actions consist primarily of monitoring and maintenance to protect the natural resources of the area. The construction of a new parking area and trails will be carried out in accordance with the guidelines established in the Division of Operations Handbook for building trails and parking areas in addition to all other applicable Department rules, regulations, policies and guidelines. Any tree cutting will be in compliance with the Commissioner's Delegation Memorandum #84-06 on Tree Cutting in the Forest Preserve and LF-91-2 Policy on Cutting, Removal or Destruction of Trees and Other Vegetation on Forest Preserve Lands .

Parking area construction will involve some tree removal. Rock or earth will not be removed from the site. Disturbed areas that are not part of the parking area will be re-seeded.

Parking area construction and relocation projects will be developed in accordance with the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan, and will incorporate the use of Best Management Practices, including but not limited to such considerations as:

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

The trail re-route would eliminate public safety concerns as well as improve the user experience and overall character of the trail. Trail construction and relocation projects will be developed in accordance with the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan, and will incorporate the use of Best Management Practices, including but not limited to such considerations as:

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

SEQR Negative Declaration

All bridge construction and relocation projects will incorporate the use of Best Management Practices, including but not limited to such considerations as:

- Minimizing channel changes and the amount of cut or fill needed;
- Limiting construction activities in the water to periods of low or normal flow;
- Minimizing the use of equipment in the stream;
- Installing bridges at right angles to the stream channel;
- Constructing bridges to blend into the natural surroundings;
- Using stream bank stabilizing structures made of natural materials such as rock or wooden timbers;
- Stabilizing bridge approaches with aggregate or other suitable material;
- Using soil stabilization practices on exposed soil around bridges immediately after construction;
- Designing, constructing and maintaining bridges to avoid disrupting the migration or movement of fish and other aquatic life;
- Consultation with the Adirondack Park Agency in cases where existing bridge abutments must be replaced.

Campsite designation and relocation projects will be developed in accordance with the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan, and will incorporate the use of Best Management Practices, including but not limited to such considerations as:

- Locating campsites to minimize cut and fill;
- Locating campsites to minimize tree cutting;
- Locating campsites so that they are properly separated form one another;
- Locating campsites away from wetlands, streams, and unstable slopes;
- Locating campsites on flat, stable, well drained sites;
- Use of drainage structures on access trails to prevent water flowing into the site;

Fishery management projects will be developed in accordance with the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan and the following Environmental Impact Statements:

- The Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement on the Fish Species Management Activities of the DEC, Division of Fish and Wildlife, June 1980
- The Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement on the NYSDEC Program of Liming Selected Acidified Waters, October 1980, as well as the Division of Fish,Wildlife and Marine Resources Liming Policy
- The Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement on Habitat Management Activities

If Conditioned Negative Declaration, provide on attachment the specific mitigation measures imposed.

For Further Information:

Contact Person: Eric J. Kasza

Address: NYSDEC
PO Box 89
225 North Main Street
Herkimer, NY 13350

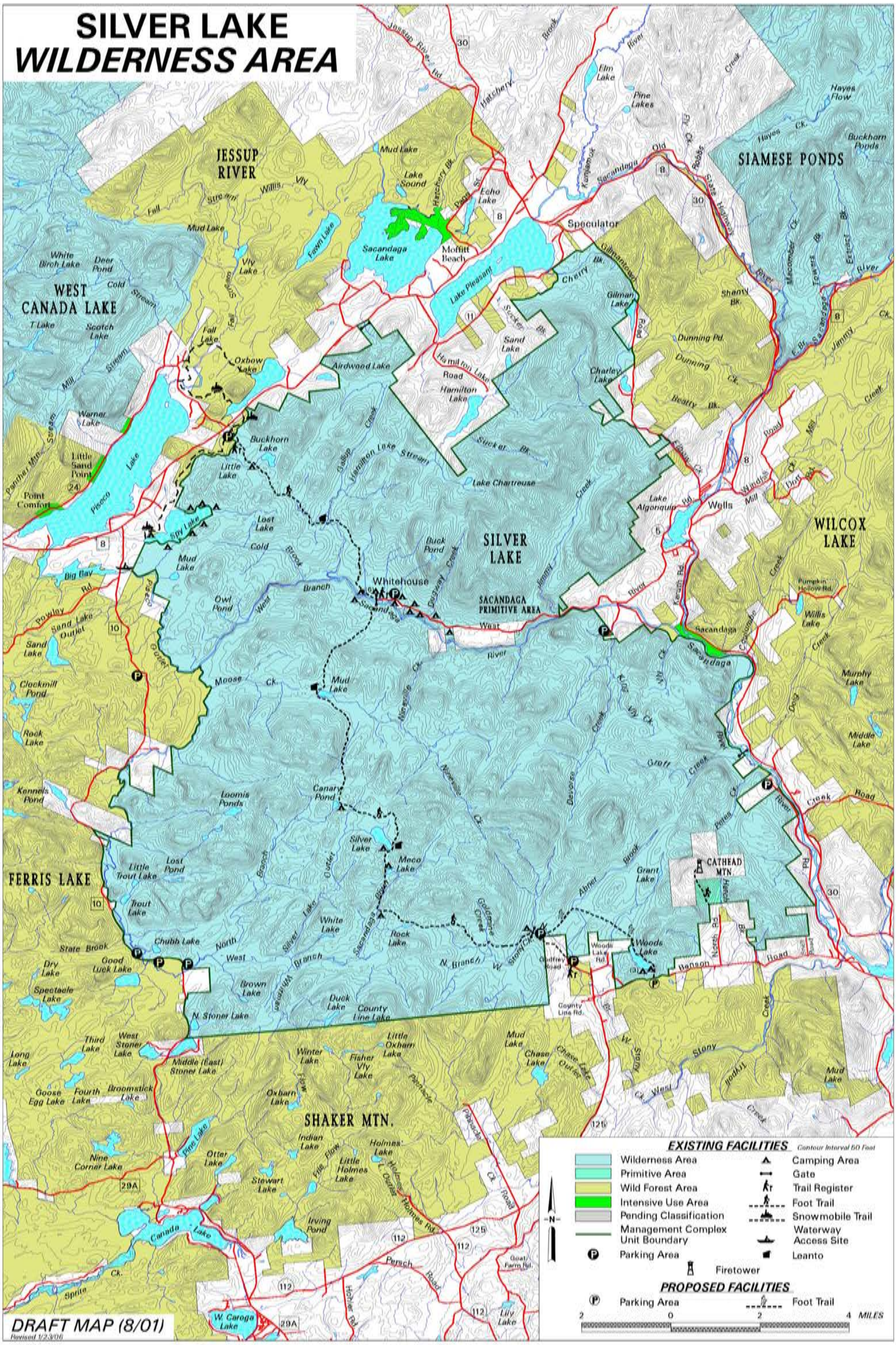
Telephone Number: (315) 866-6330

SEQR Negative Declaration

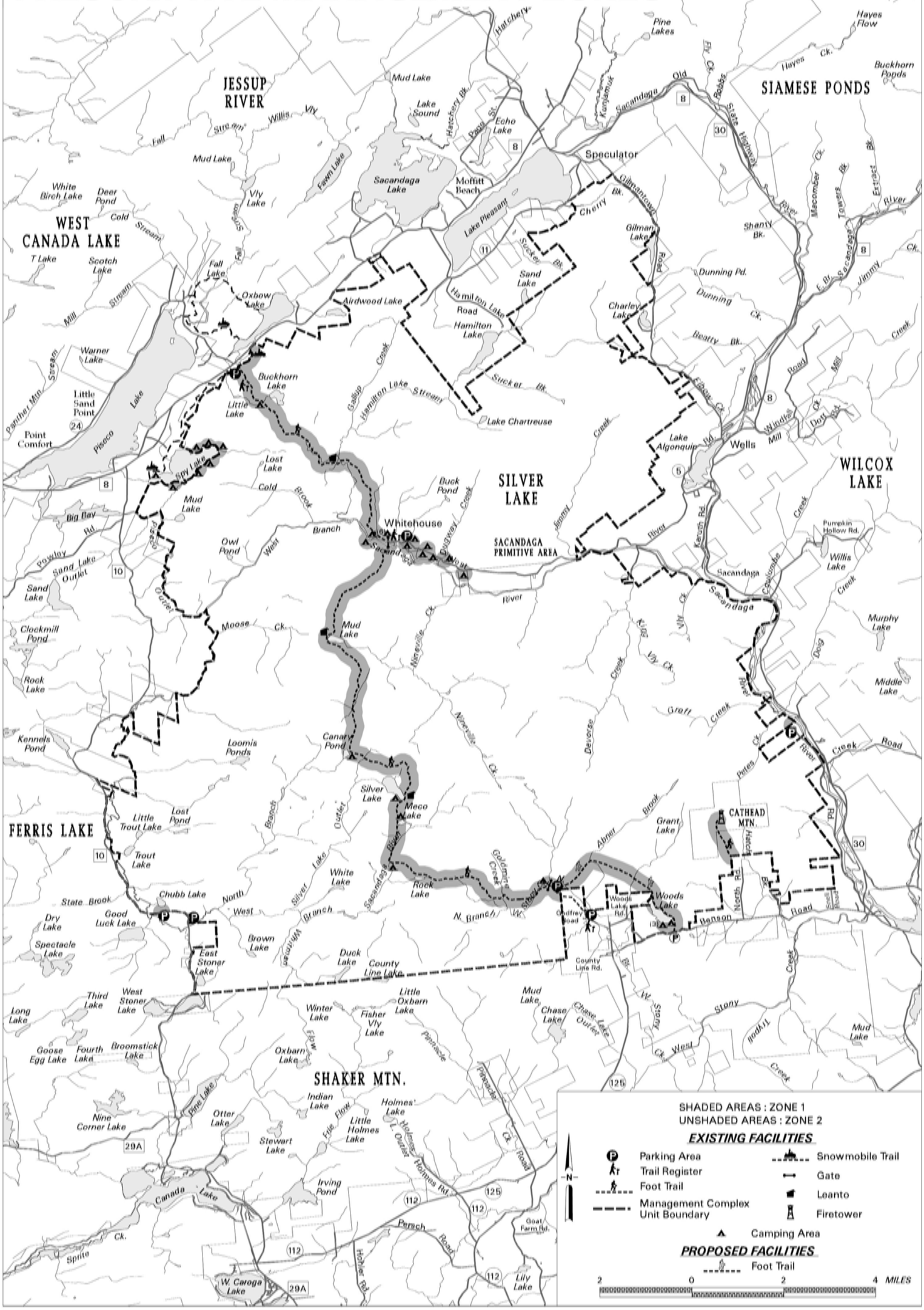
For Type I Actions and Conditioned Negative Declarations, a Copy of this Notice Sent to:
Commissioner, Department of Environmental Conservation, 625 Broadway, Albany, New York 12233; Appropriate Regional Office of the Department of Environmental Conservation; Office of the Chief Executive Officer of the political subdivision in which the action will be principally located.
Applicant (if any)
Other involved agencies (if any)

APPENDIX I
UNIT MAPS

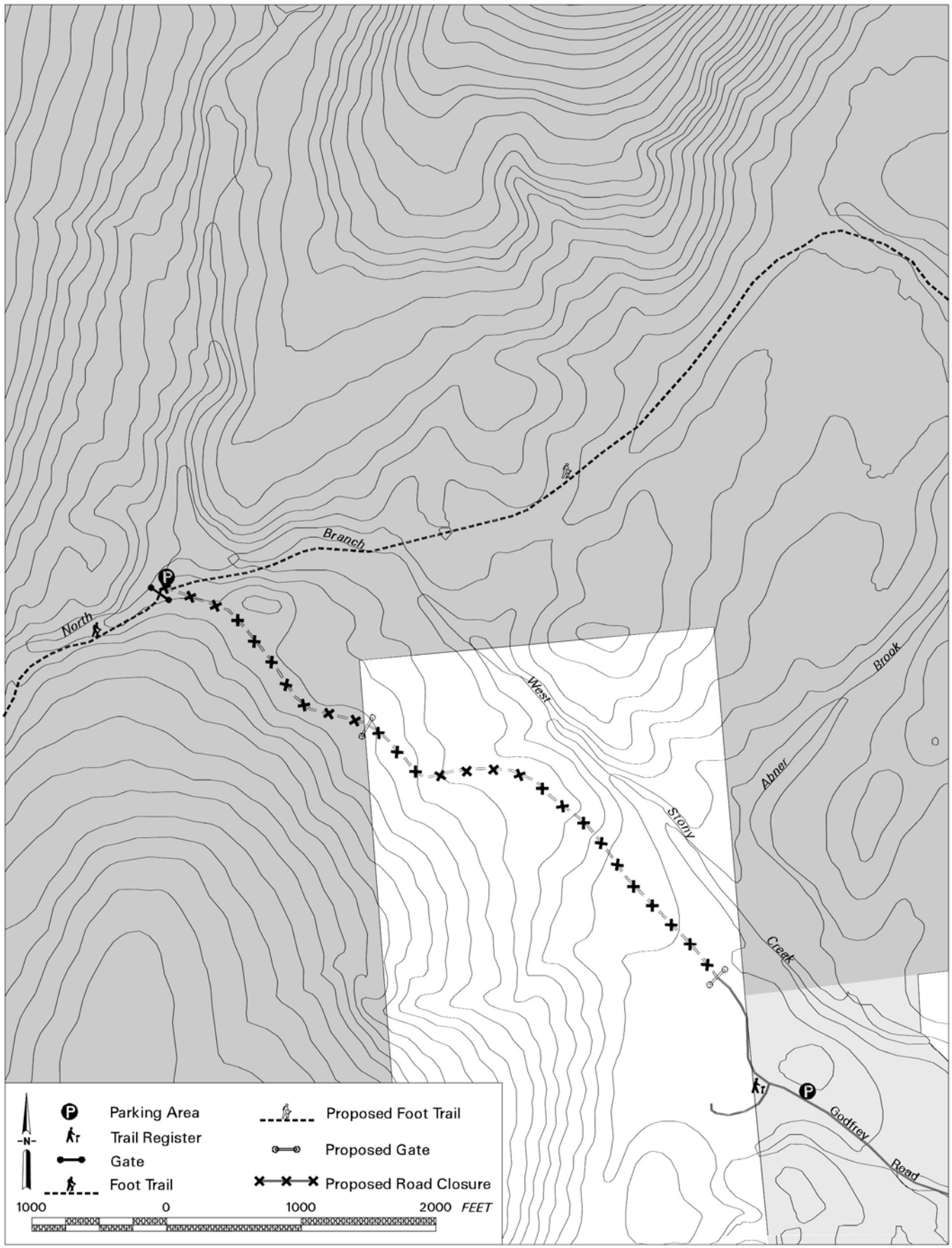
SILVER LAKE
WILDERNESS AREA



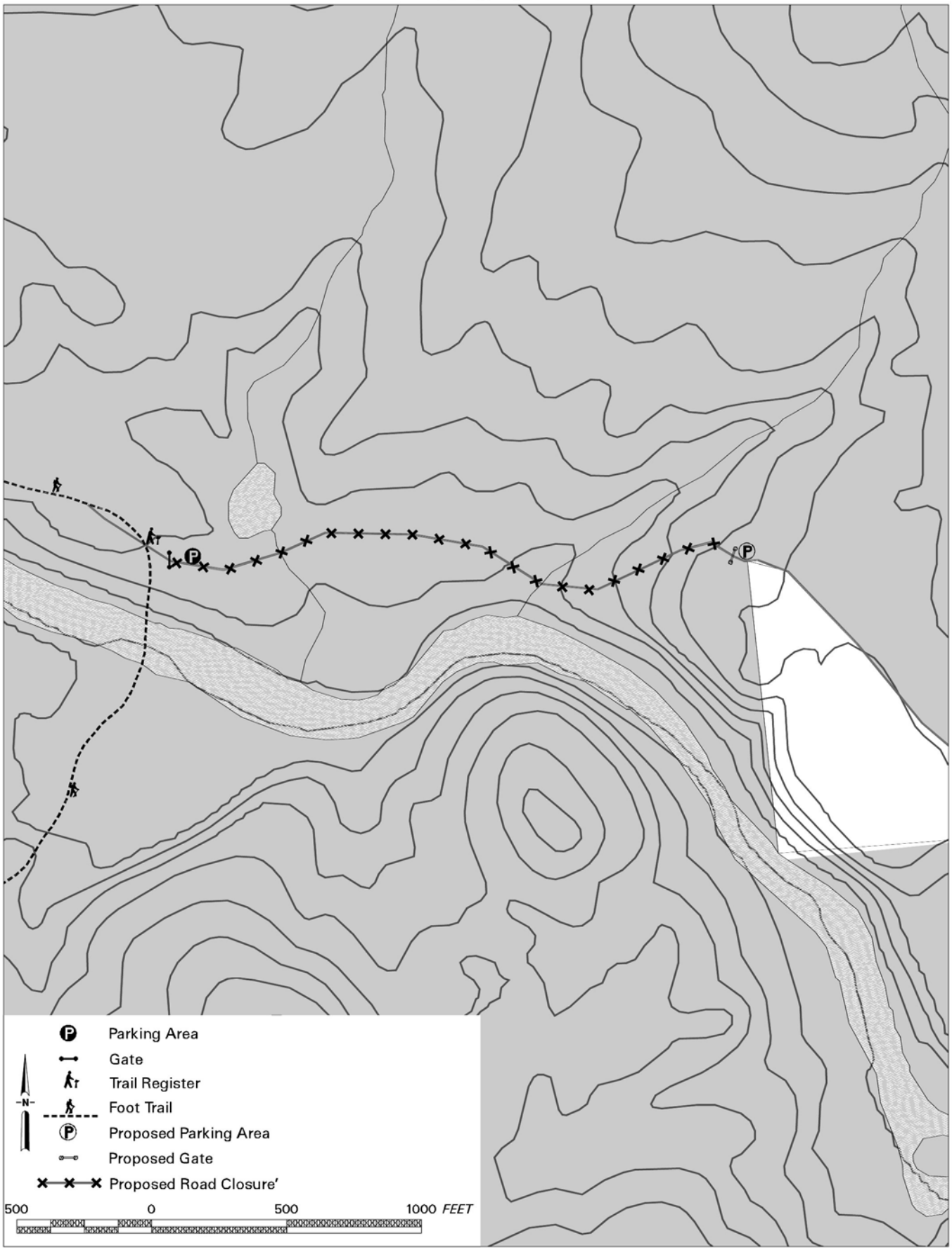
SILVER LAKE WILDERNESS
PRESCRIPTIVE MANAGEMENT ZONES



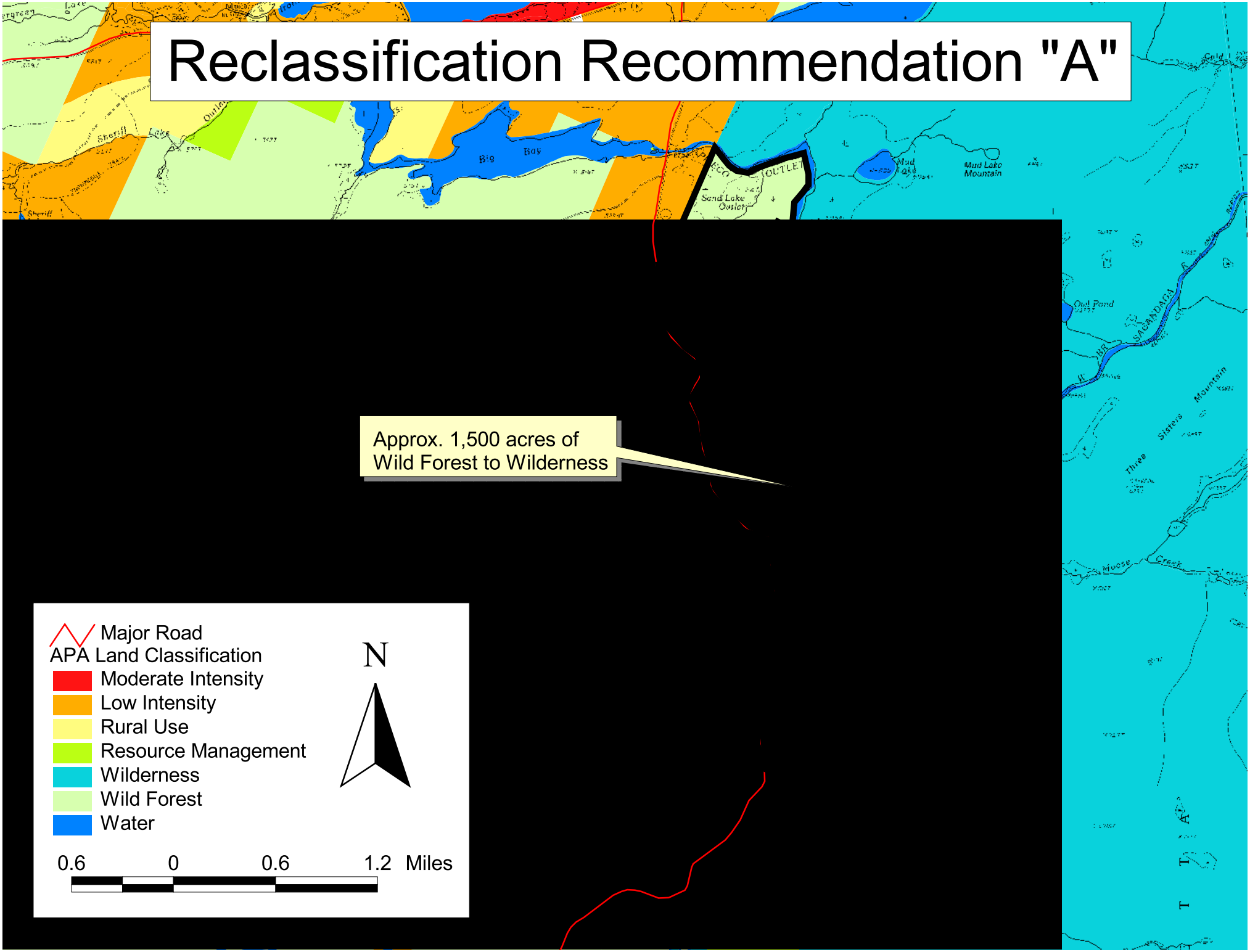
PROPOSED ROAD CLOSURE
GODFREY ROAD



PROPOSED ROAD CLOSURE
WHITEHOUSE AREA



Reclassification Recommendation "A"



Reclassification Recommendation "B"

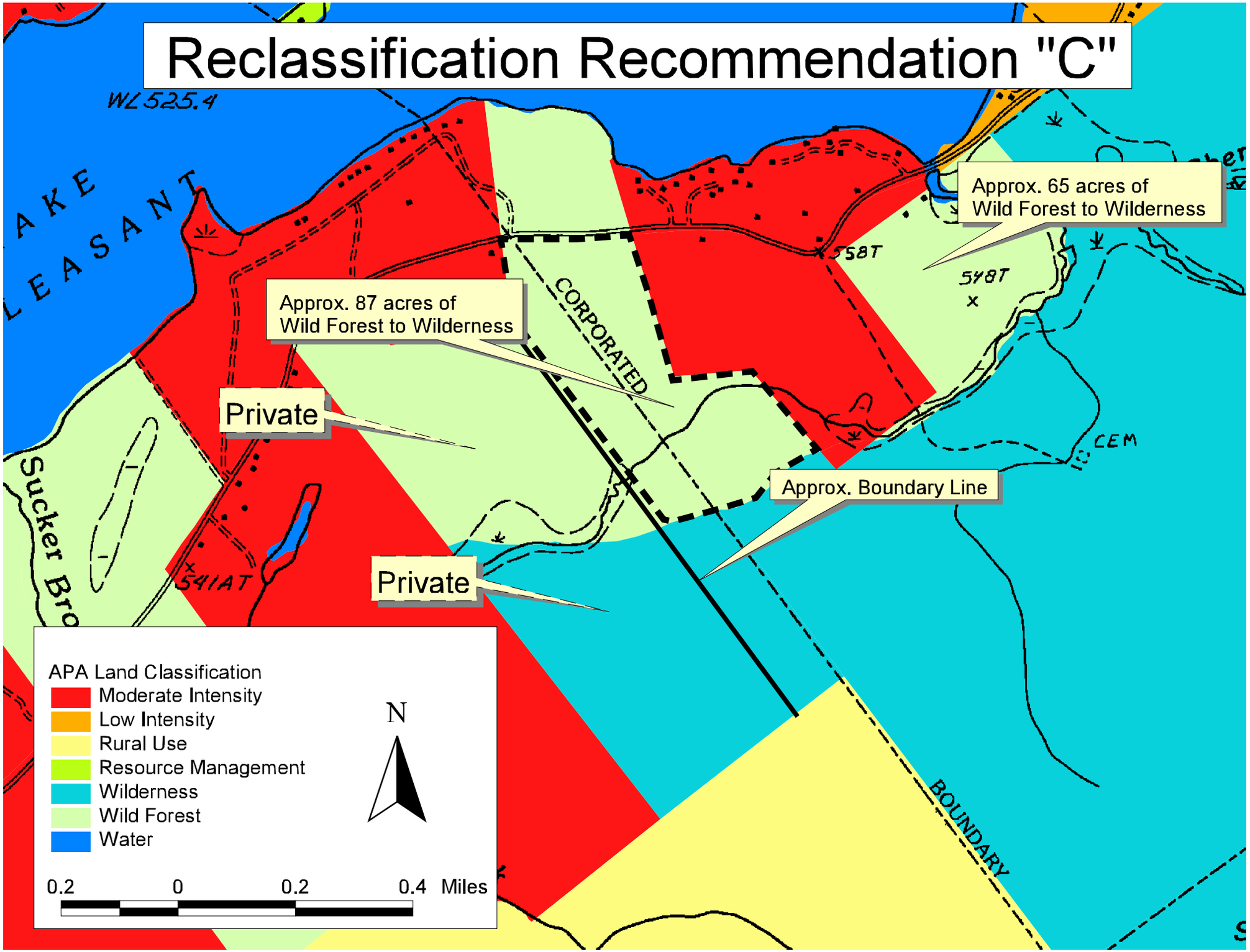
Approx. 369 acres of
Wild Forest to Wilderness

Major Road
APA Land Classification
Low Intensity
Rural Use
Resource Management
Wilderness
Wild Forest
Water

N

0.4 0 0.4 0.8 Miles

Reclassification Recommendation "C"



Reclassification Recommendation "D"

Approx. 8 acres of
Wilderness to Wild Forest

Approx. 1/2 acres Unclassified
Propose Wilderness Classification

Approx. 1/2 acres Unclassified
Propose Wild Forest Classification

Approx. 16 acres of
Unclassified Lands to Wild Forest

Approx. 9 acres of
Unclassified Lands to Wild Forest

APA Land Classification
- Low Intensity
- Resource Management
- Wilderness
- Wild Forest
- Pending Classification
- Water

N

0.1 0 0.1 0.2 Miles

Reclassification Recommendation "E"

Approx. 22 acres of
Wilderness to Wild Forest

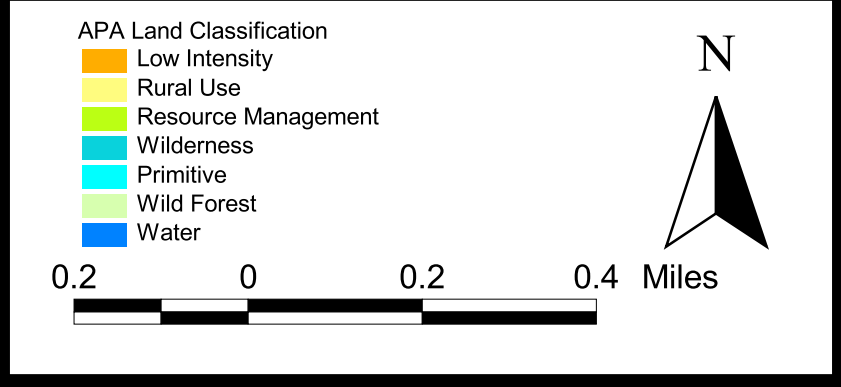
APA Land Classification
- Rural Use
- Resource Management
- Wilderness
- Wild Forest
- Water

N

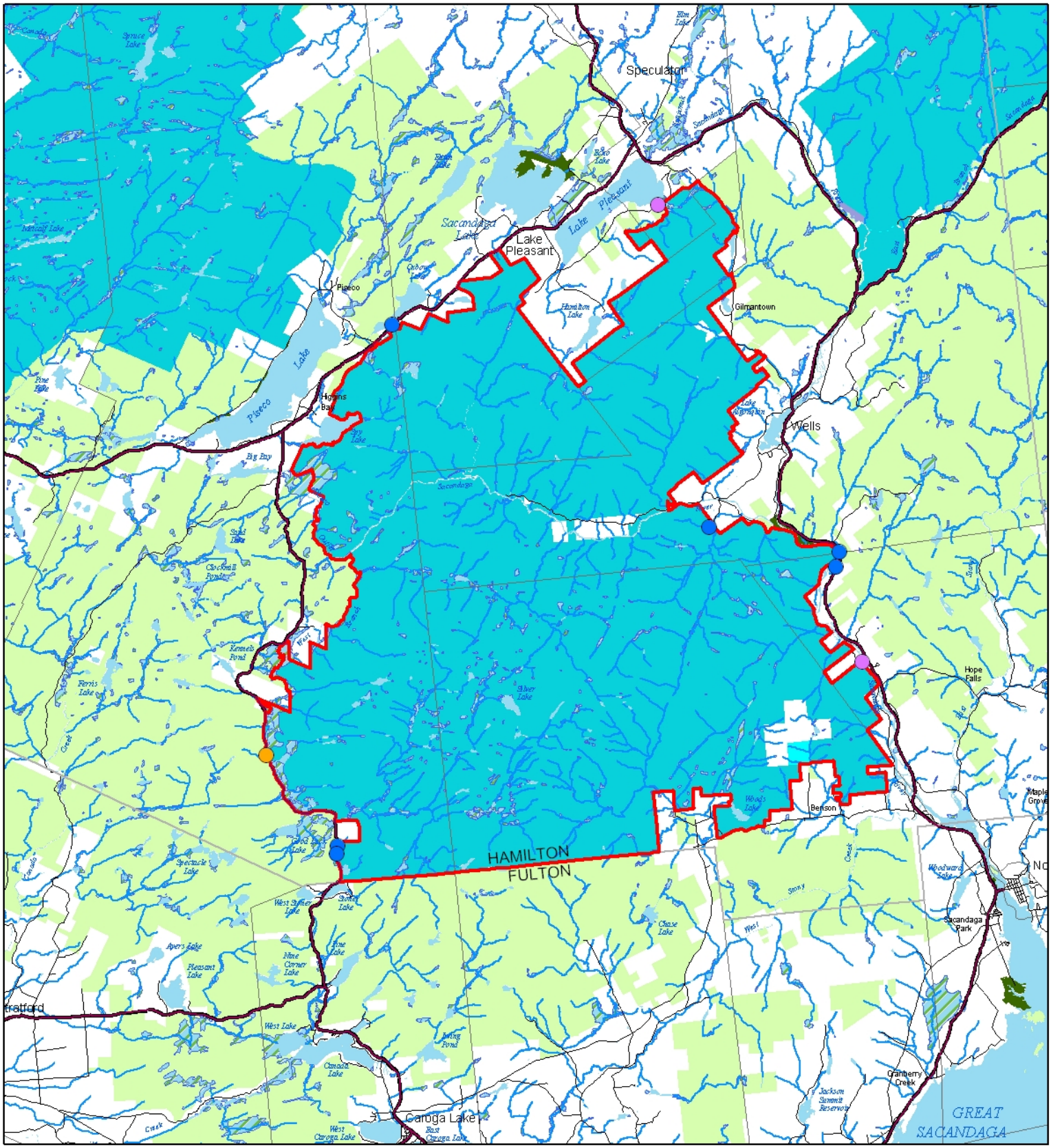
0.1 0 0.1 0.2 Miles

Reclassification Recommendation "F"

Approx. 206 acres of
Primitive Area to Wilderness



Sacandaga Lake
Lake Pleasant
Piseco Lake
10
8
30
Wetlands of Silver Lake Wilderness Area
Road
River
Water
Wetland
Silver Lake Wilderness Area
0.7 0 0.7 1.4 2.1 Miles



Silver Lake Wilderness UMP

Positive Invasive Data
Hamilton County

The Nature Conservancy ADIRONDACKS SAVING THE LAST GREAT PLACES ON EARTH

ADIRONDACK LAND TRUST

Map prepared by
ANC/ALT GIS
2004
Keene Valley, New York
Copyright 2004 (c). The Nature Conservancy

Silver Lake Wilderness UMP Boundary

Terrestrial Invasive Plants

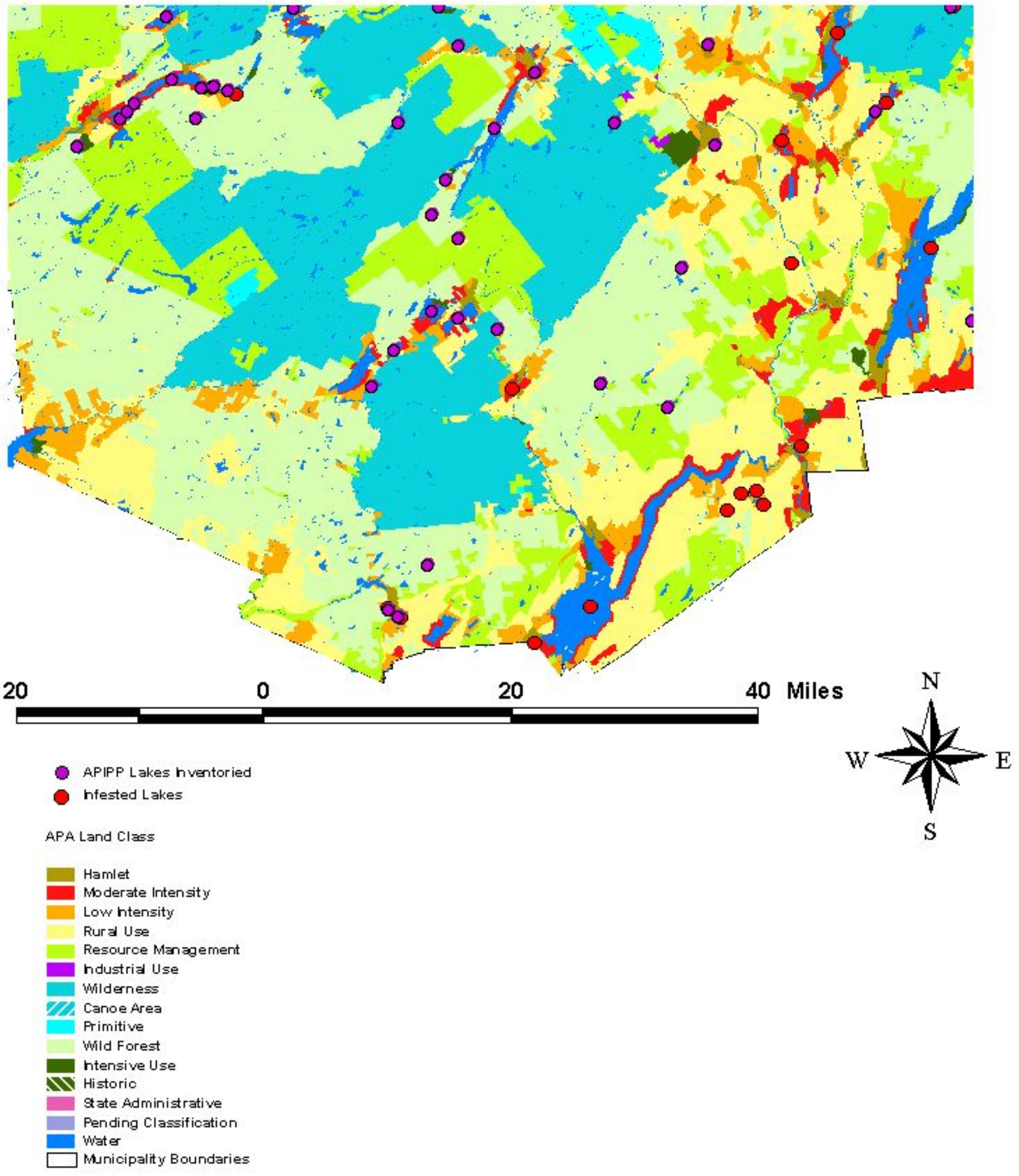
- Lythrum salicaria = Purple loosestrife
- Phragmites australis = Common reed
- Polygonum cuspidatum = Japanese knotweed

N W E S

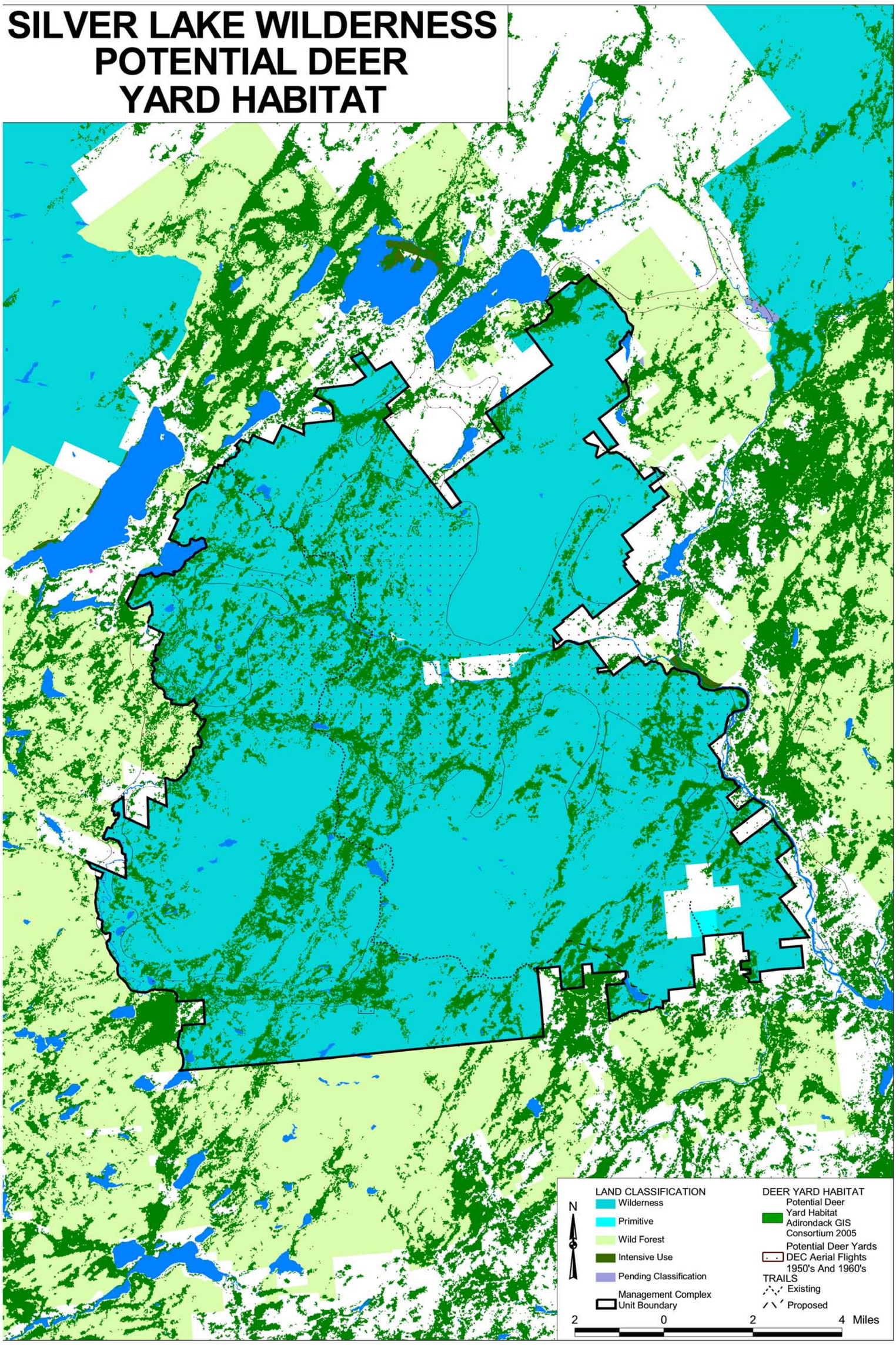
0 0.5 1 2 Miles

1:213,167

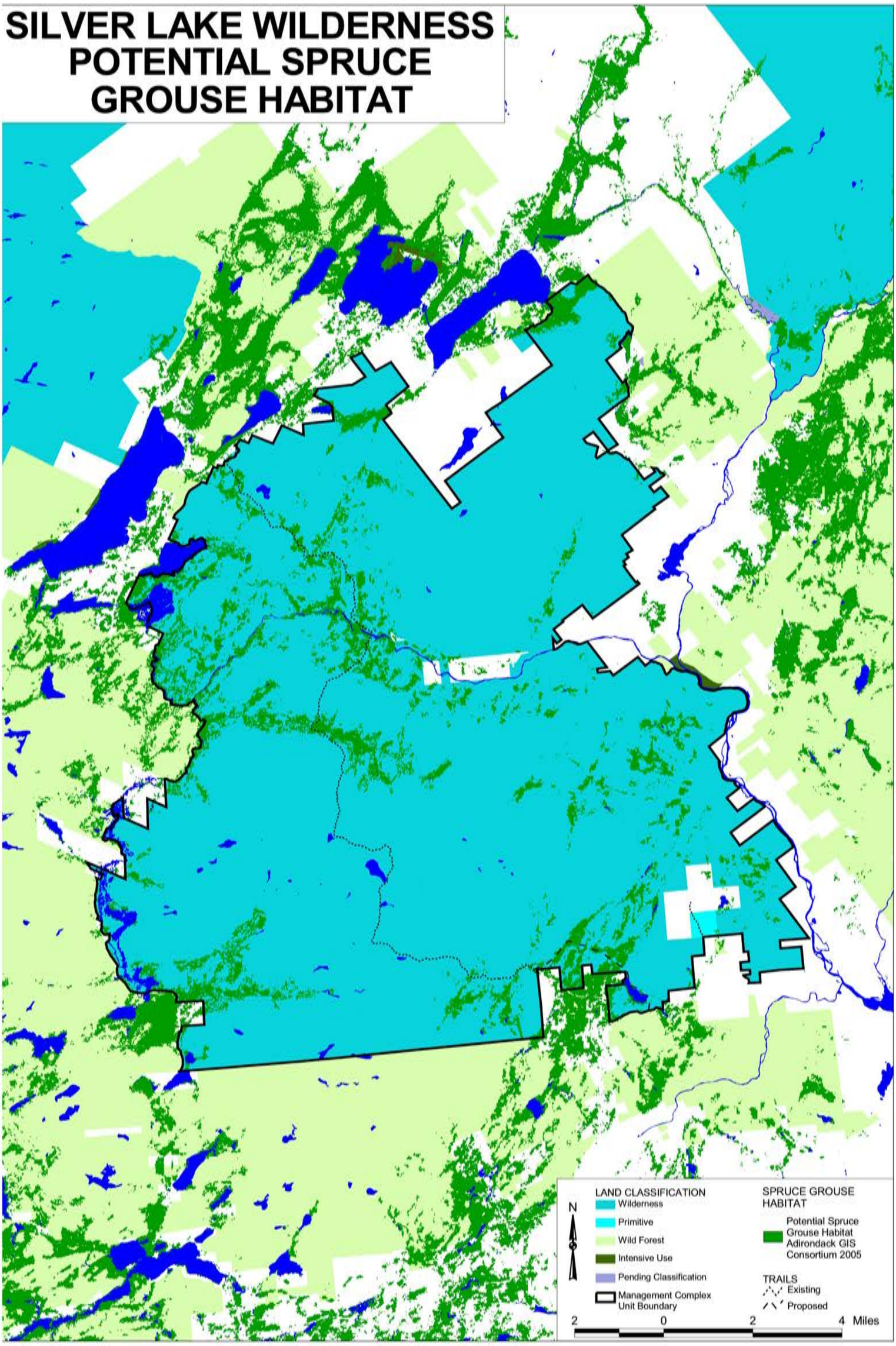
Silver Lake Wilderness
Aquatic Invasive Plant Distribution, 2004



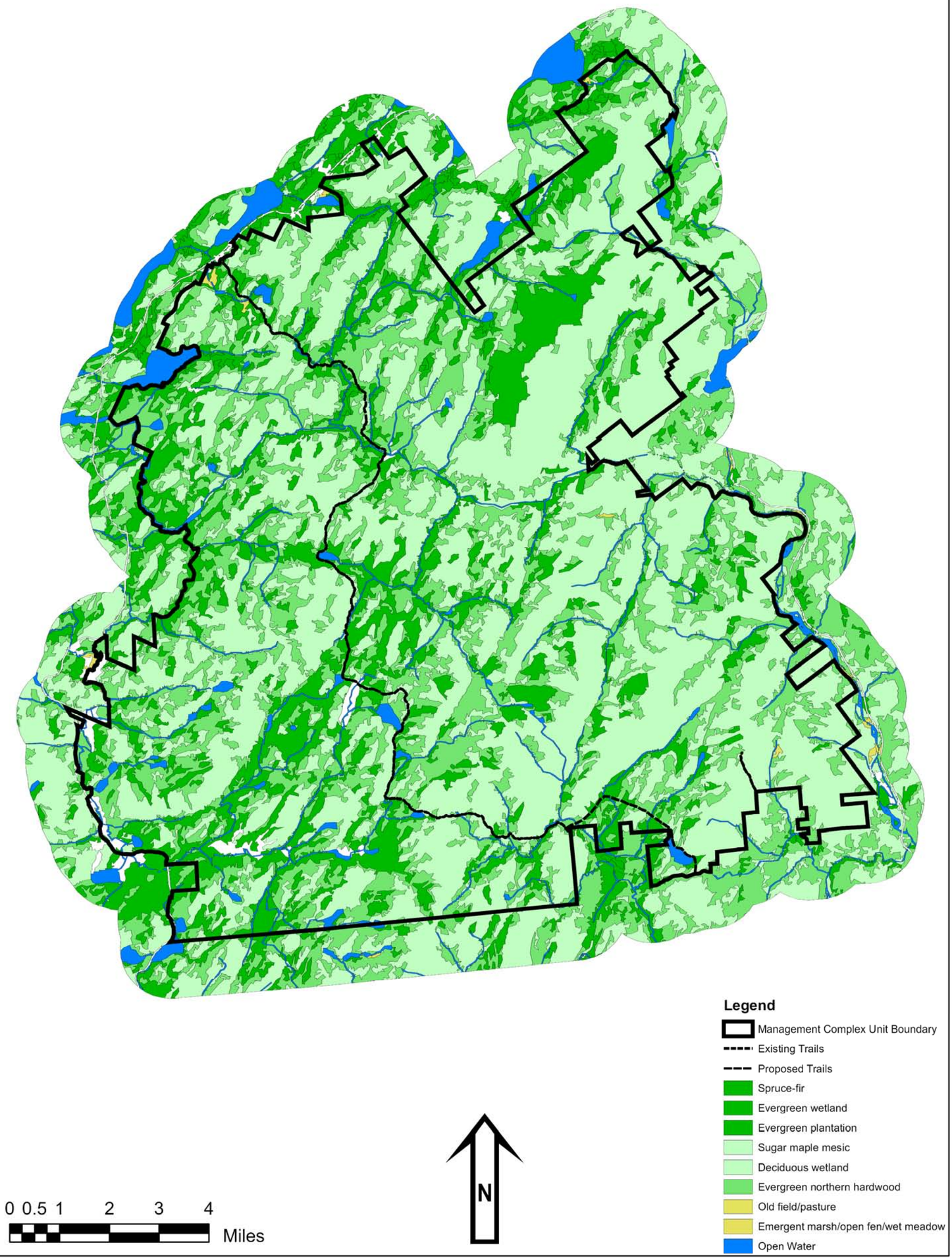
SILVER LAKE WILDERNESS POTENTIAL DEER YARD HABITAT



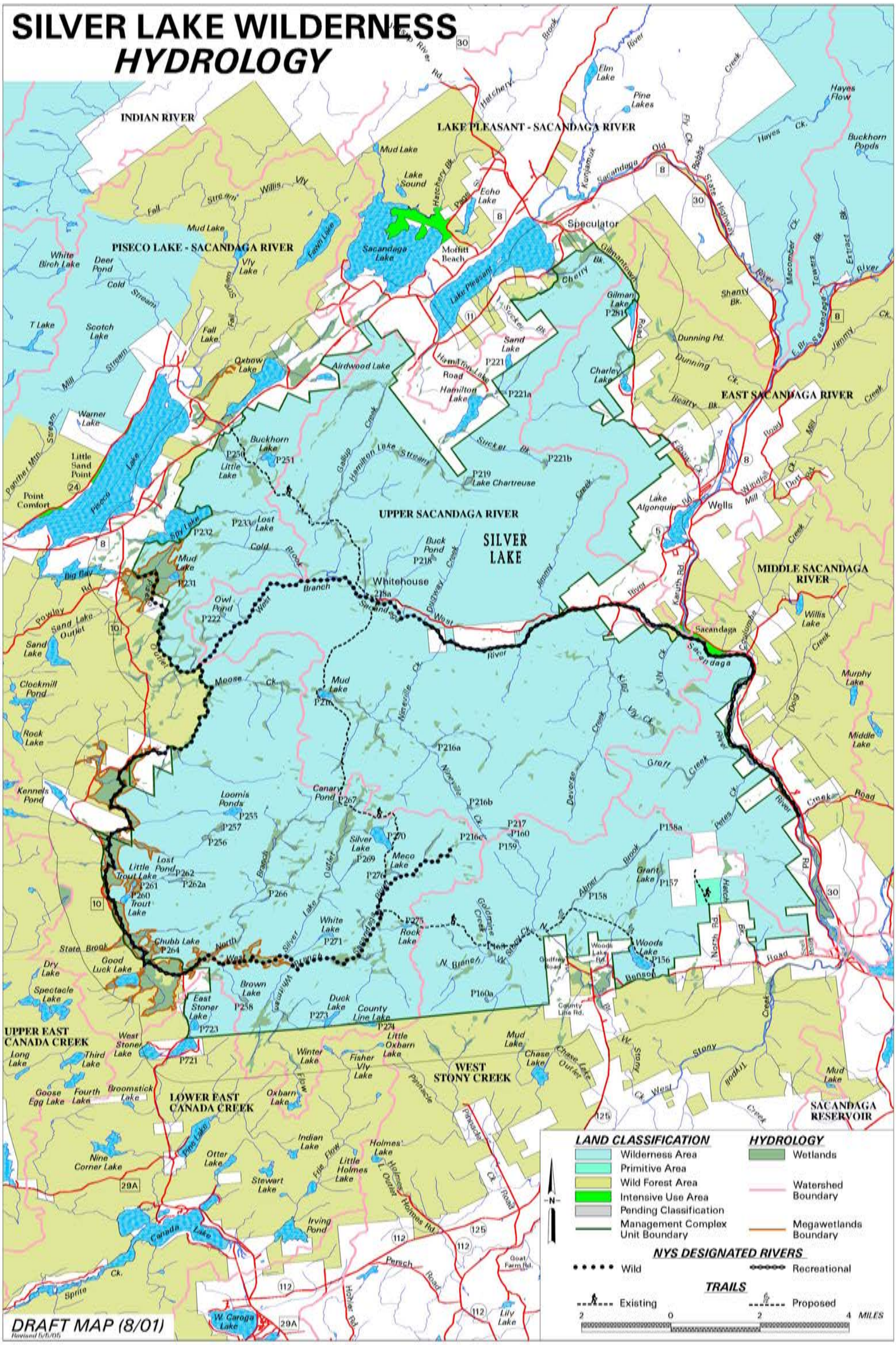
SILVER LAKE WILDERNESS POTENTIAL SPRUCE GROUSE HABITAT



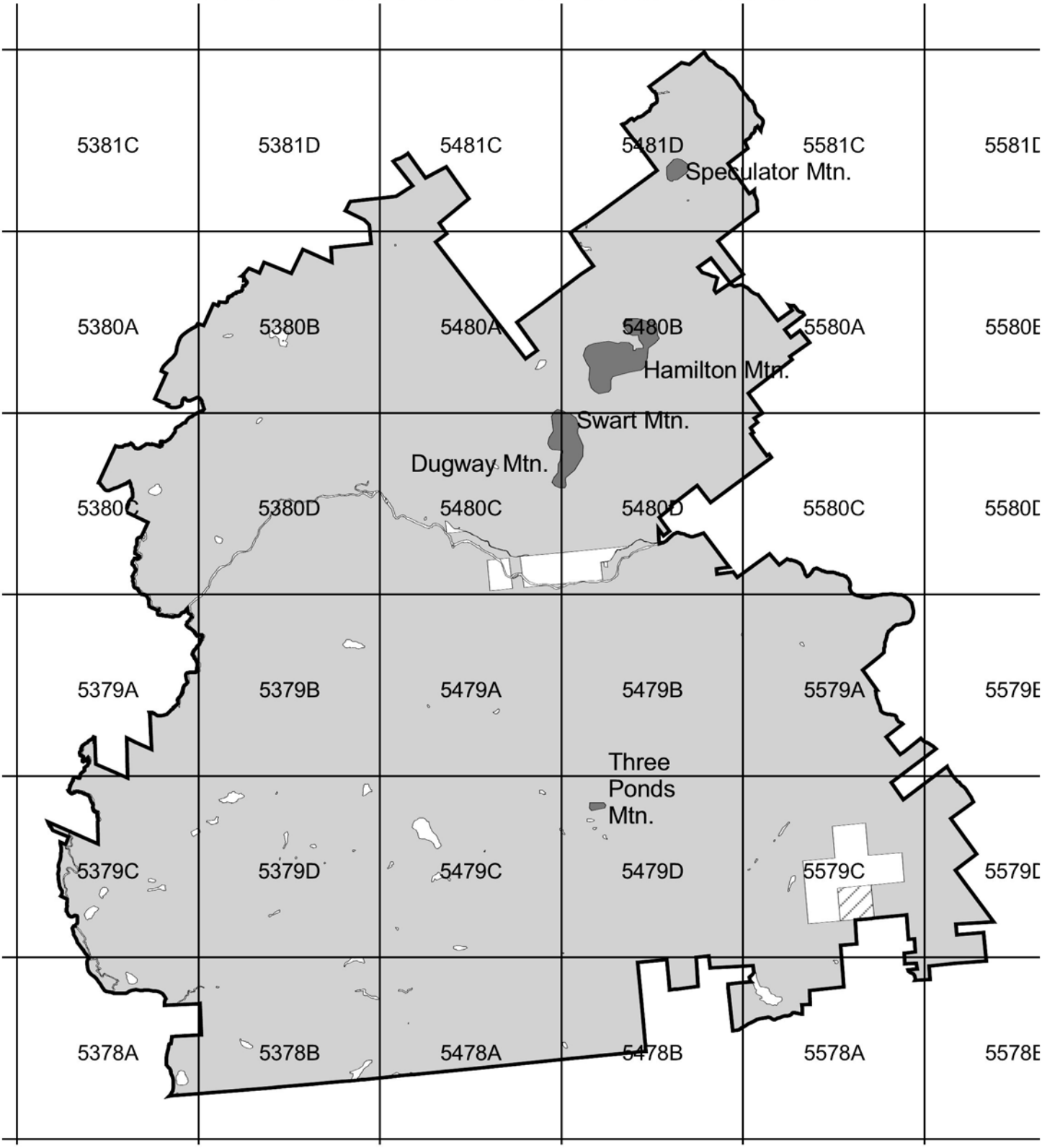
SILVER LAKE WILDERNESS AREA
FOREST COVER TYPE MAP



SILVER LAKE WILDERNESS
HYDROLOGY



SILVER LAKE WILDERNESS BREEDING BIRD ATLAS BIRD CONSERVATION AREA



Wilderness
Primitive
Management Complex Unit Boundary
Breeding Bird Atlas Block
Bird Conservation Area

N

2 0 2 4 Miles