

IV. PROJECTED USE AND MANAGEMENT PROPOSED

A. Descriptions of the six major geographic areas of the Unit, issues, projects, public use management and controls, and facilities development. (Map on previous page.)

1. Kanape

a. **Description**

The Kanape and South Hollow Brooks flow northwesterly toward the Bushkill through this area (see map on page 64). The High Point and Mombaccus - Little Rocky Mountain Ridges form a backdrop for the two stream valleys. Both streams have native trout populations. An old woods road, rebuilt in the 1930's as a fire truck trail by the Civilian Conservation Corps, parallels and eventually crosses the Kanape Brook on it's way to what is today called Freeman Avery Road. Today, the woods road is no longer a thoroughfare, and is not open to the public beyond State land. A popular unmarked hiking trail uses the woods road before turning and climbing up to a clearing on Ashokan High Point Mountain.

In 1963 all truck trails were closed to public motorized traffic by the State Attorney General's office, based on an interpretation of the "forever wild" clause of the New York State Constitution. In 1976, the stone bridges of the woods road were replaced with culverts by the Forest Rangers.

In South Hollow, the remains of a road which once connected farmsteads in the South Hollow Brook Valley to Watson Hollow Road is still visible along this brook. Access to the State land is sometimes difficult over this old woods road, which crosses the brook at one point. Farther up the valley, the old road splinters into numerous roads (once used for logging and mining) criss-crossing onto the steep flanks of High Point. For more information on this area, please refer to the History of Land Unit section in Chapter I, and Man Made Facilities in Chapter II.

b. **Visual**

Vista locations are shown on the Kanape, Mombacus, and Krumville Sections Map (page 64). Repeated fires have scarified the soil on High Point Mountain, creating small and large ridgetop heath meadows with impressive westerly views of the Rocky - Balsam Cap - Friday Mountain Ridge, and the Peekamoose - South Hollow Valley particularly from adjacent Hoopole Mountain. This view will be incorporated into the proposed trail loop. There is almost no view on the summit from the existing High Point trail toward the north and east in the summer. However, a fantastic view of the Ashokan Reservoir and the Rondout Valley framed by the Shawangunks is available from a large blueberry patch, a short hike (actually a bushwack) easterly.

No trail exists or is proposed at this time, since this meadow straddles private lands. Perhaps the landowner might be interested in maintaining the vista and the unique vegetation. Vistas also exist along a herd path trail running northerly in the direction of the col between High Point and South Mountain.

c. Wildlife

The combination of streams, heath meadows, steep rocky slopes, and hardwood forests (Chestnut oak and rich mesophytic forest) is ideal habitat for bears.

d. Issues

- 1) Access to the Kanape Area of the Unit is limited to the Kanape Parking lot (6 cars) and unmarked trail (actually an old road, later improved by the Civilian Conservation Corps for fire tower access), and informal public use via South Hollow Road onto state land. Access to the property along South Hollow Road should be clearly researched and formalized. The status of the unmaintained section of the road should be confirmed and the condition of this road should be improved so at least two entry points exist for the Kanape area. Alternatively, public access is assured since State lands also touch the maintained segment of the town road. The unmaintained segment was never formally abandoned and deeds from the 1800's indicate the presence of a public right-of-way through the area.
- 2) Any new trails in the Ashokan High Point area will take into account the presence of rare plant species and the "pitch pine-oak-heath rocky summit" community. Trails will be monitored for undesirable impacts on the area.
- 3) This is one of the few areas in the Catskills where a successful loop trail may be constructed, using existing old logging roads most of the way. Initial reconnaissance indicates an excellent opportunity for a small loop connecting High Point and Hoopole Mountains by way of an old logging-fire trail back to the Kanape trail. A larger loop, which would allow hikers to start in the Kanape Valley and via High Point travel to the South Hollow Brook valley, using an old logging road most of the way, would depend on an easement or in-fee acquisition (from a willing seller) of a pedestrian right-of-way through a privately owned parcel.
- 4) Several scenic views, described earlier, are available in this area. Such views are becoming increasingly rare in the Catskills and should be maintained.

- 5) Central Hudson has utility poles along Watson Hollow Road bordering the unit for approximately 1.4 miles. The easement/use must conform to the requirements of the State Constitution and laws pertaining to the Forest Preserve.

e. **Projects**

- 1) The Real Property Bureau staff will finalize research on the South Hollow Brook to clarify access issues. The DEC believes the public has good access.
- 2) Place additional Forest Preserve signs on State lands along South Hollow Brook Road.
 - i. Construct a four car parking area on the small piece of State land which touches the maintained stretch of South Hollow Brook Road. Only a small parking area is possible, limited to within 50 feet of the road, to maximize the distance to the stream. Stormwater runoff will be easily contained by the natural buffer. Access will be directly off the road to minimize disturbance.

Clearly delineate the right-of-way of the old roadway beyond the town maintained section and install "Public right-of-way through private lands" signs, once the status of the road and access is clearly resolved.

- ii. See Comment/Response No. 9 in Appendix A for more details.
- 3) Install trail markers on the unmarked Kanape Brook hiking trail. Marking with cross-country ski trail markers on the woods road segment of the trail in the valley will allow shared use (skiing, hiking, mountain biking and horseback riding) to continue where the base is acceptable. The upper trail and loop will be marked as a footpath to protect steep slopes and the unique ecology. Continue to maintain the Bush Kill bridge and the newly designated Kanape Brook hiking trail to High Point and add a loop trail by connecting the summit of High Point Mountain to Hoopole Mountain via a small 0.8 mile new trail, returning via an old fire road (appr. 0.8 miles) to the Kanape trail in the valley (see map). The newly designated trail will need stabilizing and improving in several locations, particularly the steep foot trail segment leading to the High Point summit.

Once this project is completed, a larger loop trail, contingent upon funding and a willing seller, should be considered. This much larger trail loop could become possible with an easement or in-fee acquisition of approximately 90 acres of private lands in the valley between South Mountain and the northwesterly extension of High Point Ridge. This would provide a trail from

the Kanape Brook across High Point to South Hollow Brook to both locations with parking lots. Also, a connector trail between South Hollow and the Kanape could easily be completed to provide one of the few real loop trails available in the Catskills, reducing the need for hikers to use two cars, while using a substantial existing woods road network. The New York State Natural Heritage Program staff (Latham, New York) have good information on the local plant communities. The area will be monitored at about five year intervals for signs of species change indicating the need for additional protection, trail relocation, or closing. The proposed trail avoids the upper South Hollow ravine beech-maple mesic forest (see also Comment/Response 6 in Appendix A). This project has a secondary priority to Projects 1 and 4.

- 4) As soon as funding becomes available through the State's Environmental Protection Fund or from other sources, approach the owner of the remaining three to five acre blueberry field on the ridge top east of High Point (Little High Point). The State land boundary currently runs through the center of this ridge. As mentioned earlier, the small remaining ridge top provides excellent views. If an easement or fee acquisition is negotiated with a willing seller, the view will be preserved and open to the public. Otherwise use will not be encouraged.
- 5) Install a bulletin and information board at the Kanape parking lot. A map of the easterly half of the unit should be included. If use increases, install an outhouse, or have a portable toilet at the site in the summer and early fall. Continue to plow the lot in winter. Install a trail register on the easterly side of the bridge over the Bush Kill, along the newly marked Kanape trail.
- 6) Continue to maintain the six camping sites designated near the Kanape trail/brook and Bush Kill and the three sites along South Hollow Brook. Review impacts and relocate any designated campsites where there is danger of surface runoff to the brook.
- 7) Clean and stabilize the spring and spring box along the Kanape trail. Maintain the stonework and design built by the Civilian Conservation Corps, probable in the 1930's. The spring is centrally located on the trail and has a good flow (see map).
- 8) Remove the barrel on the gate at the start of the Kanape Brook trail and replace with more compatible signage. Replace the stop sign on the gate over the Bush Kill ford with signs more compatible with the Forest Preserve. The gates are necessary to provide access for Forest Rangers and firefighters.

2. Mombaccus Mountain, Rosy Bone Knob and Krumville Plantation

a. **Description**

The area of Mombaccus - Rosy Bone Knob is accessed by a woods road off Haver Road in the Town of Olive (see map on page 64). The road is currently blocked off on State land after it crosses a tributary of Mettakahonts Creek. From this road, old logging roads rise up the short steeply sloping valleys between the mountains, but disappear in mid-slope. One overgrown woods road, which has become no wider than a footpath, shows signs of being kept clear by someone. This woods path reaches the ridge between Little Rocky and Rosy Bone. A path, clearly maintained, follows this ridge to the private land nearby. This route is the best way to reach the ridgetops in this area. However, no substantial views were found from these densely wooded hillsides.

Mettakahonts Creek and the streams here contain trout, although the upper tributaries may be dry in summer. Walking north from the old woods road on Mettakahonts Creek, you arrive at a place where numerous springs and wet seeps quickly swell the water flow within a quarter mile. Walking south along the Creek, the banks steepen. A large hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*) forest surrounds the creek. The heavy shade is only occasionally broken by a clearing from windthrown or storm damaged trees, where saplings are beginning to take hold.

Another way to access the Forest Preserve in this area is by Bear Spring Road (see Chapter II, Major Easements and Access Points), a woods road in the Town of Rochester which ends on private land surrounded by State land. The woods road is a public right-of-way on what has been referred to in the past as a public road.

Krumville Plantation

An 80 acre Forest Preserve parcel, one mile east of Samsonville, off Browns Road. At times, called the Brown's Road Parcel or the John Vandemark Lot. This parcel is about half covered by a 68 year old Norway spruce (*Picea abies*) tree plantation. Most of the rest is wet, protected as a State designated wetland (WS-3, Class II) of about 55 acres, some of which is on adjacent private lands.

b. **Issues**

- 1) The woods road off Haver Road is a clearly defined and established public access to the Forest Preserve. However, the access needs to be properly developed to eliminate trespass conflicts with other road frontage landowners, and make sure the public can find the road.

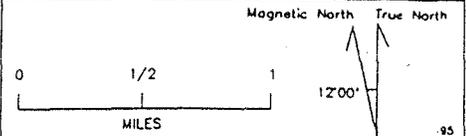
- 2) Browns Road forms the easterly, and part of the southerly, boundary of the Krumville Plantation (approximately 0.47 miles). Three house/cabins currently use a woods road which passes through the northeasterly corner of the lot. Although part of the woods road was an access to the farmhouse which once stood on the property, the right of adjacent private owners to use the woods road over State land is unclear.
- 3) The inholdings within existing Forest Preserve lands is a top priority for acquisition, either in-fee or by easements to curb incompatible development.

c. Projects

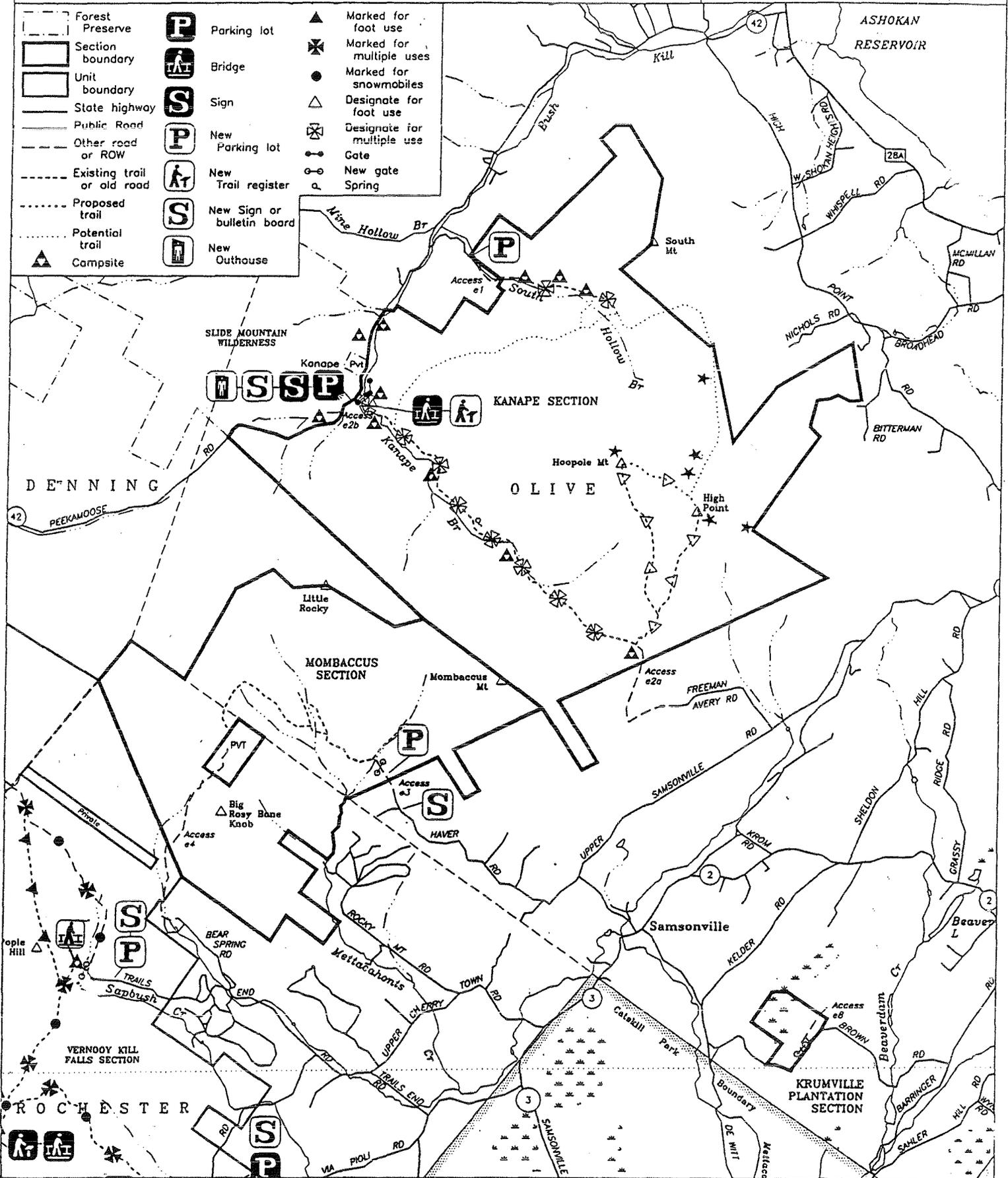
- 1) To properly develop the Haver Road access, place a sign along Haver Road indicating the turn onto the public access road to the Forest Preserve, post the edges of the roadway with signs "Public right-of-way through private land...", and provide a parking area on State land for no more than four cars along the north side of the woods road before the bridge over the stream. A parking sign and "rules and regulations" will be posted here. However, continue to maintain the woods road bridge over the stream for fire and emergency access. Maintenance will be reduced as cars will no longer park in the clearing past the stream. A sign "No motorized vehicles beyond this point" will be posted just beyond the parking lot. A gate will be considered only if enforcement or other circumstances warrant such an expense.
- 2) Once the use of the road through the Krumville Plantation is clarified, proper signage shall be placed at the entranceway and along its length. The exact location of permissible access, if any, will be established, and other roads closed. A gate will be installed at the entranceway. Additional boundary line maintenance and signage will be used in this area.
- 3) If the inholding near Rosy Bone Mountain is placed on the market, or funding is available to purchase from a willing seller, it would be among the priority projects for this unit (see D. Land Acquisition).

SUNDOWN WILD FOREST

Kanape, Mombaccus & Krumville Sections



	Forest Preserve		Parking lot		Marked for foot use
	Section boundary		Bridge		Marked for multiple uses
	Unit boundary		Sign		Marked for snowmobiles
	State highway		New Parking lot		Designate for foot use
	Public Road		New Trail register		Designate for multiple use
	Other road or ROW		New Sign or bulletin board		Gate
	Existing trail or old road		New Outhouse		New gate
	Proposed trail				Spring
	Potential trail				
	Campsite				



3. Vernooy Kill Falls

a. **Description**

The Vernooy Kill Falls area is one of the largest in this unit (see map on page 67). It is located mostly in the Town of Rochester; however, its southernmost tip lies in the Town of Wawarsing and westernmost edge in the Town of Denning. Approaching from the Rondout River Valley there is a steep climb, otherwise the area is a high plateau with occasional hills (Bangle, Pople, etc.). The main watershed is the Vernooy Kill which drains the moist eastern hemlock woodlands and wetlands in the area (See map). A snowmobile/equestrian shared use trail passes near an area called the Balsam Swamp (approximately 195 acres), one of these wetlands, which is however primarily eastern hemlock, although it does contain red spruce and some balsam fir. In the far south, the wetlands drain into the West Branch of the Vernooy Kill. All of the streams are tributaries of the Rondout Creek. Cherrytown Mountain was the site of a 580 acre fire in May, 1980, and another 400 acre fire in summer, 1991 which burned quite deeply into the mineral soils on the summit. The scar remains visible today.

A public pedestrian right-of-way crosses the Lundy property on the easterly side of this area. However, the R.O.W. passes through an area along the river which is wet even in the dry summer months.

b. **Visual**

Panoramic views from most peaks in the area are limited to the winter months, with the exception of Spencer's Ledge, which provides a good view of the High Point-Rosy Bone-Cherrytown Mt. ridgeline. Because of the fire, the trailless Cherrytown Mt. summit provides a view of the surrounding area. The most popular destination in the region is the Upper Falls of the Vernooy Kill, accessed by a woods road now designated as a snowmobile trail from either Trails End or Upper Cherrytown Road. Here the brown water, tinted from tannins in the surrounding woods, drops about sixty feet in a series of small falls. Below the falls, a 15-20 foot tall stone wall stands adjacent to the stream, probably part of the old Vernooy Mill. The smaller Lower Vernooy Kill Falls are one-half mile downstream, not on a trail. An informal parking area is located along Trails End Road, a formal parking lot on Upper Cherrytown Road.

A large meadow, most of which was once a beaver pond, lies at the headwaters of the Vernooy Kill. The stone remains of a farm can still be found nearby. Most of the area is wet and is a designated freshwater wetland.

c. **Wildlife and Wetlands**

There are several State designated wetlands in the area, totalling about 480 acres, which are shown on the wetlands map on the next page (R-4-II, R-27-II, R-5-II, R-26-II, R-1-II, R-3-II, R-29-IV, P-2-II (Balsam Swamp), P-1-II (Greene Farm beaver meadows), P-7-II, and P-6-III (just north of Spencer Road, Town of Denning)[R = Rondout USGS Quad Map, P = Peekamoose USGS Quad Map). Although no rare or endangered species have been identified here, additional screening of these sites is recommended.

The Balsam Swamp area, with a few satellite swamps along the trail to Greenville, includes several boreal relict species such as creeping snowberry (*Gaultheria hispidula*), sheep laurel (*Kalmia angustifolia*), mountain holly (*Nemopanthus* spp.), and wild raisin (*Viburnum cassinoides*) in addition to the balsam fir and red spruce (Kudish, pers comm.). Yet nearby, along the trail from Upper Cherrytown Road to Vernooy Kill Falls are southern species, suggesting a history of repeated burns: chestnut oak (*Quercus prinus*), white and red oaks, flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*), mountain laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*), great rose-bay rhododendron (*Rhododendron maximum*), black birch (*Betula nigra*) and highbush blueberry (*Vaccinium corymbosum*). This is a very small area for such differences (Kudish, pers. comm.). In August 1972 a tornado progressing northeasterly on its way from Sullivan County blew down a swath of trees (several hundred feet wide and about one mile long) west of Ridge Road in Yagerville (C. P. Fish, pers. comm.).

Two rattlesnake dens have been identified in the area near the edge of the unit, perhaps on nearby private lands.

d. **Issues**

- 1) Signs on roads accessing the Forest Preserve and existing trails. Access is unclear to the average person, increasing use of the better known and marked trails, causing additional overcrowding in some parts of the Catskills. Damage to trees, campfire scars and garbage are a problem.
- 2) The designated campsites along Trout Creek (Yagerville) and the Vernooy Kill could impact water quality and esthetics if abused or overused.
- 3) Several rare or endangered species sites, particularly rattlesnake dens, are located on or near private lands. These locations should be studied to assess what management considerations or habitat requirements are needed for long term survival of the species.

- 4) Resolve the access relationship between the Department and the owner of the inholding along Trails End Road in Rochester (see Bear Spring Road under Major Easements and Access Points, Chapter II.).
- 5) Off road vehicles have used the Vernoooy Kill Trails. Abuse and damage to some parts of the trail have occurred.
- 6) The condition of the right of way connecting Lundy Road to State lands and its location within the wet, swampy, floodplain of the Vernoooy Kill, make this a poor location for a trail to the Vernoooy Kill Falls connecting with the Long Path. Trails should avoid the steep slopes and riparian lands along the Vernoooy Kill. Although trailless access is fine, public parking rights on the shoulder of Lundy Road must be clarified.
- 7) The State owns a detached triangular shaped parcel in the Yagerville area which provides about 0.25 mile of stream access to Trout Creek. A connection to the other state lands, preferably along stream riparian lands would provide access. Alternatively, connections to Holly Road, allowing public access, will be considered if offered as a gift. Traditional public access exists to the other state lands in the area (see Access e7), so the issue is limited to the detached parcel. Presently, public access to the parcel is questionable, based on a 1960 request for permission to cross state lands, but should be investigated further.

e. **Projects**

- 1) Install DEC parking lot sign at the Vernoooy Kill Trail parking lot on Upper Cherrytown Road. The parking area across the street from the trailhead sign is so well hidden that it is unclear to users that it is associated with State land.

Maintain trail register and improve signage at Vernoooy Kill Falls. Two recommendations were received to move this trail register to Upper Cherrytown Road. However, one trail register at Vernoooy Kill Falls covers the use in that direction and towards Greenville. A trail register was considered along the trail from Trails End toward Bangle Hill, to include users of this stretch. However, trail use is very low in this area so no action will be taken at this time.

- 2) Improve and maintain direction signs at the upper Vernoooy Kill Falls trail junction with Trails End Road, with clearly delineated mileages to Peekamoose, Greenville, Vernoy Kill Falls, and the lower Vernoooy Kills Parking lot. Consider optional destinations, such as Cherrytown Mountain, People Hill, Balsam Swamp and the beaver meadows. Clearly indicate that the People Hill trail destination is an alternative to use of the Trails End Road.

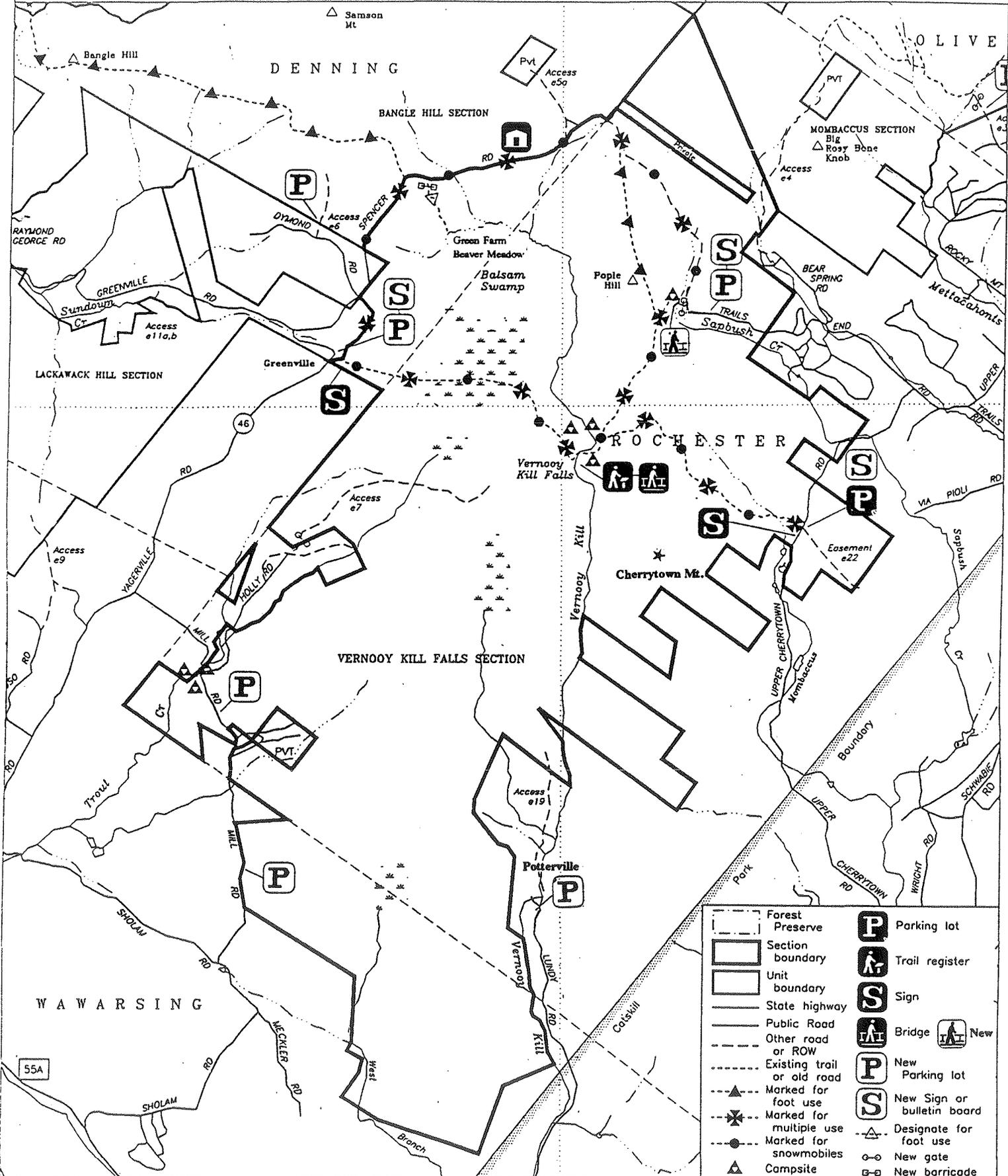
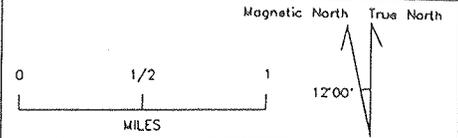
Limit disturbance by clearly delineating parking at the start of the Upper Vernooy Kill Trail, installing a bulletin board with Forest Preserve regulations and an area map. However, the area is subject to heavy vandalism, so careful design and possibly replacement will be necessary, and should be reevaluated after two years.

- 3) Install gate (two posts are already set and the gate can be easily mounted) at the start of the Upper Vernooy Kill Falls Trail. The use of the Vernooy Kill section of the trail by horses will be monitored closely for damage. The gate will be opened seasonally for snowmobiles. Policing will be done by Forest Rangers and through arrangements with snowmobile organizations to more closely monitor and educate users.
- 4) Construct wooden bridge over stream downhill and west of the gate, described under 3, and maintain.
- 5) Place sign to indicate parking and right-of-way on Lundy Road in Potterville (Town of Rochester). Mark right-of-way with "Public easement over private lands."
- 6) Install "DEC Parking" sign and occasionally mow the grass (harden the grassy clearing if ground becomes soft) at the Dymond Road entrance to the Vernooy Kill Falls Snowmobile Trail in Greenville.
- 7) Remove two of the five campsites near Trout Creek, Yagerville, Town of Rochester and mark the other campsite locations as well as "no camping" areas within 150 feet of the road or stream where abuse has occurred. Limit auto access to campsite north of Mill Road with boulders, allowing parking for no more than two cars (see map).
- 8) Maintain woods road which starts near the end of Holly Road for continued administrative access. As discussed in Chapter II, B. Major Easements and Access Points, this was once a major public road which continued on to the mill at Vernooy Kill Falls. Close with a gate if unauthorized use becomes a problem.
- 9) Maintain and improve trails and selected woods roads for public use or administrative access.
- 10) Establish two one or two car pulloffs for trailless access along Mill Road in the Sholam-Yagerville area.

- 11) Increase the frequency of Forest Preserve Wild Forest signs along Trails End Road, Spencer Road and Mill Road. Improve directional signs to eliminate confusion wherever the trail (and Long Path) intersects with Trails End Road. Block off road and mark spur trail to the old Green Farm beaver meadows south of Spencer Road within State land in Denning.
- 12) Clarify and formalize the relationship between the Department and owner of the inholding for access to the parcel of land near Bear Spring and Trails End Roads. Establish a clear and consistent policy to deal with driveway access to this parcel through preserve lands. Consider buying if it ever comes on the market (See D. Land Acquisition).
- 13) Study rare and endangered species sites, particularly rattlesnake dens, and determine what management steps, or purchases of in-fee or easements from willing landowners would protect the habitat. Two possible habitats are near Cherrytown Mountain and the southerly boundary of the unit in Wawarsing.
- 14) Maintain/stabilize all existing designated shared use trails, the Long Path hiking trail, and bridges.
- 15) If parking is permissible along Lundy Road, a sign identifying the Lundy R.O.W. and a safe shoulder to park on will be installed (see also Comment/Response #20 in Appendix A).
- 16) Undeveloped private land fronting on the Vernoooy Kill, and surrounded on three sides by State land (two parcels) is an acquisition priority, as are inholdings completely surrounded by State land or endangered species sites directly abutting the Forest Preserve (one, possibly two, known sites). For more detailed discussion, please see D. Land Acquisition).

SUNDOWN WILD FOREST

Vernooey Kill Falls Section



	Forest Preserve		Parking lot
	Section boundary		Trail register
	Unit boundary		Sign
	State highway		Bridge
	Public Road		New Bridge
	Other road or ROW		New Parking lot
	Existing trail or old road		New Sign or bulletin board
	Marked for foot use		Designate for foot use
	Marked for multiple use		New gate
	Marked for snowmobiles		New barricade
	Campsite		

4. Bangle Hill to Spencers Ledge

a. **Description**

As mentioned under the Vernooy Kill Falls segment, Spencers Ledge is the only summit in this area which provides a panoramic view of the ridge to the east. Although woods roads criss-cross the area, there is no direct or marked trail to the Ledge (see map).

The Long Path follows Trails End Road in the Town of Rochester and Spencer Road in Denning to the west. During rainy periods, the road can be quite wet as it crosses the saturated soils of the Vernooy Kills headwaters. The Long Path continues towards Bangle Hill along the lower slopes of Sampson Mountain, where noticeable stream beds begin to form as water flows southward to Sundown Creek (also known as the East Branch of Rondout Creek), after crossing Bangle Hill before it descends sharply down into the Peekamoose Valley Wild Forest. The boundary of the Peekamoose Valley Wild Forest is along the 1800 foot contour. Short streams quickly gather the runoff from this hillside and drop into the Rondout Creek through a series of spectacular waterfalls visible along Peekamoose Road after the leaves have fallen.

Sampson Mountain is heavily wooded with steep slopes. The northwest slope of the mountain, between 1800 feet and 2600 feet, may be in old growth. There is no evidence of human activity and the trees are large: three foot diameter beeches, yellow birches and sugar maples. It is accessible only from the westerly side (Bangle Hill) across a rocky and boulder strewn ridge.

A designated snowmobile trail continues west from Upper Cherrytown Road through Balsam Swamp to Greenville where it picks up Dymond Road to Spencer Road and returns via Trails End Road in a loop (See map). A cleared, though unmarked, grassy area is provided for several cars on State land off Dymond Road across the road from where the snowmobile trail from Vernooy Kill Falls exits. The snowmobile/horse trail traverses the Vernooy Kill geographic area as well.

A fifty acre private inholding in this area is accessed through a woods road (see map). Permission to cross Forest Preserve lands by car on this road, the only access available (See Chapter II, B. Major Easements and Access Points), may be granted through a two week temporary revocable permit.

A small cabin is located on a two acre parcel along Spencers Road in Denning within the Forest Preserve. A 40 year occupancy agreement exists on the property until October 19, 2015 when the land becomes State property. (See Chapter II, B. Major Easements and Access Points.)

b. **Issues**

- 1) The Long Path trail through this area, and for a shorter stretch to the east follows unpaved Trails End/Spencer Road. The road is now a four wheel drive woods road, becoming progressively wetter for the 1.3 mile stretch leaving Rochester and within Denning (which the trail follows). The trail segment receives very light use and its maintenance has a lower priority at this time than many other projects in this unit. However, work is needed to improve the hiking experience, such as bridging wet or muddy areas with stones or a footpath near the road. The Department will discuss with the towns their plans for this road in order to best plan for future management of public access and use.
- 2) Although Spencers Ledge provides one of the only panoramic views in the area, the Department proposes to keep it trailless.
- 3) The DEC will work with interested owners of adjacent lands and inholdings as well as local government, to help insure that development of these parcels when they impact State lands, is consistent with the Forest Preserve.

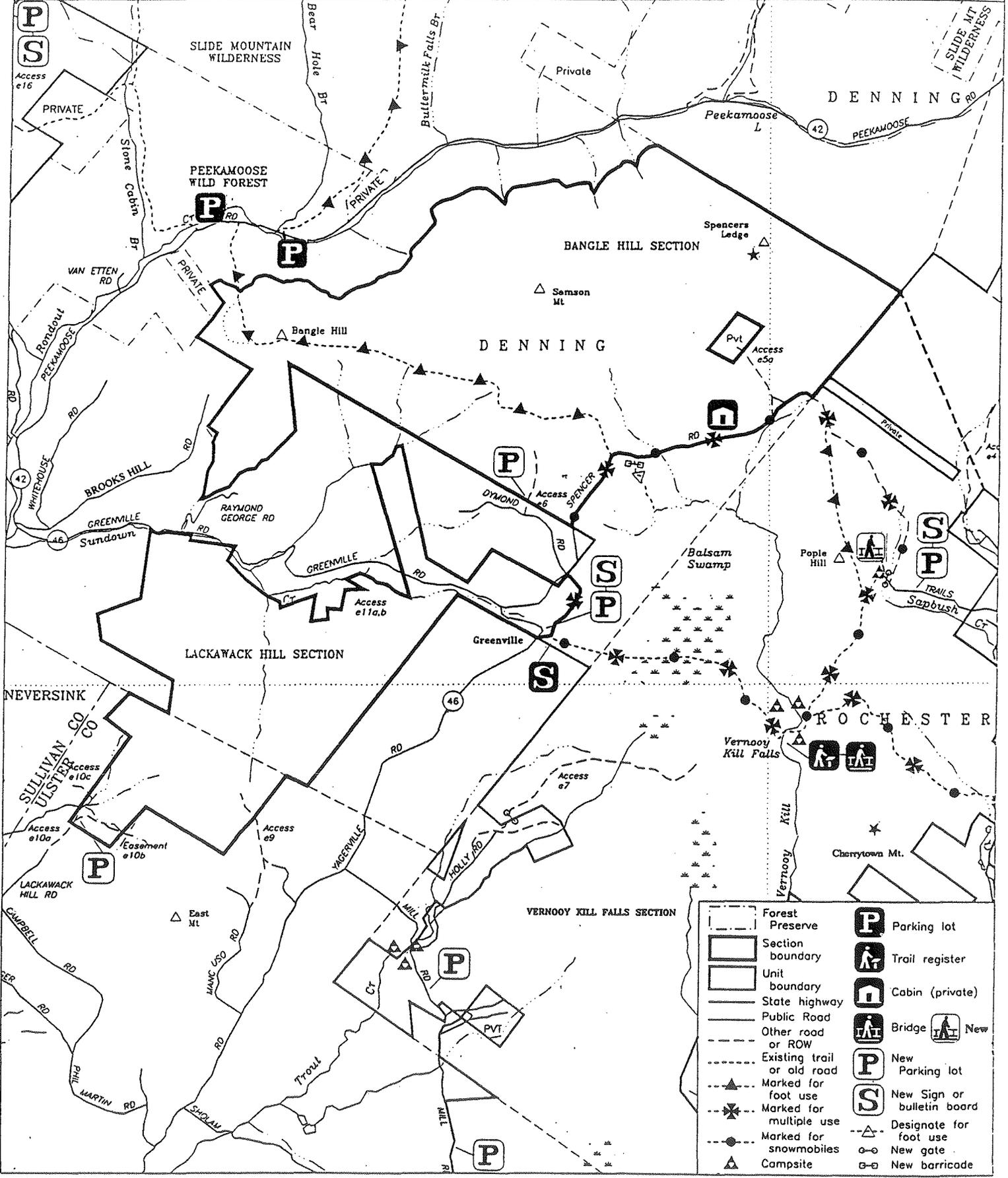
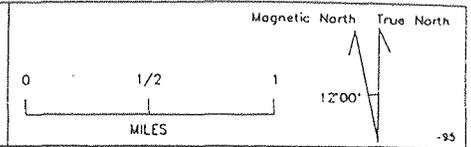
c. **Projects**

- 1) Relocate a stretch of the trail northwest of Bangle Hill to take better advantage of the contours. Currently sections are straight up and down the steep mountain slopes. Straight steep stretches add to erosion and runoff and take away from the hiking experience during wet periods. The Peekamoose Valley Wild Forest Unit Management Plan calls for monitoring the condition of this stretch of steep trail in that unit.
- 2) Develop access and rustic parking area for two to three cars on State land off Dymond Road or along Spencer Road where the Long Path leaves the road. The Dymond Road access point is within several hundred feet of this improved town road in Denning. This access is an alternative for access to the property bypassing a long stretch of Spencer Road, which is in poor condition. A level area just within State land could easily provide a rustic parking area and access to the Long Path Trail. Please refer to Major Easements and Access Points, Chapter II for more information or the map at the end of this section.
- 3) Maintain existing Long Path Trail and provide improvements or small reroutes in wet areas along Spencer Road. Management here depends on the future plans for the town road. The DEC will coordinate with the Towns.
- 4) Please see "Land Acquisition" section for details on this area.

- 5) Part of the snowmobile trail loop runs over yearround Dymond Road. The road must be officially open to snowmobiles by the Town of Denning to complete the Vernooy Kill loop. Otherwise, a parallel trail will need to be sited. The southern loop through Balsam Swamp, a shared use trail, is rough and wet in some locations. These conditions will be improved.

SUNDOWN WILD FOREST

Bangle Hill and Lackawack Hill Sections



	Forest Preserve		Parking lot
	Section boundary		Trail register
	Unit boundary		Cabin (private)
	State highway		Bridge
	Public Road		New Bridge
	Other road or ROW		New Parking lot
	Existing trail or old road		New Sign or bulletin board
	Marked for foot use		Designate for foot use
	Marked for multiple use		Designate for snowmobiles
	Marked for snowmobiles		New gate
	Campsite		New barricade

5. Sugarloaf Ridge/Lackawack Hill

a. **Description**

This area includes three separate parcels and is roughly bounded by County Route 46 (Yagerville Road) and the East Branch of the Rondout Creek (see map):

- 1) Detached parcel south of Sugarloaf Mountain in the Town of Neversink. No formal road access developed for this 254 acre parcel. However, past deeds indicate a access easement exists to this property (See Chapter II, B. Major Easements and Access Points).

The detached parcel south of Sugarloaf contains some woodlands that have not been logged for a very long time. Large specimens of oaks (*Quercus*, spp.), maples (*Acer*), and other trees are found on this ridgetop.

- 2) Sugarloaf Ridge north to Woodhull Mountain. This large parcel spans the ridge between Sugarloaf Road-Red Hills Knolls Road and the Rondout Creek (Peekamoose Valley). Access is through several dirt woods roads (Van Aken, Balace, Van Aiken Knolls, and William O'Coon Roads) in Denning and pulloffs along Sugarloaf and Red Hill Knolls Road.

The Sugarloaf Ridge north, like most of the area, had a sprinkling of hilltop farms, logging roads, and connecting town and private roads. Remnants survive today. In several locations, areas were reforested with conifer plantations. One area is near Porcupine Road (from either side of the old Stone Cabin Brook Road). Another, partly visible along Sugarloaf Road, but mostly located uphill to the west, has stands of Norway spruce (*Picea abies*), White pine (*Pinus strobus*), and Red pine (*Pinus resinosa*), planted in 1929.

A State designated wetland (P-3, Class II) of twenty acres is located on Sugarloaf Ridge. Another 17 acre wetland (P-5, Class IV) is located west of Red Hills Knolls Road (see map).

- 3) A ridge starting with Lackawack Hill in the south, extending to the Sundown Creek -- Greenville area in the Towns of Wawarsing and Denning. Lackawack Hill is northwest of East Mountain. Access to the parcel is through Lackawack Hill Road and Mancuso Roads. Both are dirt roads, and Mancuso Road can only be used with four wheel drive vehicles.

A trailer adjacent to State property along Lackawack Hill Road has access through the southwest corner of the Forest Preserve. A spring line in the area runs several hundred feet on State land to a small holding reservoir in a stream. Nearby, a 16 foot wide right-of-way splits off to lands owned by the

Whitestone Hunting Club (see Chapter II. Major Easements and Access Points). On the easterly side of this area, Mancuso Road climbs up the sometimes steeply sloping ridge. Although in disrepair, it can still be used by four wheel drive vehicles to access the State property. Here, at the center of the ridge are the stone remains of several abandoned farms, and white spruce (*Picea glauca*), Norway spruce (*Picea abies*), Balsam fir (*Abies balsamea*), Red pine (*Pinus resinosa*) and white cedar (*Thuja occidentalis*) tree plantations. Trees have been blown down from several storms and the road which once lead over the ridge disappears and reappears at intervals.

No other access to this parcel was identified except along its northerly edge from Greenville Road. However, a comprehensive search of all adjacent landowner deeds was not undertaken. Other fingers of State land are located along Spencer, Dymond, and Yagerville Roads in the northeasterly corner.

b. **Issues**

- 1) Public and administrative access to State lands is unclear, creating problems between users and adjacent landowners. Also, a small number of local landowners have blocked traditional access routes to State lands. As years go by it becomes more difficult to research and list particulars about right-of-ways. As more information is found, the presentation here will be updated to provide a centralized reference source.

Pulloffs or parking areas along roads, better directional signs, and more frequent boundary markers where State lands abut major roadways, will increase the visibility and public understanding of the Forest Preserve. In some instances, the concentrated use of the better known parts of the Forest Preserve might be redistributed to currently unpublicized areas. Parking along roads is sometimes not permitted by town ordinances, leading to visitor confusion and in some cases parking violations.

- 2) At one time, two roads in the Sugarloaf area connected with the Peekamoose Valley [Balace Road (High Falls Brook) and Stone Cabin Brook]. An excellent trail could in the future unify the area by connecting this area to the Peekamoose valley, most probably using a segment of the old Stone Cabin Brook woods road. Good views of the Peekamoose Valley and surrounding countryside are available from the ridgetop open fields on the westerly side of Stone Cabin Brook [William O'Coon Road (#16 on Map, Section II, B. Major Easements and Access Points)]. These views, coupled with an old conifer plantation, revegetating old farm fields and stone walls, and the relatively gentle topography along the ridge make it an excellent access to State land. Full protection of this area would be greatly enhanced by purchasing the inholding (139.36 acres) when it becomes available. Negotiations for purchase

were unsuccessful when conducted between 1974 and 1981. Providing a parking area and formalized access from Porcupine (formerly Woodhall Road) via old Stone Cabin Brook (William O'Coon) Road, the second existing access to the south, Van Aiken Knolls Road (a/k/a Mike Combs Road), could be gated just within the State land boundary, reducing disturbance and illegal use.

There is no demand for a trail now, so one is not proposed at this time. However, providing additional access for hikers from Peekamoose may become desirable in the future especially since there is a trend toward increasing use of available trails from west to east across the Catskills in Sullivan and Ulster Counties (See Section II, E). Access to the Slide Mountain-Panther Mountain Wilderness area via Porcupine Road will be addressed in the update of this wilderness UMP. These issues should be considered and use of the area monitored.

- 3) Utility lines and poles (electric and phone) are located on Forest Preserve lands. The status and legality of these lines must be clearly resolved.

c. Projects

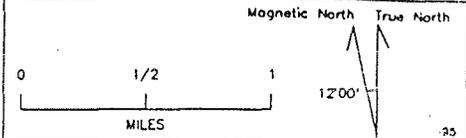
- 1) Build a small parking area (for three cars) in the southwest corner of the Lackawack Hill parcel.
- 2) Mancuso Road will be maintained to minimum standards to remain passable for administrative/emergency DEC vehicles. Signs, "No motorized vehicles beyond this point," will be placed on the road just beyond the state land boundary. At this time, a gate is not needed, but the area will be monitored. The road, where it still exists within the property, will be maintained for administrative (emergency access).
- 3) Maintain State land signs at the parking pulloff on Greenville Road (Rte 101) along Sundown Creek, to provide trailless access.
- 4) Sign and improve the parking lot along Sugarloaf Road near the Ulster/Sullivan County lines. The sign will include the name of the unit. Also a small kiosk or bulletin board with a map showing major trail locations, and synopsis of Forest Preserve rules and regulations will be placed here if a more suitable location along Rte. 55 cannot be arranged. The preferred location with parking and this information is near the intersection of Rt. 55 and 55A or along Rt. 55 in Grahamsville (possible locations which might be considered include the high school property and NYC DEP land at the intersection of State Rtes. 42 and 55). The thoroughfare here is a major access to the area. The kiosk will be located through a combined effort and cooperation between the DEC and the Town of Neversink, Chambers of

Commerce, and the New York City Department of Environmental Protection. The kiosk could be placed on town or city land and should also include information on lodging and stores, places of interest in nearby towns and Catskill natural history and watershed.

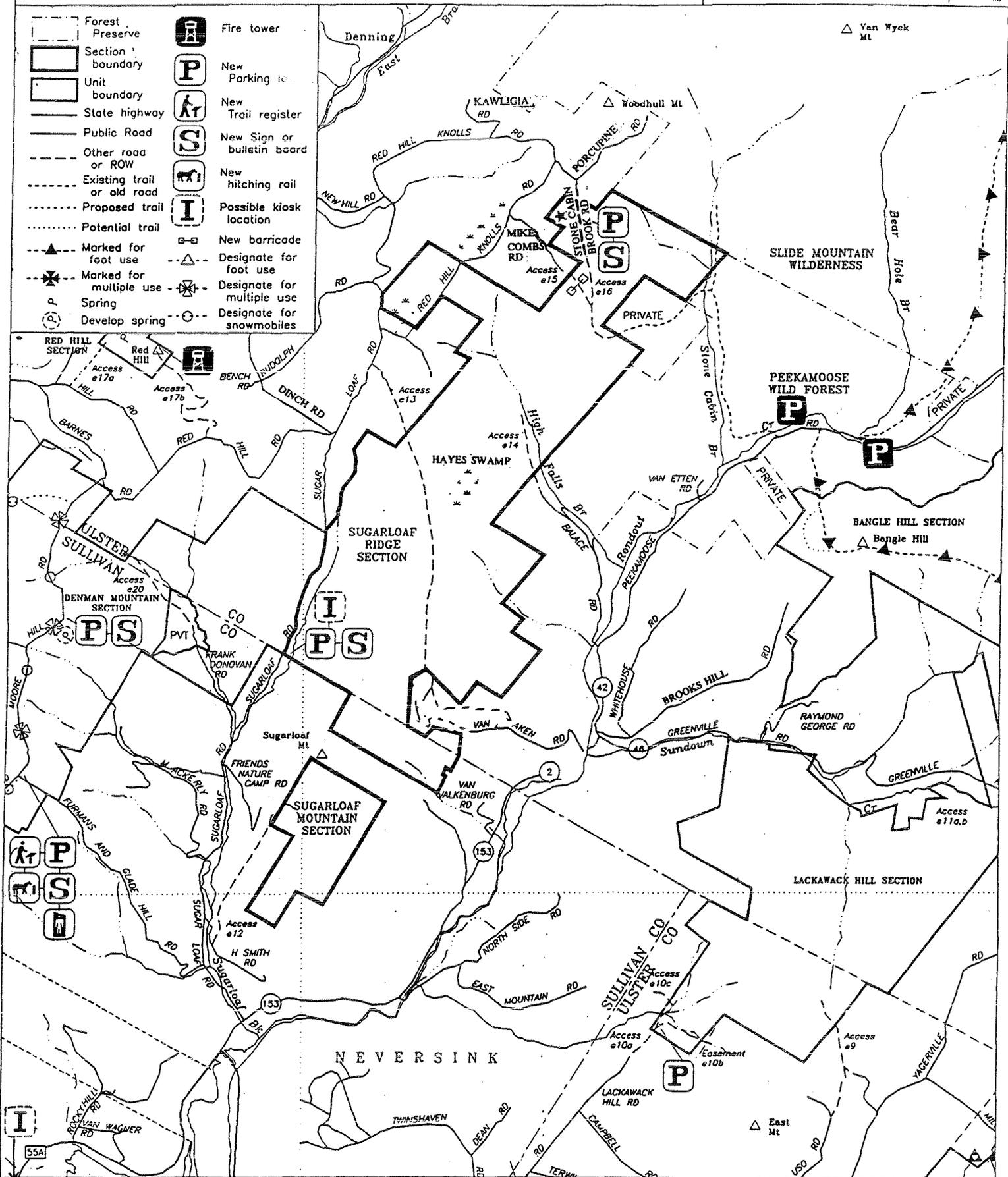
- 5) Resolve the situations where public utilities are found on Forest Preserve lands.
- 6) Place directional signs on roads clearly available for public access to Forest Preserve lands. Also clearly label these roads, which have not been abandoned by the Towns, with "Public Easement Through Private Lands" after consulting with the appropriate town officials and local landowners to address concerns.
- 7) First, monitor and assess the recreational use, trends and usage in the southern Catskill Forest Preserve. Then, one option is to construct a four car parking lot, capable of expansion to ten cars, several hundred feet into State land on William O'Coon Road (Mike Combs Road). Others include improving access from Peekamoose Valley or providing parking along Porcupine (formerly Woodhull) Road, where the public access road passing through State land on the way to a private inholding begins. Project priority is very low, pending further study and discussion with local landowners.
- 8) Close off Mike Combs Road (a/k/a Van Aiken Knolls Road, #15 on map Section II, B. Major Easements and Access Points Map) into State land, since upgraded access and parking is proposed through old Stone Cabin Brook Road, off Porcupine Road (#16 on map).
- 9) Reestablish the existence of a public or administrative easement for access to the detached parcel south of Sugarloaf Mountain, and post.
- 10) For more details on land acquisition priorities, please refer to the Land Acquisition section later in this chapter. Acquiring the 140 acre inholding in this area from a willing seller is a priority for long term management.
- 11) Research, document, and when they clearly exist and are needed, enforce public access rights to the forest preserve, (see also Section II, B).

SUNDOWN WILD FOREST

Sugarloaf Ridge & Sugarloaf Mt. Sections



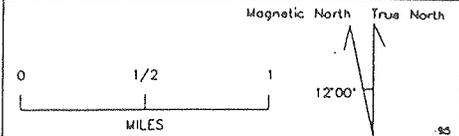
- | | | | |
|--|----------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| | Forest Preserve | | Fire tower |
| | Section boundary | | New Parking lot |
| | Unit boundary | | New Trail register |
| | State highway | | New Sign or bulletin board |
| | Public Road | | New hitching rail |
| | Other road or ROW | | Possible kiosk location |
| | Existing trail or old road | | New barricade |
| | Proposed trail | | Designate for foot use |
| | Potential trail | | Designate for multiple use |
| | Marked for foot use | | Designate for snowmobiles |
| | Marked for multiple use | | |
| | Spring | | |
| | Develop spring | | |



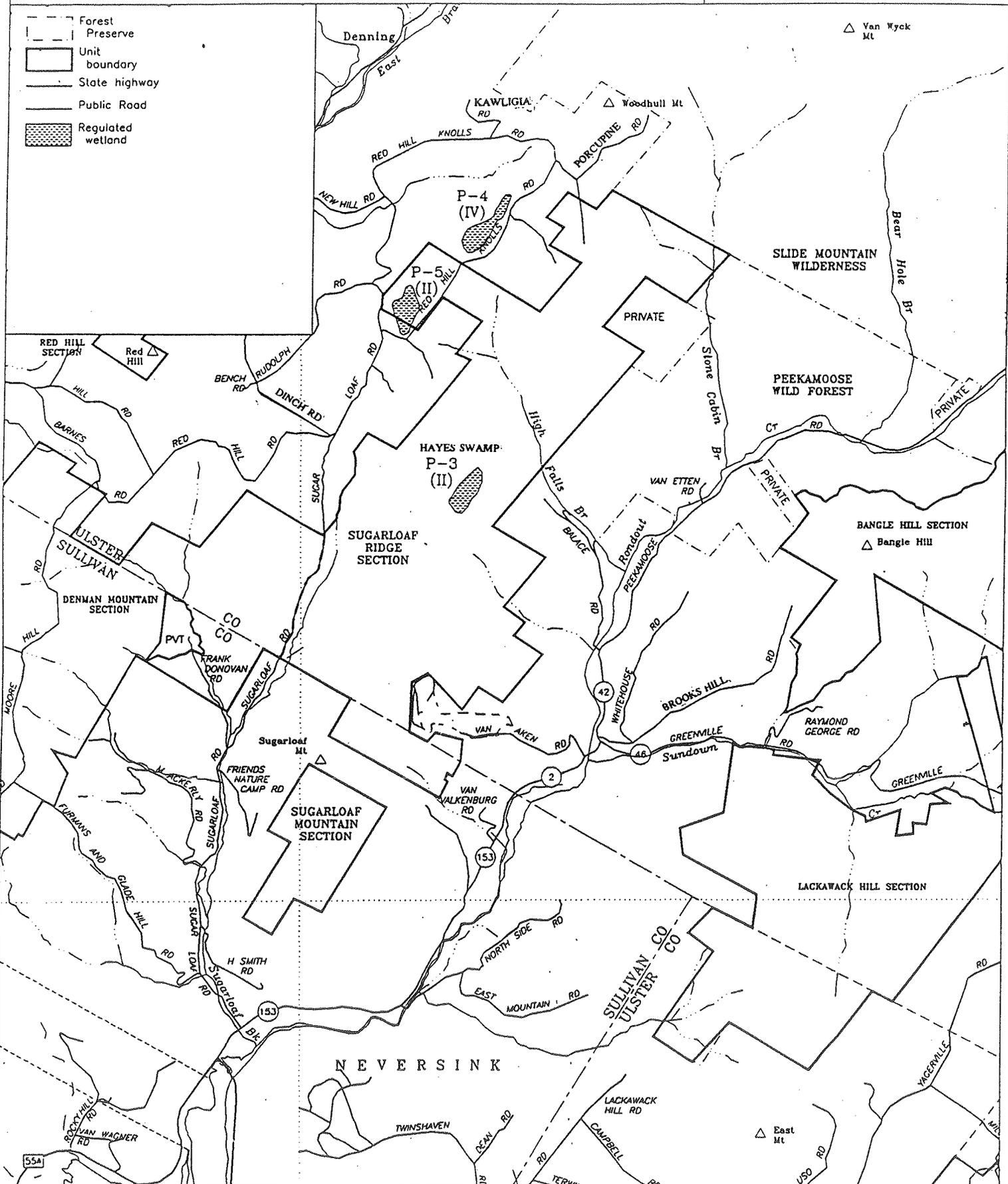
RT 55/55A INTERSECTION

SUNDOWN WILD FOREST

Sugarloaf Ridge Wetlands



- Forest Preserve
- Unit boundary
- State highway
- Public Road
- Regulated wetland



6. Denman Mountain/Red Hill/Wildcat Mountain South/Neversink

a. **Description**

- 1) Denman Mountain at 3053 feet is the second highest peak in Sullivan County (Beech Mountain, 3118 feet is the highest). Most of this parcel is within the Town of Neversink, Sullivan County, but the Red Hill, Wildcat, and Neversink River parcels are in the Town of Denning, Ulster County (see map).

Because of its size, a convenient location relative to several good town roads and villages, and a layout of old woods roads, the area has a good base for expanding recreational uses compatible with the Forest Preserve. The woods road traversing the mountain from east to west today was in the 1700's a main thoroughfare connecting many farms to Claryville and Grahamsville, and continues to serve as access to State land as well as the Denman Mountain Sporting Club inholding and several other bordering landowners. The road starts as Bungalow Brook Road near Claryville. The early landowners, Denman, Van Aken, Moore, Furman, etc. have leant their names to many now familiar places. Here and on the Wildcat parcel, stone remains of farm buildings, revegetating fields and disappearing logging roads still dot the landscape.

In May, 1992, 163 acres of woodlands burned on the southern flank of Denman Mountain (east of the private inholding), near the summit. The fire appears to have spread upslope from the woods road.

Hog Rocks, reached by Moore Hill Road, is a popular local destination to the east of Denman Mountain. In the Town of Neversink this is a seasonally maintained road which is closed in the winter. The road was greatly improved in 1993. The road is not maintained as well in Denning where it is called Glade Hill Road. Glade Hill Road ends on Barnes Road in the Town of Denning. From the north, the Hog Rocks/Denman Mountain south can only be reached by four wheel drive vehicles. At the "Hog Rocks," a cliff of perhaps 60 feet stretches about a quarter mile along Moore Hill Road. The geological term "hogback" is sometimes given to a steep ridge. Otherwise, the origin of the name of this local landmark remains unclear. A huge boulder dominates a turn in the road here and a nearby field has often been used for camping. Rutting by illegal off-road use, litter, and damage to trees has been observed on occasion.

- 2) The Red Hill property in the Town of Denning is best known for the fire tower built on its summit in 1920. The tower is sixty feet high to the cab floor, with nine flights of stairs and sits atop the 2,980 foot high Red Hill. A

1994 Letter of Resolution between the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and the DEC stipulates that the Red Hill Tower be retained. The Tower is also on the National Historic Lookout Register (National Woodlands Magazine, 1995). It affords a good view of the Catskill peaks to the west and north. Southeast from the Tower, a glimpse of the Rondout Reservoir is visible from behind Denman Mountain. Northerly, is an impressive panorama of the Catskill's high peaks. Before the use of radio repeater towers, its strategic location enabled radio communications by the Department throughout the southern half of the Region. It continues to provide a panoramic view of the largest area of productive forest land (outside the Catskill Forest Preserve) in the region. Along with Hunter Mountain until 1990, it was the last fire tower staffed in the Catskills (Marrone, 1993).

Administrative (road) access to the tower was provided by a well maintained road on adjacent private property through a verbal agreement. This permission was canceled in 1994. The owner should be periodically contacted if permission is needed to ascertain his/her position. A right-of-way for a trail and telephone line "for tower access" connects to the southwesterly corner of the property (see Section II, B. Man-Made Facilities for easement details). A developed spring, at the base of a cliff, is found to the west and downhill of the fire tower, and was once the water supply for the tower observer. Public access to the property is along its northerly border with Dinch (formerly Coons) Road, a recently rehabilitated town road which can be reached only from the east (there is no bridge from Ladleton over the East Branch of the Neversink). Here, several hillside fields associated with long abandoned farms are returning to woodlands, others were at some time planted to conifers, such as Norway Spruce (*Picea abies*). Records show 55 acres burned on Red Hill in November, 1987.

- 3) The Wildcat Mountain South parcel straddles a ridge overlooking the West Branch of the Neversink River in Denning. The same ridge continues north to Wildcat Mountain in the Slide Mountain-Panther Mountain Wilderness. The parcel touches the Wilderness area in one corner. However, the presence of nearby hunting cabins, residences and Wild Cat Road made it more appropriate for this area to be designated a Wild Forest. The Wildcat Mountain Hunting Club has access through the Forest Preserve to its cabin and property.
- 4) The Neversink parcel is a 16 acre parcel fronting on the East Branch of the Neversink River, acquired through a tax sale in 1898. Because of its location close to the road and river, camping is not permitted, and it is limited to day use (picnicking, fishing access, etc). Remnants of a fireplace and a privy are located on the property, which is essentially a floodplain with numerous streams and river channel meanders, covered by an eastern hemlock (*Tsuga*

canadensis) overstory. The shading is dense so little vegetation grows on the forest floor.

b. Issues

- 1) Denman Mountain has a long history of snowmobile use and requests for snowmobile trails. The Town of Neversink has designated several roads in the area for snowmobiles. The Mountain is on the proposed Snowmobile Corridor Trail Route 2 passing through Broome, Delaware, Sullivan and Ulster Counties, part of the State Snowmobile Trail Plan (New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, 1989). A trail here will ultimately be part of this much larger trail system.
- 2) The open, and in places quite wet, field near the Hog Rocks has been damaged by off road vehicles and cars. Steps to limit access to State land in this area are needed to eliminate rutting and off road vehicle damage. A clearly marked parking area will help. Alternatives, such as restricting seasonal town road use to the north will be discussed with the Towns of Neversink and Denning.
- 3) Illegal all-terrain vehicle trails enter the unit from several adjacent private lands and will require posting and additional patrol. In addition the status of woods roads, such as Bungalow Brook Road, needs resolution, and steps may be taken to limit unauthorized motorized use.
- 4) Safe, legal, and clearly marked parking is lacking on most State lands. Small, rustic and inexpensive pulloffs need to be provided.
- 5) Springs developed along the trail proposed for the Denman Mountain area would provide water for people and/or horses, especially during the dry summer months.
- 6) The occupancy of Forest Preserve lands by utility poles needs to be addressed for consistency with State laws. One such location is along Denman Mountain Road. Here, Central Hudson Gas and Electric was in 1947 given permission to place utility poles within the right-of-way of the town road. However the poles were placed off the right-of-way in the Forest Preserve.
- 7) Several places on the southerly side of the Denman Mountain parcel need additional patrol and boundary line clarification, with possible trespasses from springs, other outbuildings and boundary line tree cutting. The state lines along inholdings must be clearly marked to avoid accidental trespass on Forest Preserve.

- 8) The Department will review the relationship of key parcels abutting Forest Preserve land to the major rivers and streams in the Catskill watershed. In some instances, a higher priority for acquisition might be given to these lands. Any purchases would be on a willing seller basis. The value of the Wildcat Mountain South parcel to the public, and its future management would be greatly enhanced with the in-fee or easement purchase of land connecting this parcel to the shores of the West Branch of the Neversink.
- 9) Special attention will be given to managing parcels within and abutting floodplains and along rivers and streams where public use can affect water quality. The 16 acre Neversink parcel is one of these.
- 10) The Red Hill fire tower is no longer actively used for fire prevention. Because of its location away from the more famous peaks of the Catskills, poor access and no view without the fire tower, the property is used only infrequently by area residents. Funding has not been available for tower maintenance since its closing. However, because of its isolated location, it is the best preserved of those that remain. Maintenance, public safety, and access are issues here.

Argument FOR retaining the tower:

- The tower has some historic value (is a cultural resource).
- Uninterrupted scenic views of the Catskills are getting rare as the old farms and once extensively logged areas have returned to trees.
- During a fire, the tower can provide a vital local observation and communication link. An observer in the tower during a fire can keep crews advised. The nearby area has a high concentration of commercial forest lands which participate in long term forest management programs.
- In a search and rescue operation, a tower assists radio communication among searchers (Marrone, 1993).

Argument AGAINST retaining the tower.

- Current public use of the area is very low.
- Funding is currently not available to maintain and reconstruct the tower. Funding for older and more famous towers in more heavily used areas is a priority.

- The tower no longer serves the purpose for which it was constructed (fire observation).
- Redesign and reconstruction of towers may be needed if public access is allowed. Meanwhile, patrolling, fencing, and stabilizing of the structure is needed for public safety.

As a result of the 1995 public meetings and letters received in support of retaining the tower, a decision was made to stabilize and in time reopen it, pending a successful volunteer effort to construct trail access and staff the tower.

c. Projects

- 1) Clearly post State land along town roads. Block off all woods roads not open for access (post all against motorized vehicles). Post right-of-way on Red Hill.
- 2) Clarify town maintenance and access easements on all roads leading through the Forest Preserve, so the roads can be properly posted and parking provided to minimize conflicts with adjacent landowners and abuse of the preserve. Investigate possible trespasses and confirm boundary lines, especially along Bungalow Brook Road and along the four inholdings on Denman Mountain.
- 3) Construct a parking area at the intersection of Moore Hill Road with Furmans and Glade Hill Road to serve the proposed new trail (see Project 4). Install a Forest Preserve and parking lot sign, bulletin board with map, trail register, and Port-A-John. The lot will be large enough for ten cars and three horse trailers and be set back at least thirty feet from the edge of the roads. Hitching posts and a few minor modifications will be provided to accommodate the equestrian and other uses. Experts in equestrian and snowmobile trail design will be consulted. The overriding goal will be to provide a good, unobtrusive, low to no impact trail system to accommodate these and others uses typical of wild forest lands. The parking lot will become the focal point of the multiple use trail system proposed for the area (Project 4). Simultaneously construct a new segment of trail along Moore Hill Road (approximately 0.6 mile) to keep users off the year round, though still lightly used, portion of the town road. Currently, snowmobilers ride "the back side of the curl" on the shoulder of the road (as authorized by the Parks and Recreation Law). However, the shoulder of the road is not the preferred alternative for equestrian and other users.

Moore Hill Road and parts of Denman Mountain Road have been designated snowmobile roads by the Town of Neversink. (If these Town Roads are not plowed, they are officially open to snowmobiles). No maintenance is provided for these seasonal limited use highways between December 1 and April 1.

- 4a) Build a shared use snowmobile/equestrian trail around Denman Mountain, primarily using seasonal Moore Hill Road, Denman Mountain Road, and the woods road traversing State land from Bungalow Brook Road (Claryville area) (Segment 1, approximately 5.2 miles). With the successful completion of Segment 1 proceed to complete a loop by constructing or connecting existing trails around the north side of Denman Mountain (Segment 2, approximately 2.2 miles). A final segment, connecting the trail to the Claryville/Denning Road (approximately 0.75 mile) will depend on a successful cooperative agreement between local snowmobile clubs and landowners adjacent to State land (see Comment/Response #16 in Appendix A). The DEC will not purchase land or provide parking for this segment. Parking will be provided only at Furmans and Glade Hill Road as described above. Otherwise the closest parking on State land is off Black Bear Road, Town of Denning). If this segment is completed, it will act solely as a connector to the larger Snowmobile Corridor Route #2. Post other areas against illegal snowmobile and off road vehicle use.

The proposed trail will be below 2700 feet as called for in the Catskill Park State Land Master Plan (1985). The standards outlined in the Master Plan will be followed. Ranger patrols and increased monitoring and education by local snowmobiling organizations will be encouraged to avoid any abuses and insure safe driving.

Continue to allow cars to park at the two-three car capacity pulloff where Denman Mountain Road leaves Moore Hill Road to provide temporary access to the multiple use trail until the lot at the intersection of Moore Hill and Furmans Glade Road is completed. Several clearings already exist at this location. The small clearings here are remnants of a parking area constructed through a State permit by the Town of Neversink as part of a 1974 road improvement. However, the location is not appropriate for a larger facility.

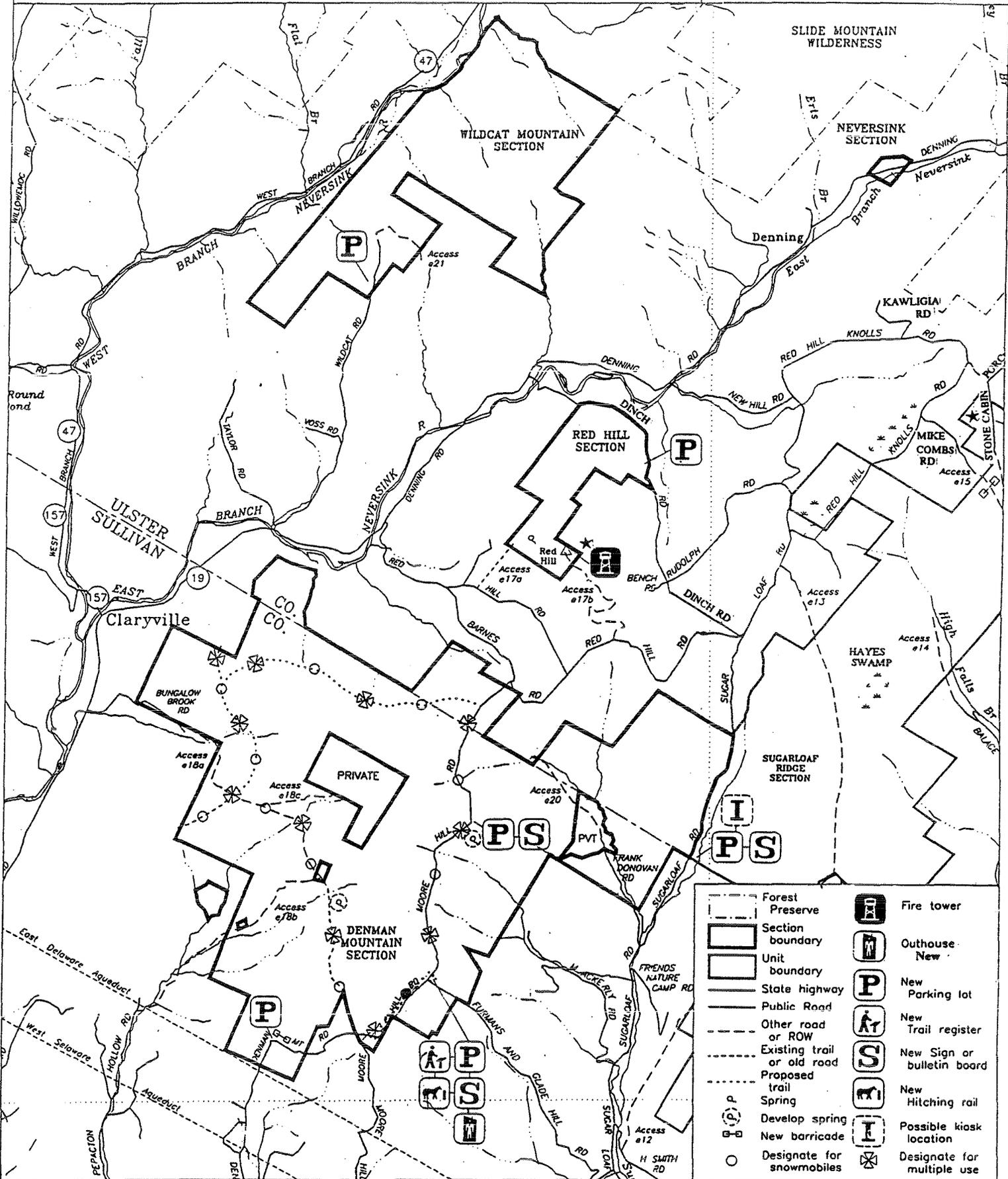
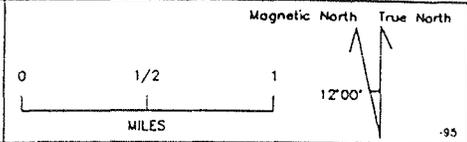
- 4b) Maintain the existing and new segments of the trail which are not on the town road.
- 5) Designate a parking lot at the Hog Rocks. Using large boulders, block off all other accesses to the cliffs and open fields in the area. Increase the frequency of Forest Preserve signs along the road. Rules and regulations and carry in - carry out signs should be posted in the area. The area will receive more frequent Ranger patrols. Discuss with the Town of Denning options for the roadway segment north of Hog Rocks.

- 6) Using large boulders, delineate parking space for a maximum of four cars at the intersection of the woods road with Denman Mountain Road (approximately one-half mile west of the Moore Hill Road intersection).
- 7) Develop a spring, if possible, in the area of the Hog Rocks. Should be designed for separate horse and human use. If alternatives are available for horses, spring may be canceled. It is not our objective, at this time, to invite camping use in the area by providing amenities.
- 8) Develop a spring, if possible, near one of the streams flowing past the proposed trail on the southerly slopes of Denman Mountain.
- 9) Clarify, and if necessary resurvey, paint and post the southerly boundary lines of the Forest Preserve on Denman Mountain.
- 10) See Project described under Lackawack Hill/Sugarloaf for a proposed exhibit to improve public knowledge and understanding along Route 55 adjacent to this area.
- 11) Consult with local government, chambers of commerce, historic preservation and trail groups, and other interested parties about cooperating to stabilize, maintain, staff and provide pedestrian access to the Red Hill Fire Tower by a new trail from the north in keeping with the requirements of the State Constitution and the Memorandum of Understanding to protect historic firetowers between the DEC and the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.
- 12) Pending a successful volunteer effort (see Project 11), provide a rustic three car pulloff parking area at a location along Dinch Road (Red Hill). Consider a public access trail from Dinch Road. However, such a trail would be a very low priority if a view is not available from Red Hill via the firetower. The property is too small for shared use trails, including horses and snowmobiles, which are better served elsewhere in the unit and the Catskills.
- 13) Provide a small rustic three car pulloff along Wild Cat Road, primarily for hunters and trailless hikers. There are several small woods clearings which could be slightly enlarged and posted without significant cutting or grading. Potentially, this area could be used to access the Slide Mountain-Panther Mountain Wilderness.
- 14) Purchase adjacent land to the centerline of the West Branch of the Neversink from the east in fee, through easement, or fishing rights from a willing seller [see also Fisheries Management (next section) and Appendix A Comment/Response #5 for guidance].

- 15) Use of the Neversink River parcel should be informal; and the area's popularity should be monitored. If visitation increases substantially, a self contained privy should be installed for this location. The Phoenicia-East Branch Trail (also known as the Woodland Valley-Denning Trail) direction and mileage signs are no longer needed and along with the other old signs on the land should be removed. Replace with a sign identifying the site as part of the Forest Preserve.

SUNDOWN WILD FOREST

Wildcat Mt, Red Hill & Denman Mt Sections



	Forest Preserve		Fire tower
	Section boundary		Outhouse New
	Unit boundary		New Parking lot
	State highway		New Trail register
	Public Road		New Sign or bulletin board
	Other road or old road		New Hitching rail
	Existing trail or old road		Possible kiosk location
	Proposed trail		Designate for multiple use
	Spring		
	Develop spring		
	New barricade		
	Designate for snowmobiles		

B. Fish and Wildlife Management

1. Wildlife Management

[Background for this section is presented under II. Inventory, A. Natural Resources, 3. Wildlife.]

Recent studies indicate a poor doe to buck sex ratio. When there are more females than can be successfully bred, many does surviving the winter will not have fawns. In this area, it is probably the result of not issuing deer management permits in 1990 and 1991 (i.e. no female harvest). The removal of surplus does will allow greater fawn survival. However, there is little potential to expand the deer population without substantial manipulation of vegetation, not permitted within the constitutionally protected Forest Preserve. (Please also see Comment/Response #18 in Appendix A).

Bears are rarely seen and nuisance problems in the area are limited to instances where food was inadvertently or deliberately made available by campers or rural homeowners. Long term stability is afforded the Catskill Bear population by delaying the opening of the hunting season until the first Saturday of the Big Game Season. This allows the earlier denning sows the opportunity to enter their dens.

The combined 1992 Black Bear harvest for the Towns of Denning, Olive, Wawarsing, and Neversink was 27 bears. One hundred and eight bears (108) were taken in Ulster and Sullivan Counties. Four bears were released in this unit in 1994, from other areas around the State.

Furbearer harvest is less than could be sustained, mainly due to the lack of access and remoteness of much of the area. Plans to improve access should increase harvest levels.

Little can be done to improve furbearer populations within the Sundown Wild Forest because of Forest Preserve guidelines and regulations. However, some habitat alterations are occurring because of beaver management (NYS DEC, 1992). Human alteration of wildlife habitat is not allowed. Management is through controls over harvest levels: season length, bag limits, and timing of season (NYS DEC, 1994).

The beaver population is expected to increase and remain above the beaver occupancy objective for the foreseeable future. Beaver harvest has been below the desired "take" for a number of years, allowing the population to increase. In addition, a "Wild Fur Regulation" (which specifies acceptable trapping methods) adopted by the European Union (EU) may eliminate an important market for beaver pelts. This could have major implications for New York's beaver management.

A high beaver population can also result in some problems. Beaver can and do cause flooding of roads and trails. The cutting of trees and flooding on private property can be a nuisance resolved by in season trapping or requesting a nuisance and destructive wildlife permit to remove the beavers and/or their dams. Beaver population management is accomplished through the relationship of season length to harvest level, but problems with individuals are handled on a case by case basis.

Rare habitats (sometimes including endangered plant species) may be eliminated or created by beaver caused flooding.

The area encompassed by the unit could support and benefit from a higher beaver occupancy rate. With the fairly low human population in the area and large tracts of wild forest, beaver nuisance problems will be rare, even with a moderately higher beaver population. Managing for a higher beaver population within the unit will improve habitat diversity by creating openings and early successional habitat. This couldn't be done in the entire Wildlife Management Unit because of conflicts and nuisance problems in areas closer to more populated areas. Consideration may be given to remove the Sundown Wild Forest and nearby preserve lands from WMU 11 to allow for a change in the management objectives in the more remote portion with different harvest levels (allowing for more intensive management).

2. Fisheries Management

Many of the streams within and immediately outside the Sundown Wild Forest can be described as critical fish habitat. Many of the streams provide good quality spawning habitat for fish. The time period between October 1 and April 30 is typically considered to be an extremely critical time for trout spawning and the development of trout eggs and larvae. Over this time period the over-wintering eggs are susceptible to suffocation if sufficient amounts of silt should settle on the eggs. Any activities that tend to cause excess siltation must be avoided over this time period.

In early spring many of these streams could be impacted by high acid runoff from snow melt and spring rains. This can be critical to the development of fish eggs and larvae in addition to older fish. Much of the area within this unit is vulnerable to the affects of acid runoff due to the extremely low buffering capacity of the local geology. The buffering capacity of a watershed will determine how much acidity the water can withstand before experiencing a drop in pH. Monitoring of pH levels and the changes in the distribution of fish and other aquatic organisms has been the focus of an ongoing study by the U.S.G.S. throughout the United States. Several streams in the Catskill Park are part of this study including some near the unit. Fisheries will stay abreast of new information and periodically monitor this situation.

The Upper Neversink River and its East and West Branches are unique, not because of their lack of biological productivity or fragility, but a combination of factors. Many streams open to the public within the Catskill Park qualify as infertile native brook trout streams. What sets the Upper Neversink apart is its combination of water quality, clarity and volume, wild natural setting, and rich angling tradition. If the angling public could get access to the Upper Neversink, they would be searching for this combination of factors in their fishing experience. Most of the angling public is not willing to go too far out of the way for this kind of fishing experience unless catch rates are very high.

Our fisheries management goal within the area is to preserve, enhance, and where needed, restore, fisheries habitats and populations to achieve and perpetuate the historic quality of the fisheries resource. This area provides a near wilderness experience for those individuals willing to hike and explore the waters within the area in order to catch wild brook, brown and rainbow trout. Aquatic resource management will emphasize the quality of the angling experience over quantity of use. Current fisheries quality can be maintained even if accessible fishing acreage is expanded in the Upper Neversink. This type of fishing experience is becoming rare within the Region and adds to the diverse fishing opportunities available to New York anglers. Crowds of people and stocked fish would not be consistent with our objectives at this time. (see also Comment/Response #5 in Appendix A.)

Past fisheries management activities within the area have been primarily limited to the stocking of the various species of trout and salmon that currently inhabit these waters. There are no current stocking policies for any of the waters within the Sundown Wild Forest. All the waters within the area are currently under Statewide general fishing regulations, with no special harvest restrictions imposed. The fishing pressure for this area is generally believed to be low (50-150 hours per acre).

Given the current regulations, and the low level of use, there is little chance that the fish populations within the unit will be significantly impacted by anglers.

Additional management actions that may be considered at some future time include:

- 1) In instances when indigenous fish communities cannot in any way be protected, maintained or restored due to human caused disturbances a waterbody specific stocking plan may be implemented. Species historically associated with the Catskill Region such as brook trout, brown trout, rainbow trout, landlocked Atlantic salmon, and some warmwater species could be incorporated in stocking plans.
- 2) In the event that acid precipitation creates acidic conditions which threaten fish populations within the unit, a liming program may be implemented to neutralize acidic waters. Any such program will be consistent with the

Department's Revised Liming Policy (June, 1991). The Policy has established a series of qualifying criteria, all of which must be met, prior to any liming treatment. At this time, what potential any waters within this unit have to meet these criteria is unknown.

Brook trout are generally considered to be easily caught and increased pressure could result in a decrease in the average size and number of fish caught. If this kind of pressure is experienced then special harvest restrictions would be the management action of choice as opposed to stocking. The second consideration is that the experience of a fishing trip to this area would be compromised if the level of use on the area increases significantly. In all cases our goal is to manage the fisheries of the area for a quality fishing experience. The present level of use is considered to be consistent with the current goals for this area and a significant increase in fishing use is not likely to occur in the near future.

Fishing access is very limited in some areas of the unit (see Section D. Land Acquisition).

C. Administration

As a result of the various improvements proposed in this plan, public use of this area is likely to increase. Controls such as barriers and signs will help, but not substitute for additional enforcement, maintenance and management (see also Comment/Response #2, Appendix A). Use of the Wild Forest is being directed to key parking lots which are more easily patrolled and monitored.

The Sundown Wild Forest falls within three Forest Ranger districts - Neversink, Denning and Wawarsing, Olive and Rochester. The most dominant positive impact on the unit has been the presence of Forest Rangers. As the Department's field managers, they watch over the area, interact with the public, enforce Environmental Conservation Law/Rules and Regulations, and detect and suppress fires. Their continued presence is essential.

At least two Assistant Forest Rangers will be needed to supplement the present level of public interaction and the work done by the two Rangers in the region, helping to develop public respect and understanding of nature and regulations. The priority hiring period is between May 15 and November 15, including high use weekends and holidays. Concerns were expressed at the public meeting that the proposed staffing was insufficient. An additional Assistant Forest Ranger will be hired or retained from the summer, for coverage during the winter months (see also Comment/Response #2, Appendix A).

Additional Division of Operations staff will be required to maintain the existing trails, vistas and parking lots as well as to build and maintain the projects proposed in this plan. At least two seasonal, preferably fulltime, Maintenance Assistants should be hired to work under the supervision of the existing Trails Supervisor. They will work from at least April 1 to December 15 of each year, primarily within this unit. If project scheduling necessitates, a small percentage of their time (no more than 20 percent) may be used to assist projects in other units. The two laborers will be provided with a vehicle and tools.

The Division of Fish and Wildlife staff is adequate to handle all present and proposed management activities.

Current Division of Lands and Forests staff is not adequate to manage this and other Forest Preserve units in Region 3. A Preserve Manager is needed and will spend approximately 15 percent of his/her work time on the unit (averaged over a 10 year period). This position, vacant since September 1990, is needed to coordinate Forest Preserve unit management planning and implementation, and land acquisition within the Region.

As detailed earlier, trespass, occupancy, easement and right of way problems affect numerous locations on the Forest Preserve. Additional Legal and Real Property staff are required to work on resolving these ongoing situations. As a minimum, one Attorney and one Land Surveyor working full time on Forest Preserve issues will be necessary for three to five years, devoting 50 percent of their time to this unit. Failure to provide the requested staff will result in further erosion, loss, and confusion of the public's use and rights to the Forest Preserve. If staffing is not adequate to maintain and patrol the proposed projects, they will not be implemented.

D. Land Acquisition - The Completion of a Viable Wild Forest

Land acquisition will be conservative, limited to key parcels of land which simplify management and insure the integrity of the Sundown Wild Forest (Refer to Comment/Response 1, 7, 9, 14 and 20, Appendix A for additional discussion). In several places, private lands penetrate deeply into the unit, complicating public and private access and trespass. The list and discussion of land acquisition below is provided so the public can see where the DEC is going with the Sundown Wild Forest, simultaneously setting limits to land acquisition in the area. Funding for land acquisition is very limited. The discussion is provided as guidance should funding become available.

All land acquisitions will be reviewed and meet the criteria and "resource value rating systems" in the Conserving Open Space in New York State Plan (1995). Notification will be made to the affected Town of the State's intent to acquire any parcels which

are not specifically listed in the Open Space Plan (all proposed acquisitions in the Sundown Wild Forest are in this category). A Town has 90 days from notification to reject a proposed acquisition. For more information on land acquisition proposed for New York State, please consult the Conserving Open Space in New York State Plan. Additional guidelines are provided in the Catskill State Land Master Plan (currently being revised). Acquisitions are always made only from willing sellers.

1. Inholdings (highest priority)

a. **In fee acquisition preferred/Easement as second option (from willing sellers):**

- 1) Denman Mountain, Town of Neversink, 4 parcels (123, 1, 1, and 1 acres).
- 2) Spencers Ledge, Town of Denning (45 acres).
- 3) Big Rosy Bone Knob-Bear Spring Road, Town of Rochester (50 acres).
- 4) Trails End Road, Town of Rochester (39.5 acres).
- 5) Bull Run Brook, Town of Denning (140 acres).
- 6) Frank Donovan Road, Neversink (78 acres).
- 7) Undeveloped private land fronting on the upper Vernoooy Kill and surrounded on three sides by State land (upper part of two parcels). Town of Rochester (approx. 80 and 38 acres).

b. **Easement preferred/Acquisition as second option (from willing sellers):**

- 1) Private land on Cherrytown Mountain surrounded on three sides by State land, near documented rattlesnake den sites. Town of Rochester (approx. 30 acres).
- 2) Yagerville, Town of Rochester (Ridge Road [< 25 acres], end of Holly Road, approx. 50 acres). Primarily to buffer State land from new development.

2. Conservation easements, or if necessary, fee acquisition (from willing sellers) may be used to protect the natural resources of lands near swamps, wetlands, and rivers with critical habitats, or rare species (the upper Vernoooy Kill area (Lundy estate), and the rattlesnake dens of southern Rochester and Wawarsing) (overlap with a7 and b1).

3. There are many locations throughout this area where private lands are surrounded by State land on three sides. In the future, should any of these lands be faced with development pressures which threaten the integrity, use, or character of State land, the Department will consider protecting them first through working out an appropriate buffer and conservation easement, allowing traditional compatible land uses, such as forest management, to continue. In a few instances, and as a last resort, fee acquisition from willing sellers will be considered. This type of acquisition will be very conservative

and reserved for instances where clear benefits accrue to the management and long term integrity of the Preserve. In these situations, the acquisitions will be done only after clear justification and discussion with the affected Town.

4. In a limited number of cases, easements or fee acquisition from willing sellers may be necessary to provide or improve access to State land. The detached parcel south of Sugarloaf Mountain in the Town of Neversink should be linked with nearby State land to the north (across Sugarloaf Mountain - maximum 80 acres), especially if access cannot be settled. Another location where this may be considered would be to provide parking or improve access from Porcupine (formerly Woodhall) Road (about 5 acres). Any purchases at these locations will be the minimum necessary to achieve balanced public use of the area, compatible with local landowners.
5. Acquisition of public fishing rights along the East and West branches of the Neversink River is a priority consideration, if a willing seller is identified. The impact of increased public use is a major consideration in developing fishing access, monitoring and management. The DEC will cooperate with the New York City Department of Environmental Protection to determine if parcels which meet the goals of both agencies could be given a higher priority in their acquisitions. DEC goals in land acquisition include not just resource protection, but when compatible, public access and use (see also B. 2. Fisheries Management in the preceding section and Response/Comment #5 in Appendix A).
6. The in-fee or easement acquisition from a willing seller would allow public use of the pass between South Mountain and the Ashokan High Point Ridge and enable the completion of a Kanape-South Hollow Brook loop trail over existing old woods roads. The combination of habitats and views along this route would rank among the most diverse and best in the Catskills (See Chapter II, Vegetation). The maximum acreage involved is 90 acres.
7. A 3-5 acre easement or in-fee acquisition from a willing seller of the heath meadow easterly of the Ashokan High Point Mountain Summit would greatly enhance State land by providing access to a popular vista. Currently the boundary line runs through the center of the meadow, inviting trespass onto nearby private land.

E. Catskill Park State Land Master Plan Amendments and Proposed Rules and Regulations

1. **Bicycles**

A formal policy is being developed regarding the use of bicycles on State land in the revision of the Catskill State Land Master Plan which is currently nearing completion. At present there are no Department rules or regulations regarding the use of mountain bikes on State Forest Preserve lands in the Catskills. However, Department policy, by order of the Commissioner, prohibits bicycles within Catskill Wilderness areas. In general, past unit management plan recommend the use of bicycles in wilderness areas is inappropriate, and their use should be limited. It is further recommended that unless posted for mountain bikes, available trails should be limited to appropriate abandoned town roads and woods roads.

Because of the rugged terrain, steep and narrow trails, and danger of erosion in sections of this unit (for example, the trail between the Kanape woods road and the top of Ashokan High Point Mountain), mountain bikes will be restricted in some areas once regulations are available. Roads or trails with these and other sensitive natural resources (e.g. rare and endangered plants) make an area unsuitable for mountain bikes and will be posted (one such place is the trail to Ashokan High Point Mountain). Monitoring impacts may indicate other unsuitable areas over the life of this Unit Management Plan.

2. **The Peekamoose Valley Wild Forest**

The Peekamoose Valley Wild Forest (NYS DEC, 1990) is a small 2,200 acre piece of land within the larger Sundown Wild Forest. The primitive camping and use in the area depends on the surrounding Sundown Wild Forest and Slide Mountain-Panther Mountain Wilderness Area. The trails, woods roads, and old town roads linking the area to Bangle Hill and the Vernooy Kill to the east and to the Sugarloaf ridge lands to the west suggests there would be benefits from integrating the unit with Sundown Wild Forest to best manage future use. The issues and background for the units have much in common and separate planning procedures are no longer warranted (The unit was created to address serious problems with overuse in the 1980's which are now under control). The Peekamoose Valley Primitive Camping Area will be incorporated into the next update of the Sundown Wild Forest Unit Management Plan. In the meantime, it will be managed according to the guidelines set forth under Comment/Response #17 in Appendix A. Meanwhile, an amendment may be added to the Sundown Wild Forest. Public participation will be sought in this process.

F. SEORA Requirements

The provisions of the State Environmental Quality Review Act have been met. Actions proposed in this unit management plan will not result in any significant environmental impacts. A "Negative Declaration" has been filed and a copy is found in Appendix C.

V. IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE AND BUDGET

The following schedule will be implemented over the five year period of the plan. Estimated costs are in addition to normal program funding. Projects proposed for years 1 and 2 which are physically near each other, may be done concurrently if substantial construction cost savings result. Also, please see Response/Comment #2, Appendix A.

Among the comments received about the implementation and cost of the plan were requests to set priorities to help guide realistic and cost effective implementation and maintenance of the proposed projects. To accomplish this, the projects are prioritized, with those considered most important in Year 1, least important or only after other projects are completed, in subsequent years. Also projects within years are prioritized (1 = highest). Projects will be completed according to the priorities as funding, with adequate staffing, becomes available.

YEAR 1

<u>PROJECT</u>	<u>ESTIMATE COST</u>
-(1) Clarify, and if necessary, resurvey the southerly boundary lines of the Denman Mountain parcel, mark and post (Real Property).	20 Work Days
-(2) Using large boulders, leave room for a maximum of four cars at the intersection of a woods road with Denman Mt. Road (in steep turn west of private land on Denman Mt. Road).	420
-(1) Have the Denman Mt. Vernooy Kill and Kanape areas reviewed by the State of New York Office of Advocate for Persons with Disabilities and local Independent Living Centers for design recommendations to improve handicapped accessibility.	1,500
-(1) Build parking lot large enough for two horse trailers and 10 cars on the north side of Furmans and Glade Hill Road where it intersects Moore Hill Road. Install Forest Preserve and parking sign, bulletin board, trail register, Port-A-John and hitching posts.	7,700
-(1) Part I. Build new shared use (hiking, snowmobile and equestrian) trail to run from this lot southerly along the east side of Moore Hill Road, then cross and connect to seasonal Denman Mt. Road (about 0.6 miles). Install crossing signs at two locations.	1,800

YEAR 1 CONTINUED

<u>PROJECT</u>	<u>ESTIMATE COST</u>
-(1) Delineate parking for four cars and close off field at Hog Rocks. Place sign and rules and regulations information.	2,000
-(1) Build multiple-use trail (Part II), suitable for snowmobiles and horses, on Denman Mountain (loop preferable), approximately 2.3 miles in length. Upgrade or maintain 5 miles of existing woods roads. (After Part I above.)	7,000
-(1) Construct 0.8 mile of new pedestrian hiking trail to complete a small loop (an additional 1.6 miles) from High Point Mt. to Hoopole Mountain. Maintain and sign existing woods road sections of trail.	1,000
-(1) Install parking lot sign at the Upper Cherrytown Road Vernooy Kill parking area.	500
-(1) Install "DEC Forest Preserve Parking" sign and occasionally mow the grass on State land across from the Dymond Road entrance to the Vernooy Kill Falls Snowmobile Trail in Greenville. Harden the grassy clearing if ground too soft for cars.	100
-(1) Research public road access and right-of-way at South Hollow Brook entrance to Forest Preserve. Finalize plan options for Year 2. (Real Property)	(approx. 5 Work Days)
-(2) Block off road spur with gate through Krumville Plantation, leaving the access route identified in the early 1900's. Place appropriate Forest Preserve signage along internal roadway.	1,000
-(2) Build parking area for four cars at Haver Road. Install direction sign and parking lot sign. Install gate to restrict public access before the culvert bridge.	2,000
-(2) Install wayside exhibit (with map) at the intersection of Rt. 55 and 55A, or along Rt. 55 in Grahamsville, two to three panels (4-6 sides).	4,500

YEAR 1 CONTINUED

<u>PROJECT</u>	<u>ESTIMATE COST</u>
- (1) Install wayside interpretive exhibit with regional map at the Kanape parking lot and a trail register on the east side of the bridge along the trail. (Includes portable toilet).	3,600
- (1) Clarify the relationship between the Department and the owners of inholdings on access to their lands. A TRP will be necessary for landowners to continue using non-deeded accesses through the Wildcat Mountain South State land; Trails End Road in the Vernooy Kill Area, and the Krumville Plantation State land.	15 Man Days
- Hire two Assistant Forest Rangers (minimum dates May 15 - November 15)	20,000
- Hire/retain one Assistant Forest Ranger winter months (November-May)	11,000
- Hire Preserve Manager (15 percent of time)	6,300
- Hire Maintenance Crew (2 persons, minimum dates: April 1 - December 15)	20,000
- Hire Attorney (50% of time)	75,000
- Hire Land Surveyor (50% of time)	4,000
- Annual maintenance materials (includes boundary line maintenance, training/improving existing trails, parking areas, signs and vistas).	<u>4,000</u>
TOTAL	169,420

YEAR 2

<u>PROJECT</u>	<u>ESTIMATED COST</u>
-(2) Complete Denman Mountain multiple-use trail, and complete connections to Claryville (once formal agreements are finalized by local snowmobile clubs) and Grahamsville (via Cummings Road, subject to Town approval). Loop trail will work independently of these connections. Place signs.	2,000
-(2) Initiate utility line investigations for decision and action by year three.	
-(1) Pending adjustments from Year 1 investigation, construct a four car parking area on the small piece of State land which touches the maintained stretch of South Hollow Brook Road. Post the road which accesses State lands with appropriate "public access through private lands" signs. Also post rules and regulations and reinforce Forest Preserve signs at entry points to State lands.	2,500
-(1) Stabilize fire tower, pending volunteer program to rehabilitate	1,000
-(1) Clean and stabilize spring box along Kanape Trail while preserving the 1930's stonework and design. Place stone cover over box. Remove barrel on the gate at the start of the Kanape Trail and replace with more compatible, less obtrusive signage. Replace stop sign on the gate over Bush Kill with a more compatible, less obtrusive sign.	500
-(1) Install rock border to delineate parking and improve base for Vernooy Kill Falls Trail parking, off Trails End Road (car turn-around and parking for a maximum of 4 cars). Install vandal resistant bulletin board. (Alternative to, put bulletin board at Falls or Cherrytown Road Parking Area or wait till year 4-5, assessing level of use). Install gate at start of Upper Vernooy Kill Falls Trail (Posts are already set). Improve clarity and add directional signs at this location as well as along the People Hill Trail intersection with Trails End and the Vernooy Kill Falls Trail (4-5 new signs). Increase frequency of Wild Forest signs along Trails End Road/Spencer Road.	3,600

YEAR 2 CONTINUED

<u>PROJECT</u>	<u>ESTIMATED COST</u>
- (2) Construct wooden bridge at culvert and road at the stream crossing on the Vernooy Kill Falls Trail near Trails End Road, in a manner suitable for horses, snowmobiles, and administrative access.	3,500
- (2) Approach owner of 3-5 acre blueberry/heath field northeast of High Point Mountain (Round Mountain). If willing seller, purchase in-fee or easement to enhance and preserve spectacular vista.	Staff
- (1) Limit auto access to the campsite along Trout Creek, north of Mill Road, with large boulders, with maximum parking for two cars. (Possibly also on campsite south of Mill Road, West Creek.)	500
- Hire two Assistant Forest Rangers (minimum dates: May 15 - November 15).	20,500
- Hire/retain Assistant Forest Ranger for winter months (November - May).	11,000
- Hire Preserve Manager (15 percent of time)	6,300
- Hire Maintenance Crew, two persons (minimum time: April 1 - December 15)	20,000
- Attorney salary for management plan	75,000
- Land Surveyor for management plan	4,000
- Annual maintenance materials	<u>4,000</u>
TOTAL	150,400

YEAR 3

<u>PROJECT</u>	<u>ESTIMATED COST</u>
- (3) Keep woods road north of Holly Road clear for administrative access (approx. two miles). Ongoing.	500
- (3) Install sign and delineate with boulders and gravel the parking lot along Sugarloaf Road. (near Sullivan/Ulster County line).	500
- (2) Develop a spring on Denman Mountain (one of two locations near one of the streams flowing past the proposed trail).	500
- (1) Stabilize Red Hill Fire Tower, cabin and shed. Complete engineering report on opening tower to the public. Coordinate needs/expenditures with volunteer effort. Years 3-4.	4,000
- Hire two Assistant Forest Rangers (minimum dates: May 15 - November 15)	21,000
- Hire/retain Assistant Forest Ranger for winter months (November-May)	11,000
- Preliminary study of Vernooy Kill area to clarify the condition and location of Rattlesnake dens, and best assess management options, particularly where State and private lands interface (Work with Natural Heritage Program, The Nature Conservancy, consultants, etc. Pursue donations and other funding sources - not included in total for Year 3).	(5,000)
- Preserve Manager (15 percent of time)	6,500
- Hire Maintenance crew, two persons (minimum dates: April 1 - December 15)	21,000
- Attorney salary for management plan	75,000
- Land Surveyor for management plan	
- Annual maintenance materials	<u>4,000</u>
TOTAL	144,000

YEAR 4

<u>PROJECT</u>	<u>ESTIMATED COST</u>
-(1) Develop a spring, if possible, in the vicinity of the Hog Rocks off seasonal Moore Hill Road.	500
-(2) Build two one or two car pulloffs for trailless access along Mill Road in Sholam-Yagerville.	2,000
-(1) Maintain bridge for continued administrative access at Haver Road.	1,000
- Hire two Assistant Forest Rangers (minimum dates: May 15 - November 15)	21,000
- Hire/retain one Assistant Forest Ranger for winter (May - November.)	11,000
- Preserve Manager (15 percent of time)	6,500
- Maintenance crew, two persons (minimum dates: April 1 - December 15, 25% of time)	12,000
- Attorney salary for management plan (30% of time)	50,000
- Land Surveyor for management plan (30% of time)	
- Annual maintenance materials	<u>3,000</u>
TOTAL	107,000

YEAR 5

<u>PROJECT</u>	<u>ESTIMATED COST</u>
-(1) Build small parking area for maximum of three cars in the southwest corner of the Lackawack Hill parcel. Install sign.	2,500
-(2) Close off Van Aiken Knolls Road (Mike Combs Road) on State land with gate (off Red Hill Knolls Road):	1,500
-(1) Construct a rustic two to three car pull off/parking area for the Red Hill parcel along Dinch Road. Install sign (subject to volunteer agreements, fire tower rehabilitation and reopening, and new trail to tower).	2,500
-(2) Provide access and rustic parking for two cars on State land on woods road right-of-way off Dymond Road. Place small Forest Preserve access sign and identify lot. Limit further access with sign.	2,600
-(1) Construct a small rustic three-car pull off along Wild Cat Road. Install "Forest Preserve Access" sign.	2,000
-(2) Pending findings and option review, build four car parking lot, capable of expansion to maximum of 10 cars, on State land or alternate site off Porcupine Road.	2,500
-(1) If possible, based on findings, delineate a two-three car parking pulloff with ID sign on Lundy Road (Rochester) where right-of-way starts. Mark R.O.W. with "Public easement on private lands." (If road ROW width allows for the structure).	500
-(1) Monitor condition of the stretch of steep trail from Peekamoose to Bangle Hill for possible relocation (also called for in the Peekamoose Unit Management Plan), relocate maximum of 0.25 mile if needed.	100
-(1) Sign all remaining access roads and public easements not already identified in the field with "Public Access Through Private Lands," to clearly establish Forest Preserve access. Work with landowners and Town officials to resolve any concerns.	See annual maintenance materials
- Hire two Assistant Forest Rangers (minimum dates: May 15 - November 15)	21,500

YEAR 5 CONTINUED

<u>PROJECT</u>	<u>ESTIMATED COST</u>
- Hire/retain one Assistant Forest Ranger for winter (November - May)	11,000
- Preserve Manager (15 percent of time)	6,500
- Hire Maintenance crew, two persons (April 1 - December 15, 50 percent of time)	21,500
- Annual maintenance materials	<u>4,000</u>
TOTAL	78,700
TOTAL PLAN COST (IF ALL PROJECTS UNDERTAKEN):	649,520
NEW PROJECTS: CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS (APPROX):	58,200
SALARY COSTS APPROXIMATELY 90% OF TOTAL	

NOTE: Land purchases recommended under Land Acquisition, Chapter IV, D, not included in budget estimates.

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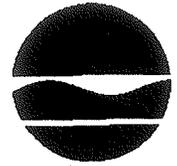
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APPENDIX A

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
21 South Putt Corners Road, New Paltz, NY 12561-1696
(914) 256-3000 FAX (914) 255-3042



Michael D. Zagata
Commissioner

March, 1996

Dear Contributor:

At least 34 groups or individuals spoke at the three Sundown Wild Forest Unit Management Plan Public Meetings. We also received 15 letters on a broad range of subjects, as well as 50 form "memos" from people concerned about the impacts on private property rights of our proposal to research and clarify the status of certain woods roads.

All of the suggestions and concerns have been studied and many have been included in the final draft. We thank all of you who took the time to attend the meetings and communicate your thoughts to us. Below is a list of the biggest issues brought to our attention, along with our response.

1. COMMENT

- a. The discussion of land acquisition is too vague. Too much land in city or state ownership already. There has to be a cap. Two-thirds of the Town of Denning is already state land. More purchases would place tremendous burden on Town of Denning residents. Should show cause on land acquisition.
- b. Proposed public access along the Neversink would threaten the limited fishery. Specific mention of Leroy Pool is inappropriate. Clarify and explain.
- c. State tax assessments for woodlands should be the same as my taxes for woodland. We want economic stabilization. At what point does State land ownership so great, that a town ceases to be viable?

RESPONSE

- a. This Unit Management Plan is much more specific about land acquisition needs than past plans. The intent was to reduce the vagueness of previous plans and provide guidelines and limits to land acquisition. All purchases will be from willing sellers. The purpose of land acquisition is to create a viable Wild Forest Unit based on the current public land holdings. A clearer, more precise discussion of the purpose and goals of land acquisition has been provided in this UMP update. Acquisition will be limited and conservative. Proposed priority acquisitions now include acreage estimates, which in-fee come to Town of Neversink - 190 acres; Town of Denning - 95 acres; Town of Olive - 95 acres; Town of Rochester - 208 acres (plus another 105 acres - Town of Rochester [easement preferred]). Any acquisition project not specifically identified in the Conserving Open Space in New York State Plan (1995), can be rejected by a Town within 90 days of notification by the DEC.

- b. Specific mention of Leroy Pool has been deleted. Also, please see response # 5b.
- c. The state government pays property tax on all forest preserve lands in the Catskills. During the 1994-95 tax year the state government paid out almost one million dollars in town, county and school taxes to the Town of Denning on forest preserve landholdings. Our state government pays the same taxes on unimproved forestlands as private landowners. State government landholdings are assessed by local government assessors. The tax rate that is established by each local government taxing jurisdiction is applied to the assessment and determines the taxes on the parcel. The procedure is the same as for private land owners and the property tax must be comparable to rates on similar private landholdings.

Very rarely, and only after a thorough discussion with a local government to understand the reasoning, the State Office of Real Property Services may go to Grievance Day, just like any private landowner to present the case that state taxpayers are overpaying. The grievance, just as those filed by any landowner, can be denied.

Many studies have been done on the effects of open space lands on property taxes and costs of town services. In general, all of the studies concluded that undeveloped land, when assessed at fair market value, contributes more in property taxes than it costs the town in services. Residential development was shown to be a net drain with open space and commercial/industrial land subsidizing residences. The ratios of taxes paid to costs are similar for open space lands and commercial and industrial developments. However, the town concerned about generating revenues would opt for commercial development. Despite this, towns with the most taxable commercial and industrial property value generally have higher - not lower - residential tax bills for other reasons. These findings do not mean that towns will be better off preserving open land, but shows that the common perception of growth lowering taxes is not always true. The property tax should not be the only reason for a town to grow or not (from Brighton and Northup [1993], Land Conservation and Local Property Taxes, and other studies, Ad Hoc Associates, Salisbury, VT). State land acquisition impacts are not so clearcut; however, acquisitions proposed in this plan will be clearly explained and limited to high priority parcels.

2. COMMENT

- a. The State does not have sufficient Ranger staff to patrol and enforce, and maintenance staff to upkeep new facilities. Any proposed new development must be accompanied by a clear discussion of long term management, costs, and steps to be taken if use becomes a problem to the local community. State always seems to run out of money once they implement something.
- b. The proposed plan is quite expensive to carry out, with significant continuing expense. Money could be better used for the maintenance and patrolling of existing facilities.

RESPONSE

Existing facilities are inadequate, encouraging illegal uses and making enforcement very difficult. Most of the proposed parking lots and pulloffs are already informal parking areas. Parking lots and facilities serving to limit and define use have been retained. The projects listed in the final draft have been prioritized to help in allocating funds during this period of fiscal stringency. Two parking facilities (at Mancuso Road and Frank Donovan Road) have been eliminated. The Porcupine and Lundy Road access parking has been postponed to Year 5 pending resolution of newly identified access issues. Other management issues are addressed under comments #7, 13, and 16.

Attorney and Surveyor costs dominate from Years 1 to 4, typically half the budget for these years. These are unusual items which have not been budgeted in previous Unit Management Plans, giving the appearance that this Plan is more costly than others (recently, the Phoenicia - Mt. Tobias Wild Forest and Balsam Lake Mountain Wild Forest Update have also included these costs). New Bureau of Preserve Protection and Management staff costs are included under the heading of Preserve Manager. Forest Rangers, since they also work on private land issues and for other programs, are not budgeted for in the Plan. However, Assistant Forest Rangers are. Staff costs are 90 percent of the total plan cost.

The Department is proposing to add two Assistant Forest Rangers during the summer months (minimum dates: May 15 - November 15) and two Operations staff (from April 1st to December) to help in constructing and maintaining the Sundown Wild Forest facilities for the first four years. In the fourth year and beyond the fifth, we anticipate that 50% of the time of a two person Operations crew will be enough to maintain and upkeep the facilities we have proposed, reducing costs in the future.

Ranger Stephen Preston covers the Towns of Wawarsing and Denning (mostly state lands, from the Neversink to Lackawack Hill). Recently, Keith Parr joined the Ranger force, covering the Towns of Neversink, Liberty and Fallsburg. (The State land in this district is Denman Mountain and Sugarloaf Mountain in Sullivan County). Ranger Stephen Scherry covers the Towns of Marbletown, Olive and Rochester (the Kanape to Vernooey Kill Falls).

We propose adding to the Final Plan an additional Assistant Forest Ranger (or retaining one from the summer) for the winter months (November 15 to May 15). The Assistant Ranger would cover from Denman Mountain and the Sundown Wild Forest to Mongaup Pond and the Willowemoc - Long Pond Wild Forest, where most snowmobile and winter use is anticipated. Alternatively, an additional full-time Ranger will be requested to cover state lands in the area. Projects and staffing depend on budget allocations - implementing depends on the amount actually received by DEC each year.

3. COMMENT

75% of Town Justice time is taken up by ENCON work.

RESPONSE

Towns by law (Article 3, Chapter 20, Town Law, 1994) must have two justices of the peace, unless they have less than 300 inhabitants as of the last census. The town receives a portion of all criminal and civil fines. The Rangers, along with Environmental Conservation Officers provide a law enforcement presence in the absence of town police.

4. COMMENT

- a. Road status/abandonment and property rights concerns. Also specific roads, including Bungalow Brook, Van Aiken, Porcupine and Balace Road (where is access?) were mentioned. Visitor centers and access should be on main roads. The status of the roads should have been cleared before now by landowners, averting this problem.
- b. 50 "Memo to DEC" letters were received "objecting to any part of the DEC's plan to reopen abandoned town roads which run through private property, unless the DEC has a legal right-of-way, easement, or title."

RESPONSE

- a. The DEC thanks all those who have sent us information to clarify and correct the locations and names, and add to our files on old town roads. Such information is valuable in helping us clearly identify the facts for all concerned, and allow a more timely conclusion.
- b. DEC agrees. Our purpose is to clarify the access rights which the people of the State of New York have or don't have to get to their land. We must know this to effectively plan for the properties. The DEC will not, and indeed, constitutionally cannot supersede private property rights without the existence of a legal right-of-way, easement or title. Our position is expressed more clearly in the final document.

As stated above, the DEC will not pursue opening public access on Van Aiken Road in this five year plan. We will however review all available information, including that supplied by the adjacent landowners, to further clarify what public rights of access do or do not exist through this old town road. As for other similar properties, we will to the extent possible, discuss the findings with affected landowners.

5. COMMENT

Concerns over the proposed management and access to the Neversink fishery.

- a. Native trout fishery and danger of stocking.
- b. Overfishing by public if access acquired.
- c. Add scientific points in text.

RESPONSE

- a. The Neversink River is currently fished and stocked by private individuals and, despite Statewide general fishing regulations, most anglers practice catch and release. Our intent as stated in the UMP objectives are to "Preserve, enhance and where needed, restore fisheries habitats to achieve and perpetuate the historically documented fish communities found in the unit's streams and ponds." We also will "perpetuate native fish populations in all streams within the unit." Our objectives and purpose, clearly stated here and in the text, should allay the concerns received. If public access and fishing rights are acquired (from a willing seller), and stocking is ever considered appropriate, it would only be used after careful consideration of impacts on the wild trout fishery.
- b. The UMP objectives further state "...improve access to the fisheries resources considering the sensitive nature and carrying capacity of riparian lands and maintain fisheries quality." Any future access site will be assessed along with the capacity of the fishery to withstand use. After this assessment, an appropriate management regulation will be assigned. If necessary, further assessment will follow to measure the regulation's effectiveness. Short of a moratorium on fishing, catch and release regulations are our most conservative regulation. Catch and release fishing results in some incidental mortality, but in most instances, natural mortality outweighs fishing mortality. Furthermore, trout constantly immigrate and emigrate to and from stream sections. Brook trout are thought to be more vulnerable to angling as compared to other trout species. However, the clear water found in the Neversink may enable wary trout earlier detection of anglers and their methods. These challenging conditions make the angler less likely to catch fish, reducing potential mortality due to fishing.
- c. Scientific points and details have been added to broaden and clarify the Fisheries Management section in the final UMP text (Chapter IV, B).

6. COMMENT

Braun's Holly Fern is an endangered/rare species on Neversink. Change the "Successional blueberry heath" description on High Point to "Blueberry balds." Loop trail proposal good, eliminating multiple trails, however the "balds" are fragile and degradation has been noted in areas of high traffic. Trail maintenance crews should be careful. The "bald" on Little High Point, partially on private land, is one of the most significant - and should be left without trails. Proposal for the larger loop trail seems excessive. Trails should avoid the upper South Hollow ravine beech-maple mesic forest. Proposals for improving South Hollow access (page 64 of the draft) should address possible resource impacts.

RESPONSE

The presence of Braun's Holly Fern (*Polystichum braunii*) in the Kanape area has also been noted. The fern is not rare or endangered at this time. However, it is on the state's list of exploitable vulnerable native plants which are "likely to become threatened in the near future throughout all or a significant portion of their ranges within the state if causal factors continue unchecked" (Environmental Conservation Law, Section 9-1503). The implementing regulation, 6 NYCRR Part 193.3, gives landowners the right to prosecute collectors that take plants without permission. Violators are subject to fines of \$25 per plant illegally taken. The list is also useful for environmental planning, as in this case.

All trails and facilities in the Sundown Wild Forest are located to avoid impacts on rare species. Also, in the event of unforeseen impacts, nearby trails and facilities will be relocated. New York State Natural Heritage Program staff (NYSNHP), Latham, New York, have good information on the Ashokan High Point plant community and we anticipate the area will be monitored at about five year intervals for signs of species change indicating the need for additional protection and perhaps trail relocation or closing. A trail is not proposed for Little High Point, and the concerns are noted for the future. At this time and until further studies are completed, the NYSNHP will not be changing the "pitch pine-oak-heath rocky summit" designation (incorrectly named "successional blueberry heath" in the draft) of the High Point plant community. The trails proposed in the draft plan avoid the beech-maple mesic forest (the location was clearly confirmed from information provided by the Natural Heritage Program). However, trails can usually be designed and constructed to protect this community without avoiding it. The beech-maple mesic forest is ranked G4, S4, unprotected, which means this is a "high quality" example of a plant community quite common in New York State (better known as the northern hardwood forest) and the world.

7. COMMENT

Trails attract nuisance uses. You don't take care of your land. People will park. Snowmobile trail attracts horses and bikes. What if people get injured? Who is liable? People will come from the Claryville side [to Denman Mountain] even without parking provisions.

RESPONSE

Please see response #2, 16, and elsewhere. Signs, patrolling, public information (Pamphlets for special uses and visitors to the Catskill Forest Preserve, bulletin boards and kiosks) and timely maintenance will avoid nuisance situations. As stated elsewhere, if trails cause damage to natural resources or private landholdings, the situation will be solved or the trail closed. The state is not drawing people to or through private lands. All proposed use is on state land and right-of-ways which are clearly open for public use. Landowners are protected further by posting their lands, and if permission is given to the public for recreational use, by the State General Obligations Law. The state is self-insured.

The proposal will not provide parking or access from the Claryville side along Bungalow Brook Road (See response #16).

8. COMMENT

Keep fire tower.

RESPONSE

A 1994 Letter of Resolution between the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and the Department of Environmental Conservation, following a review of 35 fire towers under DEC jurisdiction, stipulates that Red Hill be retained. There is pedestrian access along a ROW (Access No. 17A, see map on page 29 and 95, description on page 41 of draft) from the south, but the easement does not allow parking. The tower is on the National Historic Lookout Register (National Woodlands Magazine, 1995). The tower will remain to provide the benefits outlined on page 90 of the draft. A trail from Dinch Road (formerly Coons) can be considered in the future, but it has a low priority relative to other projects (relative priorities are assigned to projects in the final draft). Additional land acquisition in this area is not a priority.

The DEC appreciates and welcomes a sponsoring group which would be interested in marking and maintaining a trail if adequate parking from Dinch Road is available, in conjunction with providing maintenance, interpretation and security for the tower (especially during the summer months). The Department is willing to coordinate a Memorandum of Understanding for such a project.

9. COMMENT

There is no public access to the state lands through the abandoned South Hollow Road, and additional research would be a waste of money. The posting of a directional sign will attract more hikers to South Hollow and the parking lot is guaranteed to overflow at times. The placement of a four car parking lot between South Hollow Road and the Brook will have a significant adverse environmental impact.

RESPONSE

The preliminary research completed on the status of the South Hollow Road access to state land was not comprehensive. This research will be completed, so there is no doubt about public access, or lack of access in the area. Meanwhile, no project will be undertaken.

After meeting with a landowner who also represented other landowners along the road, a decision was made to:

- Eliminate the proposed "Forest Preserve Access" sign on County Route 42.
- Remove alternative 2ii, Draft page 64 (Eliminating the proposal to improve the woods road).

However, we continue to propose a four-five car parking lot along South Hollow Road as proposed in 2i, page 64 in the draft. After a review by all parties concerned and the New York City Department of Environmental Protection, all agreed that there is more than enough land buffering South Hollow Brook from the proposed parking. Also, the parking lot will be closer to the road than originally envisioned by using 90 degree or diagonal parking directly alongside the road. The parking surface will be gravel. The parking lot will divert cars from driving further to State land along the improved and unimproved South Hollow Woods Road. Signs along the road will inform users that from here on the road is a "Pedestrian right-of-way through private lands" and "No unauthorized vehicles beyond this point." Roadway entry could be controlled, but allow continuing DEC administrative access to state land, pending DEC findings and provisions of the State Highway Law.

The DEC continues to support public access to this area pending findings. Of course, if new information is found clearly extinguishing the public's right of access along the road, then a downsized "hunter" parking lot for two cars is proposed. If this occurs, signs would be posted showing very limited public access, not using the old South Hollow Woods road.

10. COMMENT

Alternate [and better] public access to Town of Olive State lands near the Peekamoose divide. Silver Mine Hollow/Top of Hill.

RESPONSE

Details were not provided for these locations. The area was reviewed, but access is limited by steep grades, streams, limited sighting distance and poor locations for public use of trails. A few "hunter parking" pulloffs are possible. The Department welcomes new information and ideas regarding this area.

11. COMMENT

Spring at Hog Rocks. We have been told that opening up a spring is unsafe due to Cryptosporidium and Giardia. The present and new springs proposed are desirable.

RESPONSE

Accepted health standards will be followed to locate and develop the proposed spring at Hog Rocks. Spring water is purer and safer than drinking water taken from the area's streams, and is the only other alternative available to users who don't bring their own water. Also, the springs are proposed for locations which drain undeveloped upland areas of the Forest Preserve.

DEC pamphlets and hiking materials state "Never assume that any water is completely clean and safe for drinking without purification. The Giardia lamblia parasite can be removed by boiling for ten minutes, proper treatment with chlorine or iodine compounds, or the use of commercial water filters."

12. COMMENT

Booklets should be handed out to all users/uses of state land.

RESPONSE

We agree. Booklets are available for snowmobiling, horseback riding, cross-country skiing and hiking and are distributed whenever an inquiry is received. Attempts will be made to provide this information on a wider basis at publicly accessible locations. Hunting and fishing information is available when a person buys a license. A training course is required for all first time buyers of hunting licenses. A Catskill-wide pamphlet will be published this year. It will provide general tourist information, will explain the Forest Preserve, summarize rules and regulations, and steer visitors to sources of more detailed information. Snowmobile and horseback riding brochures will be on display at the Furmans and Glade Hill/Moore Hill Road parking lot trail register/bulletin board (as well as information about how to get a copy).

13. COMMENT

Privies should be provided at proposed facilities. Address the need for privies.

RESPONSE

Port-A-Potties will be provided as part of the Denman Mountain parking lot project. Periodic privy maintenance is provided under contract or scheduled by the DEC Operations Department. A privy will be added to the Kanape Parking Lot when the proposed improvements are made. Please also refer to Peekamoose comment #17. Privies will not be provided for small, two-four car, parking lots provided for hunting and receiving limited use. Privies are currently not provided at Hog Rocks. Our purpose at this location is to contain illegal off-road vehicles and abuse of State land by limiting access, not encourage use. However, we have added a provision for a privy if the need arises. Need will be reviewed two years into the plan.

The Parking facility at the Furmans and Glade Hill/Moore Hill Road Intersection will be monitored for garbage, as are other locations, by Rangers, Operations staff and Foresters. Maintenance/removal will be scheduled in a timely fashion if dumping becomes a problem. However, signs will continue to stress that our facilities are carry in - carry out and littering is illegal. This has shown itself to be the most cost effective and successful of the options available to the Department.

14. COMMENT

Why more access? Have you had complaints from the public? What is the use. Cut down on new trails, especially for hiking, since use in area does not warrant. There is no major public demand for development, especially from people in the area, with the exception of snowmobile trails.

RESPONSE

Except for the Kanape, Vernooy Kill Falls and Denman Mountain area where most of the wild forests use occurs, formal development has not been proposed. New trails are limited to completing a small loop on Ashokan High Point and completing the Denman Mountain snowmobile-multiple use trail. Access remains mostly informal and for hunting because, as pointed out, there is no major public demand for development. The DEC is working from observations of current use and user group requests (local landowners, snowmobilers, horseback riders, hunters and hikers).

15. COMMENT

- a. Free camping is very unusual in the U.S. Perhaps as in primitive camping spots on National Forests, a \$5 fee could be charged and placed in a box on site.
- b. Consider privatizing campgrounds. Put some properties along public roads for bid for campgrounds.

RESPONSE

- a. This issue will be addressed in the Peekamoose Wild Forest addendum (also see response #17). The issue is also guided by the Catskill Park State Land Master Plan which is currently being revised.
- b. Campground privatizing and private campgrounds on State land in the Catskills are not allowed by the New York State Constitution which established the Forest Preserve. Article XIV of the Constitution directs that Forest Preserve lands "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."

16. COMMENT

- a. Snowmobiles. Multiple use is multiple trouble -- keep for safe use of nature lovers. Supervision of snowmobile safety and noise control is essential. State land boundaries must be clearly marked and maintained. How does the Denman Snowmobile Route 2 tie into Corridor Trail Route 2 through Sullivan and Ulster Counties? Keep snowmobile trails out of populated areas. Will New York State build a parking lot for snowmobile trailers at the Claryville access to the trail loop? Will the multiple use trail be open to all terrain vehicles?

Support for "official" snowmobile trails for recreation to reduce illegal use and to protect landowner rights against trespass.

- b. The Vernoooy Falls snowmobile loop is not a loop until the Town of Denning designates a section of Dymond Road as a "snowmobile road."

RESPONSE

- a. Denman Mountain is one of a few limited areas in the Catskills suitable for snowmobile trails, based on topography, existing old woods roads and roadways, and safe access. The multiple use snowmobile trail is limited to Denman Mountain. The proposed trail, begins, runs and ends on state land, or uses public roads compatible and designated for snowmobiles. The trail does not run near any dwellings. Signs marking the trail, limiting speed limits, prohibiting access onto adjacent roads and trails, and listing state regulations will be posted as part of the trail. A bulletin board guiding public use will be part of the parking area at the Furmans and Glade Hill/Moore Hill Road intersection. Enforcement will be provided by the locally assigned Rangers (Also see comment #2). "*Snowmobile - New York State*" is published by the Department of Motor Vehicles and the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. Another publication, "*Snowmobiling in New York State*," is provided by DEC whenever a snowmobile inquiry is received. Copies will be made available at the Town Hall and other publicly accessible locations. If problems develop the DEC will work with local landowners to correct, including installing boulders or gates, if mutually agreeable.

The shared use (multiple use) trails in the Sundown Wild Forest are not and will not be open to all terrain vehicles (ATV's).

The DEC will not construct a parking area for snowmobile trailers in Claryville. Any trail connection with the larger Snowmobile Corridor Trail Route 2 and Claryville access is completely dependant on private cooperation between landowners and snowmobile groups. Any snowmobile spur trail in this direction will be provided only if and when a connector trail, with long term, 10-20 year agreements, between private landowners and snowmobile clubs, is in place.

State lands boundaries are maintained on a seven year cycle. Places where the state land boundary is unclear are identified in this plan and will be surveyed and marked by the DEC Real Property staff.

- b. So noted. The Town of Denning will be contacted. If necessary, alternatives will be considered.

17. COMMENT

Peekamoose Wild Forest should be rejoined to the Sundown Wild Forest. The Peekamoose Primitive Campground worries many residents. What is its proposed status.

RESPONSE

The number of campsites in the valley has been reduced several times over the past few years. Maintenance has increased and some sites have been temporarily moved to allow the area to recover. In 1995, four pit privies were removed, and the remaining four privies relocated. Four Port-A-Potties have been used for several years (one at each campsite). If use dictates, four additional Port-A-Potties will be rented to replace the removed pit privies. As proposed in the draft, the Peekamoose Valley Wild Forest Unit Management Plan will be updated and added as an addendum to the Sundown Wild Forest Plan (if the separate designation is eliminated in the ongoing update of the Catskill State Land Master Plan). In the future, this area will be included in the Sundown Wild Forest. The update will consider:

1. Further reducing the number of pit privies.
2. Relocating any campsites with inappropriate affects on the Rondout.
3. No additions, and a further small reduction in the number of campsites.
4. An alcohol free zone will be evaluated.
5. Intent to place Peekamoose in the context of the larger regional picture - part of the trail systems of the Sundown Wild Forest and the Slide Mountain Wilderness. Continuing to encourage the positive - family oriented uses which have replaced much of the illegal past use.
6. Analyze whether primitive camping at Peekamoose should be continued given the use and other state and private campgrounds in the region.

18. COMMENT

Poor doe to buck ratio? Only about 50 percent of the bucks are removed each year and this had never been a problem even where the removal rate of bucks is 80 percent. Reproductive rates are a product of physical condition and because of the horrendous overbrowsing of the winter ranges, physical condition is decidedly sub-par. The old growth forests of the preserve have a tremendous potential for producing an abundance of shade tolerant species not realized due to tremendous deer overbrowsing. Needless to say, many more deer should be removed.

RESPONSE

Cutting of vegetation on Forest Preserve land for wildlife management is not a viable alternative under the protective provisions set forth by the New York State Constitution. Hunter numbers are decreasing as are harvests. The DEC, in conjunction with a citizen task force, establishes a population objective within the range of sound biological management. Deer reproduction is not wholly influenced by winter range. A variety of factors effect deer reproduction. Recent research focuses on buck to doe ratio.

19. COMMENT

NYCDEP recommends that all projects which involve land disturbance be planned, sited and designed to protect wetlands and watercourses, incorporating sediment control. Requests opportunity to review specific plans and designs to provide recommendations. All outhouses, possible at the Kanape or Denman Mountain must meet the conditions listed in the letter pursuant to 10 NYCRR 128.1.

RESPONSE

All DEC projects are designed and implemented with these standards given high priority. All outhouses proposed meet the standards required. Half of the outhouses in Peekamoose were removed in 1995, leaving four preexisting in ground.

20. COMMENT

Parking is contentious at the Lundy Road right-of-way to state land. The right-of-way crosses the Vernooey Kill stream and floodplain and is often wet or flooded.

RESPONSE

The status and width of Lundy Road must be researched. Parking is usually allowed off the shoulder of a town road, as long as you are still within the right-of-way, unless posted otherwise by the town. According to DEC Legal staff, the 66 foot wide easement running to State lands does not allow construction of a small parking lot. Access to the area is available from Greenville, Upper Cherrytown Road or Trails End Road. The cost to upgrade the right-of-way to a trail with bridges is too great. We believe the area is fragile and best left as a rustic access, stressing other more suitable access points.

21. Trail Issues

a. COMMENT

The plan says the Kanape Lot will continue to be plowed in winter. The lot on Upper Cherrytown Road should be plowed as well as the new one [proposed] at the intersection of Furmans and Glade Hill/Moore Hill Roads.

RESPONSE

The Kanape, Furmans and Glade Hill/Moore Hill Road, and Upper Cherrytown lots will be plowed. Additional parking lots may be plowed, but given limited funding, these will be the priority lots.

b. COMMENT

Vista descriptions need more careful definition, since in the absence of fire, they will likely need maintenance cutting.

RESPONSE

So noted. Clarifications, particularly on Ashokan High Point have been made in the Plan. Major vistas have been added on the maps.

c. COMMENT

Support the trail reroute on the Long Path on its northerly approach to Bangle Hill. Water bars needed to control erosion on the Upper Cherrytown Road to Vernoooy Kill Falls trail.

RESPONSE

So noted. The Upper Cherrytown Road to Vernoooy Kill Falls trail will be reviewed and maintenance scheduled with other work in the area.

d. COMMENT

Show all existing, non-State marked trails for discussion of whether to continue or discontinue.

RESPONSE

All major paths and old roadways have been shown. The area has numerous small old woods-logging roads which can continue to be used by the public in accordance with the Catskill State Land Master Plan and State regulations. No substantial publicly used trails are scheduled for closing. The plan incorporates existing use in its proposals whenever possible, then guides the use to protect the forest preserve. We welcome information on substantial trails we might have missed. The additional detail assists us in our planning efforts.

e. COMMENT

What towns have ordinances against parking along roads? We hope the official roadside parking pulloffs proposed are in such places.

RESPONSE

The roadside parking pulloffs have been located to distribute use throughout this part of the Forest Preserve, not by town parking ordinances. It is impossible for the public to know whether parking is allowed or not from one town to the other. Signs are not always posted. Law abiding people, out of fear of breaking the law, being ticketed, or towed, are discriminated against when parking guidance and spaces are not provided.

In order to save money on printing and mailing costs, copies of the Final Sundown Wild Forest Unit Management Plan can only be made available to a limited number of groups. However, we will gladly assist you in locating a copy for review. Copies are available at town halls and local libraries.

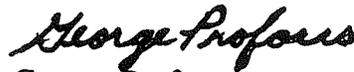
If you wish your own copy, please send us a large (at least 8 1/2 x 11) self-addressed stamped envelope (Postage = \$3.00) and we will send you a copy.

As a service to interested members of the public, the Region 3 Forest Practice Board is providing a copy of the text portion of the Management Plan on computer disk. The format is in Word Perfect 5.1 on a 3 1/2" floppy disk. The cost is \$3.00 per disk, postage paid. If you wish to obtain a copy of the disk, please complete the attached order form and return it with payment payable to the Region 3 FPB at our New Paltz address.

If you have any questions, I can be reached at the above address or at (914) 256-3082. Please leave a message if I am not in.

Thank you again.

Sincerely,



George Profous
Senior Forester
Lands and Forests

Please send a copy of the Final Sundown Wild Forest Unit Management Plan (text only), Word Perfect 5.1, on a 3.5" computer disk to:

Name: _____

Address: _____

\$ 3.00, made out to REGION 3 FPB to cover postage and the disk is enclosed.

APPENDIX B

Fish species found in the Sundown Wild Forest Area.

COMMON NAME

SCIENTIFIC NAME

American eel	<u>Anquilla rostrata</u>
Atlantic salmon	<u>Salmo salar</u>
Brown bullhead	<u>Ameriurus nebulosus</u>
Common shiner	<u>Luxilus cornutus</u>
Cutlips minnow	<u>Exoglossum maxilllingua</u>
Dace, blacknose	<u>Rhinichthys atratulus</u>
Dace, longnose	<u>Rhinichthys cataractae</u>
Golden shiner	<u>Notemigonus crysoleucas</u>
Madtom	<u>Noturis sp.</u>
Pumpkinseed	<u>Lepomis gibbosus</u>
Slimy sculpin	<u>Cottus cognatus</u>
Sucker, white	<u>Catostomus commersoni</u>
Tessellated darter	<u>Etheostoma olmsted</u>
Trout, brook	<u>Salvelinus fontinalis</u>
Trout, brown	<u>Salmo trutta</u>
Trout, rainbow	<u>Oncorhynchus mykiss</u>

Appendix B

Status and occurrence of New York mammals in Sundown Wild Forest Area, a part of the Catskill Peaks and Neversink Highlands subzone as listed in "Integrating Timber and Wildlife Management Handbook" (Chambers, 1983).

<u>COMMON NAME</u>	<u>SCIENTIFIC NAME</u>	<u>NEW YORK * LEGAL STATUS</u>
Masked Shrew	<u>Sorex cinereus</u>	UN
Smoky Shrew	<u>Sorex fumeus</u>	UN
Longtail Shrew	<u>Sorex dispar</u>	UN
Water Shrew	<u>Sorex palustris</u>	UN
Least Shrew	<u>Cryptotis parva</u>	UN
Shorttail Shrew	<u>Blarina brevicauda</u>	UN
Starnose Mole	<u>Condylura cristata</u>	UN
Eastern Mole	<u>Scalopus aquaticus</u>	UN
Hairy-tailed Mole	<u>Parascalops breweri</u>	UN
Little Brown Bat	<u>Myotis lucifugus</u>	UN
Keen's Bat	<u>Myotis keenii</u>	UN
Small-Footed Bat	<u>Myotis subulatis</u>	UN-SC
Silver-Haired Bat	<u>Lasionycteris noctivagans</u>	UN
Eastern Pipistrelle	<u>Pipistrellus subflavus</u>	UN
Big Brown Bat	<u>Eptesicus fuscus</u>	UN
Red Bat	<u>Lasiurus borealis</u>	UN
Hoary Bat	<u>Lasiurus cinereus</u>	UN
Black Bear	<u>Ursus americanus</u>	GS
Raccoon	<u>Procyon lotor</u>	GS
Whitetailed Deer	<u>Odocoileus virginianus</u>	GS
Fisher	<u>Martes pennanti</u>	GS
River Otter	<u>Lutra canadensis</u>	GS
Striped Skunk	<u>Mephitis mephitis</u>	GS
Red Fox	<u>Vulpes fulva</u>	GS
Gray Fox	<u>Vrocyon cinereoargenteus</u>	GS
Bobcat	<u>Lynx rufus</u>	GS
Opossum (Virginia)	<u>Didelphus virginiana</u>	GS
Eastern Chipmunk	<u>Tamias striatus</u>	UN
Gray Squirrel	<u>Sciurus carolinensis</u>	GS
Red Squirrel	<u>Tamiasciurus hudsonicus</u>	UN
Southern Flying Squirrel	<u>Glaucomys volans</u>	UN
Northern Flying Squirrel	<u>Glaucomys sabrinus</u>	UN
Beaver	<u>Castor canadensis</u>	GS
Deer Mouse	<u>Peromyscus maniculatus</u>	UN
White-Footed Mouse	<u>Peromyscus leucopus</u>	UN
Southern Bog Lemming	<u>Synaptomys cooperi</u>	UN
Red-Backed Vole	<u>Clethrionomys gapperi</u>	UN
Southern Meadow Vole	<u>Microtus pennsylvanicus</u>	UN
Woodland Vole	<u>Microtus pinetorum</u>	UN
Muskrat	<u>Ondatra zibethica</u>	GS
Meadow Jumping Mouse	<u>Zapus hudsonius</u>	UN
Woodland Jumping Mouse	<u>Napaeozapus insignis</u>	UN
Porcupine	<u>Erethizon dorsatum</u>	UN
Snowshoe Hare	<u>Lepus americanus</u>	GS
Eastern Cottontail	<u>Sylvilagus floridanus</u>	GS
Mink	<u>Mustela vison</u>	GS
Shorttail Weasel	<u>Mustela erminea</u>	GS
Longtail Weasel	<u>Mustela frenata</u>	GS
Woodchuck	<u>Marmota monax</u>	GS
Eastern Coyote	<u>Canis latrans</u>	GS

- * SC = Special Concern
 GS = Game Species
 UN = Unprotected
 PR = Protected
 ES = Endangered Species
 TS = Threatened Species

Reasons Supporting This Determination:

(See 617.6(g) for requirements of this determination; see 617.6(h) for Conditioned Negative Declaration)

The area will be managed in accordance with the Wild Forest guidelines established in the Catskill Park State Land Master Plan, as well as within the constraints set forth in Article XIV of the New York State Constitution and Section 9 of the Environmental Conservation Law.

The implementation of this UMP will not have a significant impact since the proposed activities will manage and reduce potential recreational user impacts (e.g. trail improvement and relocation to reduce erosion, monitoring/reducing camping along streams, maintaining and improving recreational opportunities compatible with the Forest Preserve, etc.). Construction will be minimal and will not impact waterbodies and aesthetic resources (any parking will be well-buffered and screened from roads and water) and noise and odor will be temporary and last only a few days in any one location. The new and improved trails and informational kiosks/bulletin boards will complement the careful growth of the local tourist economy only in those areas where the natural resources of the Forest Preserve can sustain long-term public recreational use without noticeable degradation.

The following Sections 1-7 are keyed to the seven project areas under "Description of Action" and provide further support for the determination.

CONTINUED

If Conditioned Negative Declaration, provide on attachment the specific mitigation measures imposed.

For Further Information:

Contact Person: George Profous, Senior Forester, NYSDEC Lands and Forests

Address: 21 South Putt Corners Road, New Paltz, New York 12561-1696

Telephone Number: (914) 256-3000

For Type 1 Actions and Conditioned Negative Declarations, a Copy of this Notice Sent to:

Commissioner, Department of Environmental Conservation, 50 Wolf Road, Albany, New York 12233-0001

Appropriate Regional Office of the Department of Environmental Conservation.

Office of the Chief Executive Officer of the political subdivision in which the action will be principally located.

Applicant (if any).

Other involved agencies (if any).

Supervisor, Town of Olive
Town of Neversink
Town of Rochester
Town of Denning
Town of Wawarsing

1. The Kanape Trail Loop will be added to the existing trail, which is located on an old truck trail. The additional loop will be about 1.6 miles and only about one-half mile of new trail will need to be built. Existing fire trails will be used for the remaining distance.

Several sections on the currently existing trail will be improved through the use of rock water bars to stabilize the trail bed and prevent erosion by water. See Section 6, Paragraph 2 on tree cutting and trail layout for more information.

Hiking and use of some parts of the Kanape Trail to High Point Mountain, sections of the Vernooy Kill Falls to Greenville Trail and the Long Path to Trails End to the Peekamoose Valley has caused soil erosion. Sometimes, as on the steeply sloping trail to High Point Mountain or the Bangle Hill area near Peekamoose, the trails might be relocated to work more closely with natural contours to reduce impacts. Water bars, drainage ditches, thank-you mats and other trail and stream stabilizing structures of rock and natural materials will be used to minimize erosion and disturbance alongside trails. The Department will continue the Memorandum of Understanding with the NY/NJ Trail Conference and work in conjunction with other volunteers to minimize the impacts of use on the resource.

2. The plan provides information on public access to the State land parcels in this Unit, and when needed, calls for additional research by the Division's Real Property Bureau and surveyors to confirm road or right-of-way (R.O.W.) status. Reasserting public access rights, but concurrently clearly delineating right-of-way locations, will reduce or eliminate public trespass on adjacent private lands and reduce local landowner dissatisfaction, while providing public access for State land. Access sites will be posted with Forest Preserve signs and notices to users to respect private lands through which they pass. Lands and Forests Division Director Robert Bathrick has set a priority to clearly identify and uphold existing administrative and public access rights to State land.

Right-of-ways through private lands such as off Haver Road and in South Hollow (Town of Olive) will be improved to prevent public wandering onto private lands to avoid poor road conditions. If appropriate road improvements are not practical (pending the outcome of investigations at South Hollow), pedestrian access may be an alternative once alternate parking is purchased from a willing seller nearby.

3. Access to this unit is severely limited in many areas because off-road parking is not available. This plan addresses this problem by providing limited and inconspicuous parking opportunities for Forest Preserve users.

Several small parking areas and pull-offs will be provided. Thirty-five off-street parking spaces exist in this unit. Ten of these are in a formal parking area at the Kanape, Watson Hollow, Town of Olive, physically within the bounds of the Slide Mountain-Panther Mountain Wilderness Area and seven are in the Upper Cherrytown Road-Vernooy Falls trailhead parking lot. However, these serve only the Sundown unit. Roughly six are on an unmarked parking lot along Sugarloaf Road in Denning not part of any trail, six (or more) are at Hog Rocks in Neversink where free access is provided to a field in summer, and six along Denman Mountain Road in Neversink.

These existing parking locations will be better graded and delineated with boulders to limit access into the interior of the unit, reducing erosion and disturbance from off-road driving and abuse. A total of approximately 51 more parking spaces will be provided in 16 or so locations, primarily small 1-3 car pull-offs with small Forest Preserve access signs. One large parking area for up to 10 cars and two horse trailers is proposed for Furmans and Glade Road/Moore Road on Denman Mountain. The parking will be off road, and a wooded buffer will screen much of the lot from the road, with one-way traffic flow in and out of the area. The area is relatively flat, so stormwater runoff on this gravel parking lot will be recharged nearby. All parking lots and pull-offs will be designed small and so runoff does not travel far from the site. No runoff and sedimentation will reach any stream or river.

4. Improving signage and interpretation will help the public find the Forest Preserve without complicated searching and inquiry and will help educate the public on the purpose and careful use of the Preserve. This will benefit the natural resources as people become more aware of the proper way to camp and use State lands, but will also benefit local economies by making the Forest Preserve a friendlier place to visit. Very importantly, a well-signed and interpreted unit, with two key wayside exhibits - including maps, information on history and the natural resources, management philosophy and use - at the Kanape and near Grahamsville, will help to familiarize the public with less well-known Forest Preserve landmarks. This may help disperse use and reduce some of the pressures on heavily visited locations such as Slide Mountain.

The information boards to be erected at major trailheads will convey the rules and regulations governing the use of Forest Preserve land and instruct users in techniques for minimum impact camping, proper human sanitation, and precautions against Giardia and Lyme disease, and preventative measures on rabies. Emergency phone numbers will also be posted.

The more detailed wayside exhibits, particularly as planned for the Grahamsville area, will include this information, as well as a map and other area information. This exhibit will be planned in cooperation with the Town of Neversink and is consistent with projects supported by the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act.

5. The Red Hill Fire Tower (built in 1920) is no longer actively used for fire prevention. Because of its location away from the more famous peaks of the Catskills, poor access and no view without the fire tower, the property is used only infrequently by area residents. Funding has not been available for tower maintenance since its closing in 1990. Although it is in better condition than many Catskill fire towers due to its isolated location, the tower would have to be redesigned if public access were allowed. Also, a trail to the tower would have to be built over steep terrain from Coons Road, since all other access points are limited to Department administrative use. The tower is part of the fire tower system established earlier this century but is not one of the oldest, nor is it on any State or national register. Notwithstanding that this Unit Management Plan has proposed its removal, the argument for and against the tower is presented in the draft for public comment and discussion. A final decision will be made after the public hearings.

If a decision is made to remove the tower, historic preservation groups will first be contacted to see if they are interested in the structure for use on private land. The structure would be dismantled and removed from the site using the road access which exists through the permission of the adjacent landowner.

6. A loop trail, designed to include snowmobile and equestrian uses is proposed for the Denman Mountain area. The principal access to the trail will be from a parking lot where Moore Hill Road intersects Furman and Glade Hill Road. Minor accesses, primarily for local users, will be provided through one seasonally maintained town road from Grahamsville and a right-of-way negotiated from Claryville by a local snowmobile association. The trail will use existing woods roads and lightly used, seasonally maintained dirt town roads for 2/3 of its length, necessitating about 2.5 miles of new trail construction around the north and west sides of Denman Mountain. This trail takes advantage of the area's topography and is part of the Region's policy to allow more intensive uses which are compatible with the natural resources in more accessible areas. Letters of support for this trail system have been received over the past decade from elected officials, area residents and organizations, and have been acknowledged positively after past reviews by the Department. Similar trails are being constructed to the west around Mongaup Pond and Quick Lake. Trail layout and construction will take one year and be designed to protect all water sources and the watershed.

The proposed multiple use trail stretch not using existing roadways will involve minor tree cutting, and may lead to some soil erosion and trampling of vegetation. These impacts will be mitigated by avoiding large trees and steep grades and employing drainage dips, ditches, water bars and, occasionally, small unobtrusive culverts to minimize erosion. Tree cutting will be limited by passing around large trees whenever possible and trying to limit cutting only to smaller understory trees blocking the new route. Actions involving tree cutting will be in compliance with the Commissioner's Delegation Memorandum #84-06, on the cutting, removal or destruction of trees on Forest Preserve lands.

7. Several large inholdings and parcels adjacent to the unit are prioritized for future acquisition from willing sellers pending available funding. The proposed acquisitions are conservative, based on minimizing encroachments and private right-of-ways and developments in the heart of the unit, protecting the natural resources of the unit such as endangered or threatened species or the upper watershed/shores of the Vernooey Kill, improving public access or substantially improving public use and enjoyment with minor additions, linking an isolated Forest Preserve parcel near large State lands (Sugarloaf Mountain South), or simplifying complex and difficult to manage property lines (where at least three surrounding borders are State land). All purchases are based on the availability of willing sellers and will comply with all procedures and requirements set forth under the 1992 New York State Open Space Plan.

The Forest Preserve lands in this unit abut, primarily, secondary streams. State Preserve lands are concentrated on ridges, with rare exceptions away from favorite fishing holes. The vast majority of valley bottoms are in private ownership. However, the Bush Kill flows into the Ashokan Reservoir by the Kanape (Town of Olive), Sugarloaf Creek (Town of Denning) flows into the Roundout Reservoir, and the East Branch of the Neversink (Town of Denning) flows into the Neversink Reservoir. These reservoirs are part of the New York City drinking water supply.

Forest Preserve lands are managed to maintain and, when possible, improve the water quality of the watersheds, whether part of a reservoir system or not. Soil erosion, containment of stormwater discharge and the use of buffers, careful siting and monitoring of approved campsites near water bodies and stable trailbeds are integral to the management of State forest lands and recreational facilities, which include parking, trails, camping sites and privies.

Special attention has been given to any lands within or near floodplains and along rivers and streams where public use can affect water quality. A privy on a small parcel off Denning Road in the floodplain/meander area of nearby streams will be removed. Use of the area is low and the property is not suitable for a privy.

APPENDIX D

NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

REGION 3

NYS DEC
21 South Putt Corners Road
New Paltz, NY 12561-1696
914-256-3000

FOREST RANGERS

DENNING & WAWARSING

Stephen Preston
P. O. Box 162
Claryville, NY 12725
914-985-2215

OLIVE & ROCHESTER

Stephen Scherry
407 Woodland Road
Accord, NY 12404
914-687-0946

NEVERSINK

Keith Parr
9557 St. Rt. 42
Grahamsville, NY 12740
914-985-7483

Refer questions to the Bureau of
Preserve Protection and Management
staff in New Paltz or Forest Rangers.