

## APPENDIX G: TRAIL CLASSIFICATION SYSTEMS

**Table 1.** Non-snowmobile trail classifications system and standards.

| TITLE             | EXAMPLE                       | MARKING   | TREAD  | BARRIERS   | USE LEVEL               | ACCEPTABLE MAINTENANCE   |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|---|--|--|-------------------------|--|
| I. Unmarked Route | Nate Davis Pond Trail         | None  | Intermittently apparent, relatively undisturbed organic soil horizon             | Natural obstructions present, logs and water courses | Occasional              | None   |
| II. Path          | Little Joe Pond Trail         | Intermittent  | Intermittently apparent, compaction of duff, mineral soils occasionally exposed. | Same as unmarked route                               | Low, varies by location | Intermittent marking with consideration given to appropriate layout based on drainage, occasional barrier removal only to define appropriate route.  |
| III. Primitive    | St. John Lake Connector Trail | Trail markers, sign at junction with secondary or other upper level trail | Apparent, soil compaction evident  | Limited natural obstructions (logs and river fords)  | Low                     | Drainage (native materials) where necessary to minimize erosion, blowdown removed 2-3 years, brushing as necessary to define trail (every 5-10 years). Bridges only to protect resource (max - 2 log width). Ladders only to protect exceptionally steep sections, Tread 14"-18", clear: 3' wide, 3' high. |

| <b>TITLE</b>           | <b>EXAMPLE</b>                 | <b>MARKING</b>  | <b>TREAD</b>  | <b>BARRIERS</b>   | <b>USE LEVEL</b> | <b>ACCEPTABLE MAINTENANCE</b>   |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|---|---|---|------------------|---|
| IV.<br>Secondary       | Tenant<br>Creek Falls<br>Trail | Markers,<br>signs with<br>basic<br>information                  | Likely worn<br>and possibly<br>quite eroded.<br>Rocks<br>exposed, little<br>or no duff<br>remaining | Up to one<br>year's<br>accumulated<br>blowdown,<br>small streams. | Moderate         | Drainage where needed<br>to halt erosion and limit<br>potential erosion (using<br>native materials), tread<br>hardening with native<br>materials where drainage<br>proves to be insufficient<br>to control erosion.<br>Remove blowdown<br>annually. Brush to<br>maintain trail corridor.<br>Higher use may warrant<br>greater use of bridges<br>(2-3 logs wide) for<br>resource protection.<br>Ladders on exceptionally<br>steep rock faces.<br>Tread 18"-24". Clear 4'<br>wide, 3' High. |
| V. Trunk or<br>Primary | Hadley<br>Mountain<br>Trail    | Markers,<br>signed with<br>more<br>information<br>and warnings. | Wider tread,<br>worn and<br>very evident.<br>Rock<br>exposed,<br>possibly very<br>eroded.           | Obstructions<br>only rarely,<br>small streams                     | High             | Same as above; Plus:<br>regular blowdown<br>removal on designated<br>ski trails, non-native<br>materials as last resort.<br>Extensive tread<br>hardening when needed,<br>bridge streams (2-4 logs<br>wide) difficult to cross<br>during high water,<br>priority given to stream<br>crossings below<br>concentrations of<br>designated camping.<br>Tread 18"-26", clear 6'<br>wide, 8' high, actual turn<br>piking limited to 2% of<br>trail length.                                       |

| TITLE             | EXAMPLE                                  | MARKING   | TREAD                               | BARRIERS                         | USE LEVEL        | ACCEPTABLE MAINTENANCE  |
|-------------------|--|---|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------|---|
| VI. Front Country | None in the WLWF                         | Heavily marked, detailed interpretive signing                           | Groomed                             | None                             | Very High        | Extensive grooming, some paving, bark chips, accessible to persons with disabilities. This is to be implemented within 500' of wilderness boundary.   |
| VII. Horse Trail  | None specifically designated in the WLWF | Marked as Trunk or Secondary  | Wide tread, must be rather smooth.  | Same as Trunk Trail.             | Moderate to High | Same as trunk trail, except use techniques appropriate for horses. Bridges: 6' minimum width with kick rails, nonnative dimensional materials preferred. Tread: 2'-4' wide, clear 8' wide, 10' high.                      |
| VIII. Ski Trail   | None specifically designated in the WLWF | Marked High. Special markers, sign at all junctions with hiking trails. | Duff remains. Discourage summer use | Practically none due to hazards. | High             | Focus on removal of obstructions, maintenance should be low profile, tread determined by clearing 6' (Should be slightly wider at turns and steep sections). Provide drainage using native materials to protect resource. |

**Table 2.** Classifications of post-UMP foot trails in the WLWF.

| CLASS III. PRIMITIVE   |                |
|------------------------|----------------|
| Name                   | Length (miles) |
| Bartman Junction Trail | 2.22           |
| Cotter Brook Trail     | 2.19           |
| Eagle Pond Trail       | 1.48           |
| Indian Pond Trail      | 1.66           |

|   |                       |
|---|-----------------------|
| Little Joe Pond Trail   | 1.28                  |
| Mud Pond Trail  | 0.11                  |
| Oxbow Trail   | 1.64                  |
| Rand Mountain Trail   | 2.98                  |
| St. John Lake Connector Trail   | 0.35                  |
| Thompson Mountain Trail   | 0.5                   |
| Wilcox Lake Lean-tos Trail  | 0.73                  |
| <b>CLASS IV. SECONDARY</b>  |                       |
| <b>Name</b>   | <b>Length (miles)</b> |
| Kibby Pond Trail  | 1.3                   |
| Tenant Creek Falls Trail  | 1.73                  |
| <b>CLASS V. PRIMARY OR TRUNK</b>  |                       |
| <b>Name</b>   | <b>Length (miles)</b> |
| Crane Mountain Trail  | 3.55                  |
| Hadley Mountain Trail   | 1.32                  |
| Moose Mountain Trail  | 3.85                  |
| <b>CLASS VIII. SKI</b>  |                       |
| <b>Name</b>   | <b>Length (miles)</b> |
| East Stony Creek Trail (Brownell Camp to Dayton Creek)  | 3.4                   |
| Old Fodder Brook Road Ski Trail (access from private land or Saratoga County land off Hadley Hill Road) | 3.58                  |

**Table 3.** Snowmobile trail classification system and standards.

| CLASS | DESCRIPTION   | GROOMING        | WIDTH & HEIGHT  |
|-------|---|-----------------|---|
| A     | Major travel routes, with physical features that permit grooming and;<br>1. Follow old roadways, or;<br>2. Connect with groomed trail systems on adjacent public or private lands, or;<br>3. Join with other trails on State land to form a long loop or other major travel corridor. | Yes, if desired | Width – Eight (8) feet on straight or gently curved stretches of trail, twelve (12) feet on curves or steep grades<br>Height – Twelve (12) feet |
| B     | Routes other than major travel routes, not designed for grooming and which;<br>1. Are connecting or “spur” trails companion to Class A trails, or;<br>2. Lead to a particular point of interest such as a popular ice fishing pond, a scenic overlook, etc.                           | No              | Width – Maximum of eight (8) feet<br>Height – Twelve (12) feet  |

**Table 4:** Classifications of post-UMP snowmobile trails in the WLWF.

| CLASS A  |                |
|--|----------------|
| Name   | Length (miles) |
| Arrow Trail  | 4.88           |
| Baldwin Spring Spur Trail                                    | 0.36           |
| Bartman Trail  | 5.92           |
| Davignon Road Extension                                      | 0.64           |
| East Stony Creek Trail (Bakertown Road to Wilcox Lake Trail) | 0.17           |
| Georgia Creek-Moose Mountain Trail                           | 4.19           |
| Girards Sugarbush Trail                                      | 1.66           |
| Kidder Brook Trail   | 0.93           |
| Lizard Pond Trail  | 4.87           |
| Murphy-Middle-Bennett Lakes Trail                            | 6.78           |
| Old Armstrong Road Trail                                     | 1.18           |
| Oregon Trail   | 4.81           |
| Oxbow Trail  | 1.64           |

|   |                       |
|---|-----------------------|
| Pine Orchard Trail  | 9.34                  |
| Pumpkin Hollow Trail  | 1.3                   |
| Round Pond Trail  | 3.82                  |
| Route 8 Trail   | 0.99                  |
| Wilcox Lake Trail (East Stony Creek Trail to Wilcox Lake-Willis Lake Trail) | 0.62                  |
| Wilcox Lake-Willis Lake Trail   | 5.04                  |
| <b>CLASS B</b>  |                       |
| <b>Name</b>   | <b>Length (miles)</b> |
| Cod Pond Trail  | 0.84                  |
| Dog 'n Pup Bypass Trail   | 1.7                   |
| Dorr Road Connector Trail   | 0.34                  |
| East Stony Creek Trail (Wilcox Lake Trail to Dayton Creek lean-to)          | 0.61                  |
| Harrisburg Lake-Tenant Lake Trail   | 1.83                  |
| Wilcox Lake Trail (Wilcox Lake-Willis Lake Trail to Wilcox Lake)            | 0.28                  |

## APPENDIX H: ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

| Number       | Quad | Reporter  | Name                                | Period, Phase                        | Description   |
|--------------|------|-----------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1439         | B    |           | Summerhouse Point                   |                                      | 1899 site files, no other information   |
| 1440         | B    | KS        | Butterstreet                        |                                      | 1899 site files, no other information   |
| 1441         | B    |           | Workhouse Point                     |                                      | 1899 site files, no other information   |
| 1442         | B    | ACG, Jr.  | Frenchman's Creek                   |                                      | 1899 site files, no other information   |
| 1443         | B    |           | Marvin Point                        |                                      | 1899 site files, no other information   |
| 9110         | B    |           |                                     |                                      | 1899 site files, no other information   |
| A035-02-0001 | B    | HAA, Inc. | Workhouse Point NYSM 1441           | Submerged under Great Sacandaga Lake |   |
| A035-02-0002 | B    | HAA, Inc. | Frenchman's Creek NYSM 1442         | Submerged under Great Sacandaga Lake |   |
| A035-06-0003 | B    | HAA, Inc. | Butterstreet Site NYSM 1440         | Submerged under Great Sacandaga Lake |   |
| A305-02-0003 | B    | HAA, Inc. | Marvin Point NYSM 1443              | Submerged under Great Sacandaga Lake |   |
| 7479         | B, N | Gillette  | Sites                               | PC                                   | Notes many sites near Great Sacandaga Lake but no precise locations are given |
| 7771         | C    | Elangier  |                                     | EA, EW                               | Points  |
| A091-09-0008 | C    | HAA, Inc. | Stewarts Bridge Hydroelectric Plant | 1951-present                         |   |
| A091-09-0009 | C    | HAA, Inc. | E. J. West Hydroelectric Plant      | 1930-present                         | NRE   |

|                |   |           |  |              |   |
|----------------|---|-----------|--|--------------|---|
| A091-44-0016   | C | HAA, Inc. | Curtis Hydroelectric Plant             | 1912-present |   |
| A091-06-000086 | E | Kirk      | Edinburg Town Park Historic Foundation | 1800s        | Surface traces and several artifacts                      |
| A091-06-000087 | E | Kirk      | Kuhn Historic Foundation               | 1800s        | Mortared fieldstone and 97 artifacts                      |
| A091-06-000088 | E | Kirk      | Kuhn Historic Wall                     | 1800s        | Dry-laid fieldstone and other artifacts                   |
| A091-06-000090 | E | Pickands  | H. P. Perry Site                       | 1850-1930    | Buried foundation often inundated by Great Sacandaga Lake |
| A091-06-000091 | E | Pickands  | J. P. Conkling Site                    | 1860-1930    | Buried foundation often inundated by Great Sacandaga Lake |
| A041-09-000001 | G | HAA, Inc. | Griffin Tannery and Logging Complex    | 1860s-1893   | Complex included several buildings and a bridge           |
| A113-06-000067 | G | Dean      | Bass House Site                        | M18-1900s    | Existing structure with buried deposits                   |
| A113-06-000069 | G | Dean      | Hamlet Store II                        | ML1800s      | Buried foundation, many artifacts                         |
| A113-06-000070 | G | Dean      | W. Potter Residence Site               | M18-1900s    | Foundation, many artifacts                                |
| A113-06-000071 | G | Dean      | The R. Gilchrist/Grove Hotel Site      | M18-1900s    | Buried foundation, many artifacts                         |
| A113-06-000072 | G | Dean      | Glen Tannery Site                      | EM1800s      | Foundation, many artifacts                                |
| A113-06-0015   | G | McCann    | The Glen Site                          | ML1800s      | Hotel foundation  |
| A113-10-000064 | G | Dean      | Blacksmith Shop/Barn Site              | L18-E1900s   | Partial superstructure, foundation, many artifacts        |

|                                   |   |           |                             |                            |  |
|-----------------------------------|---|-----------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| A113-10-000065,<br>A113-10-000066 | G | Dean      | Potter Hotel Site           | M18-1900s                  | Partial superstructure, foundation, many artifacts           |
| A113-10-0010                      | G | SUNYA     | Needham 1876                | 1800s                      |  |
| 1433                              | N |           | Osborn Bridge               |                            | 1899 site files, no other information                        |
| 1435                              | N |           |                             |                            | 1899 site files, no other information                        |
| 1436                              | N |           |                             |                            | 1899 site files, no other information                        |
| 1437                              | N |           |                             |                            | 1899 site files, no other information                        |
| 1438                              | N |           | Fink's Island               | PI, MA?                    | May be the same as NYSM 9111                                 |
| 3318                              | N |           |                             |                            | No information   |
| 8590                              | N | Wellman   |                             | H                          | Brick, cut stone, transfer-printed ceramics, handblown glass |
| 9111                              | N | Hamilton  |                             | PI, MA: Clovis, Bifurcate  | Points   |
| A035-02-0006                      | N | HAA, Inc. | NYSM 3315                   | PC                         | Many points  |
| A035-02-0007                      | N | HAA, Inc. | Fink's Island<br>NYSM 1438  | Under Great Sacandaga Lake |  |
| A035-07-0001                      | N | HAA, Inc. | NYSM 3318                   |                            | Traces of occupation   |
| A035-07-0002                      | N | HAA, Inc. | Osborne Bridge<br>NYSM 1433 | Under Great Sacandaga Lake |  |
| A035-07-0003                      | N | HAA, Inc. | NYSM 1435                   | PI                         | Clovis and bifurcate points                                  |
| A035-07-0004                      | N | HAA, Inc. | NYSM 1436                   |                            | Under Great Sacandaga Lake                                   |
| A035-07-0005                      | N | HAA, Inc. | NYSM 1437                   |                            | Under Great Sacandaga Lake                                   |
| A035-07-0006                      | N | HAA, Inc. | Fishhouse<br>NYSM 1434      |                            |  |

|                |      |           |   |               |  |
|----------------|------|-----------|---|---------------|--|
| 3315           | N, E |           |   |               | No information   |
| 10296          | NC   | Pickands  | Riverside Station Worker's Housing            | H             | Buried barn  |
| A113-06-000031 | NC   | Pickands  | Riverside Station Worker's Housing NYSM 10296 | 1880-1968     | Foundation, many artifacts   |
| A113-06-000082 | NC   | Cardinal  | W. Roblee Site                                | 1800s-present | Existing structure with buried deposits  |
| 4695           | OM   | Parker    |   |               | Burial, possibly submerged   |
| A091-05-0001   | OM   | Allen     | Old Day Centre                                | 1800-1930     | Cellar holes, graveyard boundary stones, outlines of burned buildings, and church foundation visible when reservoir is low |
| A091-05-0002   | OM   | Allen     | Day Centre Bridge                             | 1880s-1930    | Trusses intact though rusty and deteriorating  |
| 6902           | W    | James     | Thurman Station                               | PC            | Bifaces, stone ax, red ochre   |
| A113-10-000015 | W    | Bouchard  | Shikes, Cameron House Site                    | M18-1900s     | Fieldstone foundation with few artifacts   |
| A113-10-0006   | W    | HAA, Inc. | Sugarloaf Mt. Rockshelter                     | PC            | Precontact artifacts found   |
| A113-10-0007   | W    | McCann    | Cameron Site                                  | LA            | Red ochre burials destroyed by road construction   |

# APPENDIX I: ALTERNATIVES DISCUSSION – SNOWMOBILE TRAILS

## 1. Snowmobile Trails – General Direction

Several sources of policy must be considered when planning long-distance snowmobile routes in the Adirondack Park. Guidance comes from the APSLMP, the Snowmobile Plan for the Adirondack Park, and established Department policy regarding snowmobile trail management.

### *The Adirondack State Land Master Plan (APSLMP)*

The APSLMP identifies snowmobile trails as a conforming use of Wild Forest units. The APSLMP defines a “snowmobile trail” on page 31 as:

*“a marked trail of essentially the same character as a foot trail designated by the Department of Environmental Conservation on which, when covered by snow and ice, snowmobiles are allowed to travel and which may double as a foot trail at other times of the year.”*

Further, the APSLMP on page 33, in Basic Guideline 4 for Wild Forest units, states that:

*“There will be no material increase in the mileage of roads and snowmobile trails open to motorized use by the public that conformed to the master plan at the time of its original adoption in 1972.”*

Additionally, the APSLMP, on page 36, goes on to further define the appropriate nature of snowmobile trails in Wild Forest units with the following qualifiers:

*“Snowmobile trails should be designed and located in a manner that will not adversely affect adjoining private landowners or the wild forest environment and in particular:*

*-the mileage of snowmobile trails lost in the designation of wilderness, primitive, and canoe areas may be replaced in wild forest areas with existing roads or abandoned wood roads as a basis of such new trail construction, except in rare circumstances requiring the cutting of new trails;*

*-wherever feasible such replacement mileage should be located in the general area as where mileage is lost to wilderness, primitive, and canoe classification;*

*-appropriate opportunities to improve the snowmobile trail system may be pursued subject to basic guideline set forth above, where the impact on the wild forest environment will be minimized, such as (I) provision for snowmobile trails adjacent to but screened from certain public highways within the Park to facilitate snowmobile access between communities where alternative routes on either state or private land are not available or topography permits and, (ii)*

*designation of new snowmobile trails on established roads in newly acquired state lands classified as wild forest, and,*

*-deer wintering yards and other important wildlife and resource areas should be avoided by such trails.”*

### ***The Snowmobile Plan for the Adirondack Park***

Appendix N consists of a briefing document published by the Department that outlines the vision and goals of the Snowmobile Plan for the Adirondack Park. The spirit and intent of this document was considered when evaluating the alternatives discussed below.

### ***Department Policy***

Department policy and guidelines related to the siting of snowmobile trails include the following:

- For safety reasons, trails should be kept off highways (especially major highways) and water bodies whenever possible.
- Trails should be free of obstructions such as trees and boulders.
- The proper consideration of potential environmental impacts must be given when siting trails. This includes:
  - avoiding rare, threatened, and endangered plant and animal species and their habitats,
  - avoiding deer wintering areas,
  - minimizing vegetation disturbance,
  - avoiding wetlands, areas with poor drainage, and steep slopes, and
  - minimizing tree cutting and preserving the tree canopy over the trail.
- Efforts should be undertaken to minimize, and if possible, avoid user group conflicts through appropriate signage.
- Trails will not be placed on private land without the permission of the private landowner. If the landowner agrees to allow the trail on their property, the Department and its partners should secure, whenever possible, a permanent snowmobile trail easement which binds the owner's successors in title.

## **2. Warrensburg to Speculator – Alternatives Discussion** *(see Appendix L for maps)*

### ***Existing Conditions***

Warrensburg and Speculator are both reasonably large villages located in the southern Adirondacks, a region that relies heavily on the tourism industry to contribute to the local economy. As a result, the area would likely benefit economically from a well-defined, safe snowmobile route that provides a non-circuitous linkage between the two communities. Because the WLWF covers approximately half of the 29-mile distance between the two communities, using the unit's existing snowmobile trail mileage as part of the trail to facilitate snowmobile access between the two communities makes sense from a logistical and financial perspective.

Warrensburg, by most accounts, is not currently a snowmobiling “hub,” probably because of the lack of suitable Hudson and Schroon River crossings and the limited amount of state land in the

immediate vicinity of the village. Speculator has somewhat better snowmobile connections to other Adirondack communities, but the large Wilderness areas in the vicinity, including the West Canada Lake Wilderness to the north and west, the Siamese Ponds Wilderness to the north and east, and the Silver Lake Wilderness to the south, somewhat limit the number of snowmobile routes that lead to Speculator. As such, providing a snowmobile connection between Warrensburg and Speculator is an achievable goal that would serve to help realize the vision of the Snowmobile Plan and benefit the local communities involved without compromising the Wild Forest ideals laid out by the APSLMP.

***Eastern Part of the Warrensburg to Speculator Connection - Warrensburg to Baldwin Spring***

Basically, three alternatives, a northern, middle, and southern route, were considered for linking Warrensburg to Baldwin Spring (the trail hub at the center of the WLWF), but all lack an ideal snowmobile crossing of the Hudson River. Currently, there are two automobile bridges crossing the Hudson River in the vicinity of Warrensburg, one on NYS Route 418 south of Warrensburg at Thurman Station and one on NYS Route 28 north of Warrensburg at The Glen. Of these two bridges, the Rte. 418 bridge is the choice of local snowmobilers due to its lower traffic volume and proximity to connections to the local snowmobile trail network; subsequently the local snowmobile club has arranged an agreement to cross this bridge.

Alternative 1 (Southern) – From the Rte. 418 bridge, an already existing network of snowmobile trails on private lands in the Towns of Thurman and Stony Creek connects the Delaware & Hudson railroad tracks (currently open to snowmobile traffic) on the west bank of the Hudson River to Tucker Road in the Town of Stony Creek. The route formerly followed Tucker Road west and then turned northward across private lands, south of Baldhead Mountain. Because the owners of a private parcel along this route no longer wish to allow snowmobile traffic across their property and the local snowmobile club could not secure a connection across other private lands in the vicinity, a new trail across Forest Preserve land paralleling Kidder Brook (approximately 0.9 miles) has been proposed to avoid the private land along Tucker Road and provide a lasting solution to the problem. This new trail then reconnects to the existing trail network on private land near the northern end of Van Auken Road, continues westward across private lands to Wolf Pond Road, and eventually joins West Stony Creek Road, re-entering Forest Preserve land. The unplowed West Stony Creek Road provides an excellent snowmobile trail from this point westward to Baldwin Spring.

*Advantages:*

- This is the most direct route to Baldwin Spring from Warrensburg.
- The local snowmobile club endorses this route
- This route uses the Rte. 418 bridge which is the most desirable crossing of the Hudson River at this time.
- The trail connection from D & H railroad tracks to Forest Preserve land across private land has already been established by the local snowmobile club.
- The West Stony Creek Road is already designated for snowmobile use. Because the road is not maintained in the winter, vehicle traffic other than snowmobiles is extremely limited.
- The Town of Thurman maintains the West Stony Creek Road, meaning less maintenance

responsibilities for the Department.

- Because much of the route is on West Stony Creek Road, actual impacts on Forest Preserve lands are minimal.
- No occurrences of protected plants or animals have been identified in the vicinity of the route.

*Disadvantages:*

- The route requires approximately 0.9 miles of new snowmobile trail construction on Forest Preserve land.
- The West Stony Creek Road is open to ATV traffic in the winter months creating potential user conflicts.
- The West Stony Creek Road passes through potential deer wintering habitat, as identified by Adirondack Ecological Center staff, east of Baldwin Spring.

Alternative 2 (Middle) – From the Rte. 418 bridge, this route uses trails on private lands in the Towns of Thurman to connect to the WLWF trail network at Mud Pond Road in the Town of Thurman. From this point, the route continues to the end of the road, then follows the Round Pond Trail, around and/or across Round Pond to Garnet Lake. From Garnet Lake, the route uses the Lizard Pond Trail to reach Baldwin Spring.

*Advantages:*

- No occurrences of protected plants or animals have been identified in the vicinity of the route.
- The route will pass the lean-to at Lizard Pond, providing an opportunity for overnight use.
- The route is generally more scenic than the southern alternative with potential views of Crane Mountain, Ross Mountain, and Mount Blue.
- The route uses the Rte. 418 bridge.

*Disadvantages:*

- The route requires the crossing of one frozen water body, Garnet Lake.
- The route requires the construction of a 0.6 mile trail connecting the two sections of the Round Pond Trail to avoid an ice crossing of Round Pond.
- The route is somewhat longer than Alternative 1.
- The Round Pond Trail and Lizard Pond Trail are generally narrow, rough, winding, and often have a limited sight distance, making the snowmobiling slow and occasionally unsafe.
- The Lizard Pond Trail passes through potential deer wintering habitat.

Alternative 3 (Northern) – The northern alternative's route through the private lands west of the Hudson River is not well-established. Currently, the Department is in negotiations to buy a small piece of Lyme Timber Company land (as part of a larger land deal) north of the Glen Creek Road. From the D & H railroad tracks, this piece and its access road from Route 28 could form the easternmost segment of the northern alternative. From the point where the trail exits this parcel, the route across private lands is unclear but would presumably enter Forest Preserve again in the vicinity of Armstrong Road. From here, the route uses the proposed Old Armstrong

Road Trail to reach Bartman Road, which is followed southward, eventually becoming the Bartman Trail and leading to Baldwin Spring.

*Advantages:*

- No occurrences of protected plants or animals have been identified in the vicinity of the route.
- The Bartman Trail and Old Armstrong Road are generally in good condition.

*Disadvantages:*

- There is no good snowmobile crossing of the Hudson River in the vicinity of the route although the railroad tracks on the west side of the Hudson provide a good connection to the Rte. 418 bridge at this time.
- This route requires the designation of 1.1 miles of Old Armstrong Road as a snowmobile trail.
- There is no established route across private lands between the Lyme Timber parcel and Old Armstrong Road.
- The route is significantly longer than Alternative 1.
- The Bartman Trail passes through potential deer wintering area.

**Table 1.** Comparison between the three alternatives for the Warrensburg to Baldwin Spring section (eastern section) of the trail to facilitate snowmobile access between Warrensburg and Speculator.

| Alternative              | Total Mileage (Estimated) | Total Trail Mileage in the WLWF | New Trail Mileage in the WLWF |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Alternative 1 (Southern) | 23.1                      | 1.2                             | 0.8                           |
| Alternative 2 (Middle)   | 26.3                      | 7.3                             | 0.6                           |
| Alternative 3 (Northern) | 33.4                      | 6.9                             | 1.1                           |

Conclusion – It is clear that the southern route is the preferred alternative for the eastern portion of the trail to facilitate snowmobile access between Warrensburg and Speculator. The local snowmobile club, the Thurman Connection, supports this route and has worked hard to secure the connections through private lands in the Town of Thurman to connect with the West Stony Creek Road. The West Stony Creek Road provides a wide, high quality snowmobile route that does not have the associated maintenance costs for the Department that designated snowmobile trails have. Additionally, the Route 418 bridge (nearer to the southern alternative) currently makes the best crossing of the Hudson River in the vicinity of Warrensburg. Although this alternative requires 0.9 miles of new trail construction on Forest Preserve land in the vicinity of Baldhead Mountain, closure of snowmobile trails elsewhere in the unit ensures that there will be “no material increase” in snowmobile trail mileage in the unit. Although the middle alternative

has the least amount of new trail construction in the unit, it has several disadvantages that make it impractical as part of the trail to facilitate snowmobile access between Warrensburg and Speculator. The primary drawback of the route is that it relies on an ice crossing of Garnet Lake. It is against Department policy to support trails that cross water bodies when feasible alternatives exist elsewhere. Secondary drawbacks of this alternative include the lack of an established route through private lands between Warrensburg and Mud Pond Road and the narrow, winding nature of the Round Pond and Lizard Pond Trails. The main drawbacks of the northern alternative are the lack of an established route through private land between the Lyme Timber Company parcel and Old Armstrong Road and its overall length – at over 33 miles, the northern alternative is substantially longer than the other two alternatives.

***Western Part of the Warrensburg to Speculator Connection - Baldwin Spring to Speculator***

West of Baldwin Spring, four major alternative routes were considered for the trail to facilitate snowmobile access between Warrensburg to Speculator. The most direct of these routes (Alternative 1) heads westward through the WLWF to Route 8 at Griffin, where it exits the unit. From Griffin, the route crosses the East Branch of the Sacandaga River on the Teachout Road bridge and continues through the Forks Mountain Primitive Area corridor, following existing trails to Speculator. Alternative 2 would utilize a newly constructed trail parallel to Route 8 across the unit's lands south of Griffin to the Route 8 bridge over the East Branch of the Sacandaga River. The route would cross the bridge and use either the Route 30 right-of-way or the Dunning Pond Trail (currently slated for closure in the Jessup River Wild Forest (JRWF) UMP) to reach Speculator. The last two alternatives (Alternatives 3 and 4) would link to Speculator via Wells; the primary difference between the alternatives is the path used to get from Baldwin Spring to Wells. Both of these routes could exit the unit near Dorr Road in the Village of Wells or near Pumpkin Hollow Road, south of the Village of Wells. Included in all these alternatives except Alternative 4 is a segment of new trail parallel to Route 8 north of Griffin. This new trail section would replace the existing Cotter Brook Trail which is too rough for continued use. When this new trail is opened, the Cotter Brook Trail will be closed to snowmobile traffic.

Evaluation of these alternatives requires not only considering the appropriateness of the routes themselves, but also examining other factors such as the connectivity to the trails outside the unit, minimizing the amount of new trail construction, and existing regulatory constraints, among other things. For example, while Alternative 1, which uses the Forks Mountain Primitive Area corridor snowmobile trail, is already established and probably represents the most direct connection between Warrensburg and Speculator, the APSLMP strongly encourages the relocation of this trail, stating that

*“This area in the town of Wells includes the fifty-foot wide corridor of the snowmobile trail which cuts across the southern tip of the Siamese Ponds Wilderness between the Teachout Road on the East Branch of the Sacandaga and the state land boundary on the Sacandaga River. Efforts should be made to relocate the important trail in the Hamilton County snowmobile trail system so that this area can become part of the wilderness area.”*

As a result, the preferred route to connect Warrensburg to Speculator may ultimately go through Wells to comply with the APSLMP. Unfortunately, from Wells, no good trail connection exists to Speculator at the present; the current trail uses a combination of NYS Department of Transportation shoulders along NYS Route 30, unplowed town roads, and private lands and is considered unsuitable for a trail of this type due to safety concerns, maintenance problems, and conflicts with public motor vehicle use of the highway. A better trail connection between Wells and Speculator, described in the JRWF UMP, would have to be established before the Forks Mountain Primitive Area could be eliminated. Alternatively, the Forks Mountain Primitive Area and the Wilderness land to the south of it could be permanently designated as Wild Forest, eliminating the need to relocate this section of trail. However, this UMP cannot be the vehicle for such a reclassification.

Alternative 1 – This alternative perpetuates the use of the Forks Mountain Primitive Area corridor and the existing trails beyond the primitive corridor to connect with Speculator. From Baldwin Spring, the route follows the Oregon Trail west to the junction with the Cod Pond Trail. From here, the route turns south on the Cod Pond Trail and continues south along the Georgia Creek-Moose Mountain Trail. From the Georgia Creek-Moose Mountain Trail, the route continues south on a new trail parallel to Route 8 (0.3 miles of which is over private lands, contingent upon permission from landowners) to connect to the Girards Sugarbush Trail. From the Girards Sugarbush Trail, the route follows the Griffin Connector Trail to abandoned hamlet of Griffin. In Griffin, the route uses the Teachout Road bridge to cross the East Branch of the Sacandaga River and continues through the Forks Mountain Primitive Area corridor and across the Lyme Timber Company Speculator Tree Farm property via easement.

*Advantages:*

- This route uses already established snowmobile trails west of the unit's boundary.
- The Teachout Road bridge provides an excellent crossing of the East Branch of the Sacandaga River and is currently the only snowmobile crossing of the river north of Wells.
- The Oregon Trail is in relatively good condition.
- No occurrences of protected plants or animals have been identified in the vicinity of the route.

*Disadvantages:*

- The APSLMP strongly discourages the continued use of the Forks Mountain Primitive Area corridor for a snowmobile route.
- The route requires approximately 1.3 miles of new snowmobile trail construction parallel to Route 8 including 1.0 miles on Forest Preserve.
- This route has no intermediate stopping point for refueling.
- The Oregon Trail passes through potential deer wintering habitat.

Alternative 2 – This connection would use the same route as Alternative 1 until the hamlet of Griffin. Rather than use the Teachout Road bridge and Forks Mountain Primitive Area corridor, this alternative would head south from Griffin on a newly constructed, 2.4-mile trail parallel to Route 8 and cross the Sacandaga River on the Route 8 bridge. From this point, the route would

either follow the Route 30 right-of-way to Speculator or continue south to intersect with the Dunning Pond Trail in the Jessup River Wild Forest.

*Advantages:*

- This route eliminates the need for the Forks Mountain Primitive Area, allowing this area to be reclassified as Wilderness.
- The Oregon Trail is in relatively good condition.
- No occurrences of protected plants or animals have been identified in the vicinity of the route.
- The route parallels Route 8 for much of its length in the WLWF, meaning that in the case of a snowmobile breakdown, the stranded snowmobiler would not have to travel far for assistance.

*Disadvantages:*

- The JRWF UMP proposed the closure of the Dunning Pond Trail to snowmobiles, while the other alternative, the Route 30 shoulder, is not suitable for a trail of this type.
- The route requires approximately 3.7 miles of new snowmobile trail construction in the WLWF parallel to Route 8.
- The Rte. 8 bridge is not an appropriate crossing of the Sacandaga River for a trail of this type. This bridge has fairly heavy traffic volume and reasonably limited sighting distance.
- This route has no intermediate stopping point for refueling.
- The Oregon Trail passes through potential deer wintering habitat.

Alternative 3 – This alternative involves the same route recommended for Alternative 1 and 2 until the junction of the proposed new trail parallel to Rte. 8 and the Girards Sugarbush Trail near Griffin. At this point, instead of following the Griffin Connector Trail, Alternative 3 would continue along the Girards Sugarbush Trail to the Pine Orchard Trail, continuing southward to Dorr Road, skirting the private in-holding(s) at the northwest end of the road using existing trails or short segments of new trail construction. From this point, permanent routes through private land from Dorr Road to Wells need to be established by the snowmobile clubs before this route could be considered as an acceptable connection. Currently, several landowners south of Dorr and Windfall Roads do not allow snowmobile access across their property. As a result, snowmobile traffic has been forced to use Windfall Road between the intersection of Dorr and Windfall Roads and Buttermilk Hill Road. Because this section of Windfall Road, in addition to being paved and plowed, is narrow, winding, and steep, it creates unsafe conditions for both snowmobiles and motor vehicles.

As previously mentioned, from Wells, the current route to Speculator is not desirable and is unsuitable for a trail to facilitate snowmobile access between Warrensburg and Speculator. To remedy this situation, the Town of Wells supervisor and DEC staff have developed a plan for the relocation of the existing Dunning Pond snowmobile trail (within the JRWF) in order to provide a safe and enjoyable snowmobile connection between the communities of Wells and Speculator. This trail, proposed in the JRWF UMP, begins in the Village of Wells, and proceeds northwesterly over private lands and/or Niagara Mohawk property along an existing utility

ROW, eventually intersecting Gilmantown Road in the vicinity of Gilman Lake. From the powerline, the trail continues northwesterly a short distance along the road ROW to reach the entrance of an old woods road. No land in the JRWF is crossed to this point. Because the Town of Lake Pleasant opposes the designation of the Gilmantown Road for snowmobile use, a new snowmobile trail in the JRWF will be designated on the existing old road for a distance of approximately 2.5 miles to the Lyme Timber Company property line. Pending a trail easement over Lyme Timber Company lands, the trail will continue on existing Lyme roads to the Burnhams Mill bridge (the closed Old Route 30 bridge approximately 3.5 miles north of the intersection of Routes 8 and 30). From this point, the trail utilizes the existing snowmobile trail into Speculator.

The proposed Dunning Pond-Lyme Timber Company trail relocation in the JRWF combined with utility line ROW and private land connections will provide an adequate route between Wells and Speculator by bypassing the existing sections of trail with the most problems, namely along Rte. 30. The ability to entirely use routes parallel and near to travel/transportation corridors, while a goal of the Snowmobile Plan for the Adirondack Park, is not feasible at this location. The existing NYS Route 30 roadside trail section between Wells and the Burnhams Mill bridge stays almost entirely within the DOT road ROW requiring a snowmobile rider to traverse numerous obstacles including guard rails, metal signs, and sidehill banks. To safely accommodate its use as a trail designed to facilitate snowmobile access between communities, the trail would have to be relocated farther back from the road edge. However, large areas of rocky, steep sidehill terrain limit the ability to construct an adequate trail without a large degree of terrain modification to both State and adjoining private lands.

*Advantages:*

- This route eliminates the need for the Forks Mountain Primitive Area, facilitating the reclassification of this area as Wilderness.
- This route would pass through the Village of Wells, creating a possible economic benefit for the community and giving snowmobilers a chance to stop for refueling and refreshment.
- The existing trails in the WLWF used in this route are in relatively good condition.
- No occurrences of protected plants or animals have been identified in the vicinity of the route.

*Disadvantages:*

- The route requires approximately 1.3 miles of new snowmobile trail construction parallel to Rte. 8, including 1.0 miles on Forest Preserve.
- Because of terrain constraints, there are a limited number of potential routes between Dorr Road and Wells. However, the majority of these potential routes have been eliminated because several private landowners in this area do not allow snowmobile access across their property.
- Because a snowmobile connection has not been secured across private lands in this area, the current route between Dorr Road and Wells requires use of a section of plowed road which is steep, winding, and narrow, making it unsafe.
- The only available crossing of the Sacandaga River in the vicinity of this route is the Rte. 30

bridge in Wells. This crossing receives substantial vehicle traffic and is not well-suited for snowmobile traffic.

- The current route between Wells and Speculator is unsuitable for a trail connection of this type.
- The proposed future route between Wells and Speculator relies on the approval of the JRWF UMP and requires approximately 2.5 miles of new snowmobile trail construction in the JRWF.
- This route passes through potential deer wintering habitat, especially the Oregon Trail, Girards Sugarbush Trail, and the Pine Orchard Trail.

Alternative 4 – This connection would be similar to Alternative 3, but would utilize a different route to reach the Pine Orchard Trail in the vicinity of Dorr Road. From Baldwin Spring, the route heads south on West Stony Creek Road, which becomes the Arrow Trail south of the Dog'n Pup Club. At the intersection of the Arrow Trail and Bakertown Road, the route follows the road westward to the junction with the Wilcox Lake Trail and then continues westward along the Wilcox Lake-Willis Lake Trail to Pumpkin Hollow Road. From this point, a short stretch of road is used to reach the Pine Orchard Trail, which is followed northward to Dorr Road. From here, the route described in Alternative 3 is used to reach Wells.

*Advantages:*

- This route requires no new trail construction in the WLWF.
- This route passes Wilcox Lake and its two lean-tos, allowing for potential overnight use.
- No occurrences of protected plants or animals have been identified in the vicinity of the route.
- This route passes through the Village of Wells, creating a possible economic benefit for the community and giving snowmobilers a chance to stop for refueling and refreshment.

*Disadvantages:*

- The Arrow Trail is in poor condition.
- Because of terrain constraints, there are a limited number of potential routes between Dorr Road and Wells. However, the majority of these potential routes have been eliminated because several private landowners in this area do not allow snowmobile access across their property.
- Because a snowmobile connection has not been secured across private lands in this area, the current route between Dorr Road and Wells requires use of a section of plowed road which is steep, winding, and narrow, making it unsafe.
- The only available crossing of the Sacandaga River in the vicinity of this route is the Rte. 30 bridge in Wells. This crossing receives substantial vehicle traffic and is not well-suited for snowmobile traffic.
- The current route between Wells and Speculator is unsuitable for a trail connection of this type.
- The proposed future route between Wells and Speculator relies on the approval of the JRWF UMP and requires approximately 2.5 miles of new snowmobile trail construction in the JRWF.

- This route passes through potential deer wintering habitat, including along the Arrow and Wilcox Lake-Willis Lake Trails.

Alternate Route from the Pine Orchard Trail to Wells for Alternatives 3 and 4 – An alternative to the route described in Alternatives 3 and 4 exists for reaching the Village of Wells from the Pine Orchard Trail. Rather than leaving the Pine Orchard Trail near Dorr Road, this alternate route crosses Pumpkin Hollow Road and uses a short stretch of the Murphy-Middle-Bennett Lakes Trail to skirt private lands. From this point, a proposed new trail parallel to Pumpkin Hollow Road through private and Forest Preserve lands would link to the road network in the Sacandaga Public Campground. (Trails will not be placed on private land without the permission of the private landowner). The route then follows the unplowed campground road northwest, using the existing bridge across the East Branch of the Sacandaga Road. From the boundary of the campground, the route continues north (contingent upon permission from any private landowners involved) on or parallel to Karuth Road into the Village of Wells. From Wells, the Wells to Speculator connection described in Alternative 3 would be used.

*Advantages:*

- This route takes advantage of the bridge over the Sacandaga River in the Sacandaga Campground, eliminating the need to use the Rte. 30 bridge near Wells.
- This route avoids the problems associated with the Dorr to Wells connection.
- No occurrences of protected plants or animals have been identified in the vicinity of the route.

*Disadvantages:*

- The route across private lands required for this alternative is not currently established.
- This route requires 1.1 miles of new snowmobile trail on Forest Preserve lands, including 0.6 miles of new trail construction and 0.5 miles of trail designation of an old wagon road and utility right-of-way.
- This route might require the crossing of many privately-owned parcels in the Hamlet of Wells.
- The route passes through potential deer wintering habitat.

**Table 2.** Mileage comparison of the six alternatives for the western section (Baldwin Spring to western boundary of the WLWF) of the trail to facilitate snowmobile access between Warrensburg to Speculator.

| <b>Alternative</b>                                | <b>Total Trail Mileage in the WLWF</b> | <b>New Trail Mileage in the WLWF</b> |
|---|--|--------------------------------------|
| Alternative 1                                     | 11.3                                   | 1                                    |
| Alternative 2                                     | 13.7                                   | 3.4                                  |
| Alternative 3a<br>(Dorr Road connection to Wells) | 16.7                                   | 1                                    |

|   |      |     |
|---|------|-----|
| Alternative 3b<br>(Pumpkin Hollow Road connection to Wells) | 22.3 | 2.1 |
| Alternative 4a<br>(Dorr Road connection to Wells)           | 14.2 | 0   |
| Alternative 4b<br>(Pumpkin Hollow Road connection to Wells) | 12.3 | 1.1 |

Conclusion: Based on the discussions and conclusion outlined in the JRWF UMP regarding the Wells to Speculator connection, the Department is moving forward with a plan to follow the APSLMP recommendations to close the Forks Mountain Primitive Area snowmobile corridor and facilitate the reclassification of this area as part of the Siamese Ponds Wilderness Area. For this reason, Alternative 1, which includes the continued use of the Forks Mountain Primitive Area, was not considered a feasible long-term solution for the Baldwin Spring to Speculator portion of the trail to facilitate snowmobile access between Warrensburg and Speculator, despite the benefits associated with the route.

Alternative 2 is also problematic. The biggest drawback of the route is the amount of new trail construction that it requires; constructing 3.7 miles of new trail results in the need for substantial trail closures elsewhere in the unit to comply with the “no material increase” guideline of the APSLMP. Additionally, the Rte. 8 bridge might need significant alteration to make it suitable for both automobile and snowmobile traffic. Additionally, this route requires the use of the Rte. 30 shoulder from the intersection of Rte. 8 to the Burnhams Mill bridge.

If Alternatives 1 and 2 are considered to be unacceptable, the preferred choice between Alternatives 3 and 4 is Alternative 3. Alternative 4 requires the use of the Arrow Trail which at present is in extremely poor condition, especially at the southern end. Additionally, portions of the Wilcox Lake-Willis Lake Trail are in need of rerouting and a new bridge is required over the Wilcox Lake Outlet. It is uncertain as to when such improvements will be made considering the competing demands for DEC funding. Although Alternative 3 requires new trail construction along Rte. 8 between the Georgia Creek-Moose Mountain Trail and the Girards Sugarbush Trail, this mileage is offset by snowmobile trail closures recommended by this UMP in other parts of the unit.

After considering the two alternative routes of reaching the hamlet of Wells from the Pine Orchard Trail at Dorr Road, the second alternative of using the trail connections parallel to Pumpkin Hollow Road and crossing the Sacandaga River on the Sacandaga Campground bridge to reach Wells was deemed to be preferable. The alternative of crossing the Sacandaga River on the Rte. 30 bridge was considered unacceptable in light of the high volume of vehicle traffic on this bridge. Without significant alterations to make it suitable for safely accommodating both automobile and snowmobile traffic, the Rte. 30 bridge is inappropriate for a high volume, snowmobile connector trail. Although the Pumpkin Hollow connection requires more new snowmobile trail designation in the unit, much of this new trail mileage is on existing, non-

designated trail and utility right-of-way. Additionally, private land near Dorr Road make off-road trail connections in this area difficult.

***Preferred Ultimate Alternative - Warrensburg to Speculator Connection***

Based on the conclusions discussed above, the preferred alternative for the trail to facilitate snowmobile access between Warrensburg and Speculator will ultimately use the southern route between Warrensburg and Baldwin Spring and then continue to Speculator via the Village of Wells. Within the WLWF, the route uses a short stretch of new trail along Kidder Brook south of Baldhead Mountain, the West Stony Creek Road, the Oregon Trail, the Moose Mountain-Georgia Creek Trail, a new stretch of trail paralleling Rte. 8, the Girards Sugarbush Trail, the Pine Orchard Trail, a short stretch of the Middle-Murphy-Bennett Lakes Trail, and a new trail on Forest Preserve paralleling Pumpkin Hollow Road. The route leaves the unit in the vicinity of Pumpkin Hollow Road and uses the roads and bridge in the Sacandaga Campground to cross the Sacandaga River and reach the Village of Wells. From this point, the route will use the mix of private and public lands described in the JRWF UMP to reach Speculator.

***Preferred Interim Alternative - Warrensburg to Speculator Connection***

Recognizing that efforts to secure agreements and/or easements to use private lands and utility rights-of-way for the preferred ultimate alternative will take some time, the Forks Mountain Primitive Area corridor should remain open in the interim to provide an adequate snowmobile trail connection between Warrensburg and Speculator.

Within the WLWF, the interim route would use essentially the same route recommended for the ultimate preferred route described above. The divergence from the ultimate preferred route would occur at the Girards Sugarbush Trail - Griffin Connector Trail junction. Rather than continuing southeast on the Girards Sugarbush Trail, the interim route would follow the Griffin Connector Trail to the Village of Griffin. Using the Teachout Road bridge to cross the East Branch of the Sacandaga River, the route would continue west to the Forks Mountain Primitive Area corridor and then follow existing snowmobile trails across public and private lands to Speculator.

The trails along this route are in reasonably good condition, with some minor reroutes and bridge work that have been identified as proposed management actions. New trail construction along Route 8 will be necessary for approximately one and one-third mile. Since the trail will follow parallel to the road, tree cutting will be limited. New trail will also be designed to limit potential vehicle-snowmobile impacts and other obstacles that can be experienced along other existing trails adjacent to roads and highways, such as the Route 30 trail. With these improvements and good trail maintenance practices, the preferred interim route will not significantly impact the environment or character of WLWF, will provide a safe and enjoyable snowmobiling experience, and will achieve a linkage between two communities that may promote economic development and tourism.

**3. Wells to Northville – Alternatives Discussion** (*see Appendix L for maps*)

### ***Existing Conditions***

Wells and Northville are both small hamlets on the western periphery of the WLWF separated by approximately 15 miles along NYS Route 30. Both villages receive a fair amount of snowmobile traffic; Northville's location on the west end of Great Sacandaga Lake makes it highly accessible by snowmobile when the lake is frozen while Wells receives snowmobile traffic from Speculator and will, with the implementation of this UMP, be an intermediate stop on the trail to facilitate snowmobile access between Warrensburg and Speculator. However, despite the close proximity of Wells and Northville, a satisfactory overland snowmobile connection between the two communities does not exist.

Currently, snowmobilers from Northville have no direct designated trails connecting Great Sacandaga Lake to points north. A snowmobiler would have to travel almost **70 miles** via the Towmantown Trail through Blecker and into Caroga, then head north to Arietta, Lake Pleasant, and Speculator to get to Wells. While alternatives exist to trailer one's snowmobile to either the Murphy-Middle-Bennett Lakes Trailhead on Creek Road or the East Stony Creek Trailhead (Brownell Camp) on Hope Falls Road, a direct, dedicated snowmobile connection between Northville and Wells makes sense from a practical, economic, and safety perspective.

Because of this lack of an adequate snowmobile connection between Wells and Northville, the development of a connection between these two communities was identified and agreed upon as a priority by the stakeholders involved in the preparation of the Snowmobile Plan for the Adirondack Park. The development of a trail to facilitate snowmobile access between Wells and Northville was deemed to be an important component of this UMP.

### ***Alternative 1***

From Wells, the route for Alternative 1 heads south via private lands, utility rights-of-way and/or Karuth Road to connect with the road system in the Sacandaga Campground, taking advantage of the campground's bridge over the Sacandaga River. After exiting at the southern end of the campground, the route crosses Route 30 and traverses private lands and utility rights-of-way, taking advantage of the Pumpkin Hollow Road bridge over Coulombe Creek, before entering the WLWF on the western side of Pumpkin Hollow Road. Once in the unit, the route follows a utility right-of-way for a short distance before crossing Pumpkin Hollow Road and proceeding along an old wagon road paralleling the Forest Preserve boundary to the southeast. After about 0.3 miles, the route turns northeast via newly-constructed trail across private land and Forest Preserve parallel to Pumpkin Hollow Road, eventually connecting to the Murphy-Middle-Bennett Lakes Trail. The route then follows this trail south to Creek Road near Hope Falls. The connection to Northville from this point becomes difficult due to private land and steep terrain. Alternative 1 runs northwest along Creek Road for approximately 0.4 miles, then heads southwest across Forest Preserve land on newly-designated trail that follows an old road for 1.2 miles, paralleling a small tributary of East Stony Creek, before reaching the unit's boundary. The route then uses old logging roads across private lands to reach Route 30. After reaching Rte. 30, the trail continues roadside along the east side of Route 30, using a combination of private lands, unimproved roads, utility rights-of-way, and/or ice travel to reach the Village of Northville. Depending on the success of local snowmobile clubs in procuring trail access along the eastern

side of Rte. 30, a future modification of the Rte. 30 bridge over the Sacandaga River may be desirable to allow snowmobilers to take advantage of a more desirable route on the western side of the river.

Total trail mileage in the WLWF for Alternative 1 is 8.6 miles with approximately 2.3 miles of new trail construction/designation in the unit. Trails will not be placed on private land without the permission of the private landowner.

### ***Alternative 2***

Alternative 2 only differs from Alternative 1 in that a different route is utilized to reach the Murphy-Middle-Bennett Lakes Trail. From Wells, the route heads east, crossing private lands to eventually join the WLWF trail system in the vicinity of Dorr Road. From this point, the route follows the Pine Orchard Trail south, meeting the Murphy-Middle-Bennett Lakes Trail at Pumpkin Hollow Road. Once on the Murphy-Middle-Bennett Lakes Trail, the route to reach Northville is the same as Alternative 1.

Total trail mileage in the WLWF for Alternative 2 is 11.8 miles with approximately 1.2 miles of new trail construction in the unit. Trails will be not placed on private land without the permission of the private landowner.

### ***Alternative 3***

After reaching the Murphy-Middle-Bennett Lakes Trail using the route described in Alternative 1, another possible alternative from the end of the Murphy-Middle-Bennett Lakes Trail at Creek Road is to follow Creek Road to the southeast, across East Stony Creek, to Hope Falls. This segment requires approximately 0.4 miles of new trail construction parallel to Creek Road across either private land, Forest Preserve lands or some combination of the two and will also require crossing East Stony Creek on the Creek Road bridge.

From the Creek Road–Hope Falls Road intersection, Hope Falls Road is followed east for a short distance to a private roadway that heads south into Lyme Timber Company land. The route traverses existing logging roads across Lyme Timber land, where a snowmobile trail easement is being acquired (expected closing 12/2006), southward over Mason Hill toward Northville. After exiting Lyme Timber lands, the route continues across private lands into the village of Northville. This alternative requires less trail construction on Forest Preserve, although the conditions of the roads used to cross the Lyme Timber Company property are unknown and the snowmobile trail easement has not yet been acquired..

Total trail mileage in the WLWF for Alternative 3 is 7.4 miles with approximately 1.1 miles of new trail construction in the unit. Trails will not be placed on private land without the permission of the private landowner.

### ***Alternative 4***

Alternative 4 is basically a combination of Alternatives 2 and 3. The Dorr Road – Pine Orchard Trail connection is used to reach the Murphy-Middle-Bennett Lakes Trail. From the southern

end of this trail, the route over Mason Hill is used to reach to reach Northville.

Total trail mileage in the WLWF for Alternative 4 is 10.6 miles with no miles of new trail construction in the unit. Trails will not be placed on private land without the permission of the private landowner.

#### ***Alternative 5, 6, 7, 8***

Four additional alternatives, comparable to Alternatives 1-4, exist if, instead of using the Murphy-Middle-Bennett Lakes Trail option from Pumpkin Hollow Road, the Wilcox Lake-Willis Lake Trail and East Stony Creek Trail are used. This trail combination connects to Hope Falls Road at the Brownell Camp inholding; from this point, the route continues southward to Hope Falls. However, this route requires the use of either Hope Falls Road or a new trail parallel to the road. At present, the Town of Hope has not designated Hope Falls Road for snowmobile use. Additionally, residents along this road would likely oppose any such designation by the Town and would not be likely to give permission for a snowmobile trail across their lands.

In addition to these concerns, the East Stony Creek Trail is in poor condition and would require significant improvements to function properly as a high-use snowmobile trail. Additionally, the section of this trail between Dayton Creek and Brownell Camp has been proposed for closure due to the poor conditions. Although the trail will remain open for hiking in its current state, alternatives requiring the use of this trail section would not provide a safe and enjoyable snowmobiling experience.

Total trail mileage in the WLWF for Alternative 5 is 12.8 miles with 2.3 miles of new trail construction in the unit.

Total trail mileage in the WLWF for Alternative 6 is 14.8 miles with 1.2 miles of new trail construction in the unit.

Total trail mileage in the WLWF for Alternative 7 is 11.6 miles with 1.1 miles of new trail construction in the unit.

Total trail mileage in the WLWF for Alternative 8 is 13.6 miles with no miles of new trail construction in the unit.

#### ***Alternative 9***

The alternative of following Route 30 the entire way from Wells to Northville is not considered desirable or viable. The section of Route 30 between Pumpkin Hollow and the bridge traverses mostly private lands. Several segments of this route are steep, making snowmobile travel adjacent to the road corridor dangerous, and in some cases, impossible. There are also concerns about the route crossing front yards of homes that are relatively close to the road along this corridor and utility easements, which can present physical obstacles.

#### ***Ultimate Preferred Route - Wells to Northville***

Strong consideration was given to Alternatives 1, 2, 3, and 4 as the Wells to Northville Community Connector route. Alternatives 5-8 were not considered desirable because of the poor condition of the East Stony Creek Trail in comparison to the existing Murphy-Middle-Bennett Lakes Trail. In addition, Alternatives 5-8 require use of approximately 3-miles of either the Hope Falls Road or a new trail across private lands parallel to Hope Falls Road, neither of which are considered likely to be permitted. Alternative 9 was not considered appropriate for the reasons described above.

For the reasons described in the Warrensburg to Speculator discussion, it was deemed that the best method of reaching the WLWF trail system from Wells was via the trails in the vicinity of Pumpkin Hollow Road rather than the trails in the vicinity of Dorr Road. Therefore, Alternatives 2 and 4 were eliminated from consideration for this reason.

Choosing between Alternatives 1 and 3 ultimately came down to the amount of new trail construction on Forest Preserve and the connections across private lands required for each alternative. Alternative 1 requires 2.5 miles of new trail construction/designation on Forest Preserve lands and also requires traversing several miles of private land for which no formal easements or agreements are currently in place. Trails will not be placed on private land without the permission of the private landowner. Additionally, Alternative 1 may ultimately require the modification of the Rte. 30 bridge north of Northville, although the necessity of this modification is not known at this time. Alternative 3 requires only 1.3 miles of new trail construction/designation on Forest Preserve land, 1.2 miles less than Alternative 1, and, because of the pending acquisition of the Lyme Timber Hope Falls Tract easement, much of the route across private lands required for this alternative will be secured in perpetuity. For these reasons, Alternative 3 was selected as the preferred route for the trail to facilitate snowmobile access between Wells and Northville.

#### **4. Discussion of “No Material Increase”**

The APSLMP requires that there be no *“material increase in the mileage of roads and snowmobile trails open to motorized use by the public in wild forest areas that conformed to the master plan at the time of its original adoption in 1972”*. Further, the APSLMP states that *“the mileage lost in the designation of wilderness, primitive and canoe areas may be replaced in wild forest areas with existing roads or abandoned woods roads as a basis of such new snowmobile trail construction, except in rare circumstances requiring the cutting of new trails;”* and that *“wherever feasible such replacement mileage should be located in the general area as where mileage is lost to wilderness, primitive or canoe classification.”*

Prior to the adoption of the APSLMP in 1972, there were at least 64 miles of formally recognized snowmobile trails on the Forest Preserve lands that now constitute the WLWF. This trail mileage gradually increased over the next 30 years to become the 72 miles of snowmobile trails present in the unit today. Following the adoption and implementation of this UMP, the snowmobile trail mileage in the unit will be approximately 60 miles, substantially less (17%) than the pre-UMP mileage and somewhat less (7%) than the existing mileage before the adoption

of the APSLMP. This overall decrease in snowmobile trail mileage results from trail closures intended to 1) reduce redundancy in the unit's snowmobile trail network by eliminating the poorer of two parallel routes, or 2) eliminate isolated trails that have poor access and are not part of the larger trail network. The resulting snowmobile network will provide improved connectivity between nearby communities, benefitting local economies and increasing safety and efficiency. Additionally, reducing overall snowmobile mileage in the unit will allow limited trail maintenance resources to be focused on the most important and desirable trails.

**Table 4.** Mileage comparisons for snowmobile trails in the Wilcox Lake Wild Forest prior to the adoption of the APSLMP in 1972, prior to the adoption of this UMP, and following the implementation of this UMP.

| <b>Snowmobile Trail</b>              | <b>Pre-'72<br/>Mileage*</b> | <b>Pre-UMP<br/>Mileage</b> | <b>Post-UMP<br/>Mileage</b> |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Arrow Trail                          | 3.9                         | 3.9                        | 3.9                         |
| Baldwin Spring Spur                  | 0                           | 0.4                        | 0.4                         |
| Bartman Trail                        | 5                           | 5                          | 5                           |
| Bartman Junction Trail               | 2.2                         | 2.2                        | 0                           |
| Cod Pond Trail                       | 0.8                         | 0.8                        | 0.8                         |
| Cotter Brook Trail                   | 2.6                         | 2.6                        | 0                           |
| Davignon Road Extension              | 0                           | 0.6                        | 0.6                         |
| Dorr Road Connector Trail            | 0                           | 0.3                        | 0.3                         |
| Dog 'n Pup Bypass                    | 0                           | 1.7                        | 1.7                         |
| East Stony Creek Trail               | 4                           | 4                          | 0.8                         |
| Forks Mountain Primitive Area†***    | 1                           | 1                          | 0                           |
| Georgia Creek-Moose Mountain Trail   | 4.2                         | 4.2                        | 4.2                         |
| Girards Sugarbush Trail***           | 0                           | 1.7                        | 1.7                         |
| Griffin Connector Trail††***         | 0                           | 1.3                        | 0                           |
| Harrisburg Lake-Tenant Lake Trail*** | 0                           | 1.8                        | 1.8                         |
| Indian Pond Trail                    | 1.7                         | 1.7                        | 0                           |
| Kidder Brook Trail                   | 0                           | 0                          | 0.9                         |
| Kibby Pond Trail                     | 1.3                         | 0                          | 0                           |
| Lizard Pond Trail                    | 2.3                         | 3.7                        | 3.7                         |

|  |             |             |             |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Louis Waite Road Extension***              | 0           | 0.7         | 0           |
| Madison Creek Trail                        | 2.7         | 0           | 0           |
| Murphy-Middle-Bennett Lakes Trail          | 6.5         | 7.3         | 6.8         |
| Old Armstrong Road                         | 0           | 0           | 1.2         |
| Old Fodder Brook Road Trail                | 2.6         | 2.6         | 0           |
| Oregon Trail                               | 6           | 3.1         | 3.1         |
| Oxbow Trail****                            | 0           | 1.6         | 1.6         |
| Pine Orchard Trail                         | 9.3         | 9.3         | 9.3         |
| Pumpkin Hollow Trail                       | 0           | 0           | 1.3         |
| Round Pond Trail                           | 0.6         | 3           | 3.8         |
| Route 8 Trail (Cotter Brook Trail reroute) | 0           | 0           | 1           |
| Tenant Creek Falls Trail                   | 1.9         | 1.9         | 0           |
| Wilcox Lake Trail                          | 0.9         | 0.9         | 0.9         |
| Wilcox Lake-Willis Lake Trail              | 4.6         | 4.6         | 5           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                               | <b>64.1</b> | <b>71.9</b> | <b>59.8</b> |

\*Pre-1972 snowmobile trail information found in NYS DEC, 1971, *Snowmobile Trails in New York State* publication.

†Trail cuts across southern extension of Siamese Ponds Wilderness; closure is contingent on implementation of this UMP and the implementation of proposed trails in the JRWF UMP.

\*\*This trail was omitted from the 1971 DEC snowmobile brochure; however, discussion in the APSLMP suggests that this trail was in use prior to the 1972 adoption of the Master Plan, therefore it was included as pre-1972 mileage.

\*\*\*Although these trails were omitted from the 1971 DEC snowmobile brochure, it is likely that they were in use prior to the adoption of the APSLMP in 1972. However, to be conservative, they were not included as pre-1972 mileage.

††Trail connects the WLWF snowmobile trail network to the Forks Mountain Primitive Corridor; closure is contingent on implementation of this UMP and the implementation of the JRWF UMP.

\*\*\*\*although closure of this trail following the acquisition of a permanent snowmobile trail easement across private land at the southern end of the Arrow Trail is a long-term management objective in the unit, to be conservative, its mileage is being counted as post-UMP mileage.

## APPENDIX J: ALTERNATIVES DISCUSSION – ROADS

Alternatives for motor vehicle roads within the WLWF are numerous, but plagued with financial, political and practical difficulties. As stated previously, roads and vehicular access are allowable in a Wild Forest setting under APSLMP guidelines. However, the APSLMP dictates that public use of motor vehicles will not be encouraged, there will be no material increase in road mileage, and such use must be compatible with the Wild Forest character of the area. Therefore, although new road construction is not permitted, many alternatives exist for managing the existing motor vehicle roads in the unit including the total number and mileage of roads, their location, type of use, and level of improvement and maintenance.

### 1. Roads Under DEC's Jurisdiction

The Department is afforded with much greater flexibility in managing roads that are clearly under its jurisdiction. Currently, there are 8 segments of road totaling 5.3 miles in the unit that are clearly under DEC jurisdiction.

#### **Baldwin Spring Spur, Oregon Trail, Bartman Trail (Fish Ponds Road), Lizard Pond Trail**

The Baldwin Spring Spur road is the short segment of road that connects West Stony Creek Road to the Baldwin Spring Trailhead and parking area and includes the East Stony Creek ford east of Baldwin Spring. The southern Bartman Trail (Fish Ponds Road), Lizard Pond Trail, and Oregon Trail are all road segments accessed from the Baldwin Spring Trailhead that are currently open to motor vehicle use.

The East Stony Creek ford is currently in poor condition and, due to beaver activity, is safely passable only at times when the water level in East Stony Creek is extremely low. Additionally, the ford represents a location where significant water quality degradation, including vehicle fluid discharges and sedimentation, might conceivably be occurring, although the occurrence and/or extent of these effects at this location has not been studied. Alternatives for public motor vehicle use of the Baldwin Spring Spur road can basically be distilled down to three options: leaving the road open to public motor vehicle use at all times, implementing seasonal or periodic closures of the ford when it is unsafe and environmentally unsound to cross, or permanently closing the road. If the road is left open all the time or seasonally, several alternatives for maintenance exist. These include no maintenance, minor annual maintenance, or a serious reworking of the ford to make it safer. If the road is closed, alternatives exist as to where the road should be closed.

The preferred alternative for the Baldwin Spring Spur road is a permanent closure to motor vehicle use prior to the East Stony Creek ford. This ford represents too great a safety and environmental risk to remain open. Allowing seasonal use of the ford by either the public or qualified persons with disabilities as part of the Oregon Trail CP-3 route was strongly considered. However, the condition of the ford precludes even this limited use. Additionally, from a safety and resource protection perspective, allowing continued use of the ford by one user group (persons with disabilities) while denying use to others makes little sense. While this closure may be unpopular with some users, reasonable alternative access to the Baldwin Spring

area is provided by the snowmobile bridge south of the ford.

The closure of the East Stony Creek ford will eliminate motor vehicle access to the Bartman Trail, Lizard Pond Trail, and Oregon Trail, effectively closing them to this use. Because of the poor conditions and general character of these trails, this result is preferable. The Lizard Pond Trail in particular is unsuited for continued motor vehicle use. It lacks the character of a road which the other two still retain; it is in worse condition; and it no longer appears to be receiving regular use by motor vehicles other than snowmobiles. Motor vehicle use of the last half of this road is probably no longer possible. A substantial investment of Department resources and alteration to the natural landscape would be necessary to bring all of these roads up to acceptable standards. These improvements would benefit relatively few users while allocation of resources to more heavily-used areas in the unit, such as Hadley Mountain or Crane Mountain, would benefit a much greater number of people. Additionally, with the exception of the campsite at North Bend, these road segments do not provide access to any especially interesting or scenic destinations. For persons with disabilities, CP-3 permits will be available to access the Oregon Trail and the southern Bartman Trail (a.k.a. the Fish Ponds Road). (See further discussion in Appendix K). The 0.6-mile Lizard Pond trail will be closed to all public motor vehicle use except snowmobiles.

#### **Bakertown Road, Wilcox Lake Road**

The portion of Bakertown Road under the Department's jurisdiction begins after the road exits the Moosewood Club inholding and ends 0.1 miles north of the Wilcox Lake Trail snowmobile bridge. Wilcox Lake Road heads east from Bakertown Road 0.2 miles south of the Moosewood Club inholding, crossing a ford of East Stony Creek and eventually meeting up with the Wilcox Lake Trail atop the hill south of Wilcox Lake.

Based on the extremely poor condition of Wilcox Lake Road, a result of steep grades, highly eroded soils that have led to braiding and gullyng, and its frequent use in early spring for fishing access, and safety and environmental concerns surrounding the continued use of the East Stony Creek ford, the road was closed in 2004 and there are no feasible alternatives except to close this road permanently. Steep slopes and heavy use just after frost out preclude any reasonable alternatives for reconstruction and maintenance. Furthermore, foot and snowmobile access is provided to Wilcox Lake via the snowmobile bridge and Wilcox Lake Trail less than 0.5 miles further south. Wilcox Lake Road will be permanently closed with the installation of a permanent rock barrier, placed on the western side of East Stony Creek to prevent removal, and the former roadbed will be revegetated to prevent further soil erosion. Given the popularity of Wilcox Lake for early spring trout fishing and the use of small boats, canoes and other floatation devices, the distance added by the permanent closure of Wilcox Lake Road may preclude some people from using the lake.

As opposed to Wilcox Lake Road, reasonable management alternatives do exist for the Bakertown Road. These alternatives consist of leaving the road open in its current configuration or closing the road at some point south of the Moosewood Club inholding. Closure could occur just beyond the inholding, at the intersection with the Wilcox Lake Road, or at some point

between Wilcox Lake Road and the Wilcox Lake Trail snowmobile bridge. The preferred management alternative is to close the road at the old clearing about halfway between Wilcox Lake Road and the Wilcox Lake Trail snowmobile bridge. Although this alternative eliminates motor vehicle access to a short stretch of road, the clearing provides the best location for the development of a parking area with space to turn around vehicles pulling trailers. It is necessary to provide space for these vehicles with trailers because this parking area will serve as one of the access points for persons with disabilities to the East Stony Creek CP-3 route. The closure of the road beyond this point will be enforced through the installation of a gate at this location.

## **2. Town Roads**

The Department has less flexibility when managing the use of roads in the WLWF over which local towns claim jurisdiction. However, because these roads affect the Forest Preserve and provide the basis for access to the unit in many locations, this plan contains several management actions that propose working with local towns to manage several specific sections of town road that affect the unit.

### **West Stony Creek Road (The Arrow Trail)**

The portion of the Arrow Trail within the Town of Thurman, south of the Dog ‘n Pup Club inholding, is currently classified as a town road and thus open to motor vehicle access. However, this section of road provides no useful motor vehicle connection because the portion of the Arrow Trail in the Town of Stony Creek is closed to motor vehicle use. Additionally, this trail is not suited to motor vehicle use and harbors numerous mud holes, other wet spots, and very rough, rocky stretches. Two alternatives exist for this section of road – no change in the current status or working with the Town of Thurman to close the road at some point south of the Dog ‘n Pup inholding. The preferred alternative between these two options is to work with the town to close this road segment. The most logical location for this closure is at a small parking area less than 0.1 miles south of the inholding. By maintaining motor vehicle use to this point, reasonable public boating access to East Stony Creek, which becomes a canoeable route south of its confluence with Madison Creek, is preserved and access to the large tract of Forest Preserve is facilitated. Road closure beyond this point is a logical step from the perspective of resource protection and may help to eliminate the potential for illegal ATV use on the Stony Creek section of the Arrow Trail (the Town of Thurman has posted at least some portion of the West Stony Creek Road as open to ATVs from October through April). This closure will be enforced through the installation of a gate south of the parking area. If this closure cannot be agreed upon, the gate will be installed at the town line to prevent unauthorized use beyond this point. In either case, the Town of Thurman will be encouraged to provide timely maintenance to the segment of road open to motor vehicles.

### **Mud Pond Road**

Mud Pond Road is a short road off Garnet Lake Road that formerly provided access to an inholding that is now owned by the state. The road passes through a short stretch of private land after diverging from Garnet Lake Road before entering the Forest Preserve; from that point on, the road is entirely on State land. The Town of Thurman considers the Mud Pond Road to be a

town road to the point where it ends at the former inholding and provides routine maintenance on this section. However, although the road is well-maintained and presents no threat of resource degradation, it provides no useful motor vehicle connection, very little additional access, and the clearing at the current end of the road provides local youth with a potential “party spot.” Two management alternatives exist for the Mud Pond Road – no change in the current status or closure of the road at some point between where it enters Forest Preserve and its current terminus.

From the Department’s perspective, closure of Mud Pond Road at some point prior to its current terminus is the preferred alternative for several reasons. This road has been posted by the town as open to ATV use between October and April; therefore, closing the road at some earlier point might discourage illegal ATV use in the unit, especially on the Round Pond Trail, a designated snowmobile trail. For example, since the opening of the Mud Pond Road to seasonal ATV traffic, multiple instances of illegal ATV use on the Round Pond Trail have been documented and an illegal ATV trail constructed across Forest Preserve was discovered in the spring of 2005 originating from the eastern end of Round Pond, crossing Cherry Ridge, eventually connecting to Wolf Pond Road. Additionally, if the road was closed to motor vehicles at some point, a primitive tent site could be designated in the clearing at the former inholding. However, under the current configuration, designating a campsite at this location would probably further facilitate the illegal use of this location as a party spot.

The logical location to end motor vehicle access on Mud Pond Road is at the Mud Pond Trailhead. The Department will work with the Town of Thurman to accomplish this closure. If this is agreed to, a barrier will be installed at this location and the parking area may be expanded.

Because Mud Pond Road was probably opened by the town to ATVs without complying with the Vehicle and Traffic Law and this presumably illegal opening is resulting in ATV trespass in the unit, the Department will seek to end ATV use on the section of road within the Forest Preserve if aforementioned road closure cannot be agreed upon. If the town is unwilling to eliminate ATV use on this section of road, the Department may be forced to use a 212 closure order to close the road.

### **Bakertown Road**

Bakertown Road between the hamlet of Harrisburg and the Moosewood Club inholding is considered a town road by the Town of Stony Creek. This road largely passes through Forest Preserve lands and includes a ford of the Harrisburg Lake Outlet, a fairly large stream. While a permanent closure of this ford is not desirable or proposed, a seasonal or periodic closure of this ford is a management alternative that deserves consideration from a safety and resource protection viewpoint. The other alternative at this location is the no action alternative, basically doing nothing. If this ford is seasonally closed, qualified persons with disabilities and members of the Moosewood Club could access the East Stony Creek CP-3 route and Moosewood Club inholding, respectively, on ATVs via the snowmobile bridge at this location. From the Department’s perspective, the alternative of a seasonal and/or periodic closure of this ford with possible limited CP-3 ATV access during times when the ford is closed is preferred. This

alternative could be enforced with a gate across the road at the ford and a gate that selectively restricts ATV access to authorized individuals while simultaneously allowing foot traffic on the bridge.

## **APPENDIX K: ALTERNATIVES DISCUSSION – ACCESS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

Given the July 5, 2001 Consent Decree, there is no legal alternative to the provision of motorized access to the recreational programs offered by the WLWF for persons with disabilities. However, although the Consent Decree required that the Arrow Trail be designated and upgraded to accommodate users with disabilities (in automobiles or on ATVs), this proposal presents significant practical difficulties. The trail surface is very rough with numerous wet areas and protruding rocks and occasional steep slopes are encountered throughout the 3.9-mile length of the trail. Therefore, it would be extremely difficult to bring the Arrow Trail up to acceptable standards for use by persons with disabilities, even on ATVs, without a large investment of financial resources and a potentially significant impact to the unit's Wild Forest character. Similar problems exist with the Upper Fish Ponds trail (the northern portion of the Bartman Trail). Steep grades (as much as 24%), rugged trail conditions, and numerous stream and wet area crossings would necessitate changes to the trail that would likely result in a significant change in the character of the trail.

Consequently, recognizing the difficulties associated with the Arrow Trail, the substitution of an alternative accessible route within the WLWF was agreed to by the plaintiffs, defendants, and intervener-defendants in the case. This route, the East Stony Creek Trail from the end of Bakertown Road to Dayton Creek, along with the Roosevelt Truck Trail CP-3 route in the Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest, replace 3 miles of CP-3 road lost with the exclusion of the Arrow Trail from the agreement. The East Stony Creek Trail CP-3 route will be much easier to maintain to appropriate ATV standards and presents fewer potential maintenance and user conflict problems than the Arrow Trail. In addition, this route provides a better opportunity to develop access to DEC recreational programs than the Arrow Trail, including a proposal to provide a camping opportunity through the construction of an accessible lean-to at a level site near Dayton Creek.

In addition to the East Stony Creek trail, several other opportunities to provide recreational program access for persons with disabilities exist in the WLWF, including the roads originating from the Baldwin Spring trailhead – the Oregon Trail from Baldwin Spring to North Bend and the Fish Ponds Road (southern Bartman Trail) for one mile north of Baldwin Spring. Following the closure of these roads to public motor vehicle access (discussed in Appendix J), it is proposed that they be designated as CP-3 routes to provide access for persons with disabilities to recreational programs. The Lizard Pond Road, also in this area and proposed for closure, was also considered for designation as a CP-3 road for use by people with disabilities via ATV, but was considered less than ideal for this use. It no longer appears to be receiving regular use by motor vehicles other than snowmobiles, and hence, it lacks the character of a road. A substantial investment of Department resources and alteration to the natural landscape would be necessary to bring the road up to acceptable standards and would likely result in a significant change in the character of the area. It also does not add much in terms of access to Department programs (e.g, hunting, camping, fishing, etc.). It is only 0.6 miles in length and accesses areas that are similar to the areas accessed by the other two roads.

For all of these proposed CP-3 access routes—the lower Fish Ponds Road (southern Bartman Trail), the East Stony Creek Trail, and the Oregon Trail—alternatives exist as to what type of CP-3 use will be allowable and where CP-3 access will begin and end.

### **East Stony Creek Trail**

The East Stony Creek Trail is a former road that is now designated as a snowmobile trail. It connects the southern end of Bakertown Road and the northern end of Hope Falls Road and parallels East Stony Creek for much of this length. Existing and future opportunities for recreational program access along this route include fishing at Dayton Creek, camping at a proposed accessible lean-to near Dayton Creek, and hunting along the entire length of the route. As previously stated, this route provides the best opportunity in the unit to replace a portion of the CP-3 mileage lost when it was realized that the Arrow Trail was not an appropriate venue for a motorized access route. Recognizing that the East Stony Creek Trail has been formally agreed upon as part of a suitable replacement for the Arrow Trail, there are several alternatives that exist addressing the type of use and location of that use that will be permitted on this route. As discussed, public motor vehicle use on Bakertown Road will end at the old clearing midway between Wilcox Lake Road and the Wilcox Lake Trail snowmobile bridge with the implementation of this UMP (Appendix J). From this point south, motor vehicle access will be limited to qualified persons with disabilities.

On this CP-3 route, access could take the form of full-sized automobiles or ATVs or a combination of the two (although not on the same stretch of road under the Department's interpretation of NYS law). The first alternative is to make the entire route, from the end of Bakertown Road to Dayton Creek, open to automobiles only. The second alternative is to make the entire route open to only ATVs, with parking spots for vehicles with ATV trailers furnished at the end of Bakertown Road. The third alternative is to make the first part of the route open only to automobiles, with the second part of the route open only to ATVs. This alternative will require the provision of another parking area at the intermediate point where the mode of access changes from automobiles to ATVs.

The preferred alternative for the East Stony Creek Trail CP-3 route is to make the entire route open only to ATVs. Although this option will require furnishing a parking area with two accessible spaces that will accommodate vehicles with ATV trailers at the end of Bakertown Road, it avoids the necessity of providing a parking area at the Dayton Creek lean-to site (necessary with Alternative 1) or an intermediate parking area (Alternative 3). Alternative 2 was preferred over Alternatives 1 and 3 because automobiles generally cause more environmental impact due to their greater size and weight and require a higher level of road maintenance than ATVs, all else being equal, potentially resulting in a greater impact to the Wild Forest character along this route.

### **Oregon Trail, Southern Fish Ponds Road (Bartman Trail)**

Segments of the Oregon Trail and the Fish Ponds Road (southern Bartman Trail) are DEC roads currently open to public motor vehicle use. Because of the longstanding public motorized vehicle access to these roads, they all have long histories of traditional use, dating back to the early era

of automobiles. Even today, although access is often complicated by high water levels at the East Stony Creek ford, several hunting parties every year continue to drive in and use roadside primitive tent sites accessed by these roads as base camps during big game season, much as they have for decades. However, due to resource protection and public safety concerns, public automobile access to these roads via the East Stony Creek ford is proposed to be eliminated as part of this UMP.

CP-3 use of the Oregon Trail and Fish Ponds Road by qualified persons with disabilities presents a good opportunity to maintain recreational program access to this area of the WLWF for a historically under-served user group. While the threat of significant resource impacts precludes continued public automobile use of these roads (see Appendix J), some regulated motorized access by persons with disabilities will serve to substantially minimize those impacts as compared to unregulated general public use. Because the number of CP-3 users on these routes will be limited, seasonal restrictions on use during periods of wet weather will be easier to enforce. Numerous existing and proposed opportunities for access to recreational programs for persons with disabilities along these routes; the opportunities include camping at the terminus of each route, hunting along the entire length of the routes, and fishing at Stewart Creek.

Reasonable alternatives exist for the type and location of motorized access for persons with disabilities on these trails. Alternative 1 is to have CP-3 users park their automobiles at an area east of the ford, and then cross the ford and traverse the routes on ATVs. This alternative requires the provision of a parking area east of the ford with two accessible parking spots for vehicles with trailers and enough space to turn these vehicles around. Alternative 2 is to make both CP-3 routes open in their entirety to automobiles (high-clearance, four-wheel-drive trucks and SUVs) only. While this alternative eliminates the need for any special parking arrangements east of the ford, it also requires maintaining the routes to a much higher standard than would be necessary with access via ATVs. Alternative 3 is to have CP-3 users cross the ford with automobiles and park at the clearing at Baldwin Spring. From Baldwin Spring, the remainder of the routes would be open to ATVs only. This option eliminates the need for special parking arrangements east of the ford but also has the advantages of ATV use, including lower surface maintenance requirements, on the majority of the routes. Alternative 4 is to allow ATV access to the CP-3 routes via the snowmobile bridge south of the ford, eliminating altogether the safety risks and environmental impacts associated with fording East Stony Creek. This alternative requires the provision of two accessible parking spaces large enough to accommodate vehicles with trailers in the vicinity of the snowmobile bridge. Alternative 5 is to construct a new ATV/snowmobile bridge at or adjacent to the ford. This alternative would eliminate the need to use the ford, while simultaneously avoiding concerns about directing ATV use onto a snowmobile trail associated with Alternative 4. However, the drawback of Alternative 5 is obvious; the cost of bridge construction would be very high, considering the substantial width of East Stony Creek and the lack of high streambanks at this location. Alternative 6 is simply to not provide the opportunity for motorized access to persons with disabilities along these routes, recognizing that access to recreational programs for persons with disabilities is available at other locations in the unit.

From the Department's perspective, Alternative 4, because of its avoidance of the continued use of the East Stony Creek ford (Alternatives 1-3) and elimination of the need for new bridge construction (Alternative 5), is the preferred alternative for providing access to the Oregon Trail, and the Fish Ponds Road as CP-3 routes. By allowing ATV use of the snowmobile bridge and short, 0.3-mile snowmobile trail between the bridge and the clearing at Baldwin Spring, the impacts associated with the ford are eliminated. As previously discussed in the Appendix J, the East Stony Creek ford is in poor condition and poses a serious safety risk, especially when crossed during periods of high water. From a resource protection point of view, it makes little sense to prohibit use of the ford by the general public while allowing continued use by persons with disabilities. Alternative 5, while also avoiding the continued use of the ford, is financially prohibitive and not practical, especially when considering the availability of an existing bridge less than 0.4 miles to the south. The ford presents a poor location for bridge construction because of the stream width and the lack of steep banks necessary to provide adequate water clearance; therefore, bridge construction at this site might potentially result in unacceptable impacts on the character of this location. Of Alternatives 1-3, Alternative 3 is preferred if Alternative 4 is not approved. With Alternative 3, there is no need to develop two accessible parking spaces that will accommodate vehicles with trailers east of the ford because CP-3 users will be trailering their ATVs across the ford and to the parking area at Baldwin Spring using automobiles. Additionally, the parking area at Baldwin Spring is already large enough for several vehicles with trailers to park and turn around, so no additional reworking of this area will be necessary. Driving high-clearance, four-wheel-drive trucks and sport utility vehicles across the ford might also present some advantage over ATVs from the perspective of the depth of water they can safely negotiate. Once across the ford, ATVs are preferable to automobiles because they can tolerate lower maintenance levels (worse surface conditions) and generally cause less impact. However, serious consideration will have to be given to eliminating the possibility of CP-3 use of the Oregon Trail and Fish Ponds Road (Alternative 6) if Alternative 4, which requires the use of the snowmobile bridge south of the ford, is deemed unacceptable.

### **Other Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities**

Aside from the motorized access routes discussed above, many other opportunities for providing recreational program access to persons with disabilities are available in the WLWF without fundamentally altering the natural character of the unit. A list of the facilities proposed for upgrading to provide universal access in the unit includes:

- Three accessible designated campsites along Bakertown Road. All three of these sites are roadside and provide camping opportunities that can be accessed directly from an automobile. These sites require the installation of an accessible privy and possibly some surface leveling and hardening to make them universally accessible.
- An accessible designated campsite east of Baldwin Spring. This site provides a camping opportunity that can be directly accessed via automobile. The site requires an accessible privy to make it fully accessible.
- Two accessible designated campsites at Fox Lair. These two sites provide camping opportunities that can be accessed directly via automobile. Both sites require an accessible privy to make them universally accessible. These camping sites provide an accessible

camping opportunity adjacent to the proposed horse trailhead and Cook Brook Horse Trail in SPW. By grouping these facilities, the number of recreational programs offered at this location for persons with disabilities is increased while the impacts of this use are concentrated in an area that can withstand such use.

- An accessible horse trailhead with a parking area, kiosk, and mounting platform at Fox Lair. This location will provide access to horseback riding opportunities on the Cook Brook Horse Trail proposed in the Siamese Ponds Wilderness UMP. Because of the close proximity of this trailhead to the two accessible campsites discussed previously, it may not require the installation of an accessible pit privy. Appropriate signage will be necessary at the parking area/trailhead to make sure users are aware of the available nearby facilities (privies, camping opportunities, horse pasturing areas, etc.).