

**Appendix B.**

Zoar Valley Multiple Use Area

Unit Management Plan Public Scoping Meetings

Summary of Comments

## Discussion Groups

### 1. Land Management

### 2. Access

### 3. Recreation

### 4. Safety/Evacuation

(#) number in parenthesis indicates frequency of comment.

## 1. Land Management Group

### Old Growth

- ▶ Recognize and protect old growth (39)
- ▶ Map old growth (39)
- ▶ Publicize old growth (39)
- ▶ Preserve champion trees in gorge
- ▶ People are awed by large trees
- ▶ Concern over dead trees in gorge
- ▶ Look to Mr. Diggins, old growth survey & others for definition of old growth & buffers
- ▶ Old growth can withstand fires
- ▶ Have old growth experts lead walks to the old growth area
- ▶ Unique old growth in and near the gorge
- ▶ Acknowledge old growth in UMP and show it on maps
- ▶ Old growth definition found in Lake Erie gorges report
- ▶ Work with other organizations that recognize old growth to draft this plan
- ▶ If timber management is allowed, no old growth to be cut
- ▶ Don't cut old trees (large or small)
- ▶ Old growth area not prone to fires
- ▶ Don't put up signs for old growth trees
- ▶ No human disturbance in the gorge
- ▶ Old growth area should be limited access

## Unique/Forever Wild

- ▶ Rededication to Unique Area
- ▶ Designate entire area as Forever Wild (26)
- ▶ If we designate entire area Forever Wild, you lose ability to manage some species (6)
- ▶ Promote conservation of gorge
- ▶ Legal rededication of all Zoar to Unique area (20)
- ▶ Article 14, Section 4, (1970), S.45-0117 of ECL
- ▶ Rededicate all of Zoar to State nature preserve
- ▶ Have an opportunity to have a special place
- ▶ Survey for unique plants and animals
- ▶ State Policy to protect old growth
- ▶ No new classes of land use (e.g. Establish wilderness areas) (27)

## Upland Habitat Management

- ▶ Explain the deed restrictions and tell if any exceptions
- ▶ No cutting of trees
- ▶ No timber harvesting (31)
- ▶ This area is one of the greatest hardwood producing areas in the world
- ▶ Manage black walnut & other plantations
- ▶ Don't manage lands/preserves
- ▶ See Heart's Content in Pennsylvania to see what is possible
- ▶ Keep in natural state
- ▶ Protect unique plants/animals and their habitats
- ▶ Bald Eagles observed
- ▶ Maintain habitats that are there (e.g. meadows)
- ▶ No management = no fire suppression
- ▶ lose biodiversity as forests age
- ▶ NiMo kept people out of the gorge
- ▶ Use Mr. Darling's words for management/non-management of land
- ▶ Maintain Ross Farm Meadows

- ▶ No logging or salvage
- ▶ Preserve farmland & habitat diversity (old growth) (17)
- ▶ No management
- ▶ Honor the deed language
- ▶ Explain the deed restriction & how DEC considers logging to be appropriate considering the deed restrictions
- ▶ Consider logging on other than Mr. Darling's gift
- ▶ Have management study done on eagles, goshawks, and red shouldered hawks to see effects of management
- ▶ Determine the value of the timber resources on the area - excluding the gorge
- ▶ What did state receive in revenue on sales? By year?
- ▶ Create an alternate plan to revenue from timber resources
- ▶ Explain blue marked trees along Valentine Flats Road (thinning proposed but not completed)
- ▶ Want open areas - keep the fields that are there now
- ▶ Repair damaged areas
- ▶ Do not allow gas drilling
- ▶ Identify all mineral rights
- ▶ Upland areas managed, not gorge
- ▶ No resource management, have trails
- ▶ E.I.S. for changes in the UMP/current regs.

#### Buffer Management

- ▶ 300' buffer strip along gorge (31)
- ▶ 500' buffer
- ▶ Significant buffers along watershed boundaries
- ▶ If logging, need 500' buffer from all old growth

#### Recreation

- ▶ No restrictions of recreational use that don't have trees/ecosystem
- ▶ Consider value of ecotourism
- ▶ Opportunity for recreation, have people behave

## Gravel Mining/Gas Wells

- ▶ No gravel mining
- ▶ Buffer strip to prevent erosion
- ▶ Should not have cut trees to gas well. Remove gravel there and plant it to trees

## Acquisition

- ▶ Look for more acquisition
- ▶ Expand Zoar to Springville by acquisition
- ▶ Buy additional acreage along perimeter to protect gorge

## Misc. Comments

- ▶ “In wilderness is the preservation of the world” H.D. Thoreau
- ▶ Enforcement of each area
- ▶ Enforcement of enforcers
- ▶ Provide staff and maps, describe the unique characteristics
- ▶ Citizen advisory board for oversight
- ▶ Any revenue generated should be returned to the area
- ▶ Include in UMP: Lake Erie gorges, Natural Heritage Study and older study
- ▶ Preserve these notes
- ▶ Notify Seneca Nation before starting projects

## **2. Access**

### Roads/bridges

- ▶ Open up the Forty Road bridge and have the State pay for it
- ▶ Improve road down into Valentine Flats (emergency access and better parking)
- ▶ Is the Forty Road going to be repaired?
- ▶ Replace Forty Road bridge for seasonal use
- ▶ Access to Valentine Flats - gated, emergency use only
- ▶ No further building of roads in the area
- ▶ Keep Forty Road bridge closed and open up Gibson Hill bridge (off property)

## Trails

- ▶ Include horse trails and connect to other trails (5)
- ▶ Better foot access for fishing (4)
- ▶ Combine horse trails & snowmobile trails, ID to stay on trail, develop a 2-3 hour horse trail loop
- ▶ Trail access to state land will be limited by topography
- ▶ AANR is for trail maintenance (Adopt A Natural Resource)
- ▶ Tie number of trails into habitat preservation plan
- ▶ Access for nature study, birding
- ▶ Interpretive nature trails
- ▶ Better signs for trail system, ID trails with numbers
- ▶ Require permit for access to gorge - sign off to accept conditions of use
- ▶ Trail system along creek gorge (2)
- ▶ Trail system from each parking area (2)
- ▶ Should have recreational trails
- ▶ Use corrections prisoners for trail maintenance
- ▶ Trails for off road vehicle use
- ▶ Protect from overuse - consider reservation system for access to area
- ▶ Allow horse trail system
- ▶ No horses to be allowed or new horse trails

## Vehicle Use

- ▶ Use existing logging roads for motorized access (2)
- ▶ No motorized vehicles - as it is now
- ▶ Paid permit for motorized (OHV) trail use to pay for maintenance of trail
- ▶ If there are no snowmobile trails on Zoar, it may lead to closing other state lands to snowmobiles
- ▶ No ATV's or dirt bikes or snowmobiles
- ▶ No motorized access (31)
- ▶ Have ATV trails on logging roads, manage small area from revenue generated by permit
- ▶ Only non-motorized/no snowmobiles - to protect ecology

- ▶ Allow snowmobiles on trail
- ▶ Enforce ATV and snowmobile use regulations

#### Parking Access/Access Points

- ▶ Better marking of access points
- ▶ Access now is adequate, don't improve it (15)
- ▶ Better parking lot at Unger and Vail Road
- ▶ Parking for horse trailers
- ▶ Parking lots large enough for horse trailers and trucks (1)
- ▶ Improve access/launch boats (non-motorized)
- ▶ Develop site in Gowanda for removal of canoes and boats
- ▶ Provide year round parking
- ▶ Keep parking areas open for hunters
- ▶ Provide Port-A- Jons in parking area
- ▶ Litter management - carry it in - carry it out

#### Camping/Boating

- ▶ Canoe & hike in camping in valley, permanent basis
- ▶ Permit only camping for organized groups
- ▶ Overnight camping by permit
- ▶ Allow boat camping
- ▶ Repeal no wading rule in the creek

#### Acquisition

- ▶ Purchase development and conservation easements on adjacent private property
- ▶ Acquire adjoining lands along gorge (north side) to accommodate hiking trails

#### Cooperative Ventures

- ▶ Access for university research
- ▶ DEC staff should become familiar with other Multiple Use Areas
- ▶ Info. to Public - Signage

- ▶ In planning process, consider the staging areas (Peter Cooper tannery) in Gowanda
- ▶ Seasonal use indication signs (e.g. hunting, horseback riding)
- ▶ Brochures/maps on site, explaining natural history info, uses, etc.
- ▶ Signs to direct people to Zoar Valley MUA
- ▶ Directional signs tied in with area businesses - related to recreational businesses
- ▶ Web site information
- ▶ Better boundary line identification (17)

### 3. Recreation

#### Horses

- ▶ Area for horseback riding - trail system, marking layout (circular) Bits and Spurs trail riders (12)
- ▶ Horseback riding but not during hunting season
- ▶ Special area “Horses only” during hunting (non-hunters included)
- ▶ Trails established wide enough for horses and wagons
- ▶ Establish horse trail system (10)

#### Snowmobiles/ATV's

- ▶ MUA for ATV's and/or snowmobiles (specific seasons) (10)
- ▶ ATV's Use (3)
- ▶ Snowmobile use (3)
- ▶ Use existing (logging) trails for motorized vehicles (1)
- ▶ Motorized access for people with mobility impairments (including ATV use possibly by special permit)

#### Hunting/Fishing

- ▶ Preserve hunting and fishing opportunities (pheasant stocking & habitat management) (12)
- ▶ Continue support of hunting and fishing opportunities (17)
- ▶ Manage ponds for fishing, including stocking of fish/bait fish
- ▶ Allow passive (hunting/fishing) recreation (20)

## Non-motorized

- ▶ Non-motorized use only
- ▶ Cross country skiing (27)
- ▶ Bike path
- ▶ Only trails as stated by Mr. Darling, foot trails with little impact to the area (14)
- ▶ Leave use as is
- ▶ State liable for accidents?
- ▶ Clothing optional area established (6)
- ▶ Ban alcohol possession and consumption - No glass containers
- ▶ Adjacent landowner rights observed (2)
- ▶ Adjacent landowners liability for people exiting state property (2)
- ▶ Open areas for swimming, wading and bathing (16)

## Boats/Canoes

- ▶ Continued use for canoes and rafting
- ▶ More put-in and take out access points
- ▶ Improve access for boats and canoes, etc. (23)

## Wildlife Observation

- ▶ Bird and observation area for other wildlife
- ▶ Establish interpretive trails, have educational walk by DEC staff or colleges (6)
- ▶ Continue with nest box structures
- ▶ Guided tours and walks by DEC (17)
- ▶ Interpretive signs (history, plant ID, geology, wildlife use)

## Camping

- ▶ Camping by permit restricted to organized groups only (e.g. boy scouts)
- ▶ Allow limited backpacking & overnight camping (21)
- ▶ Camping by permit (15)

## Sanitation

- ▶ Carry in and carry out
- ▶ Enforce carry in - carry out regulations. (21)

## Tourism

- ▶ Tourism expansion potentials (12)
- ▶ Brochure showing foot trails & unique areas, parking directions to MUA (15)
- ▶ Don't publicize unique areas (e.g. old growth)

## Boundary

- ▶ Better posting/marketing of property lines (17)

## **4. Safety / Evacuation**

### Access

- ▶ Need good access for rescue operations
- ▶ Need access from private land
- ▶ Restrict use during harsh weather
- ▶ Better access for emergency equipment and vehicles
- ▶ Better trails for enforcement access
- ▶ Support a "dusk to dawn" use policy
- ▶ Handicapped access for handicapped horseback riding
- ▶ Have a log book available at trail heads for trail maintenance/safety comments to be noted
- ▶ Need "strainers" (dead trees & limbs, debris) removed along creek bed

### Signs

- ▶ Put up signs and educate the public
- ▶ More signs needed to indicate - If you pack it in/pack it out
- ▶ Bigger signs needed to mark the entrances, to demarcate dangerous areas
- ▶ Signs needed that say "Leaving State Property: Entering Private Property - You are trespassing"
- ▶ Sign at Forty Road parking area indicating that "the Falls" is privately owned & trespassing is not allowed

- ▶ Better signs for rules and regulations
- ▶ Signs showing the property boundaries and entrance/exits
- ▶ Signs noting when hunting seasons are open (for hikers to know)
- ▶ Sign that shows law enforcement phone number to call to report violations or emergencies
- ▶ If venomous snakes present, inform users
- ▶ If quicksand present, inform users

#### Enforcement/Regulations

- ▶ More/better enforcement on adjacent properties (trespass, drinking, garbage)
- ▶ Prohibit alcohol possession & use on MUA
- ▶ No alcohol, no glass, no drugs
- ▶ Support no swimming, no bathing
- ▶ No glass containers
- ▶ Increase enforcement with patrol
- ▶ Address indecent exposure: nude sunbathing affects other users
- ▶ Increase fines for ECL violations (Environmental Conservation Law)
- ▶ Repeal rule on wading in the creek

#### Rescue

- ▶ Lower numbers of volunteer firemen - can state help recruit
- ▶ More money to compensate fire departments who do rescues
- ▶ Charge the person that is rescued
- ▶ More training in search and rescue needed
- ▶ Replace Forty Road bridge (even if for seasonal use only)
- ▶ Emergency response equipment - stretchers modified with “dune buggy” tires for use on rough trails (Outward Bound Voyagers, Minneapolis)
- ▶ Designate a coordinator for emergency response
- ▶ Train emergency crews in white water rescue or have people with that expertise available
- ▶ Examine historic info on rescues and accidents to develop a baseline
- ▶ Grass landing pad for emergency helicopter use - Valentine Flats
- ▶ Designated parking and access for emergency vehicles with signs to maintain access for emergency vehicles - Forty Road and south branch of creek