NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY. | Department of Environmental Conservation

BLACK RIVER WILD FOREST

and

North Lake (J.P. Lewis) Tract Conservation Easement

Amendment

to the

1996 Black River Wild Forest Unit Management Plan

NYS DEC, REGION 6, DIVISION OF LANDS AND FORESTS

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MEMORANDUM

TO: The Record

FROM: Basil Seggos

SUBJECT: Black River Wild Forest Unit Management Plan Amendment

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The Amendment to the 1996 Black River Wild Forest Unit Management Plan has been completed. The Adirondack Park Agency has found the Amendment to be in conformance with the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan.

The Amendment is consistent with Environmental Conservation Law, and Department Rules, Regulations and Policies and is hereby approved and adopted.

Basil Seggos
Commissioner
New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

Date: 8/6/18

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NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY. | Adirondack Park Agency

SHERMAN CRAIG
Chairman

TERRY MARTINO
Executive Director

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE ADIRONDACK PARK AGENCY WITH RESPECT TO THE BLACK RIVER WILD FOREST AREA UNIT MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT

June 7, 2018

WHEREAS, Section 816 of the Adirondack Park Agency Act (APA Act) directs the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to develop, in consultation with the Adirondack Park Agency (Agency), individual management plans for units of land classified in the Adirondack Park State Land Master (APSLMP) and requires such management plans to conform to the guidelines and criteria of the APSLMP; and

WHEREAS, in addition to such guidelines and criteria, the APSLMP prescribes the contents of unit management plans and provides that the Agency will determine whether a proposed individual unit management plan complies with such guidelines and criteria; and

WHEREAS, DEC prepared a unit management plan for the Black River Wild Forest Area in 1996 that was amended in 2004; and

WHEREAS, DEC has prepared a second amendment to the 1996 Plan, dated June 2018 (Proposed Final 2018 Amendment), and

WHEREAS, the Proposed Final 2018 Amendment to the 1996 Plan proposes a snowmobile trail system designed to provide connections between important destinations and communities within and surrounding the Black River Wild Forest; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the State Environmental Quality Review Act, DEC determined that the Proposed Final 2018 Amendment would not have a significant adverse impact on the environment and filed notice thereof in the Environmental Notice Bulletin on January 27, 2016; and

WHEREAS, DEC received public comment on the draft UMP from January 27 until February 26, 2016 and responses to those public comments are provided in the Proposed Final 2018 Amendment; and

WHEREAS, on April 12, 2018 DEC presented the Proposed Final 2018 Amendment to the Agency; and

WHEREAS, the Agency established a public comment period on conformance of the Proposed Final 2018 Amendment with the APSLMP, which ran from April 18, 2018 through May 3, 2018; and

WHEREAS, the Agency received seven written comments during the public comment period regarding the Proposed Final 2018 Amendment; and

WHEREAS, the Agency reviewed these public comments regarding APSLMP conformance during Agency staff's June 7, 2018 presentation; and

WHEREAS, the Agency has considered the foregoing recitals, the Proposed Final 2018 Amendment, the May 31, 2018 Memorandum from Kathy Regan to Terry Martino, Agency staff's June 7, 2018 presentation, public comment, and the deliberations of Agency Board Members and Designees at the Agency's June 7, 2018 2018 meeting.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that pursuant to Section 816 of the Adirondack Park Agency Act, the Agency finds the Proposed Final 2018 Amendment to the 1996 Black River Wild Forest Area UMP, dated June 2018, and last revised June 7, 2018, conforms with the guidelines and criteria of the APSLMP; and

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

Ayes: Karen Feldman, Chad Dawson, John Ernst, Arthur Lussi, William Thomas, Dan Wilt, Lynne Mahoney, Brad Austin, Robert Stegemann

Nays: None

Abstentions: None

Absent: Sherman Craig

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Introduction

The Black River Wild Forest is located in the Towns of Ohio and Webb in Herkimer County, the Town of Forestport in Oneida County, the Town of Lyonsdale in Lewis County and the Town of Morehouse in Hamilton County. The unit contains approximately 127,135 acres. A Unit Management Plan (UMP) for this block of Forest Preserve land was completed in 1996. In 2004, an amendment to the UMP was adopted that closed several roads to ATV use within the unit.

The primary purpose of this UMP amendment is to classify snowmobile trails to conform to the trail classification system and guidelines set forth in the Management Guidance for Snowmobile Trail Siting, Construction, and Maintenance on Forest Preserve Lands in the Adirondack Park (Management Guidance). Also included are plans for an additional parking lot at North Lake, an improved parking area at the Stone Dam Trailhead and several new foot trails in support of the proposed North Country Scenic Trail.

In October 2006 the Snowmobile Plan for the Adirondack Park/Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement (Snowmobile Plan) was released. It was a conceptual snowmobile plan with the goal of creating a system of snowmobile trails between communities in the Adirondack Park (community connectors) as well as designating secondary trails for a more traditional type of Adirondack snowmobiling experience. It also proposed that some existing snowmobile trails (i.e. those within the interior of Wild Forest areas or adjacent to private in-holdings) be re-designated for non-motorized use or abandoned as trails altogether. The Snowmobile Plan identifies the UMP process as the vehicle for reconfiguring the existing snowmobile trail network across the Forest Preserve.

Following the completion of the Snowmobile Plan, the Department of Environmental Conservation, in coordination with the Adirondack Park Agency, developed the Management Guidance which was released in November of 2009. This document provides specific guidelines for trail classification as well as for siting, construction and maintenance of trails. With regards to classification of trails, the Management Guidance defines two classes of trails on Forest Preserve lands, aside from trails on roads.

Class II Trails: Community Connector Trails

Snowmobile trails or trail segments that serve to connect communities and provide the main travel routes for snowmobiles within a unit are Community Connector Trails.

These trails are located in the periphery of Wild Forest or other Forest Preserve areas (see Figure 1 below). They are always located as close as possible to motorized travel corridors, given safety, terrain and environmental constraints, and only rarely are any segments of them located further than one mile away from the nearest of these corridors. They are not duplicated or paralleled by other snowmobile trails.
Some can be short, linking communities to longer Class II trails that connect two or more other communities.

Class I Trails: Secondary Snowmobile Trails

All other snowmobile trails that are not Community Connector Trails are Secondary Snowmobile Trails. These trails are located in the periphery of Wild Forest and other Forest Preserve areas where snowmobile trails are designated. They may be spur trails (perhaps leading to population areas and services such as repair shops, service stations, restaurants and lodging), short loop trails or longer recreational trails. If directly connected to Class II trails, new and rerouted Class I trails are always located as close as possible to – and no farther than one mile from – motorized travel corridors. If not directly connected to Class II trails, they are generally located within one mile of motorized travel corridors, although some – with high recreational value – may be located beyond one mile and may approach a remote interior area.

IV. PROJECTED USE AND MANAGEMENT PROPOSED

A. FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT AND/OR REMOVAL

1. Snowmobile Trail Class Designation

The snowmobile trail system proposed in this amendment (see Figure 1) is designed to provide connections between important destinations and communities within and surrounding the Black River Wild Forest. The trail system is also designed to: a) reduce environmental impacts of the trails; b) provide for limited alternatives in the community connection network in anticipation of periodic disruptions in the most commonly used corridors where Forest Preserve roads with private rights of ways may be plowed for winter logging, and c) accommodate the high volume of snowmobile traffic that typically occurs in this lake effect snow-belt area when other regions of New York are receiving less than normal snowfall. The net result of this proposal is an improved system of trails for the snowmobiling community that is more environmentally benign. This system is consistent with the snowmobile trail designation, classification, and best management practices set forth in the Management Guidance.

<u>Class II</u>: Community Connector Routes

There are two main community connector routes within the Unit. The listings below include existing trails and roads as well as a limited amount of new trails, which will be described in further detail.

<u>Woodgate to Old Forge</u> (See Figure 2)

Designated as the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation's (OPRHP) "C-7" corridor trail, this route connects the communities of Woodgate, White Lake, Otter Lake and Old Forge. It also provides access to route "C-7C", which connects these communities to the village of Boonville and other communities in the Southern Tug Hill Plateau. This area is one of the most popular snowmobiling destinations in the country and the economic impact this form of recreation has is vital.

Table 1. Woodgate to Old Forge Community Connector Trails and Roads

Name	Miles
Otter Lake - Brandy Lake Trail	4.1
Brandy Lake - Round Pond - Moose River Trail	2.1
Brandy Lake Trail	0.5
Cohen Road	1.7
Otter Lake Connector Trail	1.1
Otter Lake - Dump Road Trail	1.2
Dump Road	0.3
Benchmark Road	0.1
Brewer Lake Trail	1.2
McKeever - Brewer Lake Trail	1.0
Railroad Spur Road and Trail	0.1
Total	13.4

McKeever to Forestport to Nobleboro/Ohio (See Figure 3)

This route is designated as OPRHP's "C-4H" corridor trail and "S-46A" secondary trail. It connects the communities of McKeever, Atwell (North Lake/South Lake), Forestport, Nobleboro and Ohio. This main connector route across the southwestern Adirondacks primarily follows a series of existing open motor vehicle roads and trails.

Table 2. McKeever to Forestport to Nobleboro Community Connector Trails and Roads

Name	Miles
Wolf Lake Landing Rd.	5.1
Big Woodhull Trail	3.7
North Lake – Sand Lake – Mill Creek Trail	7.7
Mill Creek Road	3.4
Loop Road	0.3
North Lake -South Lake Trail	4.2
South Shore Road	6.7
Herkimer Landing Road	7.2
Haskell Road	0.9
West Creek Road	5.2
Round Top Trail	1.8
Black Creek Lake Road	1.7
Flansburg Road	3.3
Bull Pen Trail	0.7
Mad Tom Lake Trail	4.3
Total	56.2

2. Management Actions

Based on the community connector routes identified above and the existing network of snowmobile routes, the following modifications to the existing UMP are proposed:

a. Classify 26.0 miles of existing snowmobile trails as “Class II” snowmobile trails on Forest Preserve lands. These trails act as community connector trails, linking towns and villages within the Adirondack Park, and usually serve as snowmobile “Corridor Trails”, as identified by the N.Y. State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

Table 3. Existing Snowmobile Trails Classified as Class II Trails

Name	Miles
Brandy Lake - Round Pond - Moose River Trail	2.1
Brandy Lake Trail	0.5
Otter Lake - Brandy Lake Trail	4.1
Otter Lake Connector Trail	1.1
Big Woodhull Trail	3.7
North Lake - Sand Lake - Mill Creek Trail	7.7
Round Top Trail	1.8
Bullpen Trail	0.7
Mad Tom Lake Trail	4.3
Total	26.0

b. Construct (if necessary) & classify 7.6 miles of new Class II snowmobile trails.

Table 4. New Snowmobile Trails Classified as Class II

Name	Miles
McKeever - Brewer Lake Trail	1.0
Brewer Lake Trail (portion of existing foot trail)	1.2
Otter Lake - Dump Road Trail	1.2
North-South Lake Trail	4.2
Total	7.6

Otter Lake to McKeever Trails – *see Figure 4*

The C7 snowmobile corridor trail from McKeever through Otter Lake is located on the shoulder of State Route 28, a major motor vehicle traffic route through the Adirondacks, or the Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor (AKA the Adirondack Scenic Railroad), a route of inconsistent reliability due to the amount of snow cover needed to cover the ties and rails and thus provide a safe route for snowmobilers. Utilization of Rt. 28 by both snowmobiles and motor vehicles presents a major safety concern, similar to use of the Railroad when snow depths are low. The proposed routes described below meet the Management Guidance requirements with respect to avoiding interior locations/keeping trails near the periphery of the unit.

Section IV (Projected Use and Management Proposed), subsection A-5, of the present Black River Wild Forest UMP recommends development of "a connection between the Dump Road (Otter Lake) and the Wolf Lake Landing Road (McKeever)" that would become part of the C7 snowmobile corridor trail. Consistent with this direction, a new trail from Wolf Lake Landing Road to the existing Brewer Lake Trail will be constructed (the McKeever-Brewer Lake Trail, approximately 1.0 miles in length). Approximately 1.2 miles of the Brewer Lake Trail, from its intersection with the McKeever-Brewer Lake Trail southwest to the trailhead, will be reclassified as a Class II snowmobile trail; the remainder of this trail east to Brewer Lake will remain closed to snowmobile use. Benchmark Road, an existing Forest Preserve public motor vehicle road which leads to the Brewer Lake Trailhead from Rt. 28 and the Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor (and past the trailhead to seasonal camps) will be opened for snowmobile use (a "Snowmobile Trail on Forest Preserve Roads" per the Management Guidance) in order to provide snowmobilers with an access point to this proposed trail system as well as the services available in the community of Otter Lake.

Around 0.3 mile east of the Brewer Lake trailhead a second new Class II trail (the Otter Lake-Dump Road Trail) will be constructed that will diverge from the Brewer Lake Trail heading roughly southwest to Dump Road (also known as Overlook or Airport Road). The end of this road intersects with the Otter Lake Connector Trail which heads south to Cohen Road and the Brandy Lake snowmobile trail system (see Figure 4). These two proposed sections of trail along with the reclassification of a section of the Brewer Lake Trail were developed with input from Adirondack Park Agency staff.

With respect to these proposed new trails, the Otter Lake Outlet Trail, an existing snowmobile trail, has been identified as "redundant" and will be reclassified as a foot trail to comply with the Management Guidance. However, it will remain open to snowmobiles until these new Class II trails adjacent to Otter Lake are constructed and operational.

No Action Alternative – Leaving the existing snowmobile trail route on the shoulder of State Route 28 or on the Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor leaves a frequently unsafe situation in place, and provides a more unreliable route for snowmobilers. Creating these new segments of community connector trail will eliminate 2.5 miles of snowmobile traffic along the side of the highway or on the Railroad, reduce the potential for snowmobile-motor vehicle accidents, and provide a safer alternative to the Railroad when snow depths are low.

North Lake-South Lake Trail – *see Figure 5*

The current C-4H snowmobile trail follows the South Lake Road, from the vicinity of North Lake, for approximately 2 miles and then continues down South Shore Road around South Lake. South Lake Road, an open town road that is plowed during the winter time, provides access to private properties at South Lake and beyond. There is also logging vehicle traffic along this road when timber harvesting is occurring on either adjacent private lands or the neighboring North Lake Conservation Easement property. South Shore Road is a Forest Preserve road that used to be open for public motor vehicle use and snowmobile use all the way southeast to the Herkimer Landing Road. However, after the original Black River Wild Forest Unit Management Plan was completed it was determined that the private in-holders on the south shore of South Lake have a right of way to their property on this road, thus creating a conflict with its use as a designated snowmobile trail. Following this determination, the landowner made road improvements, which DEC did not participate in due to lack of funds, to access their property. In addition, the owner decided to plow the road in the winter. These events created a hazardous situation where motor vehicles and snowmobiles were using the same narrow plowed route. Since DEC did not participate in the road improvements and could not help maintain the road due to very limited budgets, a decision was made to gate the road until such time DEC acquired the funds to help maintain it. Establishing the North Lake-South Lake Trail, as identified in the BRWF UMP, would resolve much of the conflict at that location.

The North Lake-South Lake Trail would move the existing C-4H trail off of South Lake Road and part of South Shore Road and re-route it through the Pratt-Northam Memorial Park and other adjacent Forest Preserve lands. The trail would leave South Lake Road at an existing unnamed forest road, east of the North Lake Road and South Lake Road intersection, that leads south to an abandoned gravel pit, continue for 4.2 miles east through the above-mentioned forest lands and then connect to South Shore Road east of the private in-holdings. This proposed route is listed in the existing and approved Black River Wild Forest UMP, under section H-7 of the “Sub-Plans for Pratt-Northam Memorial Park and Bank Lot.” The proposed location of this trail was developed with input and advice from Adirondack Park Agency staff.

Layout of the trail generally sought to follow old skid trails, haul roads and areas with open understory through the Pratt-Northam Memorial Park and adjoining Forest Preserve lands; however, some trees will have to be cut during the construction of this trail. An exact count is currently unknown but will be enumerated during the work planning process. Approximately seven snowmobile bridges are expected to be constructed along this route in addition to erosion control measures (e.g., water bars on old skid trails and steep sections) where appropriate. The Adirondack Park Snowmobile Trail Project Work Plan: Work Plan Development and Implementation guidance document from the NYS-DEC Division of Lands & Forests will be adhered to in this project.

No Action Alternative – The "no action" alternative, in this case, would leave the present C-4H snowmobile corridor trail in its current location on South Lake Road and South Shore Road. Since both roads are used by motor vehicle traffic, this situation has an increased risk for snowmobile-motor vehicle conflicts. The present trail location on South Shore Road has also led to illegal trespassing by snowmobilers onto the private in-holder's property. The gating of South Shore Road near its intersection with the South Lake Road has reduced public access to South Lake, and created a break in the snowmobile route from Nobleboro to South Lake, which is part of one of the proposed community connector routes for BRWF. Re-routing of the trail to the proposed North Lake-South Lake Trail as described above would help alleviate these issues.

c. Classify 19.0 miles of existing snowmobile trails as “Class I” snowmobile trails.

Table 5. Existing Snowmobile Trails to be Classified as Class I

Trail Name	Miles
Chub Pond Trail (from Mill Creek Road to Chub Pond Lean-To #2)	3.8
Gull Lake Lean-To Trail	0.7
Gull Lake Trail	2.0
Little Salmon Lake Trail	0.3
Mad Tom Lake Trail (southwestern portion)	0.8
Mad Tom Lake Trail Spur	0.2
Nicks Lake Trail	2.4
Nick's Lake - Nelson Lake Trail	5.4
Twin Lakes Trail	2.9
Woods Lake Trail	0.5
Total	19.0

d. Construct (if necessary) & classify 6.0 miles of new Class I snowmobile trails.

Table 6. New Snowmobile Trails Classified as Class I

Name	Miles
Nicks Lake Outlet Trail (AKA Remsen Falls Trail, western portion from the Nelson Lake Trail to the Remsen Falls Lean-To)	5.3
South Shore Road Spur Trail	0.7
Total	6.0

Nicks Lake Outlet Trail– *see Figure 2*

The eastern portion of the Nicks Lake Outlet Trail, from its intersection with the Nicks Lake Trail near Nicks Lake to Remsen Falls, will be closed to comply with the Management Guidance since much of it falls within the “remote interior” of the Forest Preserve. In order to retain motorized access to the area for winter time activities such as trapping, as well as provide a more rugged backcountry snowmobiling experience to

a point of recreational interest, reclassifying the western portion of the Nicks Lake Outlet Trail, from its intersection with the Nelson Lake Trail to the Remsen Falls Lean-To, from a foot trail to a Class I snowmobile trail is proposed.

No Action Alternative- Without reclassifying this trail, snowmobile access to this portion of the Black River Wild Forest and the total amount of Class I trail available would be reduced. This proposed new snowmobile trail would retain motorized access to the Remsen Falls Lean-to while complying with the Management Guidance.

South Shore Road Spur Trail– *see Figure 5*

Many snowmobilers park and unload their sleds at the public fishing access and campsites at South Lake, head west to North Lake along the South Lake Road or travel a short distance west on South Lake Road and attempt to access the present C-4H snowmobile trail on South Shore Road. As noted above, the locked gate near the intersection of South Lake and South Shore Road prevents access for snowmobilers that want to head south towards Nobleboro or north to McKeever. This barrier directs many to travel across the ice on South Lake and through the adjacent forest in order to access the snowmobile trail system if they do not turn around altogether.

To provide access from South Lake to the snowmobile trail system, a trail is proposed from the beginning of South Shore Road (just west of the locked gate) generally heading southwest following old skid trails in the Pratt-Northam Memorial Park to link up with the North Lake - South Lake Trail. This new Class I trail will be around 0.7 miles long; it is expected that this route will not require any bridge construction and few, if any, trees over three inches in diameter at breast height (4.5 feet above the ground on the uphill side of the tree) will be cut. Input from Adirondack Park Agency staff will be sought before proceeding with development of this trail.

To restore public vehicular access to this area, South Shore Road will be rehabilitated as far as Parcel II of the Pratt-Northam Memorial Park and a 15-car parking lot will be constructed there per the recommendations given in the current Black River Wild Forest UMP. Following the completion of this project, the gate at the beginning of this Forest Preserve road will be closed only from the beginning of snowmobile season (December 15th) through the end of “mud season” (generally mid-March to mid-late May) as well as during other times of the year when road conditions or other administrative needs dictate. This approach, along with the construction of the North Lake-South Lake and South Shore Road Spur Trails, improves public access to the area while helping to prevent conflicts between snowmobilers and the private in-holders on South Shore Road.

No Action Alternative- The locked gate at the beginning of South Shore Road prevents snowmobilers, including those wishing to park and unload their sleds at South Lake, from accessing this portion of the current C-4H snowmobile corridor trail, which is an important community connector route. It also prevents public motor vehicle access on this road which had been available in the past. Just unlocking the gate to provide this snowmobile access is not an acceptable option due to the danger of motor vehicles and snowmobiles trying to share a narrow, plowed road.

e. Classify an existing publicly used gravel access point as a snowmobile route/community connector road and trail and as access to a 3-car parking area.

New York State Route 28 to the Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor (Railroad Spur Road and Trail) – *see Figure 4*

The present OPRHP "C-7" corridor trail connects the hamlet of Old Forge to the McKeever area and points south using the shoulders of public roads including New York State Route 28, the Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor, and the trails on the John Brown Tract and Flat Rock Mountain Conservation Easement lands. Near McKeever, the C-7 trail crosses over the Moose River by utilizing the existing NY State Route 28 Bridge. This long, narrow bridge is unsuitable for accommodating both snowmobile traffic and motor vehicle traffic.

This amendment proposes using an existing, informal roadway adjacent to Route 28 (just north of McKeever) as both an access driveway to a new parking area and as part of the route for a short, new Community Connector snowmobile trail segment connecting the shoulder of State Route 28 with the Remsen – Lake Placid Railroad corridor snowmobile trail. The parking area will be constructed 100 – 200 feet outside of and east of the highway right-of-way, and it will be delineated with boulders that will limit motor vehicle access to three parking spaces approximately 40 feet from the railroad tracks. Unrestricted motor-vehicle use across the old, unused gravel mine at this location will also be prevented. The C-7 corridor trail will then be moved off a small section of the John Brown Tract Conservation Easement lands on the west side of State Route 28 and placed on the above-referenced roadway so that snowmobile riders can access the railroad bed, identified as an important snowmobile trail in Section VII-B of the Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor Unit Management Plan, and use the railroad bridge to cross the Moose River. Through use of this railroad bridge, potentially dangerous motor vehicle and snowmobile conflicts on the State Route 28 bridge over the Moose River will be reduced.

No Action Alternative – The “no action” alternative would leave the present C-7 snowmobile corridor trail in its present location on the State Route 28 Bridge across the Moose River. This bridge and the railroad bridge are the only two across this watercourse within ten miles of this area. Leaving the C-7 corridor trail in its present location dramatically increases the risk of a motor vehicle-snowmobile collision due to its length and narrow width. Considering the minimal impact to the Forest Preserve (an existing road approximately 400 feet long), versus the high risk to human safety, this alternative will not be considered.

f. Approximately 21.8 miles of present snowmobile trails will be reclassified and maintained as Class I hiking trails (i.e. trunk trails). These trails have seen little snowmobile use in over ten years and/or do not conform to the Management Guidance since they penetrate into the forest interior or are redundant.

Table 8. Snowmobile Trails Reclassified as Hiking Trails

Name	Miles
Chub Pond Trail (portion of trail around the pond)	1.5
Gull Lake Connector Trail	1.7
Little Woodhull Lake Trail	4.5
Mill Creek-Black Creek Lake Trail	2.5
Nelson Lake Trail	2.8
Nicks Lake Outlet Trail (eastern portion of this trail along Nicks Lake Outlet to the Remsen Falls Lean-To)	5.1
Nicks Lake Road*	0.8
Nicks Lake Trail	1.9
Otter Lake Outlet Trail**	1.0
Total	21.8

*This administrative road is mistakenly classified as a “trail” in the BRWF UMP and will be closed to snowmobile use.

**The Otter Lake Outlet Trail will be closed to snowmobiles after the construction and opening of the adjacent, proposed new Class II Trails around Otter Lake.

3. Discussion of "No Material Increase"

In March of 2008 the Adirondack Park Agency adopted a resolution which found that existing DEC policy, which places a cap on the total snowmobile trail mileage on all Wild Forest units at 848.88 miles, is consistent with the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan Wild Forest Basic Guideline #4. The resolution also outlined the format in which snowmobile trail mileage should be presented in future UMPs and UMP amendments to ensure continued compliance with Basic Guideline #4.

2009 Snowmobile Trail Mileage Inventory

In 2009, DEC conducted an inventory of all snowmobile trails on State lands in the Adirondack Park. This Park-wide inventory was developed in support of the Management Guidance, and was also used as the baseline in the Department's accounting for changes to the Park-wide snowmobile trail network pursuant to Basic Guideline #4. The baseline trail mileage compiled for the BRWF was 86.22 miles.

Black River Wild Forest UMP Amendment

In an earlier (draft) version of this UMP Amendment released for public comment in January of 2016, the baseline mileage was listed as 67.5 miles. During revisions to this Draft, it was discovered that Forest Preserve Roads open to snowmobiling were mistakenly not accounted for in this baseline mileage figure. Further investigation into this trail mileage discrepancy revealed both the 2009 inventory and the 2016 Draft UMP Amendment also excluded a few existing snowmobile trails (each receiving very little to no use) listed under the 1996 BRWF UMP. The baseline mileage has been adjusted in this Final UMP Amendment to correct these oversights.

This information is presented below, and includes mileage on roads and trails under DEC's jurisdiction only.

BRWF Unit Management Plan Amendment

Base Snowmobile Trail Mileage (2009 Inventory):	86.22
Additional Base Snowmobile Trail Mileage not included in 2009 Inventory:	16.78*
Proposed Closure Mileage:	21.8
Proposed New Trail Mileage:	13.7
Proposed Trail Mileage (Post-UMP Amendment):	94.9

Park-wide Snowmobile Trail Mileage

1972 Mileage	Estimated Existing Mileage in All Wild Forest Units	Proposed Net Gain/(Loss) of Mileage in BRWF	New Total Estimated Mileage in All Wild Forest Units	Total Allowable Wild Forest Mileage * *Mileage beyond which would be considered a "material increase"
740	780.13	8.68*	788.81	848.88

** The actual net change of snowmobile trail mileage proposed in this UMP amendment is a loss of 8.1 miles, but shows up as a gain because of the need to account for snowmobile trails that were unintentionally omitted from the 2009 inventory.*

4. North Lake Parking Area

A five-car parking lot at the southern end of North Lake (just north of the intersection of Loop Road and North Lake Road, across from the kiosk on the other side of Loop Road) will be constructed to provide day use parking (see Figure 6). The current concentration of existing parking areas on adjacent North Lake Conservation Easement Lands at the northern end of the lake leaves limited parking options for those wishing to recreate in the Forest Preserve at the opposite end. Often, designated campsites are used only for day use parking which conflicts with the high demand for lakeside camping. Installing this parking lot will help address this problem.

5. North Country National Scenic Trail

The North Country National Scenic Trail Adirondack Park Trail Plan/Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement (September 2015) identifies a proposed route of the North Country National Scenic Trail (NCNST) through the Black River Wild Forest and the adjacent North Lake Conservation Easement Lands (see Figure 7). Existing trails, specifically portions of the Stone Dam, Little Woodhull Lake, Grindstone Creek and North Branch Trails, will be used. However, these trails do not link directly with each other so this proposal also identifies areas (each called a "Corridor of Opportunity") where new trails would have to be constructed to connect this existing network.

In order avoid the wetlands around Little Woodhull Lake and reduce the number of footbridges necessary to cross streams (including a crossing of Little Woodhull Creek), the proposed NCNST route from the Stone Dam Trail to the Little Woodhull Lake Trail will tentatively be adjusted south of the "Corridor of Opportunity" shown upon the map (Figure 7) from the 2015 North Country National Scenic Trail Adirondack Park Trail Plan/Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement. This proposed route will commence from the Stone Dam Trail; after around 0.4 miles from its beginning (following the crossing of a tributary to Little Woodhull Creek), the proposed NCNST route will then head to the northeast along the hillside, generally paralleling Little Woodhull Creek. At approximately 2.0 miles, this route will cross Lyons Camp Lot Road south of the private land inholding and continue to the northeast along the ridge until the Little Woodhull Lake Trail is reached (an estimated distance of 3.9 miles). Following this existing trail north to its intersection with the North Lake-Sand Lake-Mill Creek Trail, the proposed NCNST route will then rejoin the "Corridor of Opportunity" northeast to the Grindstone Creek Trail within the North Lake Conservation Easement.

Approximately 6.4 miles of new Class I foot trail (trunk or primary trails) will be constructed on the Black River Wild Forest with around 0.9 miles of new trail on the North Lake Conservation Easement Lands. This proposed route will also require at least two footbridges to cross streams. These proposed new sections of trail are subject to further change from additional field scouting as they are further developed with input from the Adirondack Park Agency, including consideration of some locations for new designated campsites.

6. Stone Dam Trailhead Parking Lot

The current parking area at the Stone Dam Trailhead has room for only two cars and is difficult to access due to the steep slope from North Lake Road. Additionally, public use of this area is anticipated to increase once the proposed sections of the North Country

National Scenic Trail are constructed. To address these challenges, a new five car parking lot will be constructed adjacent to the Stone Dam Trailhead along the opposite (south) side of North Lake Road (see Figure 6). The current parking area for this trail will be closed to public use once this new lot is installed.

Appendix A: Public Comment Summary and Response

The DEC accepted public comment on the UMP Amendment from January 27, 2016 through February 29, 2016. Below is a summary of the comments received via letter, telephone and email with DEC's response. Similar comments were grouped together and in some cases, the comments had to be paraphrased and condensed for brevity.

General

Comment: DEC should revise UMPs completely instead of issuing amendments to cover projects like these. This UMP Amendment should be postponed and the proposals contained should be included in a complete revision of the UMP for the BRWF so they can be reviewed in their full context.

Response: *The Adirondack Park Agency (APA) resolution finding the Management Guidance as conforming to the APSLMP directed DEC to amend all Wild Forest UMPs so that their respective snowmobile trail systems meet these standards. Additionally, the proposals included in the UMP Amendment are of sufficient public demand and management need that there would be continued conflicts if DEC postponed these actions until a complete revision of the UMP has been completed.*

Comment: UMP Amendment lacks coordination with the Great South Woods Complex Planning Effort.

Response: *Planning for and drafting this UMP Amendment commenced well before, and progressed concurrently with, the Great South Woods Complex Planning Effort in order to comply with the APA resolution on the Management Guidance. The final Great South Woods Strategy and Recommendations were released in August 2016 while this UMP Amendment was being revised to incorporate public comment. New sections of foot trail in support of the North Country National Scenic Trail, one of the Great South Woods Complex Planning Effort's key recommendations for the Black River Wild Forest, were included in this UMP Amendment. Other applicable recommendations, such as a foot bridge over the Moose River at Remsen Falls and a second lean-to at Nelson Lake, will need to be investigated further for their feasibility prior to inclusion within a UMP Amendment or full UMP Revision.*

Comment: UMP Amendment fails to adequately address ecological impact from the proposed actions. DEC should also update past ecological assessments of the Black River Wild Forest.

Response: *Ecological impacts from snowmobile trail systems, including the construction of new Class II Community Connector Snowmobile Trails and their maintenance, were considered in the Snowmobile Plan for the Adirondack Park/Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement (2006). Additionally, ecological impacts from each of the specific proposals contained within the UMP Amendment have been considered and addressed during the State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) process. Each proposal included in this UMP Amendment will undergo a thorough project planning process, including consultation with the APA, before being implemented. Biodiversity data were updated in 2008 during an assessment that spanned both NYS-DEC Regions 5 and 6 by the New York Natural Heritage Program. These databases are continually updated as new information is discovered.*

Comment: Section on "Geology/Soils" under "Natural Resources" states that granite is a metamorphic rock when in fact it is an igneous rock.

Response: *This error applies to the 1996 Black River Wild Forest UMP, not the UMP Amendment, and will be corrected in a future revision of the entire UMP.*

Comment: Consider Regulation Changes to address ATV use on the Black River Wild Forest; the 2004 BRWF UMP amendment changes conflict with some regulations.

Response: *Comment noted. Changing the regulations that govern the use of State Owned Forest Preserve Land is outside the scope of this UMP Amendment.*

Comment: NYS should continue to ensure access to public lands for everyone.

Response: *Comment noted.*

Comment: Funds from snowmobiling and snowmobile clubs maintain the trails, hiking and fishing licenses fund these activities as well; hikers should be required to purchase a license and have this money fund trail maintenance as well.

Response: *Comment noted. This proposal is beyond the scope of this UMP Amendment.*

Snowmobiling

Comment: The snowmobile trail maps are confusing and do not provide enough detail.

Response: *The maps have been revised.*

Comment: Commenters state their support for the proposed snowmobile trail system in the UMP Amendment and for snowmobiling in the Adirondack Park.

Response: *Comments noted.*

Comment: Commenters state that DEC should not support snowmobiling on Forest Preserve Lands in the Adirondack Park.

Response: *Under the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan (APSLMP), snowmobiling on trails designated by DEC is permitted on Wild Forest Units. This activity is further subject to the restrictions contained within the Management Guidance. The Adirondack Park Agency resolution finding this document as conforming to the APSLMP further directed DEC to amend all Wild Forest UMPs to meet these standards.*

Comment: Commenters state that DEC provided much more thought to the snowmobile trail network than the other non-motorized proposals and other forms of non-motorized recreation (e.g., cross country skiing) which should be given the same amount of consideration.

Response: *While the primary objective of this UMP Amendment is to transform the snowmobile trail network for the Black River Wild Forest into compliance with the Management Guidance, non-motorized recreational pursuits are also supported through the reclassification of several snowmobile trails to non-motorized trails. The inclusion of two new parking areas and sections of hiking trail in support of the North Country National Scenic trail also enhance the available opportunities for these types of recreation.*

Comment: Commenters state that snowmobile trails should not be closed because they will never be reopened, snowmobiling occurs at a time when there are very few other users (e.g., hikers) on the trails and closing snowmobile trails limits other efforts such as research and search and rescue operations.

Response: *Trails that are to be closed to snowmobiles were identified as non-conforming to the Management Guidance, which DEC is obligated to follow, and/or trails that are no longer used very much, if at all. While not available to snowmobiles, these trails are being retained for other non-motorized uses. Snowmobiles and other motorized vehicles such as ATVs can be used by the DEC on these trails for emergencies or by other entities by permit for special purposes such as a research project.*

Comment: The UMP Amendment does not address snowmobile trail maintenance standards and the types of activities (specifically trail widening) and maintenance permitted following the reclassification of snowmobile trails.

Response: *The Management Guidance addresses trail maintenance standards and allowable maintenance for each classification of snowmobile trails.*

Comment: Commenter suggests Canada's Trail system (i.e. wider trails) as a model for New York snowmobile trails.

Response: *The Management Guidance specifies allowable snowmobile trail widths for those on State owned Forest Preserve Lands within the Adirondack Park.*

Comment: UMP Amendment does not adequately analyze snowmobile trail issues raised in the Management Guidance such as redundancy or remote interior areas.

Response: *Adirondack Park Agency staff reviewed the proposed snowmobile trail network numerous times for compliance with the Management Guidance in addition to the APSLMP. DEC feels that the UMP Amendment has been well scrutinized to ensure the trails proposed meet the standards and requirements contained within the Management Guidance.*

Comment: Commenters have concerns with classifying 26.0 Miles of snowmobile Trail as Class II Community Connector (Table 3) due to impacts from grooming and tree cutting.

Response: *Many of the trails being classified as Class II Community Connector trails are already groomed and meet the allowable widths outlined in the Management Guidance. Any future trail widening projects will occur under the NYS-DEC Adirondack*

Park Snowmobile Trail Project Work Plan Development and Implementation process in consultation with the Adirondack Park Agency.

Comment: Support the proposal to reclassify the entire trail from South Lake to Mad Tom Lake Trail as a Class II Community Connector Snowmobile Trail. The UMP proposal to widen and improve the trail around Round Top to get a tracked-groomer allowed there is a great upgrade being proposed, and should be given high priority to begin trail work.

Response*: While portions of the snowmobile route from South Lake to the Mad Tom Lake Trail are on Forest Preserve trails and thus are being classified as Class II Trails, other portions are on Forest Preserve Roads, specifically South Shore Road, Herkimer Landing Road and Black Creek Lake Road, that are open to snowmobiling and are managed in accordance with "CP-38 Forest Preserve Roads Policy" and not by the Management Guidance. The Management Guidance specifies the allowable standards, including the width and surface grading, of Class II Community Connector Snowmobile Trails. Any future project to widen any portions of these, or any other Class II snowmobile trails, will conform to these standards and be undertaken under the NYS-DEC Adirondack Park Snowmobile Trail Project Work Plan Development and Implementation process in consultation with the Adirondack Park Agency.*

Comment: Build the proposed North Lake-South Lake Snowmobile Trail as a road.

Response: *The APSLMP and DEC's "CP-38 Forest Preserve Roads Policy" both state that "no new roads or state truck trails can be constructed in Wild Forest areas unless such construction is authorized by Article XIV, Section 1 of the New York State Constitution and such construction is absolutely essential to the protection or administration of the area, no feasible alternative exists and no deterioration of the wild forest character or natural resource quality of the area will result. In addition, such construction is allowed only if it will not result in a material increase in the cumulative mileage of roads open to motorized use by the public in Adirondack Park Wild Forest units." This proposed trail cannot be built as a road without further approval and is being retained in the UMP Amendment as a snowmobile trail.*

Comment: Commenter questions if Snowmobile Trails on Forest Preserve Roads are to be managed, including grooming with a tracked groomer, like Class II Community Connector snowmobile trails.

Response: *Tracked groomers are allowed on Snowmobile routes on Forest Preserve Roads but DEC's management of roads for motor vehicle use, including snowmobiles, is guided by DEC's "CP-38 Forest Preserve Roads Policy" and not by the Management Guidance. However, the net result is that the roads that are part of a Community Connector route will be groomed similarly to Class II trails, and can be groomed to the width of the road and shoulders.*

Comment: Proposal should include an upgrade of the Nicks Lake-Nelson Lake Trail and the western end of the Nicks Lake Outlet Trail to Class II snowmobile trails and a bridge across the Moose River at Remsen Falls to connect the snowmobile trail system from Old Forge to McKeever. This route could be an alternative to the travel corridor and also serve mountain bikes during the non-winter months.

Response: *At Remsen Falls, the South Branch of the Moose River is classified as "Scenic" under the Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers Act. The restrictions of this law appear to prohibit bridge construction for motorized recreational uses, including snowmobiles, across rivers with the "Scenic" designation. Both the Nicks Lake-Nelson Lake Trail and the Nicks Lake Outlet Trail (from Nelson Lake to the Remsen Falls Lean-to) will remain as Class I trails.*

Comment: Commenters state that the Otter Lake Outlet Trail should not be closed to snowmobiles to provide access to Otter Lake.

Response: *The Management Guidance provides "…redundant trails, or are part of an unnecessarily dense, local snowmobile trail network where opportunities for quiet, non-motorized use of trails are rare or nonexistent" as criteria for snowmobile trails that are to be re-designated to non-motorized use or abandoned. In light of the new proposed Class II Trails (the Otter Lake-Dump Road Trail, the McKeever-Brewer Lake Trail, and the reclassification of a portion of the Brewer Lake Trail) servicing Otter Lake, the Otter Lake Outlet Trail was identified as a redundant trail to be closed in order to comply with the Management Guidance as well as a compensating action to enhance non-motorized recreational opportunities in the immediate area. Once these proposed new trails are built and open for use, the Otter Lake Outlet Trail will be reclassified as a hiking trail and closed to snowmobiles. The Woods Lake Trail, from the end of Lake View Drive to Woods Road in Otter Lake, will remain open to snowmobile use as a Class I trail to provide access to the west side of the lake.*

Comment: Commenters state that the Twin Lakes Trail should be closed since it does not lead anywhere, does not fit the definition of a Class I trail and is seldom used.

Response: *DEC feels that the Twin Lakes Trail meets the requirements of a Class I trail within the Management Guidance. This trail provides a more traditional, backcountry Adirondack snowmobiling experience as well as access for activities like trapping. For these reasons, this trail will remain open to snowmobiling as a Class I trail.*

Comment: The Little Woodhull Lake Trail should be closed to snowmobiles since it is seldom used and is away from the main trail system and without a parking area/trail head.

Response: *Comment noted. The Little Woodhull Lake Trail has been reclassified as a foot trail due to little use from snowmobilers.*

Comment: The currently-designated snowmobile trails to Humphrey Hill and to the lock and dam should remain open, as they have a wonderful scenic view of the Moose River, providing snowmobile access to the area from Green Bridge Rd. The map referenced in the UMP update is a little unclear if these trails are the Nicks Lake Road and Nicks Lake Trail proposed for closure or not. We recommend keeping them open.

Response: *The Nicks Lake Road (AKA Lock and Dam Trail) and Nicks Lake Trail (part of which is AKA "Humphrey Hill) will be reclassified to public non-motorized use since they were identified as redundant trails per the Management Guidance. Snowmobiling access to the surrounding area is retained by the Nicks Lake-Nelson Lake trail. Nicks Lake Road will still remain classified as an Administrative Road even though it is being closed to public snowmobiling.*

Comment: It is the snowmobile-community's position that current designated snowmobile trails that could be and are used to access other designated snowmobile trails, so long as they conform to the APA/DEC Snowmobile Trail Siting Guidelines, that they remain open as designated snowmobile trails. Conversely, we propose that when other designated snowmobile trails that are proposed to remain open but which are very seldom if ever used by snowmobile traffic, then we suggest that the Department consider closing them (after advisement on such from the snowmobile community) and use these trail miles within the DEC's Set Snowmobile Mileage Cap elsewhere in the Adirondack Park that make more sense to the overall snowmobile trail network.

Response: *Comment noted.*

Comment: Commenters question the funding and labor sources for constructing the North Lake-South Lake Trail.

Response: *Funding will likely come from a variety of sources including DEC budget appropriations. Labor for this project will likely come from a combination of sources including DEC staff and volunteers.*

Comment: Commenter recommends opening Loop Road on the North Lake Conservation Lands to snowmobiling.

Response: *Under the Conservation Easement agreement for this property, DEC does not hold the rights for allowing public snowmobiling on the North Lake Conservation Easement Lands.*

Comment: The classification of the trail past Sand Lake Falls (the North Lake-Sand Lake-Mill Creek Trail) as a Class II trail is a problem since it is located in a wetland.

Response: *Comment noted. Snowmobiling generally occurs during frozen ground conditions with minimal impact to the site.*

Comment: The periphery buffer around the North Lake-Sand Lake-Mill Creek Trail depicted on the UMP Amendment map does not appear to follow the rules in the Management Guidance.

Response: *The Management Guidance defines the "periphery" as the geographic area within two miles of a motorized travel corridor (non-snowmobile public motor vehicle routes and motorized waterbodies). Including Wolf Lake Landing Road to its end at Woodhull Lake, as well as motorized lakes, specifically Gull Lake and Woodhull Lake, in the area produces the periphery buffers depicted on the map included within the UMP Amendment. Furthermore, the Management Guidance states "A small number of existing DEC snowmobile trails in the Park shown to be located partly within remote interior areas may receive Class II designation due to their importance and may be retained and kept open, as long as either of the following conditions are met: 1) the remote interior area of concern is small-no more than 750 acres in area; or, 2) the trail segments of concern are located very near the boundary of the remote interior area, with no trail segment located further than one-half mile into the interior from any*

boundary". The North Lake-Sand Lake-Mill Creek trail meets this latter criterion and therefore can and will be retained as a Class II snowmobile trail.

Comment: The Railroad Spur Road (AKA Route 28 Spur Road) should be included in an infrastructure inventory or Appendix within the UMP Amendment.

Response: *The UMP Amendment has been revised to clarify this route is being formally proposed for parking access and for use as a Community Connector snowmobile trail.*

Comment: The proposed new trails in the Otter Lake area, the Otter Lake-Dump Road Trail, the Brewer Lake Trail and the McKeever-Brewer Lake Trail, cannot be used as justification to become part of C7 Corridor Trail since this action was not included in the original 1996 BRWF UMP.

Response: *In the 1996 UMP for BRWF Section IV (Projected Use and Management Proposed), subsection A-5, says "a connection between the Dump Road (Otter Lake) and the Wolf Lake Landing Road (McKeever) is recommended". However, even without this recommendation this amendment can propose new actions, so this UMP Amendment proposes making these new trails, the Otter Lake-Dump Road Trail and the McKeever-Brewer Lake Trail, and the section of the Brewer Lake Trail to be reclassified as a Class II trail, part of the C7 Corridor Trail.*

Comment: The justification of low snow depths for alternative trails around the Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor is unfounded because if there isn't enough snow for snowmobilers to safely ride the tracks then they shouldn't be on a trail either for the same reason.

Response: *Significant snow depths, much greater than what is required for trails in the woods, are necessary to adequately cover the rails for safe snowmobile operation. When exposed, the metal rails tend to retain heat from the sun, and generally without shading from overhead and adjacent trees, snow within the corridor tends to melt faster than in forested areas. The 2016 Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor Unit Management Plan Amendment/Final Supplemental EIS and this UMP Amendment both identify alternative snowmobile routes around the Travel Corridor for these reasons.*

Comment: The tracks on the Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor should be removed so snowmobiles can use the tracks all winter and not just in times of deep snow.

Response: *The Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor is a separate unit from the Black River Wild Forest and its management direction was addressed in the 2016 Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor Unit Management Plan Amendment/Final Supplemental EIS.*

Comment: The Brewer Lake Trail should be left as a non-motorized trail since the Otter Lake Outlet Trail does not have a destination like Brewer Lake.

Response: *The UMP Amendment proposes leaving the last mile of the Brewer Lake Trail directly to the lake classified as a foot trail only for non-motorized recreational use.*

Comment: Consider having a speed limit added to the regulations for snowmobile trails.

Response: *Comment noted. New York State has a statewide snowmobile speed limit of 55 miles per hour. However, promulgating regulations to change or further restrict this limitation is a separate process beyond the scope of this UMP Amendment.*

South Lake

Comment: Proposal to rehabilitate South Shore Road should not have been hidden in the UMP Amendment and doing so would change the character of South Lake to something similar to North Lake (i.e. less solitude); remove this proposal from the UMP Amendment.

Response: *This proposal was included and approved in the current (1996) UMP for the Black River Wild Forest, Sub-Plans for the Pratt-Northam Memorial Park and Bank Lot (page 49, Section H., #4), which states: "…rehabilitate the existing South Shore (South Lake) Road from the end of the Cox ROW to the Pratt-Northham Park Parcel II (approximately 1 mile). Develop a 15 car parking lot for parking/camping and gate the road at the parking lot. Open the gate during the snowmobile season."*

Comment: Additional parking areas should be installed along North Lake Road and South Lake Road.

Response: *The UMP Amendment includes a proposal for a new five car parking lot just off of North Lake Road (on Loop Road) at North Lake. A larger, improved parking lot (5 car) at the Stone Dam Trailhead has been added as well.*

Comment: Commenters state that the gate on South Shore Road should be removed altogether.

Response: *Comment noted.*

Comment: Commenter states that the gate on South Shore Road should remain closed and that opening the gate would violate an agreement between the private in-holders and DEC.

Response: *South Shore Road is a Forest Preserve Road that can be open to public motor vehicle use and DEC retains the right to manage its use.*

Comment: Commenters express the need for additional improvements, including hiking trails, at South Lake as well as better maintenance of the existing campsites, parking area and boat launch.

Response: *Comments noted. DEC recognizes the need for maintenance of recreational facilities on state-owned Forest Preserve Lands and tries to do so with the available resources at its disposal. The proposals for additional hiking trails in the South Lake area will be considered in a future revision of the Black River Wild Forest UMP.*

North Country National Scenic Trail (NCNST)

Comment: Commenters state their support for the proposed new sections of foot trail in support of the NCNST.

Response: *Comments noted.*

Comment: The level of detail provided concerning the NCNST route is unsatisfactory since the North Country National Scenic Trail Adirondack Trail Plan/Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement stated that the individual UMPs for each unit would

address infrastructure needs such as designated campsites and bridges across streams.

Response: *Comment noted. While still largely conceptual in nature, the proposed NCNST route has been revised to include greater detail concerning infrastructure needs. However, the exact route and required infrastructure such as bridges will not be known with a high degree of certainty until the work planning process is completed with consultation from the APA. In fact, this route may change altogether as the result of further "on-the-ground" scrutiny.*

The North Country National Scenic Trail Handbook for Trail Design, Maintenance and Construction (1998, US Department of the Interior, National Park Service) states that "the desired distance between camping areas along the trail is 8 to 15 miles". Camping options along this proposed trail include the existing designated campsites along North Lake in both the Black River Wild Forest and adjacent North Lake Conservation Easement Lands. However, it should be noted that dispersed camping is allowed on State Forest Preserve Lands as long as the chosen campsite is 150 feet away from any road, trail, spring, stream, pond or other body of water (6 CRR-NY 190.3). Likewise, dispersed camping in a similar manner is also allowed on the North Lake Conservation Easement Lands except in areas temporarily closed to public use by the Landowner for timber harvesting. Although the existing camping options currently meet the recommended criteria for the NCNST, additional designated campsites will be designated, in conjunction with the trail layout, with consultation from the APA. Additional infrastructure needs will be assessed once these new sections of trail are constructed and opened for public use.

Comment: The proposed trail should be moved closer to Chub Pond so there is an overnight destination along the trail.

Response: *Comment noted. A route closer to Chub Pond was considered but decided against due to likely impacts on the extensive wetlands around Little Woodhull Lake. Hikers wishing to access either lean-to on Chub Pond may do so by continuing north along the Stone Dam Trail.*

Comment: The Little Woodhull Lake Trail should be closed to snowmobiles so that it does not run concurrent with the NCNST, a non-motorized single-track foot trail.

Response: *Comment noted. The Little Woodhull Lake Trail has been reclassified for non-motorized uses due to the lack of use it receives from snowmobilers.*

Comment: The parking area at the Stone Dam Trailhead is inadequate; DEC should improve this parking area.

Response: *The UMP Amendment has been revised to include parking at an improved 5 car parking lot at the Stone Dam Trailhead.*

Comment: A kiosk should be installed at the Stone Dam Trailhead to welcome hikers to the NCNST in the Adirondack Park.

Response: *Comment noted. A kiosk will be installed at the Stone Dam trailhead demarcating the beginning of the NCNST in the Adirondacks and the trail itself will be signed appropriately along its entire length.*

Comment: Commenter states that changing the proposed route for the NCNST to be located further south of Little Woodhull Lake and closer to North Lake Road on the higher elevation hardwood ridges would result in a trail that is easier to construct and maintain with less environmental impact and higher aesthetic values.

Response: *Comment noted. The proposed, tentative route has been adjusted.*

Comment: Once these proposed trail segments are constructed, the existing herd path to Horn Lake in the West Canada Lake Wilderness should be used to connect the NCNST into this unit. This route needs to be marked better.

Response: *The location of the NCNST in the West Canada Lake Wilderness Area will be addressed in the UMP for that unit.*

<u>Otter Lake Ski Loop Trail</u>

Comment: Commenter states their support for the proposed Otter Lake Outlet Ski Loop Trail but desires additional information on its location.

Response: *Comment noted. The conceptual location for this proposed new trail is that south of Otter Lake on the Otter Lake Outlet Trail, this new ski trail would head east and cross the Otter Lake Outlet at a suitable location, and then head to the northeast along a ridge until it meets the Woods Lake Trail. However, additional field scouting of this proposed location has revealed that there are several obstacles, including the terrain*

(rocky areas and a few steep slopes) and wetlands. Therefore, this proposal has been removed from the UMP Amendment.

Comment: Commenters state that improvements are necessary to the Otter Lake Outlet Trail, such as removing boulders and draining/rerouting wet areas, to make it suitable for consistent cross-country skiing

Response: *Comment noted.*

Comment: Commenters state their opposition over the proposal to create a ski loop trail off of the Otter Lake Outlet Trail along with an adjacent five car parking lot due to concerns for increased traffic on Lake View Road, potential conflicts between snowmobiles/pedestrians and motor vehicles, negative impacts on the aesthetic and property values on adjacent owners, and misuse (i.e. partying, garbage being left) of the area by the public.

Response: *Motor vehicle traffic on Lake View Road is not expected to increase significantly, nor are adjacent property values to be harmed, as a result of these kinds of proposals. With any amount of public use of Forest Preserve Lands, there is always the potential for their abuse. DEC Forest Rangers will continue to patrol the area and encourage responsible recreational activities.*

Appendix B: Maps

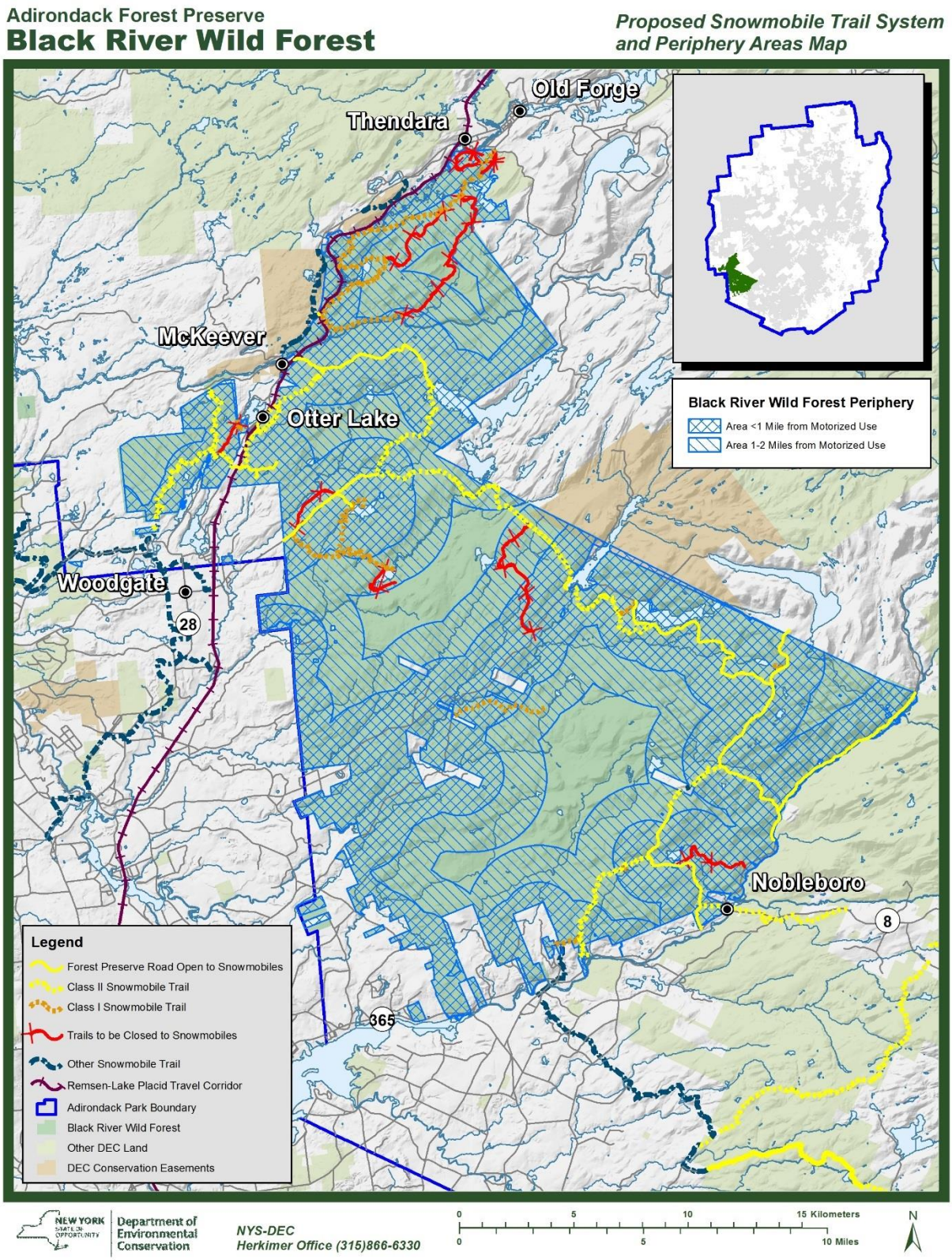

Figure 1. Proposed Snowmobile Trail System and Periphery Areas for the Black River Wild Forest.

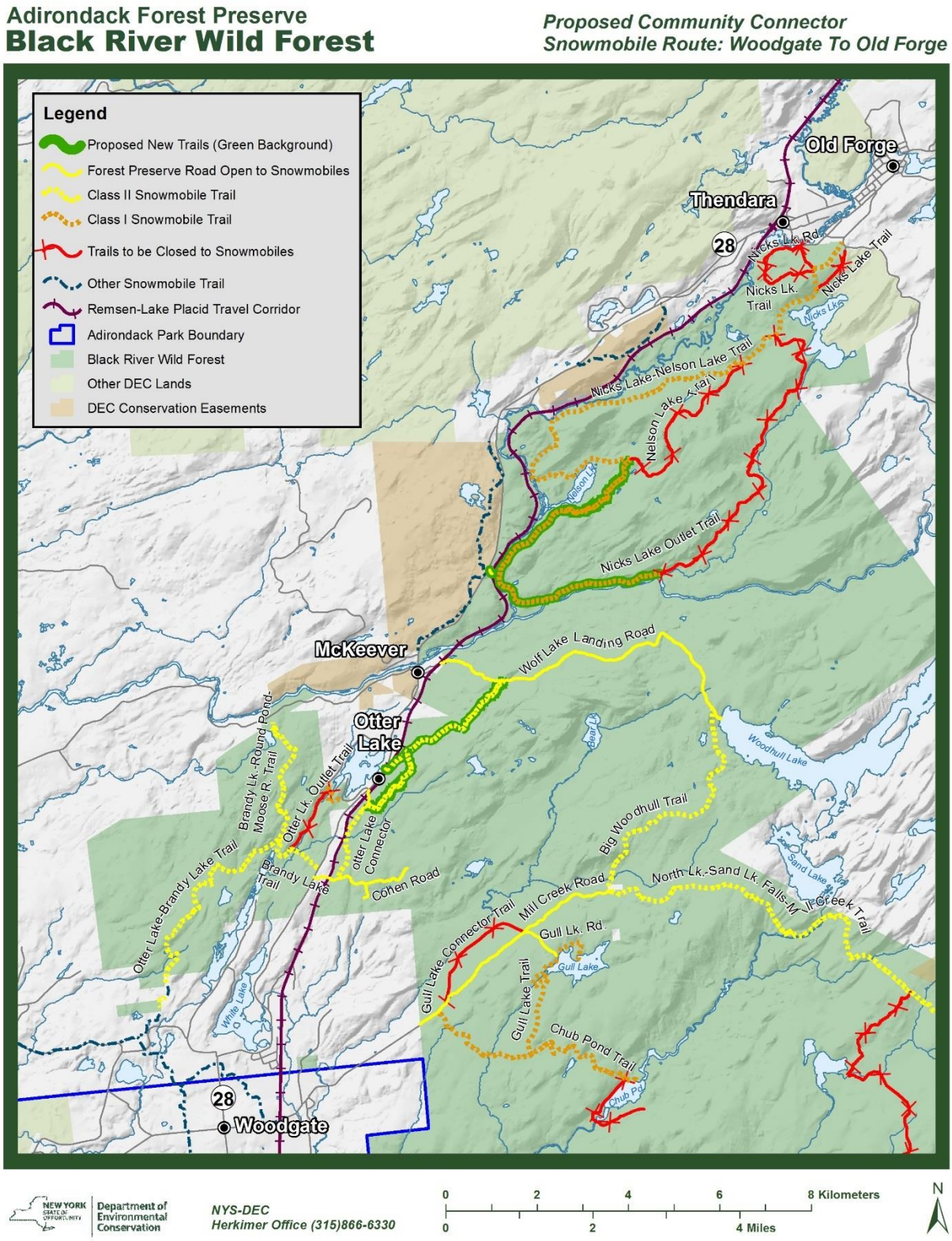

Figure 2. Proposed Community Connector Snowmobile Route Between Old Forge and Woodgate.

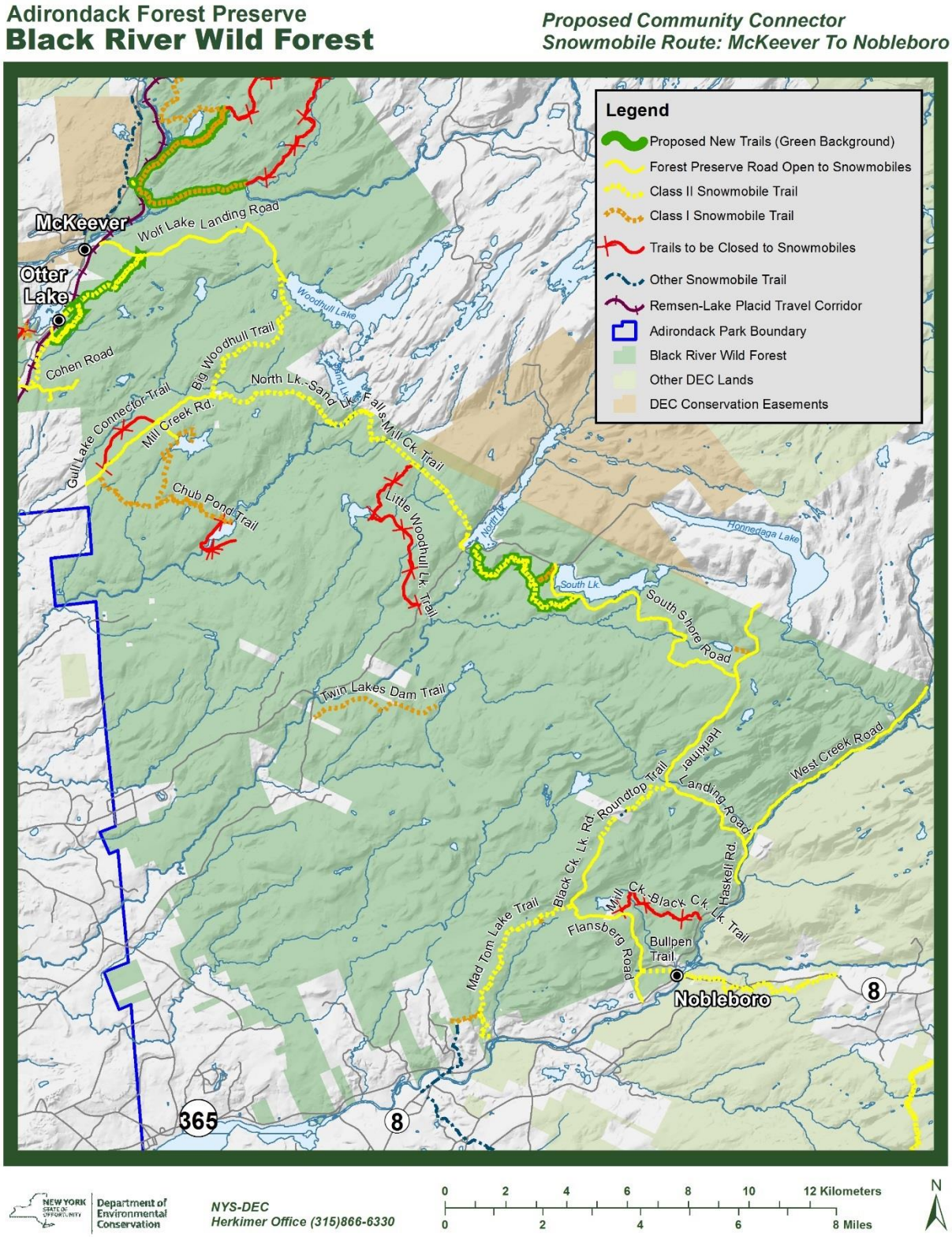

Figure 3. Proposed Community Connector Snowmobile Route Between McKeever and Nobleboro.

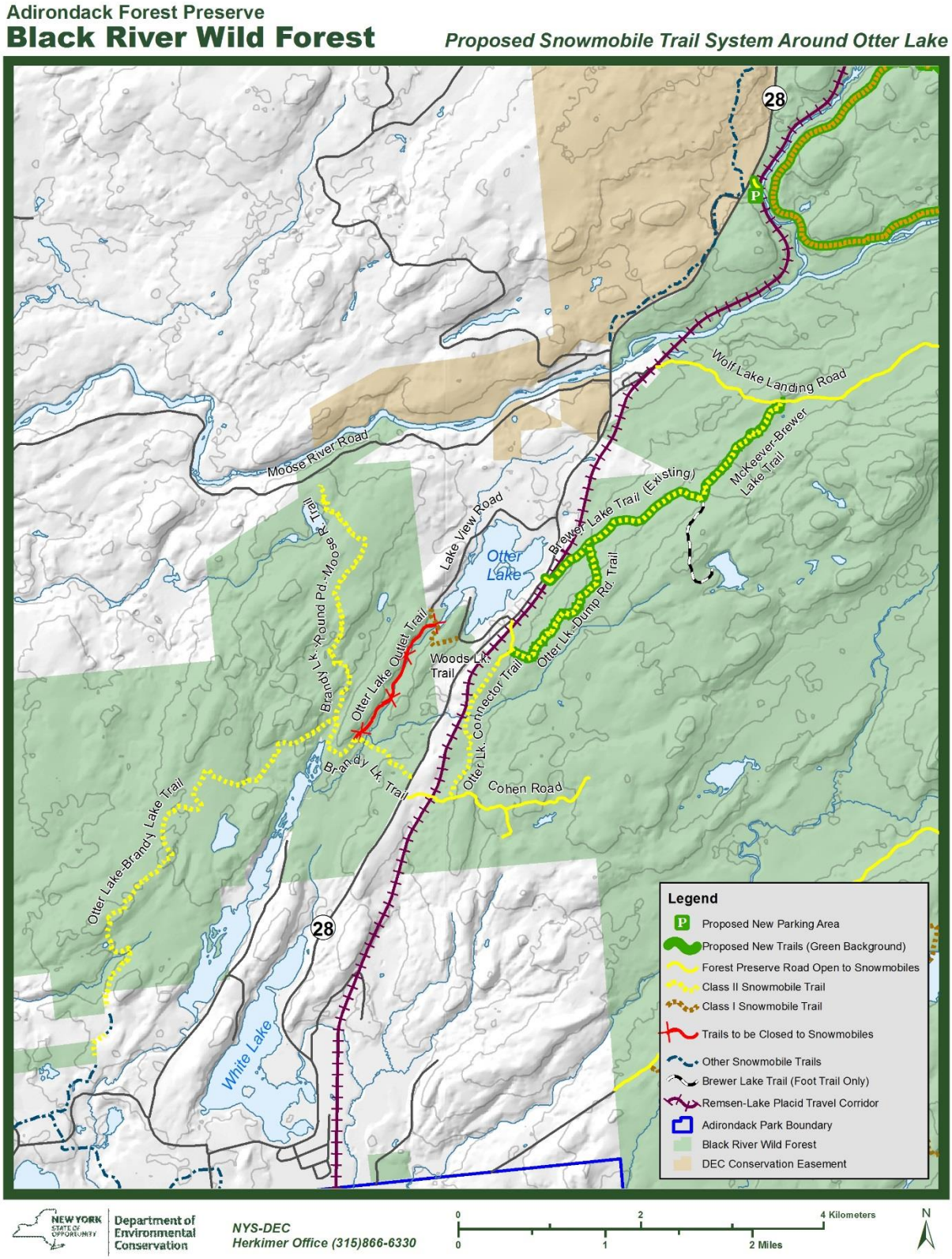

Figure 4. Proposed Snowmobile Trail System Around Otter Lake.

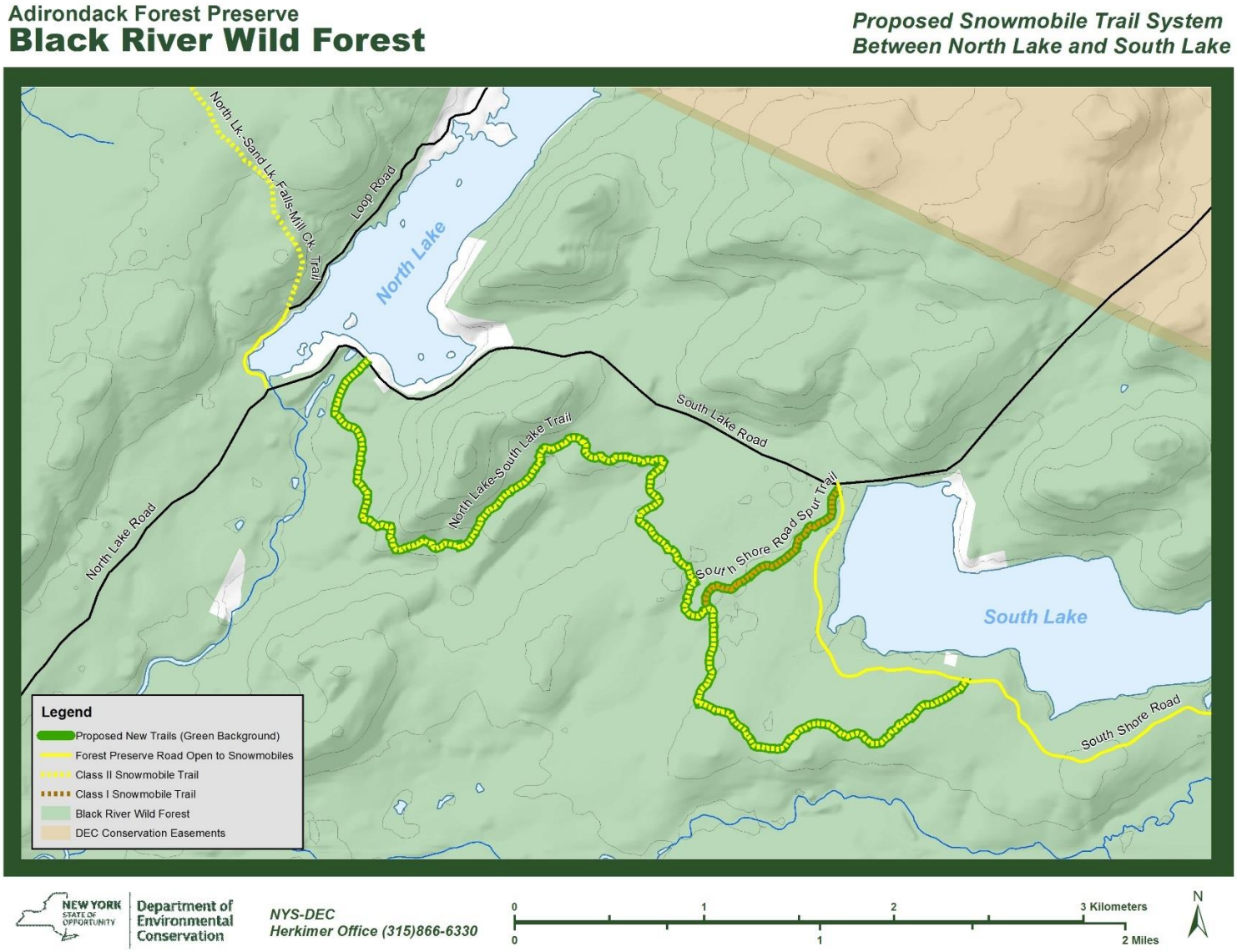

Figure 5. Proposed Snowmobile Trail System Between North Lake and South Lake.

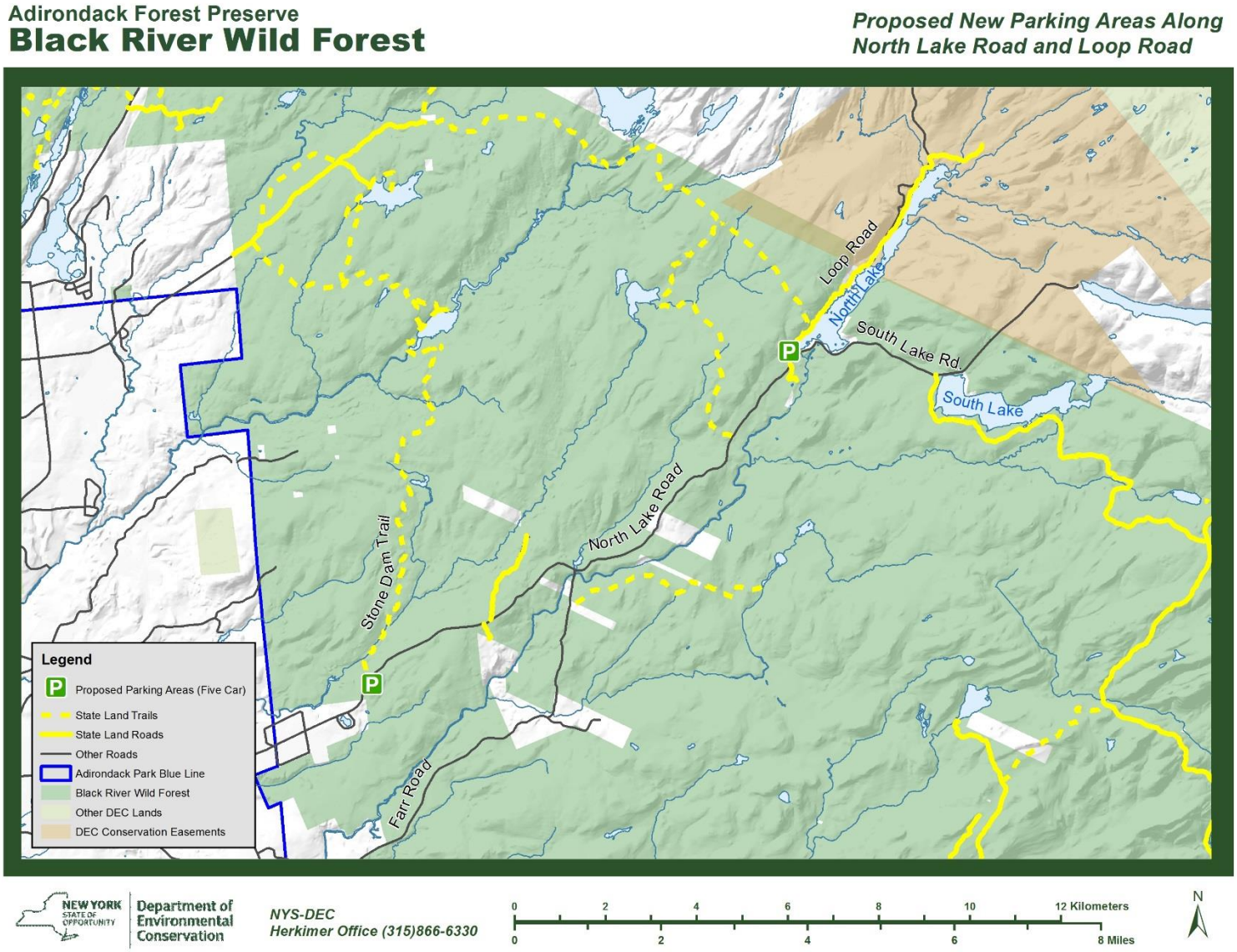

Figure 6. Proposed New Parking Lots at the Stone Dam Trailhead and North Lake.

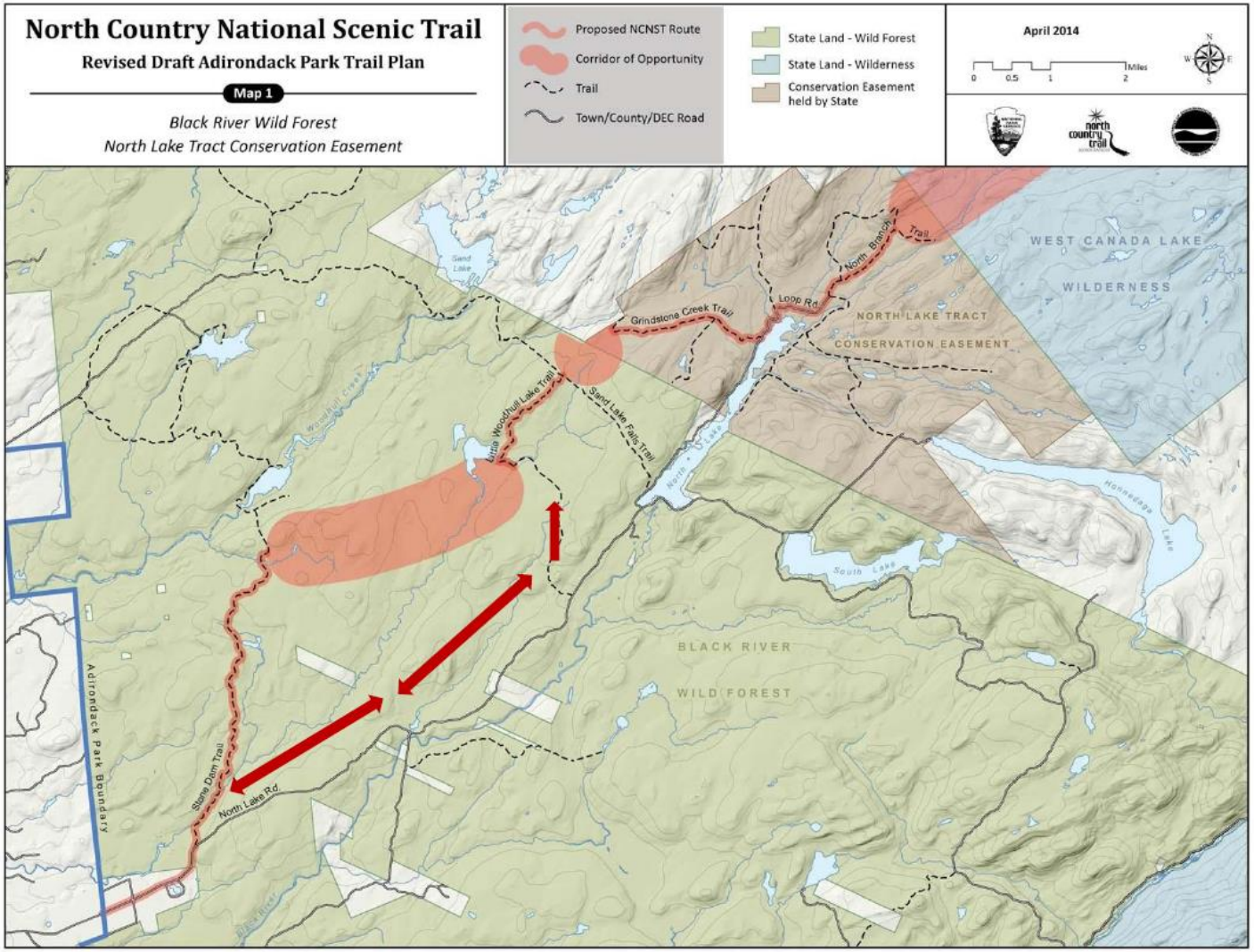

Figure 7. Proposed Route of the North Country Scenic Trail (map from the 2015 North Country National Scenic Trail Adirondack Park Trail Plan/Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement). Deviations from the "Corridor of Opportunity" south of Little Woodhull Lake are delineated with Red Arrows. After reaching the Little Woodhull Lake Trail and following it north, the proposed route will rejoin the previously identified NCNST Route into the North Lake Conservation Easement and beyond.