NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY | Department of Environmental Conservation

CROGHAN TRACT CONSERVATION EASEMENT

Draft Recreation Management Plan

Lewis County

Towns of Croghan and Watson

NYSDEC, REGION 6, DIVISION OF LANDS AND FORESTS

3127 State Route 812 Lowville, NY 13367
r6.ump@dec.ny.gov

REVIEW DECLARATION

The New York Department of Environmental Conservation has the responsibility of managing public access and recreation on the Croghan Tract Conservation Easement, in accordance with the encumbering conservation easement. This Recreation Management Plan (RMP) is consistent with the purpose, terms and conditions of the conservation easement. RMP management actions are approved for implementing public recreation on the easement property. Notwithstanding the foregoing, should any discrepancies arise between the RMP and the Conservation Easement, the Conservation Easement will prevail.

ACCEPTED BY GRANTOR:
The Molpus Woodlands Group

By: _____ Date: _____
Ken Sewell
COO Molpus Woodlands Group, LLC
Manager MWF Adirondacks, LLC

ACCEPTED BY GRANTEE:
Department of Environmental Conservation, New York

By: _____ Date:_____
Robert K. Davies, State Forester
NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
Division of Lands & Forests

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RECREATION MANAGEMENT PLAN SUMMARY

The Croghan Tract Conservation Easement (CTCE) encompasses approximately 12,816 acres in the Towns of Croghan and Watson, Lewis County, just inside the western boundary of the Adirondack Park. The property is split into two parcels, located on either side of the Beaver River. The CTCE shares approximately 8.8 miles of boundary with forest preserve lands (the Pepperbox Wilderness Area, Watson's East Triangle Wild Forest, and a detached forest preserve parcel).

This Croghan Tract Conservation Easement Recreation Management Plan outlines public recreation access and facilities which will be provided for public use of the property. Consistent with the encumbering conservation easement, proposed public recreation is considered only where compatible with forestry and natural resource protection objectives.

Summary of management proposals in this RMP:

- New kiosks and informational signage will be placed at primary access points to the property;
- 5.3 miles of road will be newly opened under the RMP to public passenger vehicles. In total, 16.3 miles of road will be open on the property, providing access to the Croghan Tract Conservation Easement and adjacent forest preserve lands;
- Ten (10) parking areas will be newly constructed or maintained;
- In total, 28.6 miles of snowmobile trail will be maintained on the property, including rights-of-way and secondary trails used as alternative routes during logging operations. New trails proposed in the plan include a 0.3-mile reroute around a hunting camp, and a 3.4-mile trail to avoid plowed roads during logging operations;
- A 0.6-mile foot trail will be constructed to access the Eagle Canyon forest preserve parcel;
- Nine (9) campsites will be designated, including two (2) campsites which will meet universal accessibility standards;
- A car-top boat launch which meets universal accessibility standards will be maintained on Soft Maple Reservoir;
- Hunting, fishing and trapping will continue to be permitted throughout the property subject to applicable seasons and regulations.

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PREFACE

Use of Conservation Easements in New York State

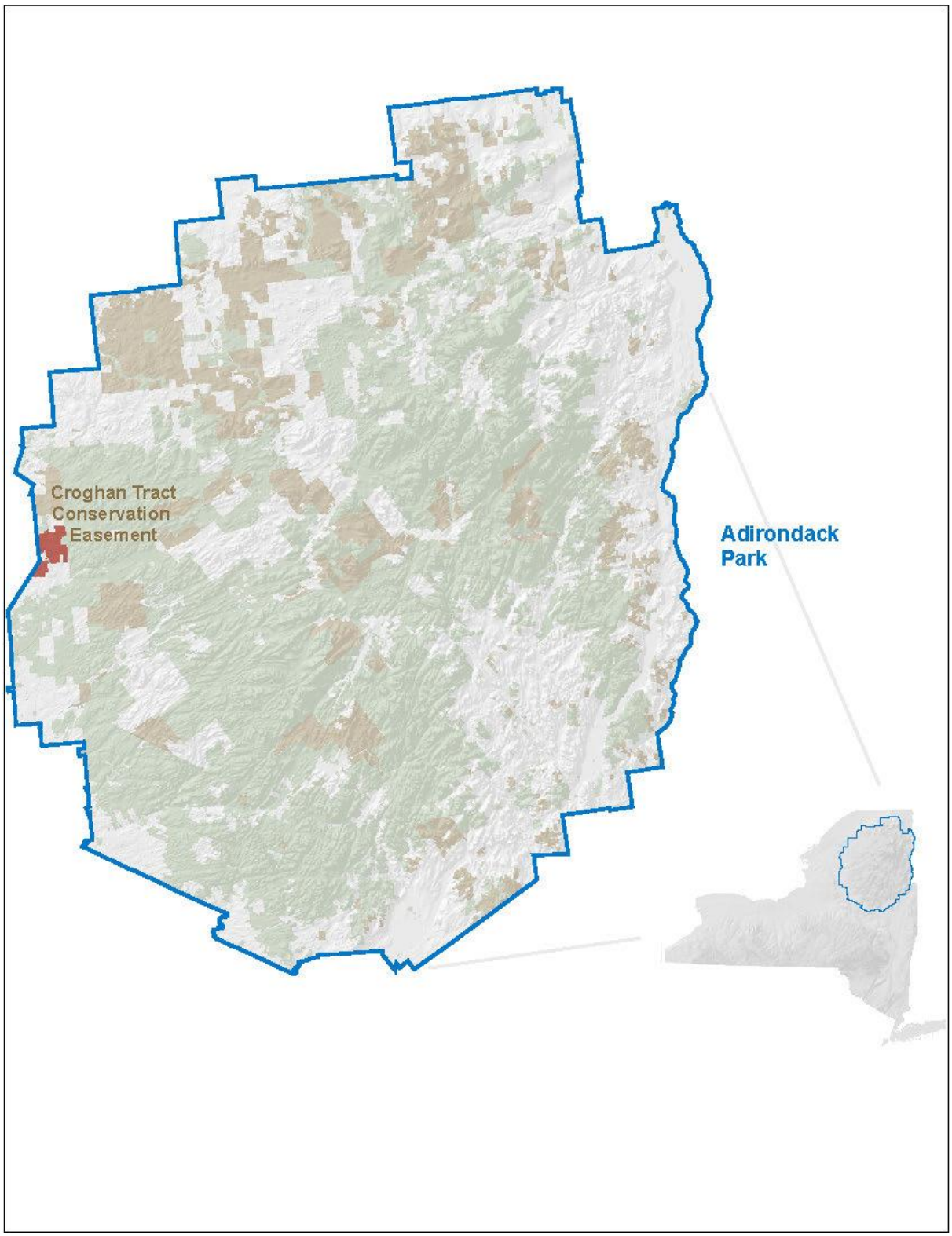
The New York State Legislature has declared that the public policy of the State is to conserve, preserve, and protect its environmental assets, natural resources and man-made resources. In addition to purchasing lands in fee on behalf of the People of the State, the State also protects land and natural resources by purchasing less than fee, permanent interests in land, termed conservation easements. Conservation easements are used widely across the United States by government and non-profit land conservation organizations to protect a variety of properties with important natural resources and other landscape values such as water quality, wildlife habitat, sensitive ecosystems, wetlands, riparian areas, scenic areas such as meadows and ridgelines, agricultural land, working forests, and historic sites. The primary function of conservation easements is to limit or eliminate future development and undesirable land uses on a property, while allowing for continued private ownership and traditional management.

New York State acquires conservation easements primarily on properties that buffer existing State lands, provide additional public recreational opportunities, and/or maintain large working forests. There are now hundreds of thousands of acres of land in New York that are protected by conservation easements acquired by the State. Most of that land consists of large tracts of commercial timber land in the Adirondack and Tug Hill regions; however, New York State also holds easements on a variety of other properties across the State.

Some conservation easements allow public access to the protected property and some do not. On many large working forest conservation easement properties, the State has acquired public recreation rights in addition to development and land use restrictions. In some cases, a wide range of public recreational use is permitted, and in others public access is very limited. The amount of public access depends largely on the goals and objectives of the landowner and the State at the time the easement was negotiated.

This RMP will explain the combination of public recreational rights the State acquired through the conservation easement and how these rights are to be implemented and managed on the property in a compatible way with the rights retained by the landowner.

Tract Location Map



I. INTRODUCTION

New York State purchased a conservation easement on the Croghan Tract in Lewis County, NY in 1999. The encumbering conservation easement is recorded in the Lewis County Clerk's Office (L643, P178), along with an amendment completed in 2012 (Instrument 2012-001488). The stated purposes of the conservation easement granted to New York State are prioritized - the principle object being to perpetuate the property as a biologically and economically sustainable working forest, the secondary objective to conserve wildlife habitat and other natural resource features, and the tertiary objective to provide opportunities for public recreation.

The Croghan Tract Conservation Easement, referred to herein as the "CTCE" or "property", grants New York State a legal interest in the property and sets forth terms, restrictions and rights of both the landowner and the State with respect to use and management of the tract. The landowner is responsible for managing the property in a manner that complies with the conservation easement deed. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (Department or NYSDEC) is responsible for managing the rights purchased by the People of New York and ensuring landowner management is in compliance with the conservation easement. The conservation easement deed and amendment are recorded in the Lewis County Clerk's Office.

Public recreation on New York State conservation easement lands is managed subject to Recreation Management Plans. It should be noted, that in the CTCE deed, the term "Land Management Plan" is used to refer to a Recreation Management Plan. The purpose of an RMP is to establish a planned, written management strategy to implement the State's rights and protect property rights of the landowner. RMPs condense applicable laws and regulations, Department policies, easement-specific conditions, and property-specific information into a single management document. It is intended that RMPs serve to guide management over time, despite changes to Department personnel or the landowner. RMPs may be periodically updated or amended. Should discrepancies arise between the RMP and the conservation easement, easement terms take precedence. This RMP applies only to those lands subject to the Croghan Tract Conservation Easement located in Lewis County, in the Towns of Croghan and Watson.

The landowner was consulted during the planning process and had the opportunity to review and comment on this draft RMP. Other stakeholders also had the opportunity to provide input during a 60-day public comment period (March 6th to May 6th, 2017) before a draft of the plan was prepared.

II. PROPERTY OVERVIEW

A. Geographic Information

1. Property Description and Access

The Croghan Tract Conservation Easement is located wholly within the Adirondack Park, adjacent to the western Park boundary, in the Towns of Croghan and Watson, in Lewis County. The CTCE is commercially managed forestland, comprised primarily of a northern hardwood forest, with lowland pockets of pine-hemlock-hardwood forest. There are seven named streams and ponds and approximately 3,002 acres of wetland located on the property. The CTCE is located within the Black River and St. Lawrence River Watersheds in the Western Adirondack Foothills Ecozone.

The CTCE is comprised of two parcels - Parcel C-1 is 10,325 acres, located north of the Beaver River and Parcel C-2 is 2,491 acres, located south of the Beaver River. The entire conservation easement is shown on the 'Soft Maple Reservoir' USGS 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle (Quad 189).

The CTCE is comprised of portions of John Brown's Tract, Watson's West Triangle and Chassanis Tract. CTCE lands are depicted in NYSDEC Map 11707, dated 2/25/2004.

Tax Parcel ID	Parcel	Town/County	Acreage
105.00-01-02.120	C-1	Croghan/Lewis	4,327
106.00-01-02.110	C-1	Watson/Lewis	5,998
119.00-03-23.000	C-2	Watson/Lewis	21
120.00-01-01.110	C-2	Watson/Lewis	2,457
120.00-01-01.200	C-2	Watson/Lewis	11
120.00-01-03.000	C-2	Watson/Lewis	2

Public road access to the CTCE is provided by Fish Creek and Prentice Roads in the Town of Croghan (Parcel C-1); and Beecher Road in the Town of New Bremen. The Adsit Trail in the Town of Watson is a private road but is open to the public and provides access to Parcel C-2.

2. Relationship to Adjacent Public Property

Forest Preserve Lands

The CTCE is located south and adjacent to 1,650 acres of Watson's East Triangle Wild Forest (http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/80005.html) which encompasses Mud Pond and the West Branch of the Oswegatchie River. The CTCE shares 1.5 miles of boundary with the

Wild Forest, separated by Prentice Road. North-south snowmobile routes in the area lead north from the CTCE into Watson's East Triangle Wild Forest.

The CTCE is also directly connected to the 22,560-acre Pepperbox Wilderness Area (http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/34719.html), located east of the property, and sharing 7.1 miles of boundary. Despite its relatively small size, the Pepperbox Wilderness Area has a reputation as a remote wilderness, providing outstanding opportunities for primitive recreation and solitude. The Main Haul Road, Jakes Pond and Sand Pond Roads provide access to the adjacent Pepperbox Wilderness, which otherwise has few trails or recreational facilities. The Sand Pond Trail (Accessible) in the Pepperbox Wilderness can be accessed from the Main Haul Road on the CTCE.

The CTCE also shares 0.2 miles of boundary with the 5-acre Eagle Canyon forest preserve parcel (Independence River Wild Forest).

Forest preserve lands are managed under their respective Unit Management Plans. Public recreation information is available through the NYSDEC State Lands Interactive Mapper (http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/45415.html).

State Forests

The 559-acre Balsam Creek State Forest (http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/8064.html) is accessed from Fish Creek Road, 2.9 miles before it leads onto the CTCE. Balsam Creek State Forest may attract some recreation from CTCE visitors who notice NYSDEC signage while driving on Fish Creek Road, but no direct relationship between the properties exists.

This parcel is managed under the Westward Waters Unit Management Plan. Public recreation information is available through the NYSDEC State Lands Interactive Mapper (http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/45415.html).

3. Relationship to Adjacent Private Property

Conservation Easements

The Oswegatchie Conservation Easement (http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/38516.html) is located a few miles north of the Croghan Tract Conservation Easement. Similar to the CTCE, the Oswegatchie Conservation Easement is managed for timber products, contains private camps, and is open to public recreation. The most direct relationship between the two conservation easements is the snowmobile trails which pass through these properties and serve as primary north-south routes in the region.

The Oswegatchie Conservation Easement is managed by NYSDEC under the Oswegatchie Conservation Easement Recreation Management Plan. Public recreation

information is available through the NYSDEC State Lands Interactive Mapper (http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/45415.html).

Other Private Property

Private property abuts 26.6 miles of the CTCE boundary. Private landowners abutting the property include Jackson Timberland Opportunities - Champion LLC (an uneased piece of land owned by the owners of the CTCE), Future Farmers of America, and Erie Boulevard Hydropower. The Adsit Trail (Road), located south of the Beaver River and adjacent to Parcel C-2 is privately owned, however is open to public passenger vehicles and snowmobiles, and therefore provides public access to the CTCE.

Rights of Way

Rights-of-way relating to the CTCE are depicted on Department Map 11707 and summarized below. Liber (L) and page (P) for each deed in the Lewis County Clerk's Office are listed.

Private Rights of Way

a. Adsit Trail/Eagle Canyon Road (L151 P139) leading south from Adsit Trail (L566 P88)
b. Crooked Lake: Crooked Lake property access over the Main Haul Road and Woods Road (Both referred to in this RMP as the Main Haul Road; L482 P47)
c. Jakes Pond: Private reciprocal easements to the Jakes Pond property from Fish Creek Road to the Main Haul Road and Jakes Pond Road (L482 P47, L643 P178, and L643 P266)
d. Sand Pond Road: Private reciprocal easements (L643 P178, L643 P266)

Public Rights-of-Way

a. Blue Line Trail: The portion of the Blue Line Trail west of the Adirondack Park Blue Line is a permanent easement owned by NYSDEC. (Primary Access Corridor - L643 P266)
b. Beecher Road: A 66-foot-wide right-of-way was acquired by New York State with the conservation easement leading from Beecher Road to Burnt Camp Road on Parcel C-2 (passes through lands owned by Vincent and Nancy Edick). Another New York State right-of-way leaves Beecher Road, following the boundary of fee lands currently owned by Jackson Timberland Opportunities – Champion LLC, to Burnt Camp Road.
c. Prentice Road Extension & Taggart Club Road: NYSDEC owns a right-of-way from the end of Prentice Road across Future Farmers of America property to the Main Haul Road and over Taggart Club Road onto the CTCE. (L422 P08)

B. Property History & Current Use

1. Area History

Before the end of the 1700s, the land now comprising the Croghan Tract Conservation Easement was occupied by Native Americans. In 1792, Alexander Macomb purchased nearly 4,000,000 acres in northern New York, comprising present day Lewis, Jefferson, St. Lawrence and Franklin Counties, and portions of Herkimer and Oswego Counties (Macomb's Purchase), including the CTCE. In 1821 the Town of Watson was formed, and in 1841 the Town of Croghan was formed.

St. Regis Paper Company, which owned the CTCE 1927-1984, primarily used the property as a source of fiber for its paper mill (softwood harvests) located in Deferiet, NY. St. Regis Paper Company purchased the CTCE as part of an agreement with Montgomery Ward – who contracted the company to produce paper for their popular catalog and wanted to assure sufficient timber for production purposes. Also, of interest, the Sand Pond Club camp is reported to have housed German prisoners dispatched to harvest timber during World War II.

2. Landowners and Private Management

The CTCE has been used for timber production since the late 1800s. Historical recreational use has been largely represented by hunting, fishing, and trapping, as well as the related lease of camps on the property. Some recent landowners include, the St. Regis Paper Company which purchased the property in 1927, followed by Champion International Corporation which purchased the property in 1984. In 1999, The Conservation Fund facilitated a multi-party deal, purchasing the Croghan Tract along with other lands totaling nearly 300,000 acres in New York, Vermont and New Hampshire from Champion International. The Conservation Fund granted a conservation easement on the Croghan Tract to NYSDEC and sold the underlying fee land to Heartwood Forestland Fund III LP. Other New York lands which were part of this deal include the Tooley Pond Conservation Easement (St. Lawrence County), Santa Clara Conservation Easement (Franklin and St. Lawrence Counties), and 29,000 acres purchased in fee which were added to the forest preserve. In 2012, Heartwood Forestland Fund III LP completed an amendment to the conservation easement with NYSDEC, which among other changes, allowed lease camps to remain on the property. The current landowner, Jackson Timberland Opportunities - Champion LLC, has owned the property since 2014.

i. Forestry

The principle objective of the Croghan Tract Conservation Easement is to ensure that the forest resource will continue to be available to the current and future landowners for sustainable forest management and the associated long-term production of forest products. Currently, Molpus Woodlands Group serves as the fund manager for Jackson Timberland Opportunities - Champion LLC, implementing sustainable forest management practices and managing a private lease camp program on the CTCE. It is common to see foresters, loggers, and logging equipment on the property. Members of the public recreating on the CTCE can expect to encounter this type of activity during a typical visit. At times, portions of the property may be closed to public recreation during forest management operations. Forest management on the Croghan Tract is currently certified by the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) and the property is enrolled in the New York 480a forest tax law program.

ii. Recreational Leases

As permitted by the 2012 conservation easement amendment, a total of 220 camps may be retained on the Croghan, Santa Clara, and Tooley Pond conservation easement lands. Currently, eleven (11) camps are located on the CTCE and leased to private clubs, and two (2) additional camp locations have been approved for construction. One acre surrounding each camp may be posted against public use. Private lessees are permitted to use motorized vehicles and in some cases ATVs to access their camps. Additional lessee-only passenger vehicle or snowmobile access may also be designated by the landowner. Lessees are required to display stickers to identify vehicles used for camp or other designated access.

iii. Reserved Sites

The conservation easement allows for a 5-acre development site on both Parcels C-1 and C-2. Each development site may have up to two principal buildings, not to exceed 6,000 ft^2. The development site on Parcel C-1 surrounds the Sand Pond Camp on the East Side Trail/13-03-00, and the site on Parcel C-2 surrounds the Twin Ponds Camp on 14-02-00. The conservation easement also allows for one forest products concentration yard up to 10 acres in size. The reserved site is located off the Prentice Road on 13-01-00.

3. NYSDEC Management

An interim recreation management plan (IRMP) for both fee and conservation easement lands previously owned by Champion International was completed in 2000 (this RMP will replace the interim plan). With landowner concurrence, NYSDEC has completed road improvements and maintenance, and replaced the Main Haul Road bridge over Fish Creek in 2010. In 2012, the landowner replaced the Sand Pond Road bridge over Fish Creek

(with contributions from NYSDEC; bridge is open to public snowmobiles). A 2012 conservation easement amendment allowed camps to remain on the CTCE, updated forestry related terms, and transferred additional land into state ownership. Currently, NYSDEC maintains 11.0 miles of passenger vehicle road, 19.7 miles of snowmobile trail, and 8 primitive campsites for public use on the CTCE.

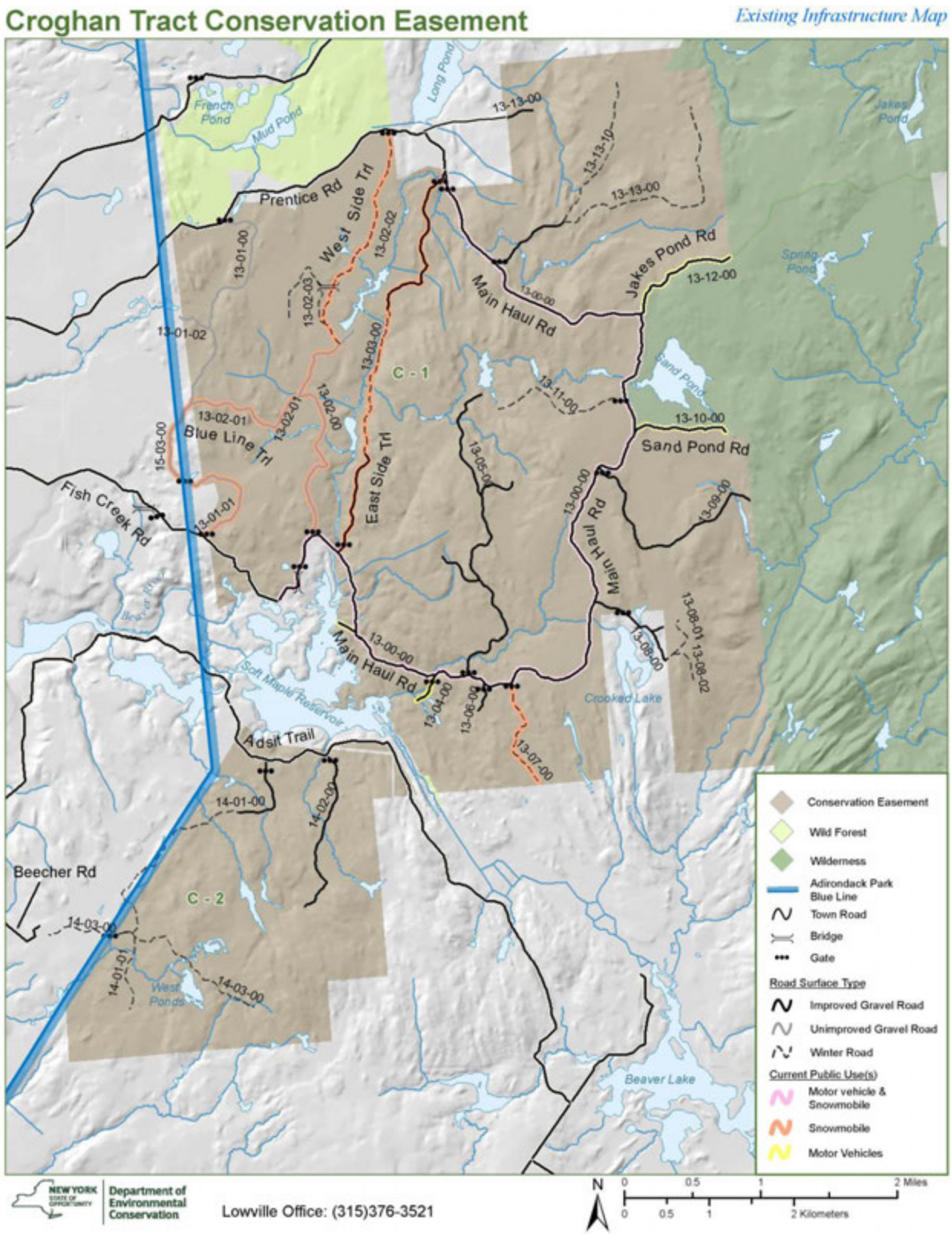
C. Economic Impact

The conservation easement which encumbers the Croghan Tract is meant to ensure that the property will remain a privately-owned sustainable working forest, protect natural resources, allow for private recreational leases and for specific public recreation opportunities. The logging industry is an important component of Adirondack Park communities and economies. By facilitating continued traditional management of the CTCE, including forest management and recreational leases, the conservation easement protects these historical and significant economic inputs. Additionally, the protection of natural resources and opening of public recreation opportunities is likely to draw additional visitors to the area to enjoy the natural setting and recreate, expanding tourism and general spending in the vicinity of the property. The Department now pays 63% of the CTCE property taxes, which reflects the proportional value of property rights purchased by the Department.

D. Property Infrastructure

1. Roads/Trails

Existing infrastructure on the CTCE is depicted on the map on the next page, and inventoried following.


Croghan Tract Conservation Easement
Existing Infrastructure Map
French Pond
Mud Pond
Long Pond
Jakes Pond
Spring Pond
Sand Pond
Prentice Rd
West Side Trl
Jakes Pond Rd
Main Haul Rd
C - 1
Blue Line Trl
East Side Trl
Sand Pond Rd
Fish Creek Rd
Soft Maple Reservoir
Crooked Lake
Adsit Trail
Beecher Rd
C - 2
West Ponds
Beaver Lake
13-13-00
13-13-10
13-12-00
13-11-00
13-10-00
13-09-00
13-08-00
13-08-01
13-08-02
13-07-00
13-06-00
13-05-00
13-04-00
13-03-00
13-02-00
13-02-01
13-02-02
13-02-03
13-01-00
13-01-01
13-01-02
13-00-00
15-03-00
14-01-00
14-02-00
14-03-00
Conservation Easement
Wild Forest
Wilderness
Adirondack Park Blue Line
Town Road
Bridge
Gate
Road Surface Type
Improved Gravel Road
Unimproved Gravel Road
Winter Road
Current Public Use(s)
Motor vehicle & Snowmobile
Snowmobile
Motor Vehicles
NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY
Department of Environmental Conservation
Lowville Office: (315)376-3521
N
0 0.5 1 2 Miles
0 0.5 1 2 Kilometers

Current NYSDEC Maintained Roads, Trails, and Facilities

Corridor Name (Landowner Rd #)	Mileage	Description	Current Public Uses
Eagle Canyon Road (13-04-00)	0.2	Main Haul Road towards Eagle Canyon.	Passenger Vehicle
Jakes Pond Road (13-12-00)	1.0	Main Haul Road east to Alder Creek Primitive Corridor.	Passenger Vehicle
Main Haul Road (13-00-00)	9.3	Connects Fish Creek Road to Prentice Road, through eastern portion of the CTCE. Includes segment sometimes referred to as "Woods Road".	Passenger Vehicle Snowmobile
Sand Pond Road (13-10-00)	0.4	Main Haul Road east to parking area south of Sand Pond.	Passenger Vehicle
Soft Maple Reservoir Road/ Water Access (none)	0.1	Main Haul Road to Soft Maple Reservoir car-top boat launch (Accessible).	Passenger Vehicle
Blue Line Trail (13-01-01, 13-02-01, 15-03-00)	2.7	Fish Creek Road to Prentice Road through western portion of CTCE. Includes right-of-way west of CTCE boundary.	Snowmobile
Coyne Trail (13-07-00)	0.9	Main Haul Road south to CTCE boundary.	Snowmobile
East Side Trail (13-03-00)	3.2	Connects to the north and south ends of the Main Haul Road. Located east and parallel to Fish Creek.	Snowmobile
Sand Pond Trail	N/A	Foot trail (Accessible). Trail and trailhead are located in Pepperbox Wilderness but accessed from the CTCE.	Non-motorized
West Side Trail (13-02-00, 13-02-02)	3.6	Connects to the north and south ends of the Main Haul Road. Located west and parallel to Fish Creek.	Snowmobile

** All listed roads/trails are currently in good repair and are regularly raked/graded and brushed as needed.*
*** In addition to listed public uses, all roads/trails are subject to use by the landowner and some are used by lessees to access camps.*

2. Bridges

Road/Trail	Waterbody	Current Public Uses
Blue Line Trail (located on NYS right-of-way)	Unnamed Wetland	Snowmobile
East Side Trail	Fish Creek	Snowmobile
East Side Trail	Roaring Brook	Snowmobile
Main Haul Road	Fish Creek	Passenger Vehicle Snowmobile
West Side Trail	Wetland associated with Fish Creek	Snowmobile

** All bridges are currently in good repair*

3. Gates

Primary access to the CTCE is controlled by two gates located at the Fish Creek Road and Prentice Road ends of the Main Haul Road. These gates are closed during mud season to prevent damage to roads. Seven more gates are used to manage access to designated public snowmobile trails on the property. Additional gates are maintained by the landowner, associated with lease camp access roads, and forest management roads/trails which are not open to public motor vehicles. A gate is also located at the CTCE boundary with the Crooked Lake property.

4. Gravel Pits

Per conservation easement terms, gravel may be excavated from anywhere on the property excluding Forest Management Buffer Areas and within 100 feet of State or local highways. Several small excavation sites are located throughout the CTCE.

III. NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

A. Natural Resources

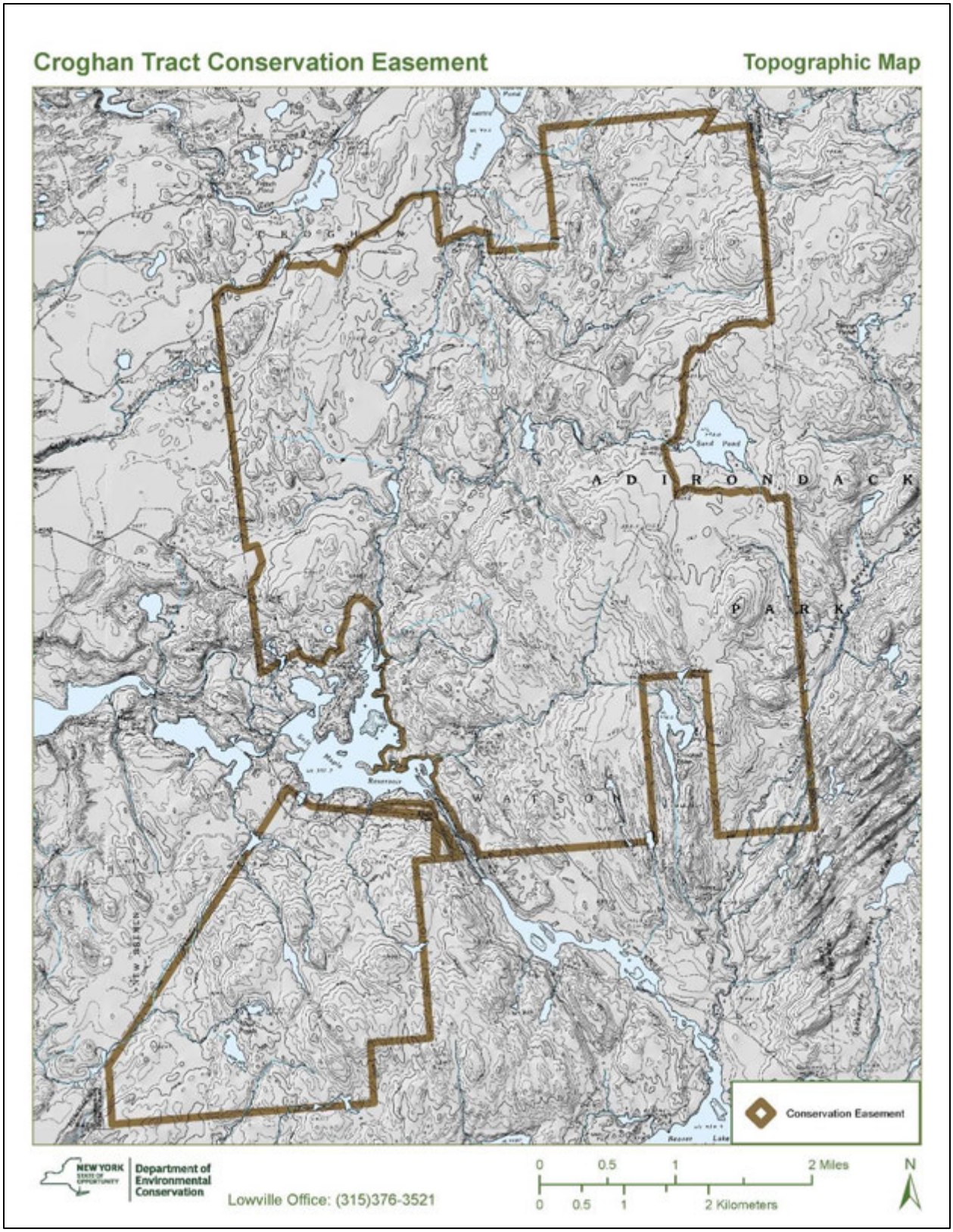
In addition to the summary of natural resources on the CTCE included in this RMP, additional and historical sources of natural resource data include a report completed by

Jerry Jenkins for Champion International prior to the granting of the conservation easement, and forest management plans which have been completed for the property.

1. Physical Resources

i. Terrain/Topography

The CTCE ranges in elevation from approximately 1,300-1,800 feet above sea level, and there are no notably prominent features. In general, terrain can be described as gently rolling, with some steep slopes and interspersed lowlands. The USGS 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle map 'Soft Maple Reservoir' (Quad 189) encompasses the entire property.

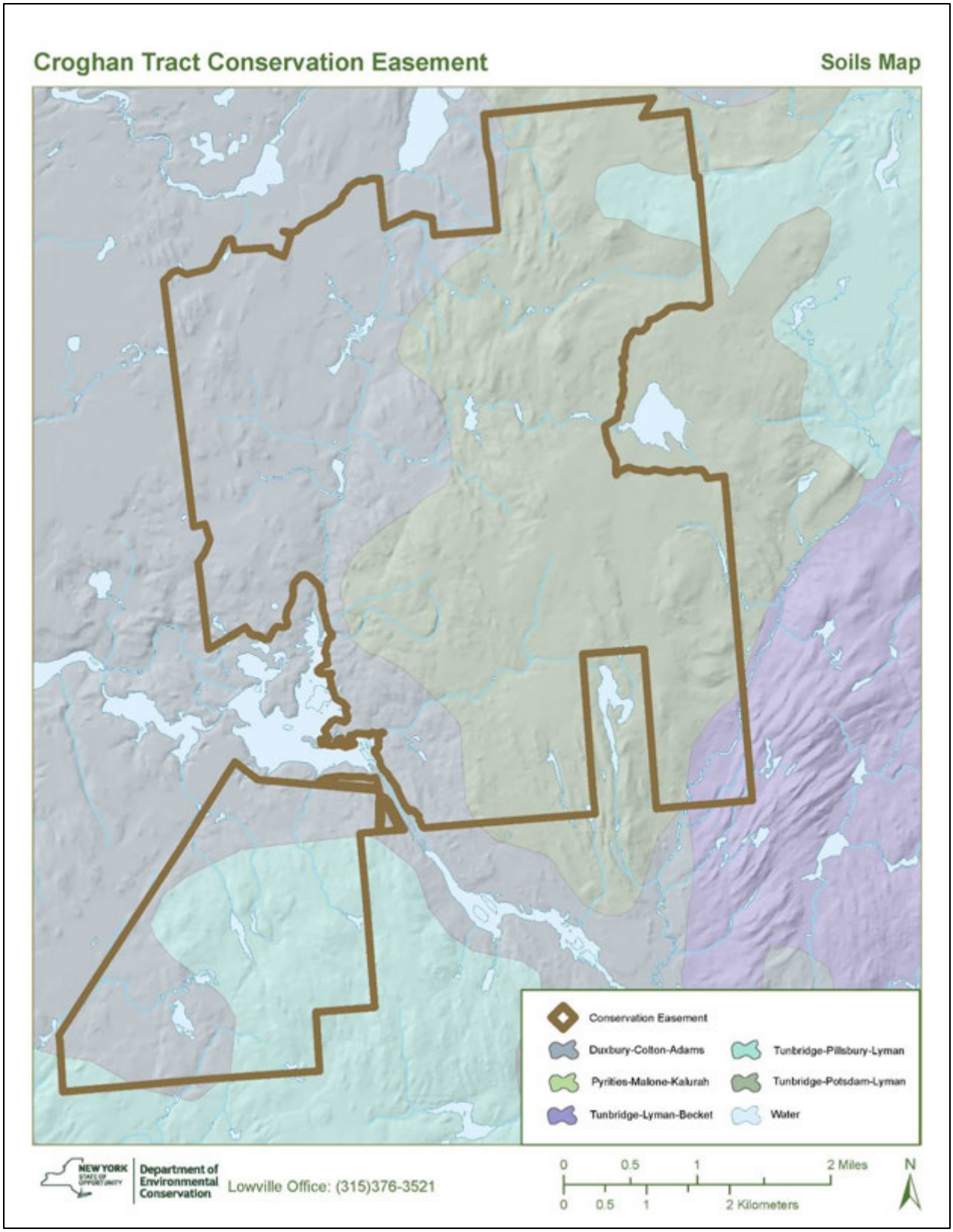

Croghan Tract Conservation Easement
Topographic Map
A D I R O N D A C K
P A R K
W A T S O N
Conservation Easement
NEW YORK
Department of Environmental Conservation
Lowville Office: (315)376-3521
0 0.5 1 2 Miles
0 0.5 1 2 Kilometers
N

ii. Geology and Soils

Soils located on the CTCE are primarily Duxbury-Colton-Adams in the west, and Turnbridge-Potsdam-Lyman-Crary in the east. Small areas of Turnbridge-Pillsbury-Lyman and Turnbridge-Lyman-Becket soils are located near the southern and eastern boundaries of the property. Excepting wetlands, no soils on the property are particularly sensitive to recreation activities.

The Duxbury Series
The Duxbury series consists of very deep, well drained soils on valley trains, outwash plains, eskers, kames, and terraces. They formed in sandy glaciofluvial deposits with a mantle of loamy glaciofluvial deposits. Estimated saturated hydraulic conductivity is moderately high or high in the solum and high or very high in the substratum. Slope ranges from 0 to 70 percent. Mean annual precipitation is about 40 inches, and mean annual temperature is about 43 degrees Fahrenheit. Duxbury soils are on terraces, eskers, kames, and outwash plains. The frost-free season ranges from 90 to 135 days. Common trees in wooded areas are eastern white pine, red pine, red spruce, eastern hemlock, white spruce, balsam fir, sugar maple, and red maple.

The Turnbridge Series
The Tunbridge series consists of moderately deep, well drained soils on glaciated uplands. They formed in loamy till. Saturated hydraulic conductivity is moderately high or high throughout the mineral soil. Slope ranges from 0 to 75 percent. Mean annual precipitation is about 40 inches, and mean annual temperature is about 44 degrees Fahrenheit. Tunbridge soils are on nearly level through very steep glaciated uplands. They are on mountain side slopes, mountain tops, mountain ridges, hill tops, and hill slopes. The frost-free season ranges from 60 through 160 days. In wooded areas the common trees are American beech, white ash, yellow birch, paper birch, northern red oak, sugar maple, eastern white pine, eastern hemlock, red spruce, white spruce, and balsam fir.


Croghan Tract Conservation Easement
Soils Map
Conservation Easement
Duxbury-Colton-Adams
Pyrities-Malone-Kalurah
Tunbridge-Lyman-Becket
Tunbridge-Pillsbury-Lyman
Tunbridge-Potsdam-Lyman
Water
NEW YORK
Department of Environmental Conservation
Lowville Office: (315)376-3521
0 0.5 1 2 Miles
0 0.5 1 2 Kilometers
N

iii. Water Bodies & Wetlands

The majority of the CTCE is located within the Black River Basin, draining to the Beaver River. Approximately 900 acres in the northeast corner of the property are located within the St. Lawrence River Basin and drain to the West Branch of the Oswegatchie River.

Water Bodies

Named streams crossing the CTCE include Alder Creek, Fish Creek, Murmur Creek, and Roaring Brook. The Beaver River also passes between Parcels C-1 and C-2; Soft Maple Reservoir abuts Parcel C-1. Named ponds include part of McCabe Pond (Parcel C-1) and West Ponds (Parcel C-2). Sand Pond is located within the Pepperbox Wilderness Area 0.1 miles east of the Main Haul Road and is primarily accessed from the CTCE. Acidic waters and metal pollution (mercury) attributed to atmospheric deposition represent primary water quality issues on the CTCE. These impairments affect aquatic life and are responsible for NYS Department of Health fish consumption advisories. Additional water quality information can be found in the Water Body Inventory/Priority list, available at: http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/36730.html

Water Body Inventory

				Water Body Inventory/Priority List			Water Quality Classification	
Name	**Index Number**	**Basin**	**Size (acres/miles)**	**Water Quality**	**Water Quality Issue**	**Pollutants**	**Classification**	**Standard**
Alder Creek and Tributaries	Ont 19-40-18	Black River	1.2 miles 1.5 miles (tribs)	Minor Impacts	Aquatic Life	Aluminum (acid deposition), Acidic pH	C	C(T)
Crooked Lake[1]	Ont 19-40-18-3 P441	Black River	47.1 acres	Impaired	Aquatic Life	Acidic pH	C	C(T)
Fish Creek and Unnamed Tributary	Ont 19-40-15 Ont 19-40-15-2	Black River	1.4 miles 0.7 miles (trib)	No Known Impairments	-	-	C	C(T)
Long Pond Inlet	SL 25-73 P237-1	St. Lawrence	1.2 miles	Impaired	Fish Consumption, Aquatic Life	Mercury (acid deposition), Acidic pH	C	C(T)
McCabe Pond	Ont 19-40-18-3 P442	Black River	3 acres	Impaired	Aquatic Life	Acidic pH	C	C(T)
Mud Pond Inlet	SL 25-73 P227-1	St. Lawrence	0.2 miles	No Known Impairments	-	-	C	C(T)
Murmur Creek	Ont 19-40-7	Black River	1.7 miles	No Known Impairments	-	-	C	C(TS)
Roaring Brook and Unnamed Tributary	Ont 19-40-15-4 Ont 19-40-15-4-1	Black River	3.2 miles 1.0 miles (trib)	No Known Impairments	-	-	C	C(T)
Sand Pond[2]	Ont 19-40-15-4 P436	Black River	74.6 acres	Impaired	Aquatic Life	Acidic pH	C	C(T)

				Water Body Inventory/Priority List			Water Quality Classification	
Name	**Index Number**	**Basin**	**Size (acres/miles)**	**Water Quality**	**Water Quality Issue**	**Pollutants**	**Classification**	**Standard**
Soft Maple Reservoir	Ont 19-40-7 P431, P434	Black River	425 acres	Impaired	Fish Consumption, Aquatic Life	Mercury (acid deposition), Acidic pH suspected	C	C(T)
Soft Maple Reservoir Tributaries	Ont 19-40-14 Ont 19-40-15-1 Ont 19-40-16 Ont 19-40-P434-2-P431-1	Black River	7.9 miles	No Known Impairments	-	-	C	C, C(T)
West Ponds	Ont 19-40-7 P416, P417	Black River	12.8 acres	Impaired	Aquatic Life	Acidic pH	C	C(T)

[1]*Crooked Lake is located on private land outside the CTCE, but is surrounded by the CTCE on 3 sides*
[2]*Sand Pond is located on forest preserve lands, but is primarily accessed from the CTCE, and surrounded by the CTCE on 3 side*

Wetlands

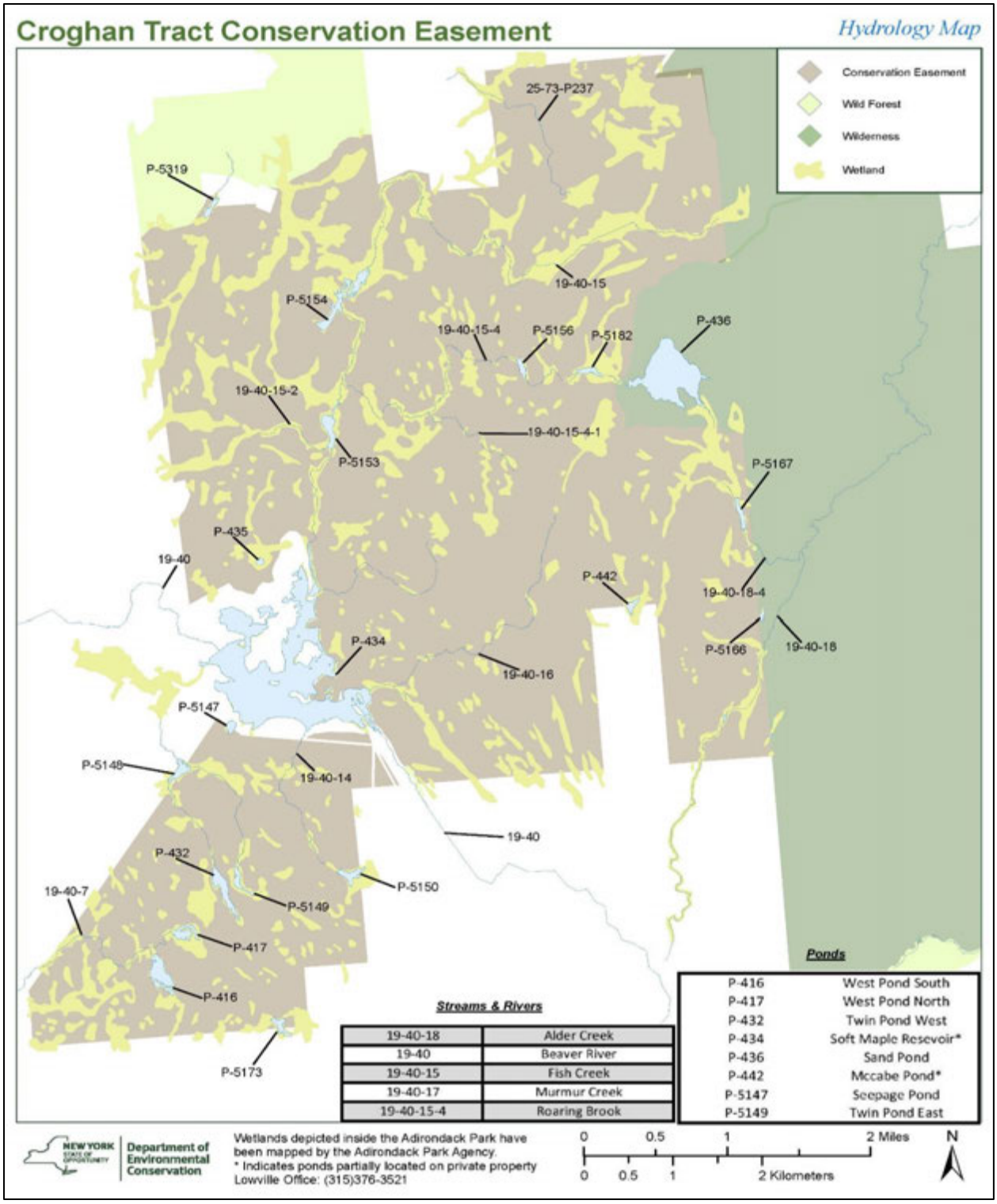
The Adirondack Park Agency Cover Type Wetlands Map shows 3,002 acres, or 23.4% of the CTCE as wetland, including open water. Approximately 2,433 acres or 19.0% of the CTCE is covered by wetlands with a primary vegetation classification other than open water.

CTCE Wetland Systems, Regimes, and Vegetation

Acres[1]	% of CTCE	% of CTCE Wetlands	System
413.9	3.2	13.8	Lacustrine habitat, greater than 8 hectares (20 acres) and more than 2 meters deep
2552.8	19.9	85.0	Palustrine habitat, non-tidal, less than 8 hectares (20 acres) and less than 2 meters deep
35.9	0.3	1.2	Upper Perennial Riverine
			Regime
1449.6	11.3	48.3	Saturated
4.8	0.0	13.8	Seasonally Flooded - Well Drained
413.1	3.2	13.8	Seasonally Flooded - Saturated
408.2	3.2	13.6	Semi-Permanent
726.9	5.7	24.2	Permanent
			Primary Vegetation Classification
78.1	0.6	2.6	Persistent Emergent
142.1	1.1	4.7	Forested, broad-leaved deciduous
1338.8	10.4	44.6	Forested, evergreen
123.6	1.0	4.1	Forested, dead
482.3	3.8	16.1	Broad-leaved deciduous scrub/shrub (shorter than 6 meters)
57.8	0.5	1.9	Broad-leaved evergreen scrub/shrub (shorter than 6 meters)
204.2	1.6	6.8	Needle-leaved evergreen scrub/shrub (shorter than 6 meters)
6.4	0.0	0.2	Dead scrub/shrub (shorter than 6 meters)
568.9	4.4	18.9	Open water
0.4	0.0	0.0	Erroneous Data[2]

[1]Acreage does not include linear wetland data included in APA Cover Type Wetlands Map. Linear data has some overlap with polygon data, does not include acreage information, and accounts for a relatively small portion of the planning area.

[2]Data is coded for undefined regime or vegetation classification.



iv. Winter Deer Habitat

Deer wintering yards are particularly important habitat for deer survival in winter months (especially in the northern portions of their range). Deer yards are usually located in

dense conifer cover, often in mapped wetlands. Surveys and corresponding maps of deer yards have been completed by the Department in the past but have not been recently updated. Due to the fact that not every location which matches typical wintering habitat is utilized by deer, field survey may be required prior to basing management decisions on previously identified deer yard locations. This RMP has been developed with cognizance of potential wintering deer concentrations that may be impacted by recreation facilities and use. Management proposals are intended to afford protection of core sections of utilized deer wintering areas and avoid fragmenting travel corridors between them. Areas previously identified as possible deer yards on the CTCE include the area surrounding Fish Creek (south of the Roaring Brook confluence) and north of Line Road/13-13-00.

2. Biological Resources

i. Fish

Fish surveys for waterbodies on and immediately adjacent to the CTCE are outlined in the table below. No water bodies are stocked on the property.

Fish Surveys

Water Body	NYSDEC Surveys	ALSC Surveys[3]
Alder Creek and Tributaries	No Survey	No Survey
Crooked Lake[1]	No Survey	No Survey
Fish Creek and Unnamed Tributary	Brief electrofishing survey in 2002 resulted in no fish. No other surveys conducted.	No Survey
Long Pond Inlet	No Survey	No Survey
McCabe Pond	No Survey	None
Mud Pond Inlet	No Survey	No Survey
Murmur Creek	No Survey	No Survey
Roaring Brook and Unnamed Tributary	No Survey	No Survey
Sand Pond[2]	Brown bullhead, yellow perch	Brown bullhead, pumpkinseed, yellow perch
Soft Maple Reservoir	Brown bullhead, chain pickerel, golden shiner, pumpkinseed, rock bass, smallmouth bass, tiger musky, white sucker, yellow perch	Brown bullhead, chain pickerel, golden shiner, lake chub, longnose sucker, pumpkinseed, white sucker, yellow perch
Soft Maple Reservoir Tributaries	No Survey; Brook trout suspected below Soft Maple Reservoir	No Survey
West Ponds	No Survey	None

[1] Crooked Lake is located on private land outside the CTCE, but is surrounded by the CTCE on 3 sides
[2] Sand Pond is located on forest preserve lands, but is primarily accessed from the CTCE, and surrounded by the CTCE on 3 sides
[3] Adirondack Lake Survey Corporation 1984-87.

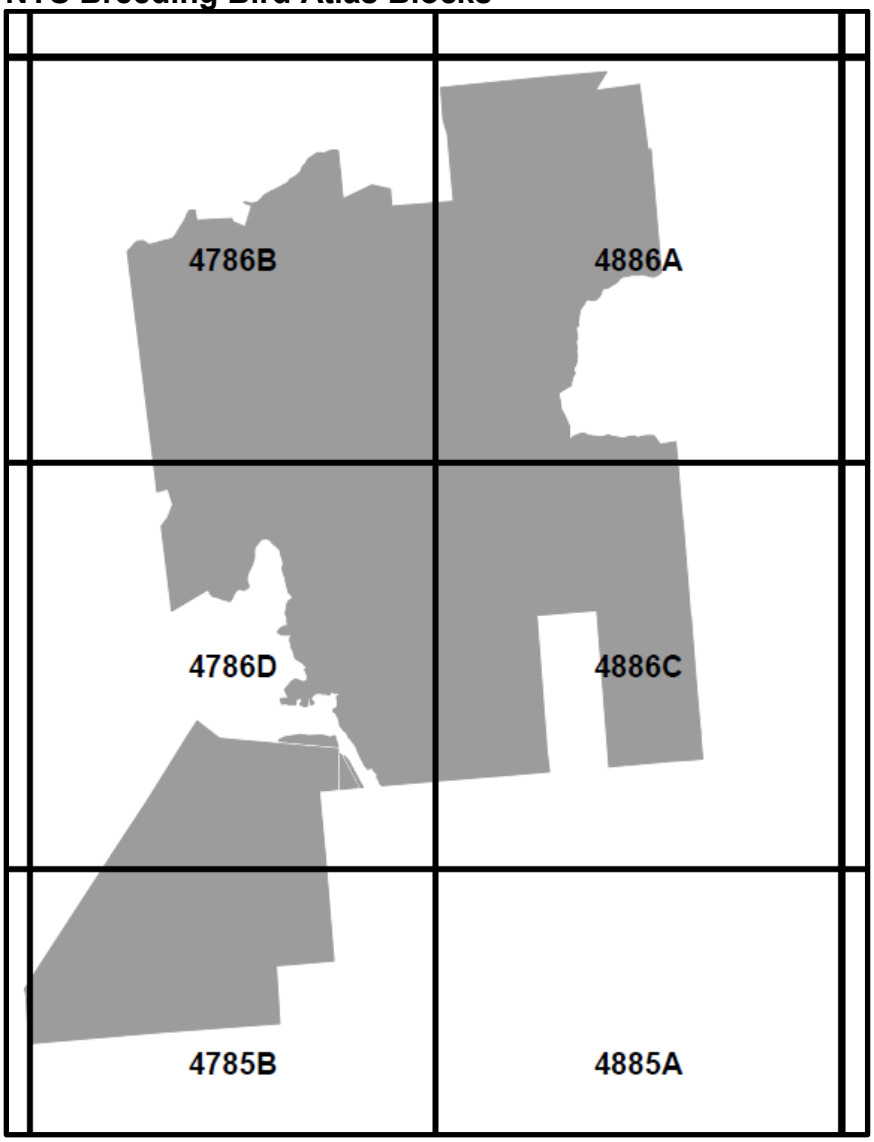
ii. Mammals

Mammals likely to be found on the CTCE include American marten, beaver, black bear, bobcat, coyote, fisher, gray fox, long-tailed weasel, mink, moose, muskrat, porcupine, raccoon, red fox, river otter, short-tailed weasel, snowshoe hare, striped skunk, and white-tailed deer. Populations of all species are generally believed to be healthy, though fisher populations are of slight concern in the Adirondacks (managed under the 2016 NYSDEC Fisher Management Plan). None of these species are Threatened, Endangered, or Species of Special Concern in New York State. Northern Long-Eared Bat occurrences have not been documented on the Croghan Tract, however, summer occurrences have been confirmed in northern Lewis County. Northern Long-Eared Bats are listed as Threatened in New York under the Endangered Species Law, and federally under the United States Endangered Species Act.

iii. Birds

The NYS Breeding Bird Atlas includes five (5) survey blocks which encompass the CTCE (4785B, 4786B, 4786D, 4886A, and 4886C). The 2nd Breeding Bird Atlas (2000-2005) identified 102 confirmed, probable and possible breeding bird species in the blocks which contain the CTCE, however due to the fact that survey blocks cover an area larger than the property itself, not all identified species are necessarily located on the property. Among the 102 species identified in these survey blocks, the American Bittern, Cerulean Warbler, Common Loon, and Sharp-shinned Hawk are Species of Special Concern, and Bald Eagles are Threatened in New York State. The New York Natural Heritage Program has identified Common Loons on Sand Pond and Soft Maple Reservoir immediately adjacent to the CTCE.

NYS Breeding Bird Atlas Blocks



Breeding Bird Atlas Species for CTCE Blocks

Common Name	Scientific Name	NY Legal Status
Alder Flycatcher	*Empidonax alnorum*	Protected
American Bittern	*Botaurus lentiginosus*	Protected-Special Concern
American Black Duck	*Anas rubripes*	Game Species
American Crow	*Corvus brachyrhynchos*	Game Species
American Goldfinch	*Spinus tristis*	Protected
American Redstart	*Setophaga ruticilla*	Protected
American Robin	*Turdus migratorius*	Protected
American Woodcock	*Scolopax minor*	Game Species
Bald Eagle	*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*	Threatened
Baltimore Oriole	*Icterus galbula*	Protected
Barn Swallow	*Hirundo rustica*	Protected
Barred Owl	*Strix varia*	Protected
Belted Kingfisher	*Megaceryle alcyon*	Protected
Black-and-white Warbler	*Mniotilta varia*	Protected
Black-backed Woodpecker	*Picoides arcticus*	Protected
Blackburnian Warbler	*Dendroica fusca*	Protected
Black-capped Chickadee	*Poecile atricapillus*	Protected
Black-throated Blue Warbler	*Dendroica caerulescens*	Protected
Black-throated Green Warbler	*Dendroica virens*	Protected
Blue Jay	*Cyanocitta cristata*	Protected
Blue-headed Vireo	*Vireo solitarius*	Protected
Broad-winged Hawk	*Buteo platypterus*	Protected
Brown Creeper	*Certhia americana*	Protected
Brown-headed Cowbird	*Molothrus ater*	Protected
Canada Goose	*Branta canadensis*	Game Species
Canada Warbler	*Wilsonia canadensis*	Protected
Cedar Waxwing	*Bombycilla cedrorum*	Protected
Cerulean Warbler	*Dendroica cerulea*	Protected-Special Concern
Chestnut-sided Warbler	*Dendroica pensylvanica*	Protected
Chimney Swift	*Chaetura pelagica*	Protected
Chipping Sparrow	*Spizella passerina*	Protected
Common Grackle	*Quiscalus quiscula*	Protected

Common Name	Scientific Name	NY Legal Status
Common Merganser	*Mergus merganser*	Game Species
Common Raven	*Corvus corax*	Protected
Common Yellowthroat	*Geothlypis trichas*	Protected
Dark-eyed Junco	*Junco hyemalis*	Protected
Downy Woodpecker	*Picoides pubescens*	Protected
Eastern Kingbird	*Tyrannus tyrannus*	Protected
Eastern Phoebe	*Sayornis phoebe*	Protected
Eastern Screech-Owl	*Megascops asio*	Protected
Eastern Towhee	*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*	Protected
Eastern Wood-Pewee	*Contopus virens*	Protected
Evening Grosbeak	*Coccothraustes vespertinus*	Protected
Golden-crowned Kinglet	*Regulus satrapa*	Protected
Great Blue Heron	*Ardea herodias*	Protected
Great Crested Flycatcher	*Myiarchus crinitus*	Protected
Great Horned Owl	*Bubo virginianus*	Protected
Hairy Woodpecker	*Picoides villosus*	Protected
Hermit Thrush	*Catharus guttatus*	Protected
Herring Gull	*Larus argentatus*	Protected
Hooded Merganser	*Lophodytes cucullatus*	Game Species
Hooded Warbler	*Wilsonia citrina*	Protected
Least Flycatcher	*Empidonax minimus*	Protected
Lincoln's Sparrow	*Melospiza lincolnii*	Protected
Magnolia Warbler	*Dendroica magnolia*	Protected
Mallard	*Anas platyrhynchos*	Game Species
Merlin	*Falco columbarius*	Protected
Mourning Dove	*Zenaida macroura*	Protected
Mourning Warbler	*Oporornis philadelphia*	Protected
Nashville Warbler	*Vermivora ruficapilla*	Protected
Northern Flicker	*Colaptes auratus*	Protected
Northern Parula	*Parula americana*	Protected
Northern Saw-whet Owl	*Aegolius acadicus*	Protected
Northern Waterthrush	*Seiurus noveboracensis*	Protected
Olive-sided Flycatcher	*Contopus cooperi*	Protected
Ovenbird	*Seiurus aurocapilla*	Protected
Pileated Woodpecker	*Dryocopus pileatus*	Protected
Pine Siskin	*Spinus pinus*	Protected

Common Name	Scientific Name	NY Legal Status
Purple Finch	*Carpodacus purpureus*	Protected
Red-breasted Nuthatch	*Sitta canadensis*	Protected
Red-eyed Vireo	*Vireo olivaceus*	Protected
Red-tailed Hawk	*Buteo jamaicensis*	Protected
Red-winged Blackbird	*Agelaius phoeniceus*	Protected
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	*Pheucticus ludovicianus*	Protected
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	*Regulus calendula*	Protected
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	*Archilochus colubris*	Protected
Ruffed Grouse	*Bonasa umbellus*	Game Species
Rusty Blackbird	*Euphagus carolinus*	Protected
Scarlet Tanager	*Piranga olivacea*	Protected
Sharp-shinned Hawk	*Accipiter striatus*	Protected-Special Concern
Song Sparrow	*Melospiza melodia*	Protected
Spotted Sandpiper	*Actitis macularius*	Protected
Swainson's Thrush	*Catharus ustulatus*	Protected
Swamp Sparrow	*Melospiza georgiana*	Protected
Tree Swallow	*Tachycineta bicolor*	Protected
Turkey Vulture	*Cathartes aura*	Protected
Veery	*Catharus fuscescens*	Protected
White-breasted Nuthatch	*Sitta carolinensis*	Protected
White-throated Sparrow	*Zonotrichia albicollis*	Protected
White-winged Crossbill	*Loxia leucoptera*	Protected
Wild Turkey	*Meleagris gallopavo*	Game Species
Wilson's Snipe	*Gallinago delicata*	Game Species
Winter Wren	*Troglodytes troglodytes*	Protected
Wood Duck	*Aix sponsa*	Game Species
Wood Thrush	*Hylocichla mustelina*	Protected
Yellow Warbler	*Dendroica petechia*	Protected
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	*Empidonax flaviventris*	Protected
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	*Sphyrapicus varius*	Protected
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	*Coccyzus americanus*	Protected
Yellow-rumped Warbler	*Dendroica coronata*	Protected

iv. Herpetofauna

The 2000-2005 New York State Herp Atlas documents reptile and amphibian species that have been identified in the USGS Quad/survey block which fully encompasses the CTCE. Due to the fact that the survey block encompasses an area larger than the CTCE, not all species have been observed on the property itself. The Herp Atlas identified 24 reptile and amphibian species in the Stillwater Reservoir West block. Wood turtles are the only specially protected species in the area, designated as a Species of Special Concern in New York.

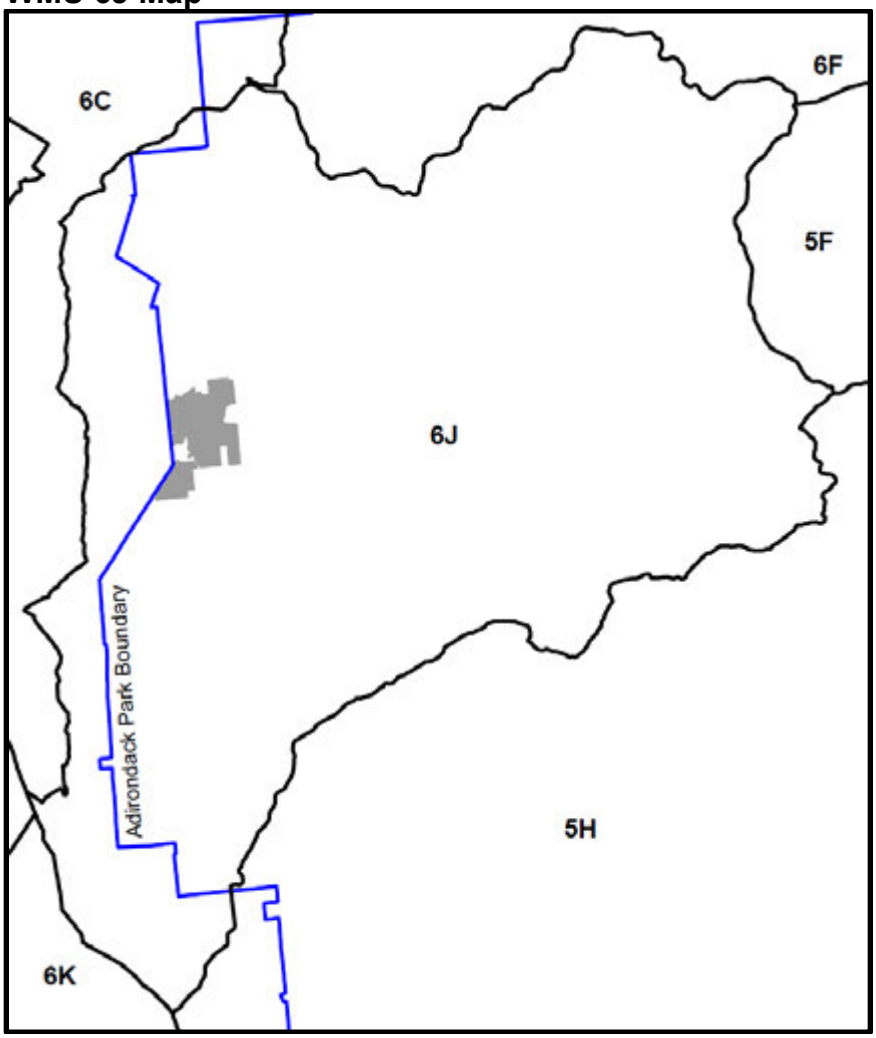
Herp Atlas Species for Stillwater Reservoir West

Common Name	Scientific Name	NY Legal Status
Allegheny Mountain Dusky Salamander	*Desmognathus ochrophaeus*	-
American Toad	*Anaxyrus americanus*	Game Species
Bullfrog	*Lithobates catesbeianus*	Game Species
Dekay's Brownsnake	*Storeria dekayi*	-
Eastern Gartersnake	*Thamnophis sirtalis*	-
Eastern Milksnake	*Lampropeltis triangulum*	-
Eastern Newt	*Notophthalmus viridescens*	-
Eastern Red-backed Salamander	*Plethodon cinereus*	-
Gray Treefrog	*Hyla versicolor*	Game Species
Green Frog	*Lithobates clamitans*	Game Species
Mink Frog	*Lithobates septentrionalis*	Species of Potential Conservation Need / Game Species
Northern Dusky Salamander	*Desmognathus fuscus*	-
Northern Leopard Frog	*Lithobates pipiens*	Game Species
Northern Red-bellied Snake	*Storeria occipitomaculata*	-
Northern Ring-necked Snake	*Diadophis punctatus*	-
Northern Spring Salamander	*Gyrinophilus porphyriticus*	-
Northern Two-lined Salamander	*Eurycea bislineata*	-
Painted Turtle	*chrysemys picta*	-
Smooth Greensnake	*Opheodrys vernalis*	Species of Greatest Conservation Need
Snapping Turtle	*Chelydra serpentina*	Species of Greatest Conservation Need / Game Species
Spring Peeper	*Pseudacris crucifer*	Game Species
Spotted Salamander	*Ambystoma maculatum*	-
Wood Frog	*Lithobates silvaticus*	Game Species
Wood Turtle	*glyptemys insculpta*	High priority Species of Greatest Conservation Need / Species of Special Concern

v. Fish and Wildlife Harvest

Fish and wildlife have historically been harvested on the Croghan Tract Conservation Easement and continue to be as the property is now open for public hunting, trapping and fishing. Wildlife harvest is managed by the Division of Fish and Wildlife under Wildlife Management Units (WMUs). The CTCE is located in WMU 6J.

WMU 6J Map



Deer populations in WMU 6J are primarily influenced by winter weather conditions (generally more abundant after successively mild winters and reduced after harsh winters), as they are throughout the Adirondacks. Currently, WMU 6J does not have buck take or population objectives and Deer Management Permits (DMP) are not issued in the unit to regulate antlerless deer take. There is an annual female take from bow and muzzleloader hunting seasons, but harvest is relatively small, and negligible in terms of population effects. Deer Management Assistance Program tags are issued in the unit where localized populations are abundant and impacting landowners. Black bears are found throughout the unit and annual harvests vary depending on weather and the

abundance of natural foods like beechnut and cherry. The long term trends in bear harvest for the Adirondacks and WMU 6J are stable.

Avian game species found in the region include the American Black Duck, American Crow, American Woodcock, Canadian Goose, Common Merganser, Hooded Merganser, Mallard, Ruffed Grouse, Wild Turkey, and Wood Duck. Of these, wild turkey represents the most popular game species - populations are believed to be healthy and able to support continued harvest. Furbearer populations in WMU 6J are also generally believed to be able to support continued harvest subject to Department regulations. Fisher populations are of slight concern in the Adirondacks and are managed under the 2015 Fisher Management Plan.

NYSDEC does not collect data relating to the harvest of fish. Most fishing in the area occurs on Soft Maple Reservoir. Limited fishing occurs on Sand Pond and streams which cross the property.

Deer Harvest

Year	Town of Croghan		Town of Watson		WMU 6J		
	Adult Bucks	Total Deer	Adult Bucks	Total Deer	Adult Bucks	Total Deer	Deer/sq. mile
2008	393	566	189	264	1783	2319	1.4
2009	262	472	134	235	898	1268	0.8
2010	239	460	103	165	873	1192	0.8
2011	267	420	129	208	920	1278	0.8
2012	307	468	167	277	1150	1548	1
2013	330	507	160	241	1175	1590	1
2014	271	449	121	182	861	1187	0.8
2015	191	287	110	161	727	1030	0.7
2016	308	408	113	135	901	1007	0.6
2017	282	379	96	106	965	1034	0.7
2018	320	441	130	160	972	1065	0.7

Bear Harvest

Year	Town of Croghan	Town of Watson	WMU 6J
2008	27	21	nd
2009	42	7	121
2010	28	9	89
2011	3	3	48
2012	25	11	78
2013	5	8	70
2014	24	15	81
2015	28	17	88
2016	19	14	77
2017	5	3	41
2018	20	6	63

Turkey Harvest

Year	Lewis County Harvest	
	Spring	Fall
2008	311	85
2009	498	145
2010	276	81
2011	279	63
2012	254	70
2013	371	71
2014	363	91
2015	196	20
2016	237	66
2017	327	31
2018	368	36
2019	309	no data

Trapping Harvest

Season	Bobcat		Fisher		Marten		Otter	
	Town of Croghan	Town of Watson	Town of Croghan	Town of Watson	Town of Croghan	Town of Watson	Town of Croghan	Town of Watson
2008/2009	10	-	20	19	-	-	19	7
2009/2010	1	2	17	17	-	1	21	5
2010/2011	3	1	30	27	1	2	13	15
2011/2012	7	-	33	14	-	-	31	11
2012/2013	3	1	25	20	-	-	22	7
2013/2014	6	1	19	11	-	-	22	10
2014/2015	3	1	5	15	-	2	15	1
2015/2016	5	3	9	3	-	3	22	2
2016/2017	3	1	1	3	-	1	11	4
2017/2018	3	-	4	4	-	-	20	2
2018/2019	1	0	3	5	-	-	14	-

Additional deer and bear harvest data available at:
http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/42232.html

Additional turkey harvest data available at:
http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/48823.html

Additional trapping harvest data available at:
http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/93855.html

vi. Vegetation

The Croghan Tract Conservation Easement is located within the Western Adirondack Foothills Ecozone. The property represents commercially managed forestland, comprised primarily of a northern hardwood forest, with lowland pockets of pine-hemlock-hardwood forest.

Most of the property can be described as Laurentian-Acadian Northern Hardwood Forest with interspersed Laurentian-Acadian Pine-Hemlock-Hardwood Forest, Acadian-Appalachian Montane Spruce-Fir Forest, and Laurentian-Acadian Swamp Systems. Tree species most commonly associated with the property include American beech, black cherry, black spruce, eastern hemlock, red maple, sugar maple, yellow birch, and white pine. The CTCE is managed for the production of forest products, and as such, growth of commercially desirable species is facilitated, representing a major influence on vegetation diversity, composition, and age.

vii. Invasive Species

As global trade and travel have increased, so has the introduction of non-native species. Many non-native species do not have adverse effects on the areas in which they are introduced, however, some become invasive in their new ranges, disrupting ecosystem function and reducing biodiversity. Invasive species have been identified as one of the greatest threats to biodiversity, second only to habitat loss, and can damage native habitats by altering hydrology, fire frequency, soil fertility and other ecosystem processes.

The Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program (APIPP) is a partnership program between the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Department of Transportation, Adirondack Park Agency, the Adirondack Chapter of the Nature Conservancy, and more than 30 other cooperating organizations. APIPP lists aquatic invasive species including brittle naiad, curly-leaf pondweed, Eurasian watermilfoil, European frog-bit, fanwort, variable-leaf watermilfoil, water chestnut, and yellow floating heart as having been observed in the Adirondack region. Terrestrial invasive species in the region include common reed grass, garlic mustard, giant hogweed, hemlock woolly adelgid, Japanese knotweed, oriental bittersweet, purple loosestrife, swallow-worts, wild parsnip, yellow iris the balsam woolly adelgid, Eurasian boar, and the sirex woodwasp. Several invasive species that have not yet been identified in the Adirondack Park but of concern include hydrilla, kudzu, Asian longhorn beetle, and emerald ash borer.

To date, APIPP has not identified any invasive species on the CTCE. However, it should be noted that APIPP surveys are primarily conducted along major travel corridors, and areas like the CTCE are lower on the priority list for survey. While no invasive species have been identified on the CTCE itself, numerous Japanese Knotweed occurrences have been documented along the Beaver River both upstream and downstream from the property. Bush Honeysuckle, Garlic Mustard, and Mud Bithynia (a small snail) have also been documented in the immediate vicinity. Invasive species represent a likely ecological issue on the CTCE moving forward.

B. Cultural Resources

1. Cultural and Archaeological

The New York State Office of Parks Recreation and Historic Preservation has identified two archaeological sites of sensitivity on Soft Maple Reservoir. One of the sites is directly adjacent to the CTCE, and the other is 0.8 miles west of the property. Due to the fact that the sites are identified as sensitive, exact locations and further details are not included in this RMP. Additionally, the Sand Pond Club camp is reported to have been used during World War II to house prisoners of war who were dispatched to harvest forest products.

2. Visual/Scenic Resources

Most scenic views on the property are associated with water bodies and wetlands. A small forest preserve parcel near Eagle Canyon which may be accessed from the CTCE also provides an impressive view.

IV. PUBLIC USE ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

A. Laws & Regulations

The Department is responsible for managing public access and recreation in a manner consistent with the terms of the conservation casement, applicable laws and regulations. This RMP has been developed within the constraints and guidelines set forth by the Environmental Conservation Law; Title 6 NYCRR of the State of New York; established Department policy; and the terms and conditions of the conservation easement that encumbers the property.

Development and implementation of this RMP shall be consistent with:

1. Application of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), along with the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 (ABA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; Title V, Section 504, have a profound effect on the manner by which people with disabilities are afforded equality in their recreational pursuits. The ADA is a comprehensive law prohibiting discrimination against people with disabilities in employment practices, use of public transportation, use of telecommunication facilities and use of public accommodations.

Consistent with ADA requirements, the Department incorporates accessibility for people with disabilities into siting, planning, construction and alteration of recreational facilities and assets supporting them.

In addition, Title II of the ADA requires in part, that services, programs and activities of the Department, when viewed in their entirety, are readily accessible to and usable by people with disabilities. The Department is not required to take any action which would result in a fundamental alteration to the nature of the service, program or activity or would present an undue financial or administrative burden. When accommodating access to a program, the Department is not necessarily required to make each existing facility and asset accessible, as long as the program is accessible by the other means or at a different facility.

This RMP incorporates an inventory of all the recreational facilities and assets on the unit or area, and an assessment of the programs, services and facilities provided to determine the level of accessibility. In conducting this assessment, DEC employs guidelines which ensure that programs are accessible, include buildings, facilities, and vehicles, in terms of architecture and design, transportation and communication to individuals with disabilities.

For outdoor recreational facilities not covered under the current ADA standards, the Department will use standards provided under the Architectural Barriers Act, to lend credibility to the assessment result and to offer protection to the natural resource.

All new facilities, or parts of facilities that are constructed for public use, are to be accessible to people with disabilities. Full compliance is not required where DEC can demonstrate that it is structurally impracticable to meet the requirements. (See Text of 28 CRF § 35.151 (a)(b) below). Compliance is still required for parts of the facility that can be made accessible to the extent that it is not structurally impracticable, and for people with various types of disabilities.

A record of accessibility determination is kept with the work planning record. Any new facilities, assets, and accessibility improvements to existing facilities or assets proposed in this Recreation Management Plan are identified, as “Accessible”, in section VI Proposed Recreation Management Actions.

28 CFR § 35.151 (a)(b)
(a) Design and Construction.

(1) Each facility or part of a facility constructed by, on behalf of, or for the use of a public entity shall be designed and constructed in such a manner that the facility or part of facility is readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities, if the construction was commenced after January 26, 1992.

(2) There are exceptions for structural impracticability:

(i) Full compliance with the requirements of this section is not required where a public entity can demonstrate that it is structurally impracticable only in those rare circumstances when the unique characteristics of terrain prevent the incorporation of accessible features.

(ii) If full compliance with this section would be structurally impracticable, compliance with this section is required to the extent that it is not structurally impracticable. In that case, any portion of the facility that can be made accessible shall be made accessible to the extent that it is not structurally impracticable.

(iii) If providing accessibility in conformance with this section to individuals with certain disabilities (e.g., those who use wheelchairs) would be structurally impracticable, accessibility shall nonetheless be ensured to persons with other types of disabilities, (e.g., those who use crutches or who have sight, hearing, or mental impairments) in accordance with this section."

(b) Alterations.

(1) Each facility or part of facility altered by, on behalf of, or for the use of a public entity in a manner that affects or could affect the usability of the facility or part of the facility shall. To the maximum extent feasible, be altered in such manner that the altered portion of the facility is readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities, if the alteration was commenced after January 26, 1992.

For further information contact the ADA Coordinator at accessibility@dec.ny.gov

2. Adirondack Park Agency Administered Laws

https://www.apa.ny.gov/Regulations/index.html

Pursuant to the ***New York Freshwater Wetlands Act***, the Department must consult with the Adirondack Park Agency (APA) concerning all recreation management actions on the property within 100 feet of a freshwater wetland. The ***Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers System Act*** is also administered by APA for private lands within the Adirondack Park, however this is not applicable to the CTCE RMP.

3. New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA)

http://www.dec.ny.gov/permits/357.html

SEQRA requires all state and local government agencies to consider environmental impacts equally with social and economic factors during discretionary decision-making. As the lead agency developing this RMP, NYSDEC completed a full Environmental Assessment Form, see appendix D. Public comments were accepted, considered and incorporated into the RMP where appropriate.

4. Section 404 of the Clean Water Act

https://www.epa.gov/cwa-404/section-404-permit-program

The Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) is charged with reviewing projects that could affect any "waters of the United States" under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, including wetlands, irrespective of size. All activities, including dredging and filling, in water pursuant to this RMP or future amendments, must adhere to permit requirements of the ACOE.

B. Policies and Memoranda

1. Adirondack Park Agency Memorandum of Understanding

https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/lands_forests_pdf/cedecapamou.pdf

The 2010 *Memorandum of Understanding between the Adirondack Park Agency and Department of Environmental Conservation: Concerning State-Owned Conservation Easements on Private Land within the Adirondack Park* guides communication between the APA and NYSDEC regarding RMP development, and lists activities requiring Agency consultation, notice and/or review or no Agency review. The APA's role relating to the Freshwater Wetlands Act, and administration of the Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers System Act on conservation easements is also outlined. All NYSDEC management of public recreation on the conservation easement property is subject to this MOU.

2. Department Policies

Department Guidance and policy documents are available at:
http://www.dec.ny.gov/regulations/2401.html

- Temporary Revocable Permits for State Lands and Conservation Easements (ONR-3)
- Volunteer Stewardship Agreements (CP-58; formerly Adopt-A-Natural Resource, ONR-1)
- Motorized Access Program for People With Disabilities (CP-3)
- Standards and Procedures for Boundary Line Maintenance (NR-95-1)

C. Guidelines and Standards

1. Accessible Designs for Outdoor Recreational Facilities Guidebook, 2014

As the Department continues to expand outdoor recreation opportunities, the design process will continue to incorporate research and ingenuity to harmonize accessibility and Universal Design principles to provide a quality visitor experience.

2. Motor Vehicle Road Standards

ROAD/TRAIL SPECIFICATION FACTOR	VEHICULAR ROAD VOLUME CLASS[1]		
	LOW	MED	HIGH
# of TRAFFIC LANES	1	1	1+
MINIMUM CURVE RADIUS w/o signage(feet)	50	50	50
MAXIMUM GRADE % (sustained/ short stretch)	10/15	10/15	10/15
SHOULDER WIDTH, EACH SIDE(feet)	3 to 4	4 to 5	5 to 6
TRAVELED SURFACE WIDTH(feet)	10	12	14
MINIMUM TURNOUT SPACING	n/a	½ mi	1/4 mi
SURFACE SPECIFICATIONS	BMP's [2]	BMP's	BMP's
DITCHING	BMP's	BMP's	BMP's
CULVERT INSTALLATION SPECIFICATIONS [3]	BMP's	BMP's	BMP's
MIN. SIGHTING DISTANCE w/o SIGNAGE(feet)	100	150	250
VEGETATION CONTROL	cut/remove	cut/remove	cut/remove
PITCH(maximum)	<10%	4" crown	4" crown
STREAM AND WETLAND CROSSING SPECS	BMP'S	BMP'S	BMP'S
SENSITIVE AREA SET BACKS	BMP'S	BMP'S	BMP'S
SIGNAGE STANDARDS[4]	Minimal	Basic	Moderate
GATE LOCATIONS	as agreed	as agreed	as agreed
SEASONAL USE SPECIFICATIONS[5]	surface	surface	surface
MAINTENANCE STANDARDS	minimal	as needed	regular
ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS[6]	APA/DEC	APA/DEC	APA/DEC
INSURANCE STANDARDS[7]	NYS REG	NYS REG	NYS REG
ENFORCEMENT[8]	DEC	DEC	DEC

**Specifications were developed in cooperation with previous landowner - Heartwood Forestland Fund III*

3. Snowmobile Trail Standards

ROAD/TRAIL SPECIFICATION FACTOR	SNOWMOBILE TRAIL VOLUME CLASS		
	LOW	**MED**	**HIGH**
# of TRAFFIC LANES	1	1	2
MINIMUM CURVE RADIUS w/o signage(feet)	n/a	40	50
MAXIMUM GRADE % (sustained/ short stretch)	10/15	10/15	10/15
SHOULDER WIDTH, EACH SIDE(feet)	n/a	n/a	n/a
TRAVELED SURFACE WIDTH(feet)	6/8	12	14
MINIMUM TURNOUT SPACING	n/a	n/a	1/2mi
SURFACE SPECIFICATIONS	BMP's	BMP's	BMP's
DITCHING	BMP's	BMP's	BMP's
CULVERT INSTALLATION SPECIFICATIONS [3]	BMP's	BMP's	BMP's
MIN. SIGHTING DISTANCE w/o SIGNAGE(feet)	n/a	150	250
VEGETATION CONTROL	n/a	n/a	cut//remove
PITCH(maximum)	n/a	20%	15%
STREAM AND WETLAND CROSSING SPECS	BMP'S	BMP'S	BMP'S
SENSITIVE AREA SET BACKS	BMP'S	BMP'S	BMP'S
SIGNAGE STANDARDS[4]	Minimal	Basic	Moderate
GATE LOCATIONS	as agreed	as agreed	as agreed
SEASONAL USE SPECIFICATIONS[5]	winter	winter	winter
MAINTENANCE STANDARDS	none	none	groomed
ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS[6]	APA/DEC	APA/DEC	APA/DEC
INSURANCE STANDARDS[7]	NYS REG	NYS REG	NSY REG
ENFORCEMENT[8]	DEC	DEC	DEC

**Specifications were developed in cooperation with previous landowner - Heartwood Forestland Fund III*

Road and Snowmobile Trail Specification Notes

1 VEHICLE VOLUME SPECS:
LOW: +/- <20 ROUND TRIPS/MONTH
MEDIUM: +/-20-300 TRIPS/MONTH
HIGH: +/- >300 TRIPS/MONTH
APPENDIX L LISTS VOLUME CLASSES

2 BMPS ARE PER THE NYS FORESTRY BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR WATER QUALITY: BMP FIELD GUIDE

3 ALL CULVERTS SHALL BE PROPERLY HEADED WITH STONE, WOOD, OR STEEL/PLASTIC COLLARS

4 SIGNAGE STANDARDS:
MINIMAL - SIGNS FOR IDENTIFYING ROAD NAME WHERE BEGINS AND FOR HAZARDOUS SITUATIONS SUCH AS BARRIERS/KNOWN HAZARD PREVENTING PASSAGE AHEAD, STOP SIGN INDICATING INTERSECTION WITH A MODERATE OR HIGHER VOLUME ROAD

BASIC - SAME AS MINIMAL PLUS BRIDGE APPROACH SIGNAGE, SHARP CURVE SIGNS, OR ADDITIONAL AS OTHERWISE NEEDED AND AGREED UPON BY DEC AND HFFIII (EG. SUCH AS SUGGESTED SPEED LIMIT IF IS FIRST ROAD INTO A PROPERTY

MODERATE - SAME AS BASIC PLUS SUGGESTED SPEED LIMIT (UNTIL IT BECOMES A REGULATION), TURNOUT SPACING, OR ADDITIONAL AS OTHERWISE NEEDED AND AGREED UPON BY DEC AND HFFIII

5 "SURFACE" MEANS THE CONDITION AND TYPE OF THE SURFACE WILL SET STANDARDS FOR SEASONAL USE. GENERALLY CLOSED DURING MUD SEASON (AS POSTED) TO PUBLIC MOTOR VEHICLE AND LOG TRUCK USE, BY AGREEMENT OF DEC AND HFFIII; "WINTER" MEANS WINTER USE ONLY

MAINTENANCE STANDARDS:
MINIMAL - CONDITION CHECKED ANNUALLY, ROUTINE MAINTENANCE SUCH AS GRADING, DITCH CLEANING POTHOLE/WASHOUT REPAIR GENERALLY NEEDED ONLY EVERY THREE OR FOUR YEARS

AS NEEDED - SAME AS MINIMAL BUT DUE TO HIGHER USE LEVELS WILL LIKELY NEED SOME ROUTINE MAINTENANCE ANNUALLY OR EVERY OTHER YEAR

REGULAR - ANNUAL ROUTINE MAINTENANCE LIKELY NEEDED

6 APA/DEC REGULATIONS ON WETLANDS, STREAM CROSSING, ETC.

7 NYS REGULATIONS ON INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS FOR VEHICLES

8 LANDOWNER IS RESPONSIBLE FOR INFORMING LESSEE'S OF RULES AND REGS FOR USE OF TRAILS AND RELATED RETAINED RECREATION RIGHTS; DEC HAS LEGAL AUTHORITY FOR ENFORCEMENT OF DEC REG'S WITH MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC, INCLUDING MOLPUS LESSEES WHEN ARE RECREATING AS MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

4. Foot Trail Standards

Indicator	Standard
Maintained Tread Width	18-24”
Adjacent Vegetation: cleared width & height, presence of ground vegetation	Cleared <6' wide / 10' high; grass, fern, small plants and shrubs present within cleared width.
Length of Water/Mud Occurrences	<100 feet per mile
Tread Erosion: trenching & root exposure	<6" trenching; Occasional root exposure
Presence of Litter	<1 occurrence / mile

** Where trails use old forest management roads, they may be wider than specified standards, but will only be maintained to specified width. Standards are not meant to eliminate the possibility of constructing trails to Accessible specifications if such trails are proposed on the CTCE in the future. If the opportunity to build an Accessible trail is found the Department will use standards provided under the Architectural Barriers Act.*

5. Campsite Standards

Indicator	Standard	
	Primitive Sites	Sites Meeting ADA Accessible Standards
Size of Campsite (sq. ft.)	1200	1200
[1]Mineral Soil Exposure (sq. ft.)	0-50%	N/A
		site hardened
[2]Vegetative ground cover (onsite)	25-50%	N/A
		site hardened
[3]Condition Class	4 or <	N/A
		site hardened

(1) Exposed Soil (On-site): Estimate the percentage of exposed soil defined as soil with very little or no organic litter (partially decomposed leaf, needle, or twig litter) or vegetation cover with in the campsite boundary. Dark organic soil (the decomposed product of organic litter) should be assessed as bare soil when its consistency resembles that of peat moss. If there are few thin patches of organic litter, assess the entire area as bare soil.

(2) Estimate the percentage of live non-woody vegetative ground cover within the campsite boundaries (e.g., herbs, grasses, and mosses but not saplings or tree seedlings).

(3) Condition Class

Class 1: Recreation site barely distinguishable; slight loss of vegetation cover and/ or minimal disturbance of organic litter.
Class 2: Recreation site obvious; vegetation cover lost and/ or organic litter pulverized in primary use area.
Class 3: Vegetation cover lost and/ or organic litter pulverized on much of the site, some bare soil exposed in primary use areas.
Class 4: Nearly complete or total loss of vegetation cover and organic litter, bare soil widespread.
Class 5: Soil erosion obvious, as indicated by exposed tree roots and rocks and/or gullying.

D. Best Management Practices

All public recreation management activities will incorporate the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) to the greatest practical extent. BMPs are those methods, procedures, and devices that are designed to prevent or minimize soil erosion, water run-off, damage to natural resources or wildlife habitat, pollution, pathogens, or other negative environmental impacts when conducting various management activities. For more information regarding BMPs, please visit: https://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/37845.html.

BMPs related to the implementation of public access and recreational improvements on the property include, but are not limited to:

- Limiting improvements to the minimum number and size necessary to meet intended and anticipated use;
- Locating improvements away from streams, wetlands, and unstable slopes;
- Locating improvements to minimize necessary cut and fill on flat, stable, well-drained sites;
- Avoiding designation/construction of recreation facilities in areas where sensitive species and communities are known to exist;
- Minimizing tree cutting;
- Using proper drainage devices, such as water bars and broad-based dips, to prevent erosion and damage to improvements;
- Designing, constructing, and maintaining bridges and other improvements on or near streams to avoid disrupting or preventing movement of fish and other aquatic species;
- Minimizing the use of construction equipment in streams;
- Using soil stabilization practices on exposed soil around construction areas, especially bridges, immediately after construction;
- Constructing roads, trails, bridges and other stream crossings at right angles to the stream;
- Limiting stream crossings and construction on or near streams to periods of low flow;
- Properly cleaning equipment to prevent the spread of invasive species from one site to another.

E. Management Authority, Staff and Responsibility

The Regional Natural Resources Supervisor is the Manager of regional staff in the Department's Division of Lands and Forests, the Division of Fish and Wildlife, and the Division of Mineral Resources. The Division of Lands and Forests has primary responsibility for managing public use of the lands subject to this RMP, including the development of this RMP, development of individual work plans and schedules, implementation and coordination of all activities with the landowner, partners, and other Department Divisions. The Division of Operations, at the direction of the Division of Lands and Forests, will oversee construction and maintenance of facilities approved by this RMP. The Regional Forester has overall responsibility for these matters. Reporting to the Regional Forester is a Supervising Forester whom is responsible for forestry and land management programs. Reporting to the Supervising Forester are one or more Foresters

or Natural Resource Planners that may be assigned to specific tasks in preparing or implementing this Recreation Management Plan. The Regional Fisheries Manager and Regional Wildlife Manager are responsible for all Division of Fish and Wildlife activities. The Office of Public Protection will be responsible for enforcement of laws and Department rules and regulations. Environmental Conservation Officers and Forest Rangers have primary responsibility for monitoring and enforcement of public use of the property.

A land manager will be designated by the Regional Forester as the lead Department staff person for developing and implementing this and subsequent Recreation Management Plans for the CTCE property. The land manager will be responsible for:

- Overseeing the coordination and preparation of the RMP, as well as periodic updates, revisions, or amendments;
- Coordinating the implementation of this RMP;
- Overseeing the budget outlined in the RMP;
- Assuring that management activities of all Department Divisions, as they relate to this RMP, comply with applicable laws, regulations, policies, and easement terms;
- Monitoring conditions and public use; addressing conflicts; and assessing the effectiveness of the RMP in addressing resource protection and public needs;
- Fostering communication about management activities within the Department, between the Department and the landowner, and between the Department and the public. The land manager will be the primary liaison with the landowner regarding public access and use issues.

The development of this RMP has primarily involved Department staff and the landowner's land management staff. Communication and coordination of planning efforts between the parties was critical to formulating management objectives and proposals. Consistent communication is extremely important in preparing and implementing this RMP and adhering to the terms of the Easement. Department staff will regularly communicate with the landowner to review completed activities, address concerns or problems, and coordinate future work.

F. Management Goals and Objectives

Management goals are broad statements of intent, direction and purpose. Goals may be based upon law, Department regulations, policies, and/or general philosophy. Management objectives are statements that describe specific conditions to manage towards, and serve as criteria for deciding what management actions are needed. Objectives are more specific than goals, and may be measured or confirmed as having been accomplished.

Management goals and objectives were developed in consideration of conservation easement terms, Department policies and philosophy, interests of various stakeholders, and use and ownership of the property by the landowner.

Management Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Avoid or minimize any negative impacts of public recreation on the natural resources and environmental benefits of the property and nearby state lands.

Objectives

1.1 Enforce all applicable laws and regulations including the Environmental Conservation Law, hunting, fishing, and trapping regulations.

1.2 For all current public recreation facilities and opportunities within areas identified in Natural Heritage Program geospatial data or other sensitive habitats or communities as identified by Department staff, complete an alternatives analysis assessing environmental impacts and including an alternative in which public facilities are removed and/or recreation opportunities are closed.

1.3 When constructing new facilities, infrastructure, or implementing public recreation rights within any area identified in Natural Heritage Program geospatial data or within other sensitive habitats or communities as identified by Department staff, complete an alternatives analysis assessing environmental impacts and including a “no action” alternative.

1.4 If public facilities are to be removed or recreation opportunities to be closed pursuant to this RMP, identify a deadline for such action.

1.5 Follow Best Management Practices (BMPs) during all construction and maintenance activities on the CTCE. These include but are not limited to those listed in Section IV of this RMP.

1.6 Regularly complete inspection reports evaluating public recreation impacts on natural resources of the property

Goal 2: Construct, maintain, and manage facilities/infrastructure to facilitate a variety of outdoor recreational opportunities on the property, consistent with Department policies.

Objectives

2.1 Provide public motor vehicle access to Parcels C-1 and C-2.

2.2 Construct/designate at least one parking area each to serve as access points for Parcel C-1 and Parcel C-2.

2.3 Maintain or construct snowmobile trails to provide connections on the CTCE to the local/regional snowmobile trail system. Maintain or construct alternative routes for periods when landowner forest management activities such as timber harvesting requires closure of a primary trail.

2.4 Where public demand exists, designate non-motorized trails to notable destinations on the CTCE and leading to adjacent state lands.

2.5 Designate up to 9 primitive campsites on the property including two Accessible campsites.
2.6 Where practical, provide opportunities for hunting, fishing, trapping, bicycling, car-top boating, hiking, skiing, snowshoeing, and other public recreation rights allowed per the conservation easement.
2.7 Provide public information regarding the CTCE online, and by posting informational signage.
2.8 Create an implementation budget and schedule for all public recreation facility development and implementation on the CTCE.

Goal 3: Avoid or minimize conflicts between public recreational use and landowner forest management activities, permitted structures, lessees, and other Reserved Rights

Objectives

3.1 Where possible, route new public recreation corridors and facilities away from lease camps on the property. Where recreation corridors pass near lease camps, they should be screened by vegetation and/or topography whenever possible.
3.2 Construct gates or place signage to direct public motor vehicles and snowmobiles on designated routes.
3.3 Coordinate siting of all public recreation facilities with the landowner.
3.4 Maintain an open dialogue with the landowner and landowner representatives.

Goal 4: Enforce laws and regulations on the property.

Objective

4.1 Provide support to NYS Forest Rangers and Environmental Conservation Officers who will enforce laws and regulations on the property.

Goal 5: Periodically assess the impacts of recreational use on forest management activities, lease camps, and natural resources.

Objectives

a. Monitor facility/infrastructure conditions using Guidelines and Standards outlined in this RMP.
b. Regularly complete inspection reports evaluating public recreation impacts on natural resources of the property
c. Maintain an open dialogue with the landowner or landowner designated Land Manager.

Goal 6: Use the CTCE as a conservation education resource.

Objective

6.1 Place environmental and forest management interpretation signage as appropriate.

G. Public Input

In order to engage stakeholders during the recreation management planning process, a public meeting was held in May 2001 to solicit public suggestions for the Watson's East Triangle Wild Forest UMP, Croghan Tract and Oswegatchie Conservation Easement RMPs. Development of the RMPs was delayed, so a press release was issued in February 2017 announcing the Department's renewed intent to draft a RMP for the Croghan Tract. A 60-day public comment period was held prior to the development of a draft RMP, from March 6th – May 6th, 2017. Thirty-two (32) written comments were received.

Comments pertained to the following topics:

- Input received prior to the release of a draft RMP should not supersede NYSDEC's fundamental role to protect natural resources;
- Support for RMP format Region 6 has recently been using, and inclusion of natural resource monitoring in RMPs;
- The RMP should include recreation and natural resource standards, capacity of the resource to withstand use (protection of natural resources), an enforcement/ applicable laws section, and specific conservation easement language pertaining to "recitals" (purpose of the grant), conservation values and affirmative rights;
- General support and opposition to motorized access (particularly using ATVs);
- Support for expanded motorized access to hunting, fishing and trapping opportunities;
- Support for public use of rifle season primary access corridors as described in the conservation easement;
- Support for motorized access near West Ponds and Fish Creek near the center of the property;
- Consider RMP impacts on adjacent forest preserve lands - particularly the Pepperbox Wilderness Area;
- Maintain/enhance snowmobiling opportunities on the property;
- Support for equestrian use of the property.

V. MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

The Department has purchased specific public recreation rights on the Croghan Tract through a conservation easement. Department management of public recreation is limited to those rights which were purchased. Due to limited Department resources, management and natural resource considerations and constraints, the Department may choose to not exercise all public recreation rights which are owned. Some recreation rights are purchased to allow for more options and flexibility as conditions and public demand might change in the future. While many conservation easement terms are summarized within this RMP, the full deed is available at the Lewis County Clerk's Office.

A. Forestry and Natural Resource Considerations

The listed purposes of the conservation easement which encumbers the Croghan Tract are hierarchal. The principle object is to perpetuate the property as a biologically and economically sustainable working forest, the secondary objective is to conserve wildlife habitat and other natural resource features (especially the diversity of forest types and conditions), and the tertiary objective is to provide opportunities for public recreation where consistent with the forest management and resource conservation purposes.

Consistent with these objectives, Department exercise and management of public recreation rights is proposed with consideration of forestry and natural resource considerations. Landowner forestry operations are a reserved right, and the landowner was involved in the development and review of this RMP. While it is acknowledged that all recreation activities and facilities have some level of impact on the natural resources, recreation proposals included in this RMP are considered to be consistent with the higher priority of the conservation easement - the protection of natural resources. No public recreation activity or support facility is proposed in this RMP that is believed to substantially impact natural resources on the property in a negative manner. Recreation impacts on natural resources are evaluated throughout the planning process by Department natural resource professionals including but not limited to natural resource planners, foresters, wildlife biologists, and habitat biologists, and are reviewed through SEQRA. In the spirit of the conservation easement, consideration of natural resources adjacent to the property has also been considered, along with impacts to resources and character of other state lands.

The capacity of the CTCE to withstand use will be continually evaluated. Should concerns arise relating to the impacts from public recreation access, activities or facilities during implementation of this RMP, the Department will re-evaluate management of related public recreation. Public recreation opportunities and facilities may be closed at any time at the land manager's discretion. Particular consideration will be given to protect Species of Greatest Conservation Need, Natural Heritage Program Occurrences, water bodies, and wetlands located on the property.

B. Public Recreation and Use Rights

The conservation easement grants the public specific rights of access to the Croghan Tract for outdoor recreational use, where "consistent with the forest management and resource conservation purposes" of the easement. All management actions on the property, as implemented through this RMP, will be conducted in accordance with conservation easement terms and will strive to be consistent and compatible with the reserved rights of the landowner. Permitted public recreational activities, as proposed in this RMP, are designed to have limited impacts on the landowner's management of the property for forest products and private leases, and on the natural resources of the property.

The following rights have been granted to the State of New York and apply directly to the development and implementation of this RMP:

1. Motorized Access - Use and Activities

The conservation easement grants NYSDEC the right to permit public motorized access over the CTCE on Motorized Access Corridors, designated in this RMP and marked for the type of permitted motorized vehicle(s) (ie. passenger vehicle, snowmobile, ATV). The Department is permitted to construct additional Motorized Access Corridors and parking areas.

2. Non-motorized Access - Use and Activities

The conservation easement grants NYSDEC the right to permit public access and use of the CTCE by foot, bicycle, and other non-motorized means including hiking, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, mechanized aids for persons with disabilities, horseback, canoeing or kayaking. The Department is permitted to construct additional non-motorized trail corridors. Camping is allowed under the same rules as it is permitted on state lands. Designated campsites must be identified in the RMP.

3. Signs

The Department posted new boundary signs following the 2012 amendment of the conservation easement to reflect alterations to permitted public recreation. The Department is responsible for posting signs relating to the management of public access and recreation on the CTCE. The landowner posts 1-acre areas surrounding lease camps as well as two 5-acre development sites as closed to the public, and may post additional signs relating to forest management activities when appropriate.

4. Recreation Closures

The conservation easement language allows the landowner to close portions of the property to public recreation during forest management operations – "Logging Operation Closure Zones." Such closures may not exceed 24 months in duration or occupy more than ten percent (10%) of the property in aggregate at any one time. Whenever possible, the landowner and NYSDEC will provide alternative routes and accommodations for public recreation. The exercise of public recreation rights

purchased in the conservation easement may be temporarily or permanently closed or altered by the Department for administrative, or environmental reasons.

C. Administration and Management Commitments

The CTCE is a privately-owned property. New York State owns a suite of rights relating to the property and works as a partner to the landowner when implementing public recreation rights. Administration of public access, maintenance of shared infrastructure, and sharing of costs where appropriate warrant ongoing communication and cooperation with the landowner.

1. Barriers/Gates/Locks

The landowner and NYSDEC coordinate the construction of permanent barriers, gates, and locks as needed. Both parties are permitted to do so in furtherance of their respective rights on the property.

2. Boundary Lines

Both the landowner and Department are permitted but not required to mark property boundaries. The Department posted new boundary signs following the 2012 amendment of the conservation easement to reflect alterations to permitted public recreation. The Department also clears brush and paints boundary lines on the property every seven years with yellow paint as is used on other conservation easements and state lands.

3. Recreation Monitoring

The Department may inspect the CTCE per terms identified in the conservation easement deed. Through regular maintenance and administration of recreation facilities, issues may also be detected outside of formal inspections. Annual meetings with the landowner provide a chance for both parties to express concerns and propose solutions.

4. Search, Rescue, Fire, Emergency Response, and Law Enforcement

The Department and the landowner have the right to undertake emergency actions necessary to preserve and protect private property interests, public recreation amenities, and human health and safety in response to natural disasters, environmental hazards, or other threats. The Department's Environmental Conservation Police, Forest Rangers, State Police, and other emergency response personnel will have full access to the property. Emergency response for search, fire, and rescue on the property will be coordinated by the NYS Forest Rangers, however a response may include other emergency responders. The Department will notify the landowner of all emergency actions and serious violations. The landowner will report public use violations to the Department by filing complaints through the area manager or the regional dispatch center. The Department will promulgate site specific regulations for the public use of the property as necessary for future recreational management and law enforcement.

D. Finite Department Resources

The Department has limited staff and funding resources to develop and maintain facilities and administer recreation opportunities on the CTCE as well as other Department managed properties. Opportunity costs, or those Department activities which are sacrificed when resources are used on the CTCE are a crucial consideration for all proposals in this RMP. The RMP is drafted to realistically and pragmatically address finite resources while maximizing appropriate public recreation opportunities.

VI. PROPOSED RECREATION MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

A. Passenger Vehicle Access

Conservation Easement Terms

The Department has purchased the right to allow passenger vehicle access on the CTCE, including all vehicles which may be legally registered and insured for use on a public highway (ie. cars, trucks, motorcycles). "Motorized Access Corridors" must be identified in a RMP and be signed for the specific type(s) of motor vehicles permitted to use them. The Department may construct new Motorized Access Corridors and parking areas which have been identified in this RMP or otherwise approved by the landowner.

Motorized Access Corridors are designated as Primary Access Corridors (PAC) which provide motorized access integral to administration and recreational use on the CTCE (may be closed by the landowner to maintain road integrity such as during "mud season"), or Secondary Access Corridors (SAC) which are not integral to public recreation but enhance public enjoyment (may be closed by the landowner during mud season or during forest management activities).

Additionally, Rifle Season Primary Access Corridors (RSPACs) were identified by the conservation easement to serve as access routes to adjacent forest preserve lands during big game hunting season prior to the expiration of landowner exclusive hunting rights. Hunting rights exclusive to the landowner have now expired, but these routes will remain open as Primary Access Corridors.

Discussion

<u>Summary</u>

The CTCE currently has 11.0 miles of road designated for public passenger vehicle use.

Few notable destinations are located on the CTCE itself. As such, designated roads are intended to provide general access. Considering the roads which are currently open to passenger vehicles, 53% of Parcel C-1 is within ½ mile of a town or conservation easement road open to public vehicles, and 89% is within 1 mile. Parcel C-2 is slightly

less accessible with 18% of the parcel within ½ mile and 61% within 1 mile of the Adsit Trail (private road open to the public) or town roads.

Notable destinations located off the property, but which are often accessed from the CTCE, include the Eagle Canyon forest preserve parcel, Sand Pond and other portions of the Pepperbox Wilderness Area, and Soft Maple Reservoir. Access to these destinations is generally accommodated by existing designated roads on the CTCE. An Accessible parking area and trail, to Sand Pond is located along the Main Haul Road, and Sand Pond Road and Jakes Pond Road each lead to parking areas which provide access to the remote Pepperbox Wilderness Area. Passenger vehicles may also drive to the Accessible car-top boat launch on Soft Maple Reservoir.

Due to the lack of specific recreation destinations on the CTCE and the fact that unconfined recreation (primarily hunting, fishing and trapping) represents most public use, extensive increase in passenger vehicle road mileage is not warranted. Given limited Department resources and the opportunity costs associated with opening passenger vehicle roads, existing hardened and relatively low maintenance roads which provide access to areas otherwise less-accessible by passenger vehicle should be targeted for opening.

Parcel C-1

The Main Haul Road provides excellent access to Parcel C-1 as it loops from Prentice Road in the north, to Fish Creek Road in the south. Additional access to Parcel C-1 and the Pepperbox Wilderness is provided by Jakes Pond Road and Sand Pond Road, which spur east from the Main Haul Road. The Soft Maple Reservoir and Eagle Canyon Roads provide motorized access towards Soft Maple Reservoir and the Beaver River.

Other through-corridors located in Parcel C-1 are represented by the East Side, West Side, and Blue Line snowmobile trails. The East Side and West Side Trails are partially hardened gravel roads, with potential to provide additional public passenger vehicle access (particularly to Fish Creek), however portions of both roads are not constructed to support vehicle traffic. The southern portion of the East Side Trail represents the best option for passenger vehicle access, due to the presence of a robust road. The northern portion of the road has a bridge over Fish Creek and passes directly next to two lease camps. The southern portion of the West Side Trail is also hardened. The Blue Line Road is improved for a short distance at the northern end, but requires upgrades beyond the existing campsite. The Department does not own the right to permit passenger vehicles on the Blue Line Trail where it leaves the CTCE.

The Department does not own any rights over private land on the Crooked Lake Road. As such, providing passenger vehicle access to the southeast corner of the property would require acquisition of additional rights or construction of a new road located wholly on the conservation easement. Since there are no outstanding destinations on the property, construction of additional roads is not a warranted use of Department resources.

Spur roads which are long enough to enhance overall access to Parcel C-1 include:
13-05-00: Hardened road leading north to the center of C-1. A lease envelope is located at the end of the road; however, no camp has been built.
13-07-00: Unhardened winter road not capable of sustaining passenger vehicle use.
13:09-00: Hardened road passes directly past a lease camp.
13-11-00: Unhardened winter road not capable of sustaining passenger vehicle use.
13-13-00: Hardened 0.6 miles to fork, however a washed-out culvert is located 0.2 miles from the Main Haul Road. Passes through potential winter deer yard habitat beyond Fish Creek.

Given limited Department resources and the opportunity costs associated with opening passenger vehicle roads through Parcel C-1, only hardened, relatively low maintenance roads should be considered as public passenger vehicle routes. The location of unscreened lease camps should also be considered where possible. 13-03-00 (East Side Road), 13-05-00 (Lightning Hill Road), and 13-13-00 (Line Road) best meet these criteria for opening to public motor vehicle use.

Parcel C-2

Currently, there are no roads open through Parcel C-2. The Adsit Trail is open to public motor vehicles and provides access to the northern portion of C-2.

Spur roads which are long enough to enhance overall access to Parcel C-2 include:

14-01-03: Partially hardened at the northern end. A major beaver dam has flooded the road before it crosses onto private land, and the southern end is wet, flooded, and unimproved.
14-02-00: Hardened road leading towards center of C-2. Passes lease camp and a 5-acre landowner exclusion site.
14-03-00: Hardened road to lease camp just outside C-2. The access right-of-way bisects a small farm. Wet, flooded and unimproved beyond camp.

Given limited Department resources and the opportunity costs associated with opening passenger vehicle roads through Parcel C-2, only hardened, relatively low maintenance roads should be considered as public passenger vehicle routes. Portions of 14-01-00 and 14-02-00 meet these criteria. The unscreened location of a lease camp and a 5-acre landowner exclusion site on 14-02-00 should also be considered.

Gates

In order to provide early-season angler access to Soft Maple Reservoir and Fish Creek, an additional gate could be installed on the Main Haul Road east of the Soft Maple Reservoir access site. This would allow land managers to open a portion of the Main Haul Road earlier than other parts of the road that remain soft into the Spring.

Parking

Designated parking areas on the CTCE are located on Sand Pond Road, at the Sand Pond Trailhead, and Soft Maple Reservoir car-top boat launch. There is generally room for road-side parking, however designated parking areas at proposed information kiosks, on Jakes Pond Road (current parking is within Pepperbox Wilderness Area), along Soft Maple Reservoir Road and at the terminus of any spur roads opened to the public is warranted.

No roads warrant closing during a portion of the year, excepting when roads may be damaged due to seasonal conditions. All roads opened to public motor vehicles should be designated as Primary Access Corridors (and remain open except during mud season per the land manager's discretion), excepting those roads currently designated as Rifle Season Primary Access Corridors (RSPAC).

Management Actions

Accounting for management proposals listed below, 42% of Parcel C-1 will be within ¼ mile of a town or conservation easement road open to public vehicles (70% will be within ½ mile and 97% within 1 mile). Parcel C-2 will be slightly less accessible with 18% within ¼ mile, 32% within ½ mile and 74% within 1 mile of conservation easements, the Adsit Trail (private road open to the public) or town roads.

Roads

- Designate the following Motorized Access Corridors for Passenger Vehicles.
    - Main Haul Road (existing; RSPAC) – Maintain to minimum specifications for a High Vehicular Road Volume Class.
    - Soft Maple Reservoir Car-top Boat Launch Road (existing; PAC) – Maintain to minimum specifications for a Medium Vehicular Road Volume Class.
    - Jakes Pond Road (existing; RSPAC) - Maintain to minimum specifications for a Medium Vehicular Road Volume Class.
    - Sand Pond Road (existing; RSPAC) - Maintain to minimum specifications for a Medium Vehicular Road Volume Class.
    - Eagle Canyon Road (existing; PAC) - Maintain to minimum specifications for a Low Vehicular Road Volume Class.
    - East Side Road / 13-13-00 (new; PAC). Immediately open the improved portion of the road leading north (0.8 miles). If feasible in the future, the road may be improved in coordination with the landowner during forestry operations, and further opened north to the Roaring Brook Bridge. Maintain to minimum specifications for a Medium Vehicular Road Volume Class.
    - Lightning Hill Road / 13-05-00 (new; PAC). Open from Main Haul Road, leading north to end of the improved road (1.8 miles). Maintain to minimum specifications for a Medium Vehicular Road Volume Class.

    - Line Road / 13-13-00 (new; PAC). Open to Fish Creek. If feasible in the future, improve road in coordination with the landowner during forestry operations and open up 1.4 miles (new). Maintain to minimum specifications for a Medium Vehicular Road Volume Class.
    - C2 Road / 14-01-00 (new; PAC). Open 0.6 miles to an Accessible campsite. Maintain to minimum specifications for Low Road Volume Class.
- Install a gate on the Main Haul Road beyond the Soft Maple Reservoir.
- Maintain all gates which control access to designated roads open to public vehicles.

Parking

- Retain Existing Parking Areas
    - Main Haul Road at Sand Pond (3-car, Accessible; Pepperbox Wilderness Area)
    - Soft Maple Reservoir Car-top Boat Launch (2-car, Accessible)
    - Sand Pond Road (2-car) Parking Areas
- Designate/Construct New Accessible Parking Areas
    - Two parking areas near proposed kiosks at the north and south ends of Main Haul Road (each 2-cars)
    - Jakes Pond Road Terminus (move from Pepperbox Wilderness) (2-car)
    - C2 Road Terminus (2-car).
    - Eagle Canyon Road Terminus (2-car)
    - Line Road (2-car; move to road terminus if opened beyond Fish Creek)
    - Lightning Hill Road Terminus (2-car)
    - East Side Road (2-car; move to road terminus if road is improved and extended)
    - Soft Maple Reservoir Road/Main Haul Road intersection (2-car)
- Continue to permit road-side parking.

B. Snowmobile Use

Conservation Easement Terms

The Department has purchased the right to allow snowmobile use on the CTCE. Snowmobile routes must follow “Motorized Access Corridors” designated in a RMP and specifically signed as open to snowmobiles. The Department may construct new snowmobile Motorized Access Corridors which have been identified in a RMP or otherwise approved by the landowner.

Discussion

The CTCE currently has 19.7 miles of Motorized Access Corridors designated for public snowmobile use. Snowmobile use on the CTCE primarily serves to connect snowmobile routes from the west and south to the north. Minimal snowmobile use occurs on the CTCE to access and enjoy other winter activities on the property.

Forest management activities on the CTCE can lead to snowmobile route closures. While the Blue Line, West Side, and East Side Trails represent three north-south alternatives to avoid forest harvest operations, the entire Main Haul Road is commonly plowed during harvest years. It is the goal of the Department to maintain connectivity of the snowmobile trail system on the CTCE, while minimizing the need to ride on plowed roads. Snowmobiles coming from the southwest corner of the Parcel C-1 can follow the Blue Line and West Side Trails north to the Steam Sleigh Trail in Watsons East Triangle Wild Forest, mostly avoiding the Main Haul Road. Snowmobilers who ride north from Stillwater Road must ride 1.1 miles of the Main Haul Road to get to continue north on the East Side Trail. A reroute off the southern end of the East Side Trail, using Lightning Hill Road, would limit the need to ride the Main Haul Road to about 250 feet, as well as move the snowmobile route completely outside of a potential winter deer yard along the southern portion of the East Side Trail. An additional 0.3 mile reroute of the East Side Trail would separate public traffic from a lease camp in the vicinity.

Several roads open to public passenger vehicles warrant consideration to be opened to snowmobiles as ungroomed routes. These ungroomed routes would serve not only through traffic across the CTCE but could facilitate other winter recreation opportunities on the property and adjacent forest preserve lands (including hunting, fishing, trapping, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing). Two roads being considered as ungroomed trails - Jakes Pond Road and Sand Pond Road, warrant special deliberation because they border the Pepperbox Wilderness. Given the Main Haul Road is the main corridor snowmobile trail through the CTCE, snowmobile use already impacts the western Pepperbox unit including soundscape, potential wildlife disturbance and impacts to social constructs of Wilderness (though these impacts are limited to the vicinity where where the Main Haul Road forms the Pepperbox Wilderness boundary near Sand Pond). Since minimal additional snowmobile use would be anticipated, opening Jakes Pond and Sand Pond Roads would be unlikely to significantly increase impacts on the eastern portion of the CTCE and western Pepperbox Wilderness.

Management Actions

- Allow snowmobiles to use ungroomed roads open to passenger vehicles on the CTCE. Maintain to Medium Vehicular Volume Class
    - C2 Road (0.6 miles)
    - Eagle Canyon Road (0.2 miles)
    - Jakes Pond Road (1.0 miles)
    - Lightning Hill Road (prior to maintenance as a snowmobile trail; 1.8 miles)

    - Line Road (up to Fish Creek; 0.2 miles)
    - Sand Pond Road (0.4 miles)
    - Soft Maple Reservoir Road (0.1 miles)
- Maintain all other snowmobile trails to High Vehicular Volume Class
- Designate/construct the Lightning Hill Trail to reroute traffic from the East Side Trail (3.4 miles). Close the East Side Trail between the Main Haul Road and the Lightning Hill Road intersection (1.6 miles) following the construction/designation of the Lightning Hill Road alternative.
- Reroute the East Side Trail around Sand Pond Club Camp (0.3 miles)
- Maintain all gates which control access to designated public snowmobile trails.

C. All-Terrain Vehicle Use

Conservation Easement Terms

The Department has purchased motorized access rights, including the right to allow All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) and other mechanized motor vehicle use on the CTCE. ATV routes must follow "Motorized Access Corridors" designated in a RMP and be specifically signed as open to ATVs. The Department may construct new ATV Motorized Access Corridors which have been identified in a RMP or otherwise approved by the landowner.

Discussion

In seeking to provide motorized access to recreation opportunities on the CTCE, the Department has considered non-winter access holistically. Discussion related to opening existing CTCE roads to passenger vehicles is also applicable to ATV access. Roads which the Department has determined do not provide meaningful access to recreation, cannot be legally accessed by the public, or cannot be feasibly maintained for motorized use are discussed in section VI-A. ATV opportunities on the CTCE fall into two categories; access to recreation opportunities on the CTCE using ATVs, and potential ATV connector routes between off property ATV trail networks.

The CTCE has a robust road system, and in this RMP most of the roads which can be feasibly maintained and provide meaningful access have been opened to passenger vehicles. Many roads on the CTCE do not provide meaningful access to recreation opportunities, would require significant improvement, and/or the Department does not own legal access to them. For roads which have already been opened or are proposed to be open to passenger vehicles, also allowing ATV use would not increase access to recreation opportunities on the CTCE. The Department has determined that proposed passenger vehicle access to the CTCE provides adequate motorized access to Department supported recreation on the property.

ATV access may be allowed on conservation easements as a means of connecting local non-DEC ATV trail networks. Lewis County has expressed interest in an ATV route

across the CTCE. The Department communicated with Lewis Country regarding potential ATV routes during the drafting of this RMP. However, at the present time, county trails that would connect to a potential CTCE route have yet to be identified, permitted, or established by the County.

Additional considerations relating to proposing public ATV use of the CTCE include illegal off-road ATV use, trespass on adjacent lands (particularly Forest Preserve lands), and associated natural resource impacts. The CTCE has many old forest management trails, providing management challenges related to keeping vehicles that are capable of driving off-road on a designated route. Conservation easement terms limit NYSDEC to permitting ATVs on designated routes only. The Steam Sleigh and Doc Woods snowmobile trails on adjacent forest preserve lands have a history of illegal ATV use and continue to receive a significant amount of damage from ATVs to this day.

Environmental impacts from ATV use in forest settings has been well documented. A 2008 U.S. Forest Service study of the effects of all-terrain vehicles on forested landscapes notes off-trail use as reducing or even eliminating vegetation, compacting soils, loosening soils, increasing erosion, and decreasing the ability for soil to absorb rainfall. The study notes the most important management implication being that ATV traffic should be limited to designated trails, and that in areas with off-trail use "reduction in the ability of natural resources to maintain their composition and structure and perform their natural functions" can be expected. A 2007 U.S. Geological Survey Report evaluated 700 peer-reviewed papers, magazine articles, agency and non-governmental reports, and internet websites relating to impacts of Off-Highway Vehicles (including ATVs) on land health. The report serves as a valuable resource, listing significant environmental impacts from ATVs including those relating to soil health and watershed condition, vegetation health, habitat condition and health of wildlife populations, water quality and air quality. Many of these impacts were observed even when OHVs/ATVs were only used on hardened trails or roads.

Management Actions

- No public ATV use is proposed at this time.

D. Hiking/Snowshoeing/Cross-Country Skiing

Conservation Easement Terms

The Department has purchased the right for the public to access the entire property on foot (excepting posted lease camps and developments sties), and construct new trails which have been identified in a RMP or otherwise approved by the landowner.

Discussion

There are currently no designated foot trails on the CTCE, however some off-trail foot access occurs. A short Accessible trail to Sand Pond in the Pepperbox Wilderness Area currently exists, and the Alder Creek Primitive Corridor through the Pepperbox Wilderness Area is used for foot access to the Pepperbox unit (both accessed from the CTCE). While not specifically managed for foot access, snowmobile trails and other forest management roads on the property provide additional meaningful access.

A trail to the Eagle Canyon forest preserve parcel was proposed in the interim management plan but never constructed. While no climbing activities are anticipated to take place on the CTCE, the Eagle Canyon forest preserve parcel is a local climbing destination which may be accessed from the CTCE. A foot trail providing access to the parcel (0.6 miles on the CTCE) would serve as an alternative to accessing the climbing wall from the Adsit Trail on the opposite side of the Beaver River.

A foot trail leading to the CTCE is permitted from Beecher Road (NYSDEC Map 11707) which would provide access to Parcel C-2. This route would likely receive minimal use, and could be marked and maintained as a minimum maintenance trail (only cleared every 5 years) to the conservation easement boundary.

Limited demand for snowshoeing or cross-country skiing on the CTCE is anticipated. However, all foot and snowmobile trails proposed on or accessed from the property could be used for winter recreation. Forest management roads/trails and off-trail use may also occur.

No new Accessible trails are proposed. The only trails not primarily designated for snowmobile use are a minimum maintenance trail for general foot access to parcel C-2 and a short trail leading to a climbing destination. The Sand Pond Accessible Trail (trailhead accessed from the Croghan Tract) already exists.

Management Actions

- Construct the Eagle Canyon Trail from the spur road leading south from Main Haul Road (0.6 miles on the CTCE)
- Clear 0.1 mile trails to two campsites on Soft Maple Reservoir
- Mark 0.9 mile Beecher Trail to parcel C-2 from Beecher Road (minimum maintenance trail – clear every 5 years)

E. Bicycling/Horseback Riding

Conservation Easement Terms

The Department has purchased the right for the public to access the entire property by bicycle and horseback (excepting posted lease camps and developments sites) and construct new trails which have been identified in an RMP or otherwise approved by the landowner.

Discussion

There are currently no designated bicycle or horseback trails on the CTCE and limited demand for bicycle or horse-specific facilities is projected. In addition to designated motor vehicle roads, the numerous forest management roads/trails on the property (including designated snowmobile trails) provide opportunities for bicycling and horseback riding. Proposed unhardened foot trails are less able to support these uses.

Management Actions

- Permit bicycle and horseback use on all roads, snowmobile trails, and forest management trails on the CTCE. Do not permit bicycles/horses on designated foot trails.

F. Paddling

Conservation Easement Terms

The Department has purchased the right for public access to and over the CTCE by canoe or other waterborne travel.

Discussion

Water bodies on the CTCE are generally small and not desirable paddling locations, however Sand Pond in the Pepperbox Wilderness Area (existing foot trail access) and an existing Accessible car-top boat launch at Soft Maple Reservoir can both be accessed from the CTCE.

Management Actions

- Permit paddling on all waterbodies on the CTCE
- Retain the existing car-top boat launch (Accessible) on Soft Maple Reservoir. Restore the boat launch and parking area to Accessible standards.

G. Camping

Conservation Easement Terms

The Department has purchased the right to permit public camping as is regulated on state lands. Designated campsites must be identified in a RMP. Camping fires are permitted and may utilize dead and downed wood on the property.

Discussion

There are currently eight (8) designated campsites on the CTCE, all of which are located on Parcel C-1. Campsites are rarely occupied, with some camping occurring during big game hunting season.

Two Accessible campsites would serve to enhance existing Accessible recreation opportunities on the property (Accessible trail to Sand Pond and Soft Maple car-top boat launch). Primitive Tent Sites with Accessible features are generally not for exclusive use by individuals with disabilities, but are generally available on a first-come, first-serve basis. If it is found that individuals with disabilities are regularly unable to find and use Accessible sites in a given area, then the Department may designate Primitive Tent Sites with Accessible features for exclusive use as per NYCRR 190.3 (f).

Management Actions

- Designate 9 campsites as shown on the RMP map. All will be accessible by passenger vehicle (may include short access driveway) except the three near Soft Maple Reservoir which will require a short (500 and 1000 feet) walk or paddle/bushwhack access. Two Accessible campsites will be designed (between Line Road and Jakes Pond Road and on parcel C-2).
- Allow camping at undesignated sites at least 150 feet from water bodies, wetlands, roads, or trails.

H. Hunting, Fishing, and Trapping

Conservation Easement Terms

The Department has purchased the right for the public to hunt, fish, and trap on the CTCE. Excepting posted lease camps and development sites, the public may hunt, fish, or trap throughout the CTCE in accordance with established seasons, rules and regulations.

Discussion

Access to hunting, fishing, and trapping opportunities on the CTCE is facilitated by designated public motor vehicle roads, snowmobile trails, and foot trails; however,

bushwhacking/off-trail travel is also assumed. Proposed motor vehicle and snowmobile access provides proximate access throughout C-1, as do proposed parking areas for C-2. Foot trails as well as old forest management trails of varying condition may also be used by sportsmen accessing the field. Hunters and trappers generally select desirable hunting locations based on their knowledge of game behavior and habitat preference. Desirable hunting and trapping grounds are located throughout the property and range from easily accessed/road adjacent lands to more physically challenging access/remote locations.

Notable fishing opportunities accessed from the CTCE include Sand Pond, Soft Maple Reservoir, Alder Creek, Fish Creek and Roaring Brook. Foot access to Sand Pond (0.1-mile trail in Pepperbox Wilderness) and a car-top boat launch on Soft Maple Reservoir currently exist. Fish Creek and Roaring Brook are crossed by the Main Haul Road, and can be accessed near the center of Parcel C-1 using the East Side Road, Lightning Hill Road, and snowmobile trails. Alder Creek is relatively remote and there is no direct access route due to the fact that the Department does not own rights on the road through the Crooked Lake property.

Management Actions

- Permit public hunting, fishing and trapping throughout the CTCE in accordance with established seasons, rules and regulations.
- Provide a topographic map of the CTCE (including waterbodies, wetlands, Department roads/trails and major but unmaintained roads/forest management trails) at the proposed kiosks on Parcel C-1 and parking area on Parcel C-2.

I. Unconfined Recreation

Conservation Easement Terms
In addition to designated motorized access and non-motorized trails, the Department has purchased the right for the public to access and enjoy the CTCE for many other recreational pursuits and general enjoyment (excepting posted lease camps and developments sites).

Discussion
In addition to designated public recreation facilities on the property, this RMP seeks to facilitate a quality experience for unconfined outdoor recreationists. Unconfined recreation includes those activities which do not rely on facilities such as designated campsites or foot trails. Examples include hunting, fishing, trapping, orienteering, wildlife observation, and countless other outdoor pursuits. While unconfined recreationists may use roads, parking areas, and trails for access, their primary recreational activity will occur away from this infrastructure.

Unconfined recreation activities will generally be dispersed enough to minimize resource impacts. The Land Manager will, however, be cognizant and responsive to resource impacts from this type of recreation.

Management Actions

- None

J. Signage

Conservation Easement Terms

The Department is responsible for posting and maintaining all signage relating to public use on the CTCE.

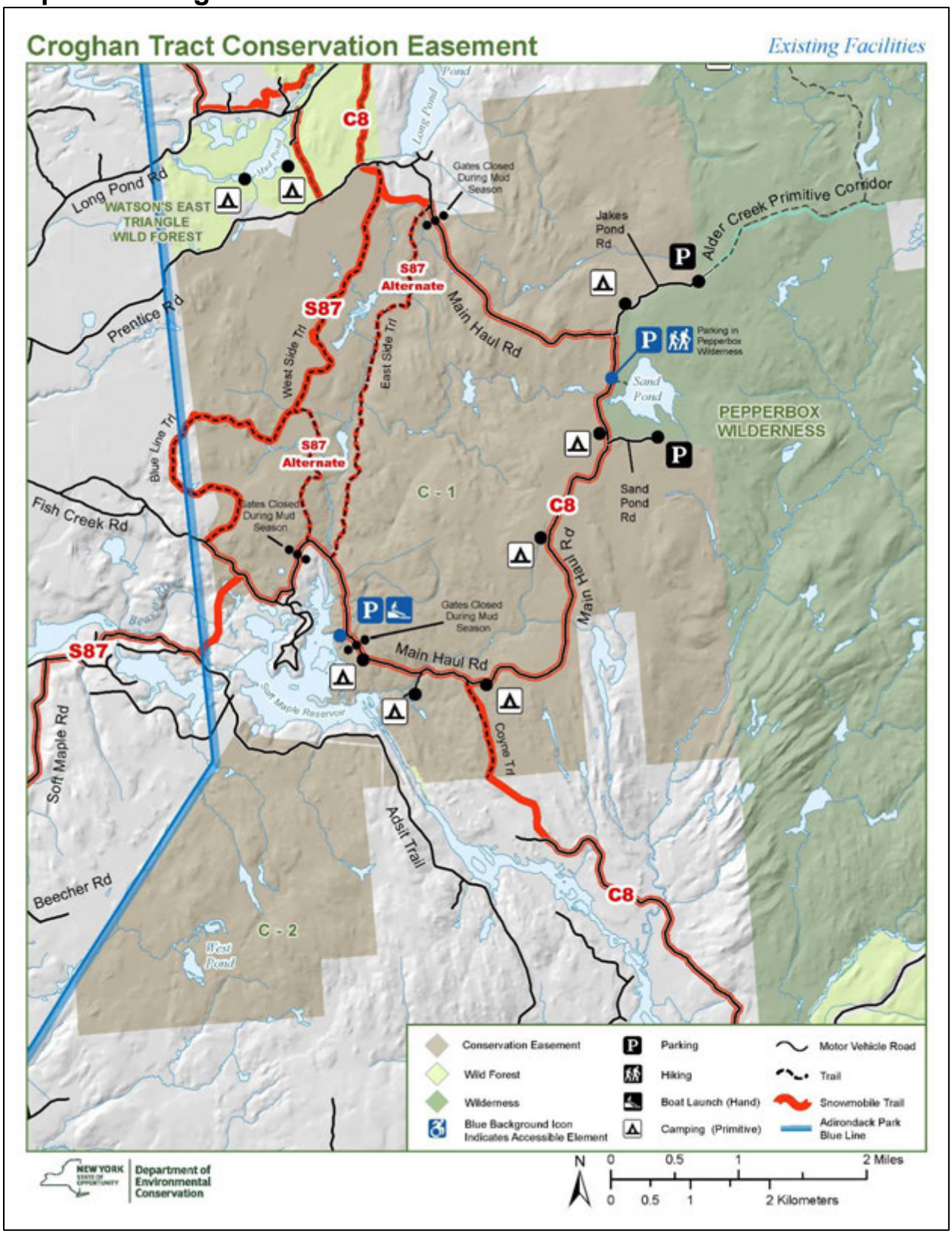
Discussion

Boundary signage is currently maintained along all public roads, conservation easement roads open to passenger vehicles and property boundaries. A Department kiosk exists on the corner of Fish Creek and Long Pond Roads, including a map and information about the Croghan Tract and Oswegatchie Conservation Easements and other nearby state lands. Due to the fact that permitted public use of conservation easement lands differ significantly between properties, additional on-site information is essential.

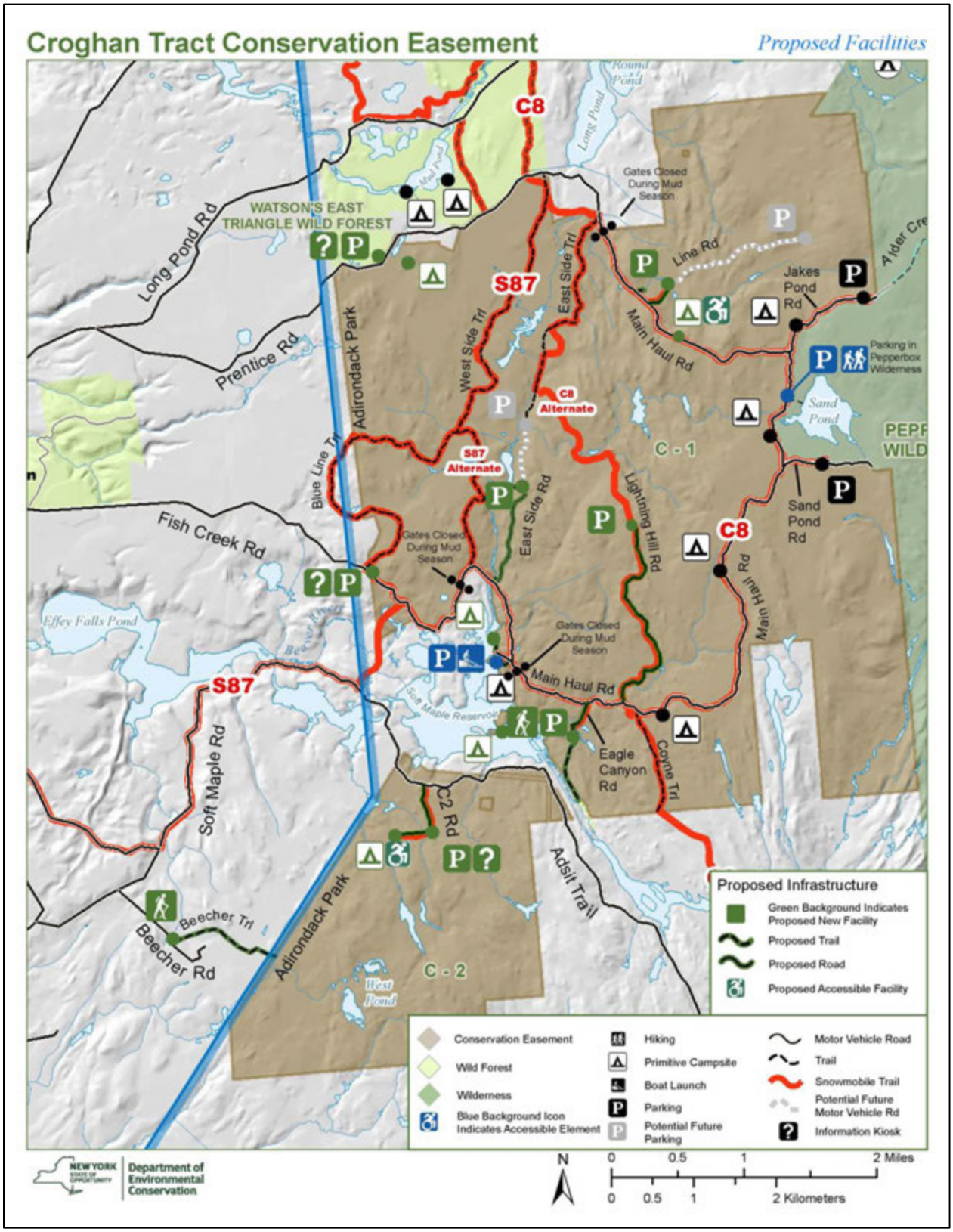
Management Actions

- Maintain boundary signage along all public roads.
- Construct information kiosks at Fish Creek Road and Prentice Road ends of Main Haul Road.
- Construct small map kiosk at Parcel C-2 parking area.
- Update the map in the Department kiosk on the corner of Fish Creek and Long Pond Roads.

Map of Existing Recreation Facilities



Map of Proposed Recreation Facilities



VII. IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE AND ESTIMATED BUDGET

The following tables outline a schedule for implementation of the proposed management actions and their estimated costs. The estimated costs of implementing these projects are based on historical costs incurred by the Department for similar projects. Values for some projects are based on costs for service contracting.

Implementation Schedule

Phase	Task	Estimated Cost	Estimated Staff Hours
1	Open East Side Road to end of hardened road (phase 1); Designate temporary parking area	-	4
	Open Lightning Hill Road; Construct parking area at terminus	$750	8
	Open Line Road to Fish Creek (phase 1); Clear/sign temporary parking area	$500	8
	Clear and post signage at parking - end of Eagle Canyon and Line Roads	750	16
	Post signage opening passenger vehicle roads to snowmobiles: Eagle Canyon, Jakes Pond, Lightning Hill Road, Line Road, Sand Pond Road, Soft Maple Road	-	16
	Sign all primitive campsites.	-	12
	Clear trails to two Soft Maple Reservoir Campsites	-	16
	Develop detailed maps for kiosks	-	40
2	Upgrade and open C2 Road; Construct parking area at terminus. Upgrade campsite to Accessible standards. Post signage also opening road to snowmobiles.	$8,500	148
	Construct kiosks and parking areas at north and south end of Main Haul Road	$2,500	48
	Reroute the East Side Trail around the Sand Pond Camp	$3,000	40
	Upgrade Main Haul Road campsite to Accessible standards	$3,500	48
3	Construct additional parking area on Soft Maple Reservoir Road for campsites/overflow	$750	16
	Construct Lightning Hill Snowmobile Trail (including 3 bridges & culvert work)	$50,000	480
	Clear and sign Beecher Trail	-	24
	Install Main Haul Road gate beyond Soft Maple Reservoir	$1,000	40
4	Improve East Side Road north to Roaring Brook (phase 2); Move Parking Area	TBD	Coordinate with landowner harvest
	Improve Line Road beyond Fish Creek (phase 2); Move Parking Area	TBD	Coordinate with landowner harvest
	Move Jakes Pond Road Parking Area	$750	16

Annual Maintenance

Maintenance Item	Cost
Road Maintenance (grade, rake, mow) – 16.3 miles @ $1,500/mile	$24,450
Trail Maintenance (brushing, blowdown removal, drainage) – 10.7 miles @ $700/mile	$7,490
Maintenance of 2 Kiosks & Other CE Signs	$500
Maintenance of 13 Gates $100/yr	$1,300
Maintenance of 8 Bridges $1000/yr	$8,000
Maintenance of 10 Parking Areas $100/yr	$1,000
Maintenance of 2 Accessible Campsites $100/yr	$200
Boundary Line Maintenance for 35.2 miles @ $200/mile over 7-year rotation	$1,006
Complete inspection reports evaluating public recreation impacts on natural resources of the property every 2 years	-
Total	**$43,946**

VIII. REFERENCES

Adiriondack Lakes Survey Corporation. 1984-87. Historic Data. Available at: http://www.adirondacklakessurvey.org/historic.php

U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, U.S. Forest Service. 2008. Effects of All-Terrain Vehicles on Forested Lands and Grasslands. Available at: https://www.fs.fed.us/eng/pubs/pdf/ATV/08231811L.pdf

U.S. Dept. of Interior, U.S. Geological Survey. 2007. Environmental Effects of Off-Highway Vehicles on Bureau of Land Management Lands: A Literature Synthesis, Annotated Bibliographies, Extensive Bibliographies, and Internet Resources. Available at: https://pubs.usgs.gov/of/2007/1353/report.pdf

IX. APPENDICES

A. APA Review Summary
B. Alternative Analyses
C. Draft RMP Public Comments Summary and Department Response (Reserved)
D. SEQRA – Negative Declaration

APPENDIX A: APA Review Summary

NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY. | Adirondack Park Agency

ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

TERRY MARTINO
Executive Director

RECEIVED
JUL 24 2019
NYSDEC REGION 6

July 22, 2019

Mr. David Smith, Regional Forester
New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Region 6
Dulles State Office Building
317 Washington Street
Watertown, NY 13601-3787

RE: Agency File A2019-0076
Croghan Conservation Easement Draft Recreation Management Plan

Dear Mr. Smith:

Thank you for providing the above-referenced plan for Adirondack Park Agency review pursuant to the Memorandum of Understanding Between the Adirondack Park Agency and Department of Environmental Conservation Concerning State-Owned Conservation Easements on Private Lands within the Adirondack Park.

Review of this plan indicates that no approval is required under the Adirondack Park Agency Act for its implementation, as the plan will not involve any of the activities listed under Section II(d) of the Memorandum of Understanding. Please note, however, that any activity involving wetlands will require an Agency permit.

Feel free to contact me with any additional questions regarding this matter. Thank you again for your coordination.

Sincerely,

John M. Burth
Environmental Program Specialist 3 (EPS3)

JMB:slp

P.O. Box 99 • 1133 NYS Route 86 • Ray Brook, NY 12977 • Tel: 518 891-4050 • Fax: 518 891-3938 • www.apa.ny.gov

APPENDIX B: Alternative Analyses

Alternative analyses are included for proposed management actions within areas identified in Natural Heritage Program geospatial data or other sensitive habitats or communities as identified by Department staff. General discussion of all other management actions is included in section VI.

1) C8 Alternative Snowmobile Route

A_0: Retain the East Side Trail as a designated snowmobile trail in current location.
A_1: Retain the East Side trail as a designated snowmobile trail in current location, however only use the trail as an alternative during winters when the West Side Trail is closed due to forest management activities.
A_2: Reroute the East Side Trail outside the potential winter deer yard near the Fish Creek corridor (Lightning Hill Road-Trail).
A_3: Close the East Side Trail to public snowmobile use.

The East Side Trail is located along the periphery of a potential, unconfirmed deer yard. Deer yards are of primary concern during winter months when the East Side Trail is used as a snowmobile trail. Summer and minimal non-motorized winter use is not believed to be a concern. Impacts on the Fish Creek corridor/deer yard may occur from snowmobile use of either the East Side Trail which is within the periphery of the mapped winter yard or West Side Trail which is not within the mapped yard, but directly adjacent. Retaining the East Side Trail as a snowmobile route is desirable because it serves as an alternative north-south route during winter forest management closures. As such, closing the trail is not a preferred management option (A_3). Retaining the East Side Trail in its current location, with the possibility of only using it when needed as an alternative route would reduce impacts on white-tailed deer (A_0, A_1). However, rerouting the trail (A_2) is the preferred management alternative as it most directly addresses concerns relating to snowmobile use and winter deer yards on the CTCE. The West Side Trail (more buffered from potential winter deer yard) may also continue to be used. The East Side Trail will not be closed until the reroute has been constructed.

2) Line Road / 13-13-00

A_0: Do not open any of 13-13-00 to public motor vehicles.
A_1: Open 13-13-00 to public motor vehicles up to Fish Creek
A_2: Open 13-13-00 to public motor vehicles up to Fish Creek and up to 1.4 miles if feasible in the future.

Beyond Fish Creek, Line Road passes through an area that has been identified as a potential, unconfirmed winter deer yard. No snowmobile use beyond Fish Creek is being considered to protect this habitat. Use of the road during non-winter months is being considered beyond Fish Creek to enhance access to the northeast corner of the CTCE. Since the road will not be used in winter, deer yards are not a major concern. It is desirable to provide motorized access to the northeast corner of the CTCE, so A_0 is not

the preferred alternative. The road is currently improved and drivable up to Fish Creek (A_1), and excepting a washout at Fish Creek, is hardened beyond (A_2). Given no notable environmental impacts to opening the existing hardened road, A_2 is the preferred alternative.

APPENDIX C: Draft RMP Public Comment Summary and Department Responses (Reserved)

<to be inserted into final RMP draft>

APPENDIX D: SEQRA Negative Declaration

Agency Use Only [IfApplicable]

Project: Croghan Tract RMP

Date: 5/23/2019

Full Environmental Assessment Form
Part 3 - Evaluation of the Magnitude and Importance of Project Impacts
and
Determination of Significance

Part 3 provides the reasons in support of the determination of significance. The lead agency must complete Part 3 for every question in Part 2 where the impact has been identified as potentially moderate to large or where there is a need to explain why a particular element of the proposed action will not, or may, result in a significant adverse environmental impact.

Based on the analysis in Part 3, the lead agency must decide whether to require an environmental impact statement to further assess the proposed action or whether available information is sufficient for the lead agency to conclude that the proposed action will not have a significant adverse environmental impact. By completing the certification on the next page, the lead agency can complete its determination of significance.

Reasons Supporting This Determination:
To complete this section:

- Identify the impact based on the Part 2 responses and describe its magnitude. Magnitude considers factors such as severity, size or extent of an impact.
- Assess the importance of the impact. Importance relates to the geographic scope, duration, probability of the impact occurring, number of people affected by the impact and any additional environmental consequences if the impact were to occur.
- The assessment should take into consideration any design element or project changes.
- Repeat this process for each Part 2 question where the impact has been identified as potentially moderate to large or where there is a need to explain why a particular element of the proposed action will not, or may, result in a significant adverse environmental impact.
- Provide the reason(s) why the impact may, or will not, result in a significant adverse environmental impact
- For Conditional Negative Declarations identify the specific condition(s) imposed that will modify the proposed action so that no significant adverse environmental impacts will result.
- Attach additional sheets, as needed.

The Croghan Tract Conservation Easement Recreation Management Plan outlines resource and recreation management for the property, consistent with applicable laws, regulations, Department guidelines, policies, and the conservation easement. Public use of the property including designation of roads open to public motor vehicles, construction of hiking trails, parking areas, up to two accessible campsites, and snowmobile trail re-routes, will have a small impact on the property and the surrounding area's resources. Project construction will utilize existing infrastructure such as old log landings and forest management trails, wherever possible. Facility development will require a small amount of tree cutting and brushing. Public use of the property proposed in the RMP are consistent with uses which currently occur on the property and with the terms in the conservation easement. The heaviest public use on the Croghan Conservation Easement is in the fall during the Big Game Hunting Season.

All construction and maintenance projects will adhere to the following Best Management Practices; locate facilities on flat, stable, well-drained sites; locate improvements to minimize necessary cut and fill; locate improvements away from streams, wetlands and unstable slopes; bridge all stream/wetland crossings; avoid attracting public recreation to areas where sensitive species are known to exist; limit the size of parking areas and other improvements to the minimum necessary to meet the intended use, minimize tree cutting; use proper drainage devices, such as water bars and broad-based dips, to prevent erosion and damage to improvements; use soil stabilization practices on exposed soil around construction areas immediately after construction; and use natural materials to blend structures into the surroundings.

Some roads on the easement are currently open to the public - opening a small mileage of new road as proposed in the RMP will not result in any increase in traffic or an increase in associated adverse impacts. Newly opened roads, providing access to the interior of the easement, may require leveling and hardening of the road surface prior to opening.

New parking areas may also require some leveling, application of gravel and hardening. Construction of a new snowmobile trail segment will involve some tree removal, brushing and the installation of three bridges over drainages. Another short snowmobile trail re-route will require some brushing. A new accessible campsite will be located in an already cleared area. Some surface leveling and hardening will be required.

Question #1, Impact on Land
As discussed above, proposed management actions in the RMP will have minimal impacts on the landscape, including localized and minimal grading of roads, foot trails, and grading/leveling of a universally accessible campsite and parking areas as needed. Snowmobile trail construction will require some tree removal. Water table depth, slope, and bedrock are not issues of concern. Proposed public use is anticipated to have very few impacts on the landscape, particularly since higher impact uses such as passenger vehicle, and snowmobile use will be limited to corridors deemed capable of supporting their use.

Determination of Significance - Type 1 and Unlisted Actions

SEQR Status: ☑ Type 1 ☐ Unlisted

Identify portions of EAF completed for this Project: ☑ Part 1 ☑ Part 2 ☑ Part 3

FEAF 2019

Upon review of the information recorded on this EAF, as noted, plus this additional support information
A map depicting proposed public recreation faculties is attached. Public use of the property will be consistent with proposed facilities and existing uses.

and considering both the magnitude and importance of each identified potential impact, it is the conclusion of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation as lead agency that:

☑ A. This project will result in no significant adverse impacts on the environment, and, therefore, an environmental impact statement need not be prepared. Accordingly, this negative declaration is issued.

☐ B. Although this project could have a significant adverse impact on the environment, that impact will be avoided or substantially mitigated because of the following conditions which will be required by the lead agency:

There will, therefore, be no significant adverse impacts from the project as conditioned, and, therefore, this conditioned negative declaration is issued. A conditioned negative declaration may be used only for UNLISTED actions (see 6 NYCRR 617.7(d)).

☐ C. This Project may result in one or more significant adverse impacts on the environment, and an environmental impact statement must be prepared to further assess the impact(s) and possible mitigation and to explore alternatives to avoid or reduce those impacts. Accordingly, this positive declaration is issued.

Name of Action: Croghan Tract Conservation Easement Recreation Management Plan

Name of Lead Agency: New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

Name of Responsible Officer in Lead Agency: Kramer Kwaczala

Title of Responsible Officer: Forester 1

Signature of Responsible Officer in Lead Agency: Kramer T. Kwaczala Date: 1-10-2020

Signature of Preparer (if different from Responsible Officer) Matthew J. Nowak Date: May 23, 2019

For Further Information:

Contact Person: Matthew Nowak

Address: 7327 State Route 812 Lowville NY 13367

Telephone Number: 315-376-3521

E-mail: matthew.nowak@dec.ny.gov

For Type 1 Actions and Conditioned Negative Declarations, a copy of this Notice is sent to:

Chief Executive Officer of the political subdivision in which the action will be principally located (e.g., Town / City / Village of)
Other involved agencies (if any)
Applicant (if any)
Environmental Notice Bulletin: http://www.dec.ny.gov/enb/enb.html

PRINT FULL FORM

Page 2 of 2

Attachment to Part 3 Full EAF

Question #7, Impact on Plants and Animals: While any project in a forest setting may impact flora and fauna, proposed management actions in this RMP will utilize existing property infrastructure and resources as much as possible. Only minimal brushing and tree removal is anticipated. Some sites will require leveling, grading and hardening of surfaces. Consumptive public uses such as hunting, fishing and trapping are regulated by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation to protect fish and wildlife populations. Noise and emissions from public motorized uses have potential to impact plants and wildlife, but impacts are anticipated to be small. These impacts are similar to those which occur from forest management equipment which is regularly operated on the property. The NYS Breeding Bird Atlas identifies Bald eagles (Threatened), American bittern, Cerulean warbler, Common loon, and Sharp-shinned Hawks (Species of Special Concern) in the vicinity of the property; but proposed management actions are not anticipated to impact these species. Since most proposed facilities utilize existing openings in the forest and existing infrastructure, public use will have few impacts on plants and animals (except consumptive uses which are regulated). No significant adverse environmental impacts are anticipated from the management actions proposed in this RMP.