

An aerial photograph of a large, winding lake system, likely in the Great South Woods area. The water is a deep, vibrant blue, contrasting with the surrounding forest. The trees are in various stages of autumn, showing shades of green, yellow, orange, and red. The lake has several smaller inlets and islands, some with small buildings or structures. In the background, rolling hills and more forested land are visible under a clear sky.

Great South Woods Complex Planning

Strategy & Recommendations

May 2016



GREAT SOUTH WOODS COMPLEX PLANNING

STRATEGY & RECOMMENDATIONS



State University of New York
College of Environmental Science and Forestry

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The State of New York’s most important, long-term land acquisition goals in the Adirondack Park have largely been achieved, yet the development of outdoor recreational opportunities within the Park that connect State lands with local communities still requires much attention. A new approach was undertaken to conduct recreation planning at a landscape scale, beyond the boundaries of individual management units, and to engage communities and stakeholders in the design of a destination-based system of trails and infrastructure that could stimulate economic activity while protecting the Adirondack Park’s ecosystems and wild character.

The Great South Woods project is the first of a series of planning exercises to be conducted on a much larger scale than that of individual State land management units. The Great South Woods (GSW) planning area (or Complex) is roughly one-third of the Adirondack Park, covering two million acres and 20 Forest Preserve management units. The process used to develop the GSW Strategy and Recommendations emphasized **public participation** and prioritized **local knowledge and community-generated ideas** to inform recreation planning at multiple scales. The GSW process was designed and led by SUNY ESF in collaboration with representatives from DEC Lands & Forests, the Adirondack Park Agency and the Hamilton County Board of Supervisors.

Development of the GSW Strategy was guided by the core themes of **Access, Connectivity, High-Quality Recreation Destinations, Public-Private Partnerships and Ecosystem Stewardship**. The Strategy is based on an 18-month participatory process that included over 300 individuals that attended public workshops and meetings held across the GSW planning area. By engaging local residents, town leaders, recreation experts, DEC Forest Rangers, agency planners, and representatives from several NGOs, the GSW process generated a **comprehensive GIS (digital map) inventory** of existing and proposed land and water trails, recreation assets such as campgrounds and boat launches, and points of natural, cultural and historical interest. All of this information was used to develop the **GSW Recommendations** central to this Strategy.

The GSW Recommendations include a detailed **Maps & Narratives** section (pages R-1 to R-59) that describe Local and Regional Networks of trails with more than 50 conceptual designs for recreation “features” that seek to meet the multiple objectives of the GSW effort. Ecosystem Stewardship recommendations in the GSW Strategy address long-standing issues such as protection of ‘remote core’ wilderness, as well as emerging issues, such as invasive species.

All components of the GSW Recommendations and Strategy are conceptual and are based on a landscape-scale approach to the region, meaning that routes and locations depicted on maps are approximate. The GSW Strategy is intended for planning purposes only, is subject to revision, and does not necessarily represent current or future planning priorities for DEC or APA.

Next steps will require further engagement with communities to identify priority projects and engage in further design work as well as internal consideration of the GSW Recommendations by DEC and APA. This report also outlines lessons learned from the GSW process, and discusses potential implications of the GSW Strategy for the DEC UMP process, and State Land Master Plan revisions. The GSW Recommendations described in the Maps and Narratives section (R-1 to R-59) may also be interactively explored at the GSW web map online here:

<http://greatsouthwoods.adirondackatlas.org>

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GLOSSARY OF MAJOR CONCEPTS

ADIRONDACK PARK WILD LANDS COMPLEX

A mixture of public and private lands that includes multiple Forest Preserve units classified as wilderness, wild forest and primitive areas, as well as working forests with DEC conservation easements and other private lands, including adjacent hamlets and villages. By ‘stitching together’ adjacent units of the Forest Preserve, it is possible to conceptualize extensive trail networks for wild lands complexes, by creating land and water routes with connections to lodging, outfitters and other amenities in local communities. By consolidating Forest Preserve units, conservation easements and other private lands, landscape planning can occur at scales relevant for stewardship of ecosystems, natural resources and sensitive species and habitats.

DESTINATION-BASED RECREATION

National and international tourists are increasingly seeking vacation destinations that offer unique and high-quality recreation opportunities. Design of destination-based recreation assets, such as mountain bike trails, should prioritize quality over quantity to attract visitors. Destinations also connect recreation activities in natural settings with amenities and activities in nearby communities, and typically offer many different options to encourage return visitation.

TRAIL NETWORK

A group of interconnected trails that enable multiple routes of travel between origins and destinations, which feature junctions (intersections between two routes) and nodes or ‘hubs’ (areas where three or more routes create an interchange), that overall enhances connectivity and creates a variety of options for moving recreation users around a region. Portions of the network can be highlighted at different geographic scales, from local trail systems surrounding a town, to the larger-scale routes that connect the local trails together and provide region-wide travel routes. Networked trails contrast with spur or ‘dead-end’ trails that require users to retrace their steps.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

An approach that relies on active engagement with members of the public, including representatives of stakeholder groups, to guide and inform planning and decision-making at multiple stages of a process. Benefits of public participation include: increased information and understanding, improved long-term support for the decision or management practice, improved management practices, improved quality of the decision, reduced conflict, citizen empowerment, enhanced stewardship, and providing a public space for deliberation and opinion formation.



GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND TERMS

AATV: Adirondack Association of Towns and Villages

ACTLS Project: Adirondack Community-based Trail and Lodging System Project

APA: Adirondack Park Agency

NYSDEC or DEC: New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

NCNST: North Country National Scenic Trail

NPT: Northville-Placid Trail

SUNY-ESF: State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry

Adirondack Regional Geographic Information System (ARGIS): A web-mapping portal (www.argis.org) that serves regional data in support of DEC unit management planning. ARGIS contains ecosystem, biodiversity, and natural resource inventories, as well as State land classifications and other data, in partnership with DEC, APA, The Nature Conservancy, The Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program, and NY Natural Heritage, among others.

Back-country: Remote or core interior areas, at significant distance from human settlements and areas where motorized use is allowed, which typically pose logistical challenges to access.

'Construction Required': Trail segments proposed as components of the GSW Regional and Local Networks. These sections do not currently exist and will require field-validation and other suitability assessments by DEC authorities prior to implementation.

DEC Existing Assets: All of the known recreation infrastructure (man-made) located on Forest Preserve and DEC easement lands, including trails, unpaved roads, boat launches, campgrounds, parking areas, trail registers, primitive campsites, fire towers, scenic vistas, etc. The GSW process added significantly to DEC's inventory of existing assets.

Easement: A legal agreement between a landowner and another party, such as a government agency or nonprofit organization, that involves the sale or forfeiture of certain rights associated with the parcel. Easements provide a mechanism for public authorities to influence land use and access permissions on private lands without requiring fee ownership. Currently NYS DEC owns conservation easements, some of which include recreation access rights, on over 800,000 acres of private land across the Adirondack Park.

Ecosystem Stewardship: The science and practice of natural resource management to promote ecological integrity and human well-being in a world increasingly defined by rapid change and uncertainty. The ecosystem stewardship framework recognizes the fundamental dependence of human well-being on functioning ecosystems and biodiversity; and embraces landscape-scale, data-driven and participatory approaches to planning and decision-making.

Front-country: Areas near human settlements and transportation corridors, accessed easily by day users and a wider range of recreationists, including motorized modes of travel.

Geographic Information System (GIS): A software application that uses geographic data to create maps and conduct spatial analysis, GIS has become an essential tool in land use planning as well as conservation science. Online GIS applications are commonly known as ‘web maps’.

GSW Feature: A discrete component of the GSW Network (see below) that is recommended as part of the GSW Strategy (see R-1 to R-59); a trail that may be described as a loop/circuit, nested loop, connector or spur (see R-16 for a glossary of feature types). Most contain trail segments that require construction to complete the feature from the existing trail network.

GSW Network: A functional network for moving recreation users around the GSW region that incorporates all GSW Features recommended in the Strategy. The conceptual GSW Network is presented at two scales, with the Local Network nested within the Regional network, and consists of existing and proposed, or 'construction required' segments (See Trail Network in Glossary of Main Concepts Section).

Multi-modal: A trail designed to incorporate different modes of recreation along different sections, such as hiking a segment, biking a segment, and paddling a third segment.

Unit Management Plan (UMP): A document that provides an assessment of the permissible public uses, existing natural resources, and the ability of those resources to support use, for a defined area (Unit) of the NYS Forest Preserve. Twelve (12) management units are located entirely, and 8 additional units partially, within the GSW Complex (Table 2; Figure 2).



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INTRODUCTION

PRINCIPLES OF COMPLEX PLANNING

The Great South Woods represents a new model and opportunity for recreation planning that:

- **Facilitates a high degree of public engagement to gather local knowledge and community ideas to inform planning, design, and implementation steps.**
- **Expands the geographic scope of planning efforts from small units to larger landscapes, allowing for a more holistic perspective and the design of high-quality recreation infrastructure that meets multiple objectives.**

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION AND OBJECTIVES

New York State's most important, long-term land acquisition objectives for the Adirondack Park – once considered by many to be unrealistically optimistic – have largely been achieved. However, the development of outdoor recreational opportunities within the Park requires additional attention. A creative, new approach was needed to address this situation: one that integrates long-term planning (responsibility of the Adirondack Park Agency) and recreation management on Forest Preserve and conservation easement lands (responsibility of NYS DEC) on a broader landscape level, in order to benefit both the economy of Adirondack communities as well as wild land protections required by longstanding law and public demand.

The Great South Woods project is intended to be the first of five such planning exercises to be conducted on a much larger scale than individual State land units. With the GSW project serving as a model, and after DEC has evaluated the process and outputs of this Strategy, subsequent planning efforts may focus on the remaining complexes in the Adirondack Park: Battleground Lakes, Cloudsplitter Summits, Northern River Highlands and Oswegatchie-Black Waters (Figure 2). The Great South Woods (GSW) is by far the largest of the proposed planning complexes, with the highest percentage of State land (2 of every 3 acres), the most towns and hamlets, and nearly 900 miles of existing trails (Table 1, Figure 1). Despite the large trail mileage, the GSW has more State land per trail mile than any other complex and has significant untapped potential for multiple modes of recreation and ecotourism that link communities and State lands. The GSW region is managed as 20 separate units, each with its own unit management plan (UMP), including 7 UMPs which have not yet been completed (Table 2), which can limit the capacity to design and implement larger-scale projects, such as long-distance trails. The GSW landscape is largely forested (86%), with approximately 6% wetlands and 5% open water (Appendix I). These conditions identified the GSW as an ideal candidate for complex planning.

Through focused collaboration with various stakeholders and the employment of professional expertise in outdoor recreation and geographic information systems (GIS), the GSW Strategy

sought to identify opportunities to develop community-based trail and lodging systems that can help revitalize communities as gateways, waypoints and destinations for outdoor recreation. An outline of steps necessary for development and stewardship of these opportunities is provided.

Table 1: Description of DEC proposed planning complexes for the Adirondack Park. Towns may be counted in more than one complex.

Planning Complex	Area (km ²)	% Wilderness	% State Land	% Easement	Trail Miles	Towns
Cloudsplitter Summits	2,802	51	60	6	468	18
Battleground Lakes	3,259	6	35	9	244	31
Great South Woods	8,127	26	64	7	885	43
Northern River Highlands	5,465	0	27	28	247	36
Oswegatchie-Black Waters	3,905	26	55	15	509	19

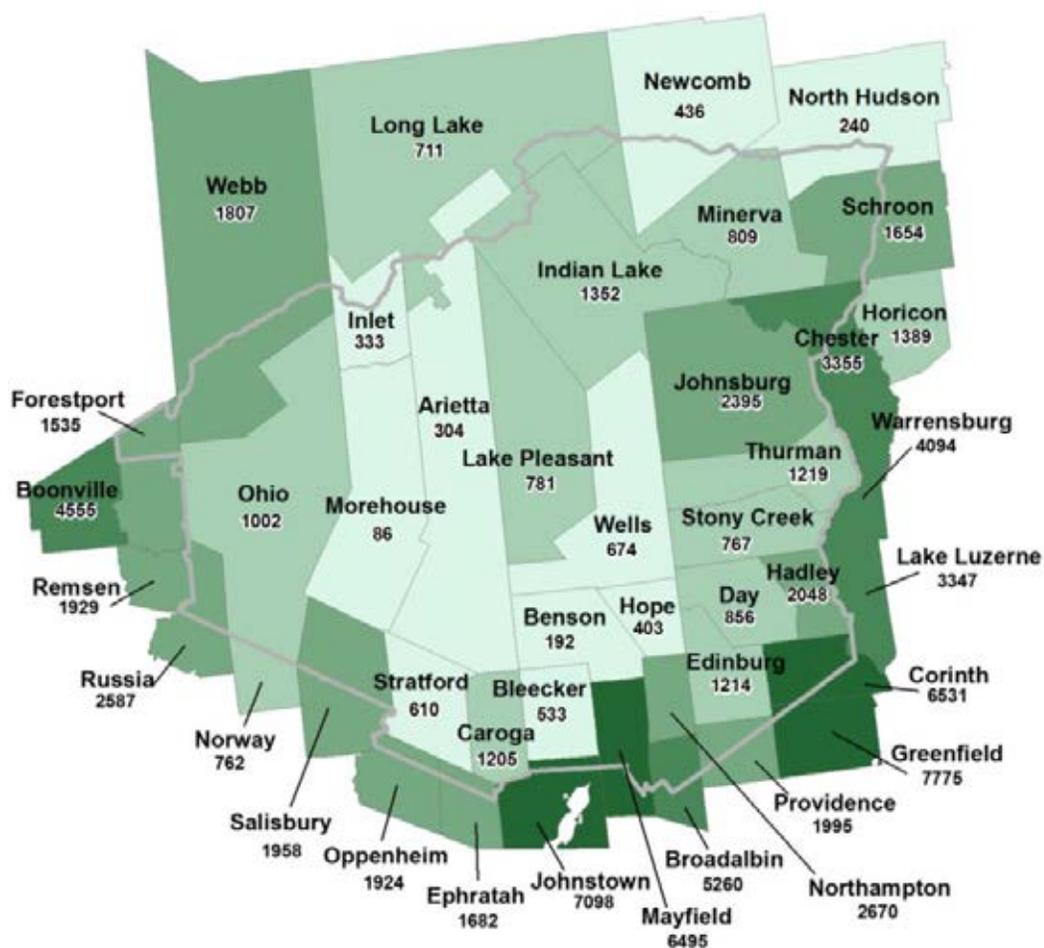


Figure 1: GSW resident populations (2010). Totals are reported for towns on the GSW boundary, although only a portion of those populations reside in the GSW planning region.

Table 2: DEC management units in the GSW complex. The following management units contain <1% State Land area inside the GSW: Hammond Pond, Lake George, and Sargent Ponds. The '--' indicates the lack of a final UMP.

Unit Name	UMP Year	State Land Area in GSW (acres)	% State Land Area in GSW	Existing Trails in GSW (mi)
Black River	1996	127,698	100	158
Blue Mountain	1995	31,366	97	35
Blue Ridge	2006	46,931	100	37
Essex Chain Lakes Complex	2016	18,805	100	39
Ferris Lake	--	146,232	100	131
Fulton Chain	1990	3,743	24	3
Hoffman Notch	2012	38,141	100	23
Hudson Gorge	--	23,725	100	21
Jessup River	2006	49,022	100	56
Little Moose	--	12,258	100	8
Moose River Plains	2011	58,052	86	139
Shaker Mountain	2006	41,726	100	29
Siamese Ponds	2005	112,839	100	92
Silver Lake	2006	107,374	100	51
Vanderwhacker Mtn.	2005	76,268	86	58
West Canada Lake	--	172,193	100	103
Wilcox Lake	--	127,500	100	109

The complex planning process is expected to provide a new opportunity to involve various stakeholders, including Adirondack communities, in planning for the development of recreation within the Adirondack Park. It is also expected to contribute to building cooperation between these various stakeholders as scenarios are explored in which the value of recreation is better captured, while protection of the Park's natural resources for future generations is also enhanced.

The GSW project's main objectives were to identify opportunities and feasible means to:

- **Optimize the potential of the Great South Woods to provide a wide spectrum of outdoor recreational activities available on Forest Preserve, conservation easement, municipal and private lands across the region;**
- **Establish a new community-based land-and-water trail and lodging system that would strengthen community linkages to each other and to nearby Forest Preserve and conservation easement lands;**

- Better develop front-country areas of State lands for improved access and greater enjoyment of diverse – including motorized – recreational activities;
- Improve protection of back-country areas of State lands in their primitive, wild condition while improving their trail systems for heightened enjoyment of self-powered recreation.

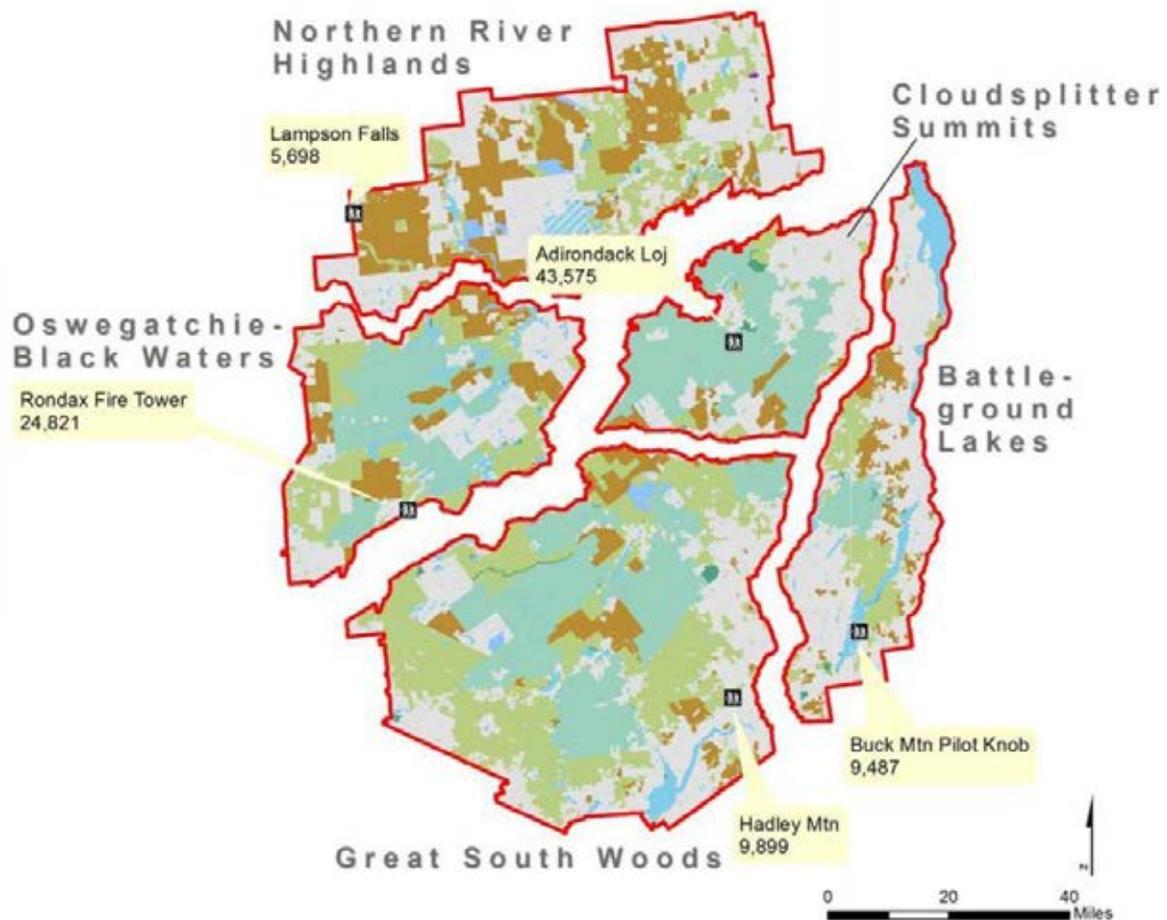


Figure 2: DEC proposed boundaries for Adirondack Park complexes, for large-scale planning efforts. The map identifies the most visited trailhead in each complex, providing the total count of visitors per trailhead from 2012. Trail use estimates are provided by the Adirondack Trail Registry Database (ADK-TReD), developed by ESF and NYS DEC.

WORKING ASSUMPTIONS OF THE GSW EFFORT

All efforts to achieve the GSW objectives will necessarily satisfy and support the long-standing ecosystem stewardship mandates of the Adirondack Park. Constitutional protections of the Forest Preserve as ‘forever wild’ forest land, as well as the mandate of the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan (SLMP) to guide the preservation, management and use of all Forest Preserve lands according to their classification, remain fully in effect. These statutory requirements are recognized as remaining critical to long-term, successful achievement of the project’s objectives. To this end, the GSW Strategy follows principles of ecosystem stewardship – which recognizes the fundamental dependence of human well-being on functioning ecosystems – to address the balance between increased recreational access and maintenance of ecological integrity.

All components of the GSW Recommendations and Strategy are conceptual, and derived from a landscape-scale approach to the complex and surrounding region as a whole. As such, all aspects of this Strategy are presented and intended for planning purposes only, are subject to revision, and do not necessarily represent current or future planning priorities of the DEC, APA or local communities. The recommended and proposed features depicted as products of the GSW Complex Planning Project are based on feedback received at public workshops and expert input, and are best viewed in the interactive web map included as a deliverable of this project.

This Strategy and its Recommendations serve as a guide, or a point of departure based on our process thus far. Any further development efforts and implementation decisions will be made by the appropriate authorities, including DEC and APA, in partnership with local governments, community leaders and various stakeholder organizations. Although considerable efforts have been made to validate and verify existing features, the routes and other recreational features portrayed in the GSW Recommendations (pages R-1 through R-59) are spatially approximate and have not been thoroughly field-validated. As such, careful consideration of on-the-ground conditions through field-validation will be critical in future planning, design and implementation. This validation will typically occur through the DEC Unit Management Planning (UMP) process (See [Linking GSW Planning to Ongoing UMP Efforts Section](#)). In addition, the DEC will assess all GSW Recommendations for universal access opportunities, and will make it a top agency priority to address landowner concerns regarding recreation opportunities on private land – which may be included in GSW Recommendations due to the project’s large-scale approach. Finally, the GSW Complex Planning Project is an experimental model, and will be more fully evaluated by ESF and its partners prior to its future implementation in other planning complexes.

Any steps to improve outdoor recreation opportunities by constructing new infrastructure or improving existing assets should include careful monitoring and management of recreation usage and its impacts on adjacent natural and built environments. Providing destination-caliber recreational experiences while protecting environmental quality and fostering economic growth in local communities will require additional investments and mechanisms for implementation from State, local, and private organizations, as well as close cooperation among these entities.

CORE THEMES OF GSW STRATEGY

The GSW Strategy is organized around five Core Themes that encompass the multiple objectives, desired outcomes and legal mandates involved in this complex planning effort (Figure 3). All five themes are related and may be thought of as a hierarchy of objectives, in which *Access* and *Connectivity* are improved via *Public-Private Partnerships* that design, create and promote *High Quality Recreation Destinations*. All of these goals rely upon *Ecosystem Stewardship* as the fundamental criteria for all recreation management and State land planning in the Adirondack Park (Figure 3). The Core Themes of the GSW Strategy are described in detail in the following section.



Figure 3: Core Themes of the GSW Strategy

ACCESS

The GSW Strategy seeks to both increase and diversify recreation access in one of the least accessible landscapes of the Adirondack Park (and the US Northeast).

Increasing access to the lands and waters of the Forest Preserve across the GSW means creating more miles of trails and additional forms of infrastructure, such as (but not limited to) lean-tos, campsites and boat launches, at key strategic locations that improve their usefulness for a variety of recreationists. It also means leveraging existing infrastructure to its maximum utility and identifying opportunities and needs for improving current assets to support increased or different patterns of recreation usage, using a landscape-scale approach that prioritizes efficient design.

A greater diversity of recreation opportunities, natural settings and experiences is equally vital to the goal of improving access in the GSW Complex. To create spaces for many types of recreation and for recreation users with a range of physical capabilities and desired experiences, the GSW Strategy considers both self-powered and motorized forms of recreation, and specifically encourages the identification of trail opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Although the diversification of access can be achieved in part by creating multiple-use trails, such multi-purpose infrastructure often does not provide the high-quality recreation experiences that are sought as a core objective of the GSW Strategy (as described below).

CONNECTIVITY

The GSW Strategy seeks to improve trail-based connections among Adirondack communities and with points of natural and cultural interest in the Forest Preserve.

In the GSW Strategy, improving connectivity goes directly hand-in-hand with improving and diversifying recreation access. A critical step in achieving this goal requires developing a more comprehensive inventory of the features on the landscape that should be connected together via one or more types of recreation activity. In this project, ESF and its partners facilitated a public, community-based participatory process to gather and validate information on important features, and transferred these data to computer-based maps that enable the visualization of an entire landscape and its overlapping natural (e.g., terrain, ecosystem types, natural resources) and societal (e.g., political and administrative boundaries, land ownership) features.

By linking together communities and adjacent points of interest along the road system (e.g., lodging, restaurants, recreation outfitters) with recreation destinations of natural and cultural interest in the Forest Preserve (e.g., summits, scenic vistas, waterfalls, fishing and hunting areas), the GSW Strategy seeks to build a **functional network for moving recreation users around the region**. This network would allow visitors and local residents to access trailheads and other entry points directly from locations within the communities. As envisioned, such a network would provide a number of other advantages, including: increased visitation of local communities and patronage of tourism-related businesses, reduced demand for roadside parking and camping adjacent to trailheads, and closer community engagement in project design and implementation.

PUBLIC – PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

To support implementation, the GSW Strategy emphasizes the necessity to develop public-private partnerships that can mobilize the funds, expertise, labor, planning processes and stakeholder engagement needed to make projects a reality.

The GSW Strategy recognizes that current State funding levels will not support development of the new recreation infrastructure or expanded ecosystem stewardship efforts recommended here. Building on recent successes with public-private cooperation to maintain recreation access, such as in the Moose River Plains Wild Forest with the Towns of Inlet and Indian Lake, the GSW process has emphasized from the start that partnerships among communities, private sector and agency officials will be fundamental to design and implementation of the GSW Recommendations. In several cases, access through private lands is often required in order to develop linkages within communities. Future design and implementation of the GSW Recommendations will directly hinge on partnerships that can successfully engage landowners and local businesses. Local communities stand to gain from such partnerships by influencing the design of recreation assets to support local visitor-dependent businesses and events. The GSW Strategy does not directly address local Town planning, but has been developed to create synergies with existing initiatives and local partnerships to support economic development.

HIGH QUALITY RECREATION DESTINATIONS

To draw visitors to the Great South Woods for recreation and tourism, the GSW Strategy prioritizes the establishment of trails and other infrastructure that create high-quality and unique recreation experiences.

Creating a functional network of trails for moving recreation users around the region, across the Forest Preserve and among communities and tourism, was our primary and large-scale approach for enhancing the GSW as a recreation destination. We aimed to connect existing 'dead end' trail segments, and design new access routes, to form a network of opportunities. Such a network affords a broad spectrum of users a near-infinite amount of desirable experiences, tailored by the user's specific needs such as group size, level of skill / exertion, or mode of use, at a specific point in time. Not all opportunities would be desirable to all users, but such a network would demonstrate the potential to support and create a variety of experiences, and to allow communities and agency officials to customize the types of opportunities that are offered nearby.

Although many ideas are proposed here, the GSW Strategy prioritizes the *quality* of the destination over the *quantity* of destinations. A trail network on its own is not necessarily a destination, but requires careful design to attract users interested in high quality recreation opportunities. Networks can serve as the 'skeleton' upon which customized infrastructure can be designed, such as technical single-track trails over varying terrain for mountain biking, or by simply moving hiking trails off of roads. Designing a quality destination often involves clear trade-offs with compatibility or multiple-use infrastructure. In lieu of multiple-use routes, we emphasize multi-modal (or hybrid) opportunities, where different segments or routes are designed to support different modes of use, such as a 'pack-and-paddle' or 'hike and bike' destination. Overall, designing high quality recreation destinations requires a strong understanding of the expectations and desires of recreationists, as well as the opportunities provided by the natural environment, land use regulations and local community engagement.

ECOSYSTEM STEWARDSHIP

The GSW Strategy recognizes that healthy and functioning ecosystems are the fundamental basis of human well-being, including all recreation activities, and that careful stewardship of Adirondack ecosystems is both a legal and ethical responsibility.

Ecosystem stewardship is fundamental to the design, implementation, and management of all recreation development throughout the Adirondack Park. The GSW Strategy embraces the existing legal mandates established by New York State's Constitution and the SLMP, and is further guided by ESF's mission to advance the stewardship of natural and designed environments. The GSW Strategy puts forward guidelines for ecosystem stewardship at both local and regional scales, to address both long-standing issues, such as back-country protection, as well as emerging threats, such as invasive species. Many of these guidelines, such as: considering impacts on wetlands, shorelines and sensitive habitats; careful monitoring of

recreation use; deployment of new informational and educational signage; limiting new trail construction in remote core backcountry areas; and proactively managing for invasive species; are most relevant to planners and should be considered during design and implementation stages.

OVERVIEW OF PROJECT METHODS

The role of SUNY ESF as the GSW project lead was to design and implement a participatory planning process, create an expanded and improved GIS inventory for the GSW Complex, and work with the GSW Core Team to develop the GSW Strategy. [Appendix II](#) provides details on the GSW process, its participants, and a discussion of outputs and outcomes of the GSW effort.

PARTICIPATORY PLANNING PROCESS

In order to engage in participatory, collaborative planning with the public and among the GSW project partners, ESF designed and facilitated multiple rounds of public meetings and workshops, beginning with a project Kickoff Meeting in December 2014, followed by a series of five Local Knowledge Workshops (LKW) in January-March 2015. ESF digitized the map data collected during LKW, and worked with DEC regional staff from April through June 2015 on data validation. ESF used the validated data to generate preliminary recommendations, which were reviewed by project partners during Joint Planning Sessions in May and September 2015, and presented during three Public Strategy Meetings in November 2015, and at the Adirondack Association of Towns and Villages Membership Meeting in December 2015. The Recommendations and Strategy presented in this document reflect the feedback received December 2014 through December 2015 from various project partners and the public.

PROJECT DELIVERABLES

At project completion, ESF has produced the following principal outputs and products:

- **A comprehensive, web-accessible GIS inventory of land-and-water trails and associated recreational infrastructure that currently exist for public use across the region's lands; and lodging facilities and other significant amenities that are currently available to visiting recreationists.**
- **A set of Recommendations concerning development of new trails and associated recreational infrastructure that could result in enhanced outdoor experiences for visiting recreationists to enjoy (including projects already approved and those yet to be proposed in draft management plans); and opportunities to assist with the development of new lodging facilities and other amenities for these visitors.**
- **A proposed Strategy that sets forth a path for establishing these new recreational and lodging opportunities and for "making it all work" – for both the economic benefit of communities and the State's protection of the GSW's ecosystems and natural resources from potential impacts of increased outdoor recreation.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The GSW Strategy recommends the design and implementation of a network of recreation infrastructure across the GSW Complex that meets the multiple objectives of the planning effort. The GSW Recommendations are based directly on the information collected in community workshops, which was then evaluated by ESF staff and members of the Core Team. Portions of these recommendations were presented at three Public Strategy Meetings ([Appendix II](#)) and feedback from these sessions has been incorporated into the current set of recommendations.

In this Strategy, GSW Recommendations are presented primarily in the form of maps that highlight features along a network of trails and related infrastructure. Maps contain a limited amount of information selected to highlight key features, and are not exhaustive in terms of the information available in the GIS Inventory or other map-based information available to the GSW effort. Narratives have been developed to describe each map.

We note that although these recommendations have resulted from a lengthy participatory process that iteratively engaged local communities and agency staff, they primarily represent efforts of the ESF team to synthesize a large amount of information into a planning document. The ESF team recognizes their limitations in State land planning, both in terms of expertise and authority, and is providing these results to inform an ongoing planning process executed by DEC and APA.

GSW RECOMMENDATIONS: REGIONAL NETWORK

The GSW Regional Network represents an attempt to link together communities and destinations on and through the Forest Preserve, using existing and proposed routes that provide circuits (or loops) and long-distance traverses (or thru-hikes) across the region (see [GSW Regional Network maps and descriptions R-1 through R-13](#)). The Regional Network intersects with key long-distance travel routes, including the unique Hudson River Corridor, existing Northville-Placid Trail, and officially proposed North Country National Scenic Trail ([R-1](#)). Each Regional Network feature shares a trail segment with as many as seven additional features, while connecting up to seven communities in the GSW planning area (i.e., Infinite North). Features vary in length from 12.4 to 116.9 miles, average 71 miles per feature. Two-thirds of the features require some degree of construction, but overall the Regional Network is 83% complete and existing. Regional Network features provide a framework of trails and linkages, creating recreation opportunities that span the GSW planning area, and allowing for the creation of Local Network features focused on communities and opportunities at a smaller scale.

GSW RECOMMENDATIONS: LOCAL NETWORK

The GSW Local Network is nested within the GSW Regional Network (R-14), and provides recreation-based connections among communities and local points of interest on the Forest Preserve, based on existing and proposed routes. The GSW Recommendations and Strategy highlights 32 features, varying in length from 7.7 miles (Potter Bike Trail) to 64.4 miles (West Indian Lake Network), averaging 25.5 miles per feature. Seven features are complete and existing, while the remaining features are 74% composed of existing trail infrastructure. The Local Network features are described in individual narratives according to the Core Themes of the GSW Strategy: Access, Connectivity, Ecosystem Stewardship, High Quality Recreation Destinations, and Public-Private Partnerships. Use the Map Extent guide provided on R-15 to locate individual features or specific areas within the Map Narrative text.



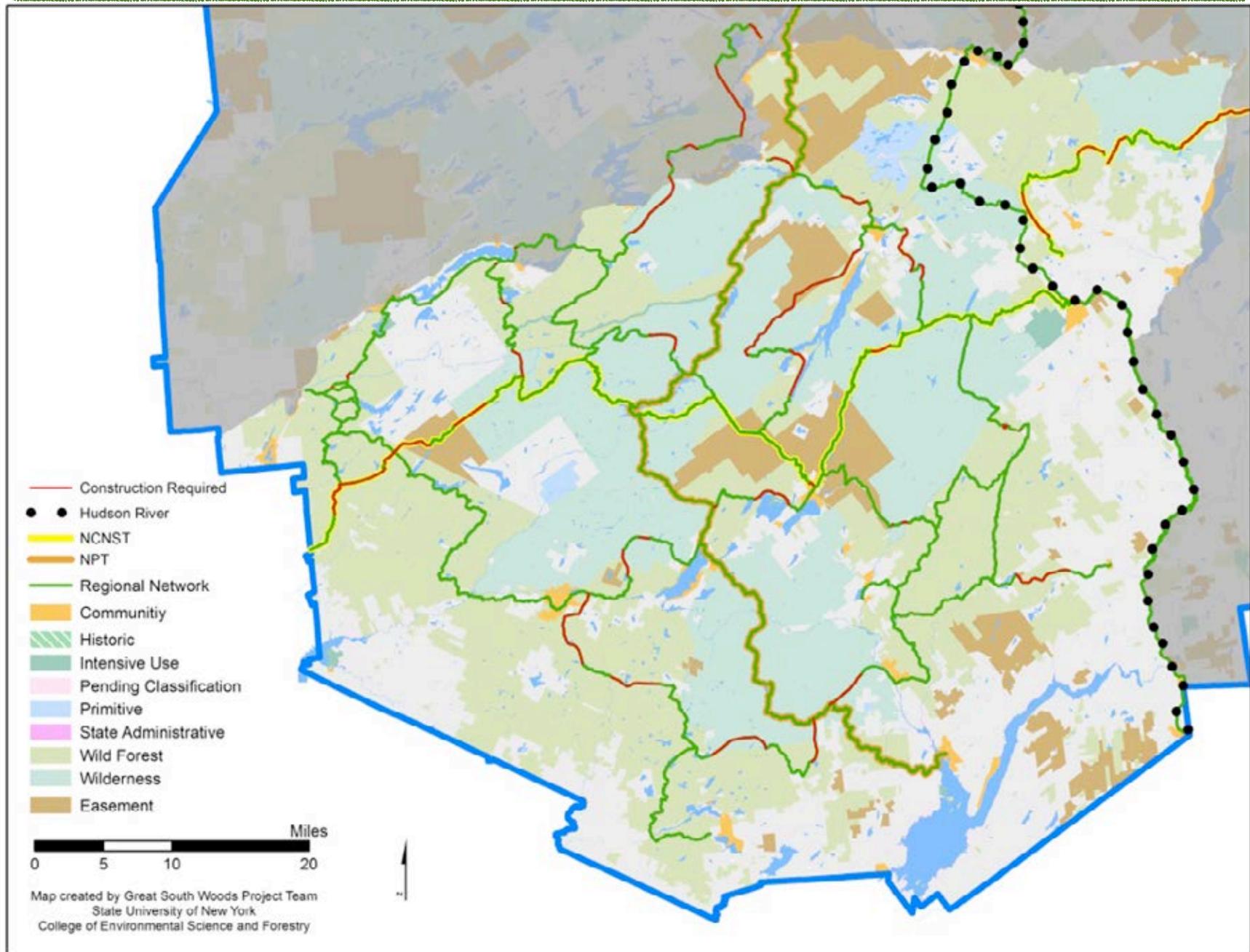
C. Beier

MAPS AND NARRATIVES (PAGES R-1 TO R-59)

SEE NEXT PAGE

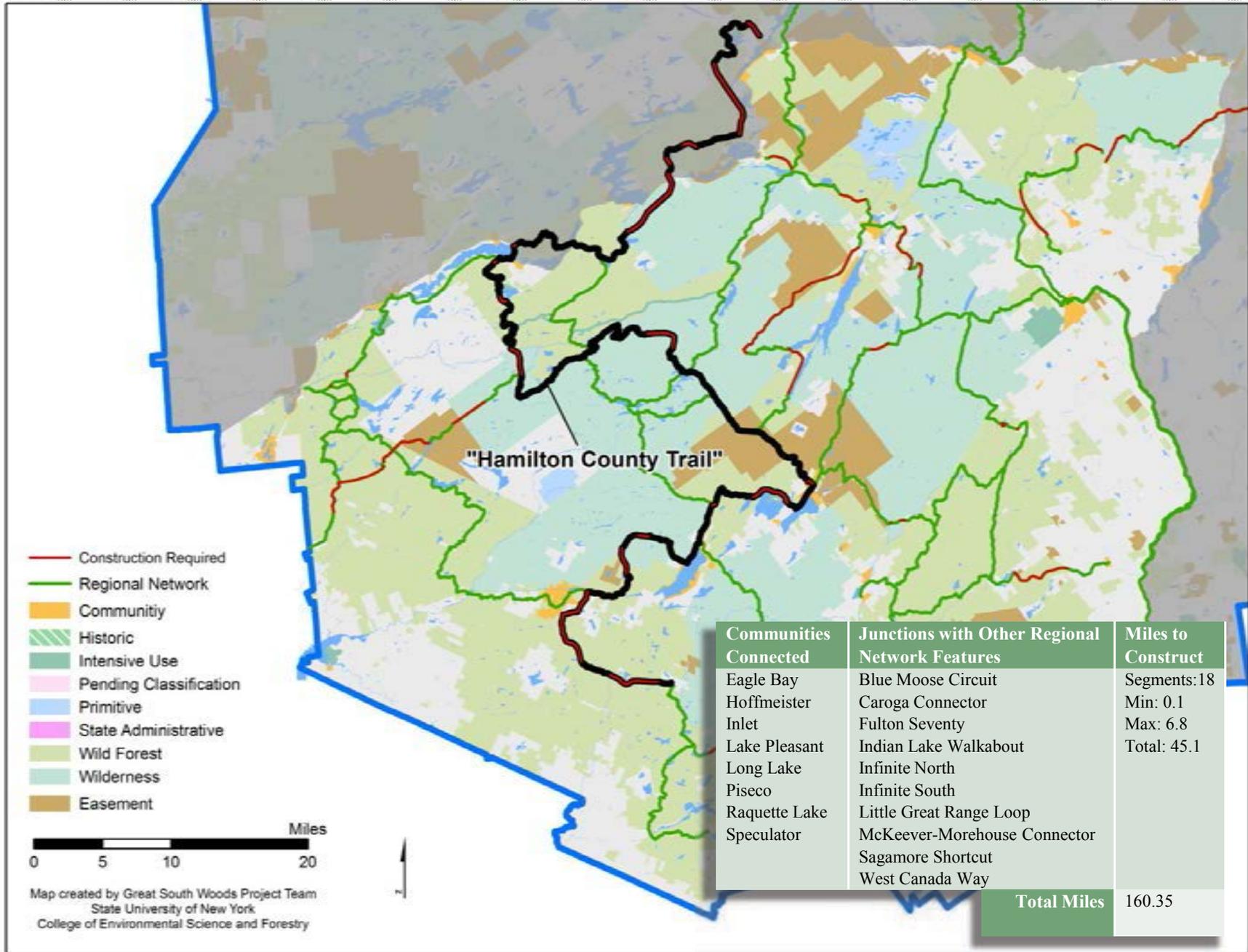
GSW Regional Network

featuring Northville-Placid Trail (NPT), North Country National Scenic Trail (NCNST) and Hudson River corridor



GSW Regional Network

Hamilton County Trail (proposed)



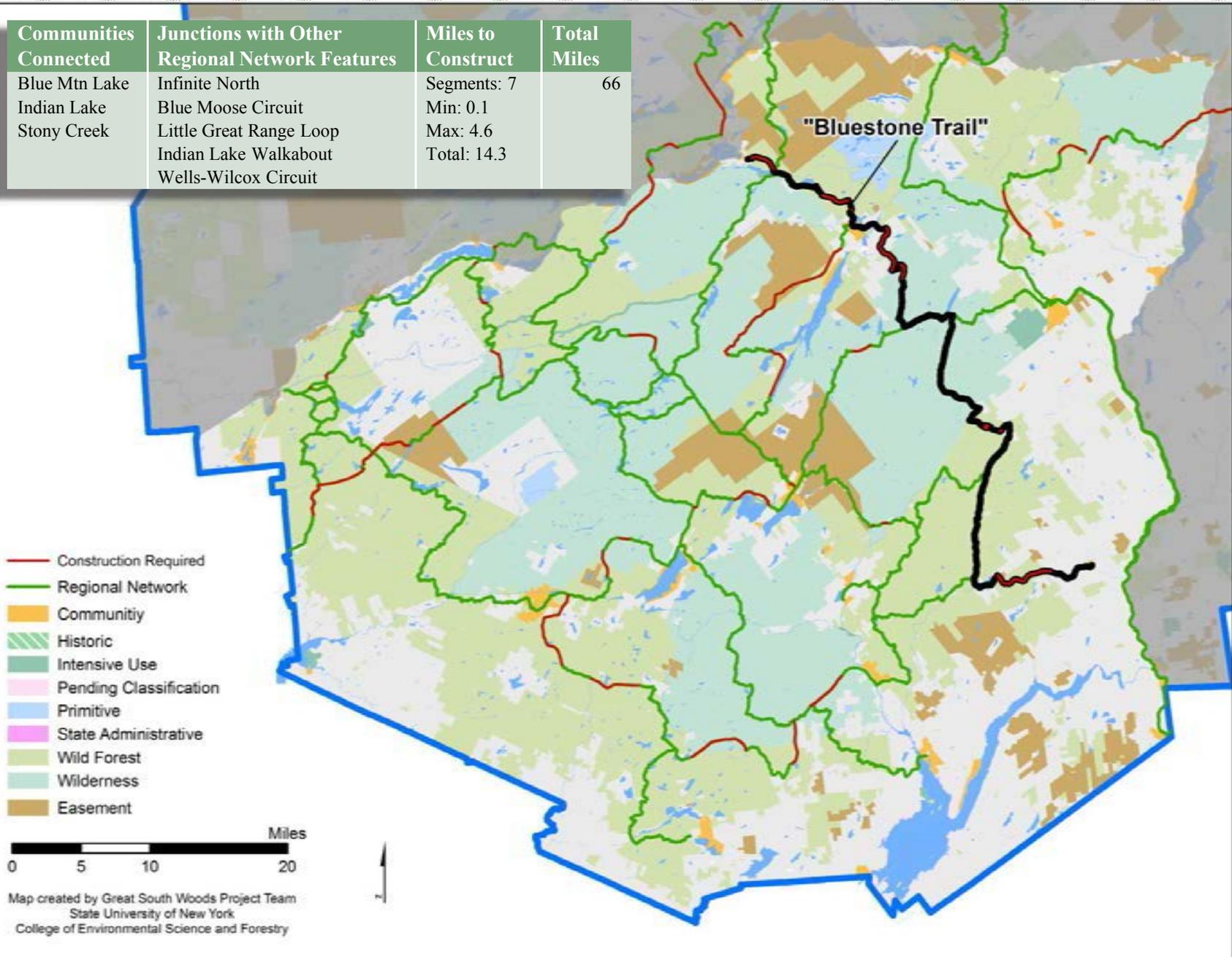
Communities Connected	Junctions with Other Regional Network Features	Miles to Construct
Eagle Bay	Blue Moose Circuit	Segments: 18
Hoffmeister	Caroga Connector	Min: 0.1
Inlet	Fulton Seventy	Max: 6.8
Lake Pleasant	Indian Lake Walkabout	Total: 45.1
Long Lake	Infinite North	
Piseco	Infinite South	
Raquette Lake	Little Great Range Loop	
Speculator	McKeever-Morehouse Connector	
	Sagamore Shortcut	
	West Canada Way	
Total Miles		160.35

Map created by Great South Woods Project Team
 State University of New York
 College of Environmental Science and Forestry

GSW Regional Network

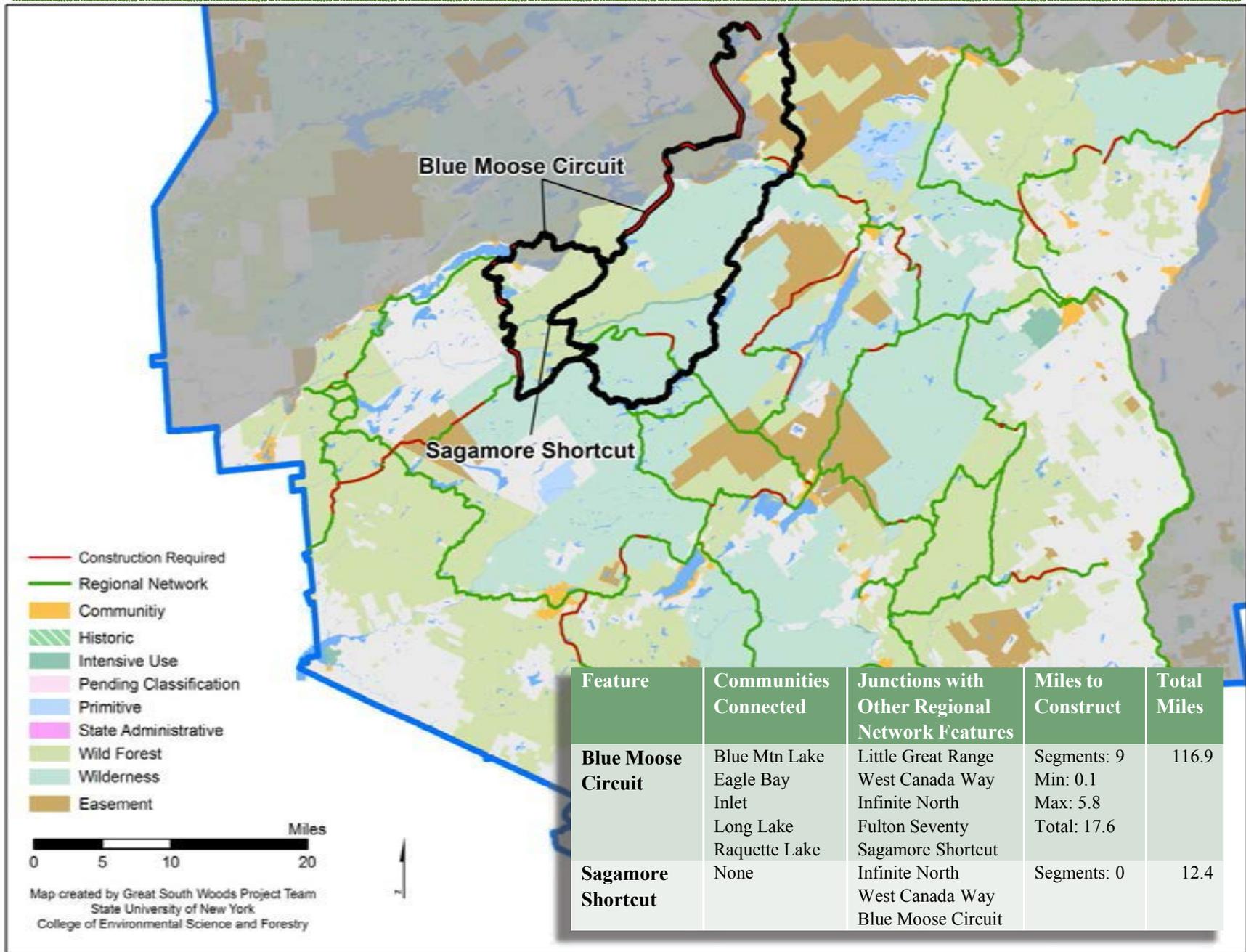
Bluestone Trail (proposed)

Communities Connected	Junctions with Other Regional Network Features	Miles to Construct	Total Miles
Blue Mtn Lake Indian Lake Stony Creek	Infinite North Blue Moose Circuit Little Great Range Loop Indian Lake Walkabout Wells-Wilcox Circuit	Segments: 7 Min: 0.1 Max: 4.6 Total: 14.3	66



GSW Regional Network

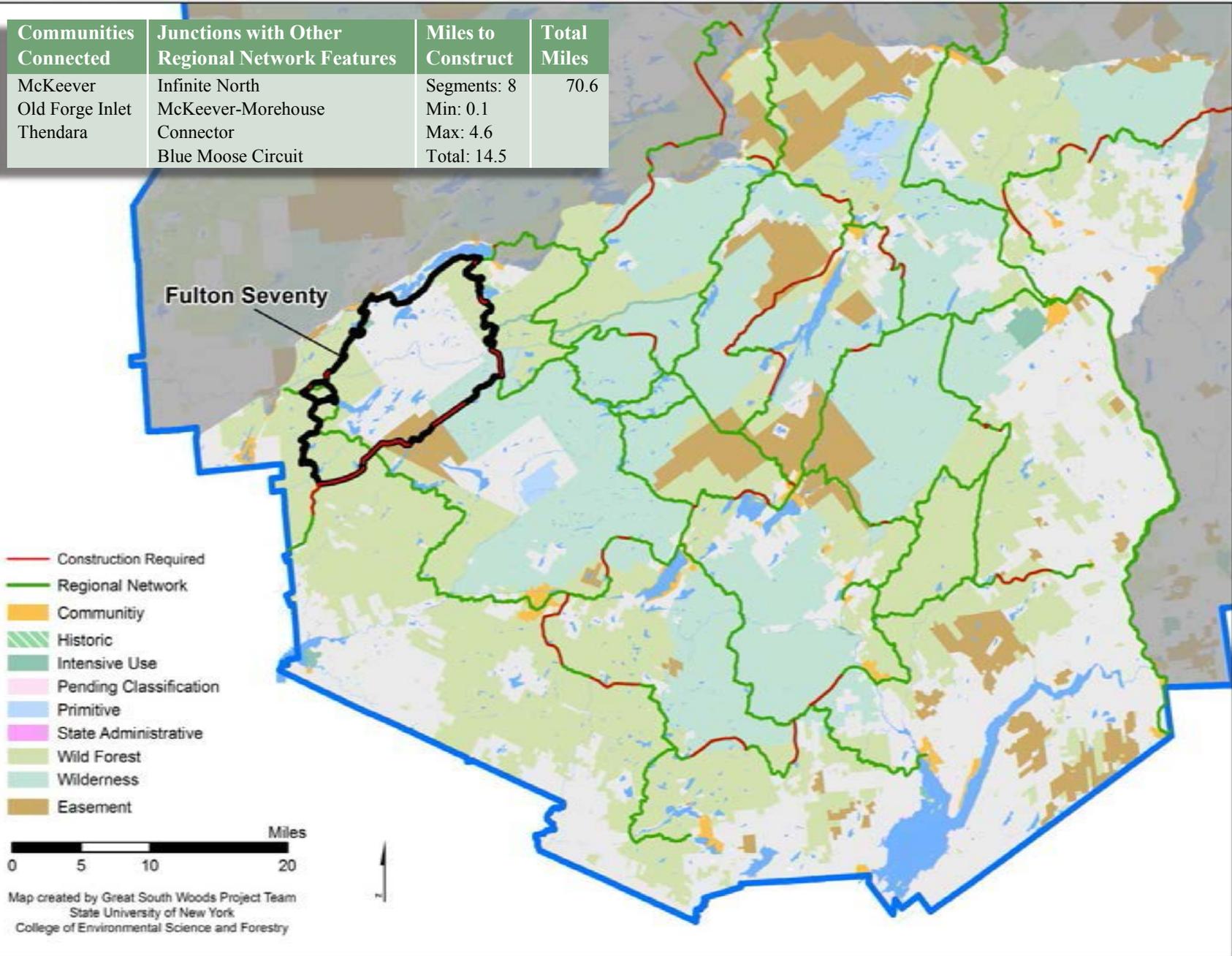
Blue Moose Circuit & Sagamore Shortcut



GSW Regional Network

Fulton Seventy

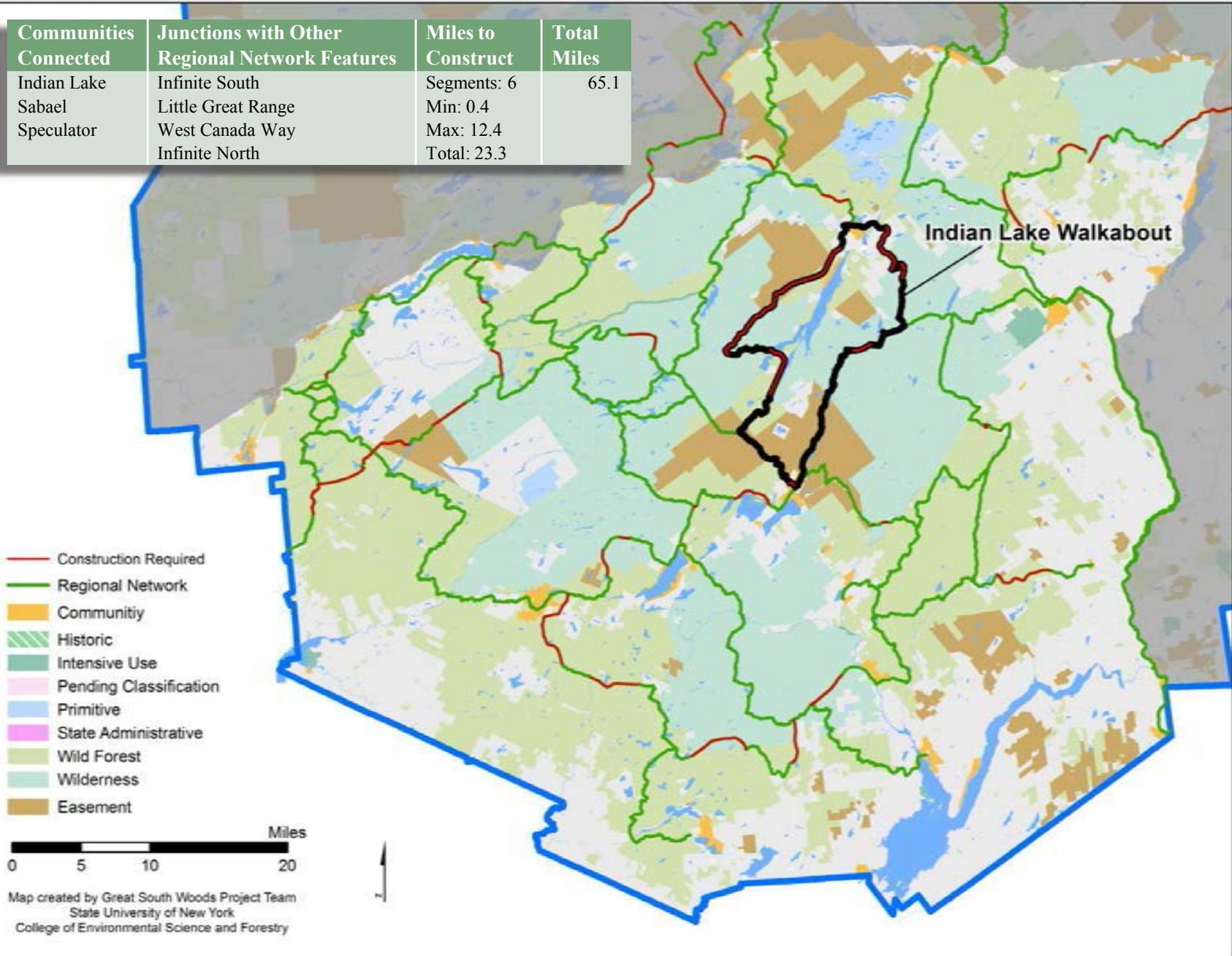
Communities Connected	Junctions with Other Regional Network Features	Miles to Construct	Total Miles
McKeever Old Forge Inlet Thendara	Infinite North McKeever-Morehouse Connector Blue Moose Circuit	Segments: 8 Min: 0.1 Max: 4.6 Total: 14.5	70.6



GSW Regional Network

Indian Lake Walkabout

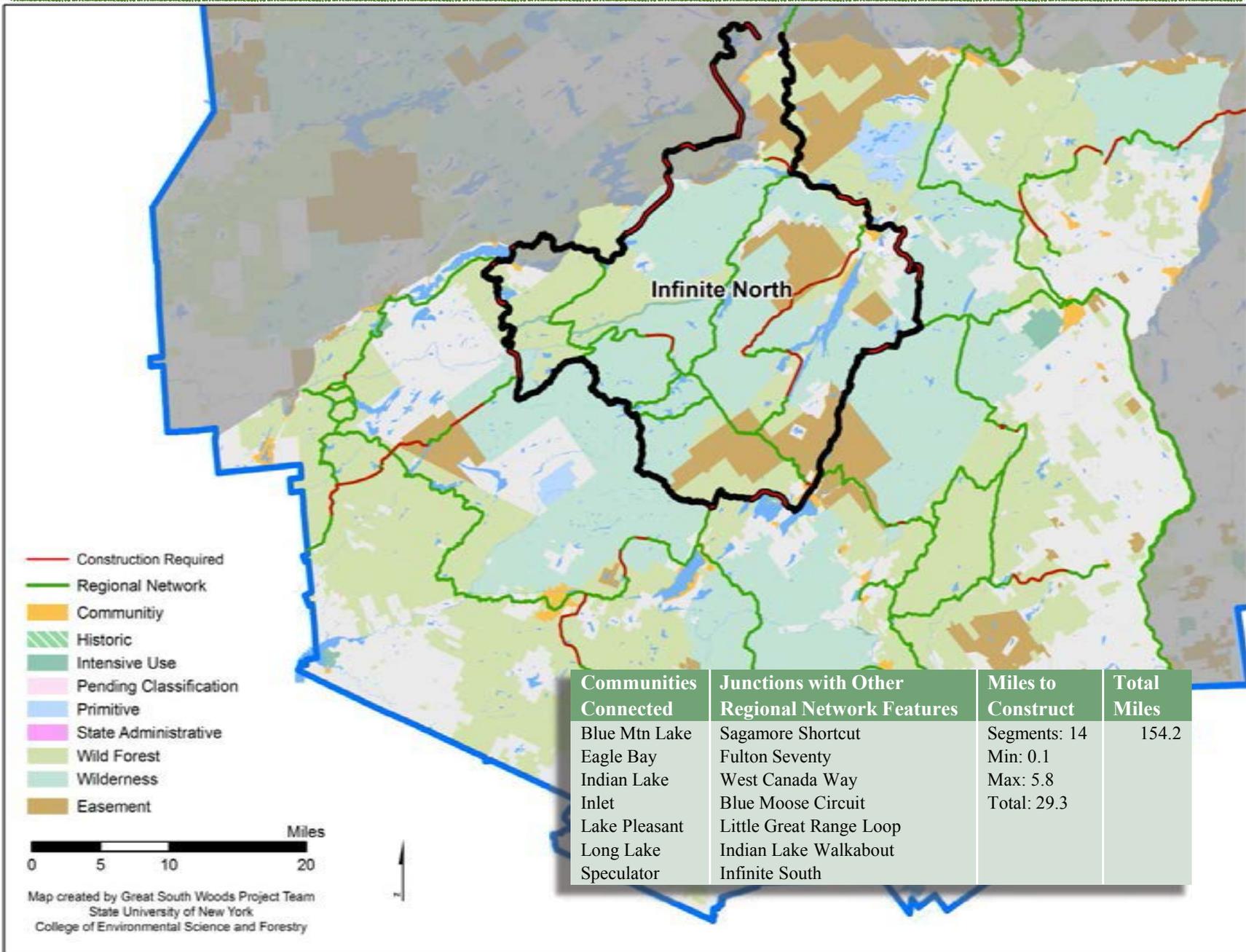
Communities Connected	Junctions with Other Regional Network Features	Miles to Construct	Total Miles
Indian Lake Sabael Speculator	Infinite South Little Great Range West Canada Way Infinite North	Segments: 6 Min: 0.4 Max: 12.4 Total: 23.3	65.1



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GSW Regional Network

Infinite Loop North



Communities Connected	Junctions with Other Regional Network Features	Miles to Construct	Total Miles
Blue Mtn Lake	Sagamore Shortcut	Segments: 14	154.2
Eagle Bay	Fulton Seventy	Min: 0.1	
Indian Lake	West Canada Way	Max: 5.8	
Inlet	Blue Moose Circuit	Total: 29.3	
Lake Pleasant	Little Great Range Loop		
Long Lake	Indian Lake Walkabout		
Speculator	Infinite South		

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GSW Regional Network

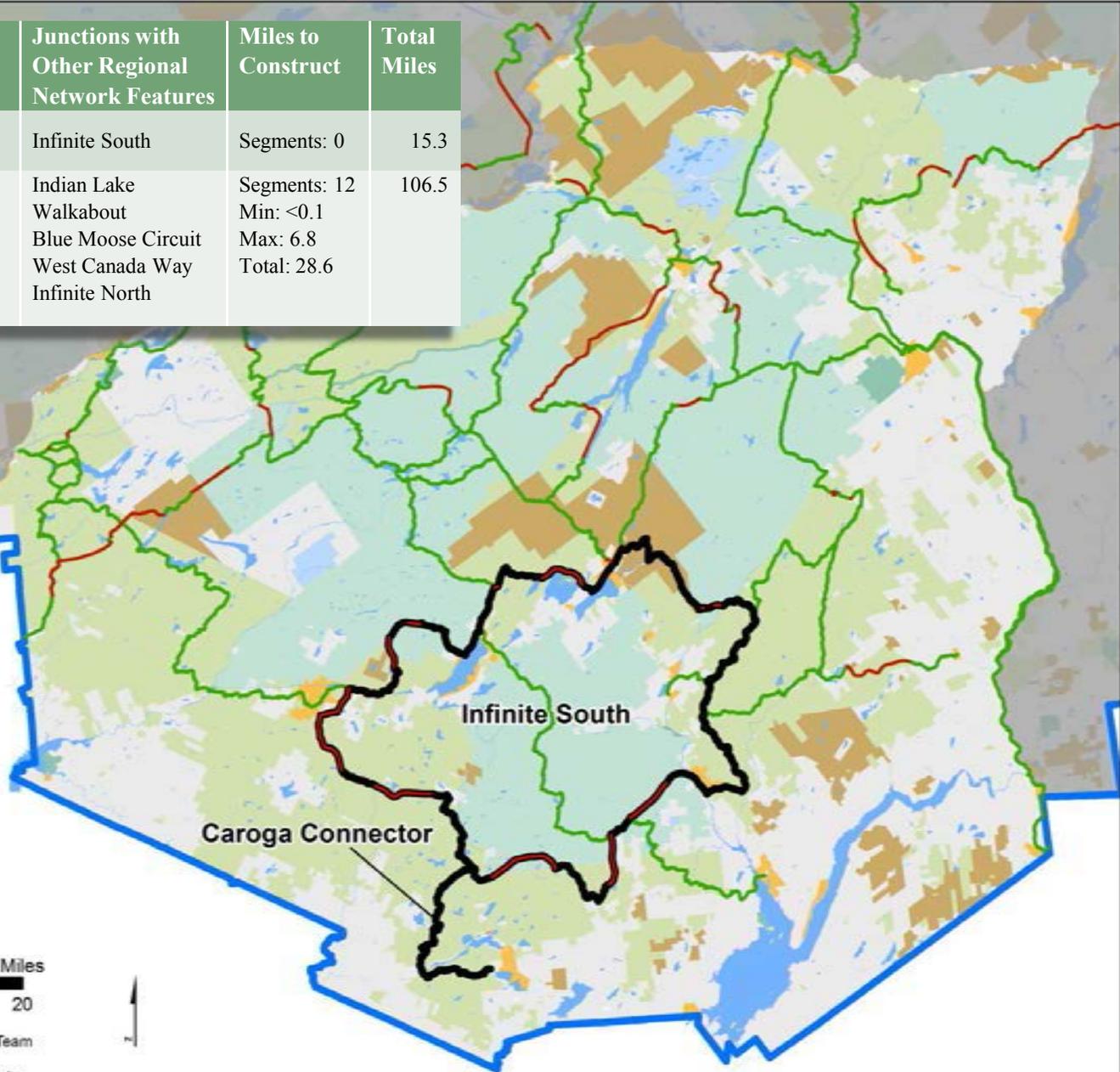
Infinite Loop South & Caroga Connector

Feature	Communities Connected	Junctions with Other Regional Network Features	Miles to Construct	Total Miles
Caroga Connector	Caroga Lake	Infinite South	Segments: 0	15.3
Infinite South	Hoffmeister Hope Lake Pleasant Piseco Speculator Wells	Indian Lake Walkabout Blue Moose Circuit West Canada Way Infinite North	Segments: 12 Min: <0.1 Max: 6.8 Total: 28.6	106.5

- Construction Required
- Regional Network
- Community
- Historic
- Intensive Use
- Pending Classification
- Primitive
- State Administrative
- Wild Forest
- Wilderness
- Easement



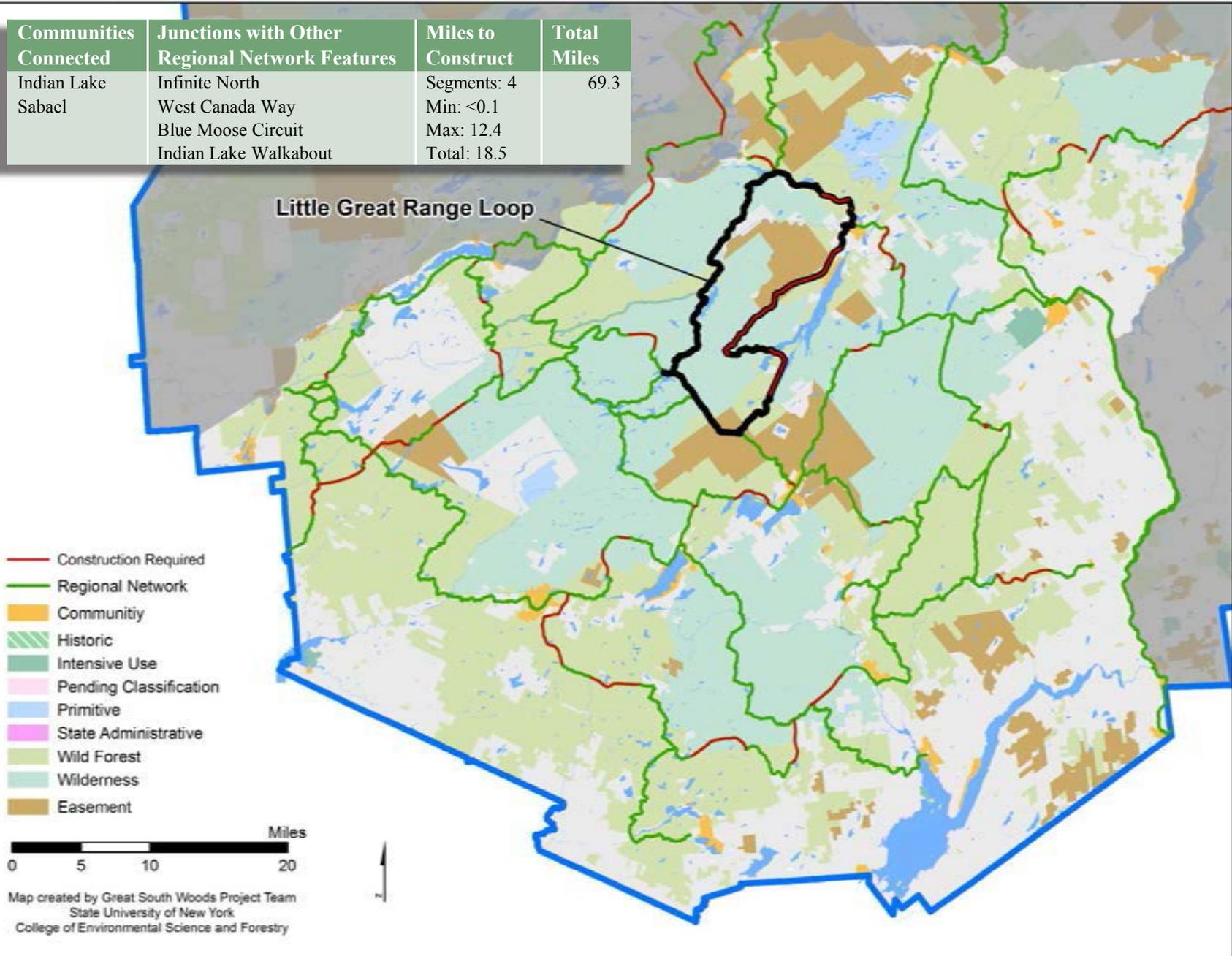
Map created by Great South Woods Project Team
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GSW Regional Network

Little Great Range Loop

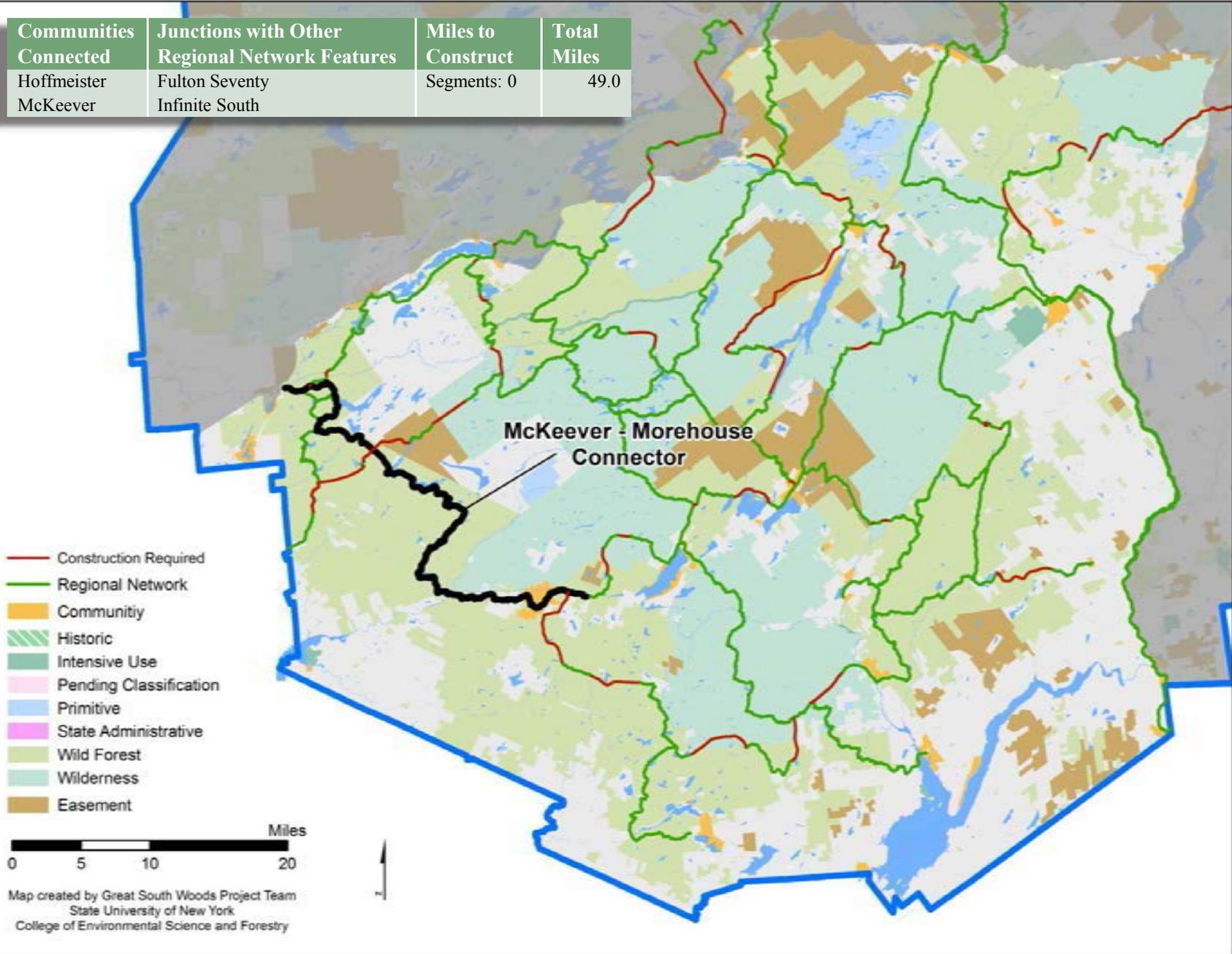
Communities Connected	Junctions with Other Regional Network Features	Miles to Construct	Total Miles
Indian Lake Sabael	Infinite North West Canada Way Blue Moose Circuit Indian Lake Walkabout	Segments: 4 Min: <0.1 Max: 12.4 Total: 18.5	69.3



GSW Regional Network

McKeever-Morehouse Connector

Communities Connected	Junctions with Other Regional Network Features	Miles to Construct	Total Miles
Hoffmeister McKeever	Fulton Seventy Infinite South	Segments: 0	49.0

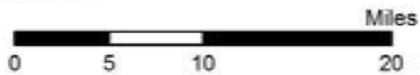


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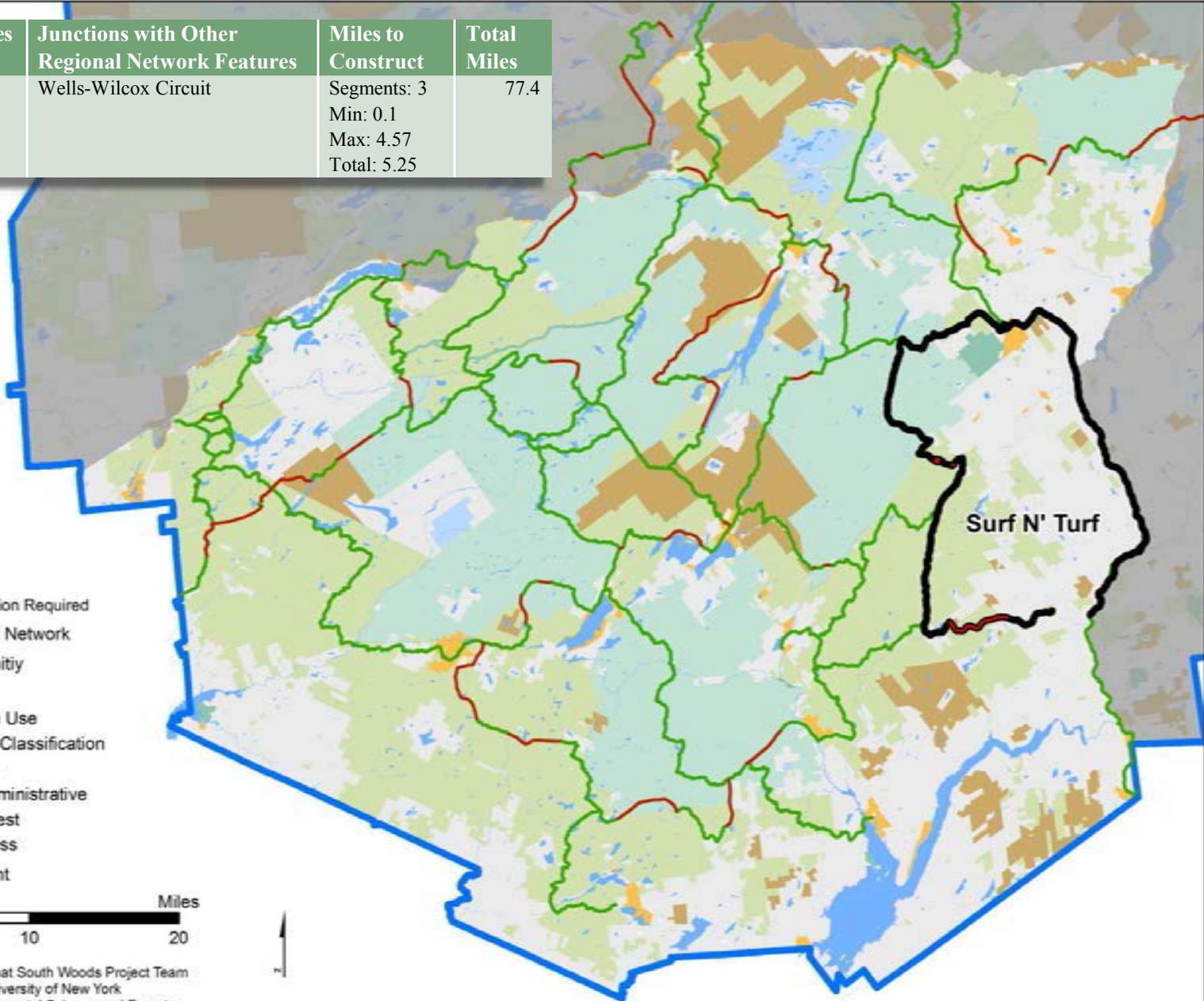
Surf N' Turf

Communities Connected	Junctions with Other Regional Network Features	Miles to Construct	Total Miles
North Creek Riparius Stony Creek	Wells-Wilcox Circuit	Segments: 3 Min: 0.1 Max: 4.57 Total: 5.25	77.4

- Construction Required
- Regional Network
- Community
- Historic
- Intensive Use
- Pending Classification
- Primitive
- State Administrative
- Wild Forest
- Wilderness
- Easement



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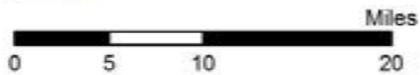


GSW Regional Network

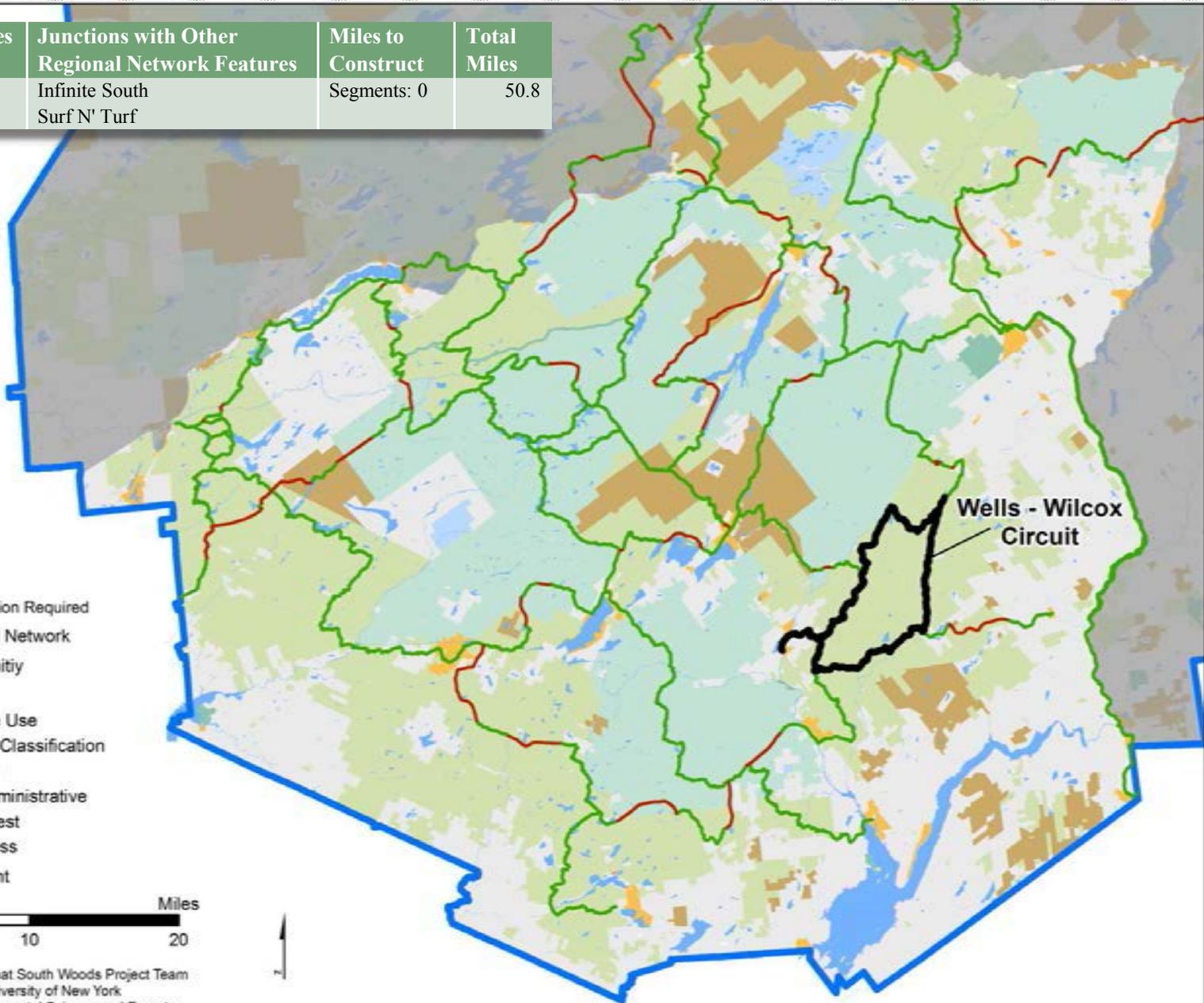
Wells-Wilcox Circuit

Communities Connected	Junctions with Other Regional Network Features	Miles to Construct	Total Miles
Wells	Infinite South Surf N' Turf	Segments: 0	50.8

- Construction Required
- Regional Network
- Community
- Historic
- Intensive Use
- Pending Classification
- Primitive
- State Administrative
- Wild Forest
- Wilderness
- Easement



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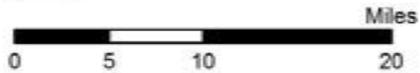


GSW Regional Network

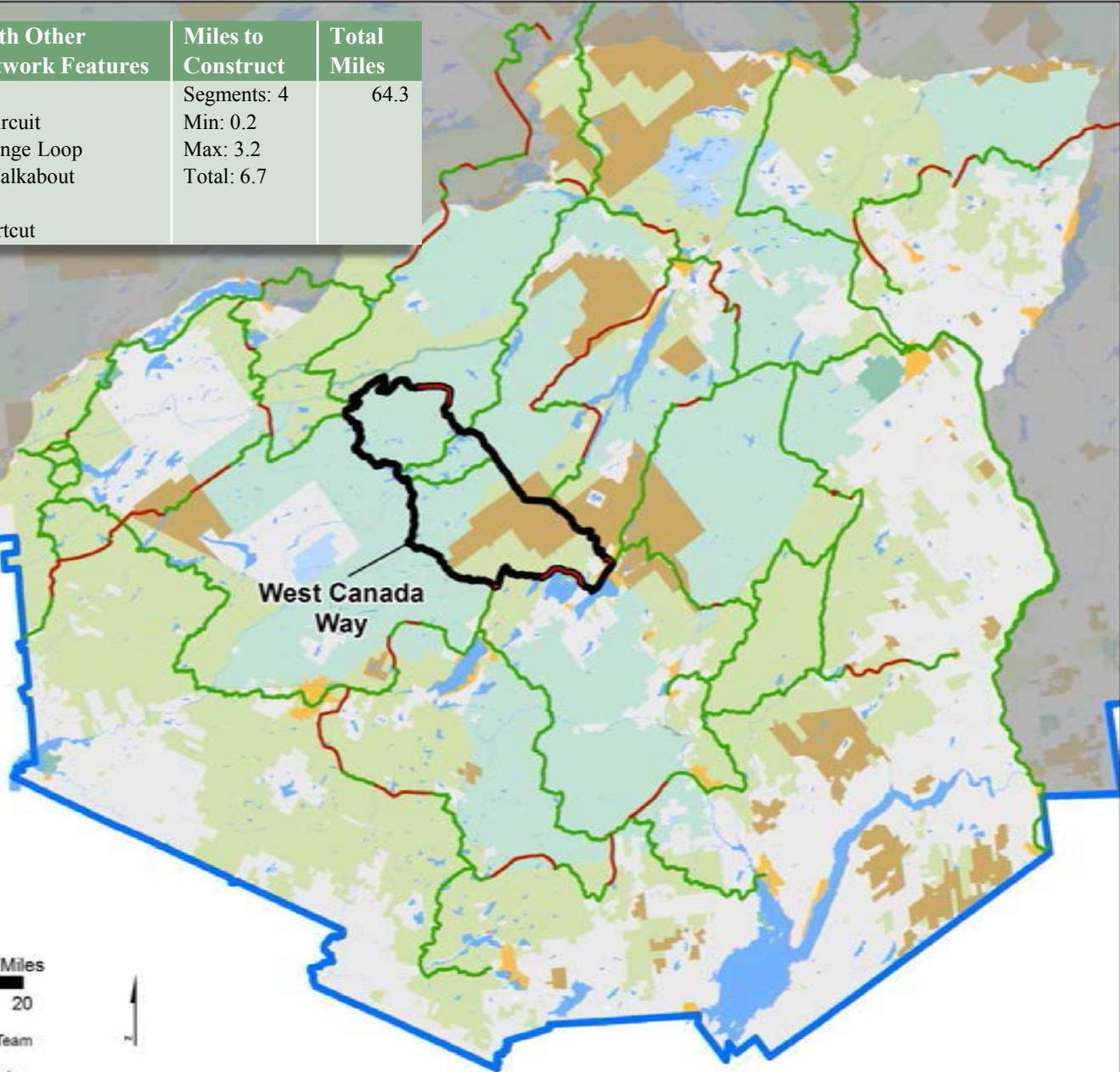
West Canada Way

Communities Connected	Junctions with Other Regional Network Features	Miles to Construct	Total Miles
Speculator	Infinite North Blue Moose Circuit Little Great Range Loop Indian Lake Walkabout Infinite South Sagamore Shortcut	Segments: 4 Min: 0.2 Max: 3.2 Total: 6.7	64.3

- Construction Required
- Regional Network
- Community
- Historic
- Intensive Use
- Pending Classification
- Primitive
- State Administrative
- Wild Forest
- Wilderness
- Easement

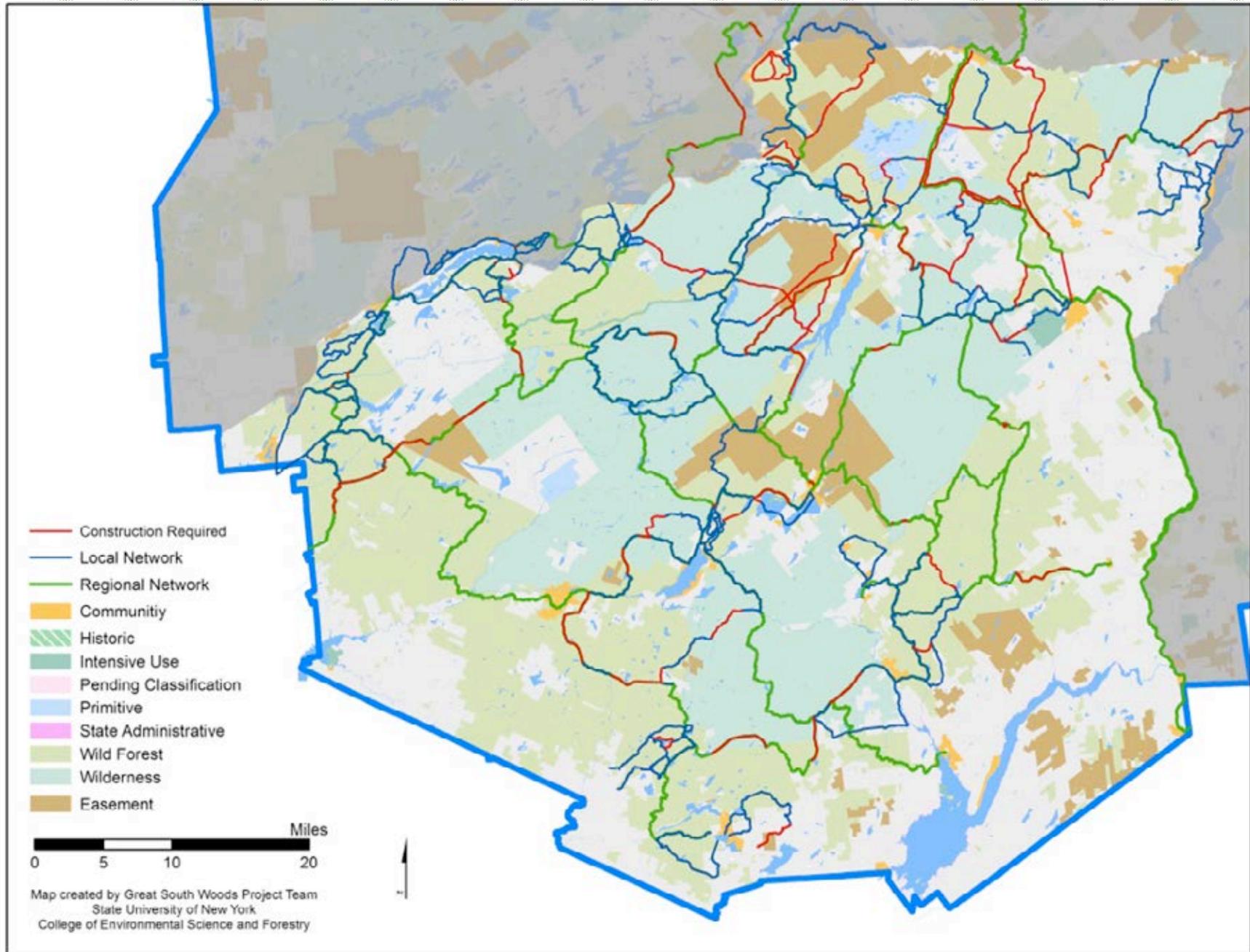


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GSW Regional Network

Local Networks



GSW Recommendations

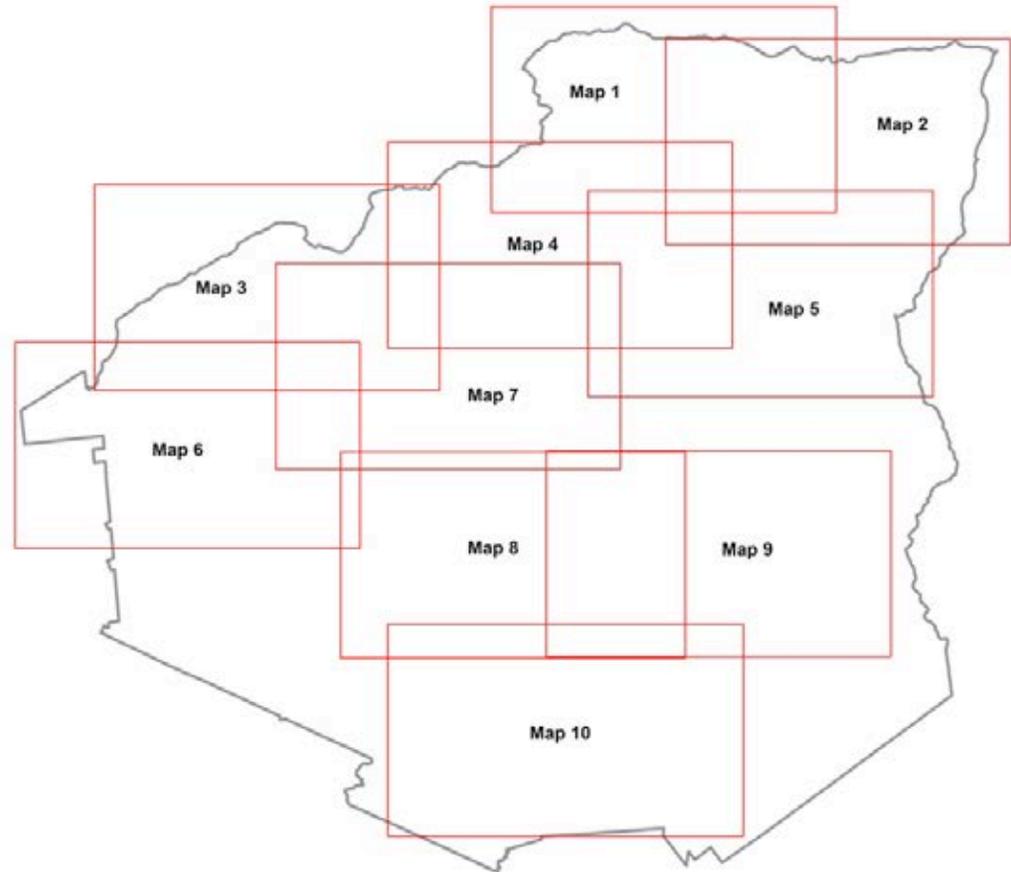
Local area maps

Map Extent & Locator Guide

The following section contains a series of smaller-scale maps that describe our **preliminary recommendations for recreation planning in the Great South Woods Strategy**. Maps were organized by dividing the GSW into ten (10) overlapping areas, as shown in red boxes to the right. ➡

Each of the ten maps is followed by detailed descriptions of **local features**. All local features are based on information and ideas developed through the **GSW process**, which included **community members, town leaders, interest groups, recreation experts and State agency officials**.

Maps are intended to inform future planning, will be subject to revision, and do not necessarily represent current or future priorities. The ideas presented here are **conceptual** and locations of points and routes are **approximate**.



Map	Locations	Pages
1	Five Towns Area	R17-R24
2	Minerva, North Hudson, Schroon Lake	R25-R29
3	Fulton Chain Area	R30-R36
4	Indian Lake & Cedar River Flow	R37-R40
5	North Creek, North River, Indian Lake	R41-R43

Map	Locations	Pages
6	Black River (Woodgate & Otter Creek)	R44-R46
7	West Canada Lake Wilderness	R47-R49
8	Lake Pleasant, Piseco, Speculator	R50-R53
9	Wells, Hope, Gilmantown, Stony Creek	R54-R55
10	Northville & Caroga Lake	R56-R59

GSW Recommendations

Symbol legends & glossary

	Hiking		Fishing		Town Beach
	Mtn. Biking		Downhill ski		Lean-to
	Road Biking		X-Country ski		Camping
	Paddling		Snowshoe		Fire Tower
	Kayaking		Snowmobile		Hand Launch
	Rafting		Winter Sports		Scenic View
	Climbing		Horse Trail		Boat Launch

Regional Network: a system of routes designed to interconnect communities across the GSW

Local Network: trail systems that connect one or more communities with destinations on the Forest Preserve or DEC easement lands

Loop or Circuit: a trail that brings travelers back directly to (or near) their starting point

Nested Loop: trail feature in which two or more connected loop routes can be traveled

Connector: a route designed to directly link communities to the regional or local networks in the area

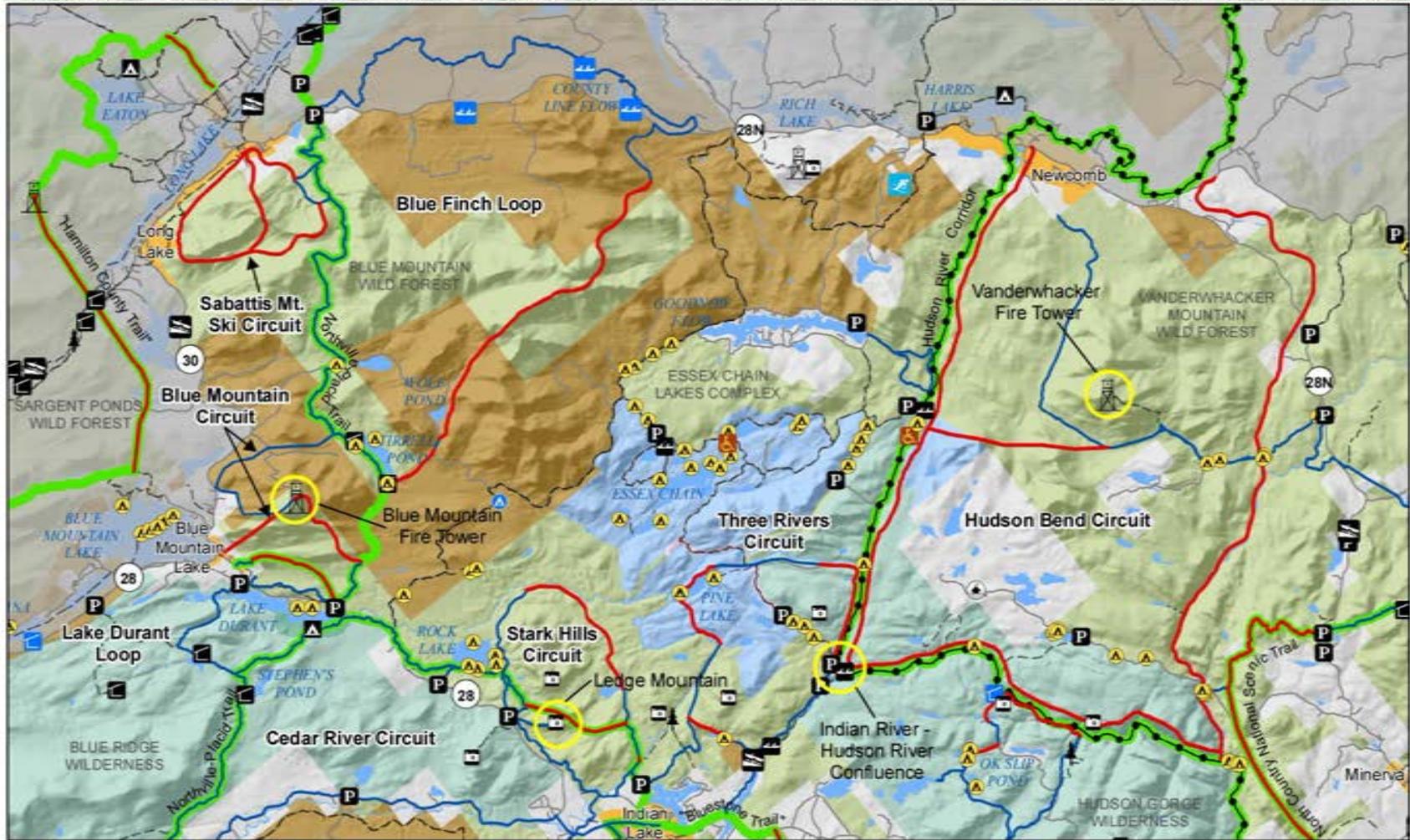
Multi-Modal: a route designed to incorporate different modes of recreation along different sections

Spur - simple out-and-back trail, usually to a specific point of interest

	ADA Accessible		Fire Tower		Day Use Area
	Lodging		Historic Site		Rock Climbing
	Boat Launch		Lean-to		Scenic Area
	Natural Feature		Paddling Access		Great Camp
	State Campground		Parking		Fishing Access
	Primitive Campsite		Scenic Area		Cross-Country Ski Center
	Downhill Ski Center		Proposed Feature		

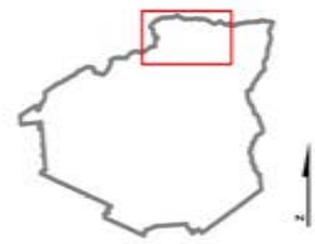
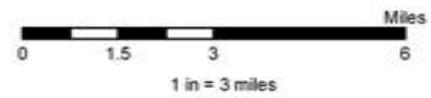
Map 1 ► Five Towns Area

(portions of Newcomb, Long Lake, Indian Lake, Blue Mountain Lake and Minerva)



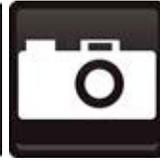
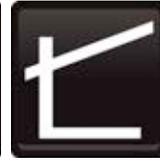
- | | | | |
|---------------------|------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| ADA Accessible | Fire Tower | Local Network | Community |
| Lodging | Historic Site | Regional Network | Historic |
| Boat Launch | Lease-to | Construction Required | Intensive Use |
| Natural Feature | Paddling Access | DEC Trail | Pending Classification |
| State Campground | Parking | Road | Primitive |
| Primitive Campsite | Scenic Area | | State Administrative |
| Downhill Ski Center | Proposed Feature | | Wild Forest |
| | | | Wilderness |
| | | | Easement |

Long Lake, Newcomb



Map produced by the Great South Woods Project Team at the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry

Map 1 ► Five Towns Area Lake Durant Loop



Lake Durant Loop is an 8.2-mile circuit, comprised entirely of existing trails and infrastructure, that connects hikers from the DEC Lake Durant Campground and the NPT with the Blue Ridge Wilderness backcountry and the western end of Lake Durant. Guided hiking-paddling trips may be developed with a local outfitter, lodges, ADK Museum and Arts Center in hamlet of BML. Access from highways and via Blue Mountain Circuit (proposed) provide opportunities for weekend excursions to multiple points of interest.

Access: All existing infrastructure -- now linked into regional network. Hybrid hiking-paddling opportunities could be developed or expanded on Lake Durant, linking with DEC campground. Joins with Blue Mountain Circuit (proposed) from shared parking area on Rt 30.

Connectivity: An existing local circuit for Blue Mountain Lake that uses sections of the NPT and Bluestone Trail (proposed) in the GSW regional network, which connects multiple communities. Good location for vehicle traffic at intersection of NYS 28 and 30.

Stewardship: Mostly located in Blue Ridge Wilderness and could require additional infrastructure and maintenance efforts with potential increased use. Backcountry trail areas along ponds may become degraded through erosion. If 'pack and paddle' trips are implemented, boat washing stations could be installed at DEC campground. Otherwise nominal concern for invasives, but campground visitors should be mindful of firewood regulations to reduce spread of insect pests. Could be a good place to educate public about invasive species.

Destination: Day-hike into the Blue Ridge Wilderness from Lake Durant Campground or parking areas on NYS 28, passing by backcountry Stephen's and Cascade Ponds, with overnight opportunities at lean-tos. Hike or paddle back to DEC campground on Lake Durant, head south into the heart of Blue Ridge Wilderness on the NPT, into Blue Mountain Lake for a day at the ADK Museum, or hike up to scenic views on the summit of Blue Mountain. In winter, backcountry skiing and snowshoeing.

Partnerships: Highlight and build upon existing local circuit for guided trips / local outfitters. May be good opportunities for multi-modal 'pack and paddle' trips based out of Blue Mountain Lake village. Snowshoeing and nordic skiing trips in winter. Also opportunities for local residents and visitors to support stewardship for back-country lean-tos and trail sections.

Map 1 ► Five Towns Area Sabattis Mtn. Ski Circuit



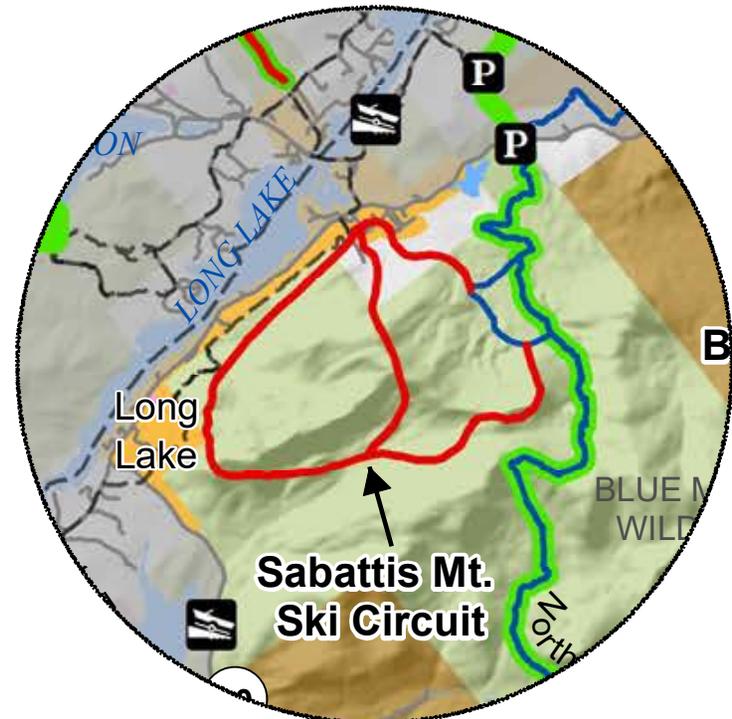
Access: New winter and summer recreation opportunities in currently trail-less Blue Mountain Wild Forest directly adjacent to hamlet of Long Lake. Connects NPT directly to popular year-round community pavilion in center of town.

Connectivity: Easily accessible in and out of Long Lake. Access off the NPT via a quarter-mile existing connector trail. Connects the NPT directly to hamlet of Long Lake instead of 1.5 miles east on NYS 28N.

Stewardship: 93% of loop requires route planning and construction. Western loop may be preferable for grooming, while eastern loop - which connects with NPT - should be designed as a backcountry ski trail. Increased exposure to invasive plants based on proximity to town and junction of NYS 28N and 30.

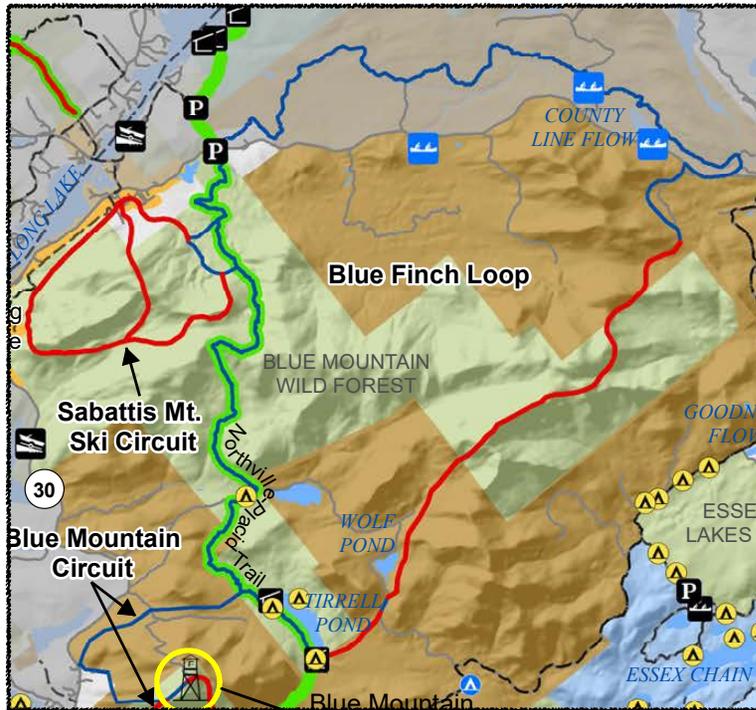
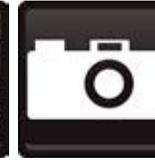
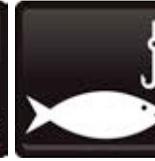
Destination: One and only skiing opportunity in scenic village of Long Lake, multiple grades of skiing and route-options along the loop, including groomed and backcountry trails. Day-hiking and mountain biking in summer.

Partnerships: Circuit was proposed at public meeting in Long Lake. Will require coordination with town government, private landowners and state agencies to draft plans. Races and community events at Sabattis Pavilion could be developed around using the circuit. Engage local expertise and the Town of Long Lake Parks & Rec Office in all implementation phases.



The **Sabattis Mountain Ski Circuit** is a 10 mile ‘double-loop’ trail system designed primarily for cross-country skiing on both groomed and backcountry paths, which connects directly with both the Sabattis Pavilion in the heart of Long Lake village and the Northville-Placid Trail as it runs south through Blue Mountain Wild Forest. One loop may be designed for groomed trails, the other for nordic skiing, but with a shared access point near town amenities, including outfitters. It provides new access to a large area of Forest Preserve directly adjacent to the destination community of Long Lake, and could bring more NPT hikers into town (without requiring a road walk). The circuit could also support day-hiking and mountain biking in summer. Nearly all (93%) of the circuit, based on approximate routes, will require design and construction. Local capacity for recreation planning and community engagement is strong and should be leveraged.

Map 1 ► Five Towns Area Blue Finch Loop



The **Blue Finch Loop** is a 32.2-mile foot trail circuit that incorporates a long segment of the Northville-Placid Trail for a 4-6 day backpacking trip, with several angling opportunities in ponds and streams, through Blue Mountain Wild Forest and working forest parcels with DEC conservation easements, including the former Finch-Pruyn lands. Proposed new trail provides access to Wolf Pond, scenic views of the Essex Chain Lakes Complex along a ridge traverse, and connection to existing snowmobile trails along Fishing Brook and NYS 28, where DEC has proposed several parking areas and boat launches for fishing access. Winter access for nordic skiers and snowshoers into Tirrell and Wolf Ponds from parking areas on NYS 28 near Lake Durant.

Access: The proposed new 6.9-mile trail segment along the loop accesses Wolf Pond from NPT, into currently trail-less areas of Blue Mountain Wild Forest and former Finch-Pruyn DEC easement lands. Proposed hand launches for boats along Fishing Brook.

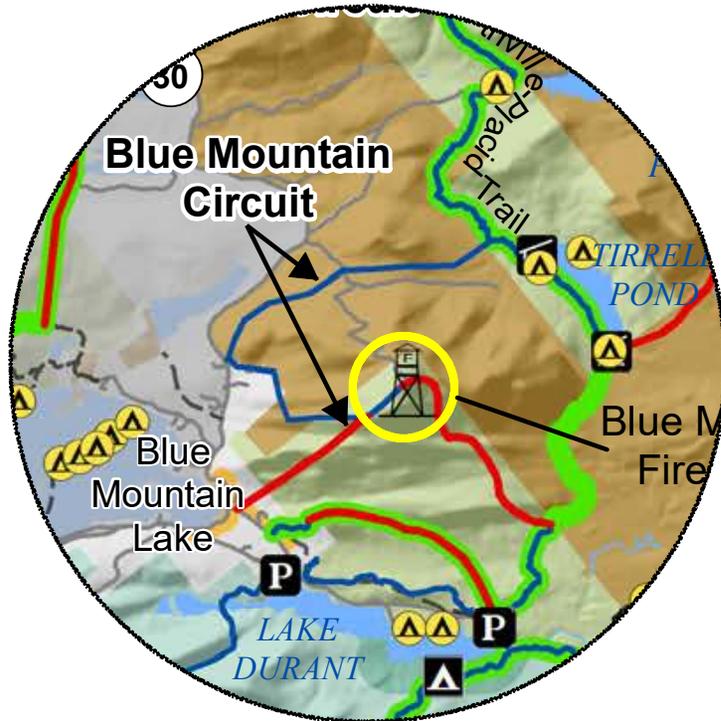
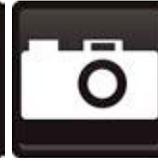
Connectivity: Builds on existing connection via NPT from Blue Mountain Lake to Long Lake. Also connected to proposed Sabbatis Mountain Ski Circuit, which originates directly in the hamlet of Long Lake.

Stewardship: Additional parking and signage required near County Line Flow/28N. Likely will need additional lean-tos or campsites along the new trail section in Blue Mtn WF. Trailhead parking and registers needed at intersection with 28N. Boat wash stations and invasive species prevention signage needed at proposed hand launch sites. Increased Ranger monitoring of use along some portions that are long and isolated. New trail along ridgeline should be designed with care and attention to ecological impacts as well as safety.

Destination: A multi-day backpacking trip that brings hikers and anglers to several ponds exploring recently acquired Finch easements.

Partnerships: Will require establishment of recreation rights on easement lands, including negotiation of fishing rights on Wolf Pond and hiking access on northern end of trail in easement; opportunities for community participation as trail and lean-to stewards.

Map 1 ► Five Towns Area Blue Mountain Circuit



Access: Brings a trailhead for Blue Mountain summit into the BML hamlet area, also provides quick access to summit from NPT. Parking areas in the village and at Lake Durant provide different options for day-hike routes.

Connectivity: Uses sections of NPT and Bluestone Trail (proposed) to connect hamlet of BML with summit and NPT. Links to Lake Durant Loop via shared parking area just west of Lake Durant Campground on NYS 30.

Stewardship: Trail construction should follow best management practices, several steep and rocky sections along route. Continue 'Summit Guide/Steward' program in the cabin/tower during summer and could coordinate more with local communities (i.e., recruit a local community member as, or in addition to, the guide/steward).

Destination: The destination is the journey - two new approaches to the iconic Blue Mountain Fire Tower with a direct start from the Hamlet, and a loop hike accessed from either NPT or the NYS Lake Durant Campground.

Partnerships: Public parking in hamlet would be required, as well as construction of roughly 75% of the loop. All Fire Towers should have accurate, readable observation maps which could be produced in partnership with local government, historical societies or interested citizens.

The **Blue Mountain Circuit** is a 11.8-mile foot trail system that connects the lakefront to the iconic summit. New proposed trails provide local access to NPT from the hamlet of Blue Mountain Lake, via new and challenging routes to the Blue Mtn summit and fire tower. The circuit originates along the lakefront in the village of Blue Mountain Lake and creates an alternate route from the Northville-Placid Trail to Blue Mtn summit that eliminates the need for thru-hikers to retrace their footsteps. NPT hikers can take the existing Tirrell Pond Trail to the Blue Mountain Trail (which share a trailhead and parking area adjacent to NYS 30), ascend to the summit and fire tower, and return to the NPT using the proposed trail heading southeast from the summit.

Map 1 ► Five Towns Area Three Rivers Circuit



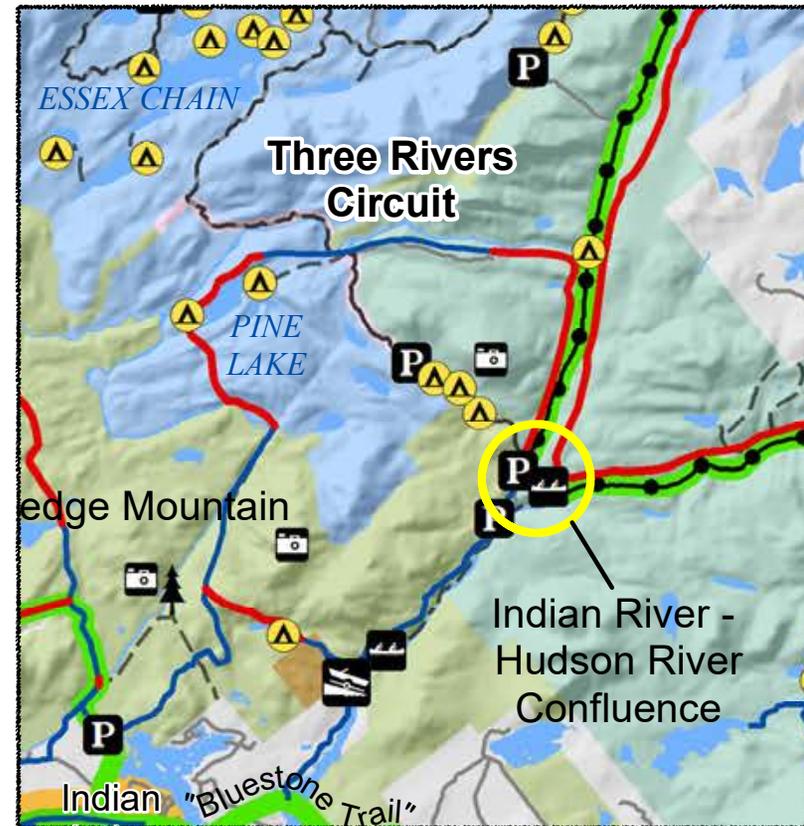
Access: New access to west bank of Hudson and western shore of Pine Lake and southernmost Essex Chain complex, approximate route allows short bushwhacks to McGinn Mtn and Big Pisgah Mtn.

Connectivity: Connects Indian Lake with Essex Chain Complex via foot trail; links Indian-Hudson and Cedar-Hudson confluence via trail along west bank of Hudson River.

Stewardship: Three segments totaling 6.7 miles need construction. Trail construction and management must safeguard *Wild and Scenic* character of Hudson River and be designed to minimize risk of erosion or damage to riparian areas. Same environmental protections should be implemented for confluence of Hudson and Indian Rivers. Live bait should be prohibited; if live bait is allowed, discourage dumping of bait worms, which are invasive and can damage nearby forests.

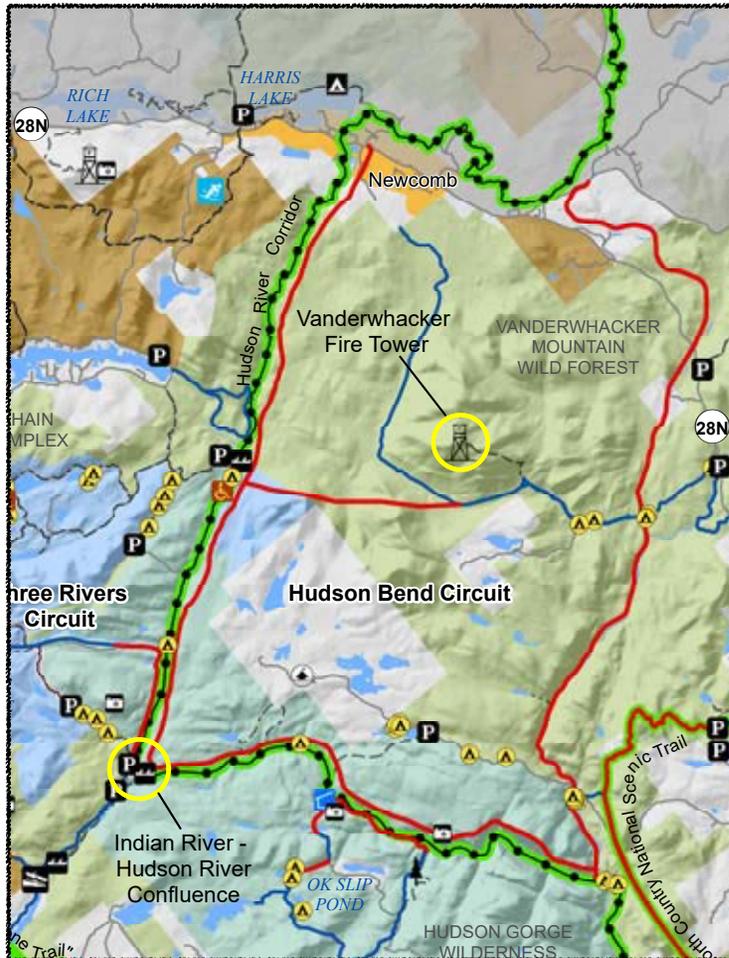
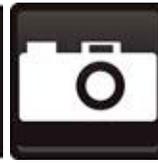
Destination: A backcountry weekend for hikers, anglers and river enthusiasts, leaving from Indian Lake, with primitive camping on Pine Lake and whitewater rafting through the scenic Hudson Gorge.

Partnerships: Increased use of short trail segment through easement may require negotiation with landowner. Trail and campsite stewards could come from Indian Lake or Newcomb. River guides / outfitters using Indian River access may design guided hiking-boating trips with return shuttles from North River back to Indian Lake.



The **Three Rivers Circuit** is a 15.7-mile loop designed for backcountry and river enthusiasts, providing a weekend trip with opportunities for camping, fishing, kayaking and whitewater rafting on the Indian and Hudson Rivers. Using a section of unpaved road from parking area to the Hudson-Indian River confluence, the circuit can be accessed from Indian Lake via two popular parking areas with raft/kayak launches, and provides access into southernmost portions of the Essex Chain Complex, including campsites on Pine Lake. It is also accessible from Newcomb via the existing road in Essex Chain Complex and a proposed trail on the west bank of the Hudson River.

Map 1 ► Five Towns Area Hudson Bend Circuit



Access: New hiking along 20 miles of the Wild and Scenic Hudson River, 6+ miles along the Scenic Boreas River; access to Borough's Cave; alternate access to Vanderwhacker Mtn. Trail. May need to develop more campsites along Hudson and Boreas, and boat take-outs at several points on Hudson.

Connectivity: Access from Newcomb to Minerva and North Creek along the Hudson River Corridor, junctions with Vanderwhacker Circuit, North Country National Scenic Trail.

Stewardship: Significant trail construction along river corridors poses environmental and logistical challenges. Trail design, construction and maintenance must safeguard *Wild and Scenic* status of these reaches and the protection of rare and sensitive ecosystems, including calcareous cliffs at Blue Ledges and ice meadows along the Hudson River. Hiking trail along Gorge rim will likely require hand rails and signage. Will need registers and signage in Newcomb, NYS 28N, and along Northwoods Club Road.

Destination: Multi-modal circuit potential, starting from Newcomb with the option of hiking to-be-constructed trail, or floating down the Hudson River, exiting the water at a take-out and heading east at the Indian River. Hike through the Hudson Gorge past Blue Ledges to Boreas River, hiking or biking north back toward Newcomb. Alternatively, Hudson/Boreas junction can be reached from North Creek and taken up to Newcomb.

Partnerships: Negotiate access with Northwoods Club. Ample opportunities for local engagement with trail construction and stewardship. East leg could be constructed for biking on old railroad bed, supporting bike rentals/ outfitters in North Creek, Newcomb and/or Minerva. Numerous workshop participants highlighted needs and opportunities for hiking along Hudson.

The **Hudson Bend Circuit** is a 39-mile loop of almost entirely new construction along the Hudson and Boreas rivers, providing access to the east banks of the Hudson River and the north rim of the Hudson Gorge. Circuit also connects with existing Vanderwhacker Mtn summit trail and fire tower. With potential opportunities for multi-modal hiking-paddling or paddling-biking trips, the circuit can be accessed from the trailhead on NYS 28N, via Northwoods Club Road, or from Newcomb via existing and proposed trails.

Map 1 ► Five Towns Area Stark Hills Circuit



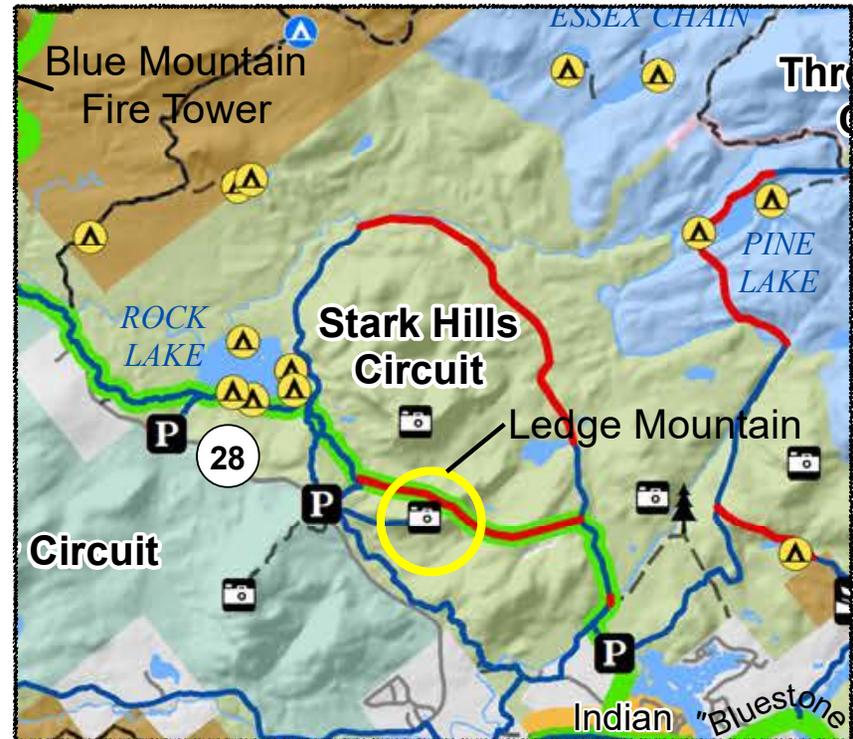
Access: New segments of trail connects together existing, dead-end segments to create alternate (loop) hiking routes to Rock Lake, Ledge Mtn scenic views, and short bushwhacks to Stark Hills and Rock River. Southernmost leg is snowmobile trail along NYS 28.

Connectivity: Loop in and out of hamlet of Indian Lake; circuit is bisected by Bluestone Trail (proposed) regional route, which connects with Blue Mountain Lake to the northwest, and several communities to the southeast, including Stony Creek.

Stewardship: Maintenance on snowmobile sections to provide for hikers. Lakefront campsites (Rock Lake) need regular monitoring and maintenance. Footbridge across Cedar River should be designed and constructed to minimize impacts on riparian habitats.

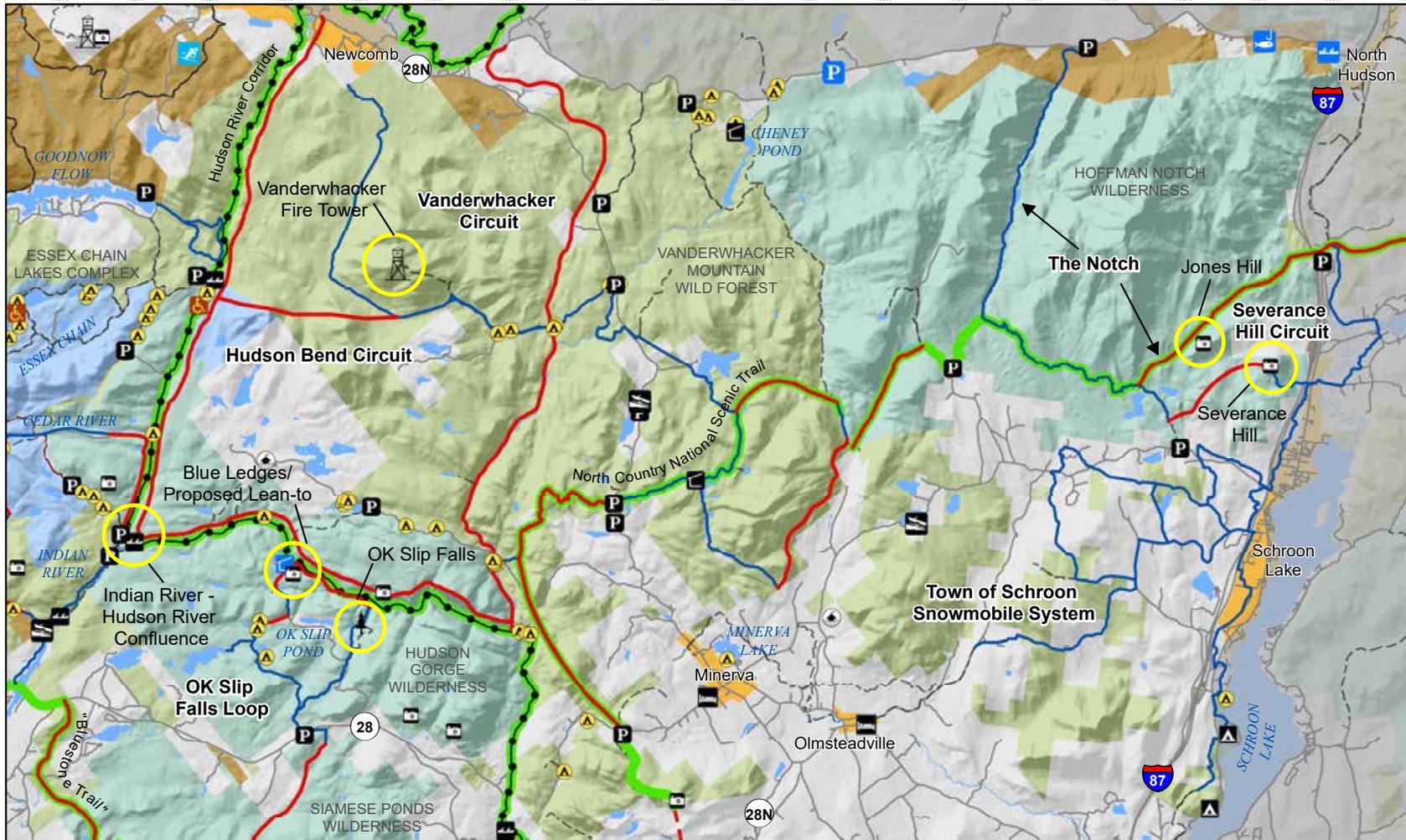
Destination: A weekend backcountry hiking or skiing trip, along Rock River and to Rock Lake with ample camping opportunities and scenic views from multiple mountain tops. For a more challenging day hike, tackle the full outer loop in the wild forest.

Partnerships: Indian Lake outfitters and restaurants; community assistance with trail and foot bridge construction over Cedar River.



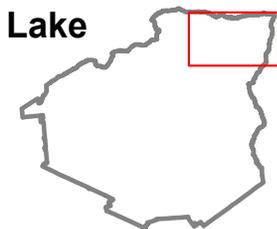
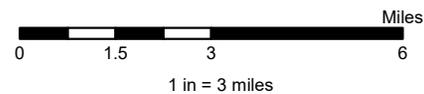
The **Stark Hills Circuit** is a 11.7-mile network of loop trails that explores the backcountry of Blue Mountain Wild Forest, with waterfront camping opportunities on Rock Lake, and scenic views from the summit of Ledge Mountain. Hikers can head off-trail to explore the Stark Hills and Rock River. Southern portions of the circuit are currently used for snowmobiling in winter, but other portions of loop are suitable for nordic skiing. Boats may be portaged from adjacent parking area on NYS 28 into Rock Lake, providing paddling opportunities with lakefront campsites that are located along hiking circuit. Addition of a foot bridge across Cedar River provides more convenient access to the Stark Hills Circuit from the hamlet of Indian Lake.

Map 2 ► Minerva, North Hudson, Schroon Lake



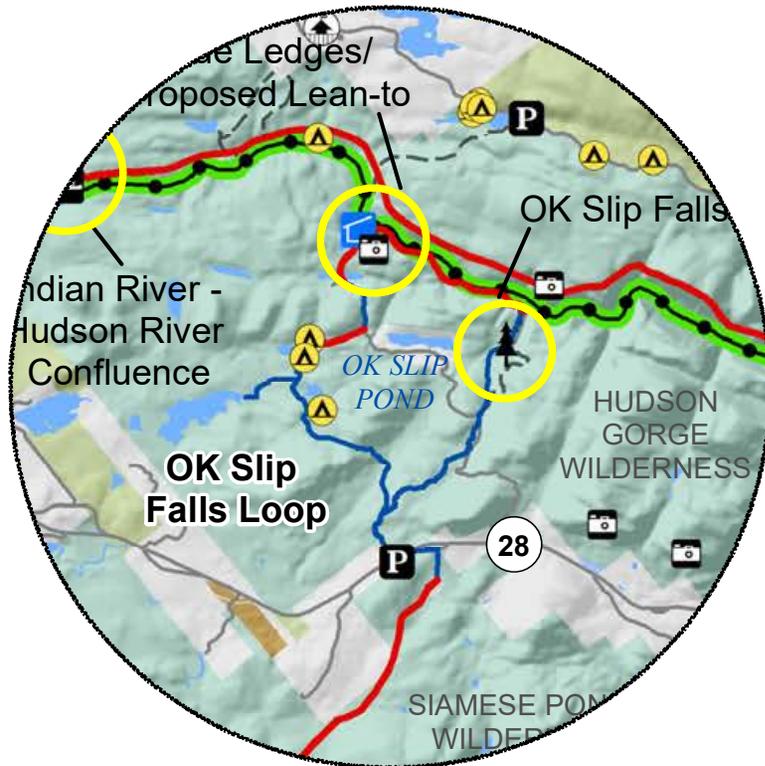
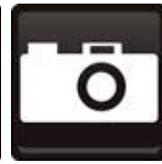
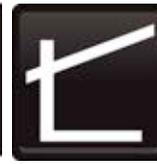
- | | | | | | | | |
|--|---------------------|--|------------------|--|----------------------|--|------------------------|
| | ADA Accessible | | Fire Tower | | Local Network | | Community |
| | Lodging | | Historic Site | | Regional Network | | Intensive Use |
| | Boat Launch | | Lean-to | | DEC Trail | | Pending Classification |
| | Natural Feature | | Paddling Access | | Road | | Primitive |
| | State Campground | | Parking | | State Administrative | | Wild Forest |
| | Primitive Campsite | | Scenic Area | | Wilderness | | Easement |
| | Downhill Ski Center | | Proposed Feature | | | | |

Minerva, North Hudson, Schroon Lake



Map produced by the Great South Woods Project Team at the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry

Map 2 ► Minerva-North Hudson OK Slip Falls Loop



Access: Connects two dead-end trails into a circuit with a proposed lean-to near Blue Ledges on south rim of Hudson Gorge.

Connectivity: No direct connections with communities.

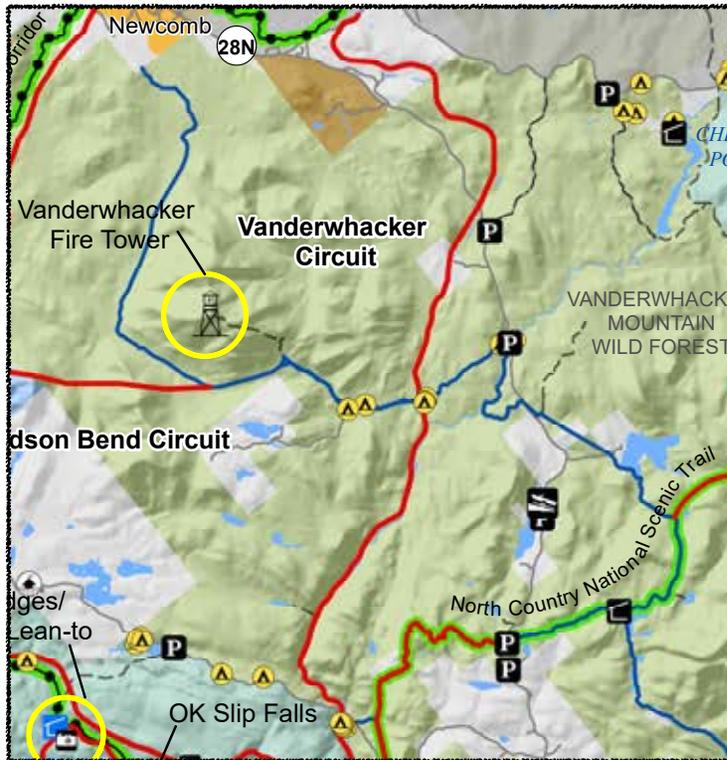
Stewardship: Design, construction and management of new trails and other infrastructure, such as proposed lean-to near Blue Ledges, must safeguard *Wild and Scenic* character of Hudson River. Protection of rare, unique and exemplary natural communities along Hudson River corridor, including several calcareous ecosystems (which support many rare species), including cliffs at Blue Ledges and talus slope woodlands. If lean-to at Blue Ledges is developed, a full-time River Steward should be 'installed' to ensure proper use and protection of area.

Destination: Pack in the best sights the Hudson Gorge has to offer for a day-long or overnight hike / snowshoe to OK Slip Falls, Blue Ledges, Whortleberry Pond, Ross Pond, Carter Pond, and the Hudson River.

Partnerships: River Steward and related education opportunities could involve local communities, leveraging cooperation across the Five Towns. Could engage local guide services for interpretation of natural features along the way, and even photography or nature-writing sessions, based on the abundance of unique natural features accessible along this loop.

The **OK Slip Falls Loop** enhances access to one of the best-loved backcountry destinations in the Adirondacks, by closing a circuit from existing trails, and potentially building a lean-to at the unique Blue Ledges. As one of the most ecologically unique and sensitive locations in the Great South Woods, our strategy **recommends a careful and adaptively-managed balance between access and stewardship**, especially at Blue Ledges and along the south rim of the Hudson Gorge. Location and construction of proposed lean-to will require consideration of Wild and Scenic River designation guidelines and/or modification of SLMP Wilderness regulations.

Map 2 ► Minerva-North Hudson Vanderwhacker Circuit



The **Vanderwhacker Circuit** is a 35.4-mile ‘double loop’ trail system - shaped like a slanted figure 8 - that creates alternative hiking approaches to the trail for the summit and fire tower at Vanderwhacker Mtn, provides access to multiple ponds and campsites, and connects Newcomb with the North Country National Scenic Trail (including proposed routes) and the Hudson Bend Circuit (proposed), which follows the Hudson corridor. Mountain biking courses could be developed at points along the circuit, and the central segment of new trail could be developed on old rail bed for multi-purpose uses. Not including the missing sections of NCNST, 12.7 miles of this circuit needs construction, but this proposed new trail will also support the creation of the Hudson Bend Circuit, bringing hikers to the north rim of Hudson Gorge.

Access: New loop in-and-out of Newcomb through Vanderwhacker Wild Forest; or a thru-hike to Minerva via to-be-constructed segments of NCNST. Circuit’s southern loop passes by Hewitt Pond, Stony Pond and 29th Pond.

Connectivity: Newcomb to Minerva using planned segment of NCNST; shares east stretch of Hudson Bend Circuit along Boreas River.

Stewardship: Camping opportunities to be developed along Boreas. Keep in mind the designated and protected status of this stretch of river. Junction signs at middle of circuit, and where circuit joins with NCNST from existing trail and at the Boreas River area. Requires bridge or careful crossing of Boreas River. Signage needed at trail junctions.

Destination: Opportunities to overnight in the middle of the circuit and at the NCNST junction. Multiple parking options along the circuit. Great hiking all along the circuit, and potential for mountain biking (requires further design and development).

Partnerships: Almost 13 miles need to be constructed, same stretch as the Hudson River Circuit along the Boreas River. East leg could be constructed for biking on old railroad bed, supporting bike rentals/pick-up/drop-off out of North Creek, Newcomb, or Minerva.

Map 2 ► Minerva-North Hudson Severance Hill Circuit



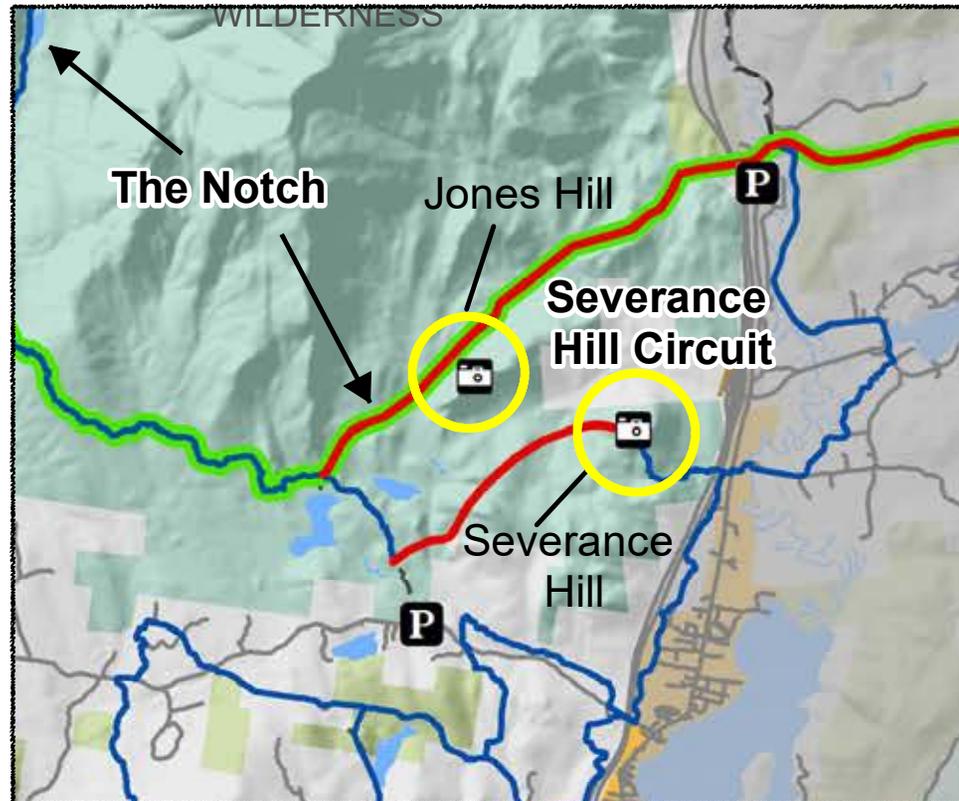
Access: Loop hike over Severance Hill, between North and Big Ponds, and back past the shoulder of Jones Hill. Circuit runs through Hammond Notch Wilderness, an area with few trails particularly on its east half, using the proposed route for the North Country National Scenic Trail. Potential to develop bushwack up Jones Hill. Accessible from Dirgy lot.

Connectivity: Circuit based in Schroon Lake; connects via The Notch (proposed) to Blue Ridge Rd (near Elk Lake turnoff and Buffalo farm) between North Hudson and Newcomb.

Stewardship: Monitor impacts if trail(s) are developed to ascend Jones Hill; carefully design and construct new trails through Wilderness; need junction signs where circuit intersects with NCNST and The Notch.

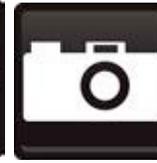
Destination: A wilderness day hike in and out of Schroon Lake that packs in scenic views and backcountry ponds.

Partnerships: Requires significant design and construction which may be done in conjunction with local partners in Schroon Lake and Paradox.

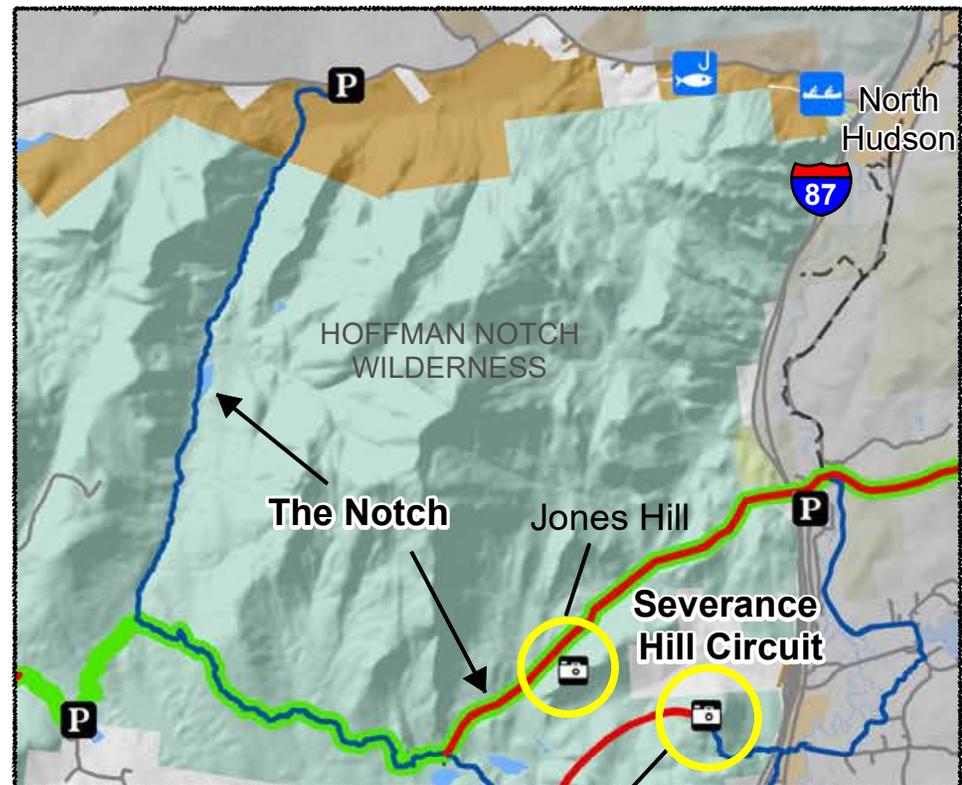


Severance Hill Circuit is a 13.8 mile loop in and out of the north end of Schroon Lake through Hoffman Notch Wilderness. Starting at the Dirgy Lot parking and traveling outside of GSW, this loop crosses the Schroon River in the northeast. Using a snowmobile trail to turn south, this loop meets up with the western shore of Paradox Lake before arriving at the Severance Hill trailhead. The trail then heads into Wilderness and ascends to a scenic viewpoint on Severance Hill, then requires new trail to join Big Pond trail, and turns east on the NCNST back to Dirgy Lot parking. Side attractions along the Severance Hill Circuit include fishing in Schroon River, Paradox Lake, North and Big Ponds, and a bushwack up Jones Hill. Multi-modal option to paddle down the Schroon River and avoid most of the snowmobile trail, then hike the remainder of the loop.

Map 2 ► Minerva-North Hudson The Notch



The Notch is a 14.5-mile backcountry traverse through the actual 'Notch' in the Hoffman Notch Wilderness area, using mostly existing trails and a planned 6.6-mile section of the NCNST that has not been constructed, but could provide access to scenic views on Jones Hill. The Notch traverse can be accessed via Hoffman Notch Brook parking or the Dirgy Lot parking, a short drive from North Hudson or Newcomb. The Notch connects to the Severance Hill Circuit, allowing the traverse to detour into Schroon Lake and Paradox Lake. This is a rather long day hike with options for overnight camping that follows 'leave-no-trace' regulations in Wilderness.



Access: Extends existing trail through Hoffman Notch Wilderness that passes Big Marsh Pond, past Jones Hill, and out near Schroon Lake, via proposed route for North Country National Scenic Trail. Additional spur trails could be built to Hoffman Mtn and Wyman Pond.

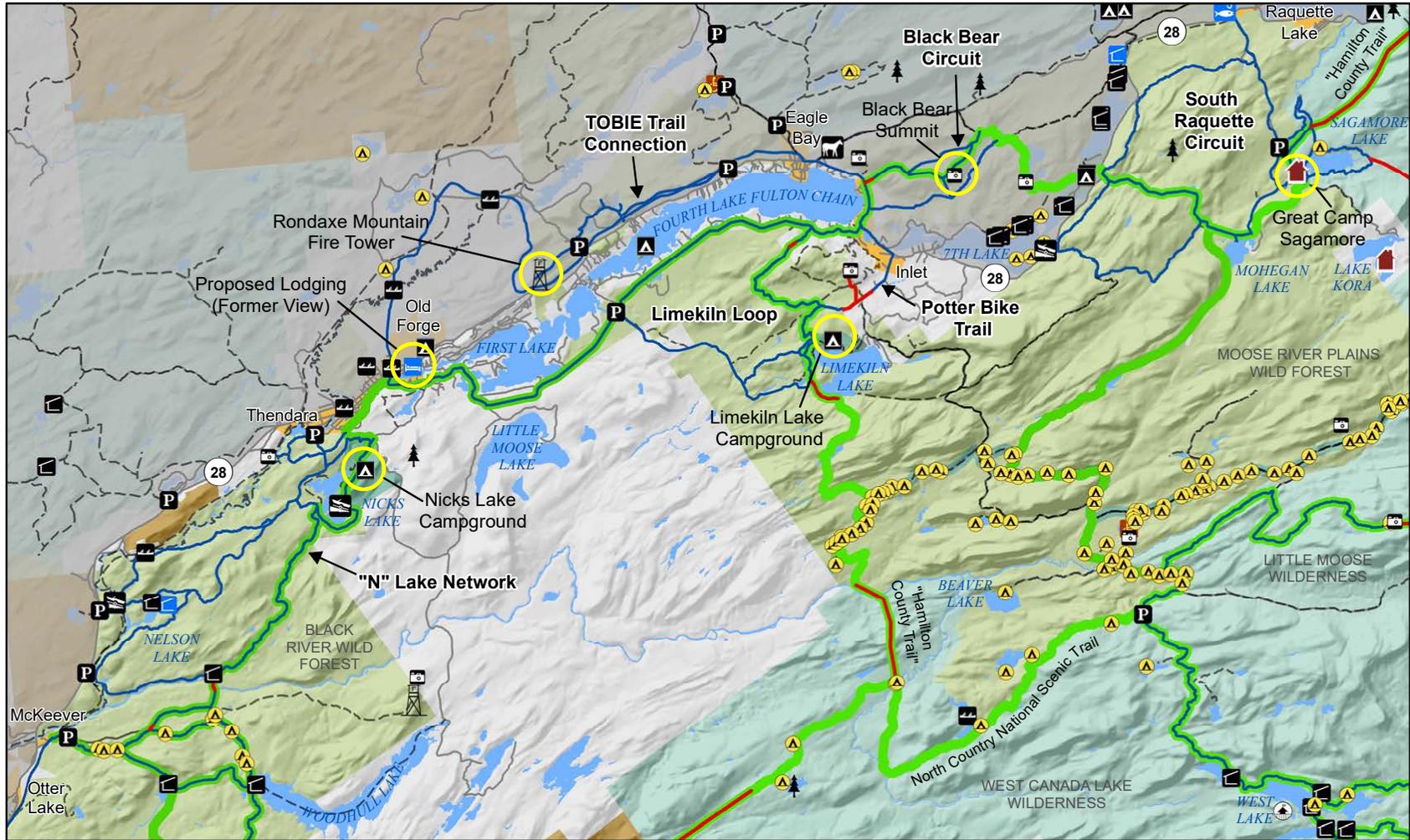
Connectivity: Circuit connects to Blue Ridge Rd (near Elk Lake turnoff and Buffalo farm) between North Hudson and Newcomb; with secondary connections to Schroon Lake and Paradox (via proposed Severance Hill Circuit).

Stewardship: Carefully locate new trails through Wilderness and potentially an overnight location; construct junction signs where feature intersects with NCNST and Severance Hill Circuit.

Destination: Bisect Hoffman Notch Wilderness, join NCNST, and exit near Schroon Lake. Parking is available at either terminus.

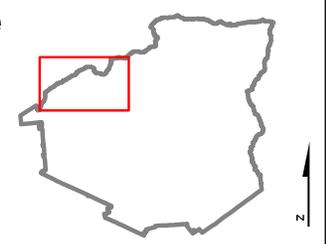
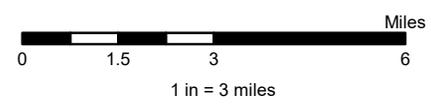
Partnerships: Just over 4 miles to construct, but those miles are part of the NCNST anyways; existing start from 28N passes through Boreas Ponds easement. Might benefit from a shuttle service, and a developed overnight location along the trail (none currently exist).

Map 3 ► Fulton Chain & Raquette Lake



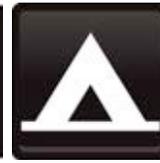
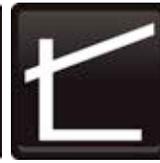
	ADA Accessible		Great Camp		Proposed Feature		Community
	Boat Launch		Historic Site		Local Network		Intensive Use
	Natural Feature		Horse Facility		Regional Network		State Administrative
	State Campground		Lean-to		Construction Required		Wild Forest
	Primitive Campsite		Paddling Access		DEC Trail		Wilderness
	Fire Tower		Road		Easement		
	Parking						
	Campground						
	Scenic Area						

Fulton Chain, Raquette Lake

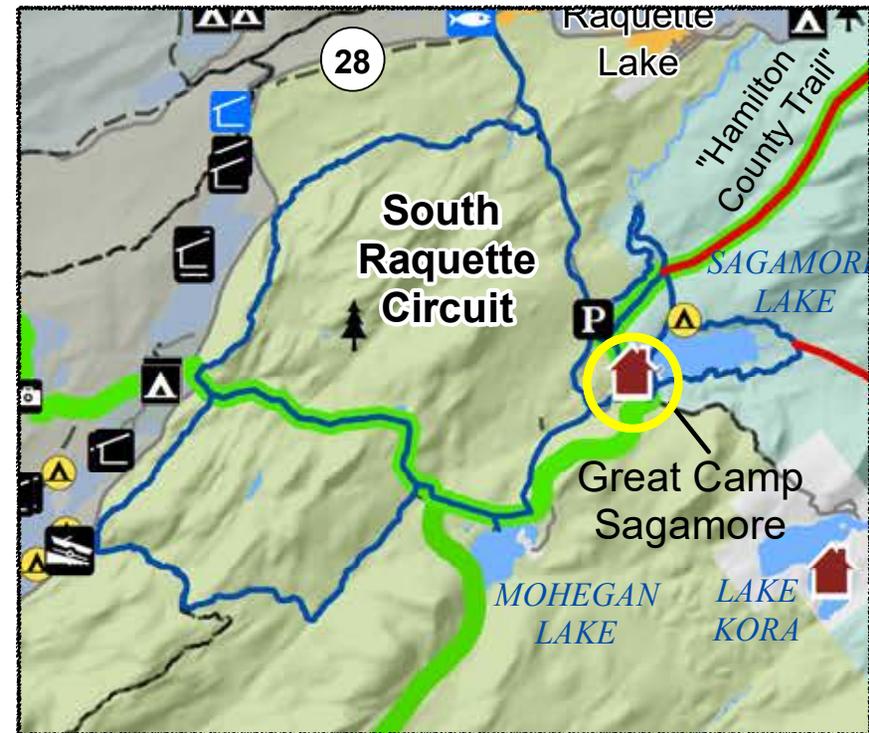


Map produced by the Great South Woods Project Team at the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry

Map 3 ► Fulton Chain South Raquette Circuit



The **South Raquette Circuit** highlights existing access to a historically and culturally rich region of the Great South Woods. The circuit is a 'triangle of opportunity,' including Raquette Lake, Great Camp Sagamore, and the Eighth Lake Public Campground. Consisting of 28.4 miles of multiple loop trail options, this circuit supports multiple uses, including biking on the unpaved road from the hamlet of Raquette Lake to Great Camp Sagamore, and Mohegan Lake, and continuing to the Eighth Lake Campground via the Old Uncas Road. Bikers may complete a loop by continuing north along Rt. 28 returning to Raquette Lake. This offers campers at the Eighth Lake Campground the opportunity to experience one of the Adirondack's legendary Great Camps with a relatively easy biking daytrip similar to the Lake Harris Campground - Great Camp Santanoni bike trip. Hikers can use the Great Camp Sagamore trail system which includes a scenic loop trail around Sagamore Lake.



Access: Existing circuit is now connected with regional network, including to-be-built sections of Hamilton Co Trail (proposed). At least one campsite on Eighth Lake is ADA accessible. Southwestern loop might be developed further for mountain biking or groomed ski trails.

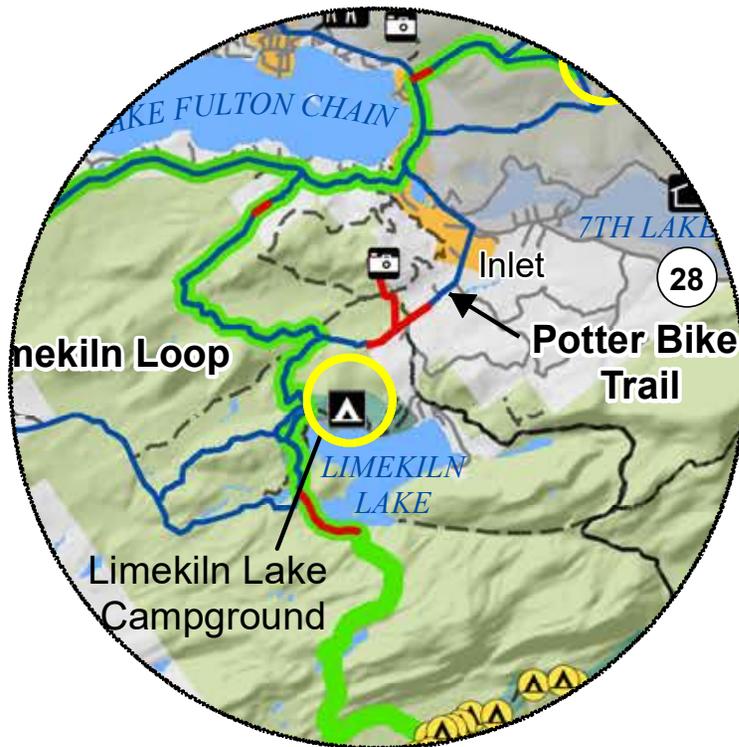
Connectivity: Multiple loops linking Eighth Lake camping opportunities to Great Camp Sagamore and the village of Raquette Lake. Circuit is bisected by Hamilton County Trail (proposed) which connects Long Lake with Fulton Chain area. This circuit also helps to link Hamilton Co Trail with village of Raquette Lake and DEC-proposed fishing area near the hamlet.

Stewardship: Special management considerations across the network, part on Wild Forest and part Wilderness, and passes through balsam flats exemplary natural community near Great Camp Sagamore. Junction signs needed with Hamilton County Trail (proposed).

Destination: From camp on Eighth Lake, trek through Wild Forest to Mohegan Lake, visit Great Camp Sagamore on Sagamore Lake, and return along a new path through wild forests. Overnights at 8th Lake (campsites, campground), also at Sagamore Lake (one is ADA).

Partnerships: Raquette Lake and Great Camp Sagamore can promote this existing circuit, which has flexibility of potential uses. Potential opportunity to travel loop on NYS 28 and a portion of this network between 8th Lake and Raquette Lake, half-marathon distance.

Map 3 ► Fulton Chain Potter Bike Trail



Access: New trail segments close circuit and provide access to scenic view on hilltop, via spur trail up to 4th Lake Lookout.

Connectivity: Uses part of South Shore Rd, snowmobile trails (also Hamilton County Trail), and the start of the Black Fly Challenge trail out of Inlet. Junction with Limekiln Loop Trail (proposed).

Stewardship: Field-validate suitability of snowmobile trails for biking, assess potential impacts on wetland areas. Bike tracks may need to be established to connect main loop with portion of Hamilton Co Trail (proposed) that runs south to Limekiln Lake Campground. Install bike-washing stations for invasives and junction signage at trail crossings. Foot traffic on shared portions of route may require alternative tracks for hikers.

Destination: Bike from camp on Limekiln Lake along wooded trails to Fulton Chain scenic views and good eats in Inlet, then follow the circuit back to camp. Suitable for beginner/intermediate bikers (and families). Needs to be designed to ensure high-quality mountain biking experience.

Partnerships: Just over a mile of construction to close the circuit, some of which is located on private land, requiring negotiation with landowners; potential to organize mountain bike trail stewardship organization, and coordinate with bike rental businesses in Inlet (likely already using this area) and Old Forge. Design specialized trails for advanced bikers.

The **Potter Bike Trail** is a 7.73 mile mountain bike loop that originates in the hamlet of Inlet and encircles Fern Park, a popular community recreation area. The Trail takes advantage of existing roads and trails, only requiring 1.78 miles of newly constructed trail. Spur trail affords a view at 4th Lake Overlook. Potter Bike Trail links to the TOBIE, which is also bike-able around the Fulton Chain of Lakes. Bikes can be rented from the local outfitter in Inlet.

Map 3 ► Fulton Chain Black Bear Circuit



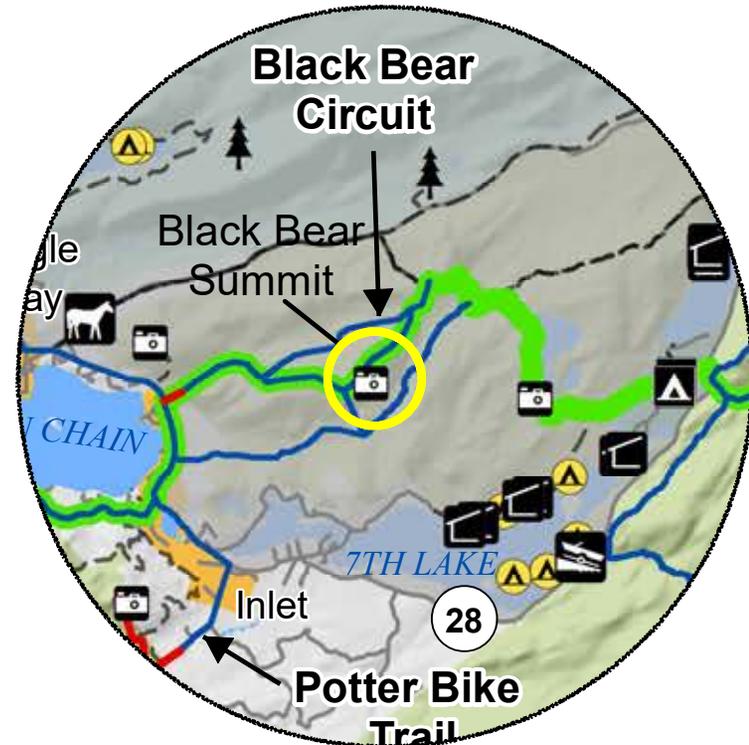
Access: Small trail network offers hikers / skiers multiple alternative routes up a summit that is a traditional family favorite in the Fulton Chain area.

Connectivity: Hamilton County Trail (proposed) runs up and over Black Bear's summit. To the east, HamCo provides a route from the Black Bear Circuit into 7th Lake Campground (overnight option) and onto the South Raquette Circuit. To the west, HamCo grounds this circuit in Inlet, with the TOBIE Connection, Potter Bike Trail, and Limekiln Lake Loops.

Stewardship: Needs assessment to identify suitable segments for skiing (portions already marked/designated). Clear signage would be important to understand the circuit and hiking options.

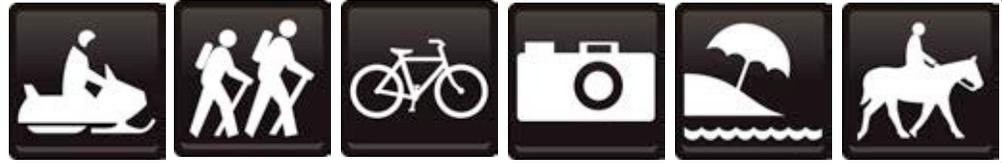
Destination: 'Choose your own adventure to the top' with multiple routes up and down Black Bear Summit, leaving directly from Inlet village. For more of a challenge, tack on the short hike up Rocky Point Mtn.

Partnerships: Education opportunity on summit; could encourage hikers to start from the Rocky Pt/Black Bear parking lot, head up the mountain, and back landing in the town center. Then they must walk Inlet's main street back to their vehicle, and have the opportunity to enjoy tourism amenities along the way (including public restrooms, department store, grocery, bakery, coffee, etc.).



Jump on the **Black Bear Circuit** (completely constructed) from the main streets of Inlet. Choose between 2 access points in town (approach of 1.9 or 2.3 mi), or start the trail from the Uncas Rd (approach is 1.4 mi), or even Eighth Lake Campgrounds (approach is 3.6 mi)-- all trails lead to the summit with views of Seventh Lake. On a clear day and a high rock, you might catch a glimpse of the High Peaks. Some trail segments are designated for skiing.

Map 3 ► Fulton Chain TOBIE Trail Connection



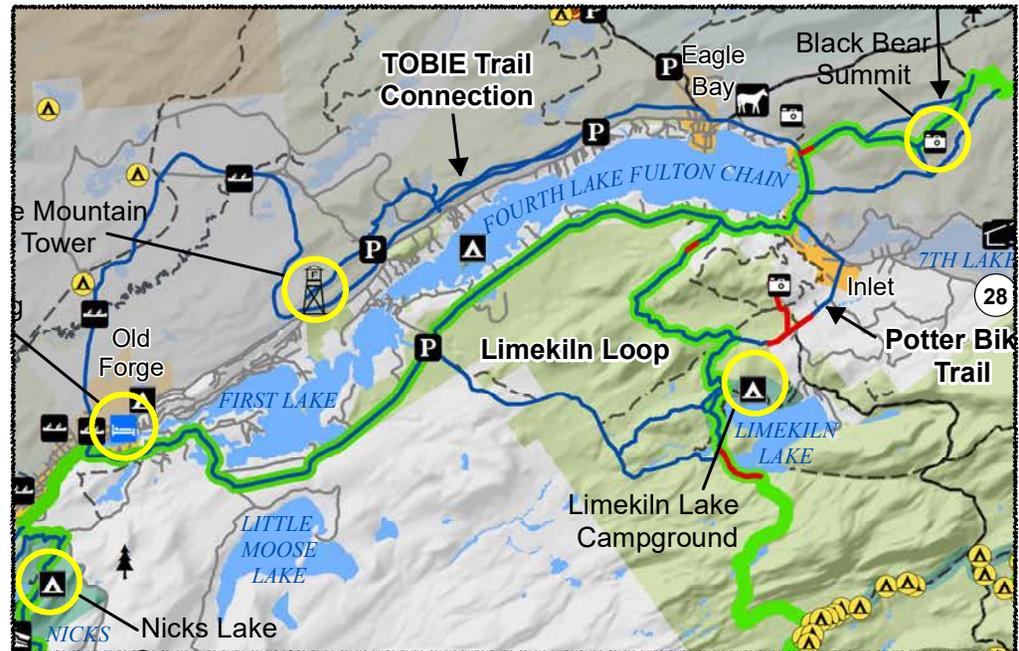
Access: Sections of TOBIE trail are well-known and widely used by locals and visitors - we highlight its potential as a circuit that connects front-country features and hamlets in the Fulton Chain area: e.g., the Scenic Mountain Trail, access to Mountain and Fly Ponds, Moose River, Siss and Bubb Lakes, Rondaxe/Bald Mtn, South Shore scenic views of Fulton Chain, Quiver and Twin Ponds.

Connectivity: Existing connection of Thendara, Old Forge, Big Moose, Inlet, and Eagle Bay. Overlaps with a section of the Hamilton County Trail (proposed) through Inlet, where it also links with the Potter Bike Trail, Limekiln Loop, and Black Bear Circuit.

Stewardship: Scenic Mountain Trail is often challenging to find and follow, better signage and interpretation could be helpful. Signage at Rondaxe could encourage users to head east instead up the Scenic Mountain Trail to reduce congestion on the popular Fire Tower trail. Requires management across 3 units and between 2 complexes.

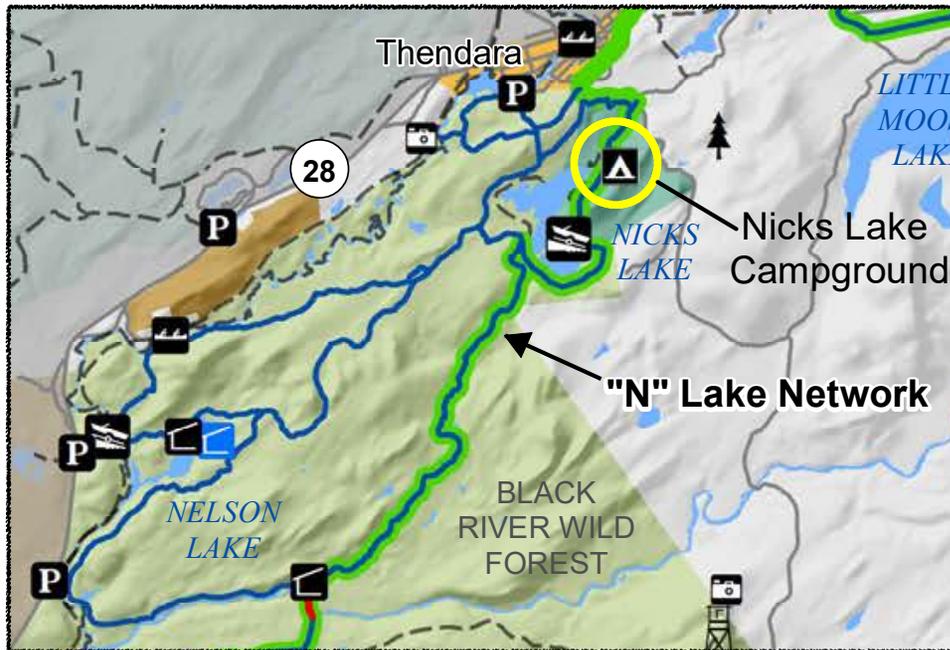
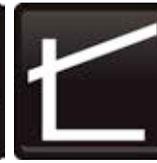
Destination: This trail is heavily used by locals for short walks, bike rides, runs, and snowmobiling. Can be divided into sections: road bike 28 and South Shore, hike from Bubb & Siss Parking up the Scenic Mountain Trail and to the Rondaxe Mtn. Parking, then back to your start along the TOBIE.

Partnerships: Opportunities to sponsor/maintain sections for specific uses; represents unity among 5 local communities that can be leveraged for events. Could offer scenic photography opportunities off South Shore at Quiver or Twin Pond -- easy access. Opportunity for "hike and beat your float" challenge, put-in to put-in on a stretch of the Moose River.



The **TOBIE Trail Connection** is a classic route north of the Lower Fulton Chain, but becomes a circuit by adding the South Shore Rd. It becomes even more appealing by connecting to the Scenic Mountain Trail/Vista Trail, which follows a ridge from Bubb & Siss Lake trailhead to the Rondaxe/Bald parking area -- making it easy to add this iconic fire tower summit onto the day's itinerary as well. All aspects of this 32.2 mile circuit are constructed, and support hiking, biking, dog walking, snowmobiling, scenic photography, and paddling where it crosses the North Branch of the Moose River. Take advantage of town amenities along the way, including bakeries, public restrooms, public beaches, and visitor centers.

Map 3 ► Fulton Chain “N” Lake Network



The “N” **Lake Network** envisions a 27.6 mile hiking experience from Nicks Lake to Nelson Lake and along the South and North Branch of the Moose River. Combine hiking and paddling along multiple loops, with many overnight options in the Black River Wild Forest including Nick’s Lake Campground.

Access: Existing foot and snowmobile trails featured as a network for hikers and bikers to access Nelson Lake, Nicks Lake and the Nicks Lake Campground via multiple pathways through Black River Wild Forest and along the Moose River. Proposed second lean-to on Nelson Lake.

Connectivity: Links Thendara and Old Forge with McKeever and Otter Lake via its connection with the Black River Loop trails (proposed, see Map 6), which require a proposed bridge over the Moose River.

Stewardship: Several segments are snowmobile trail that will need field validation and special management efforts to become suitable for hiking or biking. Additional paths / tracks may be desirable along certain segments. Invasive species education and boat washing stations at Nick’s Lake and Nelson Lake boat launches, at Nick’s Lake Campground, and at hand launch on Moose River. Primitive campsite or lean-to might be needed for overnight stay along Nick’s Lake Outlet Trail (via eastern leg from Nicks Lake down to Moose River). Signage required at internal junctions, directing to the Black River Loop, and through the Fulton Seventy to TOBIE.

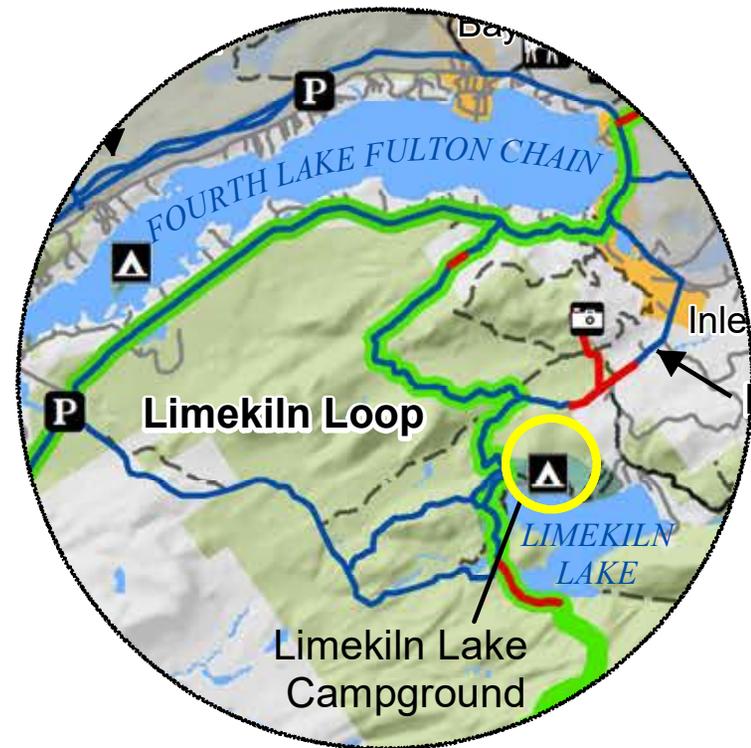
Destination: 3-5 days exploring lakes and remote reaches of the Moose River in Black River Wild Forest.

Partnerships: Potential to combine hiking and paddling stretches, with shuttles/outfitters provided by community.

Map 3 ► Fulton Chain Limekiln Loop Trail



The **Limekiln Loop Trail** runs along the South Shore Rd before heading southeast through the Fulton Chain Wild Forest to access Limekiln Lake and Public Campground, before heading north and east into Inlet, totaling 17 miles. A key trail connection of 0.6 miles needs to be constructed as the loop heads north into Inlet (same section as Potter Bike Trail). This loop offers a smaller day-loop option from the Campground around ponds to the west of Limekiln Lake. Biking and hiking multi-modal opportunity takes advantage of town roads and the Potter Bike Trail, and the potential to provide and shuttle bikes from the Campground.



Access: Fern Park, Inlet, Scenic South Shore Rd, Limekiln Lake and Campground. The 'new' element is hiking access out of Inlet (alternatively one can drive to the campground)

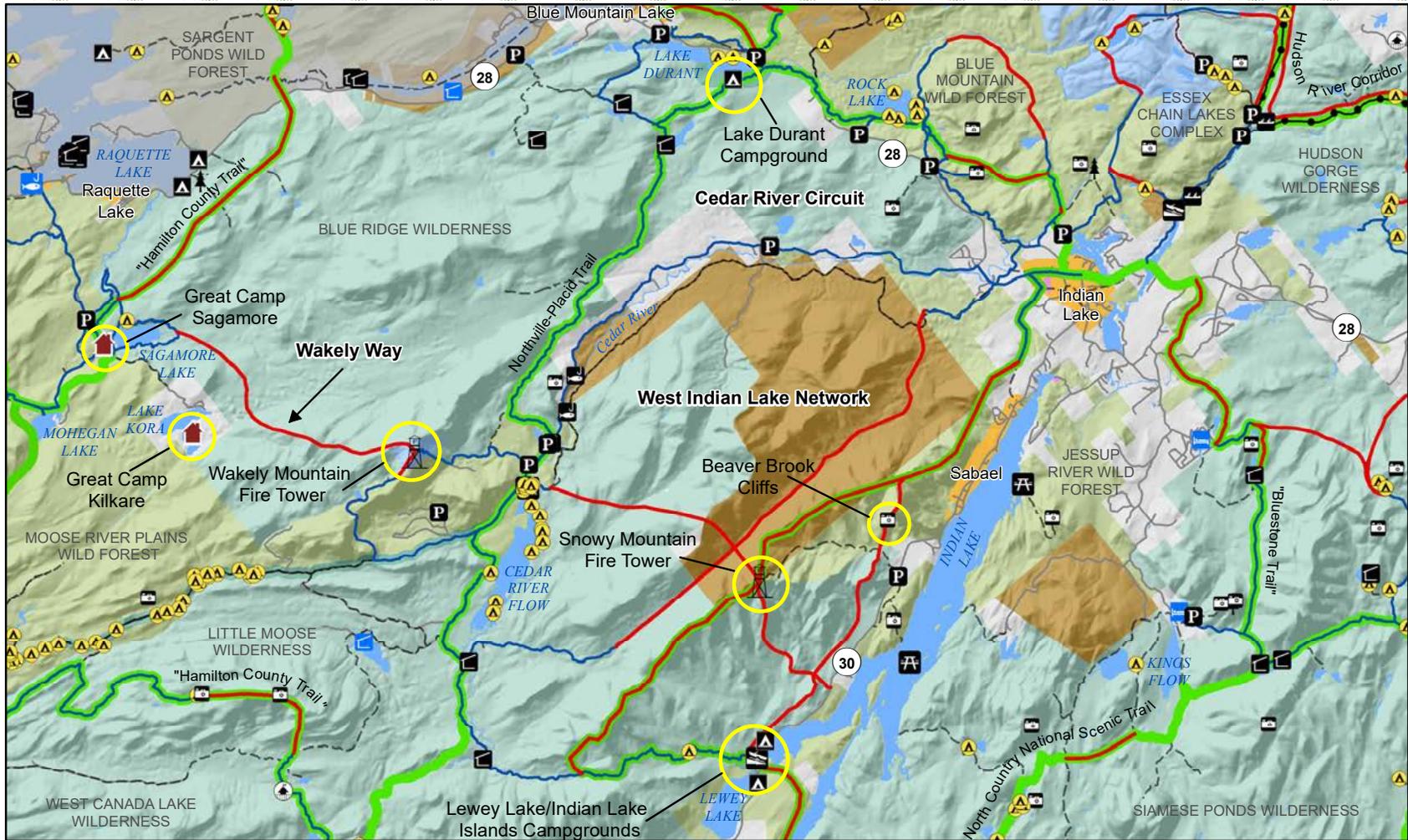
Connectivity: Uses part of HamCo, Potter Bike Trail, TOBIE trail system.

Stewardship: Construction of new trail, signage off of TOBIE and HamCo, marking internal loop options.

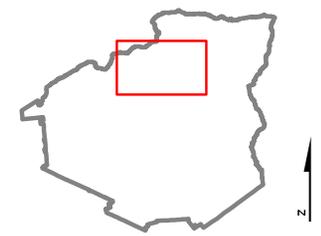
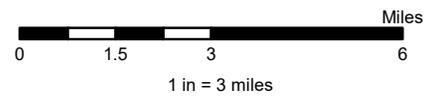
Destination: Can combine activities: road biking on South Shore, Mtn. Biking Potter Bike Trail, hike the rest through the Campground (or rest for the night) and back to South Shore.

Partnerships: Small section (0.64) to construct connecting the loop between the campground and Inlet (might involve private land). Campground could take more ownership of the loop, that's where hikers would likely stay or pass through. Shuttles or bike rentals could be provided to finish the TOBIE/South Shore section. Improved parking may be required out of Inlet.

Map 4 ► Indian Lake and Cedar River Flow



Indian Lake, Sabael

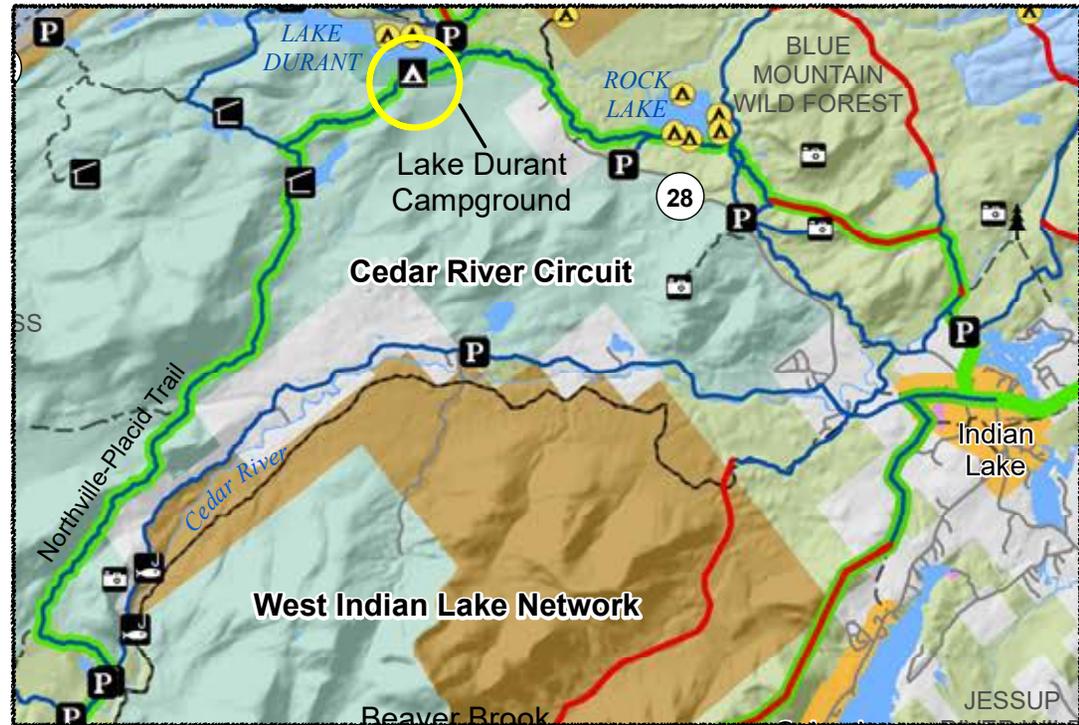


Map produced by the Great South Woods Project Team at the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry

Map 4 ► Indian Lake Cedar River Circuit



The **Cedar River Circuit** is a prime example of a multi-modal trail, leveraging 35 miles of existing trail from Lake Durant Campground to Indian Lake, along the Cedar River Road to Wakley Dam and back through Blue Ridge Wilderness along the Northville-Placid Trail. The unique appeal of this circuit is the opportunity to combine hiking and biking, with rental and shuttle support from Lake Durant Campground or Indian Lake. Side day trip options include Sawyer Mountain and Wakely Mountain (prominent fire tower mountain).



Access: Biking and hiking access in and out of Wakely Pond parking areas. Multiple parking/access opportunities along the circuit. Spur option bushwhack off circuit to Sugarloaf Mtn. scenic vista.

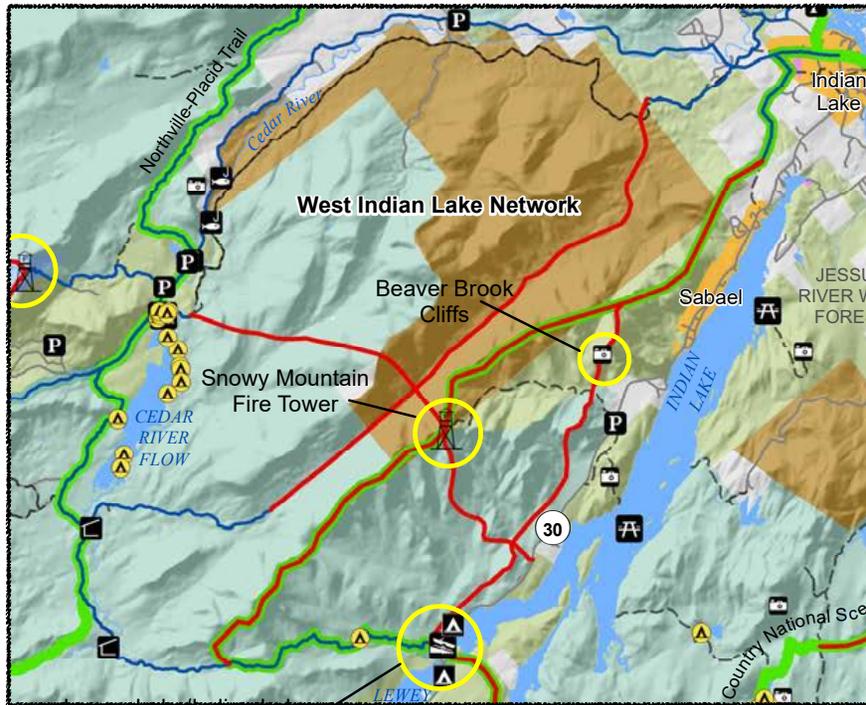
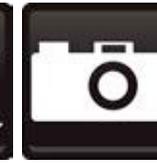
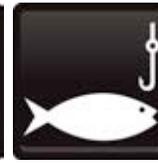
Connectivity: Blue Mtn Lake via Lake Durant Campground to Indian Lake, potential to end up in Inlet via Black Fly Challenge route. Uses stretch of NPT and Bluestone Trail (proposed).

Stewardship: Requires monitoring of bike impacts and potential 2-way bike/road traffic along Cedar River Rd. Bike security at drop points. Improve snowmobile trail from Lake Durant to Indian Lake to accommodate biking.

Destination: Multi-modal circuit potential starting from Lake Durant Campground: bike to Rock Lake and into Indian Lake, continue to Wakely Pond along Cedar River on Cedar River Rd, hike back through Blue Ridge Wilderness to Lake Durant Campground. Could be adventurous one-day opportunity, or multi-day staying overnight at Cedar River Flow campsites or pitch your own tent.

Partnerships: Portion of Black Fly Challenge (along Cedar River Rd). Great opportunity to store/rent bikes out of Lake Durant Campground or town of Indian Lake, offering pick up at Wakely Pond or Cedar River Flow and transport back to origin.

Map 4 ► Indian Lake West Indian Lake Network



The **West Indian Lake Network** totals 65 miles around and through the West Canada Lake Wilderness and DEC easement (Indian Lake Block, Township 33). This network is one of the more conceptual of the GSW Recommended features, requiring 9 miles constructed through the valley west of the Little Great Range, plus 7.3 miles constructed perpendicular to the valley stretching from Wakely Dam, over the Little Great Range, down to the Snowy Mountain parking area. 9.6 miles of new trail are required to avoid walking a stretch of Route 30 to complete the outer loop.

Access: Multiple loop options out of Indian Lake/Sabael and through West Canada Lake Wilderness and Jessup River Wild Forest, including Township 33 easement. Existing outer backcountry loop follows the Cedar River, passing Wakely Pond and Cedar River Flow, with a potential bushwhack up Sugarloaf Mtn. Multiple camping options along Cedar River and Flow, and at Lewey and Indian Lake campgrounds.

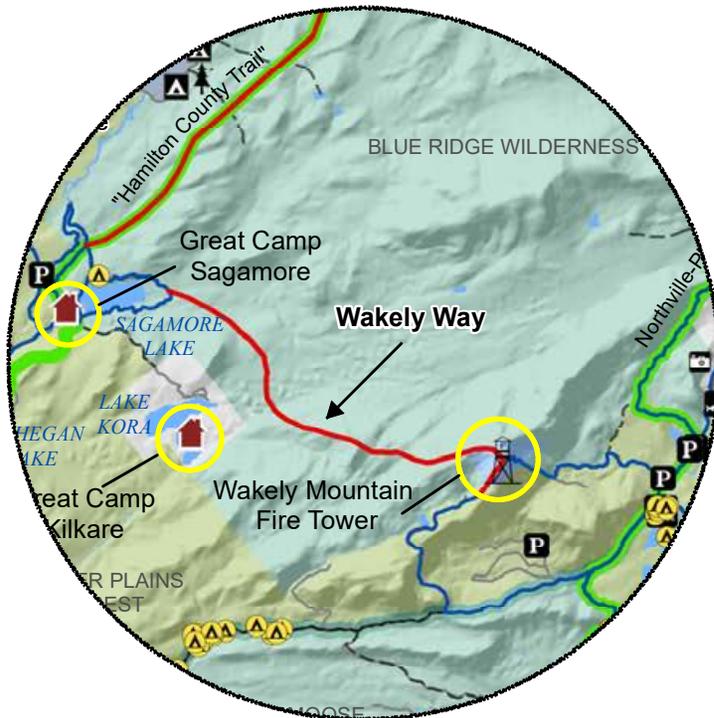
Connectivity: Provides several routes for connecting Indian Lake to NPT and Cedar River Flow area. Location of the proposed trail network creates connections to several local and regional routes.

Stewardship: Careful design and construction of trails on Wilderness and DEC Easement lands, particularly over the Little Great Range, with attention to sensitive plant communities and riparian habitats. Signage required at internal junction points, with the two Regional Networks, NPT, and to direct hikers off the network to Wakely Way (not shown). Overnight stay locations (campsites, lean-tos) may be required in easement.

Destination: Many different opportunities, including long-distance hiking of interior loops, bisecting the network over Snowy Mtn., rock climbing near Snowy Mtn., scenic Beaver Brook Cliffs, boat launches at Cedar River Flow and Indian Lake and an ADA hand launch at Wakely Pond.

Partnerships: Could become a significant attraction for hikers in the area, with Indian Lake as a home base. Approximately 40% needs to be constructed, mostly interior routes and on easement lands.

Map 4 ► Indian Lake Wakely Way



Wakely Way is a backcountry hiking experience through the Blue Ridge Wilderness. 5.6 miles of trail constructed through the Blue Ridge Wilderness links Wakely Mountain and the Sagamore area, providing access from the west to the fire tower and connecting two historic points of interest: Great Camp Sagamore and Wakely Mountain Fire Tower. By adding only 0.6 more miles of trail, and leveraging the existing Moose River Road Spur, hikers can enjoy a loop hike to Wakely Mountain's fire tower, taking in part of the Northville-Placid Trail along the way.

Access: 6 miles to-be-constructed connects the Wakely Mtn. Trail (made into a loop using old or to-be-closed roads) out of the Cedar River Flow area and into Sagamore Lake and Great Camp Sagamore trail system. Provides access to Wakely Mtn from new direction (out of Raquette Lake), and creates a loop hike up the mountain from the existing parking area.

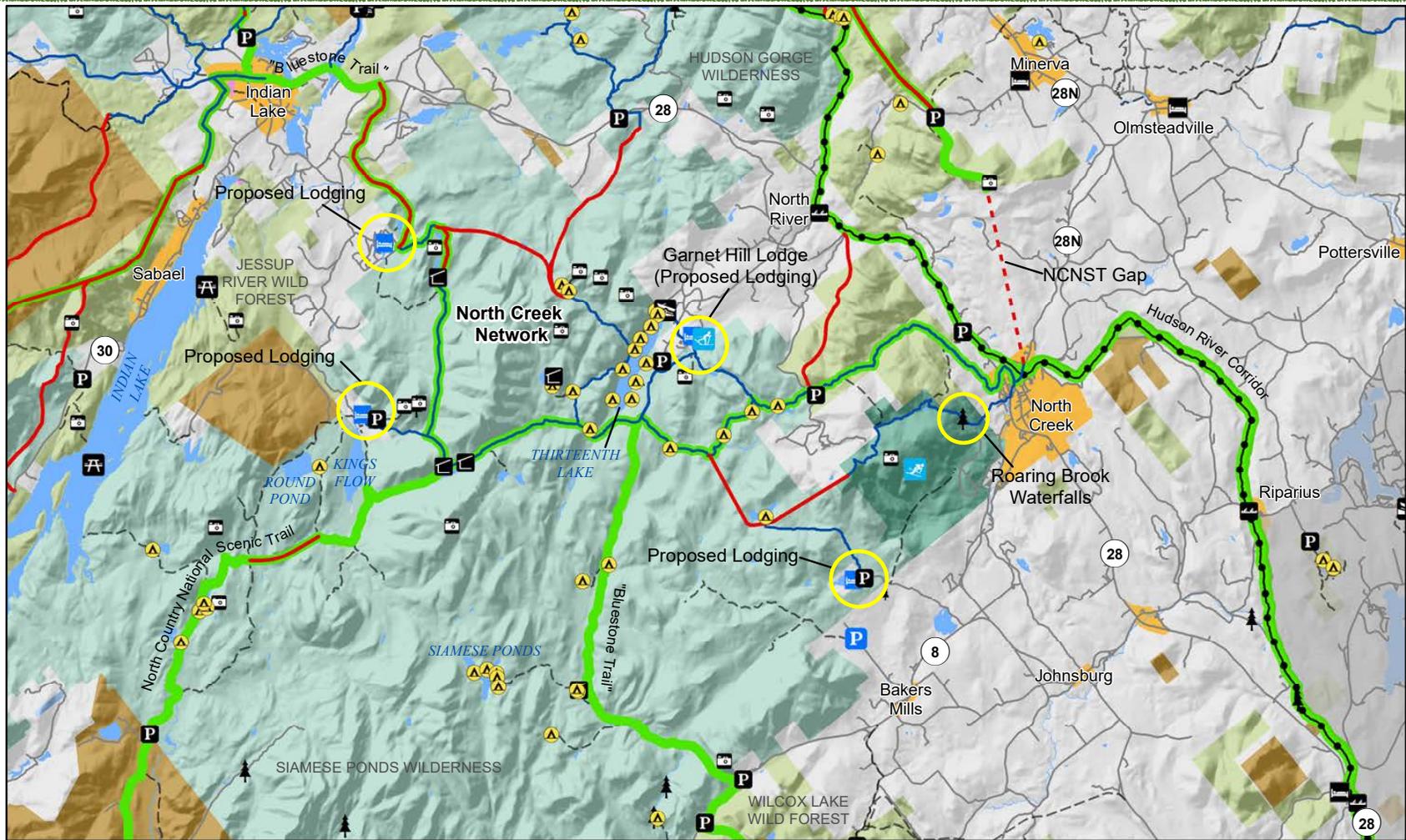
Connectivity: Serves as connector trail linking Sagamore / Raquette Lake area to NPT and Cedar River Flow campsites and fishing areas along Cedar River, which are connected via West Indian Lake Network (proposed) to the village of Indian Lake.

Stewardship: Trail design and construction should minimize disturbance to exemplary natural communities, including forested wetlands (balsam flats) located along proposed approximate route. Signage required at junction with West Indian Lake Network, South Raquette Circuit, Great Camp Sagamore and NPT. Directions required to follow the loop, to or thru-hike to Sagamore Lake and trail connections to the north and west. Wakely Mtn. summit has a fire tower and cabin and is a great location for natural and cultural interpretation.

Destination: Wakely has one of the tallest fire towers in the state, and is currently only accessed via many miles down Cedar River Rd with an out-and-back hike. A new access point and loop-option greatly increase the draw and potential challenge of this hiking destination.

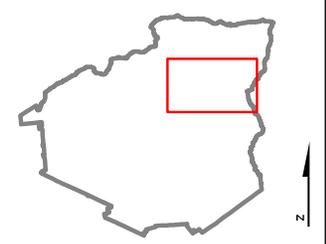
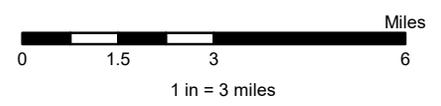
Partnerships: Several workshop participants suggested this type of connection. Partner with Great Camp Sagamore and NPT stewards.

Map 5 ► North Creek, North River, Indian Lake



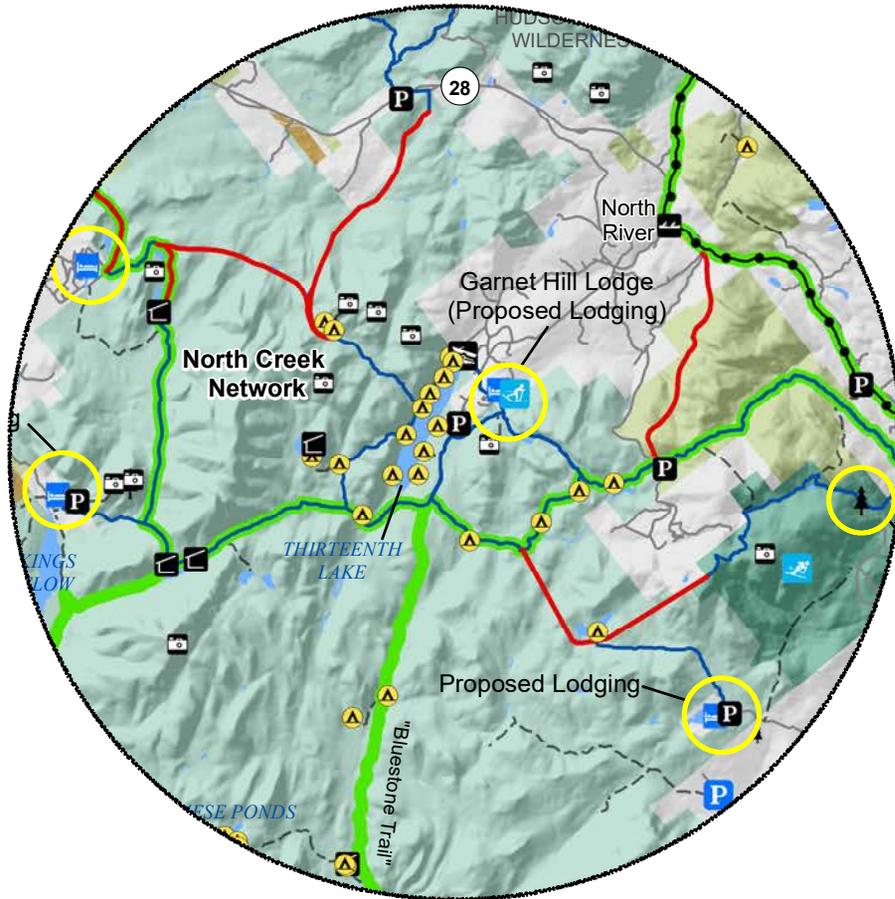
	Lodging		Downhill Ski Center		Local Network		Community
	Boat Launch		Historic Site		Regional Network		Intensive Use
	Natural Feature		Lean-to		Construction Required		Pending Classification
	Primitive Campsite		Paddling Access		DEC Trail		Primitive
	Cross-Country Ski Center		Parking		Road		State Administrative
	Day Use Area		Scenic Area				Wild Forest
			Proposed Feature				Wilderness
							Easement

North Creek, North River



Map produced by the Great South Woods Project Team at the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry

Map 5 ► North Creek North Creek Network



Access: Extends Schaefer Trail offering additional western loop; 13th Lake at its core; Out of Indian Lake: Kings Flow/Chimney Mtn, John Pond ridge; Out of North Creek: 13th Lake, Balm of Gilead Mtn, Peaked Pond/Mtn, Gore Mtn, Waterfalls along Roaring Brook; 23 camping opportunities across the network.

Connectivity: 3.24 miles of construction required to connect to North River, provides connecting route through Wilderness from North Creek/River to Indian Lake; Uses sections of NCNST, Bluestone Trail (proposed), meets the Hudson River Corridor; proposed hike/ski connector trail, starting at Peaked Mtn. Pond through Siamese Ponds to OK Slip Falls (red line).

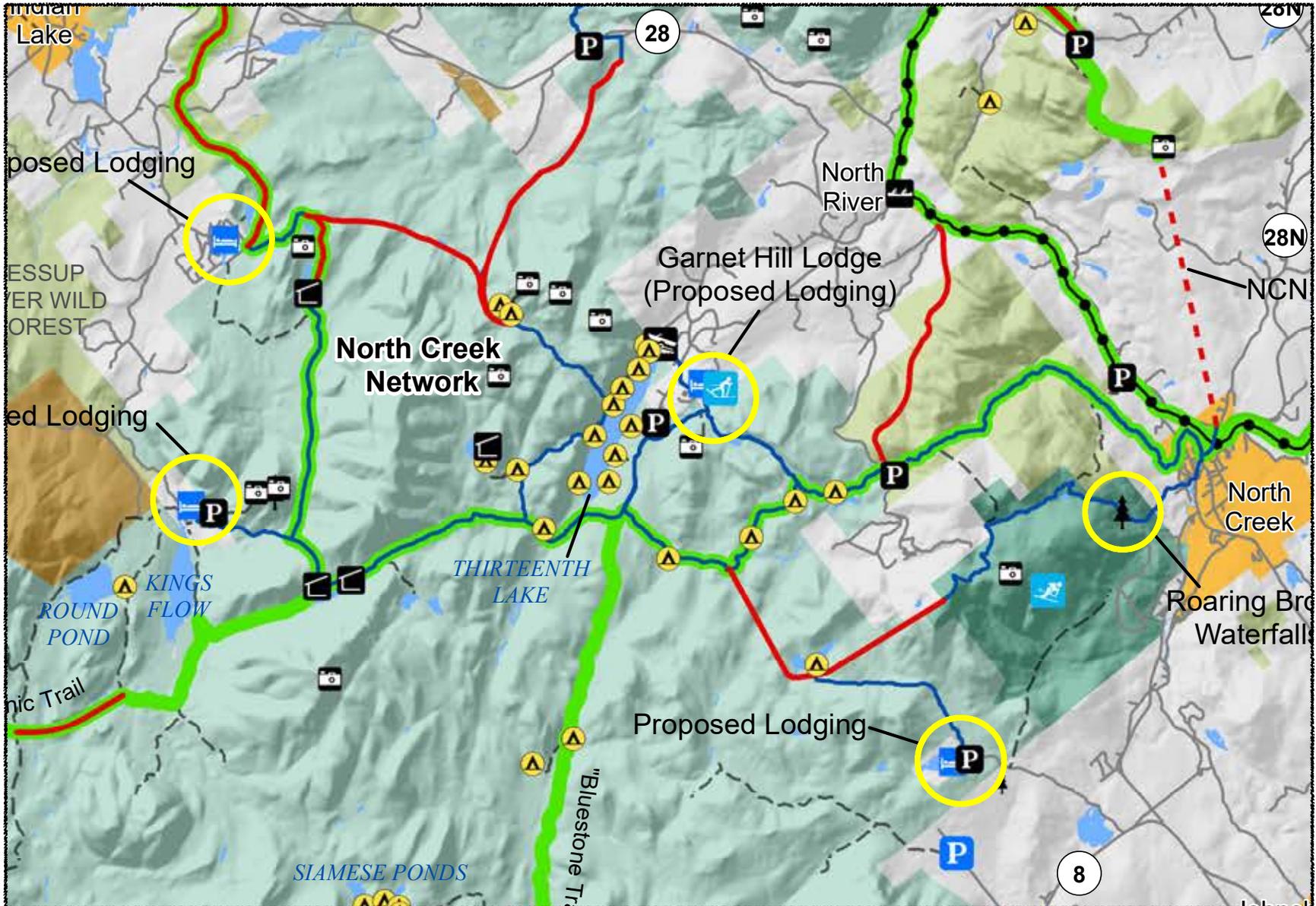
Stewardship: Caretakers at lodges/huts/backcountry lean-tos; monitor impact of common bushwhack trips; monitor usage and potential site deterioration at 13th Lake campsites.

Destination: A backcountry hub for winter and summer fun; multiple loops for hiking, some sections appropriate for XC ski; Potential hut-to-hut connecting North Creek to Indian Lake.

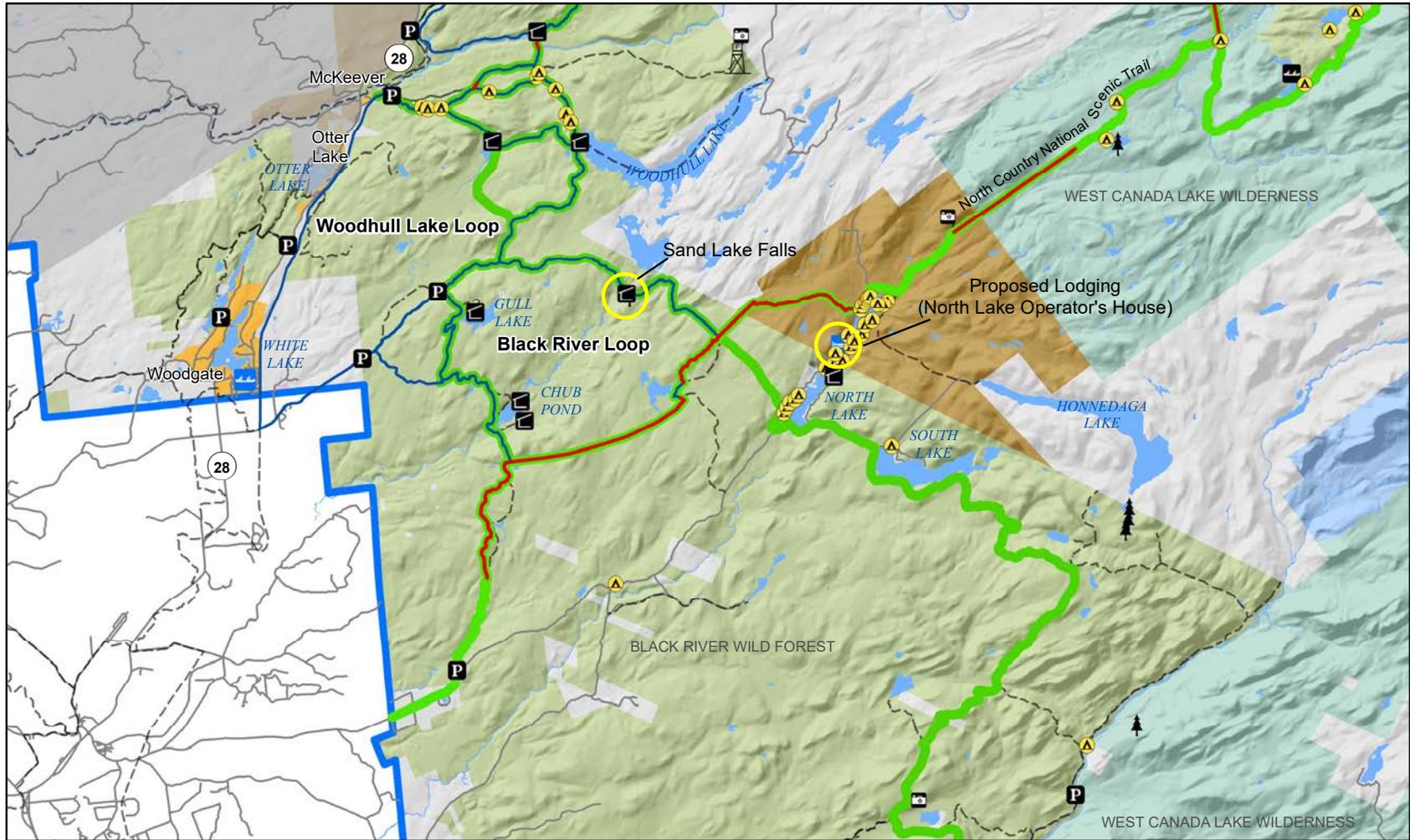
Partnerships: 24% needs construction to connect dead-ends and extend to new access points. Possible "hut-to-hut" opportunity leveraging Kings Flow and Garnet Hill and others for backcountry lodging, might involve a guide service; organize/guide hike and float adventures out of North Creek into various points of the network making use of lodging opportunities, then return to North Creek by floating down the Hudson (putting in at Indian River confluence).

North Creek Network access points include North River (3.5 miles of new trail needed to access the network), North Creek, and Indian Lake (with 4 miles of new trail needed to access the network and proposed lodging). This network features a hut-to-hut route using Garnet Hill Lodge and lodging at King's Flow (commercial structures exist, but arrangements need to be made), with shorter loop hikes around Thirteenth Lake with plenty of options to overnight at campsites. The North Country National Scenic Trail runs through the North Creek Network.

Map 5 ► North Creek Network (detailed zoom)

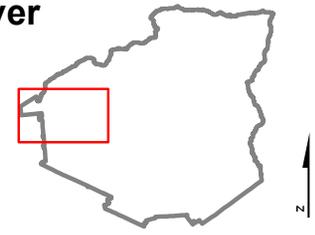
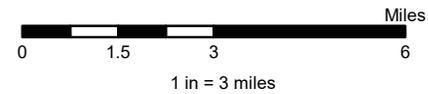


Map 6 ► Black River Wild Forest



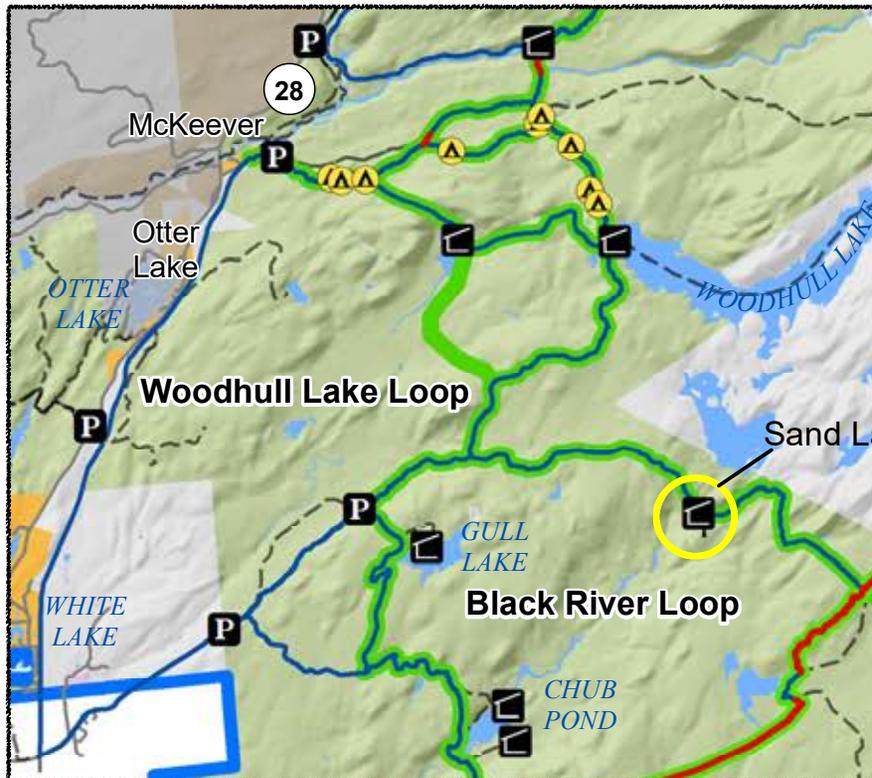
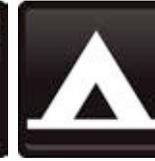
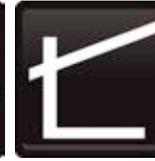
- | | | | |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Natural Feature | Lean-to | Local Network | Community |
| Primitive Campsite | Paddling Access | Regional Network | Pending Classification |
| Fire Tower | Parking | Construction Required | Primitive |
| | Scenic Area | DEC Trail | Wild Forest |
| | Proposed Feature | Road | Wilderness |
| | | | Easement |

Woodgate, Otter Lake, McKeever



Map produced by the Great South Woods Project Team at the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry

Map 6 ► Black River Woodhull Lake Loop



Access: Tour along McKeever, Otter Lake, Woodgate, and Woodhull Lake.

Connectivity: This feature provides connections with the proposed Black River Loop, Fulton Seventy, McKeever-Morehouse Connector, “N” Lake Network, and includes a portion just outside the Blue Line.

Stewardship: To use snowmobile trails for other purposes requires field-validation, else this is a one-way snowmobile loop. Junction signs required at intersections with Black River Loop, and directing users over to “N” Lake Network.

Destination: A 21-mile snowmobile loop along three communities and several waterbodies, including Woodhull Lake, which can provide a summer destination for biking, lakeside camping and hiking.

Partnerships: all completed/existing. Likely is or could be managed by local snowmobile chapters. Possible to collaborate between user groups for maintenance and management of use. Existing proposal to purchase portions of BSA Camp Russell to improve access to White Lake and Otter Lakes.

The **Woodhull Lake Loop** is primarily a 21-mile snowmobile circuit. However, this circuit could be a suitable loop for biking opportunities that directly connects Woodgate, Otter Lake, and McKeever with accessible and scenic lean-tos and primitive campsites. This loop also connects with a spur trail to Woodhull Lake fire tower, one of the more remote fire tower mountains in the Adirondack Park, at roughly 15 miles round-trip.

Map 6 ► Black River Black River Loop



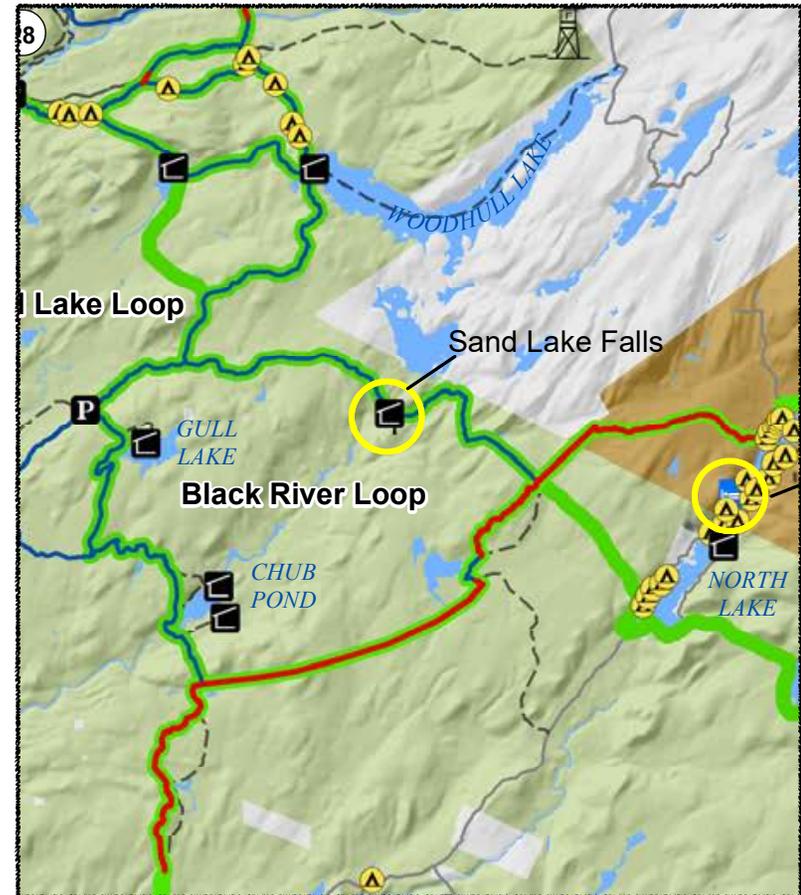
Access: New trail completes these loops, including Chub pond, Lily Lake, and Little Woodhull Lake as destinations along a series of unpaved roads and snowmobile trails that currently tour Bear Lake, Woodhull Lake, and Bloodsucker Pond. Many hiking trails in this area are in-and-outs, but this loop system connects many points of interests with overnight locations and other features.

Connectivity: Uses sections of NCNST and connects to Woodgate-Otter Lake, Fulton Seventy (Reg. Network), and “N” Lake Network via section to-be-constructed bridge over South Branch of the Moose River.

Stewardship: Bridge or crossing over South Moose River may be challenging to place. All contributing snowmobile trails need to be investigated for suitability as hiking trails. Signage required at NCNST overlap, at internal junctions, and directing users across the South Moose and onto the “N” Lake Networks.

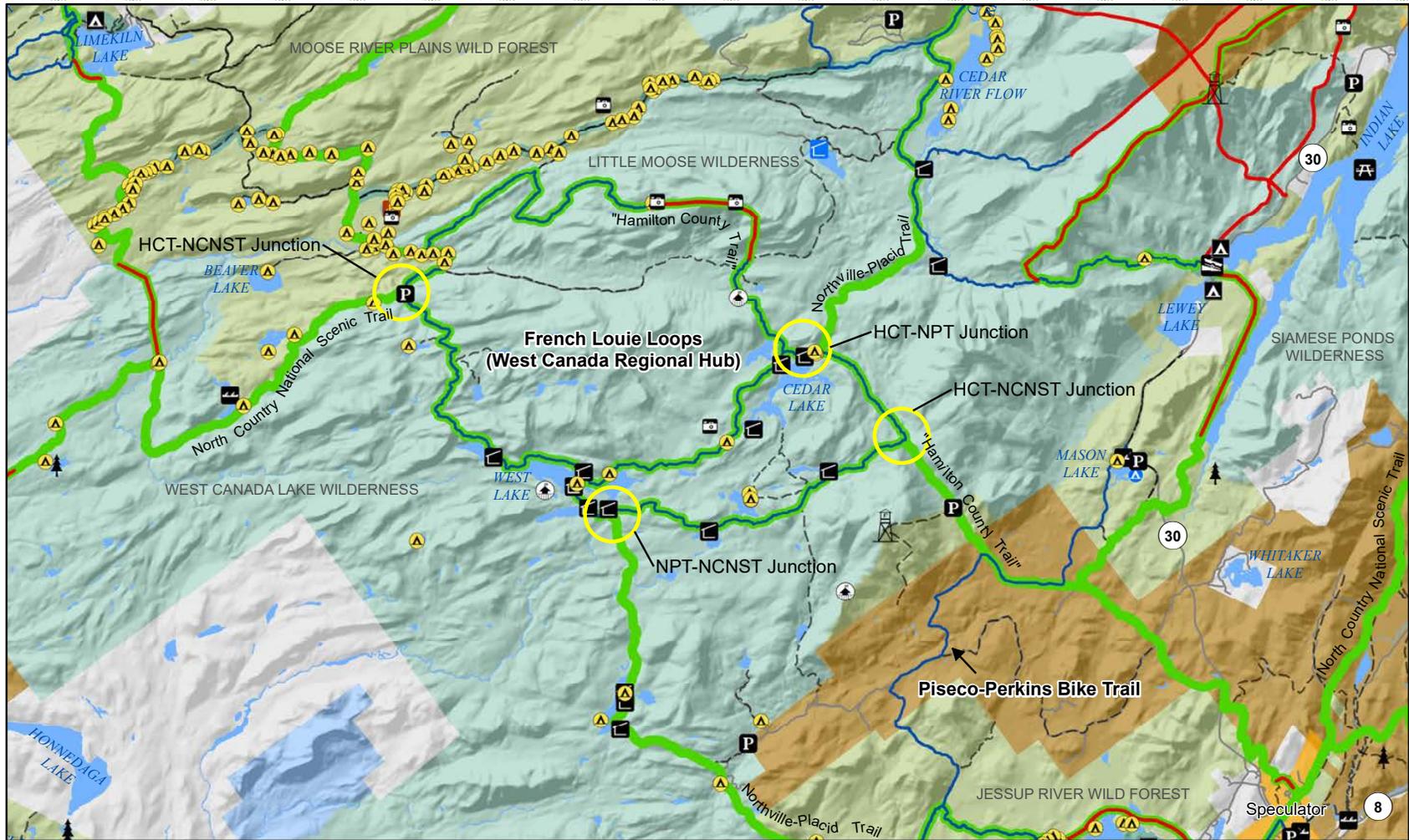
Destination: For solitude seekers, a backcountry tour of waterbodies; numerous loops and opportunities to 'get lost' in the Black River Wild Forest with lots of camping, especially on North Lake, as well as quiet lean-tos on remote ponds.

Partnerships: 16% (5.61 miles) needs to be constructed, most of which overlaps with construction required for NCNST. North end of the loop system takes users to Woodhull Mtn (has fire tower) -- can be uniquely reached by biking over old roads and flat trail, opportunity to provide bikes and transport out of local communities.



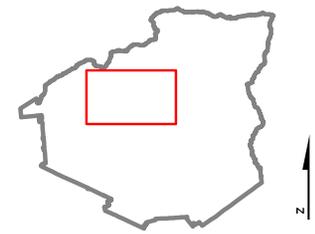
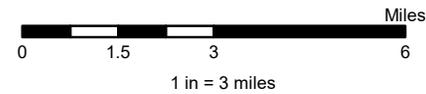
The **Black River Loop** links together a number of lakes and ponds, with access from the north out of McKeever and from the south out of Woodgate. This area generally attracts low visitor volumes and is an ideal location for hikers seeking solitude, with overnight opportunities at picturesque lake-side lean-tos on Gull Lake and Chub Pond. Many of these trail segments follow old forest roads or current snowmobile trails, and may be suitable for backcountry biking, such as the route from McKeever to Woodhull Lake and out to Woodgate via Bear Creek Road parking, or towards the spur trail to Woodhull Mountain fire tower.

Map 7 ► West Canada Lake Wilderness



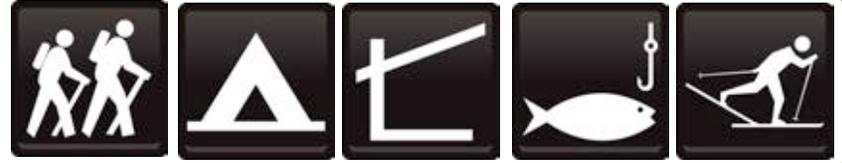
- | | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| ADA Accessible | Fire Tower | Local Network | Community |
| Boat Launch | Historic Site | Regional Network | Intensive Use |
| Natural Feature | Lean-to | Construction Required | Primitive |
| State Campground | Paddling Access | DEC Trail | Wild Forest |
| Primitive Campsite | Parking | Road | Wilderness |
| Day Use Area | Scenic Area | | Easement |
| Proposed Feature | | | |

West Canada Regional Hub



Map produced by the Great South Woods Project Team
at the State University of New York College of Environmental
Science and Forestry

Map 7 ► West Canada French Louie Loops



French Louie Loops is the ‘hub’ of the backcountry network where intersecting segments of the North Country National Scenic Trail, the Hamilton County Trail (proposed) and the Northville-Placid Trail form a pair of circuits. Nearly all (93%) of the French Louie trails exist -- and the gap to be filled in the Little Moose Wilderness could include scenic overlooks on Little Moose Mountain, mapped and suggested by Bill Ingersoll.

Access: Primarily hiking and backcountry skiing, multiple access points are possible via long-distance thru-hikes. Also accessible from the unpaved Cedar River Rd via <1 mile on the Sly Pond Loop Trail, offering an entry point for hikers uninterested in long-distance trips. The 40.4 trail-miles provide access to a dozen backcountry ponds and lakes, including Sly Pond, Cedar Lake and Brook-Trout Lake, as well as the scenic Little Moose Mtn, Cobble Hill, Old Skidder Historic Site and Cedar Lake Dam. Parking is available at the NCNST and HCT junction.

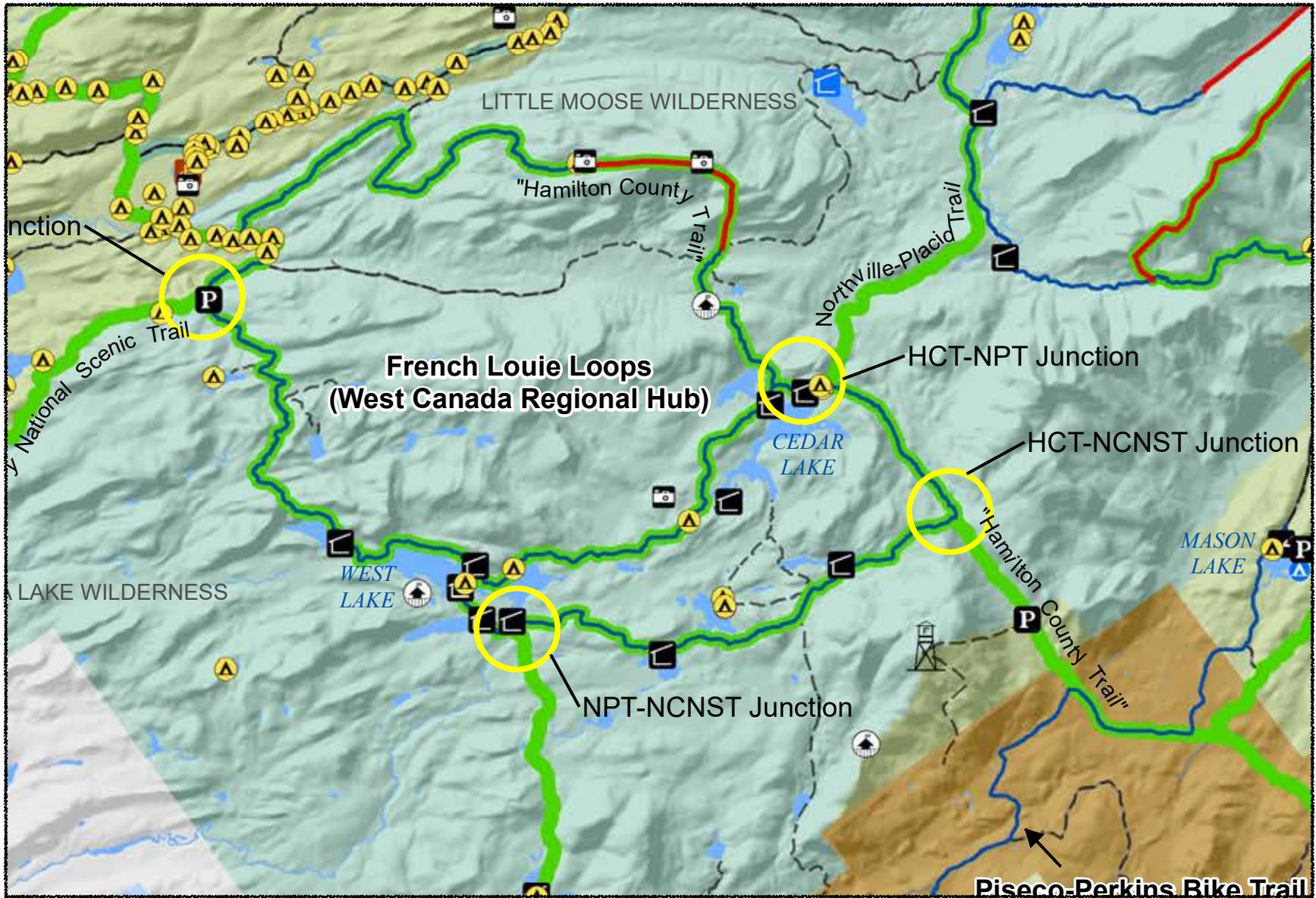
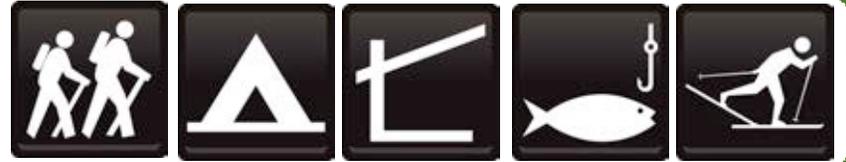
Connectivity: No direct connections to communities, but serves as the central hub of a network of long-distance routes and shorter connections that link the Fulton Chain area, the Piseco-Speculator area, and Indian Lake.

Stewardship: Additional signage and trail registers will be required, especially at the four junctions of the regional routes. The French Louie Loops pass through mature beech-maple forests and hemlock-hardwood swamps, but avoid sensitive wetlands in the West Canada Lakes, Moose River Plains, and Little Moose management units. New section of trail along ridgeline should be designed carefully to protect sensitive plant communities and for hiker safety. Trail junctions and nearby areas should be managed for greater foot traffic, erosion during mud season, and increased exposure to invasive species. Increased recreational traffic may have negative impacts on local wildlife.

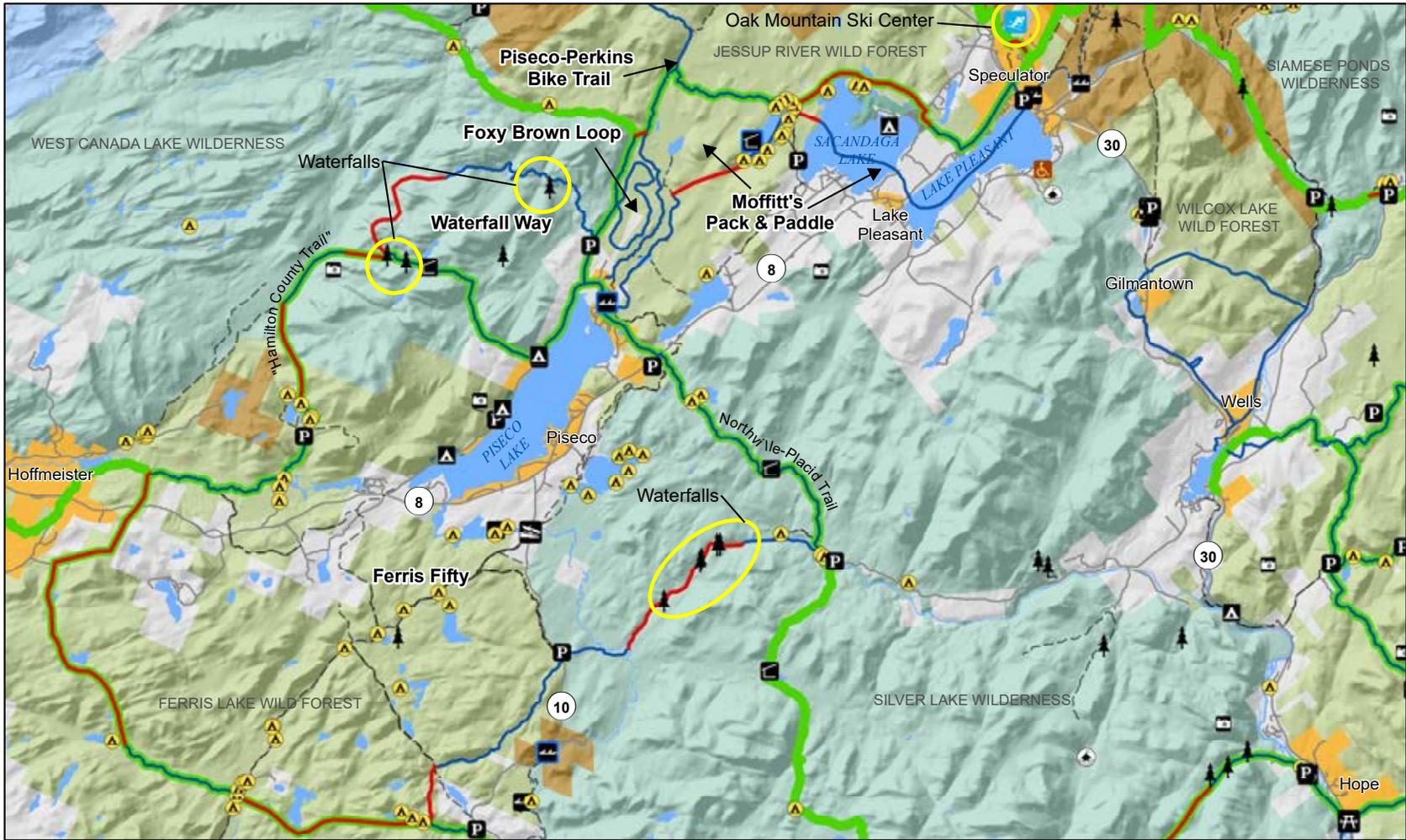
Destination: A multi-day, multi-option series of loops that provide unrivaled backcountry hiking, fishing and rustic camping opportunities, right at the doorstep of the Moose River Plains road system with over two dozen campsites available. Could become a popular pitstop with thru-hikers and a destination for day-trippers, weekend warriors, and outdoor education groups based out of camps and schools nearby.

Partnerships: Needs significant local and regional engagement for trail maintenance, backcountry stewardship and invasive species monitoring. Junctions could benefit from additional maps of points of interest.

Map 7 ► French Louie Loops (detailed zoom)

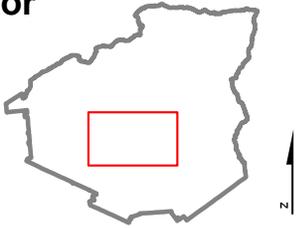
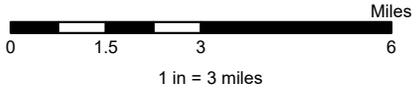


Map 8 ► Lake Pleasant, Piseco and Speculator



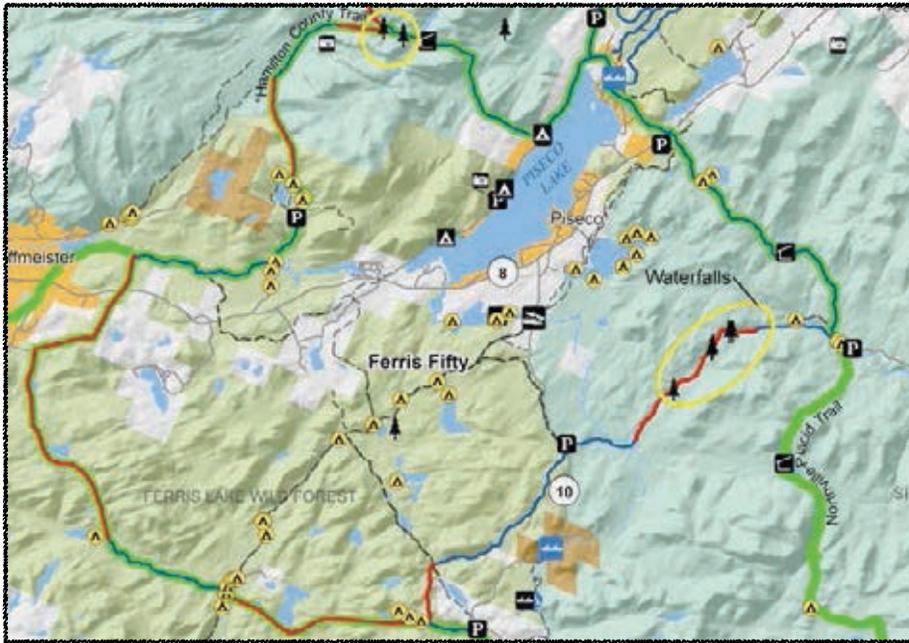
	ADA Accessible		Day Use Area		Proposed Feature		Community
	Lodging		Downhill Ski Center		Local Network		Intensive Use
	Boat Launch		Historic Site		Regional Network		Pending Classification
	Natural Feature		Lean-to		Construction Required		Primitive
	State Campground		Paddling Access		DEC Trail		State Administrative
	Primitive Campsite		Parking		Road		Wild Forest
	Scenic Area						Wilderness
							Easement

Lake Pleasant, Piseco, Speculator



Map produced by the Great South Woods Project Team at the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry

Map 8 ► Piseco-Speculator Ferris Fifty Circuit



Access: Links together several isolated trail segments, long-distance trails and backcountry points of interest in four DEC units.

Connectivity: Links Piseco and Hoffmeister by foot trail via HCT regional route (proposed). Connects at NPT-HCT junction with nearby features such as Moffitt's P&P, Foxy Brown Loop, Waterfall Way, etc.

Stewardship: Approximate routes intersect with mapped wetlands, requiring careful planning to minimize impacts. Trail segment in Silver Lake Wilderness along cascades will pose challenges. Additional signage and trail registers needed at access points and parking areas.

Destination: A backcountry hiking trip with unique natural and historic points of interest, with potential for mountain biking in Ferris Lake WF.

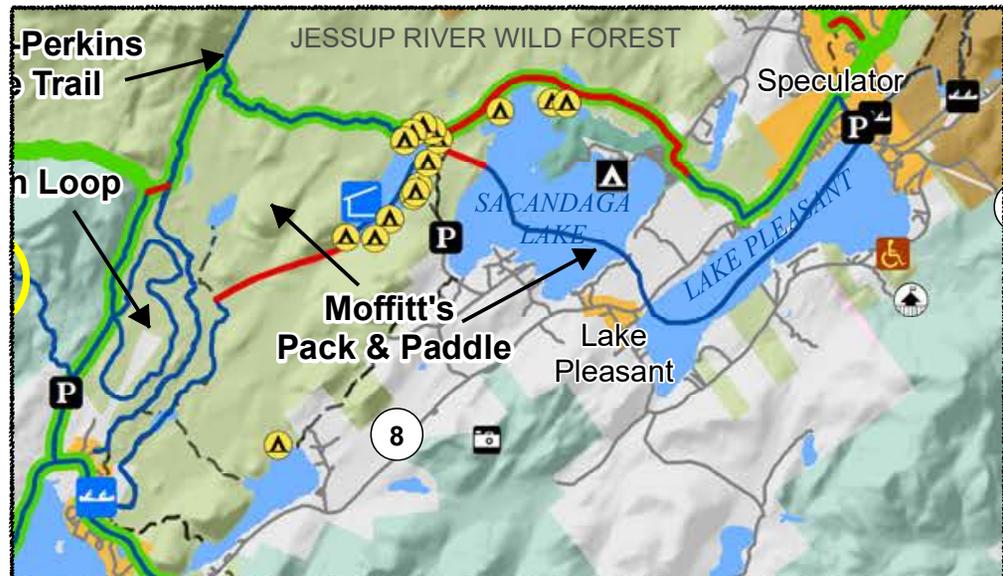
Partnerships: Could be developed as a trail run / ultra marathon to complement Piseco triathlon. Design and develop opportunities for specialized trails and infrastructure, especially for skiing and biking.

The **Ferris Fifty Circuit** is a 48.5-mile loop trail that incorporates sections of the Northville-Placid Trail, the Hamilton County Trail (proposed) and existing and proposed trail segments in Ferris Lake WF and Silver Lake Wilderness. Based in Piseco, the 6-8 day hiking trip features two sets of waterfalls (including T Lake Falls and a series of cascades currently inaccessible by trail), 26 primitive campsites (many situated on ponds and lakes), scenic views at Eagle Bluffs, the White House historical site (on NPT), and the DEC Poplar Point campground on Piseco Lake. Trail biking may be done on snowmobile trail sections during summer, and backcountry skiing on foot trail sections during winter. There is significant potential to develop more specialized infrastructure, especially for mountain biking, adjacent to sections of trail in Ferris Lake WF near Hoffmeister. Ferris Fifty can be accessed via trailheads on NYS Rt 8 and 10, as well as via regional trail routes (NPT, HCT). 17.5 miles of trail construction is needed to complete the circuit, based on approximate routes.

Map 8 ► Piseco-Speculator Moffitt's Pack-and-Paddle



Moffitt's Pack & Paddle is a 29-mile land-and-water circuit that combines hiking, flatwater boating and waterfront camping at both primitive sites and the Moffitt Campground on Sacandaga Lake. Paddlers begin at a proposed DEC hand launch in Piseco, up the navigable waterway through Fall Lake, then a 1.4-mile portage to primitive camping (and a proposed lean-to) along the shore of Fawn Lake. After a 0.5-mile portage to Sacandaga Lake, paddlers cross over the outlet flow into Lake Pleasant and head to Speculator. From town, heading west along the lake shore, hikers can either rest at Moffitt Campground or return to a primitive campsite at Fawn Lake. The rest of the trip follows the existing trail west through Jessup River WF, where it meets the Northville-Placid trail on the way to the starting point in Piseco. The Moffitt's P&P Circuit has several potential access points with parking areas in Piseco, near Fawn Lake and in the village of Speculator.



Access: Hiking access to Fawn Lake campsites from Speculator; foot trail linkage with Moffitt Campground; uses NPT segment near junction with Hamilton Co Trail (proposed).

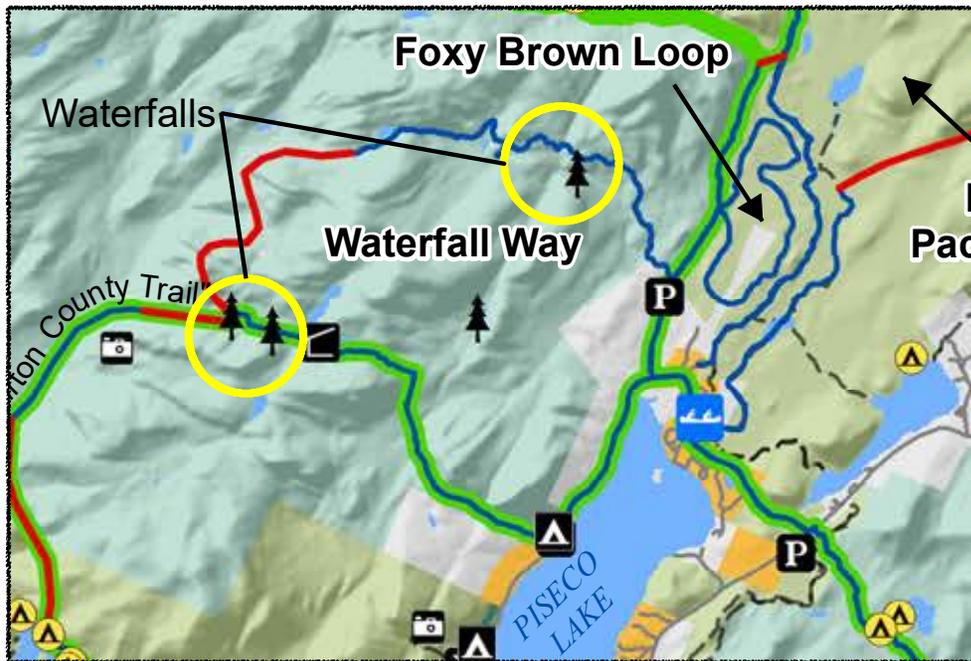
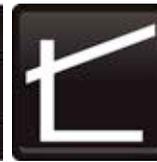
Connectivity: Links Piseco, Lake Pleasant and Speculator directly with adjacent Jessup River WF campsites and DEC campgrounds. Circuit located at junction of NPT and HCT regional routes.

Stewardship: Boat washing stations and aquatic invasive species education / mitigation at multiple access points; hand launches, campsites and trail segments on lake shores may require special management zones

Destination: 3-5 days of paddling, hiking and camping on the lakefront, with meals and lodging at halfway point in the historic village of Speculator.

Partnerships: Almost 6 miles of trail construction, including 1.5-mile portage. A local outfitter could help with boat rental, transport and storage. If portage is needed between Sacandaga Lake and Lake Pleasant, landowner permission(s) will need to be negotiated.

Map 8 ► Piseco-Speculator Waterfall Way



Waterfall Way is a 14-mile circuit that features a series of backcountry waterfalls, with a lean-to available near the popular T-Lake Falls. Can be a weekend trip leaving from Piseco -- or a scenic detour on a thru-hike (via NPT or HCT). By adding a 2.7-mile segment to connect the existing spur trail with the Hamilton County Trail route (proposed), the circuit brings hikers from the backcountry of West Canada Lakes Wilderness to the DEC Poplar Point Campground on the shore of Piseco Lake. In winter, the loop could be a challenging but rewarding excursion for nordic skiing and snowshoeing.

Access: Increases ease of access to waterfalls and scenic points of interest in southeastern West Canada Lakes Wilderness; provides day or overnight trip into the backcountry from DEC Poplar Point campground on Piseco Lake.

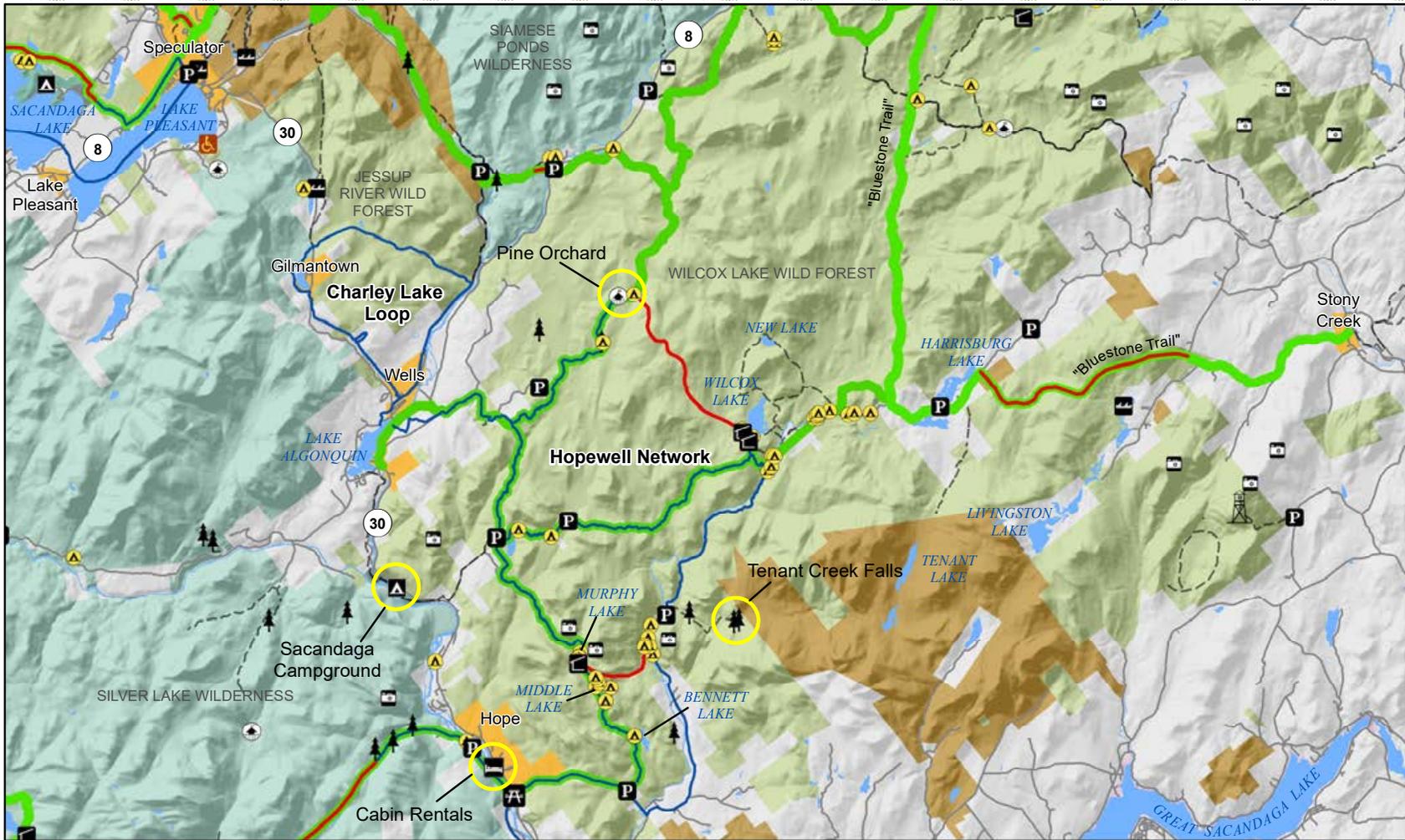
Connectivity: The circuit connects directly to the Village of Piseco and the town road along northwest shore of Piseco Lake. It is adjacent to the junction between the Northville-Placid Trail and the Hamilton County Trail (proposed), which provide connections to multiple other communities in the GSW complex.

Stewardship: Waterfalls and cascades involve sensitive riparian and headwater wetland habitats, and can also pose safety issues for hikers. Signage and other infrastructure, such as bridges and handrails, may be necessary. Trail passes through beech-maple mesic woods, and the proposed (approximate) routes may cross mapped wetlands, requiring careful trail design and construction. Depending on use intensity, an additional lean-to or primitive campsites may be needed. Signage and possibly trail registers needed at junction with NPT and Hamilton Co. Trail (proposed).

Destination: A challenging day-long or more relaxed weekend excursion from Piseco or the DEC Poplar Point Campground that takes hikers, snowshoers and nordic skiers along a series of backcountry waterfalls and cascades in the West Canada Lakes Wilderness.

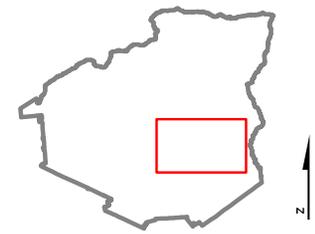
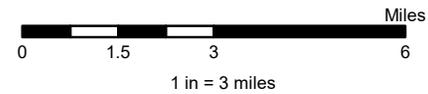
Partnerships: Trail design, construction and maintenance; potential guide opportunities; outdoor education / group excursions.

Map 9 ► Wells, Gilmantown, Hope, Stony Creek



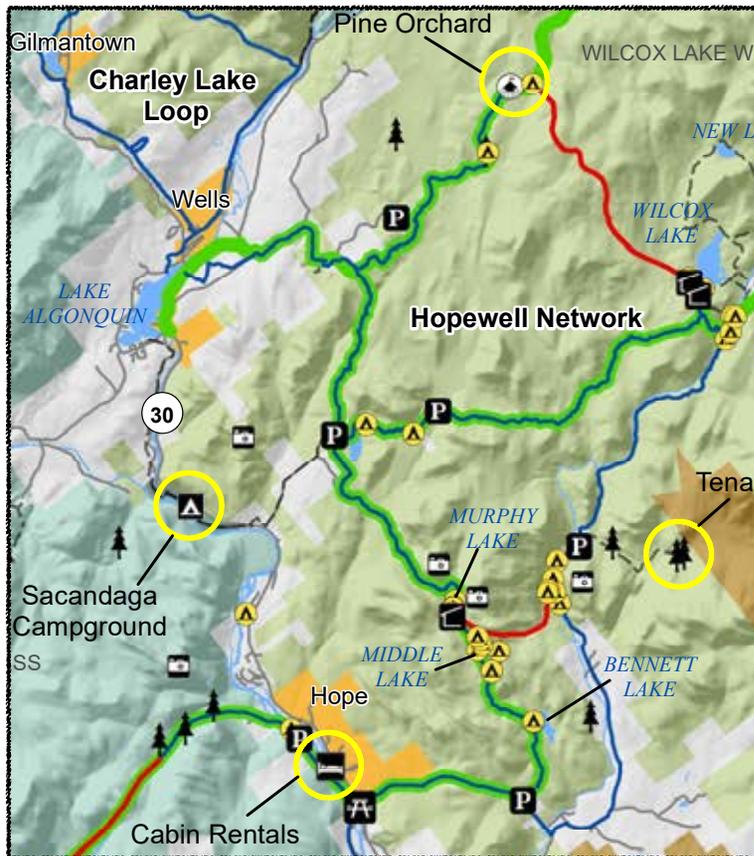
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|--|--------------------|--|------------------|--|-----------------------|--|------------------------|
| | ADA Accessible | | Fire Tower | | Local Network | | Community |
| | Lodging | | Historic Site | | Regional Network | | Intensive Use |
| | Natural Feature | | Lean-to | | Construction Required | | Pending Classification |
| | State Campground | | Paddling Access | | DEC Trail | | Primitive |
| | Primitive Campsite | | Parking | | Road | | Wild Forest |
| | Day Use Area | | Scenic Area | | | | Wilderness |
| | | | Proposed Feature | | | | Easement |

Hope, Wells



Map produced by the Great South Woods Project Team at the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry

Map 9 ► Wells & Hope Area Hopewell Network



Access: New trail segments create a loop from Pine Orchard to Wilcox Lake, and a shortcut from camping areas at East Stony Creek and Murphy Lake. These connections provide a shorter loop direct from Hope, and less out-and-back trails overall.

Connectivity: Links the communities of Wells and Hope directly, and Stony Creek indirectly by linking over to the Bluestone Trail (proposed) via Wells-Wilcox Circuit (regional network). West leg shared with Infinite South (regional network). Hope terminus links with Kallen Trek to the west.

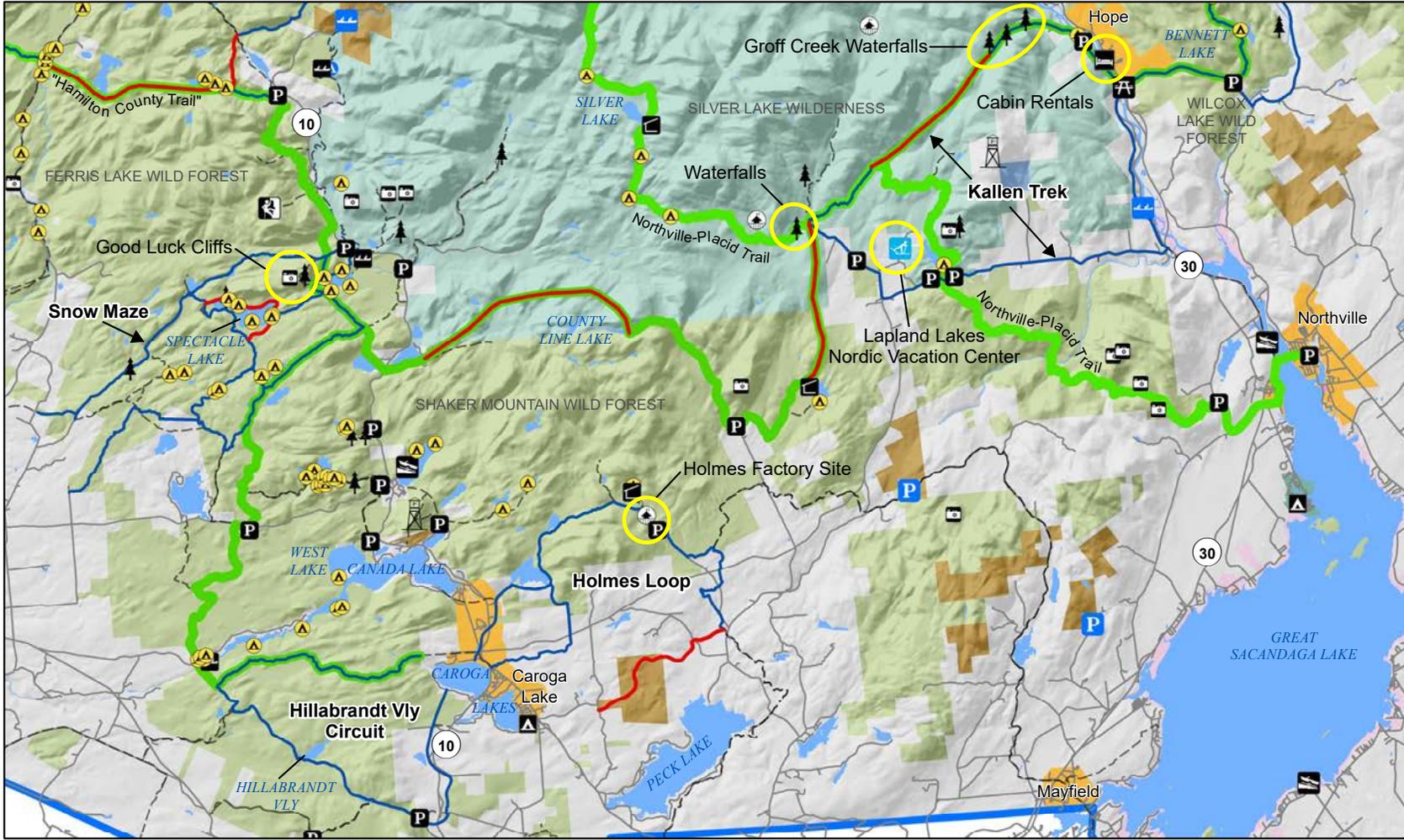
Stewardship: Signage at junctions with Wells-Wilcox Circuit and Kallen Trek; field-validate suitability of snowmobile sections for hiking (particularly access in from Wells, built for snowmobiles). Registers required in Hope (near picnic area) and Wells.

Destination: Network passes Lake Algonquin, visits Pine Orchard (old growth) then Wilcox Lake, follows East Stony Creek, with a side trip available toward easement to scenic waterfalls and Rand Mountain, then passes Bennet, Middle, and Murphy Lakes before Willis Lake where there is a spur trail to Moose Mtn. Lots of camping available near Wilcox, Murphy, Middle, Bennett Lakes and East Stony Creek.

Partnerships: Parking could be secured by each town (Hope and Wells). Two sections to be constructed are key to closing the loop (3.69 mi) and providing a shortcut in the loop (1.72 miles).

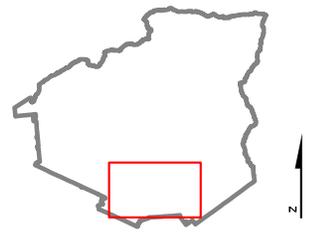
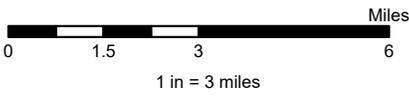
The 44-mile **Hopewell Network** offers a tour of lakes and natural features such as Pine Orchard and Tenant Creek Falls in the Wilcox Lake Wild Forest east of Hope and Wells. Instead of driving Route 30, travelers could opt to get out in the woods where few visitors venture and hike from Hope to Wells. This is not a day hike, but scenic lean-tos at Wilcox and Murphy Lakes welcome the overnight visitor. Constructing roughly 3 miles of trail through the Wild Forest provides a shortcut from Wilcox Lake to Pine Orchard. Visitors staying in Wells could also complete the Charley Lake Loop that runs around Gilmantown and Wells, following a stretch of the Sacandaga River, and connecting to the Hopewell Network near Lake Algonquin in Wells.

Map 10 ► Northville & Caroga Lake



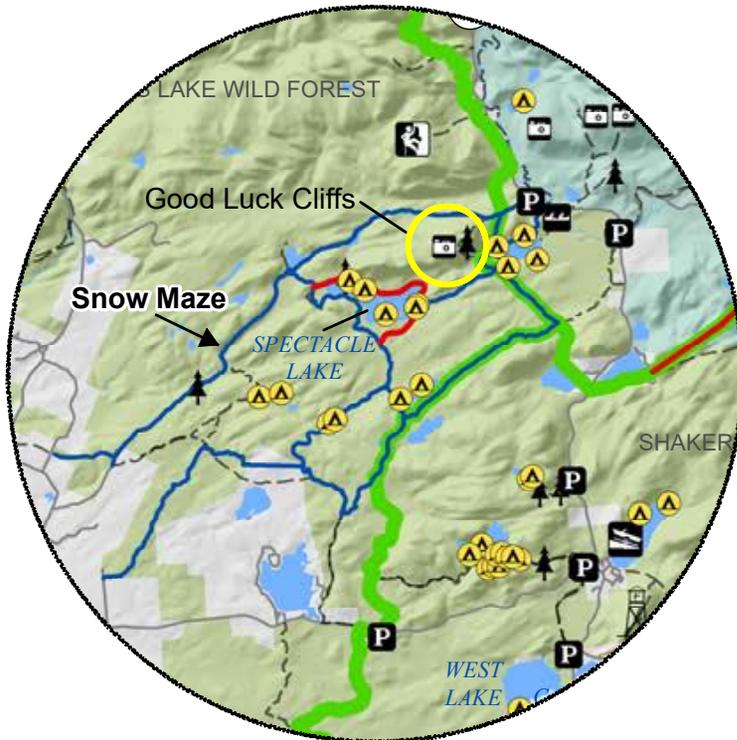
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|--------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Lodging | Fire Tower | Proposed Feature | Community |
| Boat Launch | Historic Site | Local Network | Intensive Use |
| Natural Feature | Lean-to | Regional Network | Pending Classification |
| State Campground | Paddling Access | Construction Required | Primitive |
| Primitive Campsite | Parking | DEC Trail | State Administrative |
| Cross-Country Ski Center | Rock Climbing | Road | Wild Forest |
| Day Use Area | Scenic Area | | Wilderness |
| | | | Easement |

Northville, Caroga Lake



Map produced by the Great South Woods Project Team at the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry

Map 10 ► Northville & Caroga Lake Snow Maze



Access: New trail section (2.54 mi) along Spectacle Lake completes a loop around the waterbody, adding to the overall network of existing snowmobile trails that might be suitable for hiking.

Connectivity: Links with Caroga Connector and Hamilton County Trail.

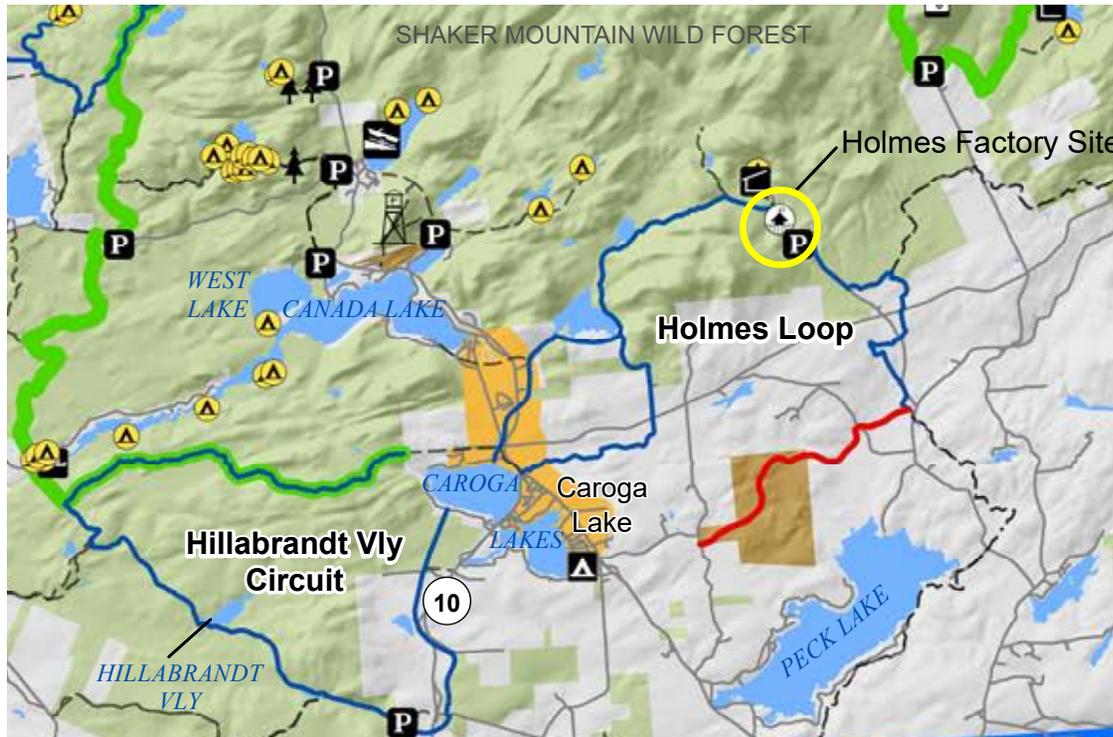
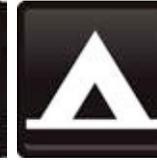
Stewardship: Junction signs at intersections with Caroga Connector/Hamilton County Trail, internal junction signs, sign designating trail around Spectacle Lake. Many wetlands throughout the area, important to keep in mind when field-validating suitability of snowmobile trails for off-season hiking. Increased use of campsites on Spectacle Lake may pose issues.

Destination: Many attractive waterfalls and waterbodies along the Maze, including Dry, Dexter, Speculator, Long, Goose Egg, Fourth, Third, and Good Luck Lakes. Overnight locations available at Waters Mill Pond, Long Lake, Third Lake, Spectacle Lake, and Good Luck Lake. Short side hike available to Good Luck Cliffs.

Partnerships: Field-validation and trail maintenance in/near wetland areas could be conducted by a local trails chapter.

The **Snow Maze** primarily serves snowmobilers, but sections can be designated for and used by snowshoers and skiers, and potentially by summer hikers and bikers -- but the trail conditions and suitability should be investigated and monitored accordingly. All-season users interested in scenic views of Ferris Lake Wild Forest can take a short hike to the top of Good Luck Cliffs from the Snow Maze in summer and fall. Spectacle Lake and Good Luck Lake provide multiple sites for primitive camping. Recommendations to expand this trail network create a loop around Spectacle Lake, improving access to primitive lakefront campsites. The area may also be suitable for single-track mountain biking trails, to be designed to minimize impact on wetlands, ponds and vernal pools. Paddling, rock climbing, hiking, camping and scenic opportunities nearby could make this area of Ferris Lake Wild Forest an outdoor recreation destination.

Map 10 ► Northville & Caroga Lake Holmes Loop & Hillabrandt-Vly Circuit



Access: Currently-existing loop trail out of Caroga Lake through Ferris Lake Wild Forest, passing West Caroga Lake, Hillabrandt Vly, and Unnamed ponds.

Connectivity: North stretch overlaps with Caroga Connector (regional network).

Stewardship: Field-validate trail suitability for hiking, considering multiple wetlands on or near existing trails. Create register at Caroga Lake.

Destination: Current snowmobile trails, might be suitable for hiking. Decent day-hike, or overnight using campsites just off the circuit on the Caroga Connector.

Partnerships: Outfitters for summer biking trips. Parking may be needed in town.

Holmes Loop and the **Hillabrandt-Vly Circuit** are twin snowmobile loops to the east and west of the Hamlet of Caroga Lake, which have potential as summer walking and biking trails that could accommodate those seeking a less challenging but scenic day trip, leaving from and returning to Caroga Lake. The Holmes Loop provides access to a number of lakes and a historic site along its route, with new trail suggested through an easement and private lands, in order to connect back to the roads into Caroga Lake. Permission for summer walking/biking use must be negotiated for sections of both loops not in the Shaker Mountain WF, as well as DEC easement.

Map 10 ► Northville & Caroga Lake Kallen Trek



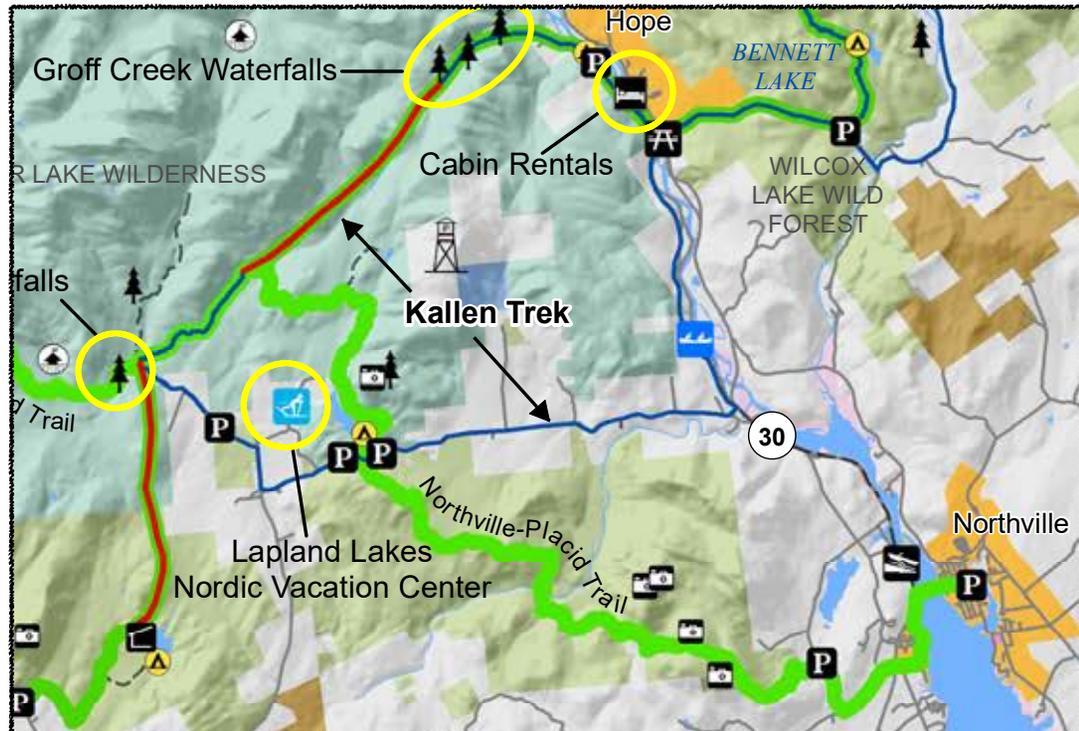
Access: Loop route passes through Silver Lake, Shaker Mountain, and Wilcox Lake units. New section (just over 3 miles) would complete the loop, extending access along Abner Brook, past waterfalls, and joining existing trail near the Sacandaga River.

Connectivity: Follows Sacandaga River on the opposite bank from Hope, accessed from Northville and Benson. Follows a section of the NPT and connects to Hopewell Network, over the Sacandaga River near Hope.

Stewardship: Junction signs required at NPT, and directing over the river toward Hope and the Hopewell Network feature. New trail constructed through Wilderness requires careful attention.

Destination: Hike, bike and paddle the weekend away on scenic but less traveled paths in southern Adirondacks. Points of interest include: Lapland Lake Ski Center, Groff Creek Falls, Sacandaga River, Abner Brook, and Woods Lake. Hike largely in or near Wilderness, the almost 20 mile loop offers an ideal overnight along Sacandaga River, at a campsite or commercial lodging. Taking an interior cutoff (NPT), spur trails access Grant Lake and Little Cathead Mtn. with its cliff views.

Partnerships: Cathead Mtn Fire Tower is located in the center of this loop on private land. Public Access and stewardship maintenance could be negotiated (maybe with the town of Hope) as part of this process.



Kallen Trek is an exciting multi-modal loop, with biking out of the parking area in Hope heading south on Route 30 along the Sacandaga River, then turning west on Benson Road (the old Northville-Placid Trail route) to the old NPT trailhead in Benson. Trading the bike for boots, hikers can trek through the Abner Brook-Groff Creek valley (3 miles of new trail required) in the Silver Lake Wilderness and visit a series of waterfalls before returning to Hope. Take an optional shortcut through the Trek on the newly-routed NPT that passes Woods Lake, Little Cathead Mountain, and Grant Lake.

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KEY RECOMMENDATIONS ORGANIZED BY CORE THEMES

The following sections expand upon the GSW Recommendations for each of the Strategy core themes. As needed, examples of Local Network features in the GSW Recommendations (R-17 to R-59) are referenced, as well as information collected during the participatory planning process.

ACCESS

The GSW Strategy recommends leveraging existing trail infrastructure and unique regional assets, while also creating additional infrastructure that establishes a network of recreation destinations across the regional landscape.

LEVERAGING EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE AND UNIQUE REGIONAL ASSETS

The following Local Network features leverage existing DEC trails and related recreation assets. Circuits Out of 'Dead-End' Trails are examples of where out-and-back trails have been transformed into circuits, in many cases connecting more than one point of interest. Nested Networks for Recreation are examples of where existing loop trails have been transformed into networks, providing multiple route options for arriving at one or more destinations (Table 3).

Table 3: Local Network features that leverage existing infrastructure.

Circuits Out of 'Dead-End' Trails	Nested Networks for Recreation
Black River Loop	Black Bear Circuit
French Louie Loops	Black River Loop
Hopewell Network	French Louie Loops
Kallen Trek	Hopewell Network
OK Slip Falls Loop	Limekiln Loop
Potter Bike Trail	"N" Lake Network
Three Rivers Circuit	North Creek Network
Waterfall Way	South Raquette Circuit

The GSW Strategy offers unique opportunities for enhancing recreation by utilizing existing DEC easements and the Hudson River Corridor (Table 4). The GSW Strategy also recommends maintaining or improving access to historic sites and hunting camps on easement lands.

Table 4: Local Network features that leverage unique regional assets.

DEC Easements	Hudson River Corridor
Blue Finch Loop	Hudson Bend Circuit
Holmes Loop	North Creek Network
West Indian Lake Network	OK Slip Falls Loop
	Three Rivers Circuit

 CREATING ADDITIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Overall, as conceptualized here, the GSW Local Network requires 191.9 miles to be constructed to established 105 new trail segments (Table 11). Most of these segments are small connector trails that convert spurs into loops, or loops into networks. Many Local Network features that require new trail construction would provide novel access routes to iconic destinations, or will establish access routes to previously inaccessible points of interest across the GSW (Table 5).

Table 5: Local Network features requiring trail construction to enhance access.

Feature Requiring Construction	Destination (miles to construct)
Blue Mtn. Circuit	From Blue Mtn. summit to NPT (2), then from NPT along Bluestone Trail back to Blue Mtn. Lake Hamlet (2).
Ferris Fifty	Close loop and pass by scenic waterfalls (3.3)
French Louie Loops	Close major loop along Little Moose Wilderness ridgeline, including scenic overlooks on Little Moose Mtn. (2.8).
Hudson Bend Circuit	Along Hudson and Boreas Rivers (32.7), and a spur trail connecting to the Vanderwhacker Mtn. trail (3.4).
OK Slip Falls Loop	Connect trail ends along scenic Hudson River and link OK Slip Falls and Blue Ledges (2.5).
Sabattis Mtn. Ski Circuit	Create double loop for skiing from Town of Long Lake (9.3).
Severance Hill Circuit	NCNST miles into Hoffman Notch Wilderness (4.2) then new western access up Severance Hill (2.4).
The Notch	NCNST miles into Hoffman Notch Wilderness for a back-country Wilderness traverse (4.2).
Vanderwhacker Circuit	Close double loop and provide eastern access to Vanderwhacker Mtn. trail (12.7).
Wakely Way	Close loop route to summit from Cedar River Rd and New western access to Wakely Mtn. from Sagamore area (3.2).
West Indian Lake Network	Access out of Wakely Pond/Dam area over Little Great Range, summing Snowy Mtn. from northwest and taking new trail down to NYS 30 (7.4).

Additional key points of lodging are required along certain features, such as the lean-to at Blue Ledges along the OK Slip Falls Loop. Similarly, lodging arrangements must be made at Kings Flow, Garnet Hill, and near Indian Lake for the North Creek Network in order to establish a hut-to-hut recreation experience.

CONNECTIVITY

The GSW Recommendations attempt to create a network of connections among communities and both new and existing recreation destinations in the Forest Preserve.

The primary objective of designing the GSW Regional Network was to provide a system of long-distance recreation routes that established connections between communities across State lands and DEC easements (See Map Narrative pages R-1 to R-13). GSW Local Network features were designed to 'fit' within the Regional Network and effectively link it with communities as well as recreation destinations on the Forest Preserve that are not accessed via the Regional Network. Some of these features were specifically designed to provide access directly out of a community or to center around the community and its main streets (Table 6). Such a configuration allows for community planning that capitalizes on the feature, designing local events that draw in visitors, coordinating support services such as ferries or shuttles for hikers, boats or bikes, and encouraging local use along the feature.

Table 6: Local Network features that directly connect to communities.

Local Network Feature	Direct Town Connection
Black Bear Circuit	Inlet
Blue Mtn. Circuit	Blue Mtn. Lake
Kallen Trek	Hope
Moffit's Pack-and-Paddle Circuit	Lake Pleasant, Speculator
North Creek Network	Indian Lake, North Creek, North River
Potter Bike Trail	Inlet
Sabbatis Mtn. Ski Circuit	Long Lake
TOBIE Trail Connection	Thendara, Old Forge, Big Moose, Inlet, Eagle Bay
West Indian Lake Network	Indian Lake, Sabael
Woodhull Lake Loop	McKeever, Otter Lake, Woodgate

HIGH QUALITY RECREATION DESTINATIONS

To draw visitors to the Great South Woods for recreation and tourism, the GSW Strategy prioritizes the establishment of trails and other infrastructure that create high-quality and unique recreation experiences.

Planning to create high-quality recreation destinations focused on producing a functional network for moving recreation visitors around the GSW region. The resulting GSW Regional and Local Networks have the potential to create high-quality destinations for a variety of modes of recreation use across the GSW region (see Table 7 for examples).

Table 7: Examples of GSW Local Network features that can support high-quality destinations for different modes of recreation. Note: list below is not exhaustive.

Recreation Mode	Local Network Destination
Back-country camping	French Louie Loops
Long distance hiking	West Indian Lake Network
Day hiking with families	Black Bear Circuit
'Hut-to-Hut' Trekking	North Creek Network
Mountain Biking	Potter Bike Trail
Road Biking	TOBIE Trail Connection
Nature & Scenery	Waterfall Way, OK Slip Falls Loop
Cross-Country Skiing	Sabattis Mtn. Ski Circuit

GENERAL POINTS FOR RECREATION PLANNING

The following points were synthesized from various GSW Project meetings and workshops as general planning points for designing high quality recreation destinations across the GSW.

- Route construction/maintenance
 - Designate a use-specific representative to involve in planning, i.e., for designing mountain biking opportunities.
 - Maintain road shoulders for biking.
 - Construct and designate hiking trails to rock climbing destinations.
 - Keep access roads open for aging populations, as well as for hunting opportunities.
 - Trail diversity (i.e. difficulty, length, time frame of trail) for hiking is important to incentivize more hikers to use the area.
 - Challenging, specialized trails for mountain biking are needed if GSW wants this population in the Park.
 - Multi-use trails are not desirable, but seasonal use trails (i.e., summer hiking, winter skiing) increase use without increasing infrastructure or even impact on the resource.
- Enhance Forest Preserve lodging options
 - Create Temporary Revocable Permits that allow for winter yurts.
 - Classify locations where structures were burned or destroyed when private land was purchased by the State, as Intensive Use to support back-country lodging.
- Expand access for family-oriented recreation. A single point of access for multiple trails reduces travel time, and provides all ages and experience levels a variety of choices.
- Rate or classify trails according to difficulty levels or attraction of the area, considering:
 - Trail characteristics (length, elevation change, impacts of seasonality).
 - Composition of user group (family with young kids, novice hiker, experienced hiker).
 - Possible use-types.
 - Use ski trail categories (green circle, blue square, black diamond, double diamond).

MULTI-MODAL TRAILS

An important GSW Recommendation for designing high quality recreation destinations is to abandon the 'multi-use' trail mentality. Often, multi-use opportunities that attempt to satisfy multiple use-types and user groups with one set of trail infrastructure and assets, fails to satisfy any of the interested users. Instead, GSW Recommendations include Local Network features that offer multi-modal trail opportunities, or the combination of uses along different segments to complete a packaged destination experience. These features are described in more detail in the [Maps and Narratives section](#), but are summarized in [Table 8](#) according to the most common combination of modes. Many of these recreation experiences will need to leverage support from local communities in order to provide and shuttle equipment and users along the feature.

Table 8: Examples of Local Network features that function as multi-modal trails.

Pack-and-Paddle	Hike-and-Bike
Hudson Bend Circuit	Cedar River Circuit
Lake Durant Loop	Hudson Bend Circuit
Moffitt's Pack-and-Paddle	Kallen Trek
"N" Lake Network	Limekiln Loop
Three Rivers Circuit	TOBIE Trail Connection
TOBIE Trail Connection	

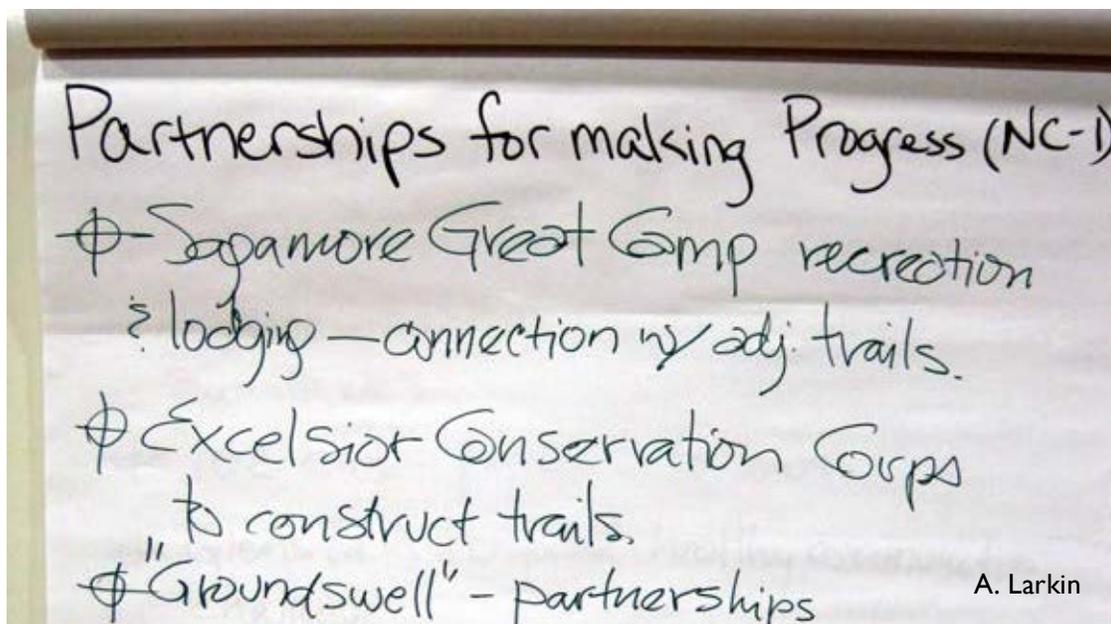
PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

The GSW Strategy is based on input and information gathered over a series of public meetings and workshops. Subsequent implementation stages will require public-private partnerships to ensure the Strategy benefits local communities and to assist with the design, maintenance, and promotion of the GSW Recommended Features.

The following points were synthesized from various GSW Project meetings and workshops as relevant to developing public-private partnerships to implement aspects of the GSW Strategy.

- How partnerships and involvement may benefit local communities
 - Communities influence design (see [Data Collection Workshops](#), Appendix II).
 - Communities prioritize projects for implementation.
 - Serve local communities, while attracting a loyal contingent of (repeat) visitors.
- Marketing is KEY
 - Organize information identifying lodging (include state campgrounds).
 - Centralize website/database/app of trail data: uses, conditions, difficulty, rating system, key features, hunting.

- Packaging experiences
 - Adirondack Trail Passport, similar to US National Parks visitor passport or Camino de Santiago Compostela passport.
 - 102 Club passport to visit Adirondack towns, can be further categorized.
 - Adirondack Heritage Pass: great camps, museums, other cultural attractions.
 - Great Adirondack Bike Tour.
 - Low-cost outdoor skills training and equipment rental for first-time visitors.
 - Hospitality training for lodging and restaurant staff, briefings on local natural attractions, trail connections, etc.
 - Supporting and promoting multi-modal trails and experiences.
- Potential partners
 - Adirondack Guides
 - Adirondack Mountain Club local chapters
 - Adirondack Paddle Pursuit
 - Business Alliances
 - Chambers of Commerce
 - Excelsior Conservation Corp
 - Old Forge-Inlet-Long Lake Central Adirondack Association
 - Siamese Pond Trail Improvement Society
 - Snowmobile clubs
 - Student Conservation Association (national)
 - Tri-Lakes Business Alliance of Rotary Clubs
 - Upper Hudson Trail Alliance
 - Volunteer Trail Maintenance Groups



 ECOSYSTEM STEWARDSHIP

The **GSW Strategy** is committed to the responsible planning and sustainable management of enhanced recreation across the **GSW** region. **GSW** recommendations for ecosystem stewardship include monitoring recreation use at existing and future recreation destinations, preserving remote areas of the Forest Preserve without trails or maintained recreation infrastructure, leveraging opportunities for interpretation and education when possible, and practicing proactive invasive species management.

 MONITORING RECREATION USE

As the GSW Strategy moves towards implementation with the goal of extending and redistributing recreation use across the planning area, managers should keep in mind current recreation use patterns. Trail register data from 2012, compiled by ESF's Adirondack Trail Registry Database (ADK-TReD) project, allows managers to identify the most-visited trails in the region (Table 9). These areas are prime locations for educational efforts, monitoring impacts, and management efforts aimed at protecting the natural resource. Despite any planned enhancement of recreation opportunities, these most-visited trailheads are likely to remain popular with visitors and locals, and should therefore remain a priority for ongoing management.

Table 9: Most commonly hiked trails in the Great South Woods, based on data from 2012.

Trailhead	Users (2012)
1. Hadley Mountain	9,899
2. Panther Mountain	7,154
3. Kings Flow (Chimney/Puffer)	6,131
4. Nine Corners	5,490
5. Kane Mountain	4,893
6. Crane Mountain	3,864
7. Snowy Mountain	3,304
8. Wilcox Lake	2,217
9. Sawyer Mountain	1,958
10. Good Luck Lake/Cliffs	1,822

The GSW Strategy recommends increasing the frequency of trail registers along the Local Network, to continue to monitor recreation use as new recreation destinations are developed (Table 10). An important tradeoff involved in creating a network of recreation destinations, with more points of access and multiple routes to different destinations, is the effort required in tracking users for search and rescue purposes, as well as monitoring recreation impacts and applying the appropriate management response. Installing trail registers is important for back-country destinations (such as Blue Finch Loop), as well as for front-country opportunities (such

as the TOBIE Trail Connection) that serve less-traditional modes of outdoor recreation but are vital for understanding the unique visitor base.

Table 10: Local Network features that will require more effort in trail use monitoring.

Local Network features Needing Additional Trail Registers	
Blue Finch Loop	"N" Lake Network
Cedar River Circuit	Potter Bike Trail
Ferris Fifty	Sabattis Mtn. Ski Circuit
French Louie Loops	South Raquette Circuit
Hillabrandt Vly Circuit	Stark Hills Circuit
Holmes Loop	TOBIE Trail Connection
Hopewell Network	Wakely Way
Hudson Bend Circuit	Waterfall Way
Kallen Trek	West Indian Lake Network
Limekiln Loop	

LEVERAGING EXISTING TRAILS & PRESERVING 'CORE' REMOTE AREAS

The GSW Recommendations include over 30 Local Network features that link to one or more of 12 Regional Network features across the GSW region. In total, these trail networks leverage over 850 miles of existing trail and require only approximately 190 miles of trail to complete all of the Local Network features, and 81 miles to complete all of the Regional Network. By making the most of the existing infrastructure, the GSW Strategy seeks to reduce the overall impact of new trail construction and infrastructure development across the Forest Preserve (Table 11).

Portions of the GSW trail networks that require construction are also segments of the official DEC-proposed NCNST: 27.3 miles over 7 segments in the Local Network, and 12.7 miles over 5 segments for the Regional Network. The segments shared with the NCNST may be considered to be further along in planning and implementation phases, and therefore may receive less critical attention as other "construction-required" components of the GSW Strategy. In addition, some trail segments requiring construction are shared by more than one feature on the Local and/or Regional Network (Table 11; see Appendix III for more detail). The one-to-many relationship of some segments requiring construction indicates the potential to minimize construction and infrastructure investment, while maximizing the additive value of the shared segment to the overall network. The overlapping, or shared features, a majority of which are in Wild Forest, could be important to consider and prioritize when making strategic implementation decisions.

Although the entire GSW landscape was considered for planning, the Strategy aimed to minimize the need to construct new infrastructure in 'core' wilderness areas of the Forest Preserve, in order to minimize impacts in these currently remote trail-less areas. Overall, completing both networks would require constructing 235 miles of trail, over 139 segments,

averaging 0.6 miles per segment (Table 11). Roughly 54% of these miles are in Wild Forest -- 104.4 miles over 52 segments, with 89.4 miles to be constructed in Wilderness over 39 segments (Table 11). Although the full implementation of both Local and Regional networks optimizes recreation potential across the area, the implementation of any number of features short of the full network would still enhance recreation opportunities across the GSW region.

Table 11: Distribution of 'construction required' segments according to land type. Some segments are shared by features on the Local and Regional Networks. This overlap is highlighted at the bottom of the table (see Appendix III for more detail). These statistics do not include the Bluestone or Hamilton County Trails as part of the Regional Network.

	Land Type	Total Miles	% of Total	# Segments	Ave. Miles per Segment	Max. Miles per Segment
Local Network	Easement	15.5	8	5	3.1	8.9
	Private	10.8	6	20	0.5	2.1
	Intensive Use	0.9	<1	3	0.3	0.7
	Primitive	4.7	3	5	0.9	2.2
	Wild Forest	91.6	48	41	2.2	9.6
	Wilderness	68.4	36	31	2.2	11.6
	TOTAL:	191.9		105	0.6	
Regional Network	Easement	7.8	10	4	1.9	4.3
	Private	1.9	2	13	0.1	0.4
	Intensive Use	1.1	1	2	0.6	0.7
	Primitive	<0.1	<1	2	<0.1	<0.1
	Wild Forest	39.5	49	24	1.6	6.8
	Wilderness	31.0	38	15	2.1	5.3
	TOTAL:	81.3		60	0.7	
Network Overlap	Easement	0.1	<1	1	0.1	0.1
	Private	0.7	2	5	3.0	0.4
	Intensive Use	0.7	2	1	0.7	0.7
	Primitive	0	0	0	0	0
	Wild Forest	26.7	70	13	0.5	6.8
	Wilderness	10.0	26	7	0.7	3.2
	TOTAL:	38.2		26	0.7	

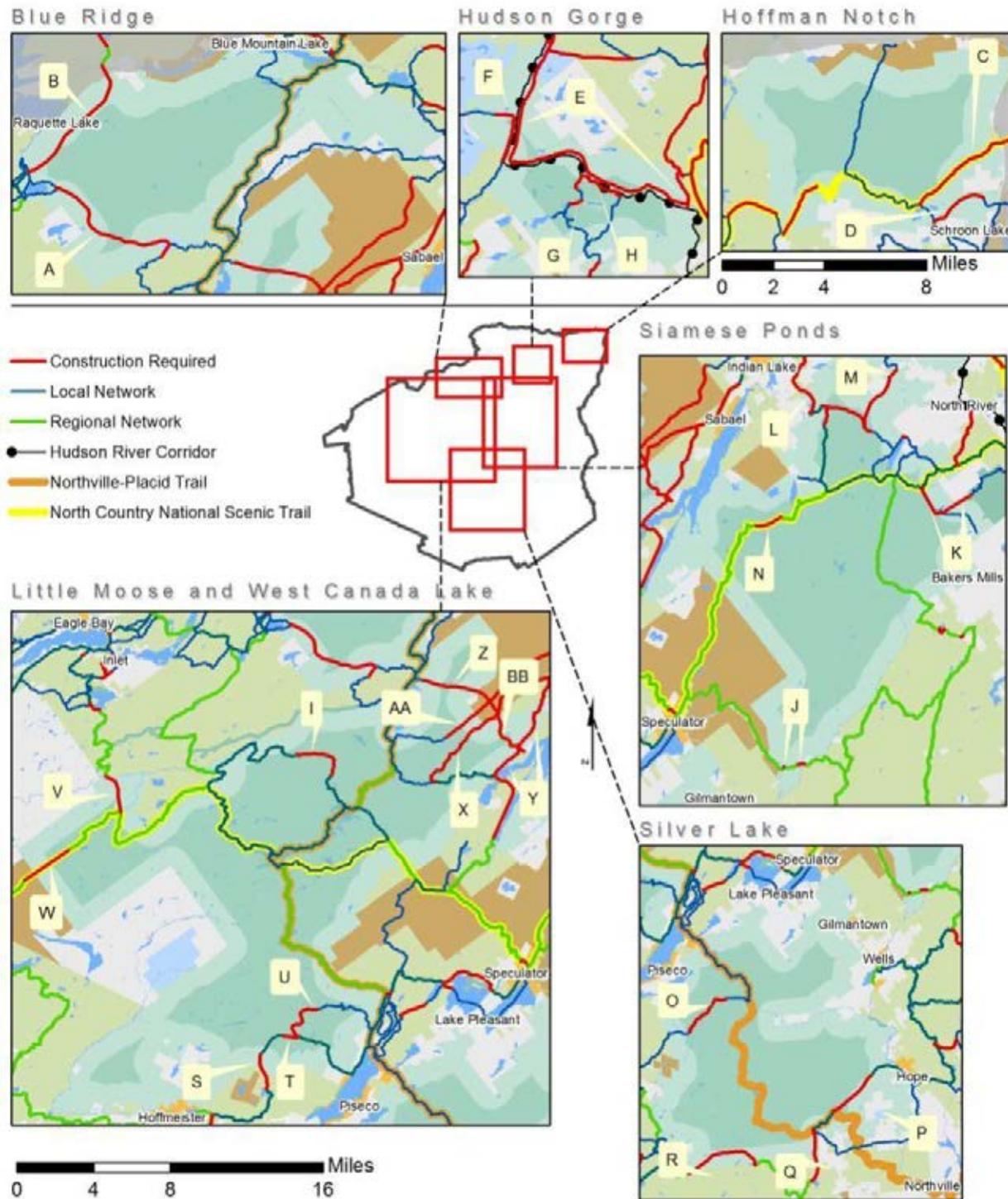


Figure 4: Location of 'construction required' segments in GSW Wilderness areas. Segments are identified by the ID in Appendix IV. Core Wilderness is defined as a mile or greater interior from the Wilderness boundary, and is indicated by the darker shade.

In addition, the GSW Strategy aimed to preserve core interior Wilderness areas by concentrating trail construction to areas within a mile of the Wilderness unit boundary. Of the 89.4 miles of segments requiring construction to complete both GSW Local and Regional Networks that are located in designated Wilderness areas, approximately two-thirds of the required mileage is within a mile of the Wilderness area boundary (Figure 4; see Appendix IV for more detail). Despite the 'construction required' trail segments recommended by the GSW Strategy, many core Wilderness areas would maintain their remote interior areas (Figure 4). *Protecting Core Wilderness* emerged as a theme out of GSW public meetings and engagement efforts.

Categorizing recreation opportunities as front-country or back-country serves to distinguish more remote recreation opportunities available in Wilderness and other Forest Preserve areas, from those that more directly provide connections across communities and State Land. GSW Recommended Local Network features can be classified as *front-country* or *back-country* (Table 12), based on criteria that consider, among other factors: a feature's access and connectivity in, out, and among communities; the quality of the recreation experience provided by the feature, such as thru-hiking versus road biking; and the length and extent of the feature through the Forest Preserve and away from road corridors, hamlets and private lands.

Table 12: Examples of Local Network features, classified as either front-country or back-country according to the GSW Core Themes.

Front-country	Back-country
Black Bear Circuit	French Louie Loops
Moffitt's Pack and Paddle	Hopewell Network
Potter's Bike Trail	Hudson Bend Circuit
South Raquette Circuit	North Creek Network
TOBIE Trail Connection	OK Slip Falls Loop
	The Notch
	Wakely Way
	West Indian Lake Network

INTERPRETATION AND EDUCATION

The following points were synthesized from various GSW Project meetings and workshops, and emphasize the importance of interpretation and education in ecosystem stewardship efforts.

- Improve signage for uniformity and consistency
 - Many GSW Recommendations include adding signage at junctions between features.
 - Fire Towers should include accurate, readable observation maps.
 - Historic sites should include educational signage about the historical significance.

- Increase access to education opportunities. Access to learning and training, which promotes safety, collaboration, and tourism would help people appreciate the places they visited (e.g., in private sector, outfitting businesses help tourists learn and enjoy the Adirondacks, while providing business opportunities and growth to communities).
- GSW ecosystems are considered by many to be the best in the Park and should be promoted to draw in visitors and educate them on proper use.
 - Many GSW Recommendations include establishing stewards at popular lean-tos, the Hudson River, and summits.

PROACTIVE INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT

The *threat of invasive species* emerged as a key concern for stewardship at various GSW public meetings and engagement efforts. In addition to management approaches for invasive species, public comments often referenced interpretation and education as additional measures for raising public awareness and proactively managing invasive species. Suggestions included using boat washing stations at motorized and non-motorized access points, as well as expanding the concept of invasive species mitigation to include boot and bicycle washing stations. With uncertainty surrounding the efficacy or implementation costs of such stations, the educational benefits of the stations were heavily discussed as encouraging low-impact and other leave-no-trace behaviors. Features that might benefit from specialized washing stations are listed in Table 13.

Table 13: Examples of Local Network features that might benefit from invasive species washing stations.

Bike Washing Station	Boat Washing Station (motorized or non-motorized)
Potter Bike Trail	Blue Finch Loop (Fishing Brook)
Cedar River Circuit	Lake Durant Loop
TOBIE Trail Connection	"N" Lake Network (Nick's and Nelson Lake, Nick's Lake Campground)
	Moffitt's Pack & Paddle

Hiking in the Adirondacks is a ubiquitous mode of recreation. Therefore, identifying priority locations for boot washing stations and informational signage, or other methods of invasive species mitigation targeting hikers, is a key GSW recommendation, especially in areas where trail use is expected to significantly increase and/or draw visitors from multiple regions.

Using the existing network of trailheads as access points across the GSW, we conducted a novel spatial analysis to combine register visitor count data with *iMapInvasives* species occurrence data, to calculate an **invasive species exposure score** for each Adirondack trailhead. Using *iMapInvasives* observation records, we considered 7 invasive species included on the New York

State Prohibited Species list (see Appendix V). Figure 5 depicts relative exposure risk for all 7 species, with high exposure risk correlated to the amount of total trail visitation. Individual species risk maps can be found in Appendix V, and suggest different trailheads have varying exposure risks depending on the species.

Trailheads symbolized by red dots, such as Bald Mountain, Great Camp Santanoni, and Hadley Mountain, have a high exposure risk because they attract a high percentage of visitors who reside in areas containing a greater proportion of New York State's invasive species observations. These high exposure risk trailheads are in the vicinity of GSW features including Blue Mtn. Circuit, Severance Hill Circuit, The Notch, TOBIE Trail Connection, North Creek Network, Waterfall Way, and Ferris Fifty. Management actions should focus on trailheads that are generally characterized by a high exposure risk, but should consider species-specific risk patterns for species-specific management efforts (see Appendix V for exposure maps by species). The invasive species exposure analysis is meant to anticipate points of invasion and to manage proactively to monitor the site, prevent invasion, educate the public, and preserve the resource.

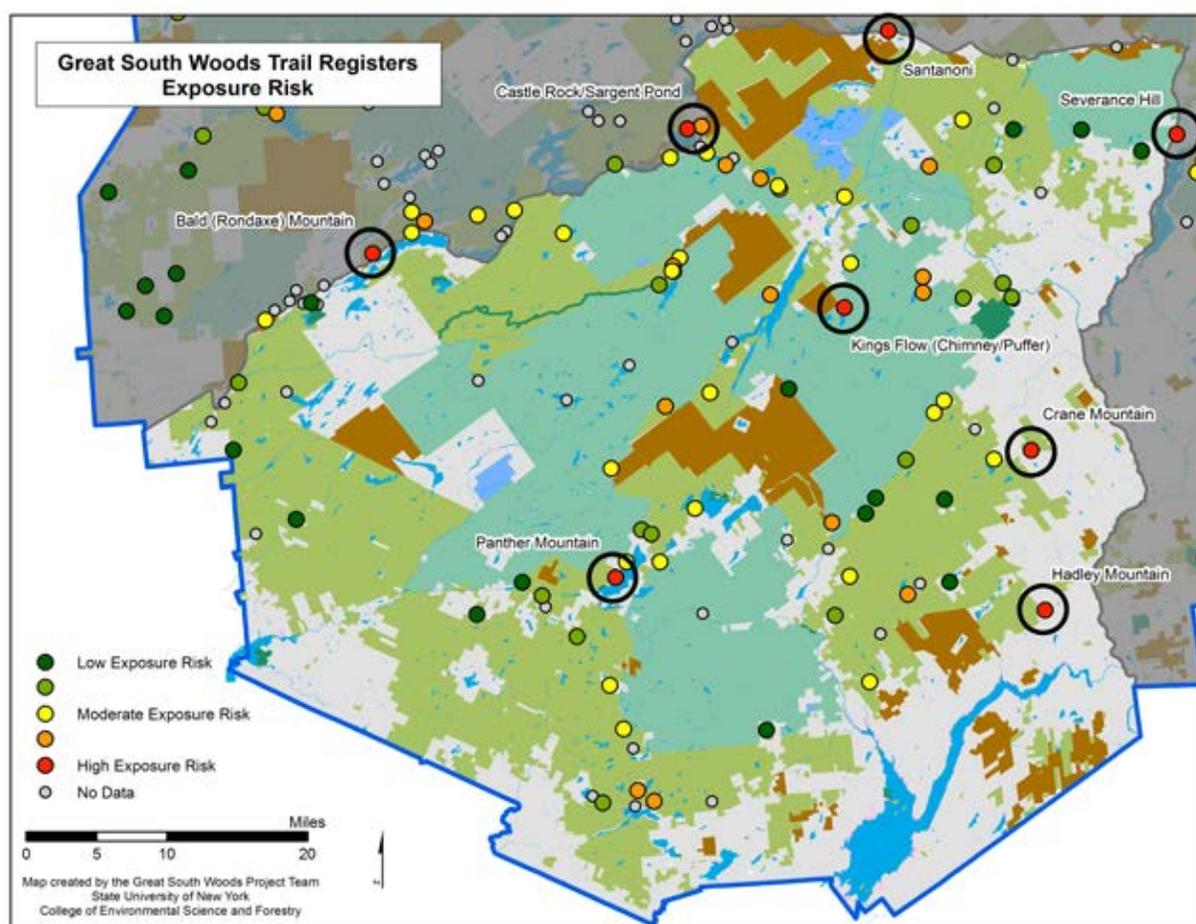


Figure 5: Invasive species exposure risk at Adirondack trailheads. Points of high exposure risk are shown in red and labeled. For species-specific exposure maps, see Appendix V.

PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

The remaining points were synthesized from various GSW Project meetings and workshops as general planning points in relation to ecosystem stewardship in the GSW.

- Field-validation is very important for supporting resource protection during Strategy implementation.
- Manage existing infrastructure, and consolidate when possible to serve multiple users, before creating new infrastructure. But, ensure the creation of new uses does not prevent or replace existing uses.
- Concentrate high-impact uses on perimeter of management units and the broader Park (not just considering Wilderness areas).
- Establish a 'true wilderness area' based on size, limited accessibility, etc.
- New management plans or approach that:
 - Addresses user-created trails (not officially sanctioned or managed by the DEC) and respond accordingly to preserve the resource.
 - Implement recommended feature(s) through a process that complements the existing Unit Management Planning Process, but does not repeat the efforts of ongoing planning (i.e., Environmental Impact Statements), and is not limited to the boundaries of one management unit at a time.
 - Plans across a large region, combining multiple land types and existing management units.



LEVERAGING THE GSW PROCESS & GIS TOOLS FOR ONGOING COMPLEX & UNIT-BASED PLANNING

Geographic information systems (GIS) are powerful tools that manage spatial relationships and analyze spatial features, based on geographic location and related information layers. The GSW project used ArcGIS and Quantum GIS, programs that manage and analyze the GSW data product, as well as the web-map platform, to make the data product visible and accessible for the DEC, APA, GSW communities, and the general public. These platforms are capable of tailoring the extent, scale, symbology, and information provided in each map produced for the GSW, or in each dynamic and interactive view selected by the user on the web-map platform. Beyond visualizing the GSW data product, GIS facilitate analyses important for assessing and implementing the GSW recommendations in future planning steps. A few cases are discussed below using ArcGIS and the Wells-Wilcox Circuit (Figure 6).

SPATIAL ASSESSMENT

Among their many uses, GIS can rapidly generate descriptive and statistical information about features of interest and the spatial relationships among multiple features or components of a landscape. Using the example of the Wells-Wilcox Circuit, highlighted in yellow in Figure 6, the length and travel time is easily calculated as 46 miles, completed in 3-7 days of hiking. Travel distances to other destinations and communities along the full recreation network can be similarly assessed. The *identity* also tool indicates the circuit is almost entirely (95%) located on Wild Forest lands, and is completely within the Wilcox Lake Management Unit.

Similarly, features of interest can be assessed based on proximity to other spatial features. Using the same example of Wells-Wilcox Circuit, the GIS tool *select by location* identifies all existing and proposed assets within 0.5 miles of the circuit. The surrounding features include 3 scenic points of interest, 7 parking areas, 26 campsites, 2 lean-tos, 5 privies, and 1 proposed foot bridge, all of which are important to consider during the planning stage.

GIS-BASED DECISION SUPPORT

In addition to describing features based on statistical information and surrounding features, GIS contain tools for complex analyses such as the *least-cost path* tool. This tool sets a route between two established points by considering weighted input layers. Least-cost path assesses the 'cheapest route' in order to minimize costs or obstacles while maximizing attractive features in route setting. When the route is a recreational trail in a protected landscape, input layers might include sensitive habitats (e.g. moose, endangered species, and wetland habitats), steep slopes, long distances, or the potential to spreading invasive species (Figure 7). Each input layer is assigned a weight, indicating the influence (positive or negative) of that layer over the resulting route. In least cost path analyses, the analyst selects the input layers and weight parameters,

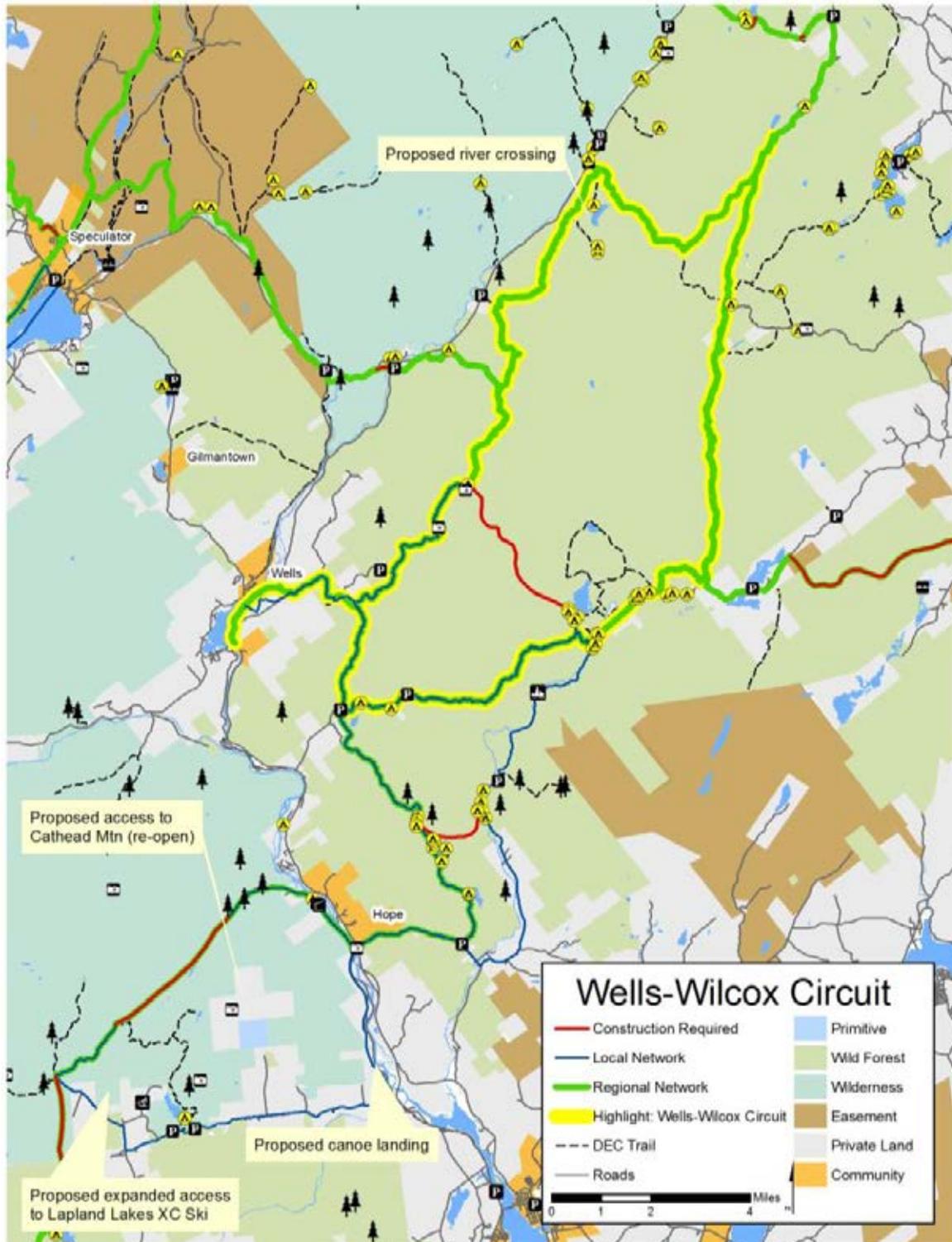


Figure 6: Example of GSW data products and GIS support in the context of the Wilcox Lake draft UMP. A proposed 'Wells-Wilcox Circuit' is highlighted in yellow.

which are subject to available data and knowledge of the system. Cost-path tools can be used to design and evaluate multiple route options by applying different weights to various criteria, such as impact on wetlands, disturbance to sensitive habitats, construction costs, difficulty of use, and many others (Figure 7). Such tools will be particularly useful for bringing existing ARGIS data layers together with the GSW Recommendations to inform design and implementation steps.

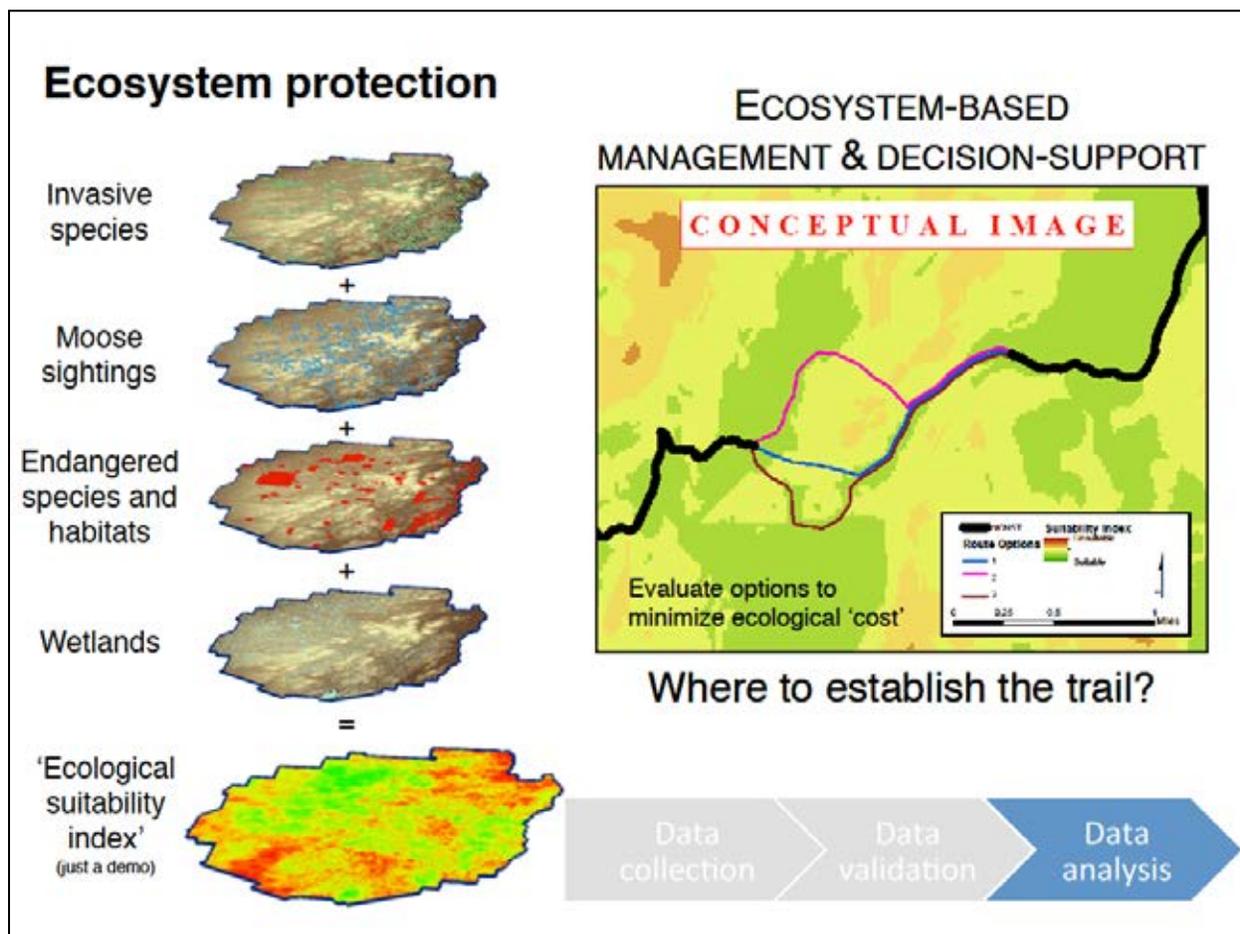


Figure 7: Conceptual illustration of ecosystem-based least-cost path tool.

Another important GIS analysis identified segments of the proposed local and regional networks that would need to be constructed. The GSW Recommendations leverage the existing trail infrastructure when possible, but include gaps that will need to be filled (via construction of trail) in order to close loops and/or open up access in new areas. Using the *erase* tool, sections of the regional and local networks that overlapped with sections from the 1) DEC Assets line layer, 2) NYS Office of Parks and Recreation snowmobile layer, or 3) the NYS roads layer were removed from each network layer. The resulting layer indicated gaps in the trail network that would need to be constructed. These gaps are indicated as red throughout the *Maps and Narratives Section*, as well as Figure 6. This information is important for assessing the investment in recreational trail planning and development required to implement the GSW Strategy.

LINKING GSW PLANNING TO ONGOING UMP EFFORTS

The GSW Planning Process was designed to be fundamentally different than the current UMP Process, while remaining complementary and supportive of ongoing planning across the Forest Preserve. Key differences were 1) the degree of public engagement and community-driven ideas generated through the GSW process, and 2) the expanded geographic scope that included the full GSW landscape (See Figure 8 in Appendix II: Methodology, for a description of the steps in each planning process). Despite these key differences, GSW Planning process is *not* intended to *replace* the UMP process, or to exist as an *isolated* exercise in planning. In fact, the GSW Planning process often engaged the DEC planners and rangers alongside the public during meetings and workshops, and offered preliminary data results that were considered in active UMP drafts (Figure 8). Throughout the GSW Planning process, a pattern of reciprocity developed with DEC-UMP personnel by engaging them during key GSW events (LKW, DEC Validation, Joint Planning Session, Public Strategy Meetings), incorporating their contributions to the resulting GSW Data Product, Recommendations, and Strategy, and applying the overall GSW Planning Process and results to support active and ongoing UMPs (Figure 8).

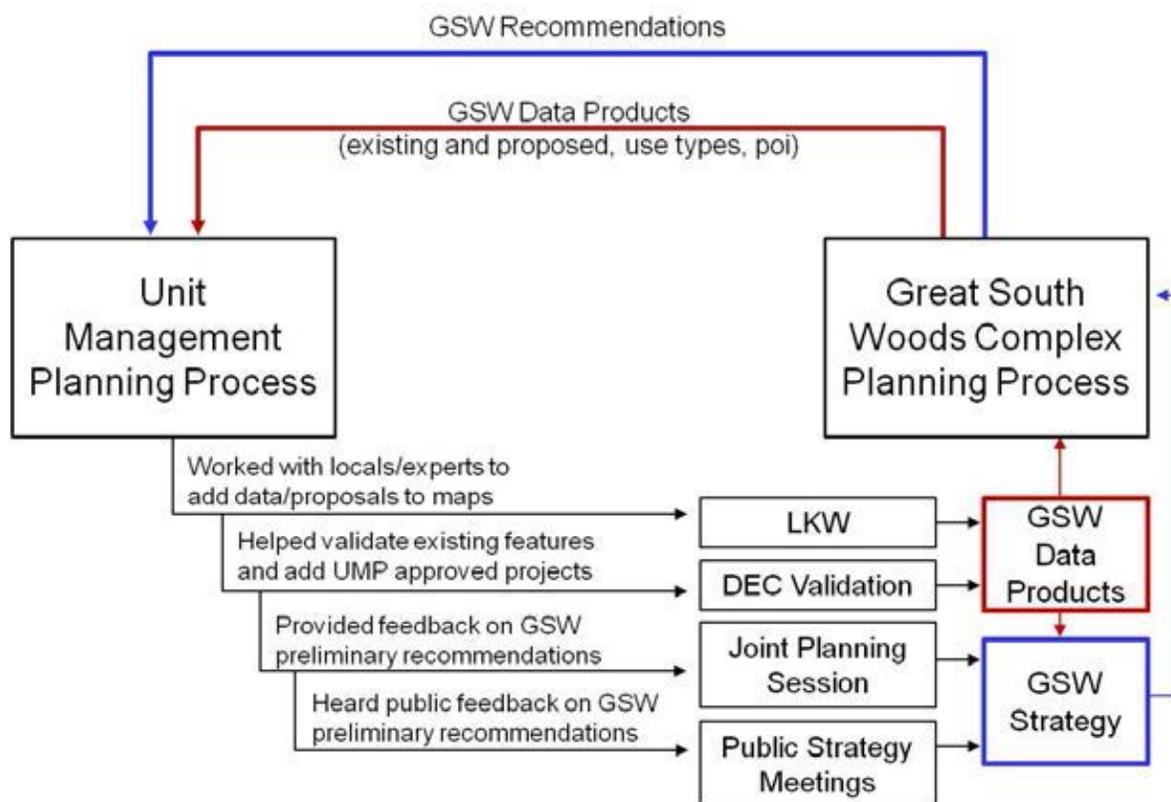


Figure 8: Reciprocal links between the Unit Management Planning process and the GSW Complex Planning process, involving the engagement of DEC personnel at multiple steps in GSW, and the application of GSW products and outcomes in an ongoing UMP. The diagram is generalized from the actual interactions that occurred between the two processes based for the Wilcox Lake Wild Forest draft UMP (see p. 32 and Figure 9).

A case study of how the GSW process can support the existing UMP process is described here for Wilcox Lake Wild Forest. Figure 9 is a map produced by Kirstin Seleen, a DEC planner that is drafting the initial UMP for the Wilcox Lake Management Unit. Ms. Seleen participated in multiple GSW workshops and planning sessions, and demonstrated the first application of how the GSW planning process and deliverables could interface with the UMP draft process. Figure 9 depicts components of the recommended GSW Local and Regional networks (red), combined with existing DEC infrastructure and proposed alternatives (blue lines). Not only do the GSW Recommendations include trails that connect outside the unit, but also suggest smaller-scale connections within existing assets. Ms. Seleen's work demonstrates an initial and conceptual engagement of the GSW process and products within the existing framework for drafting, reviewing, and amending UMPs. More work needs to be done by the DEC to field-validate and assess the utility of the proposed and alternative trail sections, and to assess new infrastructure for universal access opportunities, in the context of the goals and objectives of each UMP.

Aside from Wilcox Lake WF, we envision that the GSW process and products will be made immediately available to inform and support ongoing and future UMP drafts, reviews, and amendments. Data products from GSW can be incorporated directly into GIS-based planning. Aspects of the GSW Recommendations and Strategy can provide guidance on assets to develop, restore, or retire based on information that represents the public knowledge and interest in enhancing local and regional recreation infrastructure. Due to the regional extent of the GSW effort, the data products and recommendations herein can help to identify important connections and points of travel through multiple management units, which can be difficult to conceive or prioritize when planning occurs primarily at the unit (UMP) scale. By considering results from the GSW Planning Process, DEC planners and managers are incorporating public feedback, as expressed through various facilitated meetings and workshops, at a relatively early stage in their planning process, well before an official document is released for public comment. This is an important step as UMPs are reviewed or amended, but may be most important to consider prior to drafting new UMPs. The GSW region includes four management areas that currently lack a UMP, in addition to the UMP for Wilcox Lake Wild Forest, which is currently in the draft stage.



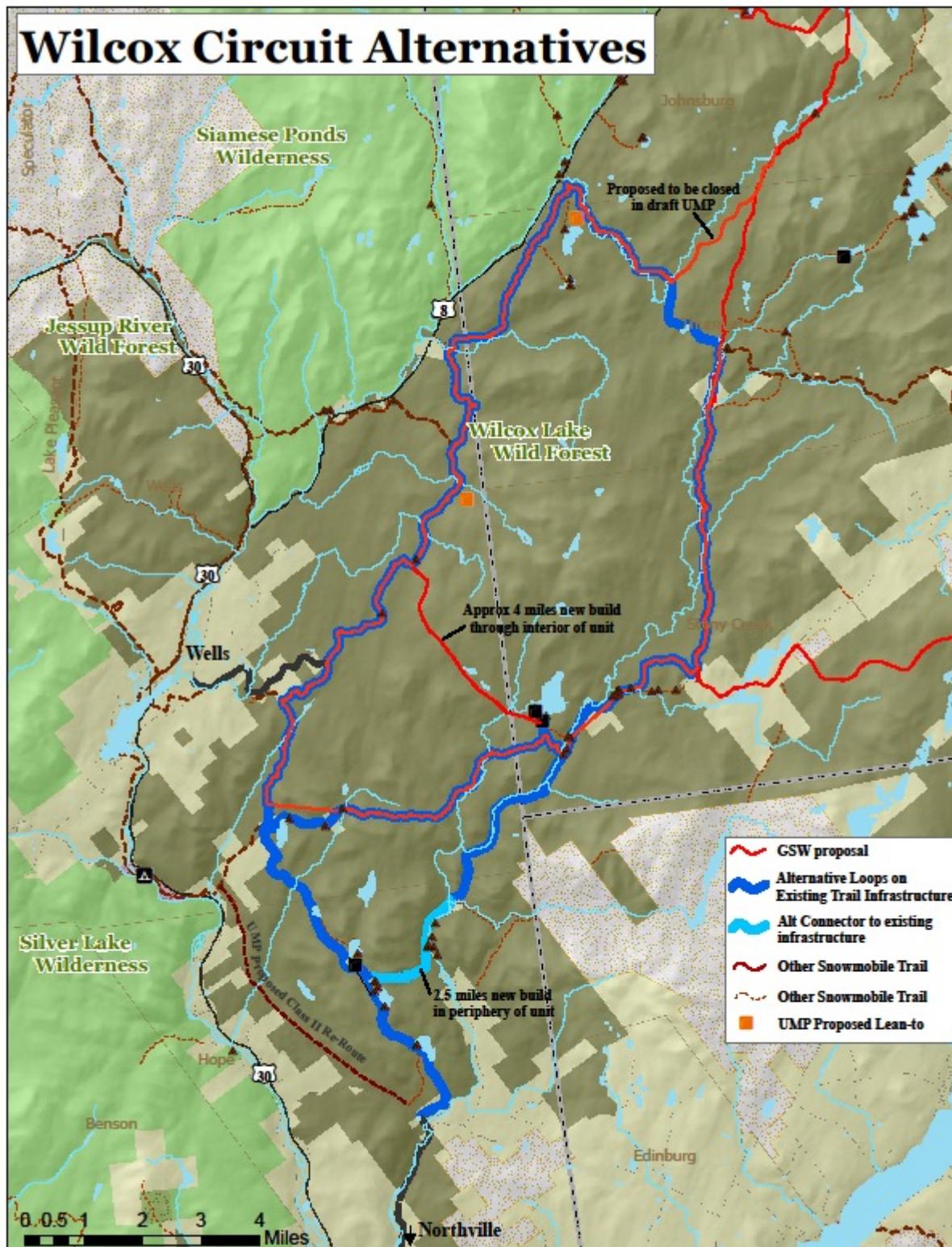


Figure 9: Incorporation of GSW data products in ongoing UMP planning efforts for the Wilcox Lake Wild Forest. Map provided by Kirstin Seleen, DEC Regional Planner.

GSW STRATEGY: IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

Beyond ESF's current scope of work for the GSW project described in its contract with DEC, there are numerous interlocking steps needed to ensure its successful implementation over coming years. To date, ESF has facilitated the GSW project by managing the logistics of community meetings, data collection and synthesis, compilation and revision of maps, curation of the website database, coordination with the DEC team and core group, responses to communities' and organizations' requests for information, etc. With the end of the contract, the GSW project enters the implementation phase and will still need a considerable amount of organizational management and funding if it is to successfully advance.

Beyond the consultative approval process between the DEC and APA which is mandated by the APSLMP and APA Act, local communities will need to play an increasing role in identifying priority projects and forming partnerships with neighboring communities, interested organizations and individuals, and the state agencies to accomplish the concepts described by the strategy. These implementation steps include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:

ESTABLISH ONGOING MECHANISMS FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND PROJECT SUPPORT

Perhaps the greatest challenge in implementing the GSW Strategy will be how to maintain the engagement of local communities across the region over the years needed for actual design and construction of the trail network and related community infrastructure. We suggest an organizational configuration that involves multiple communities, comprised of interested organizations and individuals that meet on a regular basis, and maintain a widely collaborative approach. This model would rely heavily upon local leadership. The [Adirondack Association of Towns and Villages \(AATV\)](#) might be a starting point to consider how best to advance the strategy in consultation and collaboration with the DEC regional planners and other personnel.

Throughout the GSW process it was apparent that communities want to promote their assets and are willing to adopt trails or build new trails. There are already numerous trail stewardship groups in the region that may be able to expand their connections to adjacent communities and other groups if proper incentives can be created, such as funding for joint projects. Several groups have been identified (see [Potential Partners under Public-Private Partnerships in the Recommendations section](#)) that have well-organized volunteers who can assist in building trails. Many of these groups also understand how to partner with DEC partnerships through Temporary Revocable Permits (TRPs) to build and maintain local trail networks.

The trail network database created by ESF during the GSW project with input from local residents, DEC, APA and others is an important tool for future planning efforts if it is easily accessible and understandable by potential users. There will need to be a mechanism and protocols established to maintain and update the database, as well as to ensure that it is available

to the general public. In addition, DEC planners may need training or orientation to the database as tool to assist them in their work. Transferring this technology to the DEC and APA is still an unresolved issue. Past experience with the ARGIS database indicates that further consideration is needed to establish a home agency for the database and sources of financial support to maintain these important planning tools.

IDENTIFY RESOURCES AND SECURE FUNDING TO SUPPORT PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION BY LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Another key ingredient for the strategy's successful implementation will be the availability of needed human and financial resources. The [Environmental Protection Fund \(EPF\)](#) may be the most readily accessible funding source, and when matched with in-kind labor or other community contributions, is a good mechanism for local project development.

Another potential source of support to build trail networks and related infrastructure may be Governor Cuomo's recently established [Excelsior Conservation Corps](#). If a contingent of the conservation corps could be assigned to priority projects in the GSW, there could be immediate and tangible results in the region.

The [Regional Economic Development Councils \(REDCs\) Consolidated Funding Application \(CFA\)](#) is another potential source of funding but has a highly competitive process, with less likelihood of success in the more sparsely settled rural communities across the GSW.

IDENTIFY APPROVED UMP PROJECTS NEAR TRAIL NETWORK FEATURES

Portions of the trail network and related infrastructure (e.g., parking areas, trail heads, etc.) are already included within approved UMPs and can be the initial implementation phase for the GSW strategy, if local communities agree. As these first projects are undertaken, projects that require amended UMPs can be prioritized and advanced for approval (see [Appendix II, Table 6](#)).

FIELD-VALIDATE NETWORK FEATURES TO ASSESS POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND RECREATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

There is a significant amount of effort needed to actually locate proposed trail networks on the ground. This work may be accomplished with volunteers from the various communities and trail clubs, but will need to be closely coordinated with DEC planners, rangers and other professionals to both maximize the attractiveness of the trail type and protect any fragile ecosystems and species in the area. Due to the size of the GSW, local communities will need to identify priority projects in their vicinity as well as their human resources available to work with the DEC on trail verification and environmental assessments.

Throughout the development of the GSW Strategy, it has been apparent that certain trade-offs may be necessary to accommodate a trail network which may be in conflict with an existing classification or regulatory guideline. During the field-validation work, it will be useful to identify conflicts and trade-offs and open a dialogue to assess potential options. There may be a need to triage certain trails as: “shovel-ready” or easy to proceed; moderately difficult to build due to environmental or other constraints, but still within the regulatory framework (UMP update or amendment may be needed); and difficult, due to the need to amend the APSLMP or some other constraint (e.g., permission to cross private property).

DESIGN DETAILED PLANS FOR TRAIL NETWORKS AND RELATED INFRASTRUCTURE

The GSW strategic goal of creating a world-class tourism destination will require a new level of planning and design to attract savvy global travelers who have particular recreational interests and criteria (e.g., thru-hikers, mountain bikers, canoeists, elder hostel hut-to-hut users, snowmobiler, horse-back riders, ‘glampers’, bird watchers, history buffs, etc.) Services of experienced professional outdoor recreation designers, landscape architects, architects and engineers will be needed to meet the criteria desired by destination tourism. These professionals can also teach and orient local craftspeople and artisans about the market competition and demands for future services. Special design attention will need to be applied within the communities to create an aesthetic appearance and tourist-friendly atmosphere which also makes easy and visible connections to the adjacent state lands, local amenities (e.g., attractions, food, lodging, gas, etc.), as well as other communities along the trail networks. Consideration of vehicular and pedestrian traffic patterns, sidewalks and street furniture, international symbols, signs and easily accessible information and maps (in several languages) are all part of a tourist and resident friendly community streetscape.

SECURE NECESSARY AGENCY AND LOCAL COMMUNITY APPROVALS

As detailed designs and construction plans are finalized, there are a series of agency (i.e., DEC, APA and DOT) and community (town planning and zoning boards) reviews and approvals that will probably be required as the trail networks move toward implementation across public and private lands. Early consultation with agency representatives should save time and identify any potential problems, especially environmental impacts.

DEVELOP MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION PLANS WITH JOINT PARTICIPATION OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND STATE AUTHORITIES

Except for the Old Forge and Fulton Chain areas, the GSW region is a relatively little known portion of the Adirondack Park for many tourists who visit from outside the region and see much more advertisement about Lake Placid, the High Peaks and Lake George. The *'Adirondack Advantage'* report and the concept of *'Trail Towns'* are closely aligned with the possibilities described in the GSW strategy. A key necessity will be to deploy a marketing effort that differentiates the GSW from other better-known areas of the Park, while also attracting new visitors to its recreational opportunities, natural settings, and cultural offerings.

During the GSW workshops, community participants provided numerous ideas for marketing and promotional strategies. Although beyond ESF's scope of work, it is useful to list these ideas as potential elements of the implementation process (see *Marketing is KEY* and *Packaging Experiences under Public-Private Partnerships in the Recommendations* section)

The 'I Love NY' campaign and the Regional Office for Sustainable Tourism (ROOST) can be important sources of support. A well-designed internet presence will be critical in attracting international tourists and other visitors from outside New York.



STATE LAND MASTER PLAN IMPLICATIONS

In general, nearly all aspects of the GSW Recommendations and Strategy can be accomplished within the existing policies and regulations set forth in the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan (APSLMP) and Adirondack Park Agency Act. However, some new definitions and amendments to specific unit management plans (UMPs), or certain sections of APSLMP, may be needed (see Appendix VI for references). These include, but are not limited to, the following:

DEFINITION OF 'WILD LANDS COMPLEX'

As previously noted, the GSW project has used the concept of a **Wild Lands Complex** to reflect the interdependence of State lands and adjacent private and municipal lands for achieving multiple concurrent goals, including the protection of the Adirondack Park's natural resources and open space character, the promotion of local economic development through visitor tourism and recreation, and the design and maintenance of recreational infrastructure across both public and private land boundaries. The fundamental interdependence of public and private lands, and the need for stewardship that crosses landowner boundaries and simultaneously considers multiple objectives, is consistent with the intent of both the APSLMP and APA Act.

There is currently no definition or use of the term Wild Lands Complex in either the APSLMP or the APA Act. However, the DEC and APA recently identified five large landscape regions, or planning complexes, that combine multiple land types and management areas into larger planning units (Figure 2). The GSW effort served as the pilot project for enhancing recreational opportunities while also protecting ecological integrity at the larger scale of the complex, and is intended to serve as a potential model for future complex planning.

As needed and appropriate, the definitions for 'front-country' and 'back-country' might be considered as part of the Wild Lands Complex definition. However, these concepts, while familiar to many people can also vary widely in their meanings for different stakeholders, and therefore require further discussion and elucidation prior to their formal use in Park planning.

DEFINITION OF 'WILD LANDS COMPLEX MANAGEMENT PLAN'

There is no definition or use of this term in either the APSLMP or the APA Act. However, we note that the current definition for UMP development in Section 816 of the Act does not specifically exclude the notion of consolidating contiguous Forest Preserve units for planning and management purposes, nor does it provide guidance on how to incorporate ecosystem-based management principles and achieve other recreational objectives such as regional trail networks that extend across the boundaries of Forest Preserve units and private lands.

Amending certain sections of the APSLMP to include the definition and process steps to design and implement a **Wild Lands Complex Management Plan** can provide an opportunity to better

engage agencies and local communities in long-term, large-scale comprehensive planning for the Adirondack Park. Such an approach can incorporate both state lands and private lands in a more efficient and effective manner than the current unit-by-unit or public versus private lands divisions.

UMP AMENDMENTS TO ACCOMMODATE CERTAIN TRAIL USES

During the GSW project planning sessions, it became apparent that there are several situations that could necessitate amendments to individual UMPs, or specific sections the APSLMP, to accomplish the overall objectives of the [Adirondack Park Outdoor Recreation Enhancement Strategy](#) originally described by the DEC. Examples that illustrate such situations may include:

1. Classification of State land as ‘Wilderness’ that abuts state highways and thereby excludes the possibility of an adjacent snowmobile corridor due to topographical constraints. For example, the proposed snowmobile trail between Speculator and Indian Lake along NYS Route 30 is bounded by the West Canada Lake Wilderness to the west. Although the definition for ‘Wilderness’ permits in limited instances, snowmobile trails within 500’ of a public highway right-of-way, a suitable trail route would need to be located beyond that distance to accommodate a regional connection.
2. Some specialty trails, for example, mountain biking and cross-country skiing, are more attractive for recreational users when designed as use-specific high quality recreation experiences. Certain UMPs may need to be amended to permit mechanized (but non-motorized) uses of state land for mountain biking, or motorized grooming of cross-country ski trails on state land.
3. Hut-to-hut cross-country skiing is a major winter tourist attraction in other northeastern states and northern Europe, and has great potential in the park, but huts on state lands are currently prohibited. Specific UMP amendments, TRPs, or specific amendments to the APSLMP, may be needed to permit the use of temporary yurts or the like to accommodate these uses ([see High Quality Recreation Experiences in Recommendations section](#)).

TRAIL USE MODIFICATIONS THAT CROSS MULTIPLE FOREST PRESERVE UNITS

In the community workshops, various ideas were discussed that would require modifications of existing UMPs, and specific sections of the APSLMP, for the creation of specialized mountain biking trails, horse trails or snowmobile trails, or use of motorized tracked groomers for long-distance ski trails. In cases where a long-distance trail crosses multiple Forest Preserve units with different classifications (i.e., Wilderness, Primitive, Wild Forest, etc.), the development of such a network could be accomplished by a singular amendment to the APSLMP, by amending multiple UMPs at the same time, or by introducing a new planning step that considers individual trails or features as whole entities in addition to the existing UMP process.

CHALLENGES OF COMPLEX PLANNING

Many regions of the U.S. have significant experience with large landscape, or complex, planning (see Montgomery, Carleton, 'Regional Planning for a Sustainable America; How Creative Programs Are Promoting Prosperity and Saving the Environment', Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, NJ, 2010.) Collectively, there have been many lessons learned from these regional planning processes, many of which have guided the GSW process. The following list is taken from regional planning literature and experiences, with more specific examples from the GSW. This section may serve to guide the ongoing efforts in the GSW and across the Adirondack Park as future complex planning projects are undertaken. These challenges include:

WORKING ACROSS JURISDICTIONAL BOUNDARIES WITH PEOPLE THAT HAVE DIVERSE VALUES AND OBJECTIVES, YET SHARE A COMMON PLACE

The GSW project was directed and facilitated by a technical team from SUNY-ESF contracted by the DEC and funded through the EPF. The ESF team included faculty and graduate students from the Syracuse campus and staff from the ESF Adirondack Ecological Center in Newcomb.

The DEC's primary mandate is the care and custody of the nearly 1.3 million acres of the GSW that is part of the Forest Preserve. In addition, the DEC oversees state-financed conservation easements on private forest lands. In the GSW region, DEC personnel are divided between Regions V and VI, as well as between supervisory lines of the Division of Lands and Forests (e.g., UMP planners), and Division of Law Enforcement, and Forest Protection (e.g., environmental conservation officers and forest rangers). A variety of DEC personnel were active in the data gathering, data validation and planning efforts throughout the GSW process.

The APA's primary mandate is to administer the Adirondack Park land use and development plan for private lands. Together, the APA and DEC act in consultation with each other to generate UMPs in compliance with the APSLMP and APA Act. Representatives from the APA state land department also participated throughout the GSW project.

Other state agencies had peripheral connections with the GSW project. The Department of State (DOS) funded the Adirondack Community Trails and Lodging System (ACTLS), which focuses on hut-to-hut and lodge-to-lodge connections among local communities. The Department of Transportation (DOT) has offered assistance on roadside signage, parking, etc.

Other jurisdictional levels within the GSW include NYS counties, including: Hamilton and parts of Herkimer, Fulton, Saratoga, Warren and Essex Counties. Thanks to the active participation by the Chair of the Hamilton County Board of Supervisors, the ESF team was able to maintain key communications with state, county and local town government officials.

Due to the geographic distances, jurisdictional overlaps, logistical and communications challenges, and technical complexities of managing a project of this scope and magnitude, the

key parties (DEC, ESF, APA and Hamilton County) formed a ‘core group’ which consulted on a regular basis to review progress, adjust activities and schedules, resolve conflicts, etc.

A key ingredient in the GSW project was *local community participation in all phases*, from data gathering and assessment to discussions about how to partner with each others’ communities and the state agencies to successfully implement the final strategy. In contrast to a typical UMP process (Figure 12), the GSW project asked for wide-ranging input from local community members on existing and potential trail networks prior to developing a plan. In addition, ESF facilitated the community participation sessions with DEC and APA personnel as participants; this technique reduced tensions around the agencies’ mandates which might have constrained conversations about potential trail connections and other recreational uses. Finally, numerous special interest groups also participated in the community sessions. The groups ranged from environmental advocacy non-profits, snowmobile clubs, sportsmen associations, local trail clubs, chambers of commerce, etc.

Despite a high level of public engagement throughout the project, there was still some criticism about who was or was not 'at the table.' This highlights a need for continued access by the public in the design and implementation process, as new voices will seek representation and influence.

FINDING A BALANCE BETWEEN ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY, COMMUNITY NEEDS, AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Although there has been a perennial debate over this issue in past decades, the tenor of the conversation is shifting in the Adirondack Park, in large part due to the work of the Common Ground Alliance and its goal of finding solutions that benefit the Park’s communities and economies, as well as protecting the environment. The Forest Preserve and environmental quality of the region are often described as the Adirondack’s competitive advantage and an important economic asset for local communities. The GSW project appears to be having a positive impact due to its coupling with the DEC’s openness in asking for community input, local leaders responding as partners, and a receptive governor who is encouraging appropriate development in the region.

Environmental advocacy groups have, however, raised concerns about the GSW project’s primary focus of developing a regional trail network to the perceived detriment of environmental quality. ESF’s mission is related to environmental quality and thus ESF has compiled a comprehensive Adirondack Regional Geographic Information System (ARGIS) over the past 10 years containing multiple layers of environmental data for the GSW region. ESF also manages the NYS Natural Heritage Program database. This allows ESF and planners to address ecological sensitivity during implementation stages.

WORKING KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE ECOLOGICAL STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION OF LARGE LANDSCAPE COMPLEXES

Though the ARGIS and NYS Natural Heritage Program databases exist and are accessible, these resources have been used relatively little by DEC staffers engaged in day-to-day unit management activities and planning. UMPs provide detailed narrative descriptions of natural and cultural features, but this information alone is not adequate. Maps and spatial data are essential to operationalize this knowledge in land planning activities. A key dilemma that continues to persist is how best to transfer that knowledge (and tools for its use) to the DEC, APA, local officials and other decision-makers. For example, it was apparent in a September 2015 GSW workshop with DEC planners that many were unaware that the Adirondack Regional GIS Portal – a web-map (www.argis.org) funded by DEC in partnership with ESF and many other organizations – existed or how it could be accessed to support UMP efforts. Regular professional training opportunities and agency support for ongoing data curation are potential solutions to this dilemma.

CAPACITY TO ORGANIZE, ACHIEVE AND ADVOCATE FOR COMMON GOALS

Beyond the current scope of work and immediate activities of the GSW project, the lack of state agency and local capacity to continue community-level designs and secure funds for the implementation phase is a major challenge. As one community workshop participant aptly stated, “In the past, DEC was going to do it all. Now, DEC is looking for partnerships. These trails will not happen unless organizations and communities collaborate to build and/or maintain them.” The DEC’s encouragement of local community partnerships combined with the vested interests of those communities may be able to overcome this critical obstacle.

STRATEGY TO FACILITATE COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION AMONG DIVERSE INTERESTS AND ACROSS GEOGRAPHIC DISTANCES

The geographic dispersion of the rural Adirondack communities has engendered a laudable historic characteristic of economic self-sufficiency. The GSW project’s core theme of **Connectivity** is a significantly different direction for many communities, who sometimes believe they are competing for tourism dollars, rather than competing globally and collectively for those tourists’ dollars.

There is growing awareness about the need to collaborate to overcome this challenge, and many potential partnerships and programs were presented throughout the GSW Project (see **Public-Private Partnerships in Recommendations** section). ROOST and other local Chambers of Commerce are actively developing partnerships to advance these concepts, but are often limited in geographic scope, or their services are out of reach for many Adirondack communities.

IMPROVED POLICY AND MANAGEMENT TOOLS TO IMPLEMENT DESIRED CHANGES

It is commendable that the DEC has embarked on complex planning for the Adirondack Park in collaboration with the APA and local communities. The GSW project is an experiment and has identified potential legal impediments that need to be addressed to allow for the successful implementation of this strategy, either by amending individual UMPs or by amending the APSLMP (see *State Land Master Plan Implications* section).

FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Beyond the life of the current GSW project, there is no additional funding in place to initiate implementation actions identified by this strategy. This situation has the potential to erode the local communities' enthusiasm and engagement in the process. When DEC accepts the GSW Final Strategy, ongoing conversations with local leaders to secure the necessary resources for implementation are recommended.

Several potential sources of support were identified during community meetings, including: additional EPF funds directed toward the GSW trail network construction, support from Governor Cuomo for Excelsior Conservation Corps to build trails and other infrastructure, Town/DEC partnerships under TRPs to build and maintain trails (e.g., Simonds Pond Trail Improvement Society, Upper Hudson Trail Alliance, local chapters of the Adirondack Mountain Club, snowmobile clubs, etc.).



ONLINE INTERACTIVE WEB-MAP ACCESS

To facilitate future public engagement with the GSW Strategy, and to promote the critical next steps of design and implementation, ESF has partnered with AdirondackAtlas.org to share the GSW Recommendations and related map data online here:

<http://greatsouthwoods.adirondackatlas.org>

By opening the above link in a web browser – *we strongly recommend using Chrome, Safari or Firefox* – users can explore the GSW Recommendations and related map data.

In the collapsible sidebar on the left, users can find and access the content in the map. The GSW Recommendations are found in the **Features** tab to the left, by scrolling through the list or by performing a search to filter the results. Hovering the mouse cursor over the name of the feature will highlight (in yellow) that route in the map. Clicking anywhere on the name of the feature will automatically zoom the map to the feature and bring up its narrative description (and map) from this GSW Recommendations document.

Additional map layers, such as hotels, restaurants and points of interest, may be accessed via the **Catalog**. We have provided ‘GSW Proposed Networks’ as a map layer, which shows the complete regional (green) and local (blue) networks, with red lines indicating where new trail must be constructed.

All other map layers in the **Catalog** are provided by AdirondackAtlas.org, which maintains an extensive regional database. These are **not** GSW data products and therefore neither ESF nor DEC is responsible for their accuracy.

The GSW project has provided the map layers found in the **Features** tab, and the Proposed Networks folder in the **Catalog**. Together these layers include all of the features described in the Maps and Narratives section (pages R-1 through R-59) of this document.

The **Active** tab shows the layers currently visible in the map and provides map controls for reordering (or ‘re-stacking’) the layers, adjusting their opacity, etc. Use the ‘trash can’ icon to remove the layer from the map.

We note that the online interactive map does not include all of the data collected during the GSW participatory process. The GIS inventory of recreation assets developed by the GSW project is not found here, but may be available upon request from NYS DEC.

Maps are intended to inform future planning, will be subject to revision, and do not necessarily represent current or future priorities. The ideas presented online are conceptual and locations of points and routes are approximate.

APPENDIX I: DEC PROPOSED PLANNING COMPLEXES LAND COVER

The following table describes the land cover area (km²) for each planning complex, according to the 2011 National Land Cover Database. The analysis was conducted using the Identity and Summary Statistics tools in ArcGIS 10.3.

NLCD Classification	Great South Woods	Battleground Lakes	Cloudsplitter Summits	Northern River Highlands	Oswegatchie -Black Waters
Open Water	371.8	470.0	67.5	252.3	313.0
Developed, Open Space	92.8	102.0	38.6	69.7	16.5
Developed, Low Intensity	12.7	31.4	9.5	9.5	1.9
Developed, Medium Intensity	2.9	9.1	2.6	2.9	0.7
Developed High Intensity	0.6	2.1	0.7	0.8	0.2
Barren Land (Rock/Sand/Clay)	12.9	2.9	3.9	6.9	5.8
Deciduous Forest	4359.0	908.6	1048.0	2892.3	2294.4
Evergreen Forest	1591.8	941.1	988.0	1238.3	574.6
Mixed Forest	1046.8	468.6	510.0	304.7	248.2
Shrub/Scrub	158.2	32.7	23.1	165.4	181.5
Grassland/Herbaceous	15.6	10.3	9.3	43.3	5.3
Pasture/Hay	10.5	77.5	4.8	45.7	0.9
Cultivated Crops	7.0	72.0	10.7	17.9	0.5
Woody Wetlands	397.8	119.1	78.5	387.8	228.6
Emergent Herbaceous Wetlands	46.6	11.6	7.4	27.7	33.0
Total Area:	8126.9	3258.9	2802.4	5465.2	3905.1

APPENDIX II: METHODOLOGY

The GSW Complex Planning project represents a different approach to recreation planning that:

- **Facilitates and incorporates a high degree of public engagement to gather local knowledge and community-driven ideas into recreation planning**
- **Expands the geographic scope of planning efforts from small units to larger complexes or landscapes, allowing for a more holistic perspective and the design of high quality recreation infrastructure that meets multiple objectives.**

I. KICKOFF MEETING

The launch of the Great South Woods (GSW) Complex Planning Project occurred during a formal Kickoff Meeting, held 5:30-8:30 pm in the gymnasium of the Lake Pleasant Central School in Speculator. The purpose of this meeting was to introduce and raise awareness about the project by reaching out to various Adirondack stakeholders, in particular local community members and leaders. The meeting began with an introductory presentation that outlined the project objectives, goals, methods, and partners, and was followed by facilitated small-group exercises (Table 1). Participants were organized in small groups based on coded folder colors.

The first exercise asked participants to identify GSW recreation destinations as 1) common or absent, 2) unique, and 3) to describe the infrastructure (i.e., already existing, or in need of re-design or maintenance) associated with each destination. Participants were encouraged to think broadly about activities that constitute recreation and associated destinations, and were given a worksheet and time to record their thoughts privately if they desired. After the break, participants were reshuffled for the second exercise and asked to draw connecting arrows on simplified paper maps indicating existing and potential connections among communities and recreation destinations. During both exercises ESF facilitators recorded group ideas on large notepads. At the end of the meeting, facilitators synthesized and reported key ideas and discussion points back to the larger group. Before the meeting concluded, participants were encouraged to complete an exit survey, which was used to evaluate the meeting activities and overall process. Participants were also given a Perspectives Matrix, which was used to guide a reflection on recreation assets, defining features, opportunities for enhancing, and changes to avoid at the community and regional scales. Participant comments that were important to the project, but outside the scope of the meeting exercises, were recorded at the "Trailhead," a stand-alone station with large notepad.

The Kickoff meeting was instrumental in the success of subsequent GSW public meetings. Many who participated in the Kickoff meeting returned and participated in additional GSW meetings and continued to engage in the broader project. Key decisions regarding the methods and objectives of subsequent meetings were based on feedback gathered across the core team and through exit surveys, including the decision to focus meetings on facilitated, small-group, map-based exercises.

Table 1: Overview of GSW Kickoff Meeting structure and materials.

Meeting Item	Paper Materials (Appendix I)	Other Materials
1. Arrival and Registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant Folders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Agenda ○ Perspectives matrix ○ Contact information ○ Exercise 1 worksheet ○ Exercise 2 maps ○ GSW Reference maps (4) ○ Blank notes sheet ○ Exit survey • Sign-in sheet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name tags • Pens • Folders and colored stickers
2. Project Introductions - 25 min	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GSW, ACTLS, and GIS mapping presentations • Computer/projector
3. Meeting Outline and General Instructions - 5 min	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation on best etiquette for brainstorming and discussions • Computer/projector • Large notepad for "Trailhead"
4. Exercise 1: Recreation Destinations and Access - 45 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise 1 worksheet • Reference maps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large notepad • Black markers
5. Break - 20 min	None	None
6. Exercise 2: Connections among Communities Via the Forest Preserve - 45 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise 2 maps • Reference maps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large notepad • Black markers
7. Facilitators Report Back - 15 min	None	None
8. Concluding Remarks and Reminders - 10 min	None	None
9. Exit Survey - 5 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Printed Survey 	None

2. DATA COLLECTION WORKSHOPS

Workshop design and materials were carefully prepared by SUNY-ESF, in partnership with ACTLS, in order to 1) *gather local knowledge about recreational assets* and 2) *generate ideas regarding potential new trails, lodging, and recreational opportunities*.

The large expanse of the GSW was divided into sub-areas to coordinate 5 Local Knowledge Workshops (LKW). William Farber provided initial contacts in the towns of Blue Mountain Lake, Long Lake, North Creek, Northville, Old Forge, Ohio, and Piseco. Contacts were emailed a project overview and description of the needs for upcoming public workshops. Locations and dates were determined based on the availability of necessary partners, the suitability of the

location for attracting participants, and in order to avoid conflicts with local events (Table 2). For each meeting, different communities were selected in order to disperse workshops across the GSW, while providing access to main population centers. Additional logistics (e.g., room arrangement, building access, and internet) for each location were discussed and finalized through follow-up phone calls and emails. Each meeting was advertised through an official DEC and ESF-approved press release, which was circulated to local news outlets and provided as a link on the project website. Personal invitations were sent through an ESF-maintained email list, which consisted of local town leaders, guides, professional recreation services, and any individual who previously expressed an interest in the GSW Project.

Table 2: GSW meetings scheduled from December 2014 to March 2015

Community	Location	Meeting	Date	Time (pm)
Speculator	Lake Pleasant Central School	Kickoff	12/17/14	5:30-8:30
Piseco	Piseco School Gymnasium	LKW	1/28/15	6-8
Old Forge	Library Community Room	LKW	2/25/15	5:30-7:30
Long Lake	Long Lake Central School Gymnasium	LKW	3/2/15	6-8
North Creek	Tannery Pond Community Center	LKW	3/9/15	6-8
Northville	Northville Central School Cafeteria	LKW	3/16/15	6-8

Following the model developed during the Kickoff meeting, general meeting structure for LKW consisted of introductory presentations and materials, followed by two facilitated exercises that relied on printed maps (Table 3). The first exercise was designed to collect information on additional or erroneous *existing* recreation trails and infrastructure, essentially asking participants to add or edit existing information on the base map. Participants were given a worksheet and the time to respond to this exercise privately, before group notes were recorded by the facilitator(s).

The second exercise allowed participants to identify *proposed* recreation opportunities by constructing new or leveraging existing infrastructure to enhance connections between recreation destinations and communities. For each proposed recreation opportunity, participants were asked to complete a project ‘proposal’ worksheet identifying the mode(s) of use, type of connection, and the destinations and communities associated with the opportunity, along with any other important details. Participants also had the option of providing their contact information on this worksheet.

Both exercises organized participants into small-group stations of 5-10 individuals and allowed them to sketch on large-format printed maps. Exercises occurred under the guidance of 1-2 GSW or ACTLS facilitators, using the mapping guide to sketch features on large-format maps while also recording detailed information on a large notepad. Similar to the Kickoff meeting, LKW utilized a "Trailhead" station to capture broader participant comments, as well as an exit survey to continue to evaluate meeting design and structure.

Paper maps were a key material throughout the GSW Project. During LKW, both small-group exercises relied on a series of base maps to collect and communicate information about recreation infrastructure. The GSW planning area was represented across four regional base maps (1:63,360; 3'x4'; Figure 1) that depicted the planning region and Adirondack Park boundaries, as well as the location of existing recreation infrastructure, communities, state land classifications, and easements. Community maps were initially prepared at a smaller scale (1:30,000; 3'x4') for the Piseco workshop, and were further reduced in size and scale for subsequent LKW (1:10,000-36,358; 8.5"x11"). Community maps focused on the extent of each community in the GSW, and used a topographic layer in addition to the recreation and landscape information depicted on the regional maps.

Table 3: Overview of Local Knowledge Workshop structure and materials.

Meeting Item	Paper Materials (Appendix II)	Other Materials
1. Arrival and Registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant Packet <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Agenda ○ Contact information ○ Exercise 1 worksheet ○ Mapping guide ○ Extent-indicator map ○ Exit survey • Sign-in sheet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name tags • Pens
2. Project Introductions - 20 min	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GSW and ACTLS presentations • Computer/projector
3. Meeting Outline and General Instructions - 10 min	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation on best etiquette for brainstorming and discussions • Computer/projector • Large notepad for "Trailhead"
4. Exercise 1: Destinations and Assets - 30 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 Regional maps • Various community maps • Mapping guide • Worksheet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large notepad • Black and red markers • Pencils
5. Break - 10 min	None	None
6. Exercise 2: Making Connections - 40 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 Regional maps • Various community maps • Mapping guide • Project proposal worksheets • Project proposal example 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large notepad • Blue markers • Pencils
7. Concluding Remarks - 5 min	None	None
8. Exit Survey - 5 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Printed survey 	None

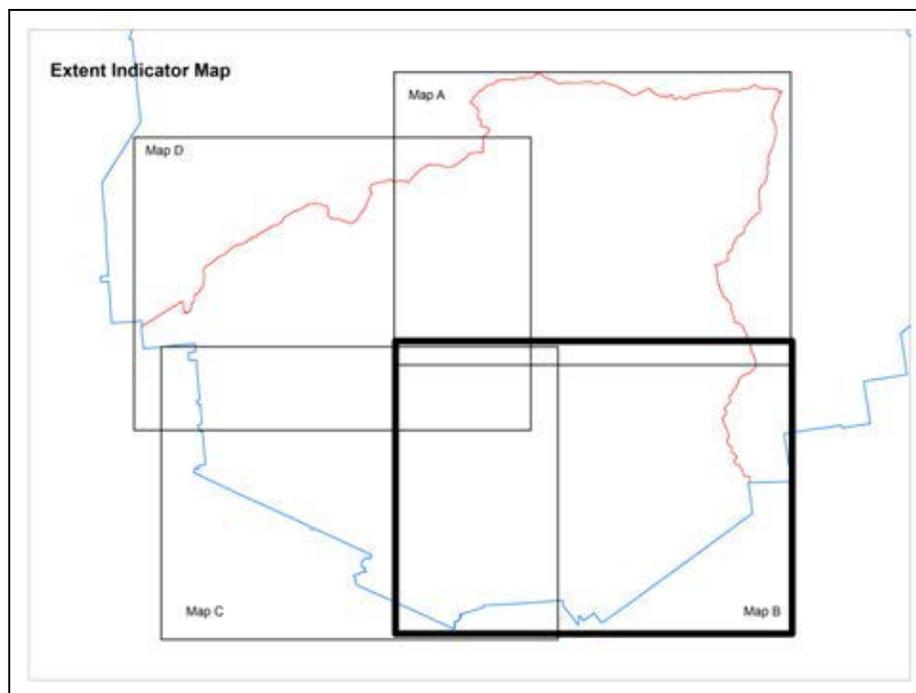


Figure 1: Regional map extents used in GSW workshops. The GSW complex is indicated by the red boundary to the north and east, and by the Adirondack Park boundary (Blue Line) elsewhere. Map B is highlighted for a workshop occurring within this map's extent.

The GSW Project followed an adaptive approach to each meeting structure, and made adjustments to methods and materials as needed. The first workshop organized participants into eight stations, with five stations focused on the most relevant regional map and related large-format community maps, and one station for each of the three remaining regional maps and related community maps. Considering the costs of printing large-format maps and organizing facilitators for stations, and participant's limited interest in community maps, subsequent LKW consisted of five stations focused on the same localized regional map with two maps per station, one station with the three remaining regional maps, and one station with smaller community maps. This adjustment eliminated one full station and the need to print over a dozen 3'x4' color maps. Additional changes included an evolving list of codes, featured on the mapping guide (Appendix II) for recording features both on the map and in detail on notepads, as well as refining our directions (verbal and through reference materials) for marking the paper maps.

Over a four-month period, more than 230 individuals engaged in the GSW planning process and contributed their knowledge about recreation across the region (Table 4). Participants at each meeting largely represented communities from inside the planning region (Figure 2), and actively participated in both exercises. Individuals with a vested interest in recreation across the planning area came forward to specifically engage with the GSW project, including William Ingersoll and advocates for the North Country National Scenic Trail.

Table 4: GSW public meeting attendance and participants from GSW region

Community	ESF Staff	ACTLS Staff	Participants	Residents of GSW Planning Area
Speculator	12	2	76	54%
Piseco	8	3	27	48%
Old Forge	12	3	28	50%
Long Lake	10	3	27	48%
North Creek	9	6	51	67%
Northville	11	6	23	44%
Total:			232	Average: 51%

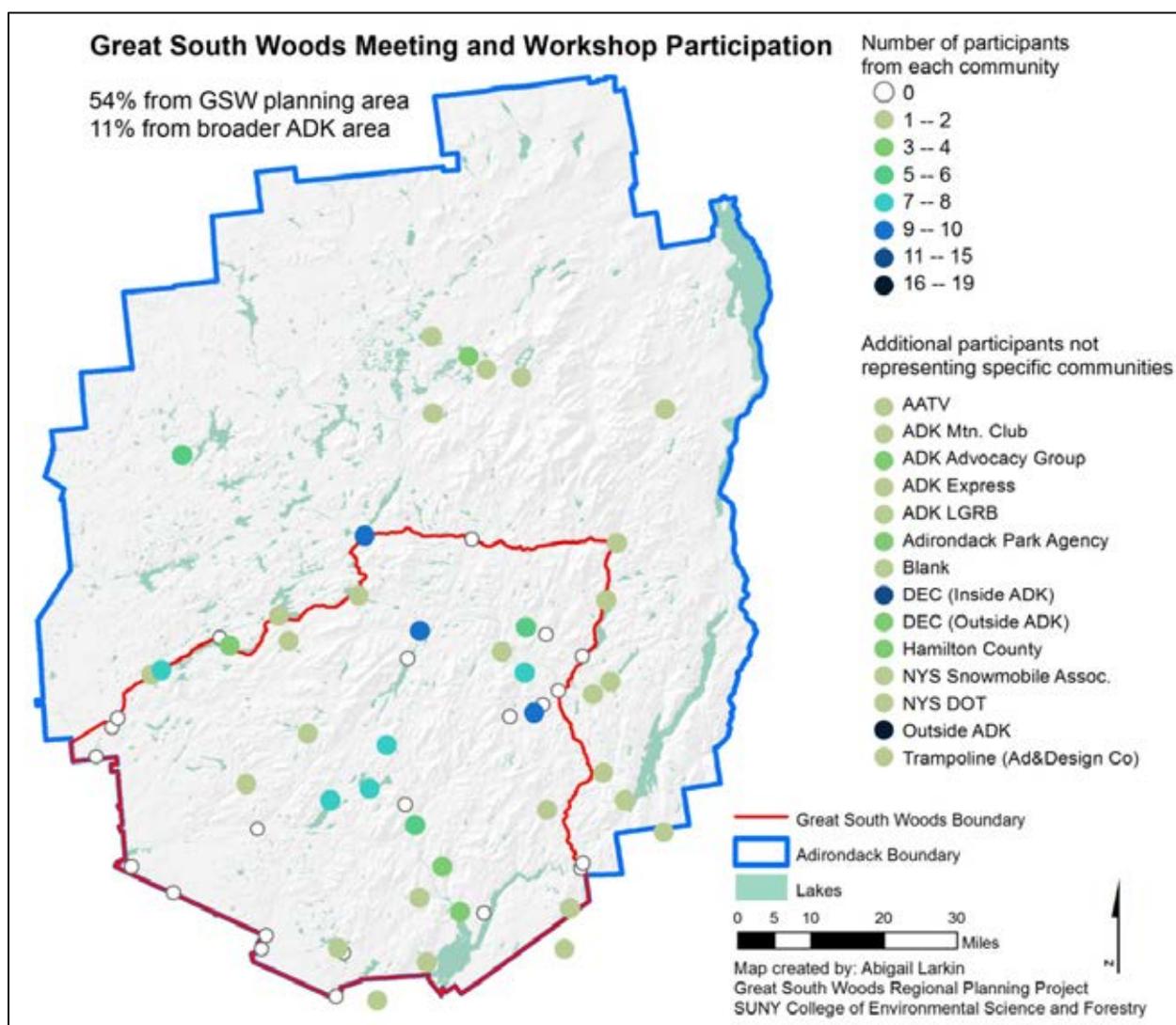


Figure 2: Public participation in GSW Kickoff Meeting and Local Knowledge Workshops.

3. DATA DIGITIZATION

A majority of the information collected during LKW was digitally processed and recorded as GIS data by the GSW-ESF project staff. As the first step in recording information, the GSW-ESF project staff took digital photos of all maps and notepads prior to leaving the workshop location. All handouts, exit surveys and proposal worksheets were digitally scanned.

Each regional and community map that contained sketched information was collected, processed through a large-format scanner and georeferenced using Quantum GIS. The georeferenced map was used as a guide for digitizing, i.e., recording each sketch on the map as a spatial feature in a shapefile layer. Spatial features were recorded as point, line, or polygon geometries resulting in three separate shapefile layers. Polygons were converted to points or lines when possible to reduce spatial overlap across features. Digitization occurred throughout the schedule of LKW and lasted approximately 5-6 weeks. Once digitized, each spatial feature was attributed with the information recorded on the large notepads and worksheets, indicating the use of the feature, specific points of interest, maintenance issues, etc. These notes were sometimes used to validate the location of the feature based on matching guidebook or online descriptions. The integrity of the original sketch was maintained whenever possible, and described to the best of our ability. This sometimes resulted in multiple and overlapping features, as well as unclear features. Any uncertainties regarding the intention of a sketch were discussed with the group's facilitator and with other GSW team members.

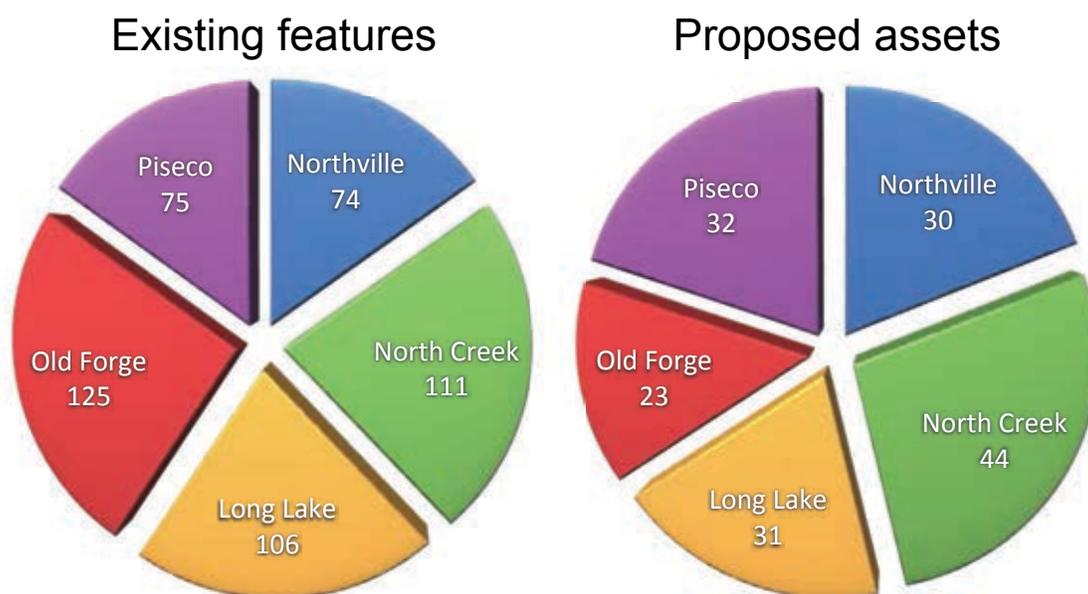


Figure 3: Summary of data collected on existing features and proposed recreation assets at Local Knowledge Workshops held from January-March 2015.

The digitization process resulted in GIS shapefiles containing a total of 650 features that represent existing (491) and proposed (168) recreation points and lines, ranging from long distance hiking trails to hand boat launch sites to community-organized ice skating. The majority of these features represented existing assets (Figure 3) that are not currently represented in the official DEC assets GIS layer. The remaining proposed features supported opportunities for hiking (42%), followed by skiing (20%) or multi-use recreation (14%) (Figure 4). Other categories included snowmobiling, biking, canoeing, parking, camping, horseback riding, fishing, or tobogganing (Figure 4).

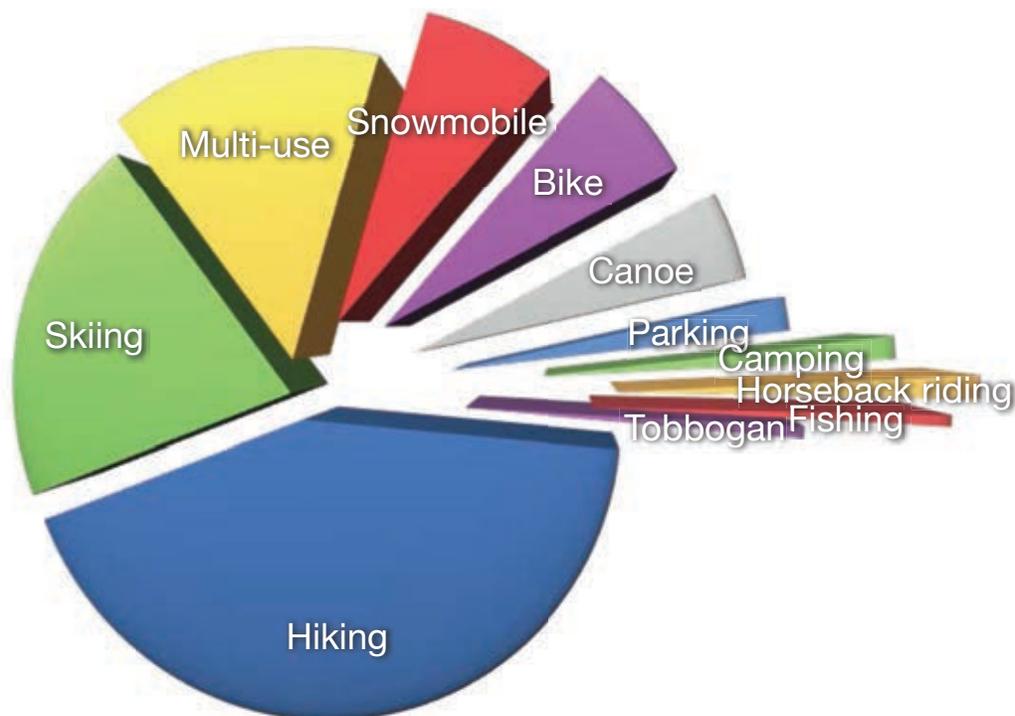


Figure 4: Types of recreation activities proposed by participants in GSW workshops.

4. DATA VALIDATION

All features indicated as existing, but not currently included in official DEC GIS layers, required validation by DEC staff or other recreation experts. Proposed features were *not* subject to validation or DEC / expert review. In April 2015, GSW-ESF project staff met with nine representatives from the Northville, Warrensburg, and Herkimer DEC regional offices and two representatives from the DEC Albany office, at a DEC facility in Indian Lake to implement a validation protocol. The intention was to package enough materials and information for a small group of DEC representatives, who would return to their regional offices and facilitate participation from other staff to complete the activities.

Data validation protocol had three main components or activities for DEC staff to complete: 1) *Review and validate local workshop information*, 2) *Identify additional, existing recreation*

features and points of interest, and 3) Identify 'proposed' and 'approved' UMP projects. A validation package (paper and digital copies) included maps of official DEC assets (points and lines) and features digitized by GSW-ESF project staff, as well as tabular data describing each feature digitized by GSW-ESF project staff (Appendix III). Regional staff were encouraged to record changes on the paper maps and provide corresponding details about these or other changes on the tabular data sheets. It was expected that regional staff would provide an authoritative review of the features added/digitized by GSW-ESF project staff, and would indicate any additional features or planned projects (e.g., in current or draft UMPs) that had not yet been included in the GSW inventory.

Any features not reviewed by DEC staff was reviewed by GSW-ESF project staff using internet and guide-book searches, as well as personal experiences and group consensus. The validation process lasted two months, with data digitization requiring an additional week beyond the last date that materials were returned from DEC offices (Table 5). Each regional office was provided the opportunity to review the full extent of DEC assets and features digitized by GSW-ESF project staff, although reviews were likely focused in each office's management area; therefore some efforts may have been duplicated across offices (Table 5). All changes indicated by DEC regional staff were made to the digitized (GIS) features by the GSW-ESF project team, while the original features were maintained as references in a digital audit table.

Table 5: Summary of DEC and ESF data validation efforts for the GSW project.

	Warrensburg	Northville	Herkimer	GSW-ESF	Total
Date Completed	5/20/15	5/29/15	6/19/15	7/9/15	
Features Validated	16	116	19	61	212
Features Removed	8	35	2	38	83
Features Added (total)	43	67	6	0	116
DEC proposed/approved features	6	8	0	0	14

One key benefit to working with DEC staff was the opportunity to identify spatial locations of projects that were officially 'proposed' or 'approved' in Unit Management Plans (UMP). Working with the 'DEC_UMP Approved_Projects Database.xlsx,' GSW-ESF project staff was able to sort and filter the records to only map those projects relevant to the objectives of the GSW effort. By filtering for the uncompleted projects in the Adirondack Park on State land units in the GSW, the database reduced from 1699 records to 363, 44 of which were tentatively geo-located by GSW-ESF project staff (Work Type=Trail). Of the remaining 319 projects, 148 were determined to have the potential for geolocation. It should be noted the most recent "Year Approved" value in this database was 2012, and it did not contain Essex Chain or the Hudson Gorge (and therefore did not reflect potential or approved projects in these draft UMPs).

In order to identify any Proposed Features indicated during LKW that might be associated with DEC officially 'proposed' or 'approved' projects, GSW-ESF project staff conducted a 'Select by Location' analysis in ArcGIS allowing for many-to-many matches (See example in Figure 5). This analysis selected any proposed point or line features, including DEC proposed/approved projects identified during LKW or data validation, within a mile of the 44 geo-located DEC 'proposed' or 'approved' projects. This analysis resulted in 88 'many-to-many' spatial matches, where multiple geo-located DEC projects were within a mile of multiple proposed point or line features. The potential for association was qualitatively categorized based on a similarity of description, use type, or appropriate location. Results indicate as many as six likely matches between proposed features indicated during LKW and geo-located DEC projects (Table 6). For improved accuracy, this analysis and its results should be reviewed by the DEC.

Table 6: Potential for association between features proposed during GSW LKW and geo-located DEC proposed/approved projects.

Match Category	Description	Number of Matches
Yes	LKW proposed feature satisfies geo-located DEC project description (3 out of 6 were explicitly recorded as 'DEC Projects' through LKW or data validation)	6
Partial	LKW proposed feature contributes in some part to the larger geo-located DEC project	12
Possible	LKW proposed feature is loosely related to geo-located DEC project, and could be incorporated.	16
Unlikely	LKW proposed feature and geo-located DEC project appear unrelated, but could potentially relate.	15
No	LKW proposed feature and geo-located DEC project are not related.	39
	TOTAL:	88

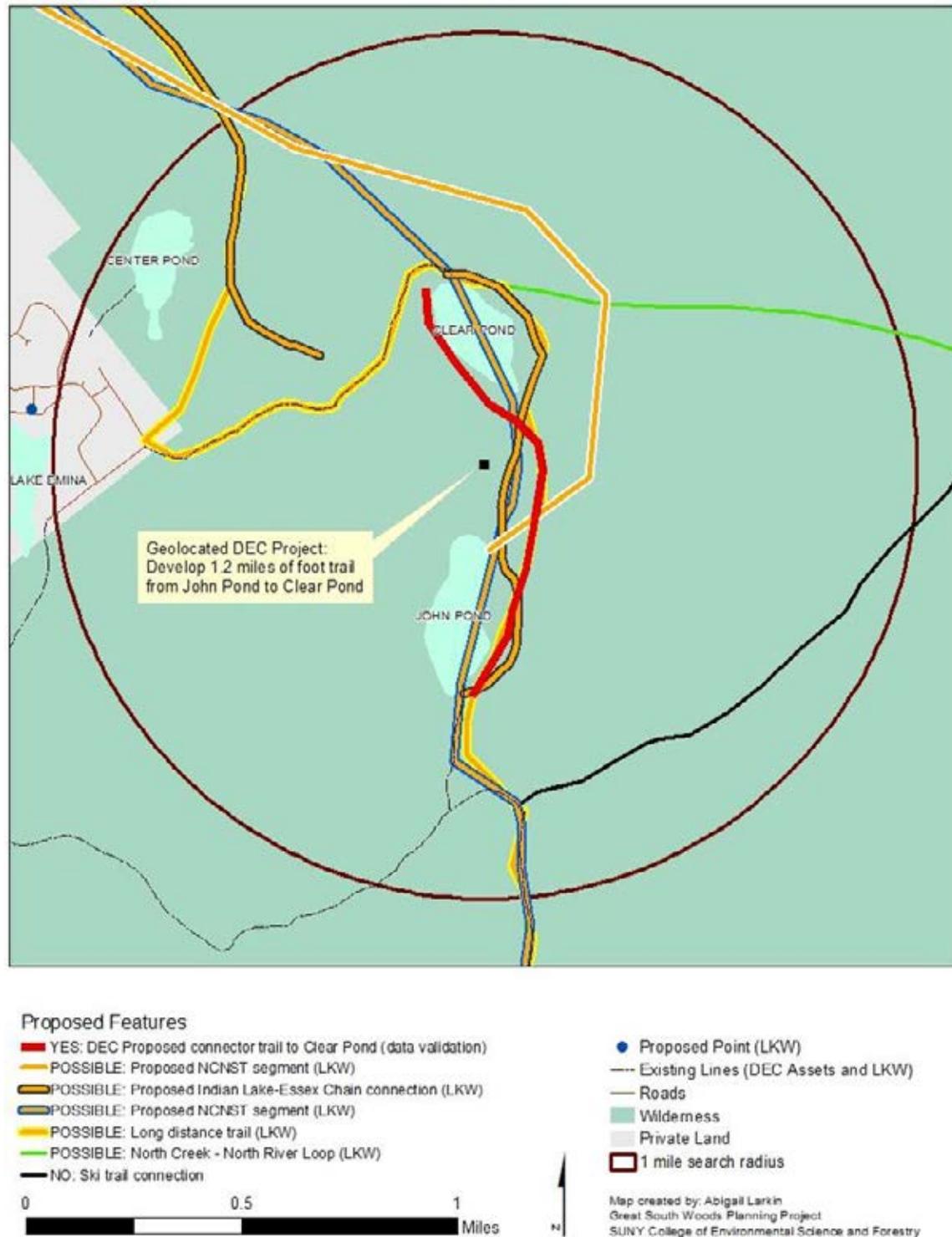


Figure 5: The following map illustrates the 'select by location' analysis performed between 1) the geo-located DEC proposed/approved projects and 2) proposed features identified during LKW. The circle indicates the search radius around the geo-located DEC project, and selected proposed features are categorized by the potential for association with the geo-located DEC project.

5. DATA PRODUCT GENERATION

The main objectives of conducting LKW were to 1) *gather local knowledge about recreational assets* and 2) *generate ideas regarding potential new trails, lodging, and recreational opportunities*. All workshop-generated information that addressed these objectives was digitized, validated, and compiled as a GIS inventory for the GSW region. This data product contains an immense amount of information with the capacity (using GIS) for technically assessing individual and categorical features based on spatial and relational attributes (Figure 6).

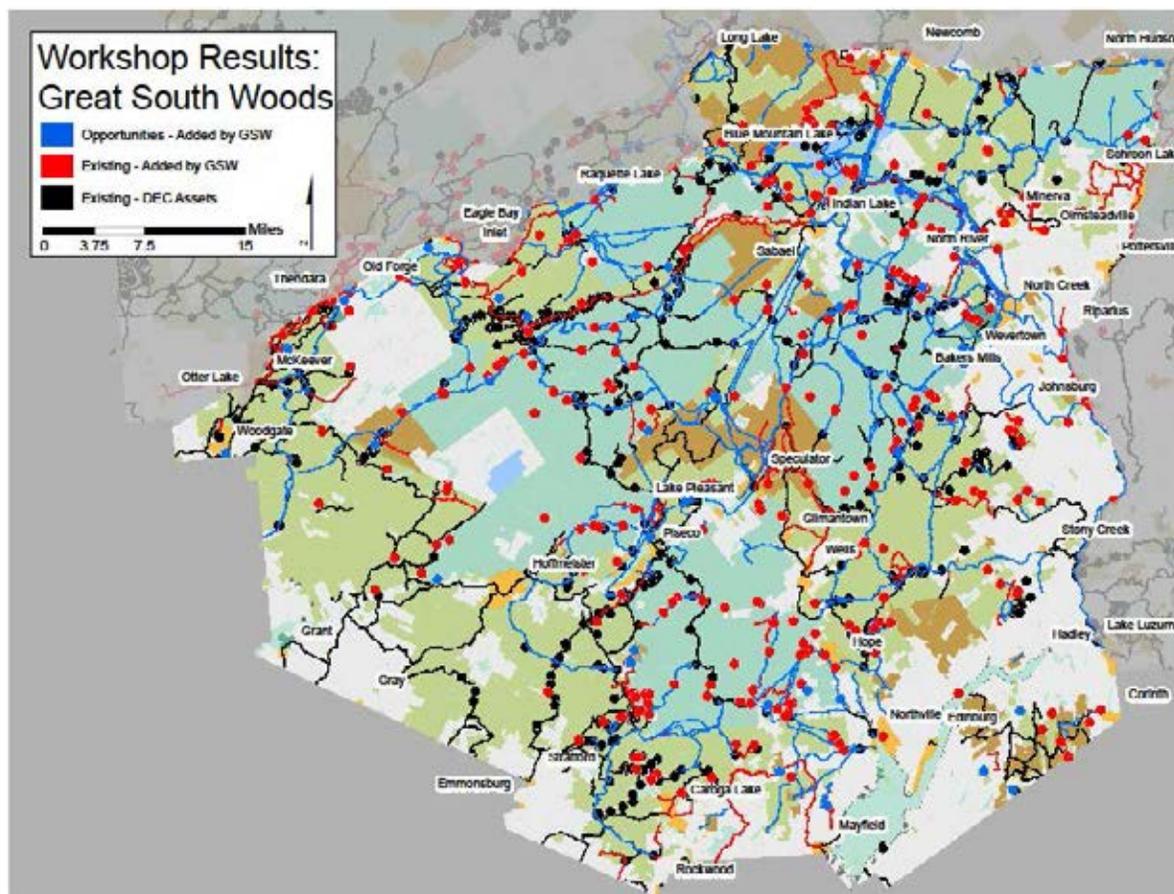


Figure 6: Map representation of GSW data product, depicting three categories of features.

The resulting GSW GIS Inventory consists of 9869 points and line segments (as of 11/30/15), stored and managed as shapefile layers in a relational geodatabase (Table 7). Although information generated at LKW is specific to the GSW region, the GIS Inventory contains all existing DEC recreational assets across New York State. Each point and line segment can be associated various attributes, such as source/author, status, and use-type, as well as detailed descriptions and notes. Each feature has a unique identifier which can be used to relate various attribute tables. Relational and geographic queries can be constructed to assess each feature's length and location, proximity to other features or communities, or association with certain landscape characteristics such as state land classification or unit (See Section: Leveraging the

GSW Process & GIS Tools). Similarly, maps can be designed to specifically display the status, use-type, or data source, as well as query results.

Table7: Main content categories of the GSW data product.

Feature Status	Point (#)	Line Segments (#)	Total Length (mi)	Average Length (mi)
EXISTING DEC Assets	751	401	1573	2.7
EXISTING GSW-added Assets*	287	126	443	3.5
PROPOSED GSW-added Assets**	40	161	1322	8.2
TOTAL	1078	688	3338	

**Includes features with the following status: Verify, Private, Town, Commercial.*
***Includes official DEC Proposed Projects collected through LKW and DEC validation.*

5.1 DATA DELIVERABLES: GIS PRODUCTS

At the conclusion of this project, the GSW data products generated by ESF will be provided to the DEC via the following shapefiles:

- **GSW Inventory:** includes all existing DEC Assets, existing features added by the GSW process and validated by the DEC, all non-validated features, and all features proposed through the GSW process (point and line layers).
- **GSW Recommendations and Strategy:** includes components of the local and regional networks, developed by the GSW-ESF project team with Core Team input.

5.2 DATA DELIVERABLES: ONLINE INTERACTIVE MAP

The GSW Final Strategy will be accessible to the DEC and general public through an online, interactive web-map. Accessing the data product online affords users the ability to select tailored extents, unique combinations of data layers, and to zoom in, out, and around the GSW region.

6. MOVING FROM DATA GENERATION TO REGIONAL PLANNING

As a collaborative project across agencies and institutions, the GSW Project required multiple forms of meetings to review process steps and results, and move forward toward outcomes that would generate regional planning recommendations. A timeline of these meetings can be found in Table 8. Many of these meetings consisted of some or all members of the Core Team via web or phone conferences. In-person meetings were limited due to travel considerations. A few

additional means of engaging within the project team, with the general public, and with specific communities will be described further in the following section.

Table 8: Overview and timeline of additional project engagement.

Date	Location	Topic(s)/Goal	Attendance
9/16/14	Conference Call	Project business	Core Team
10/09/14	Syracuse, NY	Initial project in-person meeting	Core Team
11/07/14	Syracuse, NY	Planning for public meetings	Limited Core Team, ACTLS
12/17/14	Speculator, NY	Kickoff	Core and ESF Team, ACTLS, public
1/09/15	Syracuse, NY	Map layout/design	ESF Team, ACTLS
1/28, 2/25, 3/2, 9, 16/15	Various	Local knowledge workshops	ESF Team, ACTLS, public
3/19/15	Syracuse, NY	Project update	Limited Core Team
4/16/15	Lake Placid, NY	Local Government Day presentation	Limited Core Team, specialized public
4/27/15	Albany, NY	Adirondack Day display	Government officials
4/30/15	Indian Lake, NY	DEC data validation training workshop	Limited ESF Team, DEC regional and Albany staff
5/27/15	Newcomb, NY	Working/data synthesis	Limited Core Team
8/11/15	Albany, NY	Project/contract update	Core Team
8/28/15	Newcomb, NY	FPAC Presentation	FPAC members, public
9/14-15/15	Newcomb, NY	Planning session	Core and ESF Team, invited guests: DEC staff, recreation professionals
10/13/15	Syracuse, NY	Project status	Limited Core Team
10/15-5/16		Bi-weekly conference calls	Limited Core Team
11/12, 19, 23/15	Various	Public strategy meetings	ESF Team, public
12/7/15	Lake George	AATV Meeting	ESF lead, community leaders
TBD	TBD	Draft strategy development	Core and ESF Team

6.1 JOINT PLANNING SESSIONS

In order to review the current status of the data product and to discuss the next steps, limited members of the Core Team held a day-long meeting at the ESF Adirondack Ecological Center (AEC) in Newcomb, NY in May 2015. This meeting explored methods for reviewing and evaluating recreation proposals and synthesizing data collected during LKWs. It was determined that this review, evaluation, and synthesis should involve DEC staff from the central and regional offices, APA staff, and private-sector recreation experts, and would be coordinated by GSW-ESF project staff.

In response, GSW-ESF project staff facilitated a two-day meeting at the AEC to present and receive feedback on recommendations as working concepts, based on the data generated and GSW objectives. Prior to this session, the GSW-ESF team drafted a series of maps indicating

preliminary recommendations for a network of ‘trail corridors and connections’ across the GSW region. These initial ideas had been presented to the Core Team at DEC Albany offices in August 2015 where they prompted significant discussions and tentative support for sharing with the larger audience involved in the two-day planning meeting at AEC in Newcomb (e.g., DEC planners, APA staff, outside recreation experts).

On September 14-15 2015 at the AEC, ESF provided an introduction to the project, GSW data products, and working concepts, followed by facilitated mapping in small groups. The second day included a review of progress made, followed by deliberation on methods for presenting the project's outcomes as a written document and in upcoming public meetings. The planning session concluded with a reflection on opportunities, obstacles, and lessons learned (See Section: Challenges of Complex Planning). Each session involved approximately 15-20 representatives from the DEC and APA, and participation varied for each activity.

6.2 PUBLIC STRATEGY MEETINGS

Building on the success of the previous LKWs, and to seek input on preliminary recommendations for the GSW strategy, a round of Public Strategy Meetings were scheduled and advertised (Table 9), including an official ESF press release and local outreach to newspapers and community leaders. Meetings began with general instructions and an introductory presentation outlining the preliminary GSW strategy, followed by an open question and answer session. Each presentation was unique to the meeting location, providing highlights of maps and details that were customized specifically for that area (Appendix V).

The remainder of the meeting consisted of participants engaging with ESF facilitators at four thematic stations: 1) *Partnerships for Making Progress*, 2) *Ecosystem Stewardship*, 3) *Access & Connectivity*, and 4) *Creating Recreation Destinations*, each with a GSW facilitator to engage participants and record feedback (Figure 7). Participants self-selected the station(s) they visited and the amount of time spent at each. All stations contained copies of maps featured in the presentation and a worksheet that could be completed privately. The worksheet contained prompting questions, which were included in the participant agenda, the presentation, and utilized by the facilitators to engage participants (Figure 7). No worksheets were completed and returned, indicating most participants felt comfortable with the facilitator and having their feedback recorded publicly. Each meeting attracted an average of 13 new participants that had not attended a previous GSW session, or 41% of the total population of meeting participants.

Table 9: GSW Public Strategy Meeting schedule and outcomes.

Community	Location	Date	Time	ESF Staff	Participants
Old Forge	The View Arts Center	11/12	6-8 pm	7	31
North Creek	Tannery Pond Community Center	11/19	6-8 pm	8	28
Speculator	Oak Mountain Ski Center	11/23	6-8 pm	8	33



Figure 7: Station themes and facilitation prompts for GSW Public Strategy Meetings.

6.3 ADDITIONAL COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The GSW Project was a featured presentation at the Adirondack Association of Towns and Villages (AATV) Membership Meeting in Lake George, NY on December 7 2015. The ESF project lead (Beier) gave the presentation, which was based heavily on the materials prepared for Public Strategy Meetings while providing a more regional perspective appropriate for the audience. The presentation was well-received and stimulated conversations with town leaders regarding future involvement and partnerships to gather further data and planning ideas.

7. COMPLEX PLANNING AND UNIT MANAGEMENT PLANNING

State lands in the Adirondack Park are currently planned and managed at the unit-scale by the DEC and APA. Active planning and ongoing management by the DEC follows individual Unit Management Plans (UMP), which are prepared, revised, and amended as needed through an iterative process between the DEC and APA, which also provides opportunities for public comments (Figure 8). In contrast, the GSW Complex Planning process engaged the public directly and continuously in the creation of new ideas and directions for recreation planning that consider the entire GSW region, which is much larger than the unit-scale. These processes can be complimentary, where both the data product and strategy generated in the GSW process can

inform steps of the UMP process. GSW recommendations are directly based on public ideas and feedback, therefore UMP can benefit from incorporating projects generated through a focused public process that planned across a larger landscape. With the GSW data product and recommendations at their disposal, planners could prioritize or included projects as they see fit, based on the timing and objectives of each unit management planning process.

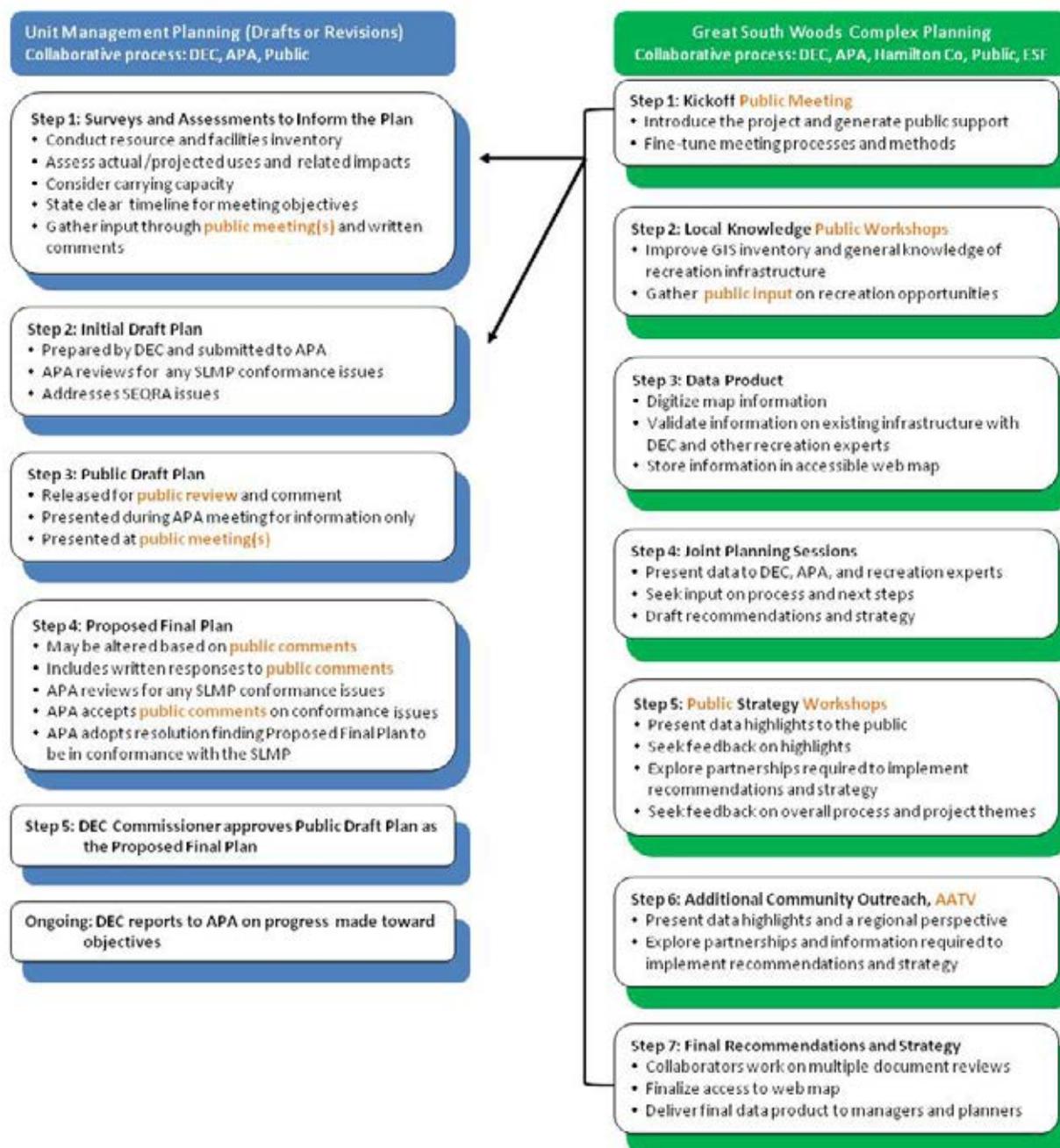


Figure 8: Proposed relationship between the NYS DEC Unit Management Planning process and the Great South Woods Complex Planning Process, emphasizing potential opportunities for public engagement in both processes (yellow text).

APPENDIX III: 'CONSTRUCTION REQUIRED' SEGMENTS SHARED BY FEATURES

The following table identifies 'construction required' segments that are shared across more than one feature. Each row indicates a combination of local and/or regional features with a shared 'construction required' segment, indicating the length and land type of the shared segment.

Local Network Feature	Regional Network Feature	Land Type	Miles
Thirteenth Lake Loop North Creek Network		Private	0.08
Hudson Bend Circuit Vanderwhacker Circuit		Private	0.65
Hudson Bend Circuit Vanderwhacker Circuit		Private	2.09
West Indian Lake Network	Little Great Range Indian Lake Walkabout	Private	0.38
North Creek Network	Infinite North Indian Lake Walkabout	Private	0.07
North Creek Network	Infinite North Indian Lake Walkabout	Private	0.09
Potter Bike Trail	Blue Moose Circuit Infinite North Fulton Seventy	Private	0.14
	Infinite North Indian Lake Walkabout	Private	0.15
	Infinite North Indian Lake Walkabout	Private	0.26
	Little Great Range Loop Indian Lake Walkabout	Easement	4.18
West Indian Lake Network	Little Great Range Indian Lake Walkabout	Easement	0.1
Moffitt's Pack-and-Paddle	Infinite South Infinite North West Canada Way	Intensive Use	0.74
	Little Great Range Indian Lake Walkabout	Intensive Use	0.38
Hudson Bend Circuit Vanderwhacker Circuit		Wild Forest	9.64
French Louie Loops Stark Hills Circuit	West Canada Way Infinite North	Wild Forest	<0.1 2.02
	Little Great Range Loop		
Black River Loop	Fulton Seventy	Wild Forest	3.57
Black River Loop	Fulton Seventy	Wild Forest	1.41
Black River Loop	Fulton Seventy	Wild Forest	0.13
Black River Loop	Fulton Seventy	Wild Forest	0.37

Local Network Feature	Regional Network Feature	Land Type	Miles
Ferris Fifty	Infinite South	Wild Forest	3.53
Ferris Fifty	Infinite South	Wild Forest	6.78
Ferris Fifty	Infinite South	Wild Forest	1.08
North Creek Network	Infinite North	Wild Forest	2.44
	Indian Lake Walkabout		
Moffitt's Pack-and-Paddle	Infinite North	Wild Forest	0.22
	Infinite South		
	West Canada Way		
Moffitt's Pack-and-Paddle	Infinite South	Wild Forest	2.48
	Infinite North		
	West Canada Way		
West Indian Lake Network	Little Great Range Loop	Wild Forest	2.7
	Indian Lake Walkabout		
	Little Great Range Loop	Wild Forest	3.59
	Indian Lake Walkabout		
	Little Great Range Loop	Wild Forest	0.57
	Indian Lake Walkabout		
	Infinite North	Wild Forest	0.68
	Fulton Seventy		
	Blue Moose Circuit		
	Infinite North	Wild Forest	0.42
	Fulton Seventy		
	Blue Moose Circuit		
	Infinite North	Wild Forest	<0.01
	Blue Moose Circuit		
French Louie Loops	West Canada Way	Wilderness	2.83
Kallen Trek	Infinite South	Wilderness	3.17
Ferris Fifty	Infinite South	Wilderness	0.83
Ferris Fifty	Infinite South	Wilderness	0.75
North Creek Network	Indian Lake Walkabout	Wilderness	1.27
	Infinite North		
North Creek Network	Infinite North	Wilderness	1.15
	Indian Lake Walkabout		
	Infinite North	Wilderness	5.26
	Blue Moose Circuit		
	Little Great Range Loop	Wilderness	4.5
	Indian Lake Walkabout		
	Infinite North	Wilderness	1.73
	Fulton Seventy		
	Blue Moose Circuit		
	Infinite North	Wilderness	1.39
	Indian Lake Walkabout		

APPENDIX IV: 'CONSTRUCTION REQUIRED' IN WILDERNESS AREAS

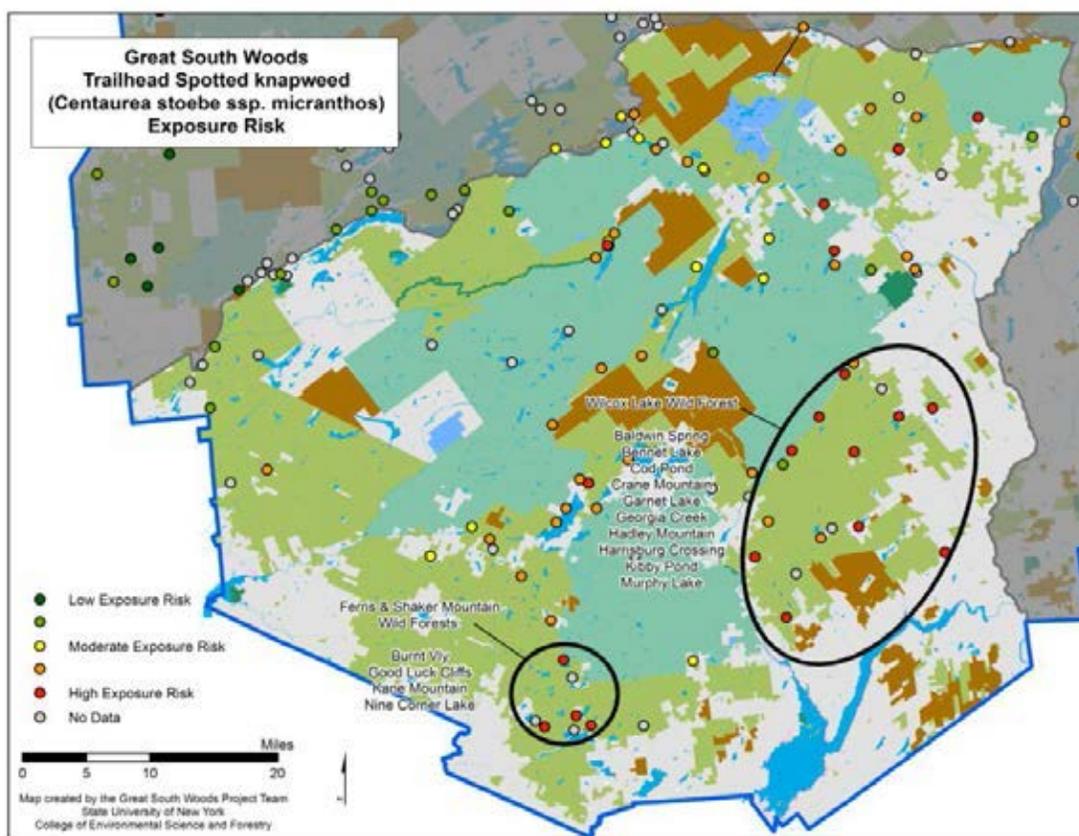
The following table details an examination of 'construction required' segments that considered distance from the Wilderness boundary: within a mile, or greater than a mile away. Some segments cross the mile boundary, and are measured in both distance categories. * indicates a segment of the DEC Proposed NCNST.

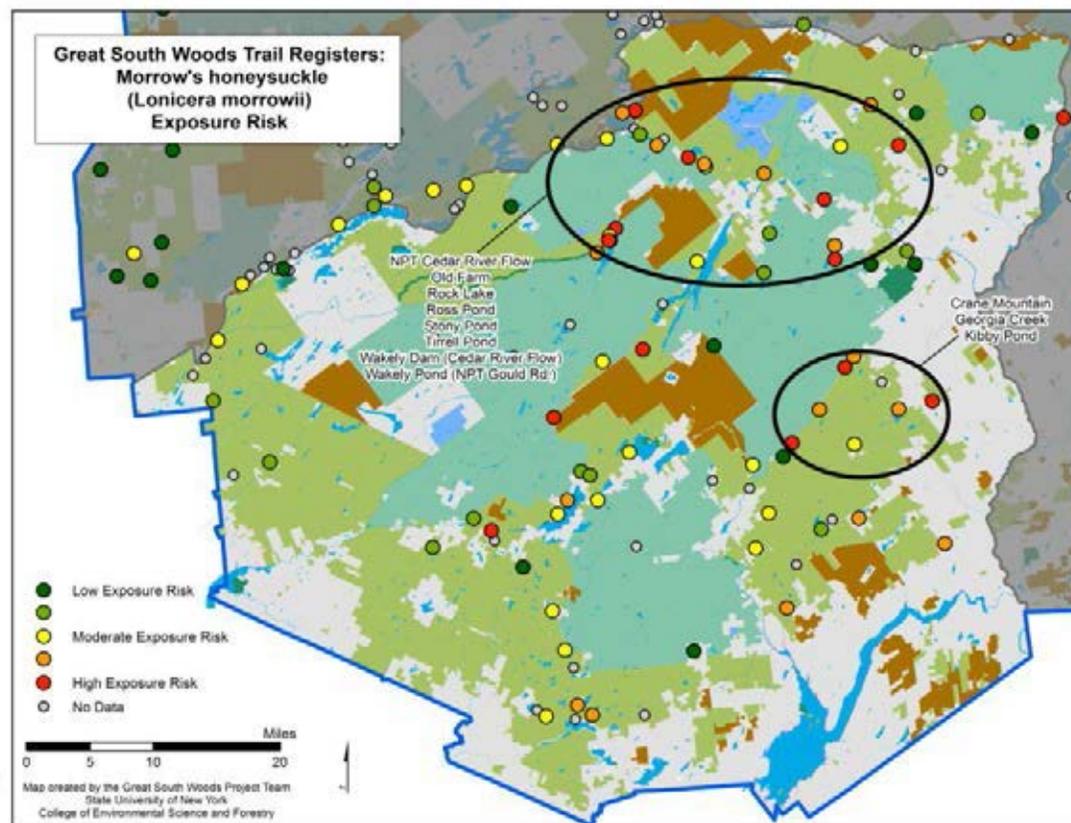
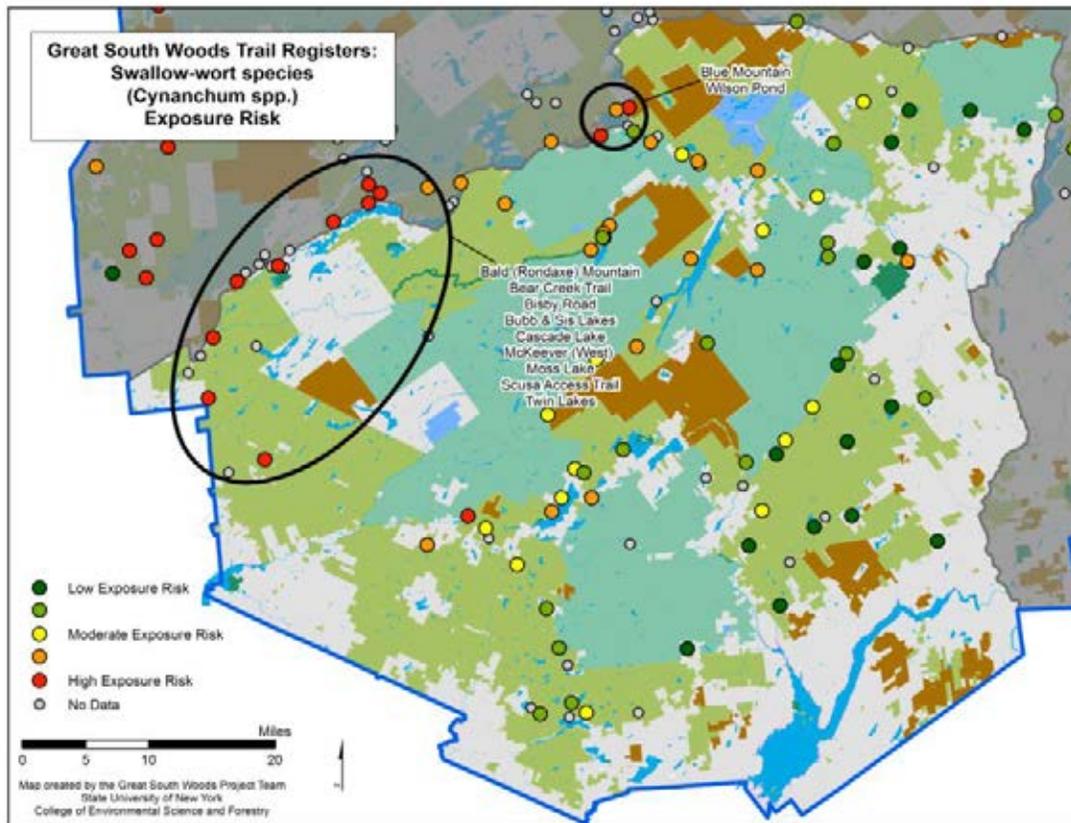
Wilderness Area	ID	Feature (L=local, R=regional)	Within a mile	More than a mile
Blue Ridge	A	Wakely Way (L)	5.4	0.8
	B	Infinite North (R) Blue Moose Circuit (R)	5.3	
Hoffman Notch	C	The Notch (L) Severance Hill Circuit (L)	3.4 *	0.8 *
	D	Severance Hill Circuit (L)	2.4	
Hudson Gorge	E	Hudson Bend Circuit (L)	8.9	2.7
	F	Three Rivers Circuit (L)	2.4	0.2
	G	OK Slip Falls Circuit (L)		0.5
	H	OK Slip Falls Circuit (L)	0.5	2
Little Moose	I	French Louie Loops (L) West Canada Way (R)		2.8
	J	Infinite South (R)	0.4	
Siamese Ponds	K	North Creek Network (L)	1.3	1.7
	L	North Creek Network (L)	1.4	
	M	North Creek Network (L) and OK Slip-North Creek Network Connector	4.2	3.2
	N	Indian Lake Walkabout (R) Infinite North (R)		1.4 *
	O	Ferris Fifty (L)		3.3
Silver Lake	P	Kallen Trek (L) Infinite South (R)	2.1	1.1
	Q	Infinite South (R)	1.7	
	R	Infinite South (R)	4.2	
	S	Ferris Fifty (L) Infinite South (R)	0.6	
West Canada LK	T	Ferris Fifty (L) Infinite South (R)		0.8
	U	Waterfall Way (L)		2.7
	V	Blue Moose Circuit (R) Infinite North (R) Fulton Seventy (R)	1.8	
	W	Fulton Seventy (R)	1 *	1.2 *
	X	Indian Lake Walkabout (R) Little Great Range Loop (R)	1	3.5
	Y	West Indian Lake Network (L)	5	
	Z	West Indian Lake Network (L)	2.4	0.4
	AA	West Indian Lake Network (L)	1	0.9
	BB	West Indian Lake Network (L)	2.5	0.5
	Total Miles:			58.9
Percent of Total:			66	34

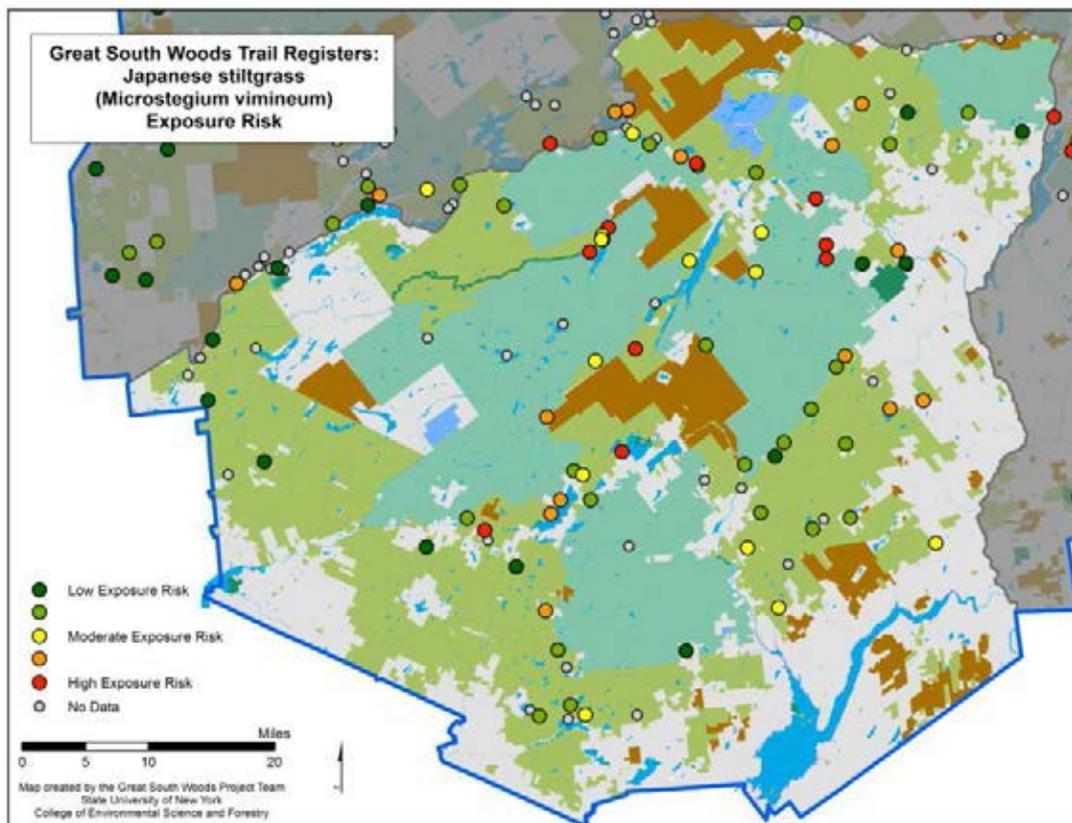
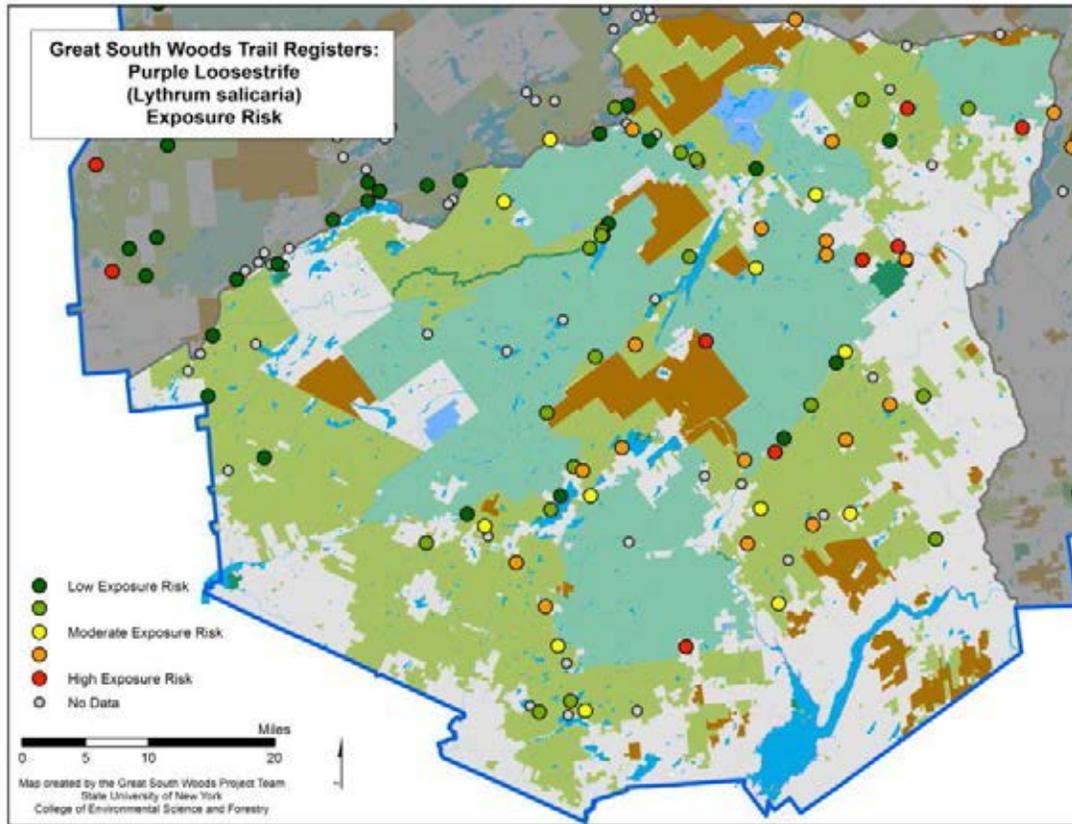
 APPENDIX V: SPATIAL ANALYSIS OF INVASIVE SPECIES EXPOSURE RISK

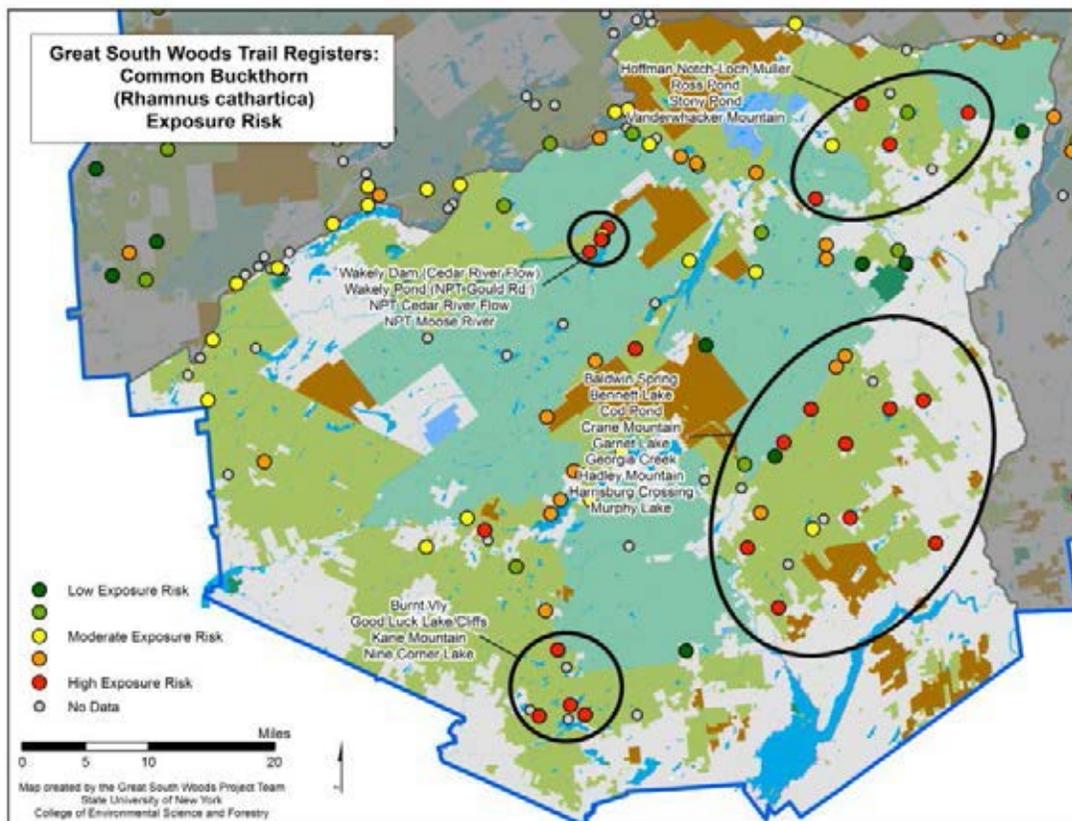
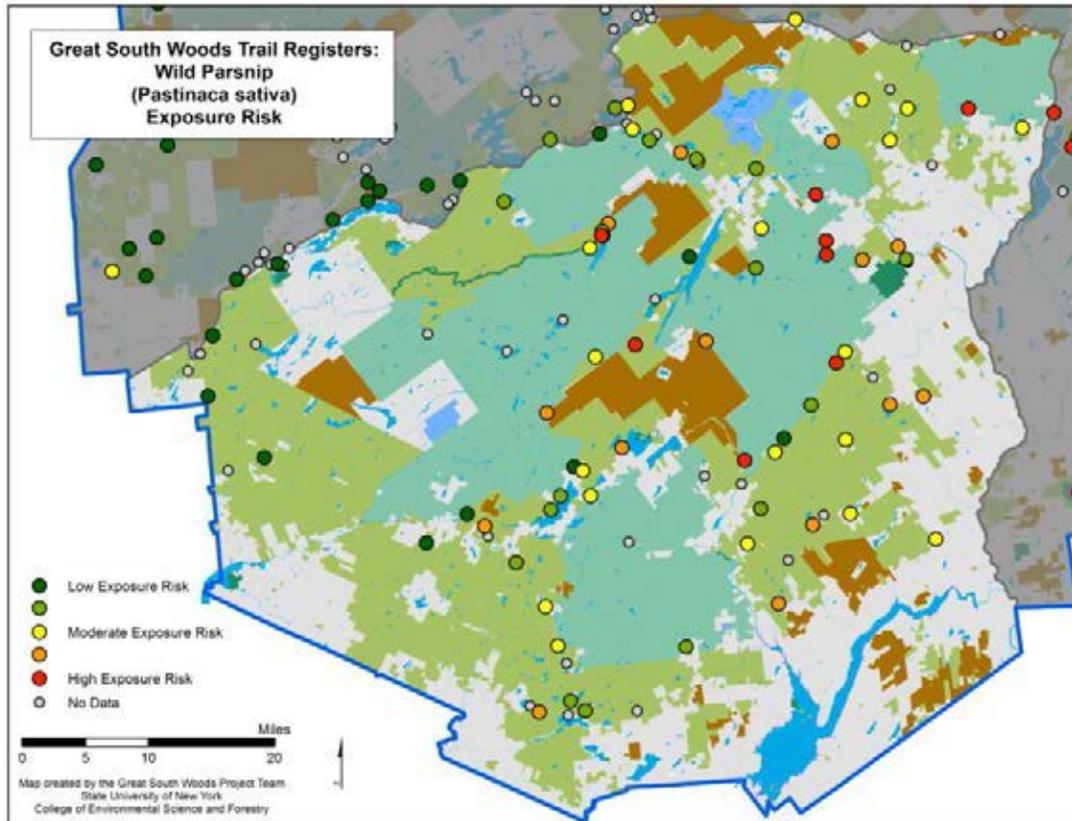
The following individual species maps are based on percent visitation rather than total visitation. Exposure risk was calculated for each trail register by multiplying the percent visitation from each Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISM) by the percent of total species observations contained in the corresponding PRISM, and then summing the results. Registers represented in red (high exposure risk) typically received a large percentage of use from PRISMs containing a large percentage of a given species' total NYS observations.

Exposure scores based on total trail visitation suggest that monitoring and management actions should be focused on the most heavily trafficked trailheads regardless of species (species non-specific), while scores based on percent visitation highlight potential management focus areas for each species (species specific). Implementing actions informed by a combination of both calculations allows for the creation of a targeted management approach focusing on heavily used trails as well as trails located within a species' "region of concern" (circled in black). For instance, if a manager is concerned with the potential proliferation of *Cynanchum spp.* they may decide to monitor, more closely, high visitation trailheads as well as those located in the western Adirondacks where exposure risk for this species is high. Management actions may also include increased monitoring, the installation of boot cleaning stations, and targeted public education.









APPENDIX VI: SLMP AND APA ACT REFERENCES

ADIRONDACK PARK STATE LAND MASTER PLAN

“Unit Management Plan Development: Section 816 of the Act directs the Department of Environmental Conservation to develop, in consultation with the Agency, individual management plans for each unit of land under its jurisdiction classified in the master plan. Due to the widely dispersed nature of certain wild forest areas, the Department may establish for unit management planning purposes, individual sub-units of wild forest units which because of location, physical features, ecological systems and use patterns can be managed as an individual unit. In accordance with statutory mandate, all plans will conform to the guidelines and criteria set forth in the master plan and cannot amend the plan itself. ..”

ADIRONDACK PARK AGENCY ACT

“Section 801. Statement of legislative findings and purposes (paragraph 7).

The Adirondack Park land use and development plan set forth in this article recognizes the complementary needs of all people of the State for the preservation of the Park’s resources and open space character and of the park’s permanent, seasonal and transient populations for growth and service areas, employment, and a strong economic base, as well. In support of the essential interdependence of these needs, the plan represents a sensibly balanced apportionment of land to each. Adoption of the land use and development plan and authorization for its administration and enforcement will complement and assist in the administration of the Adirondack Park master plan for management of state land. Together, they are essential to the achievement of the policies and purposes of this article and will benefit all the people of the state.”

“Section 816. Master Plan for the management of State land

1. The Department of Environmental Conservation is hereby authorized and directed to develop, in consultation with the agency, individual management plans for units of land classified in the master plan for management of state lands heretofore prepared by the agency in consultation with the department of environmental conservation and approved by the governor. Such management plans shall conform to the general guidelines and criteria set forth in the master plan. Until amended, the master plan for management of state lands and the individual management plans shall guide the development and management of state lands in the Adirondack Park.
2. The master plan and individual management plans shall be reviewed periodically and may be amended from time to time, and when so amended shall as amended henceforth guide the development and management of state lands in the Adirondack Park. Amendments to the master plan shall be prepared by the agency, in consultation with the department of environmental conservation, and submitted after public hearing to the governor for his approval.
3. The agency and department are hereby authorized to develop rules and regulation necessary, convenient or desirable to effectuate the purposes of this section.”

This report was prepared by the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF), with input and guidance from the NYS DEC Bureau of Lands and Forests, the Adirondack Park Agency, and local government representatives.

