STATE OF NEW YORK
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

ADIRONDACK PARK AGENCY

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FYI + High Peaks UMP file

June 1, 2000

Honorable John P. Cahill
Commissioner of Environmental Conservation
50 Wolf Road
Albany, NY 12233

Dear Commissioner Cahill:

Re: High Peaks Wilderness Complex Unit Management Plan
Little Porter Mountain Trail Relocation Amendment

I am pleased to advise you that at its May 12, 2000 meeting, the Agency authorized a determination that the above-referenced unit management plan amendment complies with the guidelines and criteria of the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan, absent material public comment on the proposal. No public comments were received in response to the May 10 ENB notice.

We congratulate the Department on gaining the cooperation of adjacent landowners and the continuing progress with respect to management of visitors at the Garden Parking area. Both are important steps in this unit plan's implementation.

Sincerely,

Daniel T. Titts
Executive Director

DTF:JSB:hs

cc: Stuart Buchanan, Regional Director, DEC
Christopher Alberga, High Peaks Unit Manager, DEC
Agency Members and Designees

UMP Amendment – High Peaks Wilderness Complex

Amendment: 2000-01

Background

Since the July 1999 adoption of the Unit Management Plan for the High Peaks Wilderness Complex the Department has been provided the opportunity to acquire a more secure and less intrusive location for portions of the Little Porter Mountain trail from Interbrook Road in Keene Valley. The current trail begins on private land and passes over another 10 private parcels before reaching the summit. Revocable easements have been obtained from two of these owners who will allow relocation of the trail over their property. An additional relocation of the lower section of trail will allow the trail to start directly from the Garden parking lot and avoid a start on private lands.

Introduction

The present trail to Little Porter Mtn from the Garden begins on private lands a short distance from the Garden parking lot. Shortly thereafter the trail crosses a brook on a log bridge onto Forest Preserve (High Peaks Wilderness Area). The trail continues through another 10 private parcels before reaching the summit of Little Porter Mountain and continuing on to Porter Mountain. The upper section of the trail passes over and along private roads and driveways and close to private residences in the Adrian Acres West development. The Department holds no public easement agreements with any of the landowners. The future of this trail is uncertain since refusal of public access by any one of 11 landowners will close public access.

A plan for relocation of the existing trail has been proposed which will 1)minimize the number of private land crossings, 2)place the relocated trail out of sight and sound of any of the residences and off of private driveways, 3) reduce the potential for conflicts between hikers and the maintenance of privacy for the private owners, and 4)provide a trail surface which is located and constructed in a manner to minimize adverse environmental impacts from use and the need for rehabilitative trail maintenance.

Table 1: Net changes in trail lengths on Forest Preserve and private lands resulting from trail relocation.

	Private Land		Forest Preserve		
	Upper (ft)	Lower (ft)	Upper (ft)	Lower (ft)	Net change
Present	2,075	300	925	950	4,250
Proposed	1,150	0	1,475	1,400	4,025
Net change	(925)	(300)	550	450	(225)
	(1,225)		1,000		

Location Map

Maps of the present and proposed trail locations are included as Appendix A. A preliminary location proposed trail relocation has been marked on the ground and laid out such that the average grade will not exceed 10%. Approximately 6/10 mi. of new trail will be constructed, 2/10 mi. on the lower section and 4/10 mi. on the upper section.

Landowner Agreements

There is no deeded easement agreement with the landowners, over who's land the current trail passes. Written *Hiking Trail Construction and Maintenance Agreements* have been secured by DEC for permission to establish and maintain a trail across two private parcels at Department expense. This is a temporary easement and may be terminated by the either landowner or the Department with three months notice.

Wetlands and stream crossing

On-site inspection has identified no regulated wetlands that will be impacted by either the upper or lower trail relocation.

One stream crossing has been identified that will require a bridge crossing due to flow volume and high runoff in the Spring season. This crossing is on the lower relocation section, where the proposed trail crosses Slide Brook. The crossing will be on Forest Preserve land designated as part of the High Peaks Wilderness Area. To protect trail users during the high spring runoff a 25' span foot bridge will be constructed. The bridge will be constructed from a combination of on-site and off-site materials. Off-site materials will consist of untreated lumber for tread and hardware. Due to the large size of the main support beams needed to span the brook, the stingers and hand rails will be constructed from on-site hemlock which will be cut pursuant to Lands and Forests Policy 91-2 (Cutting and removal of trees in the Forest Preserve).

A location for the bridge has been identified that minimizes the span of the bridge and allows for construction of a bridge that will minimize alteration of the stream bank of the brook. Large boulders will be utilized in-place as natural abutments for the bridge. Photos of the proposed crossing and a sketch of the proposed bridge have been included as Appendix B and C, respectively.

Tree Cutting Permits

An application for a tree cutting permit will be submitted to the Regional Forester for the felling of three 14-18" dbh eastern hemlock (*Tsuga canendensis*) trees which will be used to construct the bridge over Slide Brook. No other trees over 3 inches will be cut as part of this project.

Trail Closure

Old trail segments will be brushed in and new signage erected that directs users along the new trail at locations where the new trail departs from the old route or crosses roads on private property. The new trail will be marked using DEC foot trail markers, replacing old ADK trail markers which currently mark the trail location. All markers on closed sections of trail will be removed. Signage will be erected at the new and old trailheads informing hikers of the rerouted trail. Signage marking the departure of the Little Porter Mountain Trail from the Brothers trail will recognize the maintainer

role of the Schenectady Chapter of ADK with respect to this trail segment. Upon completion, a press release will be issued by the Ray Brook field office announcing the new trail.

Parking issues

The present trail begins on private land approximately 1/4 mile back down the Interbrook Road from the Garden Parking Lot. The new trail will start off of The Brothers trail, approximately 1700 ft. up the trail from the Garden lot. It is not expected that the trail relocation will cause any net change in use patterns since parking for the trail will remain in the same location.

Staffing - Manpower

Construction of the new trail will be accomplished with a combination of volunteer and ADK professional trail crew manpower under the direct supervision of the ADK Trails Coordinator and the Division of Lands and Forests. The landowners have committed to partially fund the cost of relocating the trail. The remaining cost for trail construction will consist of manpower provided by the ADK Trails Program and Schenectady Chapter of ADK. Specifically, the following organizations will undertake the indicated aspects of the project:

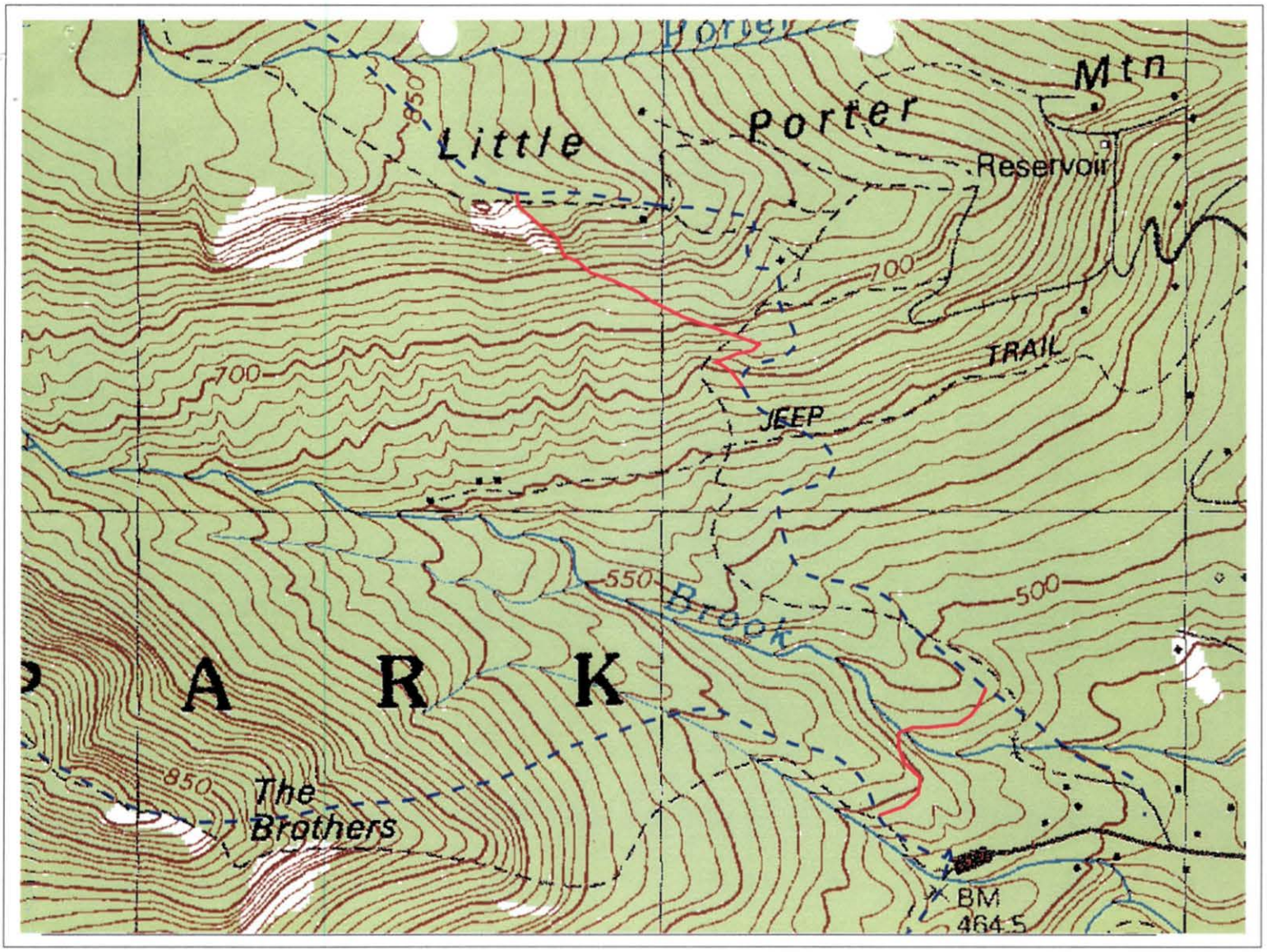
> ADK Professional Trail Crew – setting stringers and footings for Slide Brook bridge, trail stabilization and cribbing on upper section of trail.
>
> ADK National Trails Day project – side cutting trail between The Brothers trail and current Little Porter trail north of Slide Brook.
>
> ADK Schenectady Chapter and ADK Volunteer Trails Program -- brushing in old trail, side cutting upper trail reroute, and construction of Slide Brook bridge. The existing Forest Preserve boundary line will be repainted in compliance with the Lands and Forests Standards and Procedures for Boundary Line Maintenance Policy NR 95-1.

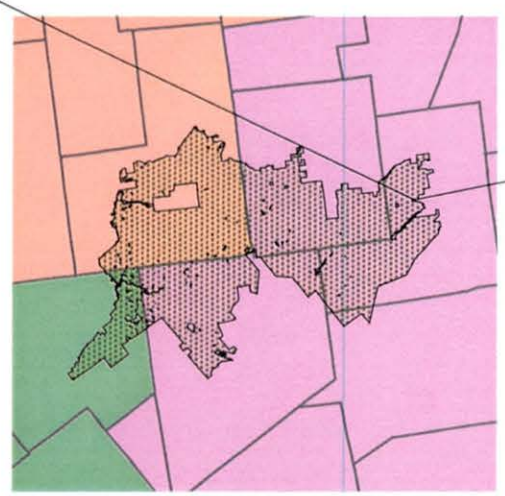
SEQR

No negative environmental impacts resulting from relocation of the trail have been identified. A negative declaration has been prepared in compliance with the State Environmental Quality Review Act. The Environmental Assessment and Negative Declaration are attached as Appendices D and E, respectively.

Appendix A – Site Maps

Unit Management Plan Amendment
High Peaks Wilderness Complex





High Peaks
Wilderness Area

Legend

Trails

Existing

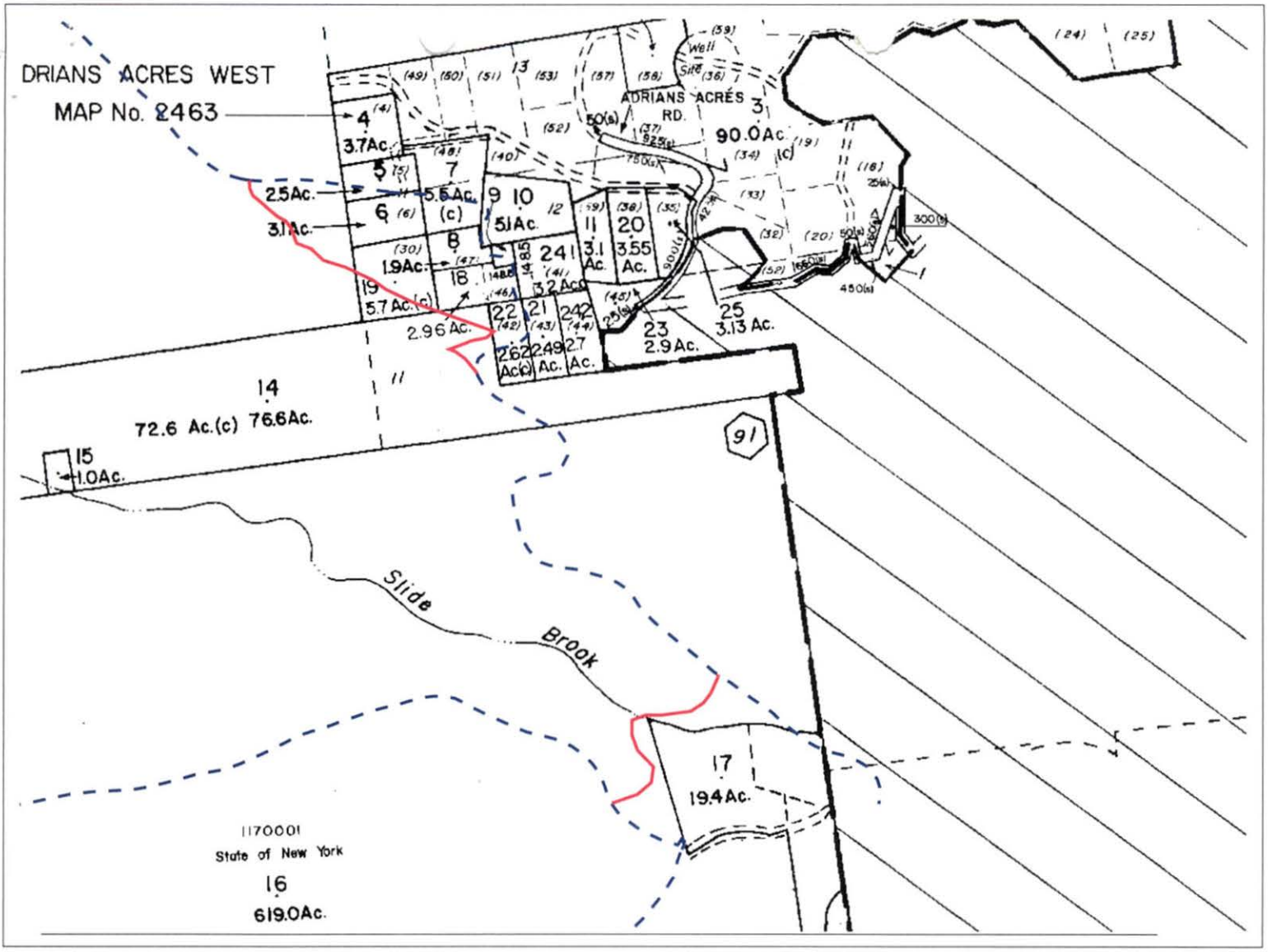
Proposed

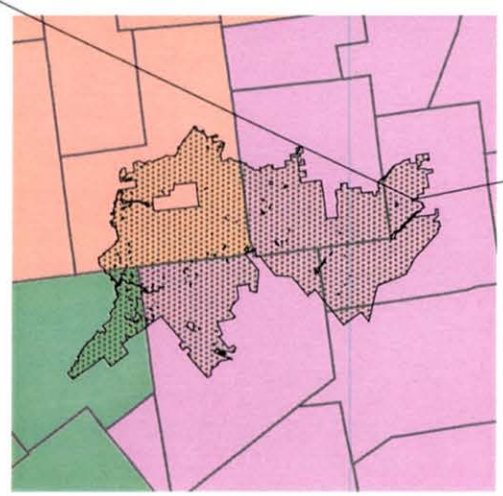
500 0 500 1000 1500 2000 Feet

1:12000

Proposed Trail Relocation
Little Porter Mountain Trail
High Peaks Wilderness Area
Town of Keene
Essex County, New York

Map Prepared by:
New York State Dep't of Environmental Conservation
Division of Lands and Forests, Region 5
Ray Brook, NY
10 February 2000





High Peaks
Wilderness Area

Legend

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Existing

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500 0 500 1000 1500 2000 Feet

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Proposed Trail Relocation
Little Porter Mountain Trail
High Peaks Wilderness Area
Town of Keene
Essex County, New York

Map Prepared by:
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Appendix B – Slide Brook Bridge Crossing Location

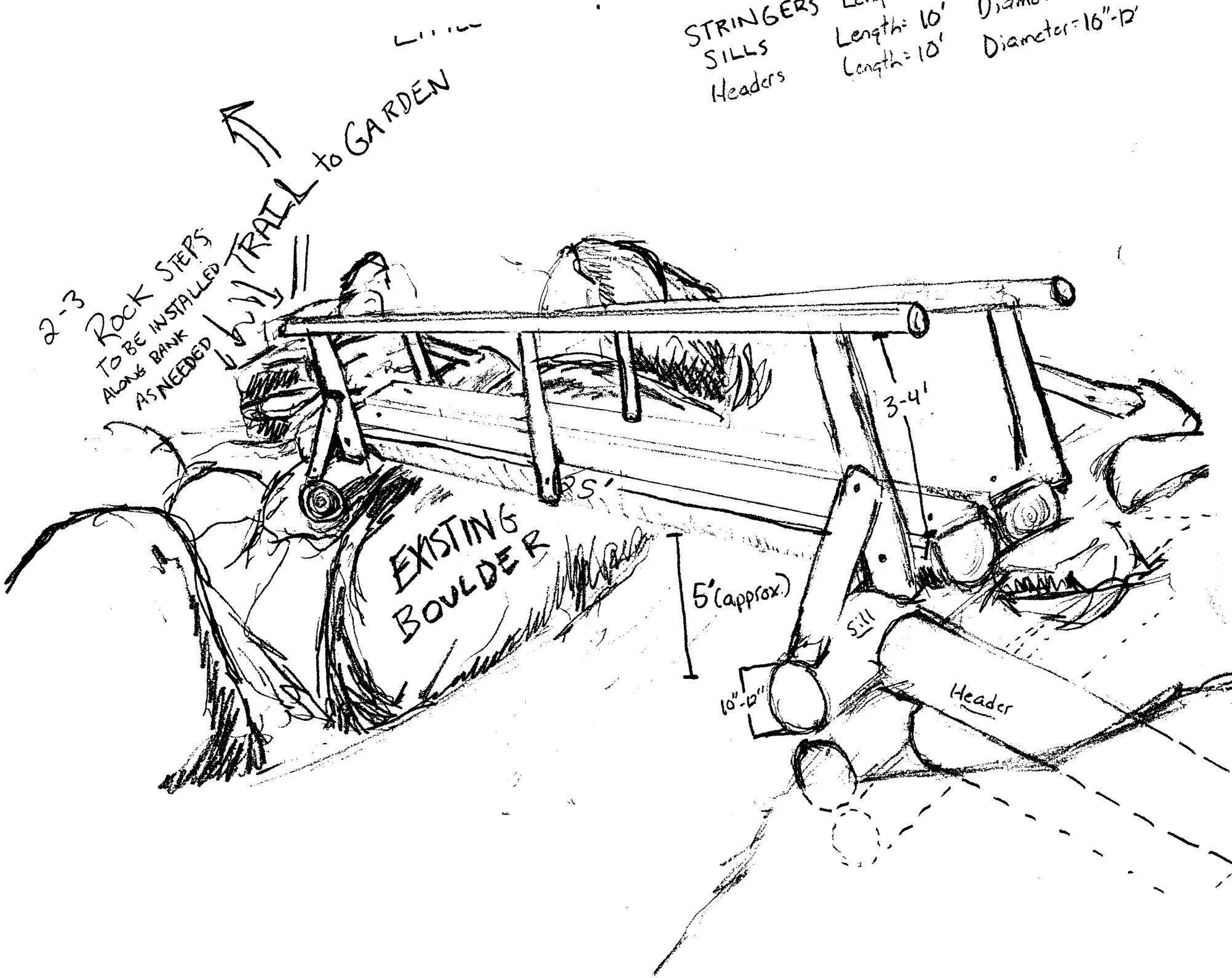
Unit Management Plan Amendment
High Peaks Wilderness Complex

Figure 1: South side of brook crossing looking down stream

Figure 2: North side of brook crossing looking down stream

Appendix C – Slide Brook Bridge Design

Unit Management Plan Amendment
High Peaks Wilderness Complex


STRINGERS Length: 10' Diameter: 10"-12"
SILLS Length: 10'
Headers Length: 10'
TRAIL to GARDEN
2-3 ROCK STEPS TO BE INSTALLED ALONG BANK AS NEEDED
25'
EXISTING BOULDER
5' (approx.)
3-4'
Sill
10"-12"
Header