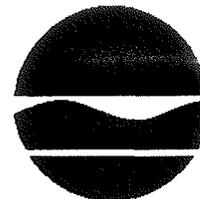


**MEMORANDUM FROM  
LANGDON MARSH, Commissioner**



New York State  
Department of Environmental Conservation

FEB 3 1995

TO: The Record  
FROM: Langdon Marsh *Langdon Marsh*  
RE: Unit Management Plan (UMP)  
Independence River Wild Forest

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An amendment for the Independence River Wild Forest UMP has been completed. The amendment is consistent with the guidelines and criteria of the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan, the State Constitution, Environmental Conservation Law, and Department rules, regulations and policies. The amendment is hereby approved and adopted.

#### D. Informational Details

1. Map - See attached
2. Situation Description - The Otter Creek Horse Trail System was established in 1988 by an amendment to the 1986 Independence River Wild Forest Unit Management Plan. In 1990 an additional amendment was implemented to allow an additional 2.65 mile expansion of the system to provide a marked connector to draw the equestrians away from an area of private lands that they were trespassing on and to provide additional trail capacity and variety. Additionally, several minor expansions have occurred during this time period on State Forests (Lewis Reforestation Areas #34 & #35) to provide additional capacity and variety and to provide an access trail to an adjacent private store, campground and pay phone.

The current situation is that recreational demand has continued to expand since the system's inception. From the 1988 figure of 340 horse days, use has continued to grow. In 1993 it was used a total of 5,558 horse days and the 1994 season looks like it will surpass that. The facility has been extremely well received and word-of-mouth has brought in many new recreationists. Additionally, television coverage, news articles, equestrian journals and a recent feature in "Adirondack Life" have raised public awareness of the recreational opportunity. Additionally, the higher levels of usage have caused a couple of limited instances of erosion on hills. These were handled by minor trail realignments. But the increased use is best handled by expansion of the system to draw persons away from the most heavily traveled sections.

Expansion of the system requires either an amendment of the IRWF UMP or a revision. A revision is planned, and a task force has been named. But realistically, due to staffing limitations, it will be 2 years before the revision is completed. Since the need is immediate, it was decided to seek an additional amendment.

3. Proposed Trail Construction - Six trail segments are proposed to be designated, for a total trail mileage increase of  $\pm 10.5$  miles. Of that, the Icicle Trail (1.6 miles) is already existing and is being heavily used by horsemen, especially during the hotter summer season. The Homebound Trail (1.4 miles) is another existing trail. Some of the equestrians are, and legally so, using the Bull Road, to return to the Assembly Area (i.e. parking, stalls and waterpoint). However, this is creating conflicts with inholders who have a right-of-way on the Bull Road and with the fee owners where we have a right-of-way over them. Some of the equestrians, partially recognizing the conflict, and in part to avoid the gravel on the road (some of the horses are unshod) and to be in the shade, have started riding south of the road. This

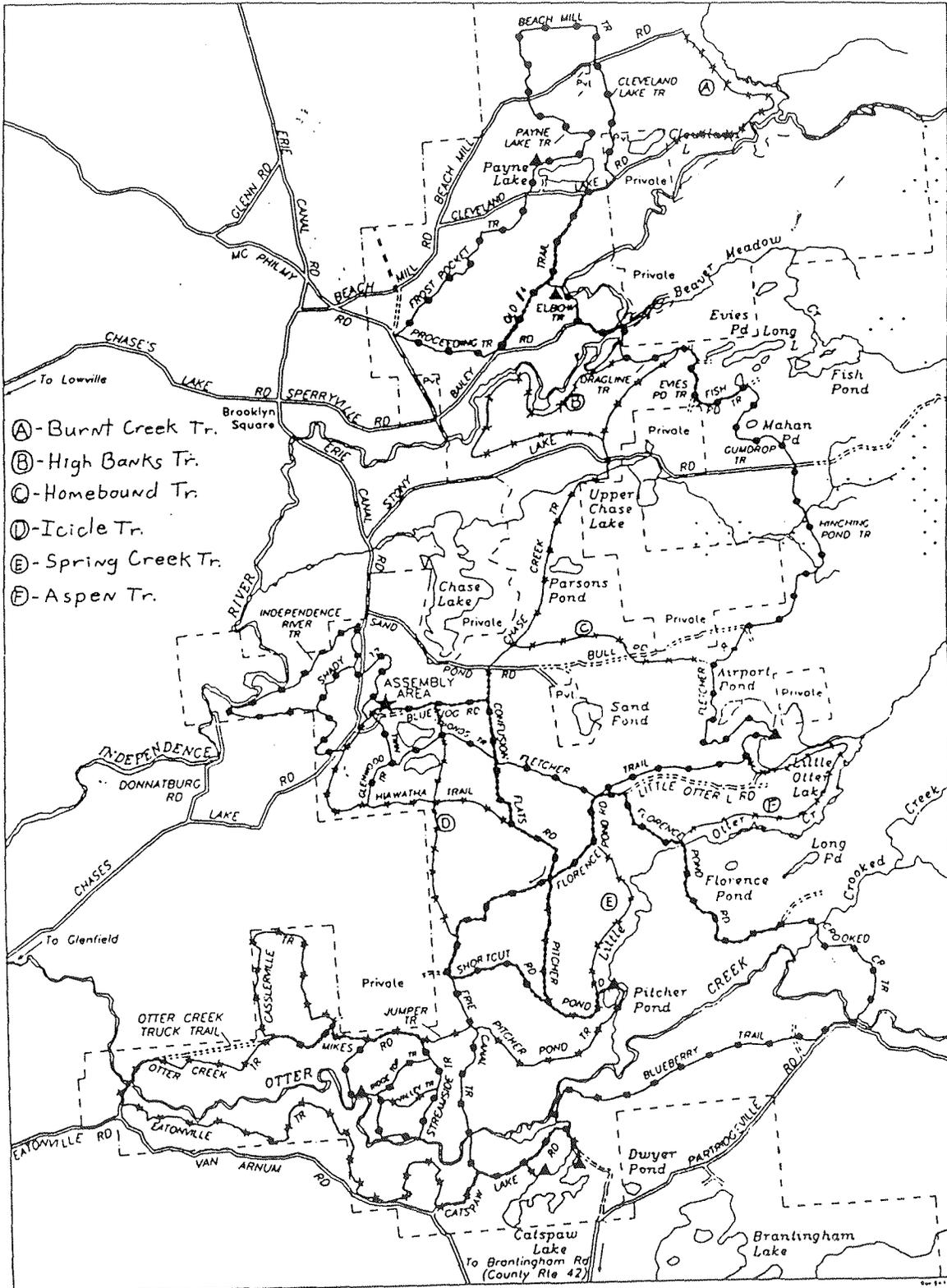
puts them crossing a town road on a curve, draws them by an entrance road to a beach on Sand Pond that we wish to not overburden, and sometimes brings them into a private inholding of +30 homes and camps on the south end of Sand Pond. We propose to have a part of the trail relocated North of the Bull Road to eliminate the above problems. The Aspen Trail (2.1 miles) and the Spring Creek Trail (1.3) are basically new trails although they do use short sections of Motor Vehicle Trails or old paths. The High Banks Trail (2.6 miles) and Burnt Creek Trail (1.5 miles) are essentially all new trails. The trails will use existing ground for tread. The trails have been carefully laid out on the sandier, well-drained to excessively well drained Adams and Colton soils that are typical of the area, avoiding the small ill-drained pockets in the area.

Trail clearing will consist of overhead and side pruning and brushing. The average trail width will be 4 feet in width and will avoid all trees larger than 3" dbh. This narrower width and winding alignment is attractive to equestrians but discourages ATV's.

Trail marking will consist of standard D.E.C. horse trail markers at approximately 7' height, placed intervisibly. Additionally, signs indicating road and trail names will be placed at intersections.

The layout of the new trails continues along with the previous design work. Trails have been laid out to provide a series of interconnecting loops, allowing for equestrians to vary loop length and terrain either by advance planning or when out on the trail to compensate for horse speed, animal health, time available, fly and heat conditions while having fresh scenery from ride to ride. The trails in this amendment have specifically been laid out to avoid impacting wetlands, streams, stream corridors, critical areas, private inholdings and dangerous road crossings.

# OTTER CREEK HORSE TRAIL SYSTEM



- Ⓐ - Burnt Creek Tr.
- Ⓑ - High Banks Tr.
- Ⓒ - Homebound Tr.
- Ⓓ - Icicle Tr.
- Ⓔ - Spring Creek Tr.
- Ⓕ - Aspen Tr.

- Red Trail
- Blue Trail
- △—△— Yellow Trail
- Public Road
- Jeep Road
- Trail on Road
- Proposed Trails
- ★ Assembly Area  
Parking, stalls, water
- ▲ Scenic Point
- - - State Land Boundary
- Wetlands

