

NEW YORK STATE

Department of Environmental Conservation

DIVISION OF LANDS & FORESTS

Watson's East Triangle Wild Forest Amendment

to the

2010 Watson's East Triangle Wild Forest Unit Management Plan

Towns of Croghan, Diana, and Watson - Lewis County

Town of Webb - Herkimer County

ANDREW M. CUOMO

Governor

JOE MARTENS

Commissioner

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ANDREW M. CUOMO
GOVERNOR



JOE MARTENS
COMMISSIONER

STATE OF NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12233-1010


NOV 14 2012

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Record
SUBJECT: Watson's East Triangle Wild Forest
DATE:

The Final Amendment for the Watson's East Triangle Wild Forest Unit Management Plan has been completed and the Adirondack Park Agency found it to be in conformance with the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan.

The Final UMP Amendment is consistent with the State Constitution, Environmental Conservation Law, and Department Rules, Regulations and Policies and is hereby approved and adopted.


Joseph J. Martens

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UMP AMENDMENT #1

INTRODUCTION

The Watson's East Triangle Wild Forest is located in the Town of Croghan, Lewis County and the Town of Webb, Herkimer County. The unit contains 13,417 acres of Forest Preserve land classified as wild forest. A Unit Management Plan (UMP) for the unit was completed and approved in 2010.

The UMP proposed the construction of a new lean-to near Buck Pond, at the end of the Buck Pond Road. To prevent inappropriate use of the lean-to, the UMP also proposed the entire length of the Buck Pond Road—totaling 0.3 miles—be closed to all motor vehicle use. During the fall of 2011, an assessment of the road was conducted to determine what was needed to convert it into a universally accessible trail as originally proposed in the UMP. That assessment indicated that a substantial amount of work would be required to meet accessibility guidelines. This would have included constructing part of the new accessible trail off from the old road bed in order to overcome a terrain obstacle.

During this same time period a discussion with a group of users at the existing campsite revealed that most of the current use of this site was during big game hunting season. Without motorized access, several members of this group would not be able to utilize this site due to physical disabilities. As one of the few remote locations within the area that affords access to people with disabilities, DEC staff considered other alternatives for the leanto location other than those proposed in the UMP.

Based on the considerations detailed above, the Department determined that it is appropriate for the Buck Pond Road to remain open for motor vehicle use, but only for those persons having a valid CP-3 permit. The current campsite will be made universally accessible to better facilitate use by users with disabilities, particularly during the hunting season. The universally accessible lean-to that was originally proposed for this site will not be located within Watson's East Triangle WF at this time. The Department will, however, construct the universally accessible leanto next to the Middle Branch of the Oswegatchie as proposed in the 2010 UMP.

Management Alternatives and Selection of a Preferred Alternative

No Action Alternative - This would leave the current UMP proposal in place resulting in the road being closed to all motor vehicle use and converted into an accessible trail. An accessible lean-to would be constructed at the current tent site. As this alternative could be cost prohibitive both in construction costs and maintenance it will not be supported in this amendment.

Alternative 1 - Continue to allow public motor vehicle use to the existing site. The rationale in the UMP to close this road to public motor vehicle use was to avoid a situation where a lean-to site was accessible by motor vehicles. Past experience has shown that an easily accessible lean-to site can quickly become a popular party location and the area can quickly be degraded by heavy

use. As the proposed lean-to for this location will not be built, motor vehicle access for the above stated reason is not an issue. However, as the goal is to provide a more primitive experience for persons with disabilities, this alternative will not be supported.

Alternative 2 - Close the road to all motor vehicle access except during big game hunting season. Gating the road, with the exception of big game hunting season, would reduce any impacts associated with motor vehicle use in the area. However, as the existing site is going to be made universally accessible, gating the road seasonally limits opportunities for use by those it is being built for. For this reason this alternative will not be supported.

Alternative 3 - The Preferred Alternative - Under this alternative the Buck Pond Road would be closed to public motor vehicle access but would remain available for motor vehicle access to persons with disabilities under a CP-3 permit. A gate would be installed at the intersection with the Bear Pond Road and the lock combination would only be given to CP-3 permit holders requesting it. To accommodate continued limited motor vehicle use of the Buck Pond Road, the parking area proposed in the UMP at the intersection with the Bear Pond Road would need to be constructed at a location where it doesn't block the Buck Pond Road. This could easily be accomplished on either the Bear Pond Road or near the beginning of the Buck Pond Road.

IV. Proposed Management Actions

B. Man Made Facilities

1. Roads

The UMP called for the Buck Pond Road to be closed to all motor vehicle use to prevent issues with use of a lean-to that was proposed to be located near Buck Pond. This new proposal will retain the Buck Pond Road as a CP-3 road which will allow a limited amount of motor vehicle use.

Management Actions:

- Designate the entire Buck Pond Road (0.3 miles) as a CP-3 route.

3. Parking Areas

The UMP called for a two car parking area to be constructed at the intersection of the Buck Pond Road and the Bear Pond Road. As the Buck Pond Road is now proposed to remain open for CP-3 access, a new parking area, that doesn't impede traffic, will need to be constructed. The new location is approximately 50 feet in from the intersection of the Buck Pond and Bear Pond roads and utilizes an existing opening.

Management Actions:

- Construct a two car parking area near the intersection of the Bear Pond Road and Buck Pond Road.

7. Primitive Tent Sites

The existing primitive tent site at Buck Pond will be modified to make it universally accessible. This will include hardening of the tent site and installation of an accessible pit privy and picnic table. Hardening of the site will be undertaken in a manner, and with materials, that have the least impact on the character of the area.

Management Actions:

- Convert the existing Buck Pond primitive tent site into an accessible site by hardening where needed, installing an accessible privy, fire place and picnic table.

8. Gates/Barriers

The proposed rock barrier for the end of the Buck Pond Road will be replaced by a gate with a combination lock. This will allow access by persons with CP-3 permits but prevent unwanted motor vehicle use.

Management Actions:

- Install a new gate, instead of a rock barrier, at the beginning of the Buck Pond Road.

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Buck Pond Accessible Tent Site Project

