

# Forest Preserve Detailed Project Work Plan

## Fiscal Year 2023 Project # C0-WP244

<u>Region</u>	<u>Project Title</u>
3	Blue Hole Parking Lot and Accessible Connector Trail Phase 1

<u>Project Type</u>	<u>Town(s)</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Management Unit</u>
New Construction	Denning	Ulster	Sundown Wild Forest

### **Description of Desired Condition(s) for Project:**

Management of the Blue Hole is guided by the Sundown Wild Forest Unit Management Plan (UMP). Desired conditions include improving health and safety while protecting the wild forest character of the area. We aim to curtail natural resource damage by restricting visitation to hardened pathways where possible.

The proposed Blue Hole parking area is designed with the intention of accommodating all visitors on an average day of visitation, with the goal of improving public health and safety. The proposed parking area will allow visitors to park in one designated area and provide a direct route to the Blue Hole instead of being dispersed amongst numerous, separate parking areas along the entirety of the 3-mile Peekamoose Valley Riparian Corridor. The proposal for the car parking area and accessible trail is included in the 2023 Sundown Wild Forest Unit Management Plan Amendment as phase 1 of a 2-phase process (pertinent pages attached). The Blue Hole parking area and trail will help improve pedestrian safety concerns along Peekamoose Road.

Currently, a health and safety issue exists as many groups of visitors to the Blue Hole are parking and then walking distances of up to a mile and a half through the narrow roadway corridor. Many visitors, who do not walk on the road, walk through the woods for a portion of the way which results in numerous braided social trails. An accessible connector trail, in conjunction with the new parking area, will help redirect traffic and provide visitors a more straight-forward, enjoyable experience. By keeping visitors on hardened paths and durable surfaces we can concentrate use and better protect the riparian corridor while simultaneously keeping people out of the roadway.

### **Description of Project Specifications:**

**Parking Area:** The parking area and driveway shall consist of an area approximately 300' x 100', a total of 30,000 square feet, or 0.6 acres, not to exceed 3 % cross slope. The parking area will meet accessibility requirements by having several accessible parking spots, each measuring 20' by 20'. The accessible portion of the parking area will be covered in suitable crusher dust material to provide a hardened surface, and a DEC kiosk will be accessible from nearby those parking spots. Parking area sign standards and kiosks will be constructed with pressure treated lumber.

**Trail:** Trail dimensions include a sinuous 5' wide trail that will be approximately 3000' in length, a rounded total of approximately 20,000 square feet or 0.45 acres. Trailed access includes a 5' wide, 60' bridge that spans over Bear Hole Brook, a tributary of the Rondout Creek. The bridge crosses this tributary on the north side of Peekamoose Road as illustrated in the attached sketch. The timber bridge will be constructed per standard DEC accessible design, with pressure treated lumber, steel stringers, ramps, and railings.

## **Description of Measures Taken to Avoid, Mitigate and Minimize Impacts to Natural Resources:**

### **1) Trees to be removed:**

Parking Area: A tree tally is attached with a direct count of trees to be cut for the parking area. In total, 48 trees over 3" diameter at breast height(dbh), and 34 trees between 1- 3" dbh were tallied. Whenever possible, parking area construction will be completed with minimizing tree cutting in mind. The construction of this parking area takes advantage of a large, cleared area that currently allows for motorized access and parking resulting in a minimum amount of trees needed to be cut for parking area construction.

Trail: A tree tally is attached with a direct count of trees to be cut for the Accessible connector trail. In total, 116 trees over 3" dbh, and 40 trees between 1- 3" dbh were tallied. Whenever possible, trail construction will be completed with minimizing tree cutting in mind, but with quality and selection of trees also playing a role in the design and layout of the trail.

### **2) Earthwork and Disturbance, including Identification of Work Outside the Project Footprint:**

Parking Area: The Blue Hole parking area will be built through the process of excavating all organic soils and materials including brush, trees, and rootballs from the proposed driveway, drainage ditches, and parking area prior to any excavation for grade. After initial excavation, the parking area and driveway will be constructed by installing woven road fabric over the prepared surface, compacting a mix of 3" and 4" crushed stone over the woven fabric, and then surfaced with compacted NYS DOT item-4 crushed stone. Suitable organic soils initially removed will be installed along downslope areas of the parking area and driveway, and shall be graded, seeded, and mulched under suitable conditions. Surface and ground water will be controlled at all times during phases of construction to prevent erosion, siltation, both on site and to off-site locations. The accessible portion of the parking area will be covered in suitable crusher dust material to provide a hardened surface, and a DEC kiosk will be accessible from nearby those parking spots. Parking area sign standards and kiosks will be constructed with pressure treated lumber.

Trail: Trail dimensions include a sinuous 5' wide trail that will be approximately 3000' in length, a rounded total of approximately 20,000 square feet or 0.45 acres. The trail treadway will generally be confined within a 5- 6' wide corridor depending on encroaching vegetation and necessary drainage establishment. The earthwork needed to construct the trail will mainly occur within the 5' wide treadway surface, however; drainage dips, ditching, and leveling may occasionally extend outside of the immediate 5' treadway. The trail corridor, outside of the treadway surface, will typically extend 6-12" off each side of the 5' trail treadway, and will be variable depending on site conditions. Within the corridor outside the trail treadway, encroaching vegetation, small trees, and tree branches may be cut to facilitate trail construction and maintenance, however; not all trees will need to be removed from within the portion of trail corridor outside of the treadway.

The trail treadway will be built to accessible standards that will include clearing the treadway area of trees, vegetation, and upper organic soils and then compacting stone dust upon the treadway surface. A level trail surface that minimizes slope will be constructed through cut and fill construction where the amount of material from cuts will roughly match the amount of fill to create a level treadway surface. Trail treadway may occasionally need to be elevated compared to surrounding areas to provide sustainable water shedding and drainage.

Trailed access includes a 5' wide, 60' long bridge that spans over Bear-Hole Brook, a tributary of the Rondout Creek. The bridge crosses this tributary on the north side of Peekamoose Road as illustrated in the attached sketch. The timber bridge will be constructed per standard DEC accessible design, with pressure treated lumber, steel stringers, ramps, and railings.

### 3) Mitigation of Impacts to Streams, Waterbodies, and Wetlands

- a. Wetlands Silt fencing will be placed around stockpiles and limits of disturbance areas during construction phase per NYS Standards and Specifications for Erosion and Sediment Control. Stockpiles will not be placed near sensitive areas.
- b. Stockpile and disturbed areas will be restored, and cleaned of stockpile debris, graded to existing ground, seeded and mulched. All other disturbed areas including areas where silt fence was installed, areas where machines have entered the construction zone, will be graded, stabilized, seeded and mulched. Any areas where ditching has been crossed by machinery or a vehicle will be restored to operational condition.
- c. Construction ditching will be used, and modified as necessary, to direct storm water runoff during construction. Existing drainage swales will be used, and modified as necessary, to direct storm water runoff, and some minimal construction of new drainage swales with stone check dams will be used.
- d. Surface and ground water will be controlled at all times during all phases of construction to prevent erosion and siltation both on site and to off-site locations.
- e. Facilities within the unit will be monitored for natural resource degradation. If action is warranted, appropriate measures will be taken to address specific areas of concern.

### 4) Identification of Rare, Threatened or Endangered Species

No rare, threatened, or endangered species were identified within the project area.

### 5.) Wild Forest Character and Aesthetics Mitigation

- a. Tree cutting will be limited by passing around large trees and cutting smaller, lesser quality understory trees blocking the route. Trails will be built with limited amounts of tree cutting, and on minimal grade slopes.
- b. Trail will be sinuous in nature, traversing through forested areas and blending in with the natural surroundings.
- c. Construction of timber bridges to blend with the natural surroundings and use of soil stabilization practices on exposed soil around bridges immediately after construction. Design, construct and maintain bridges to avoid disruption of migration or movement of fish and other aquatic life.
- d. Site selection for the parking area takes advantage of an already leveled and cleared area that has provided parking and access to the Peekamoose Valley for decades. Conversion to more robust and orderly infrastructure at this location does not constitute a drastic change to the character of the area.

### **Analysis of Project Location and Design Alternatives:**

The Department has considered several trail and parking proposals to provide a safer route for the public to travel to the popular swimming area. Three alternative management scenarios have been considered and a preferred trail-route alternative was identified. Both alternatives include building an 80-car parking area at the trailer field with a trail connecting to a bridge crossing over Bear Hole Brook on the northern side of Peekamoose Road. After crossing Bear Hole Brook, in both alternative proposals, the trail will cross Peekamoose Road. This alternative analysis focuses on whether the trail, after crossing Peekamoose Road, will traverse through a wooded section of land or be placed directly along the roadway before meeting with the 300-foot section of trail requiring a retaining wall.

Alternative 1 – (Forested Access) (Preferred Alternative) The preferred alternative proposal calls for the trail to be built through forested area after crossing Peekamoose Road. This proposal would adequately address safety concerns by removing pedestrians from the roadway area.

Alternative 2 – (Roadside Access) The roadside-access, proposal calls for the trail to be built directly next to the roadway, as opposed to through a forested area, after crossing Peekamoose Road. This option was not selected due to the lack of buffer between pedestrians and roadway, as well as concerns that visitors would be tempted to walk the road rather than the trail if the 2 were not separated adequately. This proposal would not adequately address safety concerns of removing pedestrians from the roadway and moving vehicles.

Alternative 3 – (No Action Alternative) - The historical use of the area will remain unchanged, and visitors will continue to walk along the road to access the Blue Hole. This option poses many public safety concerns. The No Action Alternative

is not the preferred alternative because the threat to public safety will persist if people continue to walk long distances on County Route 42 to access the Blue Hole via a congested and heavily trafficked roadway.

**Description of Use of Motorized Equipment and/or Motor Vehicles, if any:**

The 2019 Sundown Wild Forest Unit Management Plan Revision and 2023 Sundown Wild Forest Unit Management Plan Amendment propose infrastructure changes that require the use of motorized equipment. In addition, a Conceptual Use Plan for Administrative Access by Motor Vehicles in Wild Forest Areas (CP-17 Appendix A) has been submitted for approval specifically for both the parking area and trail projects. Motorized Equipment and vehicles for construction include suitable vibratory roller of at least 8 ton capacity, large chipper, dump trucks, excavator, mini- excavator, chainsaws, and walk-behind wheel barrows

**Description of Applicable Standards for Accessibility by People with Disabilities:**

Consistent with ADA requirements, the Department incorporates accessibility for people with disabilities into the planning, construction and alteration of recreational facilities and assets supporting them. The projects outlined in this work plan can be made accessible without fundamental alteration in the nature of the design and service and will not result in an undue financial or administrative burden. The connector trail and footbridge will be built to accessible standards conforming to the DEC Standard Accessible Designs for Outdoor Recreational Facilities guidebook. Trail surfaces will be firm and stable, built with compacted gravel and crusher fines, and will not exceed 10 % slope on average.

**Other Relevant Considerations:**

A recent Unit Management Plan Amendment to the Sundown Wild Forest proposes infrastructure changes in the Peekamoose Valley Riparian Corridor in order to increase public safety and enhance natural resource protection. The Peekamoose Valley Riparian Corridor is 275-acre section of the approximately 30,000-acre Sundown Wild Forest. Throughout recent years, visitation has continued to increase throughout the Peekamoose Valley despite permit requirements, with reports of up to 2,000 people per day attempting to access the Blue Hole and surrounding areas of the Peekamoose Valley Riparian Corridor. The level of visitation that is currently occurring in the area during the warmer summer months is unsustainable without long term or irreparable impacts to natural resources and the high levels of use have resulted in numerous public safety concerns.

**Prepared by (Name & Title):** Ian Dunn  
**Phone:** 845-256-3083

**Date:** 5/8/2023

**REGULATORY CLEARANCE CHECKLIST – STATE LANDS and CONSERVATION EASEMENT PROJECTS**

PROGRAM	PERMIT	REQUIRED		SECURED BY	COMMENTS
		YES	NO	(NAME)	
Air Resources	Restricted Burning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Mineral Resources	Mining	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Materials Management	Solid Waste Mgt. Fac.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Water	Dam Safety Review	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Const. in Flood Hazard	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Public Water Supply	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	SPDES	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Spills Management	Petro. Bulk Storage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Lands and Forests	Unit Management Plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ian Dunn	2019 Sundown Wild Forest Unit Management Plan and 2023 Sundown Wild Forest Amendment
	Tree Cutting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ian Dunn	
	Protected Native Plants	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ian Dunn	
	Historic Preservation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ian Dunn	
Fish and Wildlife	Freshwater Wetlands	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Wild Scenic & Rec. River	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Compliance Services	Other Protection of Waters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	EAF	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ian Dunn	Full Environmental Assessment Form (FEAF) and worksheets completed
	Negative Declaration	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ian Dunn	A negative declaration has been drafted based on the scope and impact of the project.
	Env. Impact Statement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Water Quality Cert.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
DEC (other)	CP-17	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ian Dunn	CP-17 Submitted December 2022
	Commissioner (aircraft, motorized equipment)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Flight Request	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Contract Clearance Sh.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	DOB Exemption	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Other Agencies	APA MOU	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	APA Wetlands Permit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Corps. of Engineers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Building Permits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

Local Permits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Easements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Highway Enter DOT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Wastewater Disposal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

## **Forest Preserve Work Plan Attachments**

For

Construction of New Facilities and Expansion or  
Modification of Existing Facilities

Blue Hole Parking Lot and Accessible Connector Trail – Phase 1  
Construction

Page 2 ... Parking Area Tree Tally

Page 3 ... Accessible Connector Trail Tree Tally

Page 4....Location Map #1 - Town Level Map

Page 5 ... Location Map #2 - Management Unit Level

Page 6... Project Map – Street Level

Page 7... Project Sketch – Ground Level

Pages 8 – 16 ... Excerpts from 2023 Sundown Wild Forest Unit  
Management Plan Amendment

**State Land Tree Tally**

Project: Peekamoose Blue Hole Parking Area 2023

State Land Unit: Sundown Wild Forest

County and Town: Ulster / Denning

Date Talled: 12/9/2022

Tallied by: Ian Dunn - Forester 1 - Region 3

**Peekamoose Blue Hole Parking Area 2023 ( Phase 1 - Parking Area)**

	DIAMETER														TOTAL
	4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28		
american hornbeam	24	10	2												36
white ash						1	1								2
grey birch	1				1										2
yellow birch	5														5
black cherry							2								2
apple	1														1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>48</b>

Number of Trees 1-3" dbh = 34
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In total, 48 trees over 3" diameter at breast height(dbh), and 34 trees between 1- 3" dbh were tallied for the Blue Hole Parking Area. Whenever possible, parking area construction will be completed with minimizing tree cutting in mind. The construction of this parking area takes advantage of a large, cleared area that currently allows for motorized access and parking resulting in a minimum amount of trees needed to be cut for parking area construction.



**State Land Tree Tally**

Project: Peekamoose Blue Hole Connector Trail 2023 (0.6 mile trail)

State Land Unit: Sundown Wild Forest

County and Town: Ulster / Denning

Date Talled: 12/9/2022

Talled by: Ian Dunn - Forester 1 - Region 3

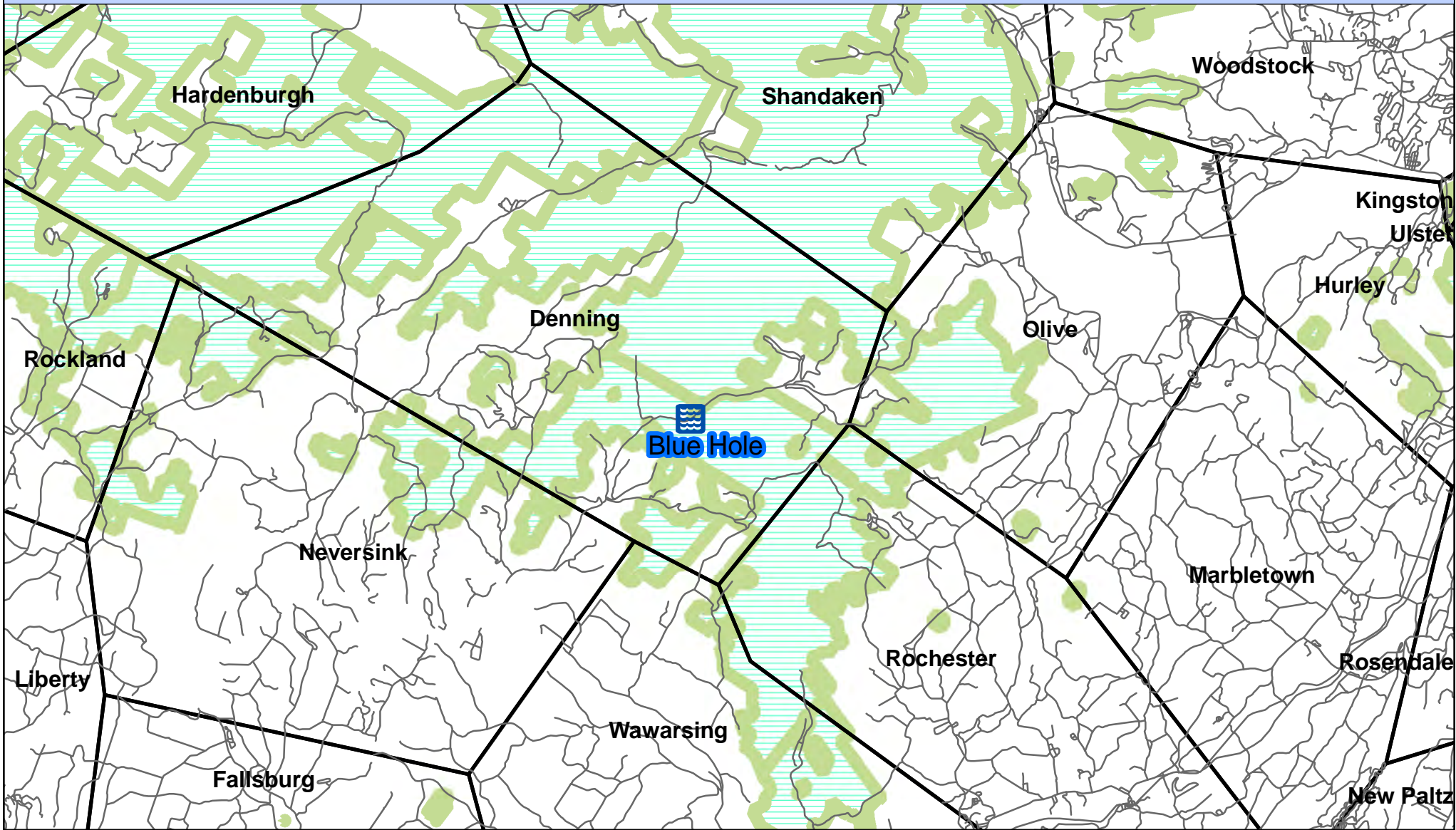
**Blue Hole Connector Trail 2023 (Phase 1 Trail)**





	DIAMETER CLASS													TOTAL
	4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	
american hornbeam	1													1
american beech	28	20	2	3										53
grey birch	10	9	8	3	1									31
yellow birch	3	1	2				1							7
hop hornbeam	1													1
white ash	1	1	1	2	2								1	8
sugar maple				1		1								2
striped maple	2													2
hemlock		1			1									2
red maple		1												1
white pine		1	1	2	2	1	1							8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>116</b>

Number of Trees 1- 3" dbh = 40
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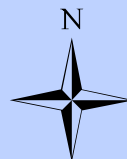
In total, 116 trees over 3" dbh, and 40 trees between 1- 3" dbh were tallied for the Blue Hole Connector Trail. Whenever possible, trail construction will be completed with minimizing tree cutting in mind, but with quality and selection of trees also playing a role in the design and layout of the trail.

# Blue Hole Town Level Location Map



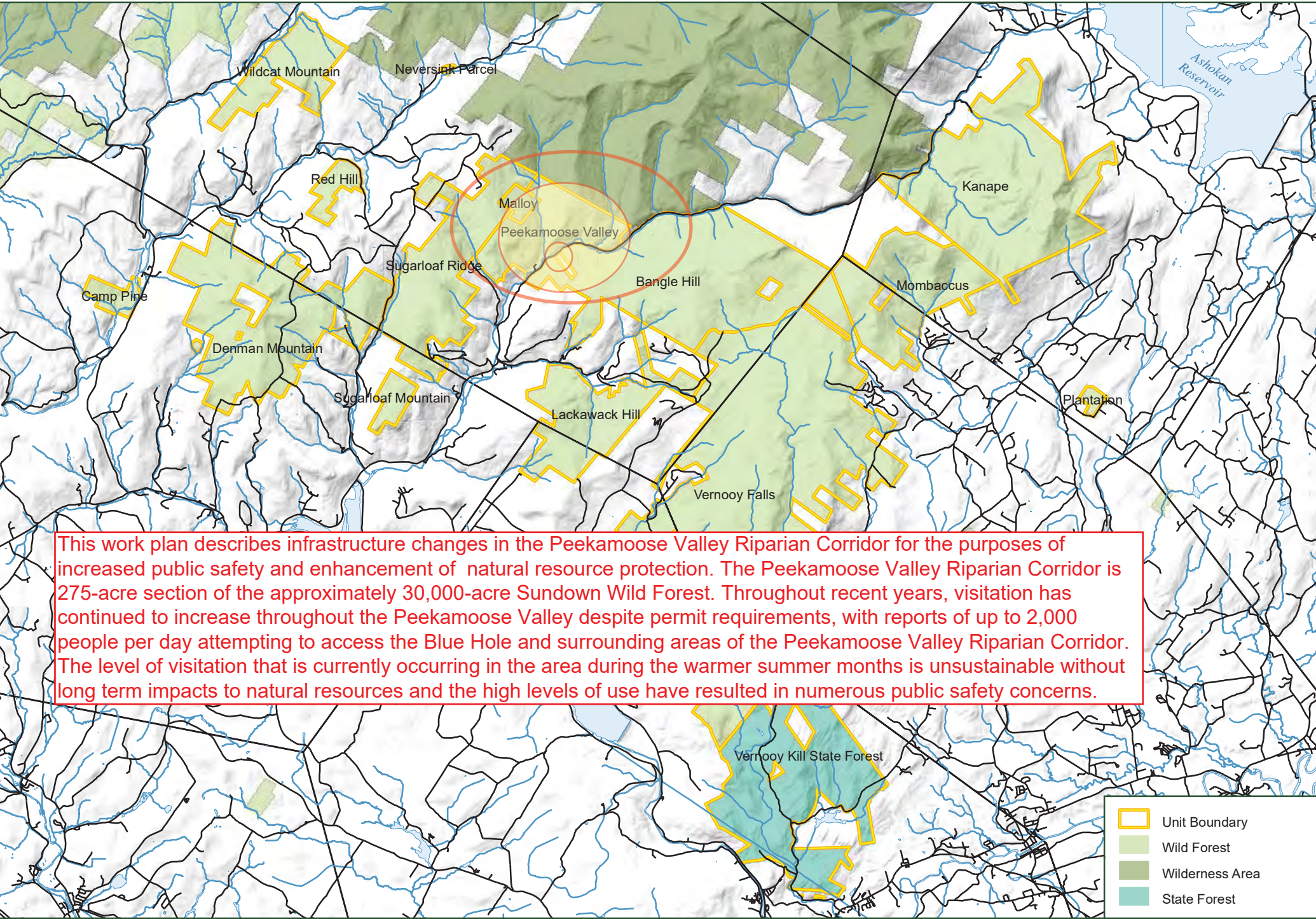
-  Blue Hole
-  Roads, 1:100,000
-  Town Boundary
-  Forest Preserve

0 2.5 5 10 Miles





# Sundown Wild Forest Unit Management Plan



This work plan describes infrastructure changes in the Peekamoose Valley Riparian Corridor for the purposes of increased public safety and enhancement of natural resource protection. The Peekamoose Valley Riparian Corridor is 275-acre section of the approximately 30,000-acre Sundown Wild Forest. Throughout recent years, visitation has continued to increase throughout the Peekamoose Valley despite permit requirements, with reports of up to 2,000 people per day attempting to access the Blue Hole and surrounding areas of the Peekamoose Valley Riparian Corridor. The level of visitation that is currently occurring in the area during the warmer summer months is unsustainable without long term impacts to natural resources and the high levels of use have resulted in numerous public safety concerns.



# Sundown Wild Forest

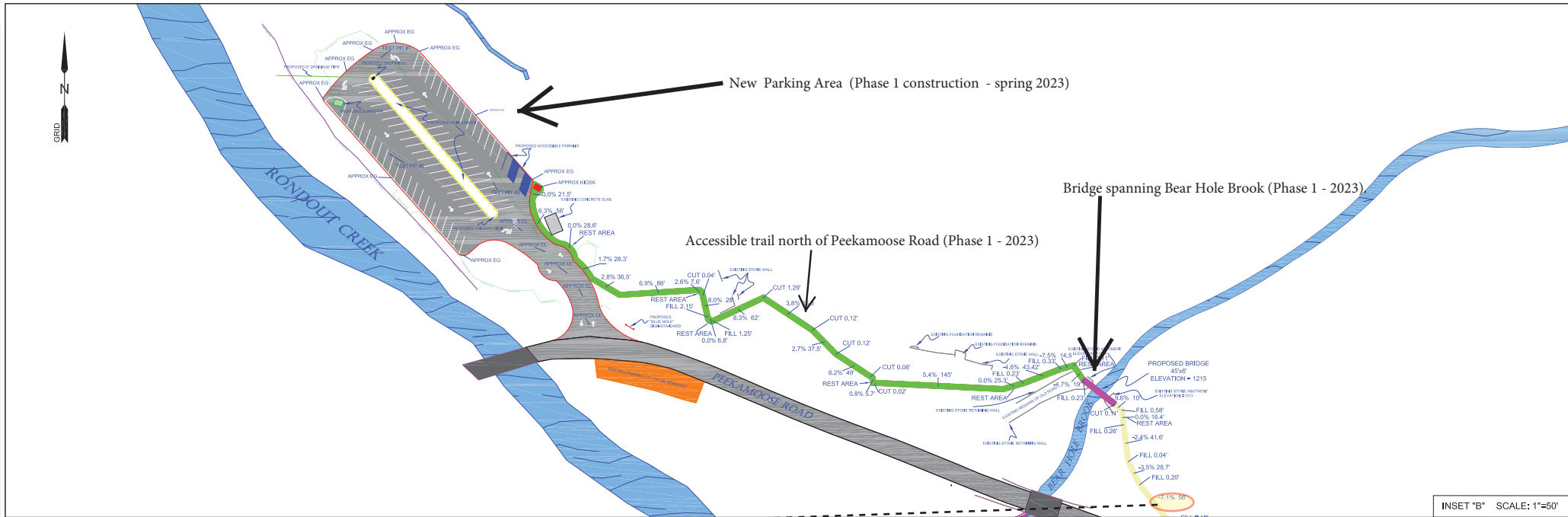
## Peekamoose Valley Riparian Corridor Map - Proposed Parking Area Changes

Catskill Forest Preserve

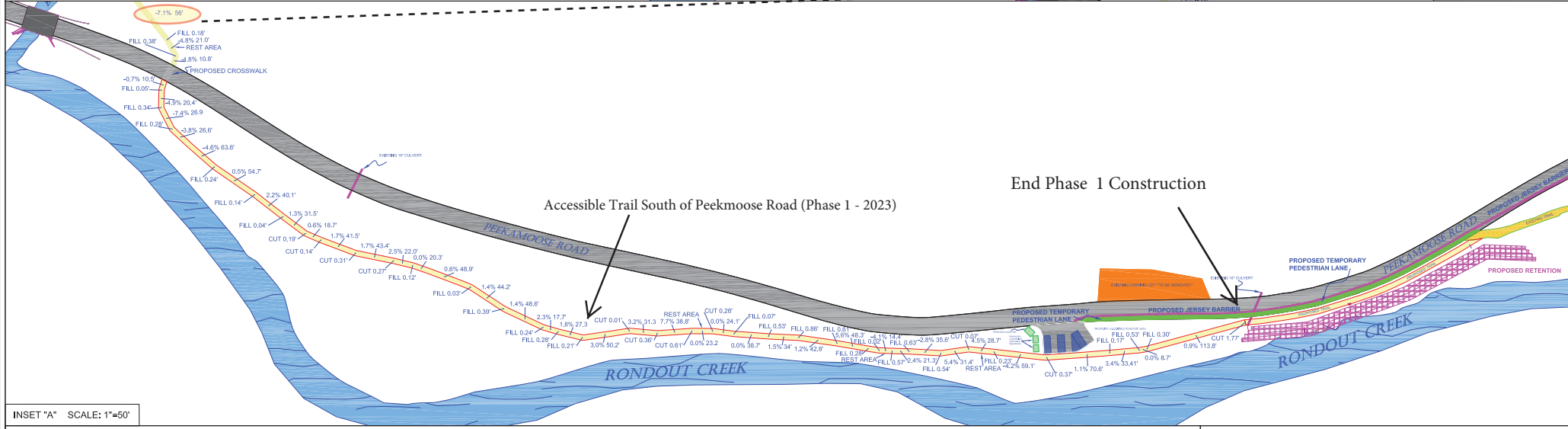
### Phase 1 Construction

- Construct an 80 car parking lot in the footprint of the Peekamoose Trailer Field to consolidate the parking in the Peekamoose Riparian Corridor to a single location.
- Construct an approximately 3,270 ft connector trail from the 80-car parking area to the point where retaining wall construction will be required for trail construction. Due to the challenging topography of the area, the section of trail requiring a retaining wall will be built in a secondary phase of construction.
- Close eight parking areas throughout the Peekamoose Valley Riparian Corridor with the use of boulders, barriers, and gates.





INSET "B" SCALE: 1"=50'



INSET "A" SCALE: 1"=50'

**REFERENCES:**

- 1) LIBER 1340 PAGE 672 (S.L.B 51-245)
- 2) REFERENCE MAP 9157
- 3) PROPOSED PARKING LOT CONSISTS OF SEVENTY FIVE (75) 10x20' PARKING SPACES
- 4) PROPOSED ACCESSIBLE PARKING CONSISTS OF TWO (2) 10x20' & THREE (3) 8x20' PARKING SPACES INCLUDING ACCESS LANES TO THE RIGHT OF THEIR RESPECTIVE PARKING SPACE
- 5) PROPOSED PHASE ONE TRAIL IS APPROXIMATELY 61973' INCLUDING A 45x60' BRIDGE
- 6) CENTERLINE OF WATERWAYS BASED ON 2021 GIS ORTHOIMAGERY, SPCS: NY EAST NAD83
- 7) TEMPORARY PEDESTRIAN LANE IS APPROXIMATELY 4x450'
- 8) PROPOSED JERSEY BARRIER CONSTITUTES FIFTY (50) 2x12' BARRIERS RUNNING APPROXIMATELY 640'
- 9) TRAIL DESIGNED WITH "UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE ACCESSIBILITY GUIDELINES FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION AND TRAILS (2012)"

**PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS:**  
**PEEKAMOOSE CORRIDOR**  
 TOWN OF DENNING, COUNTY OF ULSTER  
 STATE OF NEW YORK







Department of  
Environmental  
Conservation

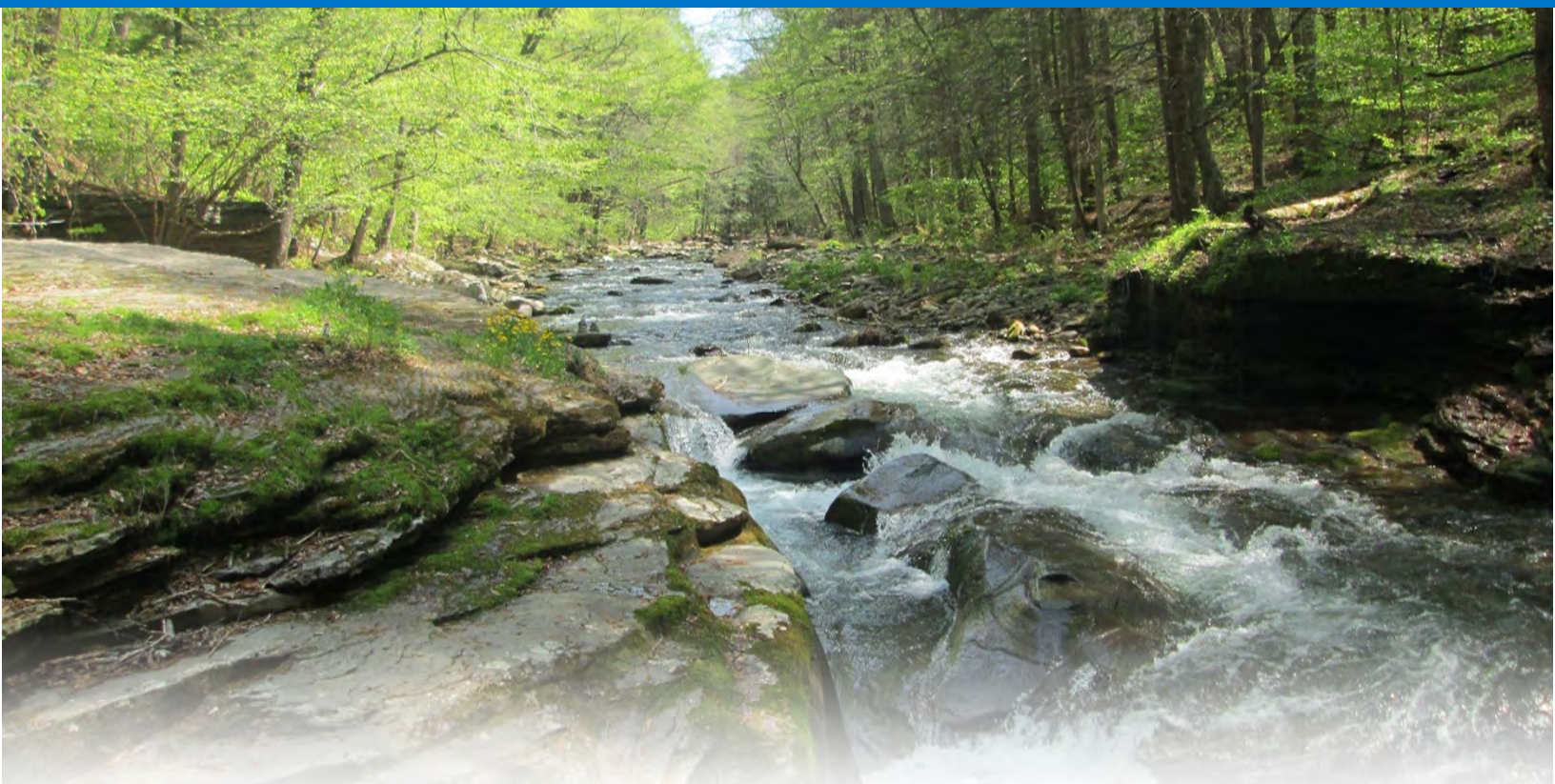
# SUNDOWN WILD FOREST

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## Amendment

to the

### **2019 Sundown Wild Forest and Vernoooy Kill State Forest Unit Management Plan**



**NYS DEC, REGION 3, DIVISION OF LANDS AND FORESTS**

21 South Putt Corners Road, New Paltz, NY 12561  
r3.ump@dec.ny.gov

# I. Purpose of the Amendment

## Peekamoose Valley Riparian Corridor

A Unit Management Plan for the Sundown Wild Forest and Vernooy Kill State Forest was adopted by the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) in 2019 ([https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/lands\\_forests\\_pdf/sdwfump2.pdf](https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/lands_forests_pdf/sdwfump2.pdf)). This amendment to the UMP proposes infrastructure changes in the Peekamoose Valley Riparian Corridor (“Corridor”) to increase public safety, enhance natural resource protection, and to improve the visitor experience and appreciation of the wild setting afforded by the Forest Preserve.

The Corridor encompasses 275 acres of Forest Preserve lands in the approximately 30,000-acre Sundown Wild Forest. Since 2016, the Corridor has been subject to special regulations, including a permit system for the Blue Hole, that provide additional public safety and natural resource protections<sup>1</sup>. Throughout recent years, despite the permit requirements, visitation has continued to increase throughout the Peekamoose Valley, with reports of up to 2,000 people per day attempting to access the Blue Hole and surrounding areas of the Corridor. The level of visitation currently occurring in the area during the summer months is unsustainable without long term impacts to natural resources. Additionally, the high levels of use have resulted in numerous public safety concerns.

The 2019 UMP contained a proposal to construct a 40-car parking lot and trail on the east side of County Rt. 42 (Peekamoose Road). This proposed management action would have required the removal of a significant number of mature trees as well as a large amount of soil disturbance. This amendment proposes an alternative solution for the parking and trail location which significantly reduces the tree cutting and terrain modifications necessary to construct the proposed infrastructure

### Desired Conditions for the Peekamoose Valley Riparian Corridor

The Peekamoose Valley Riparian Corridor presents a unique opportunity for the public to experience the Forest Preserve. Contrasted by the larger, more remote and rugged tracts of wilderness and wild forest within the Catskill Park, the Corridor’s gentle grades, pre-existing cleared areas and a paved public road provide easy access to a variety of existing and potential recreational opportunities with minimal impacts to the natural resources and wild setting. These characteristics combined with the Corridor’s proximity to the greater New York City metropolitan area make it uniquely suited to provide

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<sup>1</sup> 6 NYCRR Part 190.35

people of all backgrounds and abilities the opportunity to experience the Forest Preserve in a positive way.

This amendment builds upon DEC's previous efforts to make the Corridor safe and welcoming to the public by alleviating congestion at points of interest, by creating safe conditions for pedestrians while accessing these areas, and by creating an experience that maximizes public appreciation of the wild setting created by the Forest Preserve.

## Summary of Implementation

This amendment proposes the following management actions to fulfill the desired conditions for the Peekamoose Valley Riparian Corridor. Additional detail and discussion are provided in Section III - Management Proposals.

### **Phase 1**

- Construct an 80 car parking lot in the footprint of the Peekamoose Trailer Field to consolidate the parking in the Corridor to a single location.
- Construct an approximately 3,270 ft connector trail from the 80-car parking area to the point where retaining wall construction will be required for trail construction. Due to the challenging topography of the area, the section of trail requiring a retaining wall will be built in Phase 2.
- Close eight parking areas throughout the Corridor with the use of boulders, barriers, and gates. Parking will now be consolidated at the new parking area and trail, greatly reducing the amount of pedestrians within the roadway.
- The existing Peekamoose trailhead parking area will be permanently closed. The parking area will be relocated to the opposite side of county rt 42 in the area where the port-a-johns are currently located and will be referred to as the "Restricted Access Parking Area" and will provide 4 parking spaces for administrative use and parking for people with mobility impairments.
- Close 25 designated campsites throughout the western portion of the Corridor.

### **Phase 2**

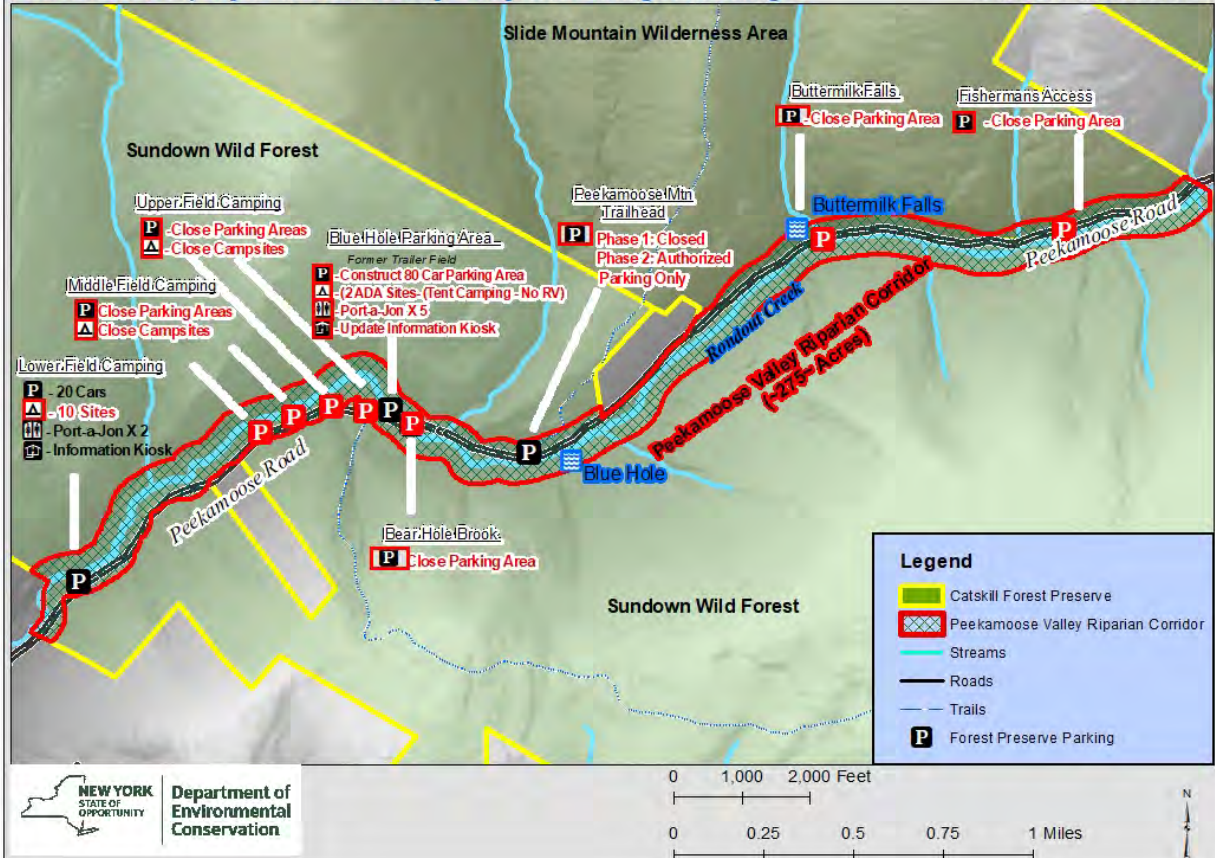
- Construct 2 new accessible campsites in a suitable location.
- Construct a foot bridge/ retaining wall near the wooded pathway entrance to the Blue Hole between the banks of the Rondout Creek and Peekamoose Road.
- Construct an accessible path from the Restricted & Accessible Parking area to the entrance of the Blue Hole and design to accessible standards to accommodate people with mobility impairments.
- Provide an accessible photo point for people on the accessible portion of the Blue Hole Trail
- Install a 10-step stone staircase to harden a section of trail leading to the Blue Hole to prevent additional erosion and soil loss.



# Sundown Wild Forest

Peekamoose Valley Riparian Corridor Map - Proposed Parking Area Changes

Catskill Forest Preserve



## Objectives:

- Design parking areas to manage visitor use within the Peekamoose Riparian Corridor. Availability and final number of parking spots will be based on protecting resource values and accommodating visitor needs.
- To ensure all new or expanded parking lots have accessible spaces pursuant to ADA and ADAAG guidelines

## Management Actions:

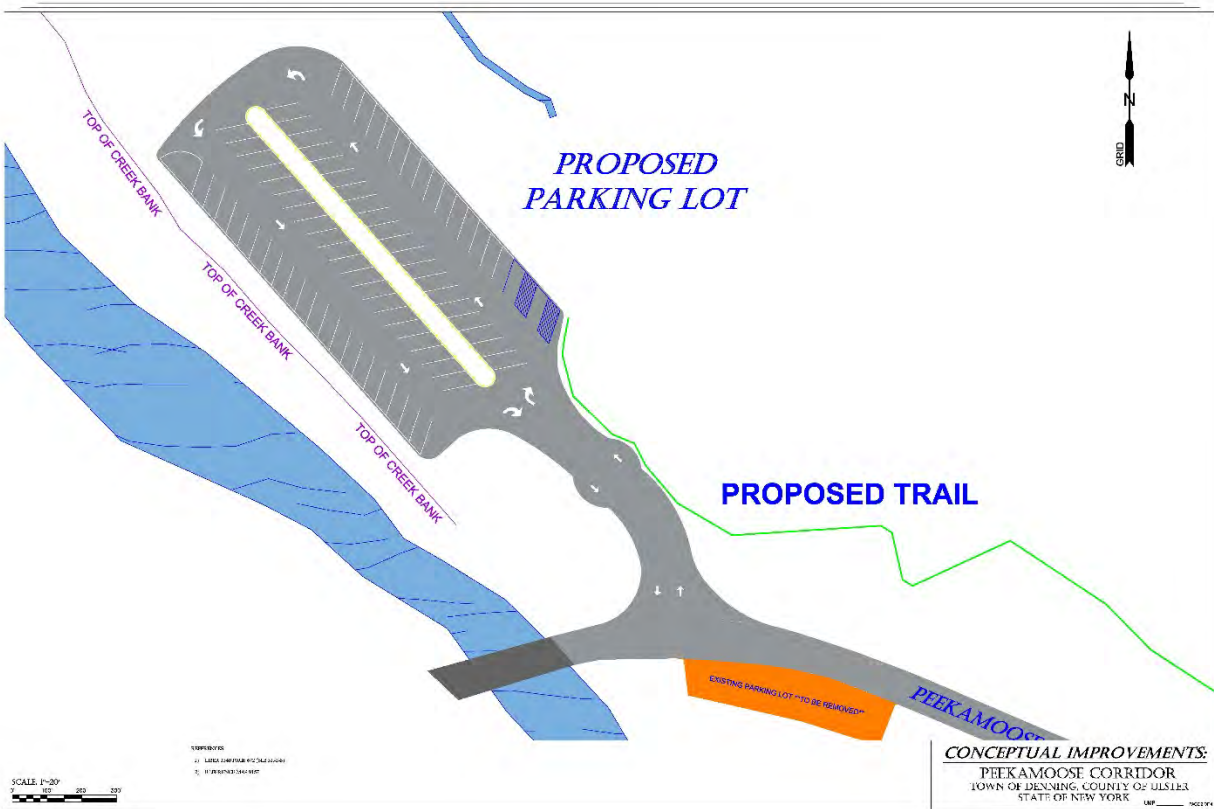
### (Phase 1):

- Convert trailer camping field into 80 car parking area.
- Close eight parking areas (57 parking spots) throughout the Peekamoose Valley Riparian Corridor using gates, jersey barriers or boulders:
  - Close two Middle Field Camping Parking Areas
  - Close two Upper Field Camping Parking Area
  - Close Bear Hole Brook Parking Area
  - Close Peekamoose Trailhead Parking Area

- Close Buttermilk Falls Parking Area
- Close Fishermans Access Parking Area
- Redesignate the hardened area directly across the road from the Peekamoose Trailhead parking area for administrative use and accessible parking only.

**(Phase 2):**

- Routinely monitor, evaluate and open and close parking areas as necessary to provide safe access for visitors to the corridor.



*The proposed 80 car “Blue Hole” Parking area is part of the Phase 1 implementation and is designed to accommodate visitors to the Blue Hole, the hiking community who wish to access the Long Path, as well as hunters and anglers. This parking area will feature accessible parking spots, an accessible information kiosk, and access to an accessible trail connecting the parking area to the Blue Hole. Access to the Long Path will be provided via a short reroute and connector trail from the newly proposed trail to the existing Peekamoose-Table Trail (Long Path).*

## B. Trail Development

### Existing Conditions *(Trail Development)*

#### ***Peekamoose Valley Riparian Corridor***

The Corridor offers access to the Long Path off County Route 42 in two locations. The Peekamoose Trailhead offers access to the Long Path heading north through Sundown Wild Forest into the Slide Mountain Wilderness Area. The Eastern Upper Field Parking Area offers access to the Long Path heading south towards Bangle Hill.

An unmarked trail leads visitors approximately one tenth of a mile from County Route 42 to the Blue Hole. This informal, user-created trail will require some work to stabilization and rehabilitation work. Eventually, the rehabilitated trail be utilized as a portion of the final official Blue Hole trail to the east of the proposed retaining wall area.

#### ***Vernooy Kill Falls Region***

The 2019 UMP proposed a new 10-mile trail segment of the Long Path in the vicinity of Vernooy Kill Falls to re-route the “trail” off public roads and onto the Sundown Wild Forest and adjacent Vernooy Kill State Forest. The segment was identified in the UMP as a multiple-use trail, which included the proposed use of snowmobiles.

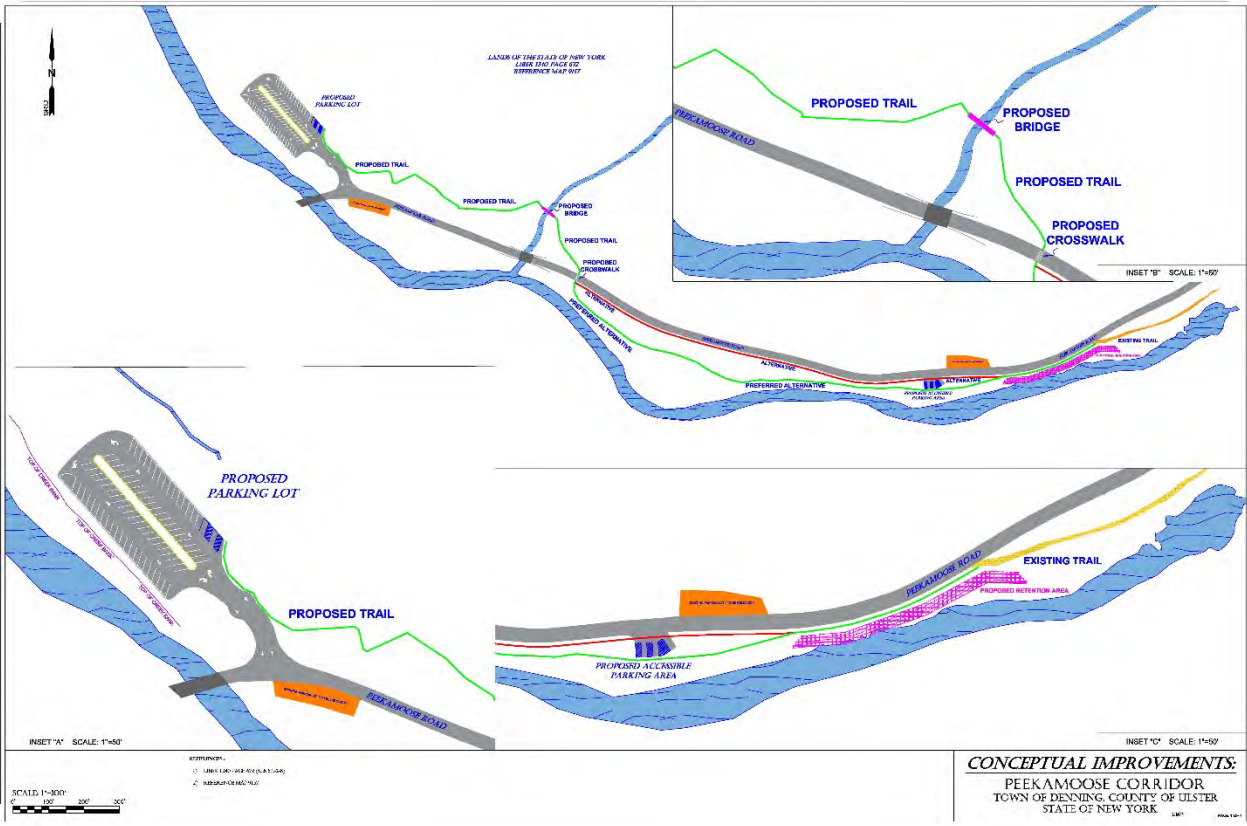
### Proposed Management *(Trail Development)*

#### ***Peekamoose Valley Riparian Corridor***

A 5-foot-wide connector trail will extend east from the 80-car parking lot through a short section of forested area to a bridge that will cross Bear Hole Brook, a tributary of the Rondout Creek. The 60-foot bridge will be constructed over the abutments of a former bridge north of County Route 42. Shortly after the bridged area, the trail will cross to the south of County Route 42 traversing east towards the Blue Hole. The final 300-foot approach to the existing Blue Hole entrance and trail will require a retaining wall due to short distance between the road and extreme slope of the stream bank directly off the roadway. The connector trail, in conjunction with the new parking area, will help redirect traffic and visitors providing a more direct route to the Blue Hole through a picturesque, wooded area. By keeping visitors on hardened paths and durable surfaces we can concentrate use and better protect the riparian corridor.

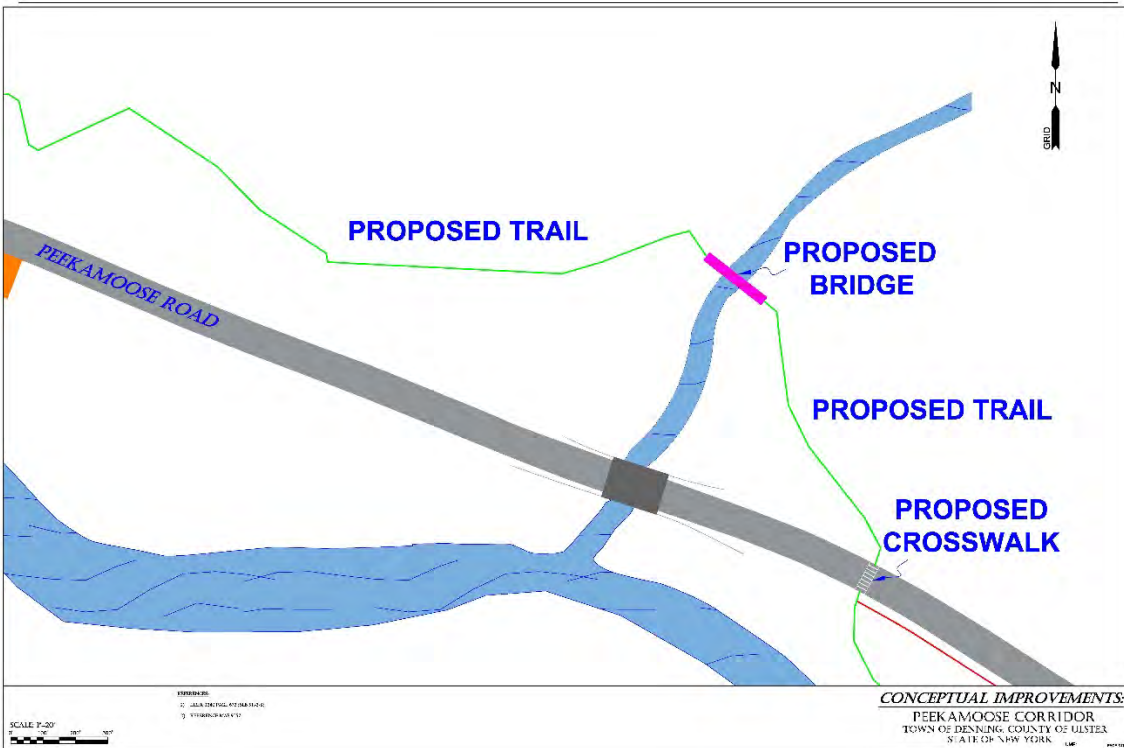
#### ***Vernooy Kill Falls Region***

After further evaluation of the forest characteristics and the desired conditions for public use and experience of the Forest Preserve in the Vernooy Kill Falls region, DEC has concluded that constructing a trail to accommodate snowmobiling would not be

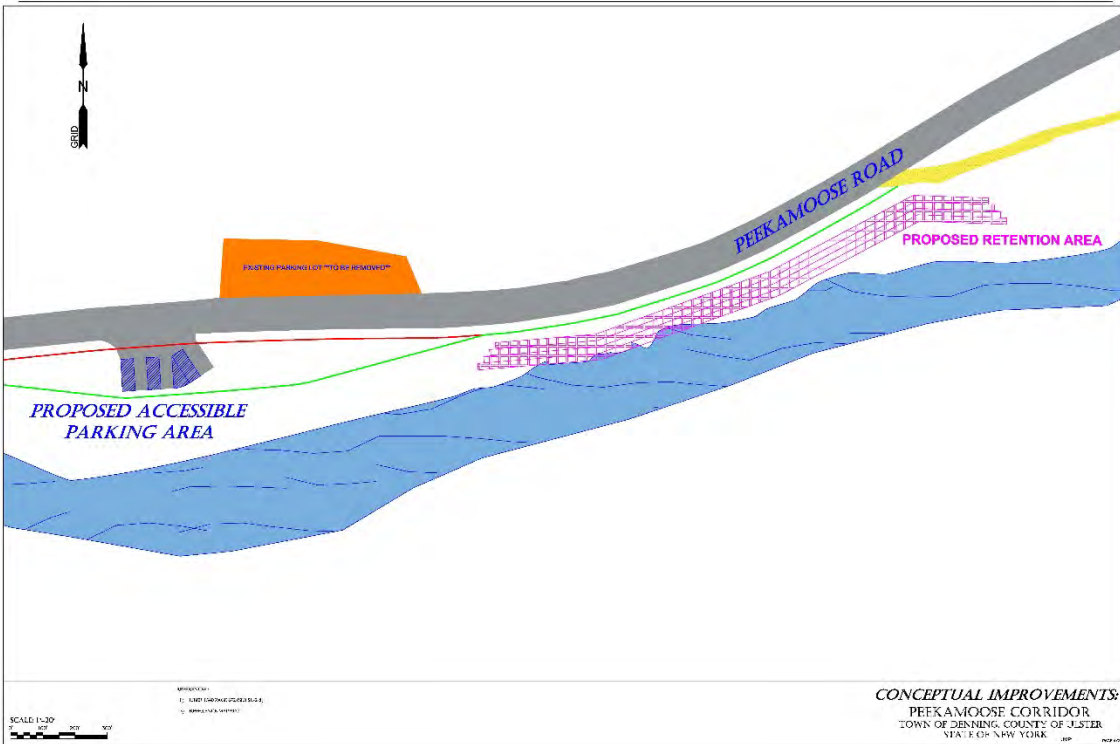


During phase 1 implementation of this management plan, the majority of a 0.6 mile trail will be constructed to connect the new “Blue Hole Parking Area” with the Blue Hole. During Phase 2, the proposed retention wall area will be built along with the final approach of trail to the entrance of the Blue Hole. The trail will provide safe connectivity with the Blue Hole by removing pedestrians from the busy roadway on County Route 42 (Peekamoose Road). Bridging and a retention wall are necessary for completion of portions of this trail and are illustrated in more detail below. The above sketch illustrates the alternatives considered between forested trail access and roadside trail placement.





*Conceptual phase 1 improvements include a 60-foot bridge that crosses Bear Hole Brook, a tributary of the Rondout Creek. The bridge will require construction of new abutments and will be built directly over the old existing bridge abutments. The trail will then traverse south, crossing Peekamoose Road, before winding east through a short section of forested area and eventually connecting with the scheduled phase 2 retention area improvements.*



*Phase 2 implementation includes a 300 foot section of retaining wall and trail that connects the newly built Blue Hole connector trail to the existing Blue Hole entrance and trailway. A short reroute and connector trail will provide access to the Long Path trail that traverses north from Peekamoose Road.*

## C. Camping

### Existing Conditions *(Camping)*

There are currently 35 designated campsites within the western portion of the corridor. Campsites are split between the lower, middle, upper and trailer fields.

- Lower Field – 13 Campsites
- Middle Field – 7 Campsites
- Upper Field – 9 Campsites
- Trailer Field – 6 Campsites (2 are accessible for persons with disabilities)

*Campsites as of September 2022 (Trailer Field not pictured). Camping is by permit only from May 15<sup>th</sup> – September 15<sup>th</sup> of each year. See management proposals below.*